DEVELOPING RELATIONAL RESILIENCE:
Engaging Youth Living in the Midst of Intractable Conflict

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DEVELOPING RELATIONAL RESILIENCE

ENGAGING YOUTH LIVING IN THE MIDST OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

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Abstract in Dutch

Dit proefschrift doet verslag van langjarig onderzoek naar processen van tieners die midden in een weerbarstig maatschappelijk conflict opgroeide en leven om tot relationele weerbaarheid te komen. Hoewel er veel bestaande programma's zijn die zich met jeugd-en-conflict bezighouden, is de focus van dit proefschrift op de zgn. Artsbridge interventie: uniek vanwege het systematische gebruik van:

1) Transformative Reflecting Dialogue; 2) collaboratieve artistieke modaliteiten; en 3) een sociaal-constructivistisch design en epistemologisch kader.

Decennia van conflict en scheiding tussen de verschillende groepen hebben Israëli en Palestijnse standpunten gecreëerd die op negatieve wijzen onafhankelijk en verschillend en vaak contrastrijk zijn. Dit proefschrift bestudeert hoe Artsbridge een veilige plaats vormt voor tieners ter nuancering van die standpunten en opbouw van nieuwe, meer omvattende zienswijzen over het persistente, veelomvattende maatschappelijke conflict. Artsbridge beoogt plaats te maken voor meer begrip en tolerantie voor de complexiteit van dit conflict, en om er in ieders leven wijzer mee om te gaan.

Middels grounded theory en diverse theoretische invalshoeken werden er diepte-interviews gehouden met een random steekproef van Artsbridge alumni, hun ouders en stafleden. Hun ervaringen met Artsbridge werden geanalyseerd om de impact van het 3-weken durende zomerprogramma beter te kunnen begrijpen. De in het proefschrift gerapporteerde systematisch analyse van de data leidde tot verschillende thema's die het programma behelst, inclusief het meest primaire thema: 'relational resilience.'

Het Artsbridge program ter bevordering van relational resilience wordt in dit proefschrift ook vergeleken met andere modellen van resilience. Deze studie biedt een nieuw denkkader voor het werken met cruciale leden van de maatschappij die, te midden van een zichzelf immer voortzettend, verhard en gewelddadig conflict, lijkt weg te drijven van het oplossen van het conflict. De specifieke designelementen in het Artsbridge programma blijken de jongeren in de richting te doen bewegen van het ontwikkelen van relationele weerbaarheid, een vaardigheid die dus vrij jong aangeleerd kan blijken te worden. Het proefschrift eindigt met cruciale reflecties en een onderzoekagenda voor goed opgezet en evt. uitgebreider vervolgonderzoek, waaronder ook actieonderzoek, hetgeen recht zou moeten kunnen doen aan het (door sommigen als bijna hopeloos ervaren, en voor eenieder maatschappelijk ongewenst) fenomeen.

Kernwoorden: Jeugd; Persistent maatschappelijk conflict, Zomerkamp, Programma ontwerp; Dialoog, Expressieve kunsttherapie, Israëli-Palestijnse verhoudingen, Relationele weerbaarheid

Abstract

This thesis explores a process which aims to help teens living in the midst of intractable conflict move towards the development of what has emerged as the main theme of this study – relational resilience.

While there are many existing programs that work with youth in conflict, Artsbridge, the focus of this thesis, is unique in its utilization of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD), artistic modalities, and collaborative art within a social constructionist framework. Decades of violence and separation between the various groups have created Israeli and Palestinian narratives that are negatively interdependent and mutually exclusive. This dissertation explores how Artsbridge provides the safe space for the deconstruction of those narratives and the construction of new, more inclusive narratives that allow for a multiplicity of understandings and an appreciation of and tolerance for complexity.

Through a constructionist grounded theory analysis, interviews with 31 alumni of Artsbridge from 2008 through 2019, former staff, and parents of alumni, were analyzed in order to understand their experience of Artsbridge and the impact it has had on their lives. This analysis of the interviews led to the primary theme of relational resilience. The Artsbridge model of relational resilience is explored and compared with other models of resilience.

This study offers a new paradigm for working with members of communities entrenched in prolonged, violent conflict, moving away from the concept of resolving conflict and, instead, towards the development of relational resilience.

Keywords: Art, Conflict, Dialogue, Encounter Programs, Expressive Arts Therapies, Israeli Palestinian Conflict, Social Construction, Dialogue, Relational Resilience

A Note about Terminology

Language is powerful, therefore, the terms we use to define entities holds meaning for those who are represented by those terms. There are three populations that have relevance to this dissertation, and I have chosen to differentiate the nationality of the participants with deference to how they define themselves. Therefore, this study will do utilize the following terms:

- Jewish Israeli, or (JI): Those who are Jewish and living in Israel
- Palestinian Israeli, or '48 Palestinian: A Palestinian who lives within the green line of Israel (The Green Line refers to the 1948 borders of Israel from 1948)

- Palestinian, or '67 Palestinian: Those who live in the occupied territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem that were captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

There are many ways to refer to the two pieces of land inhabited by Israelis and Palestinians, each fraught with their own political connotations. Out of respect for both sides, and with the hope for eventual autonomy for all of the citizens of both lands, I will use the terms Israel and Palestine. Israel will be the term used to define all land within the green line of Israel, and Palestine will refer to the occupied territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Dedication

Firstly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Peter, my partner in life who has provided me the space and time to write this dissertation, which at times seemed endless, and for accompanying me on this journey, which includes the creation of Artsbridge. Also, to my children David, Arielle and Uri, who put up with my preoccupation with Artsbridge and the writing of this thesis, and for appreciating the meaning that both held for me. And, of course, to my grandchildren, whom I did not get to spend as much time with as I would have liked while working on this dissertation. It is my hope that they, in their lifetime, will be able to experience a world where respect is held for all cultures and nationalities, and that a multiplicity of narratives is seen as an advantage rather than a cause for violent conflict.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to all of the alumni of Artsbridge, and to the many volunteers and staff who made Artsbridge possible. They have enriched my life enormously and have been valuable teachers for me. I am truly in your debt.

And finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Tarek el Heneidy, who was one of the founding members of the Artsbridge board and an invaluable resource for the work. He was a dear friend and, truly, a man of peace. He and his wife Joy are truly missed.

Acknowledgements

My life has been blessed with many voices that have guided and supported me along the journey that leads to the writing of this dissertation. It is not possible to mention everybody as I have been touched by so many along the way. However, I would like to acknowledge their contributions, as well as the contributions of those who have been more clearly visible.

To my friends and family who have supported me throughout this journey, through encouragement, humor and guidance along the way, I thank you. To Peter, for your support and for lending your keen eye to helping with editing.

To Celeste Wilderom, my University of Twente promoter, I am grateful to you for having given so generously of your time and wisdom to support me in this endeavor. I have truly appreciated our conversations.

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To Sheila McNamee who guided me, patiently, in the creation of this dissertation, and supported me in all aspects of this PhD journey. Our many conversations have been invaluable, and your support along the way means the world to me. Thank you.

To my friend and mentor, Evan Longin, who started me on my journey to social construction, I am forever grateful. To the people of the Salem Center, especially Evan, Marjorie Roberts and Stephan Gaddis – I cherish those Monday evenings spent working with families and grappling with the ideas that make up social construction, both philosophically and within therapeutic practice.

I would also like to acknowledge the many families in Israel and Palestine who have supported me along the way, trusted me with their children, and provided me with hospitality and delicious meals. Thank you, also, to the organizations that have worked with Artsbridge along the way and supported our work. In particular, Karen AbuZant, the people of Neve Shalom Wahat al Salam, Beit Hagen in Haifa, and the Palestinian Peace Coalition. I am grateful.

Last but not least, I am forever grateful to the students who have participated in Artsbridge over the years, and who have been my greatest teachers, especially those who sat with me and engaged in the rich conversations that contributed to this thesis. To the people who have worked at Artsbridge, either as volunteers or staff over the years, your friendship and wisdom have been invaluable to me, and I have learned so much from you. Saying thank you is not enough to express how much I appreciate all that you have contributed.

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Chapter One: Introducing the Dissertation

Introduction

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is considered to be one of the longest intractable conflicts in modern times. Throughout the history of this conflict, there have been many serious attempts at mediation, at both a governmental and grass-roots level. Yet, despite many efforts, an endless number of initiatives, and many partial agreements, it seems that the sides are more polarized than ever.

The era of the Oslo Accords[1] was a time of hope for many people on both sides of the conflict. Along with the Oslo Accords came the birth of several organizations whose goal was to prepare Israelis and Palestinians for the prospect of peace and coexistence. Their hope was to encourage communication between the two sides and to begin the process of reconciliation; alleviating stereotypes, developing a sense of trust between groups, and beginning the process of healing. However, as the years have gone by with no solution in sight, the conflict has become more entrenched, and it seems that there is less trust, and more fear, frustration, and anger (Cohen-Chen, 2014; Maoz, 2004).

Efforts to bring the two sides together have had varying degrees of constructive impact, and the sustainability of the results in the long term has been called into question (Bekerman, 2018; Maoz & Ron, 2016; Shani & Boehnke, 2017). What is clear is that, over the years, thousands of Israeli and Palestinian citizens have lost their lives and millions more have suffered, to varying degrees, from the continued violence, tensions, and fears.

Artsbridge, the focus of this study, was developed as a response to the intractability of the ongoing conflict. Having studied mental health counseling and art therapy, and having been introduced to, and immersed in, the concepts of

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[1] The Oslo Accords represent a series of agreements signed by Israel and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization), in May of 1994 which began with the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian Self-Rule. (Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel/The-Oslo-Accords)

social construction, I began to explore the potential benefits of combining these elements in an effort to work with teens living in the midst of intractable conflict. The aim was to offer a unique, holistic approach to conflict transformation utilizing Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, collaborative arts, and expressive therapies with the goal of providing opportunities for the exploration and deconstruction of entrenched, mutually exclusive narratives. Over the years since its formation, the process and goals of the program have evolved – from a conflict transformation program to a program that focuses on developing relational resilience in youth living in the midst of intractable conflict. While no one program can put an end to the conflict, I am proposing that it is possible to help mitigate the negative impact of intractable conflict on those affected. I will argue that this can be achieved by shifting the focus away from the resolution or transformation of conflict, and towards resilience in the face of intractable conflict.

The desire to create Artsbridge stems from my own personal journey. I was born to parents who were 1st generation American Jews. Growing up in a suburb of Philadelphia in the late '50s and '60's could hardly be considered living in a war-zone. Yet, the history of World War II, the Holocaust and subsequent murder of 6,000,000 Jews, as well as the conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East loomed heavily in my life. Like many post-war Jewish families in America, my parents held strong Zionist beliefs. Zionism, to them, was a noble idea. According to the narrative that I grew up with, Israel was the homeland of the Jewish people. It was their safety net against another holocaust and the fulfilment of the biblical promise of the land of Israel for the Jewish people. While my immediate family was not directly impacted by the Holocaust, the narrative of the Holocaust weighed heavily and became an integral part of my identity. "Never again" was the mantra that permeated my young life. That particular narrative did not hold much room for a positive view of Arabs[2], whether they be citizens of Israel or otherwise. As Golda Meir stated with the establishment of the new State of Israel, "Israel is a land without a people for a people without a land." Never mind that people, mostly Arabs, had been living on that land for hundreds of years. The understanding was that those Arabs wanted to push the people of Israel into the sea and they were not to be trusted.

While I did not grow up in a war zone, as one of only a few Jewish students in my school, I was subject to anti-Semitic slurs, discrimination, and on a few occasions, physical assaults. Of course, this only strengthened the narrative of

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[2] The narrative of my youth did not differentiate between the various Arab cultures.

Israel as a safe haven for the Jewish people. My first trip to Israel was at the age of 13. I fell in love with the country and vowed that I would return. I did so at age 19, after two years of university. While initially intending to stay one year, I eventually ended up staying for almost three. Until that time, my narrative of Israel held strong. My first year in Israel was divided between living on a kibbutz (communal farm) that was located on the border with Jordan and a six-month immersion program to learn Hebrew.

After that first year, I was accepted to Tel Aviv University to work on my undergraduate degree. While studying, I held a part-time job as a bilingual secretary for a company that made items out of brass, including belts with brass buckles. One of my jobs every couple of months was to help coordinate a secret meeting between the owner of the company and the Palestinian leather merchant who sold us leather for the belts. Despite the friendship between the owner and Palestinian merchant they had to keep their meetings and their business dealings secret. A Palestinian doing business with an Israeli was often risking his life and had to be extremely careful not be seen as a "collaborator." For an Israeli citizen of Israel, it was illegal to do business with a Palestinian. Witnessing this and being confronted with something that did not fit my understanding of the conflict was a challenging experience, leading me to begin a process of questioning my understanding of Israelis, Palestinians, and the conflict.

During my almost three years in Israel my contact with Palestinians was limited to my travels to the West Bank markets or traveling in the Sinai Desert[3]. While I did meet Arab citizens of Israel from time to time, it involved little more than a cursory conversation. I suppose I viewed them with polite mistrust. Somebody had once told me that, "they may seem nice to you now, but if they had the chance, they would stab you in the back." Of course, with this as part of my story of the "Arabs," it left little opportunity for opening up the possibility of trust.

However, having experienced a few moments of conflict between the narrative that I grew up with and my current lived experience at the time, small cracks opened in my deeply held belief of Arabs as the enemy and Israel as the home of the Jewish people. The opportunity was created for me to further question what I had always, up to that point, held to be true, and that journey continues to this day. At times the journey has been difficult, and sometimes painful, but it has always

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[3] During the almost three years that I lived in Israel there were no restrictions on travel between Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. Additionally, the Sinai had not yet been returned to Egypt.

been an invaluable process. A process that, years later, fed my desire to create Artsbridge in the hopes that I might be able to guide others to a more complex understanding of the conflict, to appreciate the multiplicity of narratives that exist, and to the concept of truth as socially constructed. My journey continues to this day.

The Research Problem

Hundreds of organized contact interventions currently exist whose focus is on the improvement of relations between Israelis and Palestinians with the ultimate goal of achieving peace and reconciliation. Significant research has been conducted on the effectiveness of these interventions with varied results. Ifat Maoz (2011, 2018) provides an overview of four major models of intergroup encounters that work with Israelis and Palestinians and that "seek to reduce hostility and increase understanding and cooperation between the two nationalities" (p. 115). Those four models are the coexistence model, confrontational model, joint projects, and narrative (2011). Other scholars have conducted research on specific programs that work with teens, such as Hands of Peace, Seeds of Peace, Sadaka Reut, and Peace Child Israel (Hammack, 2006; Lazarus, 2011; Maddy-Weitzman, 2005; Ross, 2013). These are just to name a few. A more complete overview of the research is covered in chapter 4.

While there has been a great deal of research on various interventions and educational strategies for working with groups in conflict, the focus of that research lacks detail regarding the specific processes utilized. Programs have been described by their models of intervention, whether their focus is on coexistence, power relations, collaborative projects, or a focus on narratives. However, I have not found any which have described, in detail, just how those models are utilized and how they are implemented. While the model of intervention has relevance, the challenge becomes, not what the interventions are, but how they are implemented. I will argue for the benefit of shifting focus from **what** these interventions do to **how** they are implemented, as well as a shift in the overarching goals of programs taking place **in the midst of** ongoing conflict. While program interventions have been evaluated, there is a lack of focus on the implemental **process** of programs, including the appropriateness of the goals themselves.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

This dissertation departs from more traditional dissertations in several ways. Firstly, it aims to explicate a process that was created for working with youth living

in areas of intractable conflict. In accordance with a relational constructionist approach, it is not an attempt at an empirical analysis of the process – rather it lays out, in detail, how Artsbridge, the focus of this study, aims to achieve what it does. Through this study, a new model of relational resilience has emerged, which has become a major theme of this thesis. The second aim of this dissertation is to explore what it is that Artsbridge does as elucidated through interviews with alumni, former staff, and parents of past participants. This dissertation describes, in detail, the Artsbridge process, paying careful attention to its implementation, which includes the utilization of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, and the arts to engage participants in a process that addresses the destructive impact of intractable conflict. Additionally, the Artsbridge process is informed by a relational constructionist stance, which will be described in Chapter 2. The reader will notice that quotes taken from the interviews conducted for this study will be utilized throughout the dissertation, rather than being limited to the analysis section. These quotes are meant to assist the reader in understanding how participants understand the impact of the Artsbridge process, and provides illustrations of that impact.

Artsbridge was founded in 2007, with its first summer program held in 2008. While Artsbridge was originally conceived of as a conflict transformation program, it became increasingly clear that this did not adequately define what the program was achieving. However, what its impact was seemed to defy definition. This study was undertaken in order to better understand what it is that Artsbridge does, in addition to exploring that impact through the experiences of the participants. To that end, this study responds to the following research questions:

1. How does Artsbridge enable participants from both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to move beyond the destructive impact of intractable conflict on their lives, towards more constructive engagement with the world around them?
2. How do participants of Artsbridge experience their participation in, and impact of, the Artsbridge process?

Methodology

This research is conducted through the lens of social construction. The intention is not to produce empirical facts. Rather, I see this research as a generative process, meant to provide the reader with opportunities to reflect on what is possible and to generate conversation regarding how we view work with communities in conflict, and what might be possible moving forward, or, as Gergen

(2014) calls it, "future-forming research." Social constructionist research is a future forming process (Gergen, 2015) that does not attempt to document what is, rather it creates the possibility of what can be. In a sense, this research is constructed in a way that Artsbridge asks its participants to engage, moving away from entrenched ideas of what is true and good, to a place of curiosity for emergent possibilities.

In response to the first research question, I present a detailed description of the Artsbridge process, including the rationale behind it, with a focus not just on what is done, but rather on how and why it is done, including how a stance of relational construction informs the process. The second research question is the focus of the analysis of data generated from interviews with a total of 31 participants conducted with alumni and former staff and parents of Artsbridge that represent Jewish Israeli and Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as Palestinians living in the Palestinian territory of the West Bank. Alumni represented the various cohorts from 2008 through 2019. Through a qualitative, constructionist grounded theory approach, interviews were analyzed with the purpose of exploring and developing a deeper understanding of the impact of Artsbridge on participants, as well as how alumni understand their experience of the program.

Since the beginning of this study, I have focused on remaining open to exploring the emergent data derived from the interviews. A Grounded Theory approach from within a constructionist epistemology allowed for a rich exploration of the interview data and provided the opportunity for the generation of new meanings for how Artsbridge engages with its community of participants. As Charmaz (2019, p. 25) explains, "…grounded theorists attempt to remain open to all possible theoretical understandings of the data and systematically checks which one best accounts for them" Through the utilization of this approach, the main theme of relational resilience emerged, and it has created possibilities for designing programs that deal with intractable conflict in a new way, by shifting the focus from resolving the conflict to creating relational resilience.

Contributions of this Thesis

The impact of intractable conflict on societies as well as members of those societies is significant and tragic. This study makes several contributions. First, it presents a new model for working with people living in the midst of intractable conflict. By shifting the focus of interventions from one of conflict resolution, transformation, or mitigation of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to that of relational resilience, the potential exists for providing opportunities for the generation of new

meanings and new ways of moving forward together, despite the conflict. This new model introduced in this dissertation introduces a process for encounter programs that is informed by a stance of relational construction, utilizes Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, collaborative arts, and expressive therapies with the goal of providing opportunities for the exploration and deconstruction of entrenched, mutually exclusive narratives.

The second contribution of this study helps to understand how participants in the program understand their experience of Artsbridge and its impact on their lives. Additionally, it encourages the development of an appreciation of the complexities of the conflict, a sense of curiosity for what is possible when moving forward together, the generation of reasonable hope and an expansion of imagination, all with the goal of helping participants gain relational resilience.

Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into three parts, consisting of a total of twelve chapters. Part I includes this current chapter which introduces the study, including the theoretical, epistemological and practical background, motivation and contributions. Chapter two describes the epistemological framework of relational construction. Chapter three provides a review of intractable conflict literature, including relevant theories and implications. Chapter four includes a review of the various intergroup encounter programs that work with Israelis and Palestinians as well as the theories that inform them.

Part II provides a detailed overview of Artsbridge and its process for working with teens living amidst destructive conflict. Chapter five is an introduction to the program, including the motivation for its creation, as well as the various considerations in developing the process. Also included are the various elements that are implemented in the program. Chapter six includes a review of the literature regarding various forms of dialogue, as well as a focus on dialogue as it is utilized in Artsbridge, including how Transformative Reflecting Dialogue was adapted to a program that engages teens from the Middle East. Chapter seven provides a review of the literature on the use of art and expressive therapies, as well as an overview of the components of the art in the program, including the rationale behind their use. Chapter eight describes the interrelationship between the dialogic and artistic elements of the Artsbridge process.

Part III, which includes chapters nine through twelve, includes a description of the methodology utilized for this study, which is a retrospective, grounded theory approach from within a relational constructionist framework. Chapter nine

describes the methodology of constructionist grounded theory. Chapter ten presents an in-depth analysis of the data, including a depiction and examples of the six themes that emerged from the interviews, which led to the emergence of relational resilience as explicated in Chapter eleven. Chapter eleven describes the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience, which has emerged as the primary theme in this study. Chapter twelve presents a discussion of theoretical insights as they relate to the research questions, as well as potential applications of the Artsbridge process, the implications of the research, including limitations, final reflections, future research possibilities, and conclusion.

Chapter Two: A Social Constructionist Orientation

In this chapter, the theoretical orientation of social construction, and more specifically, relational construction, will be introduced, beginning with my own journey to a social constructionist stance. I will then discuss elements of social constructionist theory that are relevant to this inquiry.

Why Social Construction?

I was certainly a curious child – always asking questions and questioning the answers. Growing up, and well into my adulthood, concrete ideas and hard truths seemed problematic to me. Whenever faced with a "truth" or a "black and white" issue, I often managed to think of alternative possibilities. When witnessing an argument, I strived to see both sides. In studying art therapy, I was troubled by the idea that one could see inside a person's mind by looking at the picture that they drew. When walking through a museum, I was curious as to how the curator of an exhibit could speak definitively as to the intention of the artist or the meaning of a particular brushstroke or image. Yes, I was a very curious child, and an equally curious adult, and almost always skeptical of what is held up to be a "truth." All of these ideas made living in a modernist, empirical world challenging.

In the last year of my master's degree, I accepted an internship at the Salem Center for Training, Research, and Therapy, in Massachusetts. The Center was run by three therapists, all practicing from the perspective of social construction: Marjorie Roberts, from a dialogic perspective, Steven Gaddis from a Narrative perspective, and Evan Longin from an eclectic, relational perspective. The training there was different than any other that I had experienced and certainly different from the experiences that my peers were having at their internship sites. At the Salem Center the interns would sit in with the therapist and act as reflectors[4] in the session. Each Monday evening, interns and therapists would sit together and

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[4] The role of reflector will be discussed in more detail further in this dissertation. For the purpose of this chapter, the role of the reflector is to listen to the conversation between the therapist and client. When the therapist pauses the conversation with the client, the reflector(s) share their thoughts with each other on how the client's words resonated with them while the therapist and client adopt a listening position.

engage in rich conversations that focused on the social constructionist philosophy and its relation to therapy. After those conversations, one of the therapists would invite a family they were working with into the space where we would then engage in a therapy session that included family members, the therapist or team of therapists, and the interns. After the sessions, the interns and therapists would process the encounter. It was during that time that I felt that I had finally found a home for my natural curiosity, and so many of the ideas with which I had been struggling.

Social constructionist ideas were exciting and heightened my curiosity to explore further and to deepen my understanding. As we worked with families, couples, and individuals, I was able to witness the transformations as clients were able to move from being "stuck" to finding new ways of moving forward with their lives and in their relationships. These conversations were what Gergen, McNamee and Barrett (2001) call Transformative Dialogue, which I will discuss later in this dissertation. It was during this time that I was fortunate to be able to meet and engage with many of the people who were deeply immersed in social constructionist thought and practice. My world has been forever enriched and expanded. Paradoxically, the more I learn and live with these ideas, the more comfortable I become with being in, what Harlene Anderson calls, a position of not-knowing. This position of not knowing allows me to remain curious, challenging me to continually question and critically explore assumptions that are taken to be truth. Harlene Anderson (2005) explains the stance of "not-knowing" as embodying the constructionist view of knowledge. This includes the idea that the development of knowledge (i.e., reality and truth) is a relational process, meaning that we come to know what we know through the interactions we have with others. Within a therapeutic setting, "not knowing" relates to the idea that the therapist does not assume to know the intention or thoughts of the client. However, utilizing respectful listening, which is "listening in an active and responsive way" (p. 503), the therapist remains open to the other person's story, which Anderson considers to be critical in dialogue. The stance of not-knowing does not mean that the therapist does not know anything or is considered a blank slate. Rather, it relates to the idea that any questions or ideas brought into the conversation by the therapist are offered from within a tentative posture – a posture that shows respect and openness to the client (2005, 1995). As I will discuss later in this dissertation, this concept of entering into a conversation with a stance of "not knowing" has significant relevance when engaging members of societies living in the midst of intractable conflict.

Thus, my seemingly circuitous path – from curious child, to artist and educator, to intern at the Salem Center, to art therapist, and to my subsequent work with clients – has led me to the subject of this dissertation, which is the exploration of how to work with teenagers from Israel and Palestine, by engaging them in a generative, relational process that includes dialogue and collaborative art within the framework of social construction.

Social Construction as Critique

From a modernist perspective, the idea that reality exists and that we act on it as individuals, forms the foundation of knowledge and research (Cunliffe, 2008). The modernist assumption is that the nature of the world can be revealed through observation, stringent procedures and uniformly agreed upon standards (Cunliffe, 2016). The individual is seen as a self-contained entity. Who we are, our psychological characteristics, including a person's thoughts, feelings, and knowledge, are contained within the boundary of our skin. As such, from a modernist perspective, meaning-making is situated in the mind of the individual (Sampson, 2008). In other words, traditional/modernist models of communication are "based on the ability of the speaker to convey meaning and intent and the ability of the listener to grasp the meaning" (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 123). Language, in this context, is seen as a tool through which a person conveys meaning. Gergen and Thatchenkery describe this modernist view of language as "an outward expression of an inward mentality, which has been passed across the centuries" (2006, p. 37-38). They go on to state that, to the modernist, "we use language to report on the nature of the world insofar as we can ascertain its character through observation. Words, then, are carriers of 'truth' or 'knowledge' – whether in journals, books, or in everyday conversation" (2006, p. 38).

Camargo-Borges (2017) describes the difference between modernism and social construction as such: "Modernist theory is viewed as a representation of reality. When theory is viewed as a metanarrative, the assumption is that theory can be translated as an explanatory map that would inform, predict, and provide standardized procedures of what the world is about. In contrast, theories in a postmodern approach are not taken as maps of the world but as frames for seeing the world and constructing it" (p. 91).

Towards Social Construction

> *Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for the truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.*　　　　(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 110)

There is no single definition of social construction. Social constructionist thought represents the ideas of many thinkers in an array of fields (Gergen, 2015). However, there are several concepts that differentiate a social constructionist perspective from modernist ways of thinking. These concepts revolve around the acquisition of knowledge, how we view truth, and how we conduct research. Also of concern is how we view the self and how we view language. The perspective taken in this dissertation and in Artsbridge, is that of relational construction which, as Hosking notes, "centers dialogical practices as ways of relating that can enable and support multiple local forms of life rather than imposing one dominant rationality on others" (2011, p. 60). Within social psychology, the concept of person is radically different - seen not as one independent, bounded being, but as a dialogical being, constructed in language-based relational processes (Hosking, 2011; Sampson, 1993).

Knowledge and Truth

Social construction requires us to take a critical view of the discourses that are held and assumed to be true. As Burr (2015) puts it:

> Social constructionism insists that we take a critical stance toward our taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves. It invites us to be critical of the idea that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its nature to us, to challenge the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observation of the world. (p. 2)

This viewpoint invites us to understand that aspects of the world typically taken for granted are socially constructed, opening up space for alternative intelligibilities (Camargo-Borges, 2013). As Gergen (2015) explains, knowledge creation is a relational-dialogic, social process. Through this process, people in conversation with others generate new possibilities for understanding and meaning-making. Since knowledge is formed through a dialogic process, language is viewed as an interactive social process that, according to Bakhtin, is inherently transformative.

Within the social constructionist framework, knowledge is not seen as a direct perception of reality. Rather, it is constructed, within interaction, and is culturally and historically specific. Knowledge, then, is considered to be relational, rather than universal and static. As such, objective facts do not exist (Burr, 2015). Objectivity is a rhetorical achievement, constructed from within a specific, value-saturated worldview – and there are many worldviews.

Language

"*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world*"

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922)

To the constructionist, language does not represent reality or confer a truth. Rather, we create meaning in our languaging with others. For Ludwig Wittgenstein, language is not just a tool for transmitting information; when we coordinate with others, we are "in language" (in Camargo-Borges, 2013). Wittgenstein, believed that how we understand words depends on the social context in which they are used (in Burr, 2015). He used the term "language game" to describe this idea. In other words, how we use language in the game of soccer is quite different than how we would use it in a science lab. As McNamee (2015) explains, meaning is derived within coordinated social action. Put another way, meaning making occurs between people – in interaction with others. Language gains its meaning as people coordinate with each other and with the world around them.

As Lock and Strong (2010) state, "Our principal point of reference for 'what things mean' is not private experience or a dictionary, but each other. Language is a human creation and acquires its meaning through shared use…" (p. 152). To illustrate this point, Wittgenstein shared his drawing of the duck-rabbit in his book, Philosophical Investigations, written in 1953 as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Wittgenstein's Duck-rabbit Drawing
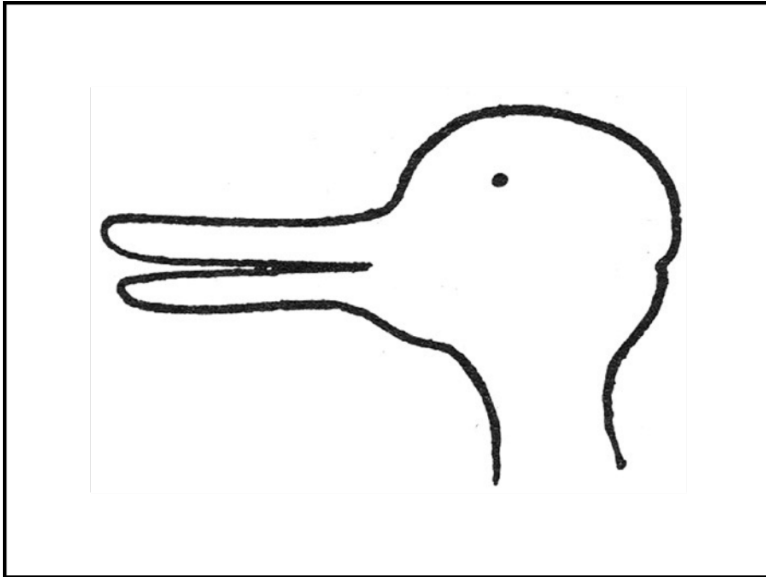
From Wittgenstein (in Lock & Strong, 2010)

For some, the duck is the first thing noticed, while for others, it is the rabbit. Gestalt psychologists often use diagrams such as this to explore the "psychologies of the individual involved" which they determine by how the image is interpreted. Wittgenstein took a very different approach, seeing the differences in interpretation as "evidence of participation in different forms of life." In other words, a person will notice a duck or a rabbit first depending on the experiences they have had in their lives, and how they have learned to share those experiences (Lock & Strong, 2010). How an image, such as the duck or rabbit, is used by traditional psychologists versus social constructionists is emblematic of the differences between modernism and social constructionism. A modernist will look for the answer inside the mind of the individual, whereas the social constructionist will examine how the individual is in relationship to others and what their lived experience has been. Wittgenstein's example of the duck/rabbit image may be simplistic in its presentation, however the impact of the concept of "different forms of life," or different world views is significant in relation to Israelis and Palestinians, who approach interactions with each other from vastly different perspectives, as will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

What's in a Word? The meaning we give to words, from a constructionist stance, is based on our previous experiences and on the people around and before us because, as Bakhtin (1984) says, all utterances are "double-voiced." Bakhtin termed this polyvocality - the idea that, because people have been in many different relationships over time and in different circumstances, we bring to any conversation a multiplicity of voices (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). The words themselves do not hold inherent meaning. Rather, words derive their meaning from the culture, group, or society that they inhabit. Consider how cultures have created their own meanings for words and actions.

A simple example of this concept can be seen in the difference between American English and British English. In British culture, having tea means to have the evening meal. In the US, it means to drink a cup of tea. My husband is British, and I am American. When we met many years ago, we assumed that we understood each other since we both spoke the same language, English. However, we soon came to realize that, while we both spoke English, the meanings we had for many words were quite different, which created many challenging moments until we, from within our relationship, began to understand the differences. This is also true for symbols. What Americans understand when someone raises their two fingers in a V-shape is victory. When those same two fingers are raised in the UK, it has a very different meaning, which could lead to significant misunderstanding!

How we view a work of art or a particular photograph is also influenced by our prior lived experiences. While giving a lecture at Al Quds University in Palestine, I was speaking of the power of art to bring people together. A young college student stood up and asked me how images could possibly bring people together when they hold such different meanings for different people. He provided the example of the image of a soldier. He pointed out that, when an Israeli sees an image of a soldier, they see a hero and feel pride, but when a Palestinian sees an image of a soldier they feel hatred and see a terrorist. His point is well taken. However, as I replied to the student, one of the values of art is its ability to externalize these perspectives, thereby allowing those engaged in conversation to perceive the varied understandings and interpretations of the image.

More than Just Words. For most, language is commonly thought of as limited to words. However, Merleau-Ponty (1962) considers language to be any means by which people communicate, including ways of communicating with our body, through art, movement, or gesture. Merleau-Ponty felt that Western philosophy has paid little attention to the body, focusing instead, on more cerebral activities. Lock and Strong (2010) explain that, to Merleau-Ponty, the body is "the bedrock of consciousness, from which the separation of the mind and the body has been

created as a conceptual abstraction" (p. 48). I would add that the act of creating art may also be considered language. When an artist paints a picture, she is, in a sense, having a conversation with the canvas, and is transformed as the painting emerges. The creation of a work of art, be it writing, music, visual arts or other creative endeavors, is a transformative process. One could say that there is a conversation that takes place between the artist and the work of art, and through that conversation, new meaning emerges. When the artwork is observed by others, they view the art from their unique perspective, which is a byproduct of their previous lived experience, including history, culture, and previous interactions. This, then, creates new meaning for the viewer as to what the artwork portrays, which may be vastly different from the artist's own understanding. In a sense, the beauty of art is in its ability to generate new ideas and new possibilities for meaning or understanding to emerge.

Co-constructing Our "Self"

> *"The way in which I create myself is by means of a quest. I go out into the world in order to come back with a self."*
> Mikhael Bakhtin (1963)

Western Society has led us to view our "selves" as individual, self-contained entities. As Descartes claimed, "I think, therefore I am." We are considered to have our "own minds" with the ability to think independently. The modernist paradigm encourages the exploration of a person's "true" identity, "true" personality, and our "true" essence. Psychological sciences have taken on the task of exploring what is contained inside the mind – what determines our behavior, makes us think a certain way, and controls our emotions – thereby, attempting to determine what our individual qualities are and how much is innate versus how much is learned – nature vs. nurture. The focus on the individual as a self-contained being can be problematic. For example, if thought and behavior are located inside the mind of the individual, then problems that arise such as depression, aggression, etc., are seen as a pathology that must be cured. From this perspective, the power to heal lies with the therapist, who must probe inside the mind of the patient to discover the cause of the problem. As McNamee argues, the goal in traditional psychotherapy is seen as the correction of deficiencies that lie within the person (2009). Michel Foucault (1973) suggests that, in categorizing and defining the problems that clients bring to psychotherapy, a power dynamic is set up between the psychotherapeutic system and the client. This system, Foucault argues, rather than

empowering those who seek help, has the paradoxical effect of disempowering the very people they are meant to serve (1973). Because of dependency on the psychotherapist, managed care systems, as well as the pharmaceutical industry to "cure" their problem, the client no longer has agency to find ways of moving forward without dependence on those systems (McNamee, 2009).

Constructionism suggests other possibilities. According to Edward Sampson (1993), humans are dialogic, conversational beings. Therefore, we cannot be understood by "probing taking place deep within each individual" (p. 98). A constructionist approach, and one used by narrative therapists (Monk, 1997), is that the problem does not lie within the individual. Rather, it lies within the relationship of the person's story, or narrative, to the dominant discourse. From this constructionist perspective, the power to heal lies within the relationship between the client and the therapist, as they explore more constructive ways for the client to move forward in relation to society.

Burr (2015) suggests that we consider the term Identity, rather than personality to describe a person's being. Personality connotes something intrinsic within the individual. However, according to Burr, "identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, and which we draw upon in our communications with other people. A person's identity is achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads" (p. 123). There is the thread of age, occupation, income, education, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Additionally, when one identifies something, it implies a relationship between the thing being identified (or person) and the one doing the identifying, thereby emphasizing the relational quality of identities. Keeney (1982) notes the following:

> . . . any description says as much or more about the observer as it says about the subject of description. An obvious example is a critic labeling a particular film as 'absurd.' Such a description often reveals more about the critic than the film. Descriptions of clients who are institutionalized, have electrical voltage charged through their brains, or have drugs pumped into their veins give us information about their therapists. (pp. 80-81)

In other words, my observations about another say more about me in relation to the other than anything about the other per se.

From a constructionist perspective, "all that is central to human nature and human life… is to be found in processes that occur between people" (Sampson, 2008, p. 98). Sampson goes on to say that, "We gain self through a process of social interaction, dialogue and conversation with others in our social world"

(p.106). As such, as long as we are in relation with others, we are constantly evolving.

A Relational Constructionist Epistemology

Social constructionist epistemology has played a significant role in both Artsbridge as well as in this study. It can be argued that Artsbridge students are learning and experiencing new ways of being in the world that are often a dramatic shift from what they have grown up with. These new ways of being are influenced by the framework of social constructionist thought. So, it has been my intention that this study be conducted through that same perspective.

A constructionist orientation to research transforms both the goals of research as well the practice of research (Burr, 2015). I would like to point out here that social construction is not a method per se, rather it is a philosophical stance that guides how we look at and understand research, as well as the data generated by that research (McNamee, 2014).

Traditional, empirical research is seen as using an exacting, unbiased methodology to discover a "truth that exists" and is waiting to be discovered (Burr, 2015; Gergen, 2015; McNamee, 2010; McNamee & Hosking, 2012). It suggests that the researcher must remain objective and ensure that bias is eliminated. Essentialist research also sets up the dichotomy between researcher and subject, thereby positioning power with the researcher who is considered "expert." As Burr suggests, the researcher is seen as the "holder of knowledge, the one who tests theories and interprets conditions" (p. 174). The subject or subjects[5] of the research are considered to be "passively responding to the experimental conditions, without their voice being present in the final research" (p. 174). This stands in contrast to the constructionist view of research which maintains that the inquiry itself brings "a world or reality into being" (McNamee, 2010, p. 14). A constructionist approach to research does not have as its "goal" the discovery of a universal truth. Whatever conclusion we draw from our research is a by-product of our relationship with the research participants, as well as the research community within which we operate (McNamee, 2010). In addition, research is not seen as a static process, rather, it is seen as transformative, not just for the participants, but for the researcher as well (McNamee, 2010). In other words, research attempts to

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[5] Participants in a more traditional type of study would be considered as subjects. In this study, I use the term participants, as this connotes a less hierarchical stance that does not place the researcher in the position of expert.

generate new possibilities for understanding. New meaning emerges from the joint activities of all of the participants. The process of Artsbridge, as well as the understanding of its impacts, evolved throughout the process, while also allowing my ways of thinking and being to evolve along with it. It was a relational, dialogical process, not just for the participants of the program, but for the staff, and myself as well.

It is important to note that, while social construction does not deny the utility of traditional scientific inquiry, it does suggest that it is only one option, and that there are other legitimate forms of inquiry that are considered viable. No one orientation is considered "truer" than another. As McNamee states, "the question of utility replaces the question of validity. We are invited to reflect on how generative any form of inquiry will be for those involved and thereby encouraged to understand any 'conclusion' as a partial and temporary conclusion that is tied to situated activities" (p. 18).

Many consider that a constructionist approach means that, necessarily, qualitative methods are utilized. However, as Gergen (1999, 2001) points out, empirical methods such as quantitative analysis are not necessarily incompatible with social construction. What is problematic is the concept of a universalist truth that quantitative methods often claim (Burr, 2015). A constructionist sensibility does not see research as a way to provide an accurate picture of a particular phenomenon. Rather, research to the constructionist, creates new possibilities for the future and for how we view the world (McNamee, 1988). In order to further locate the focus of this study, I will use the term relational constructionist inquiry as described by McNamee (2014). By using this terminology, emphasis is placed on the examination of interactive processes rather than on a particular entity or entities. As McNamee states, "the focus on relational processes that *construct* our worlds is understood as something very different from the focus on *discovering* how the world is" (2014, pp. 74-75). A relational constructionist framework is a creative, imaginative approach that can be seen as generative, as well as a resource for social change that provides us with the potential to enrich research (Camargo-Borges, 2017). Table 1 compares aspects of traditional quantitative, traditional qualitative, and relational constructionist research.

Table 1

Comparison of Traditional Quantitative, Traditional Qualitative and Relational
Constructionist Research

Scientific Method *Traditional Quantitative Diagnostic Evidence Based Practice*	Let's Understand *Traditional Qualitative Interpretative*	Let's Change It Together *Relational Constructionist*
Prove	Understand	Change
Observe	Describe/Interpret	Co-Create
Researcher/Subject	Research/Participants	Co-Researchers
True or False	Situated Meanings	Generate New Meaning
Discoverable Truth and Cause/Effect Mechanisms	Contextualized Knowledge and Multiple Realities	Generate New Realities
Statistically Valid	Authentic to Participants	Locally Useful/Generative
Generalizable & Repeatable	Possibly Transferable	Local and Historical, Co-Evolving
Discover Truth	Expand Insight	Generating Possibilities

Note. From McNamee, S. (2014). Research as Relational Practice. In A. Simon G. & Chard
(Ed.), Systemic Inquiry: Innovations in Reflexive Practice Research (p. 77). Farnhill, UK:
Everything is Connected Press.

Common Critiques of Social Construction

Social construction is not without its critics. An often-heard critique of social
construction is that it takes on an "anything goes" frame of reference. Or, as
McNamee refers to it, "rampant relativism" (2017). The argument states that the
relativism that social construction presents paves the way for nihilism, and to a
moral relativism where anything is justified (Ramaoli, 2021). However, social
constructionism does not suggest that anything goes, or that there is equal value to
anything and everything (2021). Social constructionism espouses not that there is
no truth, but that there are multiple truths that need to be considered in the context
of relationship. In other words, meaning, or reality, is created in relationship with
others, in what people do together. This does not suggest that anything that we
want can be made up about the world (McNamee, 2017). Social constructionists
see the construction of reality as a social process. Within the situated tradition in

which we live, established ways of being are created. Through these established patterns, values and beliefs are created.

It is important to note that social construction does not purport itself to be a "truth", nor does it deny the validity of other existing intelligibilities. (Gergen, 2015). Social construction does not suggest that all moral values are equal. Rather, a social constructionist framework opens space for a multiplicity of viewpoints that challenge the dominant discourse, such as feminism, race theory, etc. As Gergen suggests, "All traditions of value – religious and spiritual, political, social – are invited to speak" (p. 226). What sets social construction apart from other value positions is that those that engage with constructionist ways of being do not claim a superior stance in relation to others (2015).

With respect to research, social construction does not deny the existence of or devalue scientific knowledge, as some have suggested (Mackay, 2003). As Gergen (2015) notes, each tradition of knowledge (e.g., scientific, religious, etc.) has its own way of constructing the world. Social construction takes a stance of "both/and". In other words, it implores us to explore both the positive and negative consequences that each rationality has for us.

Social construction challenges the modernist notion that reality and truth are universal, and that if we use the right tools, reality is there to be discovered. Rather, social construction acknowledges that there are multiple realities. Each reality is a byproduct of our interactions with others and their environments, and is influenced by history, culture and community.

In Summary

This chapter provided an overview of social constructionist thought, with a focus on concepts relevant to this dissertation, including how knowledge and truth are viewed, how we understand language, and how the "self" is understood. Also included in this chapter was a review of relational constructionist epistemology. In the following chapter I provide an overview of intractable conflict and its impact on those living in its midst.

Chapter Three: An Overview of Intractable Conflict

Artsbridge was founded on the premise that, through the lens of social construction, the use of art, art therapy and Transformative Reflecting Dialogue would provide benefits to Israeli and Palestinian teens living in the midst of destructive conflict. While originally designed as a conflict transformation program for Israeli and Palestinian teens, it has evolved over the course of its existence. In this section, literature relevant to the issues that Artsbridge was designed to address will be reviewed, as well as literature that speaks to how the program has evolved.

A vast amount has been written on conflict and a complete review is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. Hence, I will focus on literature that is most relevant, including the literature on intractable conflict, with a focus on how such conflicts are socially constructed. I will also present a review of the literature on the relationship of narratives and identity to Intractable conflict.

What is Intractable Conflict

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of the more widely publicized and vivid demonstrations of protracted and complex social conflict in the world today. Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) label it as an intractable, ethnonational conflict, similar to those in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and the Balkans. What sets these conflicts apart from others is not only their destructiveness, but also their resistance to more traditional methods of resolution (Bar-Tal, 2007; Coleman, 2014; Kriesberg, 1993; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998), such as problem-solving, mediation, or negotiation. As Bar-Tal (2007) notes, intractable conflicts are, by their very nature, severe and lengthy with neither side willing to engage constructively or move towards a peaceful settlement. They tend to erupt when goals, intentions and/or actions are perceived as mutually incompatible (Bar -Tal, Kruglanski & Klar, 1989; Mitchell, 1981; Rubin, Pruitt & Kim, 1994). While the term "intractable" has become the more commonly used term for these types of conflicts, other labels have also been used. Some scholars use the term "seemingly intractable" to highlight the idea that those involved in the conflict perceive it to be irreconcilable (Coleman, 2000). Specifically, Pearce and Littlejohn (2013) describe what they call

moral conflict as what happens "when people deeply enmeshed in incommensurate social worlds come to clash" (p. 50). These social worlds that Pearce & Littlejohn describe are viewed as moral orders. Groups that have different moral orders differ in how they view being, knowledge, and values. A moral order can be considered the lens through which a group comes to understand its experience and determines what is right and wrong. Bernstein (1985) suggests that these types of conflicts are the result of incommensurate worldviews that are mutually exclusive.

Whatever they are called, these types of conflicts share certain characteristics that are central to defining a conflict as intractable (Bar-Tal 2007; Bar-Tal, 2013; Kriesberg, 1993, 1998): First, intractable conflicts are protracted in nature and can continue for generations. As is often the case, at least one generation knows of no other reality than living in the midst of conflict. Second, intractable conflicts involve a great deal of violence, either through wars and/or terrorist attacks. The frequency and intensity of the violence is not necessarily constant, rather it fluctuates over a long period of time (Bar-Tal, 2007; Coleman, 2006; Kriesberg, 1993, 1998). A third characteristic of these types of conflict is that all parties involved perceive the conflict to be irresolvable. As Kelman (1999, 1987) explains, with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both parties believe that the others' status as a nation represents an existential threat to their own status as a nation, not only regarding land, but also with regard to national identity and each party's very existence, thus creating a zero-sum game. As Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) note, those perceptions create a situation where neither side can see a possibility for resolution. There is no willingness to seek mutually acceptable solutions - only one side can win (Bar-Tal, 2010; Kelman, 1999).

The Impact of intractable conflict is tragic, both on the individual as well as on society. On a societal level, the economic costs are significant, infrastructure is destroyed, and often families and communities are divided. On a personal level, the impact is profound: from trauma to loss of hope to increased levels of anxiety and loss of life (Coleman, 2003; Kriesberg, 1999; Lederach, 1997).

The Unique Features of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict

In addition to the aforementioned characteristics, there are other elements unique to this conflict that increase the resistance to any sort of reconciliation (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). First, both Israelis and Palestinians see themselves as the rightful owners of the land, often to the exclusion of the other. Second, each side sees themselves as the victim, with a long history of persecution. The most

salient examples for each side are the Holocaust for the Jewish people and the Nakhba for the Palestinians, with each side ignoring the history of suffering of the other. Third, the populations of both Israelis and Palestinians are intermingled, with some Israelis[6] having settled in the West Bank (Palestine) and approximately 20% of the population of Israel being Palestinian. These numbers do not include the large populations of Israelis and Palestinians living in the diaspora. Further complicating the matter, Israel considers any person of Jewish descent to be an automatic citizen of Israel according to the "Law of Return."[7] However, since 1948, no Palestinian is allowed to return to the land from which they fled or were expelled. Another complicating factor is the perceived power asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians. While Israel is considered the more powerful society in relation to the Palestinians, Israel sees itself not just in relation to the Palestinian community, but rather to the Arab world at large, thereby defining itself as the less powerful, thereby justifying the need for one of the most powerful armies in the world.[8]

While intractable conflicts and specifically the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, certainly involve significant tangible issues, such as land, resources, autonomy, and security, those are not the only factors that lead to intractability. Rather, as the conflict escalates, it shifts away from tangible issues to ideas that take on greater emotional and symbolic meaning. Many of the essential features of intractable conflict relate more to the perception of the conflict, rather than the original, more tangible issues, such as resources or land, that may have initiated the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2010). Those perceptions of the root causes and central issues of the conflict inform the justification for whatever strategies might be used by the conflicting sides, and the beliefs of those who live in the midst of the conflict (Kriesberg, 1993).

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[6] As of 2021, the total population of the West Bank was 3,648,000, of which 305,000 were Jewish (https://www.britannica.com/facts/West-Bank)

[7] The Law of Return was enacted into law in Israel in 1950, and states that every Jew has the right to come to Israel as a new immigrant and to become a citizen of Israel by virtue of their being Jewish (Retrieved from: https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/return.html).

[8] As of 2021, the Israeli military is ranked 20th out of 140 countries in the world according to Global Fire Power (https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php).

Frameworks for Understanding and Addressing Intractable Conflict

How, then, do we come to understand the development of the emotional and symbolic meanings, as well as the perceptions, that lead to intractability? Coleman (2004) suggests that there are several ways to frame intractable conflict in order to try to make sense of it. Specifically, he names five major paradigms, into which most approaches fall. Of those five paradigms, two are relevant to this research. The first paradigm relevant to this dissertation is the "Systems Theory" paradigm, which revolves around nested levels, nonlinearity, and complexity (2004). The second paradigm is what Coleman calls the Postmodernist paradigm (and which I will call social construction), which focuses on communication, knowledge construction, and consciousness.

The Systems Paradigm

Intractable conflict through the lens of systems theory is seen as a complex organism which is made up of interdependent, interactive elements which are nested within environments that are increasingly complex (Coleman, 2004; Syna Desivilya, 2004). These interactive elements represent individual, group, and social environment levels (Desivilya Syna, 2020). A systems model suggests that intractable conflict may be seen as a result of multiple, discursively interactive elements. Intractable conflicts do not begin as such. Rather, a complex, multimodal process is involved in the escalation of conflict from tractable to intractable.

The escalation of conflict occurs through negative transformations at each of the levels mentioned above (Coleman, 2000; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Kriesberg, 1998; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). One model that elucidates this multimodal process is the MACBE model shown in Figure 2, which names five interconnected elements that are negatively impacted. They are Motivation, Affect, Cognition, Behavior, and Social Environment (Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). Each of the elements influence the other recursively. Motivation (M), relates to the adoption of increasingly tough, competitive positions, which stem from a zero-sum game view, thereby changing the motivation from beating to destroying the opponent. Affect (A) refers to increasingly negative feelings. Emotions escalate from anger to overall antagonism, and towards a hatred that is fueled by the desire for retaliation. The cognition (C) element refers to the harboring of negative perceptions of the other, including a high level of mistrust. The conflicting parties increasingly rely on stereotypes, and the selective perception of the adversary. Negative information about one's own side is discounted or attributed to external factors, while favorable evidence about one's own side is enhanced. The (B) component relates to the

negative behaviors which exist in these types of conflicts, which include actions which are progressively antagonistic, escalating from verbal to physical violence. The (E), or environment, refers to the increasing polarization between the rival camps, (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). Scholars suggest that intractable conflicts are impacted by all five elements in the MACBE model. Therefore, in order to constructively impact intractable conflict, programs must necessarily seek constructive impact in most, if not all of the five areas – motivation, cognition, affect, behavior, and social environment. As will be discussed later in this dissertation, Artsbridge utilizes a multi-modal approach to working with participants that address all five of the aforementioned areas noted in the MACBE model.

Figure 2
MACBE Model of Conflict Escalation Dynamics
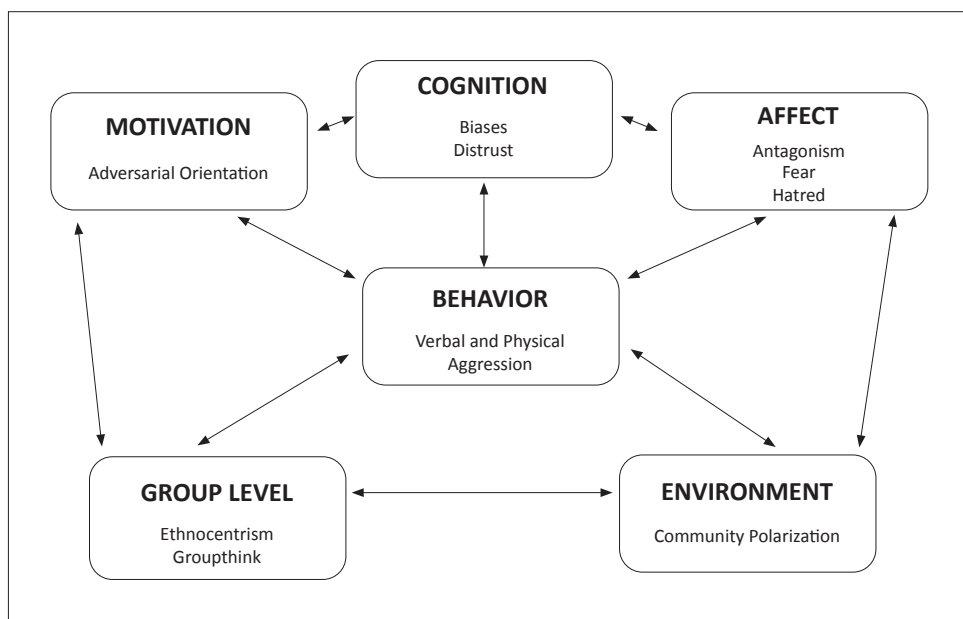
Note. Adapted from Syna Desivilya, H. (2004). Promoting Coexistence by Means of Conflict Education: The MACBE Model. Journal of Social Issues, 60(2), 339-355. doi:10.1111/j.0022-4537.2004.00115.x

The dynamics of the escalation of a conflict towards intractability are grounded in and feed on fear and defensiveness (Fisher, 2016). Threats meet counterthreats, as the costs to each side increase and the notion that the other side cannot be trusted and is to be feared becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The original MACBE

model developed by Pruitt and Olczak (1995) focused on interpersonal conflicts. However, they suggested that it had relevance for intergroup conflicts as well (Desivilya Syna, 2020).

The Postmodern Paradigm

Intractable conflict, as seen through the lens of postmodernism, is, as Coleman (2004) suggests, "rooted in the ways we make sense of the world" (p. 217), with its focus being how we communicate with others and how we construct knowledge. Conflict arises from subjective definitions of a given situation. Intractable conflicts, rather than revolving around competition over resources or struggles over power are, instead, created through a process of meaning-making through social interaction (Coleman, 2004; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). Coleman suggests that the Post-modern paradigm maintains the worldview that a form of power is derived from controlling meaning-making. In other words, different groups develop a set of assumptions about what is "right" and "true" that are taken for granted ways of seeing the world. The disparate assumptions that conflicting groups hold are what develops and maintains conflict (2004).

While I assert that the epistemological framework of social construction does place a focus on communication, knowledge construction and consciousness as Coleman asserts, there are subtle differences between Coleman's description of how intractable conflict is framed in the postmodern paradigm, and how it will be framed and related to in this dissertation. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be viewing intractable conflict through the lens of relational construction. Relational constructionism is unique to other ways of understanding social construction in several ways. One way, as Hosking (2011) notes is that relational construction does, unlike other types of social construction, speak about ontology and power. Additionally, the focus is on processes. In other words, it focuses on the how, rather than on the what. Relational construction also sees the concept of "person", or the "self", not as an individual, bounded existence, but as a dialogical, relational being (Hosking, 2011; Hosking & Morley, 1991; Sampson, 1993). In Coleman's perspective, in which he cites Burbules and Rice (1991), change can be achieved "by dragging these assumptions into the light of day through critical reflection, dialogue and direct confrontation (2004, p. 218). In contrast to this concept and with a focus on the relationship between incommensurate world views and not on individual perceptions that lie within the individual, understanding and the movement towards greater understanding must be accomplished in a way that allows for the natural development of understanding through constructive

communication. As Hosking notes, "it centres (sic) dialogical practices as ways of relating that can enable and support multiple local forms of life rather than imposing one dominant rationality on others" (2011, p. 47). I will argue that an understanding of the complexity of the conflict as well as an appreciation of the multiple narratives that exist, is achieved through the careful development of a relational process that respects and carefully deconstructs the dominant narratives that are brought to the table, without privileging any particular worldview, allowing constituents to reach their own understanding in the hopes of creating a new narrative that allows them to move forward constructively. One aspect of this is to allow for a process that highlights the role that narratives play in sustaining intractable conflict. The Artsbridge process, as will be discussed later in this dissertation, creates a space that allows for this process to occur through a multimodal approach that targets multiple elements believed to be impacted by intractable conflict. This approach differs from Coleman's approach, as well as from Syna Desivilya's, in that it avoids confrontation. Understanding of the complexities of narratives occurs through relational discourse, as opposed to confrontation.

The Role of Narratives

Within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, narratives play an important role in maintaining the conflict by providing an explanation of the origins of the conflict, as well as legitimization for any past, present and future actions taken by each side in the name of safety and security (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012). A narrative can be defined as a story about an event or events occurring over time that has a plot with a clear start and endpoint and provides sequential and causal coherence (Bruner, 1990, 1991).

Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) maintain that each social group creates its own understanding of what is real and what is good. In their words, "Reality is social, and the moral order within which it is constructed is a product of historical process in which stories are told and retold and a moral tradition is established" (1997, p. 52). Wittgenstein (1972) defines moral orders as belief systems of subjective certainty. They are composed of elements that are considered to be beyond doubt. These realities, narratives, or meta-narratives help us gain a sense of "who we are, what is real, and what is right" (Gergen, McNamee, & Barrett, 2001, p 697). According to McNamee (2008), moral orders are "ways of being in the world that are taken for granted as necessary for maintaining 'goodness'. They emerge out of the unwritten social conventions which serve to maintain social order" (p. 3). Examples of what might constitute a social group are family, particular sciences,

religion, ethnicity, race, and nationality which all offer a sense of belonging and connection.

What happens when one group comes in contact with a community with divergent values or moral orders? There is a tendency for those who hold fast and singularly to their particular world order to be closed to reflecting on the needs and interests of those around them. This, in turn, has the potential in extreme cases, to lead to overt hostility and, perhaps, violent conflict (Gergen & McNamee, 2000). Derrida relates the risk in not seeing beyond one's own narrative as creating binaries (in Gergen, 2015). Binaries are created when a particular discourse is seen as the true and good discourse, suggesting that anything or anyone that lies outside of that discourse is not true, and is "bad." In Derrida's view, many binaries exist within Western culture and whenever binaries exist, there is the risk that the dominant group will lay claim to the privileged side of the binary, leaving the "other" to be its "opposite" – thereby opening the possibility for the oppression of the "other."

Consider for a moment, the untold suffering and death caused in the name of religion, as one religious group determines that their belief system is the only "righteous" and "good' faith and others are, at best, misguided and, at worst, evil. One need not look further than what is happening in the United States today. Political views are becoming more polarized than ever, with neither side willing to listen to the perspective of others. No longer are news stations seen as apolitical (one could question whether they ever were). Each "side" has their own preferred news stations and most refuse to listen to other news outlets. The attack on the United States capital on January 6th, 2021 in an attempt to stop the certification of an election is indicative of what can happen when perspectives are reduced to binaries. This idea is particularly relevant to this dissertation. When working with Israeli and Palestinian teens, each brings a narrative that has been pre-established – over time – within their community. These disparate narratives are mutually exclusive, with each side seeing the other as the evil oppressor and their own side as righteous and victimized. One might also look to the narratives held in Israel and Palestine regarding violence and bloodshed. The Israeli narrative views their army as "the most moral army in the world," recognizing violence as necessary for self-defense, while they view Palestinian violence as terrorism. The Palestinian narrative defines the Israeli army as the oppressors and terrorists, while they consider Palestinian perpetrators of violence to be freedom fighters.

Michel Foucault (1979) focuses on the potential consequences of narratives or discourses. He was concerned with how people "willingly subjugate themselves to subtle forms of power" (Gergen, 2015, p 52). Foucault considered that knowledge –

which he defined as the particular common-sense view of the world prevailing in a culture at any one time – is intimately bound up with power (Burr, 2015).

The Narrative of Conflict

While most conflicts may begin with disagreement over tangible issues, the escalation to intractable conflict and its continuation correlates to the development of conflict narratives. Bar-Tal (2018), refers to these collective narratives as providing "a sequential, systematic, and causal story relevant to the collective agenda, which becomes embedded into their societal belief system, and may also represent their collective identity" (p. 3). Laws, policies and practices are developed based on these narratives, which then reinforce those very ways of constructing that moral order. Society is heavily involved in reinforcing and perpetuating the respective narratives through education, parenting, the media, and politics (Coleman, 2004). These stories evolve to become the dominant narrative of each society, maintained and reinforced by those in positions of power. Alternative narratives tend to be marginalized and/or disregarded entirely (Bar-Tal, 2018; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Tint, 2010; Wertsch, 2002).

In many ways, intractable conflicts can be seen as a war of conflicting narratives between the respective societies. Conflict narratives provide, according to Bar-Tal (2018), the justification, explanation, and rationalization for the outbreak of the conflict, and feed their continuation. Within these narratives lies the foundation of shared beliefs, emotions, and capacities that fuel the continuation of conflict (Tint, 2010). Communities derive their sense of identity, history, perceptions of itself and their role in the conflict as well as how it views its enemy from their collective narrative (Polkinghorn, 1988). As Tajfel and Turner (1986) note, collective narratives provide the group a sense of shared identity. Collective narratives play an important role in supporting violent conflict. First, they justify the goals of the conflict by presenting them as indispensable for the survival of that society (Bar-Tal, 2018). This may include values that the society deems sacred, perhaps based on religious and/or historical beliefs. They also define the conflict in terms of social identity, which means that members of that society view their deprivation as impinging on the essence of their being as a nation (Rothman, 1997). As Rothman notes, conflicts that are defined in terms of social identity are "deeply rooted in the underlying human needs and values that together constitute people's social identities" (p 6). It should be noted that it is imperative that such conflict narratives see the goals and values of the other society as antithetical to the survival of their own society (Kriesberg, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Salomon (2004), notes that collective narratives of groups in conflict play a central role in how each society sees the conflict. Narratives are constructed in a way that suits the goals of a particular society. Therefore, information, interpretations, etc. are processed through the narrative. In addition, conflict narratives tend to simplify. Information is presented in an uncomplicated, generalized manner, with stories that are black and white in nature and where the rival is seen as all negative and evil, while their own society is seen as moral, thereby justifying violent actions.

Collective narratives of conflict mobilize members of society to work towards the achievement of goals that are deemed to be existential. This includes the justification of the use of violence. Additionally, the meaning-making that is provided by collective narratives serves to protect the members of that society from the devastating consequences of the conflict, or collective trauma, while also assisting in the process of healing (Salomon, 2004). While conflict narratives contain elements that shield members of society from the consequences of conflict, paradoxically, they are also responsible for maintaining, and often, exacerbating the conflict, leading to its intractability (Bar-Tal, 2011).

Elements of the Conflict Narrative

In order to mitigate the harsh impact of intractable conflicts societies develop mechanisms that help members of the society cope with the stress, constant threat and anxiety that exist and enable them to live in the midst of constant stress and prolonged trauma. Because of their protective capacity, their deeply entrenched nature, and their strong connection to the social identity of members of that society, the very mechanisms that people and societies utilize to protect themselves from the tragic impact of protracted conflict are some of the very elements that make it more difficult to engage constructively with the other. The byproduct of this is an inability to consider alternative possibilities to destructive violence or to see the other as anything but an enemy who seeks nothing but to destroy the other (Coleman, 2003; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Because of the paradoxical nature of the conflict narrative, I argue that it is important when working within societies embroiled in these types of conflicts, to work carefully to assist in bringing into light the complexity and contradictory elements of these entrenched narratives while simultaneously working to help members of society feel safe enough to question the very discourses that they have held to be "true" and "right."

Collective Memory

History and memory play an important role in conflict situations, and are important elements in the collective narratives of societies in conflict. Not only does history provide the foundation for a society's collective narrative, it also provides the lens through which the narrative develops.

Because Intractable conflicts often span many generations, it is important to consider how each society transmits its history and memory from one generation to the next (Tint, 2010). Just as intractable conflict can be defined in relational, constructionist terms, so too can memory. As collective memories are passed down through generations, so, too are the "values, emotions, and beliefs associated with them…" (Tint, 2010, p. 243). In a sense, social constructionist thought suggests that the present informs the past in that the current needs, beliefs and goals of individuals and societies determine how and what is remembered (Gergen, 1985; Shotter, 1990; Tint, 2010).

History and memory, rather than being singularly factual, are relationally constructed. Frederick Bartlett and Maurice Halbwalchs (in Gergen, 2009), introduced the idea of collective memory, suggesting that memory is a social process. To Bartlett, memory serves not as a recording of data, but rather as an attempt to create meaning (2009). Barbara Tint (2010) argues that memory is not a passive process that takes place within an individual—it is a relational, contextual process. Bartlett, as cited in Shotter (1987), suggests that "social organization gives a persistent framework into which all detailed recall must fit, and it very powerfully influences both the manner and matter of recall" (p. 14). In other words, from a social constructionist perspective, a society's narrative provides the filter, or framework, through which historical events must fit. The narrative determines what we remember and how we remember it. An example of this is seen in the parallel narratives of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict as detailed in Appendix A, where each party to the conflict sees the same events from very different perspectives.

Memory is often selectively influenced by current beliefs and goals. Collective memory is a narrative that "focuses on how a society remembers its past" (Bar-Tal, 2006, p. 23). The narratives of collective memory develop over time. Certain elements of history are omitted, and others events are interpreted in a way that meets the current needs of the society (Bar-Tal, 2007; Shotter, 1990). In the midst of intractable conflict, collective memory serves several functions. First, it justifies the conflict as well as its development. As Paez and Liu (2011) note, the collective memory of past conflicts motivates the members of a society to act collectively, and justifies any actions of that society towards the enemy. Another theme found in the

collective memory of conflict is that it presents its own society in a positive light, while simultaneously delegitimizing its opposition (Bar-Tal, 2011; Baumeister & Gastings, 1997; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007).

According to Bar-Tal (2007), it is through the sharing of societal beliefs through collective memory that societies involved in intractable conflict develop the capacity to meet the challenges of protracted conflict by focusing on several themes in terms of the perception of the conflict. First, collective memory provides justification for the outbreak of the conflict, presents a positive image of their own society while delegitimizing the other, and, finally, they present their own society as the victim of the opposing society (Bar-Tal, 2007). Societies exert great effort to commemorate particular events in history that support their narrative, which allows these selective memories of events in history to take on mythic proportions and enhance the power of the historic narratives, which then reinforce the political goals of that society (Pennebaker & Banasik, 1997; Tint, 2010).

The Trauma Narrative

Both Israeli and Palestinian societies share a legacy of trauma that features predominantly in their respective collective memories, and serves to influence their responses to their current conflict (Alexander, 2012; Eyerman, Alexander, Breese, 2011; Rinker & Lawler, 2014). Traditionally, trauma has been studied through the lens of the psychology of the individual. However, more recently, social psychologists have begun to study the connection between trauma and protracted conflict (Rinker & Lawler, 2018; Volkan, 1998).

The Oxford Dictionary defines trauma as "a deeply distressing or disturbing experience, or an emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis" (https://www.lexico.com/definition/Trauma). The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) defines posttraumatic stress disorder as: A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: (1) Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s); (2) Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others; (3) Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental (DSM-5, 2013).

This dominant discourse on trauma tends to focus on a pathology that resides within the individual and seems to steer away from the concept of trauma as something that is relational or societal (Lannamann & McNamee, 2019). Jeffrey

Alexander (2012) refers to the traditionally accepted way of seeing trauma as Lay theory. Within lay theory "traumas are seen as naturally occurring events that shatter an individual or collective actor's sense of well-being. In other words, the power to shatter – 'the trauma'- is thought to emerge from events themselves. The reaction to such shattering events – 'being traumatized' – is felt and thought to be an immediate and unreflexive response" (2012, pp. 7-8).

There are several critiques to this way of thinking about trauma, which point out its potential to pathologize the individual, with the possibility of limiting how we see and relate to trauma (Lannamann & McNamee, 2019). Utilizing the lens of a medical model and the DSM to identify responses to trauma can be harmful in that, rather than serving to help those struggling with trauma, it actually constructs a disorder that can be dangerous. It also reinforces a worldview that separates people from their social worlds, leading to an oversimplification of a complex, multifaceted issue (Burstow, 2005; Lannamann & McNamee, 2019). This is not to suggest that a diagnosis of PTSD might not be useful in certain circumstances, but that it is important to look at it through a critical lens and to be aware of the potential to individualize and objectify those that it is attempting to help (Lannamann & McNamee, 2019).

In his critical response to lay theory, Alexander (2004) suggests that, while the language of trauma seems to have become intuitively understood, at least in Western cultures, it is important to think more reflexively about the concept and to shift from thinking about trauma as occurring within the individual to something that is constructed by society. He argues the following:

> ...events do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma. Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution. The attribution may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction. (p. 8)

Collective Trauma

Collective trauma can be seen as the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society. The tragedy that has occurred is represented in the collective memory of the group not as factual history, but, as Hirschberger notes, "an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it" (2018, p. 1). He argues that the "collective memory of traumatic events is a

dynamic social psychological process that is primarily dedicated to the construction of meaning" (p. 2).

The collective memory of trauma differs from individual memory in several ways. Firstly, it persists beyond the lives of the direct survivors and can be remembered by members of a group that might be far removed from the traumatic event, either by location or time. The collective memory of the traumatic event gets passed down through subsequent generations that have never witnessed the actual events. As the memory gets passed down, it may shift in meaning from generation to generation, and has the potential to create what Volkan (2007) calls a chosen trauma. A chosen trauma is a component of identity that plays a significant role in intractable conflict, and is defined as the "shared mental representation of a massive trauma that the group's ancestors suffered at the hand of an enemy" (2001, p. 79). The narrative of a chosen trauma has the potential to fuel conflict for generations. One reason for this is that the group's identity is strengthened through connection to and identification with the trauma. As the chosen trauma becomes woven into the identity of the group, it becomes harder to relinquish (Volkan, 2006). Within the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the concept of chosen trauma is particularly relevant. As noted earlier, the Holocaust remains the chosen trauma for Israelis. Chaitlin (2014) notes how politicians will often resort to using metaphors from the holocaust in order to reinforce the image of Israelis as victims, and thereby providing justification for maintaining the occupation of, and military presence in, Palestinian lands. The rallying cry of "never again" is a mantra that Israelis use to reinforce the idea that they will never again fall prey to others who wish to destroy them as in the Holocaust. The Naqhba remains the chosen trauma for the Palestinians, who see the Occupation and siege of Gaza as extensions of the expulsion of Arabs from their lands in 1948 (Bar-Tal, 2013; Chaitlin, 2014).

Collective Victimhood

When groups have experienced traumatic events in the past, they may develop a sense of victimhood that is maintained by the narratives of those events. Bar-Tal argues that "the sense of collective victimhood emerges as a major theme in the ethos of conflict of societies involved in intractable conflict and is a fundamental part of the collective memory thereof" (2009, p. 240). In the case of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, each side sees themselves as the victim and blames the other side for its victimization. Determining which side has more strength and/or

power seems irrelevant, as even those who have strong military or economic superiority may still see themselves as victims (Shaw, 2003 in Noor et al., 2008).

   Functions of victimhood status. Maintaining a group's sense of victimhood serves several important functions for a society and its members. Firstly, it provides a sense of meaning to members of society for the conflict, which helps mitigate the impact of stress, fear, and a sense of uncertainty. Secondly, it provides moral justification for any harmful acts perpetrated by their society, and decreases any sense of collective responsibility and/or guilt (Bar-Tal, 2009; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Thirdly, victimhood may provide a sense of unity and solidarity amongst members of the ingroup by highlighting the need for security and mobilizing members of the group to make critical sacrifices in countering the perceived threat to survival. Fourth, being the victim in a conflict has the tendency to command support from the international community, often allowing them to avoid blame for the outbreak of violence, and gain material and moral support (Noor et al., 2012).

   Implications of victimhood status. Maintaining a sense of collective victimhood has several important implications for the maintenance of intractable conflict. Studies have shown that when a society is reminded of a prior historical victimization, such as the holocaust for Jews or Pearl Harbor for Americans, collective guilt for harm done to a current adversary is minimized, and justification for the harm done to the current adversary is increased (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008).

   Another finding by Maoz and Eidelson (2007) noted that victim beliefs related to a sense of vulnerability impacted their willingness to support policies that called for annexing land from Palestinians and transferring the population to neighboring Arab countries. The more vulnerable the Israeli society members felt, the more they were likely to support more extreme policies (Maoz & Eidelson (2007). On the Palestinian side, evidence suggests that the deeper the sense of victimization the more motivation for suicide bombing missions and the greater the feeling of a lack of effective nonviolent alternatives, as well as greater feelings of oppression and humiliation (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Maoz & Eidelson, 2007; Noor et al., 2012; Volhardt, 2009).

   As victimhood status serves several important functions, it is possible to understand how groups involved in conflict might compete for the title of victim and be willing to expend resources to sustain it. When both sides of a conflict see themselves as victims, as is the case in intractable conflict, the competition for the status of victim can lead to competitive victimhood (Bar-Tal, 2009). Competitive victimhood can be defined as "a group's motivation and consequent efforts to establish that it has suffered more than its adversaries" (Noor & Shnabel, 2012, p.

351). Each side strives to convince members of its community, the adversary, and the international community that they, alone, are the true victims in the conflict (Noor, Brown et al., 2008). Nadler and Shnabel (2008, 2015), in examining the use of victim terminology amongst Israelis and Palestinians, argued that behind the competition for victimhood status lies a fight over moral social identity. Gad Yair (2014), in his work on Israeli existential anxiety and cultural trauma, provides illustrations of how Israeli leaders use past traumas to justify current actions against Israel's perceived enemies. Prime Minister Netanyahu, as he was speaking to an American Jewish political action committee in 2012, stated, "I will not allow Israelis to live under the shadow of annihilation." Later, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly he added, "Every year, for over three millennia, we have come together on this day of reflection and atonement. We take stock of our past. We pray for our future. We remember the sorrows of our persecution; we remember the great travails of our dispersion; we mourn the extermination of a third of our people, six million, in the Holocaust" (p. 346).

Despite the advantages that victimhood status has the potential to provide, the potential disadvantages and ramifications are significant, including the perpetuation of cycles of revenge.

Cycles of Revenge. One of the more tragic implications of collective victimhood is the cycle of violence that it perpetuates. Vollhardt (2009) notes how responses to victimization lead to spiraling cycles of revenge, leading to increasing levels of egregious acts. Bar Tal (2009) refers to how group members who have experienced severe persecution have the potential to become perpetrators themselves. There are several examples of inter-ethnic conflicts where victims of violence become victimizers themselves in order to teach the outgroup a lesson and/or act as a deterrent for future aggression. In another example, Lickel et al. (2006) discuss how a sense of victimhood can lead to vicarious retribution, which is the targeting of members of the perpetrator's group who were not directly involved in the aggressive acts, i.e., civilians and children.

Alternatives to the Negative Impacts of Collective Victimhood

While collective victimhood is most notably seen as having a negative impact on societies in conflict and a significant factor in intractable conflicts, it is possible, in some circumstances, that it can also lead to a path of "increased understanding, empathy, and even prosocial behavior toward outgroups experiencing ethnopolitical violence and other forms of suffering" (Vollhardt, 2009, p. 154). One of the challenges of collective victimhood is the exclusive nature of the victim

beliefs, with each side believing that they are the only victim. However, it is possible that recognizing similarities with other groups or even related groups' experiences of group-based violence, can lead to constructive outcomes (Vollhardt, 2009). Vollhardt and Staub (2009) were able to show that increased empathy can lead to increased prosocial behavior among people who have suffered from group-based violence. The Parents Circle-Families Forum (PCFF) is an example of an initiative that focuses on acknowledging the shared suffering of both Palestinians and Israelis. The PCFF is a group of bereaved Palestinian and Israeli families who have lost family members in the conflict. They work together through their shared grief, and are also active in their communities as well as internationally, working to promote peace through educational programs, lectures, media and advocacy (PCFF website, https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en).

The Role of Emotions in Intractable Conflict

As illustrated in the MACBE model, emotions play an important role in both the escalation and maintenance of intractable conflict (Coleman, 2004; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Tint, 2010). Bar-Tal (2010) suggests that emotions provide the third element of intractable conflict that works together with collective memory and the ethos of conflict to mitigate the negative impact of prolonged conflict on members of society. Pearce and Littlejohn (1997) suggest that emotional experiences serve as the core of the extreme reactions that occur in a conflict setting, while Coleman (2003) suggests that emotions can serve as both a cause and a consequence of intractable conflict. Lederach (1997) has suggested that emotions, as well as subjective perceptions, have the capacity to perpetuate cycles of violence and counter violence irrespective of the issues that led to the original conflict.

Intractable conflicts hold a high degree of emotional intensity which is pervasive throughout the society and its members (Coleman, 2000, 2003; Desivilya Syna, 2004, 2020; Tint, 2010). There is a significant link between emotions and how memory is constructed, with a person's current emotional state determining how a particular memory is constructed. As discussed previously, not only does social construction consider memory to be a relational process, so too, are the emotions that accompany those memories. Goldman and Coleman (2005) posit that "the ways in which emotions are socially constructed affects how emotions are experienced, acted upon, and recalled, and that these emotional experiences, actions and recollections directly influence the degree to which conflicts escalate and become stuck in cycles of violence" (p. 30).

Emotions have traditionally been considered to be universal, occurring biologically and physiologically within the individual (Gergen, 1991, 2011; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). While there are physiological experiences connected with emotions, how those emotions are labeled, understood and acted upon is socially constructed. In other words, the meaning of emotions as well as how they should be performed stem from a moral order, or narrative (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997). Averill (1982) sees emotions, not as having a biological basis, but as cultural performances that are learned and enacted as the occasion warrants. He goes on to state that emotions are not forces that are contained within an individual, rather they are performed, recruiting biology in order to carry out the emotion. However, biology does not necessarily require the actions themselves. Stearns (1995) uses anger as an example, and notes that the expression of anger depends on the social context. Individuals express anger differently if they are speaking with their supervisor than if they were speaking to their spouse. Therefore, Stearns sees the expression of anger to be determined by the social context rather than as an outpouring of feeling. Harré and Gillet (1994) note that emotions tend to be a display that expresses a judgment and accomplishes a social act. As an example, Harré and Gillett state:

> When one feels or displays envy, this is an expression of the judgment that someone has something that one would oneself like to have. In the case of malign envy, one judges oneself to have been demeaned or depreciated by the possession of that good by the other. To take another example, because a display of anger, irritation or annoyance expresses a judgment of the moral quality of some other person's action, such a display is also an act of protest, directed toward the offending person. (pp. 146-147)

In thinking about the social construction of emotions, I am reminded of an experience that many of us have likely shared. I remember watching young toddlers as they are learning to run. Inevitably, they will fall, and perhaps skin their knee or bump their head. If one has the opportunity to observe the child immediately after a fall, one notices that the first thing they often do is look at the nearby adult as if to determine how they should respond.

Emotions, while they may be felt by the individual, are still determined by the individual's connection to society. As we consider the concept of emotions and the idea that they are experienced both individually as well as collectively, it is possible to see how they may play a powerful role in, as Tint (2010) notes, "both creating and shifting group mood and consciousness" (p. 246).

The current literature discusses several emotions that influence intractable conflict (see Bar-Tal, 2007; Halperin, 2016; Halperin, Sharvit & Gross, 2011; Miller, Roloff, & Reznik, 2014). While some of these emotions are more easily defined, others are more complex. Below, I will discuss some emotions that are considered to have a significant impact on intractable conflict, as well as some of the more complex concepts that, while influenced by emotions, may not, necessarily, be called emotions themselves.

Fear and Hatred in Intractable Conflict

Fear and hatred are two emotions that play a role in conflicts. Both are considered to have a negative emotional orientation which impacts how a group responds to what they perceive as a threat to a person or society. When fear is considered in a collective context, the impact can be significant (Bar-Tal, Halperin & Rivera, 2007). Fear arises in situations where there is a perceived threat to an individual or society which then causes the individual to develop a protective response (Gray, 1987; Halperin, Nets-Zehngut, 2008). Volkan (1997) notes, if the collective memory of a society focuses on past traumas and negative experiences, members of that society tend to relate current events to those past negative experiences which then evokes fear. In this context, a collective fear orientation has the effect of limiting perspective, thereby creating expectations for the future based on the negative experiences of the past (Bar-Tal, 2001). By doing so, the ability of members of society to hope for peace is inhibited (Bar-Tal et al., 2012).

Fear has a negative impact on how society members process information in the context of intractable conflict (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014). It does so by sensitizing people to potential threats, causing them to overestimate dangers and threats (Bar-Tal, 2013), as opposed to more positive cues. Fear motivates protection from events that are perceived as threatening, which has the potential to lead to aggressive acts, despite there being no foreseeable benefit to the aggression.

Fear and hatred are just two of the emotions that are considered part of a cycle that leads to violent conflict. Lindner (2014) notes how leaders often use fear and hatred to mobilize members of society towards committing acts of violence against perceived enemies by instilling the fear that those perceived enemies intend to humiliate them.

Humiliation

Humiliation is understood to play a significant role in perpetuating intractable conflict. Social scientist Evelin Lindner (2009) defines humiliation as:

> … the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their pride, honor, or dignity. To be humiliated is to be placed, against your will (very occasionally with your consent as in cases of religious self-humiliation or in sadomasochism) and often in a deeply hurtful way, in a situation that is greatly inferior to what you feel you should expect (p.55).

Lindner also argues that being forced into passivity, acted on, and made helpless is one of the defining characteristics of humiliation. Vamik Volkan (2004) notes how humiliation is linked with chosen trauma. When the chosen trauma is experienced as humiliation, it may lead to a range of feelings from entitlement to revenge. Because humiliation is such a powerful emotion, it has the unique capacity to be used in the unleashing of mass violence. One notable example of this is offered by Lindner (2002, 2014), who suggests that after World War I Hitler was humiliated by Germany's defeat. Hitler led his followers towards bloody revenge, claiming that he could build a more powerful Germany that would be impervious to further humiliation at the hands of its enemies.

While humiliation certainly has significant potential to exacerbate and prolong violent conflict, it is not inevitable. In the case of South Africa, many expected violent retribution after apartheid. However, bloodshed did not materialize. Instead of seeking revenge, Nelson Mandela chose to sit down with his humiliators and work together with them towards a society in which all peoples, black and white, would be assured of equal rights and human dignity (Lindner, 2002). Mandela's actions provide us with an example of the constructive function of emotions that are designed to de-escalate, rather than escalate, actions that elicit a sense of hope.

Hope

Webster's dictionary defines hope as "desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope). In other words, by Webster's definition, there are two components to hope. The first is a desire for something and the second is the expectation that it will happen. While this definition seems straightforward enough, theorists have suggested a wide array of definitions of hope beyond Webster's. Snyder et al. (2002) define hope as a way of thinking, with feelings playing a contributory role. Webb (2013) suggests that "hope is best understood as a socially mediated human capacity with varying affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions" (p. 398). Through the lens of social construction, this suggests that the meaning and experience of hope can be understood differently depending on the social context. In contrast to optimism,

which is defined as "the inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/optimism), hope must contain the additional component of an active commitment to attaining the desired goal (Breznitz, 1986; Leshem, 2019). James Averill (2004) defines hope as "a story we tell ourselves and others, a story with rhetorical power to 'seduce to life'" (p. 150).

While many theories of emotion do not include hope as an emotion, Stotland (1969) lists it as one of the core emotions needed for human progress and survival. Averill (1990) suggests that hope differs from other emotions in that it is largely a "cognitive" state if one utilizes a broader definition of "cognitive," which is considered to refer to "all activity that is not interpreted in a strictly physiological or behavioral way" (p. 680). However, if one refers to the narrow definition of "cognitive" which is defined as the "intellectual processes by which knowledge is gained" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary), then hope would be considered noncognitive. Similar to anger and love, hope affects the way you think about or perceive events, as well as affecting behavior, thereby putting hope in the realm of emotions, rather than cognition (Averill, 1990). However, while fear, anger, happiness, and sadness are considered to be among the primary emotions, hope is considered to be a complex secondary emotion (Averill, 1990). Hope requires the ability to imagine possibilities for a more positive future. As Fromm (1968) states, hope requires "conviction about the not yet proven and courage to resist temptation to compromise one's view of present reality for a better future" (Fromm, in Halperin, 2016, p. 86).

In his literature on teaching hope in the classroom, Webb suggests five different categories for experiencing or defining hope, which he calls pedagogies of hope. The one most relevant to this dissertation and to intractable conflict is the concept that he calls "transformative hope," which he defines as a mode of hoping against the evidence. Transformative hope differs from other modes in several areas. One significant difference is that, while Webb sees other types of hope to be more individualistic, transformative hope functions on the societal level, with the focus being on change in how society is organized, and one's way of being in that society (2012). This type of hope does not situate itself in the present, rather it is driven towards a better, alternative future. It places confidence in the capacity of human beings to resolve human problems. Transformative hope places emphasis on the transformative power of communal action, which then inspires goal-directed action. While Webb's theory of transformative hope was geared towards teaching hope in the classroom, I believe it has relevance for societies mired in protracted conflict, specifically, with how one works with youth from impacted societies.

Hope and Intractable Conflict. Research suggests that hope is not only an obvious outcome of a successful peace process, it is also one of its sources (Leshem & Halperin, 2020, p. 179). In order to better understand the role of hope in intractable conflict, it is necessary to first look at the sense of hopelessness and its role in societies impacted by protracted, violent conflict.

One of the characteristics of intractable conflicts is the sense of hopelessness felt by members of society (Coleman, 2000; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). In the case of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, citizens from both societies have lived their lives mired in the seemingly endless cycle of failed attempts at peacemaking, with each attempt being followed by a spike in violence. Each time there seems to be the possibility for resolution, society members become hopeful, and each time negotiations fail, despair and hopelessness set in. With each round of negotiations and violence, it becomes increasingly difficult for people to believe that change is possible. Therefore, citizens living in the midst of protracted conflict tend to have the belief that the conflict is irresolvable, and that both the ingroup and outgroup are unable to change (Cohen-Chen et al., 2017; Leshem, 2019; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

While the recurring cycles of attempts at peacemaking and renewed violence is one explanation for the sense of hopelessness in intractable conflict, research suggests other possibilities as well. It is possible that a sense of hopelessness regarding the peaceful resolution of the conflict may act as a form of emotional protection in the face of intractable conflict. It may also stem from the need for predictability and certainty (Thórisdóttir & Jost, 2011; Zartman, 2005). Citizens who have been living in conflict for generations seem to prefer to see the violent conflict as irresolvable rather than engaging in hope and work for peace, which has been elusive. Hopelessness, therefore, is related to a sense of futility, which limits the ability and/or desire for constructive communication (Miller, Roloff & Reznik, 2014). The feeling of hopelessness and despair can cause public apathy to the conflict and to any new possibility for its resolution, leading to a freezing of the social and political system (Coleman, 2003).

There are several reasons why a sense of hopelessness contributes to the intractability of conflict, and conversely, why hope is so important to its resolution. Firstly, in order to successfully resolve conflict, it is necessary for constituents to be open, to have a sense of trust, to be able to take the necessary risks, and to be able to think creatively (Halperin, 2016). Hope has been shown to have a positive influence on a person's openness to new ideas as well as having a constructive influence on their patterns of information seeking, processing, and decision making. Hope allows the parties in conflict to imagine a different and better future,

as well as the belief that a peaceful resolution is possible. Scholars suggest that these abilities are considered essential in order to take the risks necessary to resolve the conflict (Cohen-Chen & Smadar, 2014; Halperin, 2016). Conversely, a sense of hopelessness inhibits constructive change, thereby contributing to the continuation of the conflict, which then deepens the sense of hopelessness among members of the society (Bar-Tal, 2007; Halperin, Bar-Tal, Nets-Zehngut, & Almog, 2008; Leshem, 2019). Seeing the conflict as irresolvable reinforces the feelings of hopelessness. The recurring and failed attempts to resolve the conflict which leads to a sense of hopelessness becomes part of the national narrative and the conflict narrative (Bar-Tal, 2007; Cohen-Chen, Crisp & Halperin et al., 2014; Halperin, 2016).

It is interesting to note that, during the interview process for applicants to Artsbridge, I ask what seems to be a simple question: "Suppose for a moment that a miracle occurs. You go to sleep at night, and when you rise the next morning, peace has broken out. How would you know?" Inevitably, the students look perplexed, often hesitating to respond. When they do, their responses tend to be suggestions that they would not be afraid to ride a bus, or that there would be no fear that soldiers would storm their homes in the middle of the night. Some suggest that Israelis and Palestinians would be free to be friends, or that there would be no need for an army. There are those who are not even able to think of a response to the question. My next question would seem to be a simple follow-up: "Can you imagine, in your lifetime, that you would see this come to pass?" To this day, I have yet to have a student respond genuinely in the affirmative. For me the critical question then becomes – if one is not capable of imagining the possibility of something happening, how can one be expected to work towards achieving it?

In a public poll conducted in 2013, almost half of Israelis and Palestinians believed that the conflict will never end (Telhami & Kull, 2013). In 2017, a study called the Hope Map Project was conducted in both Israel and the Palestinian territories. What was distinctive about this study is that it measured two separate components of hope. The first was the wish for peace and the second was expectations for peace. In order to account for the variance in the understanding of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, they defined it as "generic reciprocal peace" (Leshem & Halperin, 2020, p. 186). When asked about their wish for a reciprocal peace, approximately 77% of both Israeli and Palestinian participants equally scored on or above the midpoint. However, when asked about their expectations for reciprocal peace, less than 25% of all participants scored above the midpoint of the scale, with Palestinians scoring slightly higher than the Israelis when it came to expectations. The authors of the study speculate that this

difference may be due to the fact that Palestinians, having lived under Israeli military control for over 50 years do not have the luxury to be pessimistic, whereas Israelis, who live under more privileged circumstances, do not feel as pressing a need for expectations of peace. I would also suggest that Palestinians living under occupation seem to have more to gain from a resolution to the conflict regarding quality of life than do Israelis, whose lives are relatively more comfortable. In the same study, the researchers showed that the wish for peace predicted participants' support for peacebuilding over and above the other factors measured, which included dovish political orientation, expectations for peace, being Palestinian, political efficacy, and wish for peace. The expectation for peace also scored high as a predictor for support for peace initiatives (2020).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of intractable conflict and its challenges, as well as its relevance to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. As Coleman (2004) notes, there are several lenses, or paradigms, through which one may view intractable conflict. Two in particular, were discussed here. The first being the lens of systems theory and the second being the lens of relational construction. I am not suggesting that there is one "right" way to view intractable conflict. However, how one views intractable conflict will influence which strategies might be utilized to address that conflict. I argue that a relational constructionist stance provides a lens that is uniquely suited for working within societies enmeshed in protracted conflict. With its focus on communication and relationship, a relational constructionist approach does not place its focus on perceptions that lie within the individual. Rather, its focus is on constructive communication that allows for a natural development of understanding the complexity of the conflict as well as to the multiple ways of viewing the conflict. This focus leads to the possibility that new understandings and possibilities may emerge for more constructive engagement.

Not all conflicts are considered to be intractable, and these types of conflicts do not begin as such. However, as the MACBE model describes, through a series of complex and interrelated elements, conflicts can escalate to the level of intractability (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995).

The important role played by collective narratives created by societies enmeshed in intractable conflict was also addressed in this chapter. Those narratives influence how history is seen through collective memory, how societies view actions taken in the conflict, as well as the important role played by emotions. Israeli and Palestinian societies have been embroiled in the complexities of

intractable conflict for almost a hundred years now. As Coleman suggests, an ideal approach to dealing with conflicts such as this would be to "develop a capacity to conceptualize and to address protracted, intractable conflicts in a manner that is mindful of the many complex relationships and contradictions inherent to the phenomenon" (2004, p. 228). I suggest that, rather than imposing any one particular rationality, a multi-modal approach through the lens of relational construction serves the purpose outlined by Coleman. It can achieve this through its focus on utilizing dialogical and creative practices to develop the capacity to engage complexity and to appreciate the multiplicity of perspectives that exist within intractable conflict.

Artsbridge, the program explored in this dissertation has developed a process that works multimodally to constructively address the complex challenges that intractable conflicts present. While Artsbridge is not a conflict resolution program, it does address the elements that make intractable conflict so difficult to resolve. The program's focus is on helping participants through a multi-faceted process that is focused on the mitigation of some of the devastating impacts intractable conflict has on individuals and society as outlined in this chapter.

In the following chapter I will review the various types of encounter programs that exist with the purpose of bringing Israelis and Palestinian youth together. This chapter will delineate the philosophies that inform them in order to illustrate the wide range of extant interventions that exist for working with Israeli and Palestinian youth, in comparison to Artsbridge.

Chapter Four: A Review of Intergroup Encounter Programs

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict has long been seen as a living laboratory for the study of social behaviors and conflict interventions (Bar-Tal, 2004). The literature on the subject is vast and well beyond the scope of this dissertation; therefore, I will limit my review to relevant literature, which will include an overview of intergroup contact programs, including programs that are considered to be focused on peace education. Also included will be a review of the theoretical frameworks behind many of the intergroup encounter programs that exist in Israel/Palestine.

A Brief History of Intergroup Encounters

Intergroup encounter programs in Israel/Palestine are rooted in the development of several theories of intergroup contact. While many of the programs focus on intergroup dialogue, there are programs that function without dialogue being the primary goal.

Intergroup contact encounters began in the United States with the interpersonal and intergroup relations approach which was popular in the late 1960's and early 1970's especially in the field of race relations (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Hammack, 2012). Luis Kriesberg (1991) notes that the development of modern conflict resolution began with the advent of problem-solving techniques which were introduced into industrial organization theory and practice, and that emerged from the fields of human relations and intergroup relations (Abu-Nimer, 1999). Beginning in the 1950's, while the Palestinian population was still under military rule, there were limited attempts to improve relations between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis (Maoz, 2011). Throughout the 60's and 70's several large-scale, planned encounter programs began, again with Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. These groups followed the development of John Burton's controlled communication approach to problem solving which was introduced in the first international workshop in Cyprus. According to Burton these types of workshops eased tensions and built trust between conflicting parties (Lazarus, 2011). Other scholars and practitioners followed in Burton's footsteps with their own type of problem-solving workshops. One noteworthy scholar, Herb Kelman, brought his work to the

Israeli/Palestinian arena with his development of the "Interactive Problem-Solving Workshops" (Kelman, 1996, 2002, 2004; Lazarus, 2011). Kelman's workshops, which began by bringing Israeli and Palestinian academic and political figures to Harvard University for secret meetings, prioritized psychological factors before political issues, and required the opposing groups to begin by listening empathically to each other's needs and fears (Kelman, 1998). However, it wasn't until the 1980's, when public opinion polls showed an increase in right-wing extremism, as well as anti-democratic and anti-Arab views among Israeli Jews, that planned encounter programs grew significantly (Maoz, 2000, 2006, 2011; Zemach, 1986 in Maoz, 2011). The Ministry of Education decided at that time that they would support the introduction of curricula which dealt with Jewish-Arab relations, beginning with the introduction of encounter workshops that targeted teachers as well as students (Bar-Tal, 2002; Maoz, 2000, 2010, 2011). From the 1980's onward many organizations ran encounter programs that were conducted between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. According to Ned Lazarus, as of 2017 there were over 60 organizations conducting intergroup programs for Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel.

There was a significant shift in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo peace accords which heralded an era of hope for those who desired a peaceful resolution to the longstanding conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (Maoz, 2004; Ross & Lazarus, 2015). Several encounter programs were launched that promoted dialogue between Israeli youth and Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories with the aim of generating grass-roots support for what was hoped to be the official peace process (Maoz, 2000). Approximately 500 people-to-people projects were initiated and implemented by over 100 organizations during the Oslo years of 1993-2000 (Herzog & Hai, 2005).

In September of 2000 with the outbreak of the second Intifada, many of the encounter programs ceased to exist due to the increased complications of bringing Israeli and Palestinians together. However, there were several organizations that managed to continue their work. Maoz (2004) notes that interviews and written accounts of various stakeholders in the programs suggest that there were several factors that enabled those programs to continue to conduct their activities during the increased violence and tension of the first intifada. First, the programs maintained an "infrastructure of constructive relationships between the sides" (p. 572), preserving whatever connections between the sides that were still able to be preserved. They also provided a support system for those on either side that wanted to continue to work together, creating a safe space for them to talk and share ideas and support each other, especially since they were often marginalized

in their own societies. The Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP), a coalition of Israeli and Palestinian peace NGOs lists over 151 grassroots organizations in its membership as of August, 2022.

Theoretical Frameworks Underlying Intergroup Encounter Programs

Intergroup encounters between Israelis and Palestinians include several different models and are informed by various conceptual frameworks. Two prominent theories that inform many of the encounter programs that exist are known as the Contact Hypothesis, developed by Gordon Allport, and the Social Identity Theory, developed by Henry Tajfel and Joseph Turner.

Contact Hypothesis

One of the more influential and strongly supported theories that has influenced encounter programs between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis is the Intergroup Contact theory, based on American social psychologist Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis introduced in 1954 (Allport, 1954; Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Hammack, 2011; Maoz, 2011). Initially intended to address inter-racial hostility stemming from social segregation in the United States, this 'Hypothesis' was to be used to reduce prejudice and support desegregation (Hammack, 2011; Pettigrew, 2021).

Allport's initial hypothesis was based on the notion that, under certain conditions, contact between groups could be effective in reducing the prejudice and mutual negative stereotypes within individuals that work to maintain intergroup conflict (Allport, 1954; Hammack, 2011; Maoz, 2011; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Allport described the four conditions that needed to be met in order for intergroup contact to be effective. They are: (1) Both groups must have equal status within the encounter; (2) They must engage directly with each other on the issues that divide them; (3) They must work together with mutual respect and shared exploration, with a commitment to joint problem-solving, and; (4) There must be institutional support and consensus amongst the authorities involved (Fisher, 2014; Hammack, 2011; Maoz, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Originally called a "hypothesis" by Allport (1954) it has, today, evolved into a major social psychological theory (Pettigrew, 2021). Since its introduction, Intergroup Contact Theory has been extensively studied. The majority of empirical studies examining the impact of intergroup contact on reducing prejudice have found that, under the aforementioned conditions, contact contributes to reducing prejudice and negative stereotypes (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Ron, Maoz et al., 2010). For example, Pettigrew and Tropp conducted a meta-

analysis on the studies based on contact theory that found, in more than 490 studies, a strong relationship between direct intergroup contact and the reduction of various prejudices (2006; Pettigrew, 2021).

Despite the extensive research suggesting a positive impact, there are several critiques of Allport's original theory. One such critique is that contact alone, without the four stipulations outlined above, is not only insufficient in reducing prejudice between groups, it can potentially intensify negative attitudes between individuals in conflict groups (Amir, 1969; Pettigrew, 1998). Barlow et al. (2012) argued that negative contact experiences have a stronger effect on outcomes of encounters than positive contact (Schafer et al., 2021). In contrast, the research of Graf and Paolini (2017) showed that the stronger effects of negative contact may be mitigated by a higher frequency of positive contact.

Other critiques of contact theory question whether the effects of planned intergroup encounters can be generalized to the larger population (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Dixon et al., 2007) as well as how the impact can be sustained within escalating or intractable conflict (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Desivilya Syna & Maoz, 2019; Dixon et al., 2005; Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). Several studies have suggested that the positive effects of intergroup encounters do have the potential to extend beyond the participants of the encounter to the larger outgroup (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 2021). However, results have been mixed, with other studies suggesting that the benefits of contact-based strategies tend to be overwhelmed by outside socio-political factors. Several critiques of the theory focus on its efficacy in the context of acute asymmetry between groups involved in the intergroup encounter such as in the case with Israeli and Palestinian encounters (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Maoz, 2011; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). Dixon et al. (2005, 2007) note that much of the research on contact theory related to optimal conditions and did not study the effectiveness of intergroup contact interventions in conditions of acute asymmetry (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Desivilya Syna & Maoz, 2019; Maoz, 2011; Ron et al., 2010). Critics have also argued that encounters that are based on contact theory tend to 'normalize' oppressive conditions, and that fostering positive relations amongst the parties involved in the encounter has the potential to decrease motivation amongst the minority group to engage in collective action aimed at alleviating social injustices (Wright & Lubensky, 2009). Cakal et al. (2011) call this the "sedative" effect (Dixon & McKeown, 2021), and Dixon et al. (2010) consider this to be a "paradoxical" effect of positive contact. As Dixon and McKeown (2021) assert, current research seems to confirm this distinct phenomenon in a variety of types of intergroup relations (see Carter et al., 2018; Dixon et al., 2017; Tropp et al., 2012).

Phillip Hammack (2011) argued that, in his view, "… the most significant problem with the contact hypothesis is its desire to neutralize power" (p. 38). He goes on to suggest that viewing conflict as an issue of individual personality misses the larger context within which those personalities develop. He highlights the work of social psychologist Muzafer Sherif and his Robbers Cave experiment which showed that the introduction of superordinate goals between two competing groups of boys dramatically reduced intergroup hostilities. Where Allport's work focused on the role of the individual in conflict and social change, Sherif (1958, in Hammack, 2011) argued that, rather than conflict being rooted in individual personality, conflicts are rooted in an incompatibility of goals. With that in mind, Sherif went on to develop the Realistic Conflict theory, which posited that whenever two or more groups are seeking the same limited resources, conflict ensues, as well as negative stereotypes, beliefs, and discrimination between groups. These effects can be reduced through superordinate goals, which are defined as mutually-desirable goals that require the participation of all groups involved in the conflict (Hammack, 2011; Sherif, 1958). Hammack (2011) argues that, "in some ways, Allport and Sherif are positioned at opposite ends of a false dichotomy" (p. 38), with one end of the pole being individual forces and the other being social forces as the most important in conflict. He then suggests a new paradigm which focuses on the cultural psychology of identity and conflict, suggesting that the individual and social structure dynamically interact in "a mode of reciprocal production." Individuals are, hence, both products and producers of a particular structural configuration of power and identity, and it is through the individual process of narrative engagement that they come to unwittingly participate in this larger reproductive end" (pp. 38-39). In this dissertation, I suggest yet another paradigm. I will suggest that it is neither the individual nor the group that is the focus of conflict – rather it is the continuous 'reciprocal production' or relational process between the two, that is and should be the focus.

While results of research are mixed on the efficacy of contact theory, it seems that, while contact theory may be useful in achieving what it was initially intended for—reducing prejudice and stereotypes in once segregated communities—its impact is questionable when utilized in situations of deep power asymmetry and escalating or protracted conflict.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Another influential theory that pertains to planned intergroup encounters in Israel/Palestine is Social Identity theory (SIT), developed by Henry Tajfel and

Joseph Turner in the United Kingdom in the late 1970's (Tajfel et al., 1978, 1979, 1986). In many ways, SIT was a response to what many argued was missing from encounters based on the contact hypothesis, which was the concept of social versus individual identities and its connection to power relations (Halabi 2004; Sonnenschein, Halabi, & Friedman, 1998; Tapper, 2013). It is not that contact theory avoided the power asymmetry. Allport suggested that, in order to eliminate prejudice, one must reduce or neutralize structural and social power. So, rather than directly address power relations, their goal was to ameliorate structural inequities within the group setting without connection to the larger societal structures and dominant narratives that exist outside of the small group setting. Tajfel and Turner, on the other hand, specifically focused on collective identity and power relations (Hammack, 2011). The focus of SIT is on the fundamental role of social identity, with a focus on issues of collective identity. In other words, its focus can be understood as "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). The theory posits that the interactions between individuals is shaped by their group affiliation, such as ethnicity, religion, or nationality (Hammack, 2011; Tapper, 2013). It suggests that it is our affiliation with a group that determines our behavior rather than a person's individual identity (Tajfel, 1978). As Suleiman (2000) explains, Tajfel "views the group itself as an entity that is qualitatively different from the sum total of all the individuals constituting it (pp. 34-35). That being the case, the unit of analysis would be the group, and not its individual members.

In order to substantiate this idea, Tajfel and colleagues developed an experiment that suggested that the act of simply categorizing individuals into different groups will activate in-group bias (Hammack 2011; Tajfel & Turner 1986). Therefore, in viewing encounters within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through the lens of SIT, when these two groups come together in an encounter situation, they do so as representatives of their respective social identity, and not as individuals (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Salomon, 2004; Suleiman, 2004). As I will address later in this thesis, the challenge with SIT is its entitative, rather than relational focus. Reflecting an essentialist approach, SIT simply transfers the focus from the individual, and onto the small group, still overlooking the broader social context.

Common Ingroup Identity Theory

In the 1990's, another theory was developed by Gaertner, Dovidio and colleagues which they named the common-in-group identity model (Gaertner et al.,

1993). In it they hypothesize that "if members of different groups are induced to conceive of themselves as a single group rather than two completely separate groups, attitudes toward former out-group members will become more positive through processes involving pro-ingroup bias (pp. 5-6). In other words, they propose that, rather than reducing or eliminating conflicting group identities, creating a group categorization in ways that reduce intergroup bias and conflict would be more useful. So, rather than focusing on two distinct group identities, the creation of an inclusive one-group identity to reduce intergroup bias would be needed. Building on Social Identity theory, they posit that, by establishing certain conditions, groups are able to transcend their social identity in order to achieve intergroup cooperation. Thus, it is possible to reduce intergroup conflict by creating a third group with a common identity, which is superordinate to the two competing identities (Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner & Davidio, 2000). Similar to SIT, the challenge here lies within the essentialist, entitative quality of the theory. Common Ingroup Identity theory simply transfers the focus from two distinct groups to one larger group. However, it does little to address the challenges that exist in the broader social context. I will argue that this limits the theory's ability to help participants relate to the reality they face in their home communities, as defined by the dominant narratives that exist.

Israeli/Palestinian Encounter Programs

As mentioned earlier, as of 2022, there were approximately 151 organizations working with Israelis and Palestinians in some form of peacebuilding activity, each utilizing their own methodology stemming, primarily, from the spectrum between Contact theory and Social Identity theory. Ifat Maoz (2011), in her review of 20 years of peace education programs that were conducted between Israeli and Palestinian citizens of Israel, identified four different models of planned encounters between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis. Along with the various models of planned encounters, there are several other aspects and characteristics to consider. They are: (1) programs located outside of the conflict region [non-local] or within Israel/Palestine [local]; (2) Programs based on religious vs secular ideologies; and (3) the length of time of each program.

Coexistence Model

Programs utilizing a Coexistence model are considered to have been the first, and initially, the dominant models of planned encounter programs in the 1980's. They were based on the contact hypothesis and sought to reduce stereotypes, and

to promote mutual understanding and tolerance between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The emphasis in this model is on interpersonal and cultural similarities, and promotes the notion of togetherness and cross-group friendship. With its emphasis on commonalities and fostering mutual respect, it tries to avoid disagreement, as well as any controversial issues relating to the conflict. This method of contact and/or dialogue facilitation has also been called the *recategorization approach* as its focus is to help members identify, not through their Israeli or Palestinian identity, but through a new, superordinate identity, which is modeled after Common Ingroup Identity theory as defined by Gaertner and Dovideo (2000).

Despite the fact that the Coexistence model is still considered to be the dominant model in use today, there exist several critiques of the model. While it has been found to be useful for very young children (Stephan, 2001 in Maoz, 2011), it was found to be lacking in several areas for older youth and adults. Primarily, this model is criticized for its lack of discussion of topics deemed relevant to the conflict, which often causes frustration in participants, especially the Palestinian participants. A second criticism relates to its potential to reinforce the macro-reality of the conflict, which includes power asymmetry between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. This has the potential to have a paradoxical effect of maintaining, or even exacerbating, the conflict (Bekerman, 2009; Suleiman, 2004).

Joint Projects Model

Closely related to the Coexistence model, but primarily based on the Common Ingroup Identity theory and Realistic Conflict theory, the Joint Projects model is based on the assumption that working together towards a superordinate goal fosters a common identity and puts less focus on the members' separate group identities (Sherif, 1966 in Maoz, 2011). There are many examples of joint arts and cultural projects between Israeli and Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as environmental, sports and curricula building projects. Similar to the Coexistence model, commonalities are emphasized, thereby avoiding controversial issues such as power asymmetry between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, and the discrimination of Palestinian citizens (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Maoz, 2011). The Joint Projects model is considered by some to be somewhat ideal in that it "provides a concrete, visible process of working together that results in a joint project, which can be seen as reflecting the success of the intergroup cooperation" (Maoz, 2011, p. 119). Scholars also suggest that the contribution of the weaker group enhances its self-esteem. Critics of the Joint Projects model point out that,

because there is not always equal involvement between the Jewish and Arab participants, it has the potential to reinforce negative stereotypes (Maoz, 2011).

Confrontational Model

The Confrontational, or Group Identity model was formulated based on Social Identity theory in response to the criticisms of the Coexistence and Joint Projects models. Developed by Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, it is premised on the idea that groups in conflict that come together will vie for power and status, thereby replicating the conflict setting. Individuals within the encounter will represent the interests of their group, and not themselves as individuals (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). As such, the Confrontation model focuses on the power relations and conflict between sides, with an emphasis on the empowerment of the minority. The goal of the Confrontation model seeks to empower the members of the Palestinian minority by having them confront Jewish Israelis directly within the encounter through frank discussions of the issues that relate to power asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the discrimination and challenges faced by the Palestinian citizens of Israel (Halabi & Friedman, 1998; Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Hammack & Pilecki, 2015; Maoz, 2011; Ron, Maoz & Beckerman, 2010). Hammack and Pilecki (2015) demonstrated that the Confrontational model of intergroup dialogue did challenge the existing power asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians when having conversations about history more than the Coexistence model did. Their study showed evidence that the Confrontational model was able to counteract the tendency of intergroup contact to reproduce power asymmetries existing in society.

In her review of the Confrontational model, Maoz notes the following problem: "Confrontational models can be more susceptible to destructive intergroup communication patterns that include verbal violence towards, and degradation and delegitimization of members of the other group" (Maoz, 2011, p. 120). Additionally, Hammack (2011) notes the challenge with the issue of power relations amongst Israelis and Palestinians. Jewish Israelis view the issue of power relations through the lens of their historical experience of antisemitism which culminated in the Holocaust. In other words, many Jewish Israelis view their relations with Palestinians from within a larger global context of existential threat, including the view of being surrounded by nations that they consider to be enemies of Israel. Palestinians, on the other hand, view their relations with Israelis from the narrower perspective of Israel/Palestine, where Israel is viewed as encroaching on and occupying their land. Additionally, while the model seeks to empower the low-

status group members, it has the potential to alienate the Jewish participants (Hammack & Pilecki, 2015). In a sense, the Confrontational model mainly reverses the power dynamic. For Jewish Israelis, this direct confrontation can lead them to feeling threatened, and to the development of, not only negative attitudes and distrust towards Palestinians, but also towards the structured encounters between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians (Maoz, Bar-On, & Yikya, 2007; Maoz, 2011).

Narrative Model

The Narrative model arose towards the end of the 1990s for encounters between Israeli Jews and Palestinians after initially being developed for encounters between second-generation Jewish Holocaust survivors and second-generation Nazi perpetrators from Germany (Bar-On et al., 1998; Bar-On, 1993). The Narrative model allows participants to focus on their personal and emotional experiences through story-telling, with the intention of reconciling the anger and pain associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bar-On, 2002, 2006, 2008). By narrating their personal stories participants are able to explore the lived experience of the other side, which leads to the creation of empathy towards the other (Maoz, 2000; McNamee & Gergen, 1999). Bar-On and his team believed that hearing the stories of the lived experience and suffering of the other builds trust and compassion through the re-humanization of the other and by developing a more complex image of each other (Maoz & Bar-On, 2002; Maoz, 2011).

The Narrative model, according to Maoz (2011), is considered a mixed model, combining the strengths of both the Coexistence and the Confrontational models, and addressing the limitations of each of them. Similar to the Coexistence model, the Narrative model focuses on creating personal ties and developing empathy for the other, yet it does not ignore the power asymmetries or the protracted conflict that exists between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. However, discussing difficult issues through the use of personal stories tends to avoid the heated rhetoric of competing and mutually exclusive narratives.

While the Narrative model seems to combine the advantages of earlier models, limitations have been noted, such as the consideration of what is a 'good enough' story and how it is told (Ross, 2000). Another potential limitation is raised by Bar-On (2006) who considers the integrity and/or authenticity of the stories told. He questions whether the stories needed to be factually true, and how and whether stories need to be verified.

Table 2 presents an outline of the four different models of encounter programs as outlined by Maoz (2011), showing a comparison of the various approaches.

Table 2

Comparison of Models of Encounter Programs (adapted from Maoz, 2011).

	Coexistence Approach	Joint Projects Model	Confrontational Approach	Narrative Storytelling
Goal	Promote mutual understanding and tolerance, reduce stereotypes, foster positive intergroup attitudes.	Reduce intergroup hostilities, foster a common identity, increase liking and cooperation.	Modify the construction of identity of members of minority and majority groups. Encourage greater awareness among Jewish participants re asymmetrical power relations & their role as the dominant or oppressive group. Empowerment of Palestinian-Arab minority.	To work through unresolved pain and anger by encountering the experience and suffering of the other, thereby creating intergroup trust and compassion by re-humanizing, and constructing a more complex image of the other.
Emphasis	Interpersonal similarities, togetherness, cooperation.	Emphasizes commonalities. Working together towards a common, superordinate goal.	Power and conflict relations between the sides.	The combination of interpersonal interaction with group identities. Combining the formation of personal ties with discussions of the conflict and power relations.
Strengths	Widely shared and noncontroversial commonalities – "We are all human beings". Suitable for young children.	Provides a concrete visible process of working together with the production of a joint product. Shared interests and cooperation. Can be seen to create interdependence between involved groups.	Explicit discussion of issues re. relations between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, such as discrimination, expression of Palestinian identity, power asymmetry.	Personal stories may create immediate empathy towards members of the outgroup. Increases understanding of the complexities of personal and collective trajectories of the conflict. Combines advantages of the Coexistence and Confrontational

	Coexistence Approach	Joint Projects Model	Confrontational Approach	Narrative Storytelling
				models, as it addresses some of their limitations.
Limitations	Lack of discussion regarding the relationships between sides can cause frustration, disappointment, and unfulfillment. Risk of perpetuating existing asymmetrical power relations.	Does not necessarily deal directly with issues related to the conflict. Can be seen as irrelevant to participants' actual needs and preferences.	Potential to alienate Jewish participants, causing negative attitudes and distrust towards Arabs and towards Arab/Jewish encounters in general. More susceptible to destructive intergroup communication, including verbal violence, degradation and delegitimization of group members.	The challenge of striving for an ideal story that fills needs and expectations of each group. It is challenging to ensure that stories are shared in a constructive way within the Israeli/Palestinian encounter.

Non-local Encounter Programs

Along with the four major models of planned encounters outlined by Maoz (2011), an additional aspect to consider when describing encounter programs is where the programs take place. While it is understandable that the majority of encounter programs for Israelis and Palestinians take place within Israel/Palestine, there are several other programs that take place outside of Israel/Palestine (non-local programs). As seen in Table 3, non-local programs differ from local programs (i.e., taking place within Israel/Palestine) in several ways. Firstly, because most non-local programs run for an extended period of time, they allow for a variety of activities, enabling participants to engage with each other in several ways and to get to know each other in ways that they would not be able to do in their home countries. Many of these encounter programs, such as Seeds of Peace, and Hands of Peace, are considered by some to be a mixed-model encounter as they allow for varied engagement that includes both coexistence type encounters, as well as more confrontational type encounters based on Social Identity theory (Lazarus,

2011; Maddy-Weitzman, 2005). Secondly, along with the extended, continuous time frame, non-local programs have the advantage of allowing for more intensive engagements between participants, including shared accommodations, with participants sleeping in the same rooms, eating communally and participating in communal activities. However, there are some programs, such as Hands of Peace, which have American families hosting the Israeli and Palestinian students (Hammack, 2009). Thirdly, the language spoken tends to be English, rather than their native Hebrew or Arabic, and staff tend to be from outside of Israel/Palestine (Lazarus, 2011).

For many of the participants in these non-local programs, this is the first time that they have experienced a setting outside of the conflict zone. Removing participants from the conflict zone, advocates suggest, inspires an openness to new ways of thinking. Additionally, because they are run by a seemingly[9] impartial third-party, they are considered by their proponents to be more equalizing in status than local programs (2011).

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[9] There are differences of opinion as to whether the United States can be considered impartial in its dealings with Israelis and Palestinians. Additionally, many consider American attempts to engage Israelis and Palestinians as naïve and misguided, with a lack of knowledge of what the "real" issues are relating to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Table 3
Comparison of Local and Non-local Models of Intergroup Encounters

Program Aspect	Non-local Programs	Local Programs
Time	2-3 weeks, continuous, shared accommodations	Series of sporadic meetings and/or weekend workshop
Setting	Setting outside of the Middle East	Local facility in Israel or East Jerusalem
Dominant Language	English	Hebrew or bilingual Arabic/Hebrew, with translation
Program & Organizational Culture and Staffing	Non-local facilitation (though some Israeli and Palestinian staff tend to be included)	Israeli or joint/bi-national

Note: Based on Lazarus, 2011.

Despite the suggested benefits of outside of the region programs espoused by their proponents, there are also several critiques. Hammack (2009) argues that, while there are some potential advantages to American programs, there are also several limitations. His research of Seeds of Peace and Hands of Peace comprised longitudinal studies of participants of both programs. He argues that both Seeds of Peace and Hands of Peace base their curriculum on an American model of social change, with its focus on individual agency and its potential to impact the course of the conflict, as well as the notion that "individuals can escape the psychological confines of the conflict through physical removal" (p. 130). The primary goals of these programs are, according to Hammack, "neutralization" of identity through policies that have a focus on equality. In other words, they are structured in a way that "remove structural distinctions between Israelis and Palestinians that exist in the reality of the conflict" (p. 131). For example, participants of Seeds of Peace wear the same "uniform", with every student required to wear the Seeds of Peace t-shirt, further unifying identities. While dialogue sessions at Seeds of Peace focus on discussion of the conflict, other activities offer opportunities for the development of superordinate goals, such as cross-group cooperation through athletic and arts activities. Both programs have an anthem that focuses on unity, friendship, and peace (Hammack, 2006). Hammack's study of Seeds of Peace noted that a mixed

model led to confusion amongst the participants. On the one hand, they were supposed to forget about their national identity and become one unified group. Yet on the other hand, the dialogue sessions led them to, once again, act as representatives of their national group, thereby enhancing their national identities (2006).

I suggest that this is not an inherent problem with non-local programs themselves, rather it is related to the focus or design of the programs, how communication is facilitated, as well as its intended goals. The focus in Artsbridge is, in part, the ability to appreciate complexity, and to be able to acknowledge a multiplicity of narratives that exist within the context of intractable conflict. Through in the process of acquiring these capacities, one must, necessarily challenge one's own deeply held belief in the "rightness" of one's own narrative. As I will discuss in part II, Artsbridge creates a safe space in which to challenge one's deeply held beliefs. Within that process, one may develop a clearer sense of one's own identity, while at the same time expanding their worldview to include multiple ways of understanding the conflict in which they live.

Summary

Part I of this thesis included an overview of the philosophical framework of social construction – which forms the foundation of Artsbridge and this study. I also provided a review of intractable conflict as well as the types of encounter programs that work with Israelis and Palestinians within the context of intractable conflict. In Part II I will discuss how the Artsbridge process relates to the challenges of intractable conflict and how it differs from other types of encounter situations. There are aspects of the Artsbridge model that are similar to other American based, mixed-model encounter programs. As with other programs, it takes place in North America and includes Israeli, Palestinian, and American students. It also provides opportunities for multiple types of engagement over an extended period of time, allowing for deeper connections. There are also many elements that differentiate Artsbridge from other current programs and models that work with Israeli and Palestinian teens. First is the philosophy that grounds the practice, which is premised on a relational constructionist framework. Secondly, how dialogue is conducted within the program's design and how it differs from other programs that were studied before. In my research I have not come across any other prior program that utilizes a method of dialogue like Transformative Reflecting Dialogue with Israeli and Palestinian teens. Additionally, rather than having the conflict be the focus of the dialogue, the primary goal is to teach participants how to engage in

difficult conversations. Once participants understand this, the focus of the dialogues shift to the sharing of personal stories of the conflict through Transformative Reflecting Dialogue. Regarding the challenge of the power asymmetry that exists between Israelis and Palestinians, Artsbridge neither ignores nor confronts the issue of power asymmetry. However, the concept of power is addressed indirectly through non-hierarchical, dialogical engagement that permeates all aspects of programming. Participants come to perceive power as socially constructed. That is not to say that power asymmetry does not exist between Israelis and Palestinians back in their home communities. However, the focus is not on shame or blame which runs the risk of alienating the very people whose cooperation is needed in order to address the perceived power dynamics. Rather, the focus is on recognizing and deconstructing the narratives that reinforce the power asymmetry between the groups, encouraging participants to ask the question: How can we work together to change the systems that reinforce and maintain those systems of power?

Artsbridge does not focus on individual change, nor does it focus on societal change. Rather, its focus is on relationship – what happens between individuals and how to allow for constructive engagement.

PART II: OVERVIEW OF ARTSBRIDGE

This section of the dissertation provides a detailed description of Artsbridge which includes the rationale for its structure as well as the use of dialogue and the arts in order to achieve its goals. Chapter 5 provides an overview of Artsbridge, including the motivation for its creation, the history of its development and what criteria were considered. Chapter 6 provides a detailed overview of the dialogic component developed for use in Artsbridge which I refer to as Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD). Chapter 7 elucidates the use of the arts throughout the program, including the rationale for its use. Chapter 8 describes the relationship between the arts and dialogic components of the programming, including the recursive, symbiotic relationship between the two.

Throughout Part II I have included direct quotes from the participants interviewed for this study in order to illustrate how the various components of the program influenced them, and how they understood the impact of those elements on their experience in Artsbridge. Several vignettes are also included in this section which are derived from my personal notes taken at the time of the program, as well as from memory. In several cases, these vignettes were discussed with the participants in their interviews in order to corroborate details.

Chapter Five: An Introduction to Artsbridge

In this section I will describe the impetus for creating Artsbridge, as well as how it was developed. I will also provide a detailed description of the various elements of Artsbridge along with the rationale behind its structure.

Motivation for Creating Artsbridge

Artsbridge was developed as a response to the intractability of the ongoing Israeli/Palestinian conflict, in order to offer a new and unique approach to navigating the conflict continuum that takes into account a variety of factors and offers a holistic, creative approach to working with people living in the midst of destructive conflict.

Artsbridge was a work in progress for several years before its inception. As a graduate student in Mental Health Counseling and Expressive Therapies with a specialization in Art Therapy, I was fortunate enough to experience internships in both a studio art therapy program as well as a therapy practice that was focused on relational practices through a social constructionist lens. Having had the opportunity to experience both of these ways of practice, I began to see the potential in combining them to develop a program that deals with an issue that is of great interest to me – the tragic consequences of the destructive conflict that exists between Israelis and Palestinians.

Since its first summer in 2008, Artsbridge has continued to evolve. The experiences of both participants and staff members, as well as their feedback, allowed for that evolution to continue. While never meant to be a "peace" program, in the early stages of the development of Artsbridge, we did consider it to be a conflict transformation program. As the years went on and the program evolved, we began to understand that the program was not just about the transformation of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. However, it was a challenge to define exactly what we were. We knew we were having a powerful impact on the participants but what to call that impact remained elusive. This study was conducted in order to more fully understand the impact of Artsbridge on its participants. To be clear, I did not see myself as a researcher when I began Artsbridge and the program was not created as a dissertation topic. The idea of this PhD dissertation arose through the process of running the program and with the desire to be able to explore and articulate

more fully the impact of the program and its potential for working with communities in protracted conflict.

A Team Effort

In the year and a half before launching the first summer program, several visits to Israel and Palestine were made in order to meet with various organizations for the purpose of gaining a more in-depth understanding of what key constituents in the region felt would be most useful in working with young people in their communities. I met with leaders from various NGOs working with Israelis and Palestinians from the West Bank, or working with Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The goal of those trips was to listen – to gain an understanding from those living in the midst of the conflict as to what issues they felt needed to be addressed and what their experiences had been regarding what they understood to be productive and what they considered to be unhelpful, or even detrimental. These meetings and budding relationships proved to be invaluable in the development of Artsbridge, as well as in building relationships for potential, future partnerships. Additionally, I was sensitive to the fact that, as a white, Jewish, American woman, it was important for me to not interject my own biases on the communities within which Artsbridge was intending to work. To be seen as imposing my ideas and thoughts on a conflict that I was not living personally, in communities that I was not a part of, would seem to be simply reinforcing some of the very issues that brought Israelis and Palestinians to the crisis they are living in today – that of an outsider imposing their ideas on a native community.

With these ideas and experiences in mind, an understanding of the value of the arts, and a belief in relational practice, Artsbridge was created. In conjunction with the development of relationships in Israel/Palestine, a small team was created in the United States which included experts in the fields of Psychology, Expressive Therapies, business, and non-profit law. Among the group were individuals who were American, Israeli, Palestinian, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian. The goal of the committee/team was to begin to explore possibilities for the program and to view relevant issues from various perspectives. While it was understood that this would be a multimodal program which incorporated relational, reflecting dialogue and the arts, there were many hours of conversation on the structure of the various components, including the schedule of the day, how the art and dialogue components would be structured, and what else would be included in the programming. Cultural sensitivity was a thread that ran through all of our conversations. I considered it a priority to enter into this project with the assumption

that I was not an expert in the cultural norms or the struggles of members of the communities within which we were to work. I was committed to remaining curious and to embarking on an educational journey to achieve greater understanding while listening to the various stakeholders. Each voice on the team was valued for their unique position and perspective, and each voice was taken into account in the co-creation of Artsbridge. In introducing the team to the concept of Artsbridge, it was made a priority to engage one another in conversation and teamwork that mirrored the same philosophical framework in which we were hoping to engage the students.

Considerations

Several factors were considered in the creation of Artsbridge: which age group to work with, the size and the cultural make-up of the group, the length of time for the summer program, as well as the location. Additional factors considered were the specific activities to be included in the programming, not only for the summer intensive, but also programming before and after the summer that would enhance sustainability. Every detail was carefully explored and considered in order to maximize constructive impact and minimize error.

Age

While each age group has its unique advantages, it was determined that this program would focus on adolescents between the ages of 15-17 years, with the idea that they would be uniquely suited for this type of process. At this developmental stage in life, adolescents are already beginning to explore their identity as they begin the process of individuating from their parents. Additionally, adolescents by this age tend to have developed the capacity to understand more complex and abstract issues. An additional factor in considering the age of the students is that Jewish Israelis are required to enter army service when they graduate high school, unless they have a medical or religious exemption or choose to do some sort of national service before entering the army. While some have suggested that participation in an encounter program might be more useful when the Jewish Israelis are post army service (Hammack, 2011), I believe that introducing Artsbridge to participants before their army service will have a beneficial impact on how they serve in the army and how they perceive Palestinians. Likewise, how Palestinians view Jewish Israelis who serve in the army is also an important factor.

A Note about the Israeli Army. The Israeli army has a significant impact on the lives of the Israeli and Palestinian students, regardless of nationality. The army is deeply embedded in Israeli society and in the Jewish Israeli narrative. From kindergarten on, students are inculcated into the idea that the Israeli Army is the most moral army in the world, and that it is not only a legal obligation, but, in essence, a moral obligation to serve in the military. Jewish Israeli teens, once they graduate high school, are expected to enter their military service. Women serve two years and men serve two and a half years. So much of Israeli society revolves around the army – for many young Jewish Israelis, it is seen as a rite of passage. Historically, the army has been held up as a great source of pride for Jewish Israeli citizens. That being said, views of army service have shifted over the years. According to recent surveys the enlistment rate amongst those obligated to serve has seen a reduction over the past 20 years, from 75% to almost 60%. Despite the fact that, according to Israeli law, the military can punish those who decline army service with jail time, most cases tend to be ignored. Additionally, recent surveys have shown that willingness to serve in combat units – once considered highly coveted, has declined from 90% in the 1990's to 80% in the 1980's, and as of 2019, to only 67% (Jager, 2018).

In the past several years, those who do not or cannot perform army service, have the option of performing national service which consists of volunteering in the health, education, or welfare sectors. Despite the historical shifts in enlistment statistics, the centrality of the military in Israeli society continues to have the effect of marginalizing those who do not serve. There is the perception that serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) provides a stepping stone to more lucrative jobs, as well as more elevated social status. For many young Israelis, the military provides valuable opportunities and training for future careers (Hadar & Hakkinen, 2020).

In effect, the army signifies very different things for each of the groups – Jewish Israelis, '48 and '67 Palestinians – and creates an even greater divide among them. For Palestinians living in Israel, it is an unsettling time. As their Jewish peers look forward to entering the army, Palestinians living in Israel ('48 Palestinians) feel further isolated from Israeli society, [10] often struggling with their conflicted identity – being a citizen of Israel but with Palestinian heritage and culture. With the army

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[10] The term '48 Palestinians is used to define Arabs who have lived in Israel continuously since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 - in other words, within the Green Line. The term '67 Palestinians is used to define Arabs who have either lived in the West Bank and Gaza in 1948 or arrived there after the establishment of the State of Israel (Tessler, 2009).

playing such an important role in Jewish Israeli society, and the fact that employers often ask about a job applicant's army service, the Palestinian population of Israel disproportionately suffers from discrimination as they do not serve in the Israeli army.

For Palestinians living in the West Bank, the challenge of seeking a college education, finding work and struggling to live under occupation weighs heavily. Most Palestinians, consider the Israeli army a violent force against them and their communities, and see it as the face of the occupation. Despite the decrease in the percentage of Jewish young adults enlisting in the army, in the eyes of Palestinians, all Jewish Israelis become soldiers – therefore, it stands to reason that Palestinians would identify their young Israeli peers with the army (Hammack, 2010).

Participating in the summer program one to two years before high school graduation provides the opportunity for the students to continue with Artsbridge through follow-up seminars and alumni conferences for at least the following year, allowing Artsbridge to continue to support the students' newly acquired ways of thinking and being (Nathan, 2016).

Nationality

While many consider the players in this conflict to be simply Israeli and Palestinian it is, in fact, more complex. Israel is made up of citizens who immigrated from many countries around the world since its creation, as well as those who have lived on the land in what was previously Palestine, for many generations. Large gulfs exist between various subgroupings in this tiny nation. Divisions exist between Jews who originated in European countries (Ashkenazi) and Jews originating from Middle Eastern countries (Sephardic). There are also Jews who have immigrated from Ethiopia, who often face racial discrimination in Israel (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/12/world/israel-ethiopia-jews-immigration.html). Non-Jewish citizens of Israel include the Druze community, Bedouin community and Palestinian citizens of Israel. A small percentage of the population also consists of various other religious groups. With regard to nationality, there are three primary subgroups that Artsbridge considered in selecting its participants; Jewish Israeli, '48 Palestinians, and '67 Palestinians. Although '48 Palestinians comprise only 20 percent of the population in Israel the decision was made to include them in Artsbridge in an equal proportion. The reasoning behind this decision is based on equal representation. '48 Palestinians struggle as a minority within Israel (Waxman, 2013) and it was decided that they

should have an equal voice within Artsbridge. Therefore, each annual cohort consisted of one third Jewish Israeli, one third '48 Palestinian, and one third '67 Palestinian.

Gender

While an equal male/female ratio is ideal, the fact that many see Artsbridge as an arts-based program, skews the applicant pool towards a female majority. That being said, at least one third of each annual cohort has tended to be male. Having both male and female participants allows for generative conversations regarding gender, which students have found very useful. Constructive conversations revolving around gender issues often arise out of the dialogues.

Religion

The majority religions in Israel and Palestine are Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. Within Israel, 80% of the population is Jewish. Every effort is made to have equal representation of each of the major religions. While many of the participants consider themselves to be secular, each year has seen representation from observant Jewish, Muslim and Christian participants. In order to accommodate religious students, Artsbridge has endeavored to maintain Kosher and Halal[11] dietary restrictions, as well as allowing for Muslim prayer and Ramadan observance for the Muslim students and Sabbath observance for the Jewish students.

Some cohorts over the years have also included representation from the Druze community. The Druze are a close-knit religious and ethnic community active in public life, which includes serving in the Israeli Army. They make up roughly 2% of the country's population with most living in the northern regions of the Galilee, Carmel and the Golan Heights. (Retrieved from: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/21/5-facts-about-israeli-druze-a-unique-religious-and-ethnic-group).

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[11] Kosher is the designation for the dietary laws followed by observant Jews. Halal is the designation for dietary laws followed by observant Muslims. While these dietary laws have some commonality, they are not the same and care must be taken to honor both sets of dietary laws as much as possible in the program. Vegetarian options are always available as an alternative.

Ideology

While specific political and ideological beliefs were not a determinant for acceptance into the program, it was important to ensure that the selected cohort was diverse in their thinking and experience. That being said, due to the nature of the program (bringing Israelis and Palestinians together) the group might be considered somewhat self-selecting. However, each year has seen representation from a large swath of political ideologies, ranging from far left, apolitical, and students who considered themselves to be right wing, including students who live in Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Geographical Location

Developing relationships with organizations on the ground in Israel and Palestine was an important step in our process. Working with organizations that are located in strategic areas of the region allows us to choose students who are within traveling distance to one of the organizations with which Artsbridge maintains a relationship. This helps to ensure that students have access to preparatory programs, as well as post-summer programs. Students are required to participate, not only in the pre- and post-summer programming, but in any additional programming required by the local organizations.

A Note about American Students

When Artsbridge was first developed, it was decided not to include Americans in the program. At that time, it was questionable as to how constructive their role would be for them and for the group as a whole. In 2012 Artsbridge invited American students to participate for the first time. American participants seemed to add an interesting dynamic, shifting the dialogues away from looking at conflict through the lens of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and towards a broader lens of how one is impacted by destructive conflict in any society. As Americans shared their personal stories, which included living in inner cities, being a minority in the United States, or living amidst violence in their community, Palestinians and Israelis often voiced surprise that they were not the only ones living with violent conflict. The inclusion of American students served to broaden the lens through which all of the students viewed violent conflict. The experience of the Americans in Artsbridge seems to be in contrast to what Hammack, Pilecki and Merrilees (2014) found in their study of another program based in the US that involved Israeli, Palestinian and American youth. The program that was examined was a program whose mission was to "foster coexistence between Israeli and Palestinian

youth and to educate American youth about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" (p. 300). Hammack argues that their study revealed that American youth reported in diaries (that they kept for the purpose of the study) an overall negative experience with the dialogue process. They note that American youth reported that they felt either they had no right to speak as they were not directly connected to the conflict, or they felt marginalized in the dialogue sessions. Hammack went on to suggest that one possibility for this dissatisfaction was that the US students did not have a clear definition of their role in the context of the dialogue (2013).

I suggest that our method of dialogue, as well as the inclusion of the arts in our programming, has allowed for a different experience for the American participants. Had the dialogues been less structured, or politically oriented, it is possible that the Americans would not feel that there was a space for them in the conversation. Perhaps this could be explored with further research. One example of connection created by including American students comes from Nura, who said the following:

> My partner is an African-American and we both felt like we're living in jail, like we're always criminalized, we're always guilty. And I was guilty for being born Palestinian and he was guilty for being born a black person. My jail is Israel; his jail is America. But we were feeling the same thing.

Participant Selection

In recruiting students for the program, Artsbridge worked together with local Israeli and Palestinian organizations to disseminate information, solicit applications, and interview and select applicants.[12] All applications were reviewed by a representative of the respective local organization and myself, as director of Artsbridge. Each eligible applicant was then interviewed in person and in small groups, also by myself and a representative of the local organization. When possible, Artsbridge alumni were included in the interview process in order to gain their perspective. Interviews were conducted in English with translations provided by the local representative, if needed. Because Artsbridge programs are conducted in English, it was important to assess the applicants' proficiency in spoken English.

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[12]While American students began to be included in Artsbridge in 2012 and students from Sri Lanka in 2018, this dissertation will primarily focus on the students from Israel and Palestine.

During the interview process students are engaged in conversations that seek to learn more about the student as well as to better understand their motivation for wanting to join the program. Because Artsbridge is a challenging program, the interview process is also an opportunity to assess a student's suitability for participation. While there are no specific criteria for selection into Artsbridge, students must show a willingness to engage with the 'other', a willingness to train and work in the arts and in dialogue skills, and to show a spark of genuine curiosity.

Why Students Choose to Apply to Artsbridge

The reasons students give for wanting to participate in Artsbridge vary widely, as seen in Table 4. As mentioned earlier, Artsbridge does not have stringent criteria for who is accepted into the program based on academic performance, knowledge of the conflict, or even a deep interest in peacebuilding. We believe that students from a variety of backgrounds and interests can benefit from participation in the program. One of the questions included in the interviews conducted for this research asked why they chose to participate in Artsbridge. Many students gave multiple reasons. Responses that were generated most often were, being able to travel to the USA, wanting to participate in an art program, wanting to meet people from other countries, or to meet "the enemy", and wanting to know more about the conflict.

Table 4

Breakdown of Reasons Students Wanted to Participate in Artsbridge

Reason for Participating	Total # Responses
Interest in Art	14
Meet/influence/learn about the other side	16
Learn more about the conflict	7
Want to make a difference	7
Visiting the United States/trip abroad	8

Note. Represented in this table are responses from participants interviewed for this research. Some students suggested more than one reason for wanting to participate.

As Munir (PLI) explains:

…at first, I was looking for something in the USA, because I really wanted to go there. And when I heard it was [about] the

> Israeli/Palestinian conflict I was like, it's okay. But when I actually
> started the interview, and when I went there, I actually got really,
> really, really interested in the idea. And I just realized how much I
> don't understand anything [about] it. Not anything, like I
> understand one side or one perspective. I understood that I
> need to know more, and my interest in the USA really changed
> into the interest in knowing more about the Israeli/Palestinian
> conflict.

Elements of Artsbridge

Artsbridge consists of several components that work together to create an experience for the students that encourages the development of relational resilience. While the three-week summer program in the United States is the largest elemeny, there are other aspects of Artsbridge that are equally important. After acceptance into Artsbridge, many students will have begun engaging in their local communities in one of the organizations that Artsbridge works with. The first time that all Israeli and Palestinian students accepted for the summer program for that year will come together is at the orientation.

The Orientation

Once students are selected, they must begin preparations for participation in the three-week summer session. Part of the preparation requires attendance at a 2-day seminar where the Israeli and Palestinian students will meet for the first time. During this orientation, usually held in June, students are introduced to each other through various group activities. Details of what to expect in the summer are explained to them and questions are answered. It is during these first two days that the students are introduced to Artsbridge dialogue. Often, when the students first experience the dialogue, there is confusion and, for some, frustration. Students are used to more confrontational approaches, such as debating and arguing, where there is a perceived winner and loser. At the orientation, they are encouraged to stay curious and to be open to new experiences.

Other topics are discussed during orientation, such as respect for religious and cultural norms. While Artsbridge is not a religious organization, the topic of religion is addressed, and there is discussion regarding respect for different religious and cultural practices within the context of inclusivity.

It is also during the orientation that students are informed that they will be sharing rooms with each other, and that each room will be multicultural. This idea is

often met with concern and some level of fear. While students tend to not express their fear in front of the group, they will sometimes come up to me in private and express their concerns. They are encouraged to be open and reassured that they will be safe. They are reminded that staff members are always close by and that the safety of all participants and staff is of utmost importance. By the time the orientation is over, most students are feeling less apprehensive and more excited. They are curious as to what awaits them. To date, no student has chosen not to participate in Artsbridge because of their experience in the orientation.

It is a requirement for participation in Artsbridge that at least one parent of each student attends one of the parent orientation meetings, which are held in several locations throughout Israel and Palestine. During that meeting, parents are informed of the details of the program, both logistically and programmatically. Just as there is apprehension amongst the students about engaging with their "enemy", parents are, often, equally concerned about the safety of their children as they travel overseas – some for the first time.

All Roads are not Equal. In addition to the payment of fees to participate in Artsbridge[13], the journey to Artsbridge for Israeli and Palestinian students is not an equal one. Both Israeli and Palestinian students must apply for a visa to the United States in order to participate in Artsbridge. For students from Israel, this means filling out an application online, paying a fee and going to the American embassy in Tel Aviv for an interview. For '67 Palestinian students, acquiring a visa for travel to the USA is more challenging. While filling out the application online is the same for Israelis and Palestinians, the challenge begins when they must go for their interview. The American embassy for Palestinians is situated in East Jerusalem, which is considered by Israel to be part of Israel, and is, therefore, on the Israeli side of the border. When the student applies for their American visa, they are given a date for their interview. Once the students have their date, they must then apply for a permit to enter Israel,[14] which takes a minimum of 10 days to receive. Applying for a permit is no guarantee that one will be granted. There have been several occasions where the students have received an appointment for their interview but did not receive their permit in time to get to their interview. Artsbridge

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[13] There is a fee to participate in Artsbridge, which is inclusive of the costs of the program as well as airfare. While scholarship is offered to any student requiring assistance, there are those who will not apply for the program due to the cost.

[14] Even though East Jerusalem is considered occupied territory, Israel considers it to be part of Israel, and thus requires Palestinians from the West Bank to have a permit to enter.

has a partner organization in the West Bank to assist students with this process, but there is never a guarantee that they will receive a permit.

The journey to the USA is another challenge for the Palestinian students. Due to the restrictions against Palestinians from the West Bank traveling through Ben Gurion airport in Israel, it is impossible for the entire group of Israeli and Palestinian students to travel to the United States together. Students who live in Israel travel through Ben Gurion Airport, which is anywhere from 20 minutes to no more than 2 hours from their homes. For the Palestinian students, though Ben Gurion Airport is physically a shorter distance away, they must travel through Jordan's Airport in Amman. The journey to the Airport in Amman requires them to travel to the Israeli border with Jordan, go through Israeli security, then Jordanian security and then stay overnight in Amman in order to take a flight the next day. They must also pay exit fees to Israel, entrance and visa fees to Jordan, as well as transportation costs and hotel costs. Even for the Palestinian students living in Israel, their journey is not as simple as for the Jewish Israelis. While the Jewish students pass through security with relative ease, the Arab students must deal with enhanced security measures, which can entail all of their luggage being opened and searched, lengthy interviews, and occasionally, a strip search. While all students travel with a chaperone, the chaperones are not allowed to accompany a student who is being taken for extra security.

For many of the Jewish students, it is the first time that they have been made aware of the differential treatment between themselves and their Palestinian peers.

Three-week Leadership Development Program

The three-week summer program, the largest component of Artsbridge, has taken place on various university campuses and, more recently, takes place on the campus of a boarding school in Western Massachusetts. One week before the arrival of the students, staff[15] arrive for training and preparation. During this week, staff work to prepare for the program which, along with typical preparations for staff working in residential summer programs, includes training in Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD). All staff are trained in TRD so that there is an understanding amongst staff of how dialogues are constructed. Additionally, all

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[15] Staff is comprised of paid and volunteer positions. Counselors, who oversee the students in social activities and in the dormitories, are generally volunteer college students (with priority given to alumni of Artsbridge). All art and dialogue facilitators are paid positions.

staff are trained to utilize TRD concepts in their activities with the students outside of dialogue.

Once the students arrive, they are shown to their room, given a tour of the campus, and introduced to the staff. Programming begins in earnest after the first day, starting with a high ropes course and teambuilding activities. Afterwards, students choose the art class in which they will participate. Additionally, they are divided into dialogue groups, taking into account a balance of nationalities in each group. The days are long and structured. Students experience a range of emotions throughout the three weeks, and it can often be stressful as they confront new and challenging ideas and experiences. The day is structured with minimal downtime, and minimal opportunities for students to go back to their rooms and retreat into isolation. The aim is to ensure that students are supported by the staff and their peers. The day begins at 7:00am and ends, officially, at 10:00pm. The programming continues for six days a week with one day set aside for a trip off campus. The daily schedule implemented for the 2019 cohort is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Example of a Typical Daily Schedule in the Artsbridge Summer Program

Time	Activity	Description
7:00/7:30-7:50am	Contemplative activity begins at 7 Remaining student wake-up 7:30	Students are given different options each day and may include Yoga, silent hike, running, depending on staff availability
8:00-8:30	Breakfast	
8:30-9:20	Student Morning Meeting	Expressive therapy group, consisting of check-in, teambuilding activities, and exploration of various topics as they arise
9:30 – 12:30	Dialogue	Dialogue groups
12:30-1:15	Lunch	
1:30 -2:50	Elective	Varies daily: Sports activities, additional art activities, swimming on hot days
3:00- 6:00	Art, Music, Film, Dance	Arts classes. Students go to the class that they chose
6:00-6:45	Dinner	
6:45- 7:00	Clean up	Students are divided into work groups at the beginning of the summer. Each group rotates through various responsibilities including, dorm cleaning, kitchen duty. Each group also has computer time scheduled in twice per week to contact family and friends
7:00- 8:00	Free time	Shower time and preparing for evening activity, relaxing
8:00-10:00	Evening activity	Scheduled group activities
10:00-11:00	Free time for small group activities in dorm	Students must be in their dorms but are able to socialize quietly
11:00	Lights out	Students must be in their beds

The three-week summer program culminates with the Showcase, which takes place the day before the end of the summer program. A detailed description of the Showcase will be explicated in chapter 7.

Post Summer Seminars

After the students return home, various secure groups are made on social media that include staff and students. The social media groups help to keep the experience and the conversations alive while students are distant from each other. For many of the students, face-to-face meetings are impossible. Information is sent on a regular basis to students in order to maintain contact until the first post-summer seminar which is held around the end of October. By that first seminar, the

students will have been home for a couple of months, and school will have begun. Enough time has passed for the students to have time to begin to process their experience from the summer program, but not so long that memories have faded.

There are three formal weekend gatherings for all of the Israeli and Palestinian students. The first one, at the end of October, will bring the students back together for the first time since the summer. While some students have been able to get together in small groups, many have not had the opportunity, though the vast majority have stayed connected via social media. Once again, the seminar takes place in Israel as it is illegal for the Jewish Israelis to enter into the West Bank. Artsbridge applies for permits for the Palestinian students the month before, and waits in anticipation to hear whether the students will get their permits. There have been years when students were denied permits, or, even if they have received permits the borders were closed at the last minute.

Each seminar has a specific goal. The fall seminar provides the students an opportunity for students to see each other as a group for the first time after the summer. There is a lot of excitement, yet there is also hesitation on the first evening. Students are not sure how they will be received. Will they all still be as close as they were in the summer? What has changed since then? There is time for socializing, as well as for dialogue. The dialogues center around processing what it has been like being back home after the summer. Questions such as, "What was it like to arrive home?" "What did you notice?" "How were you received by your family, your peers?" Many students express the feeling of having a bubble burst when they get home. They remark that the summer seemed like a safe bubble and they get home to realize that everything at home is the same as when they left. Others speak of being with their family and friends and noticing that often, when others are speaking nobody seems to be listening. The experiences and ideas that the students have when they return home are important to process during these two days, thus providing them with the space to articulate what they are noticing and the challenges they are facing as they return home and try to acclimate. The conversations continue by sharing ideas for how they can navigate these challenges, and how they can hold on to their new ideas and ways of being in the midst of "the old ways of being." Strategies are discussed and students are encouraged to stay connected with each other as each of them understands what they have all been through and that they can continue to have the kinds of conversations that had been so meaningful for them during the summer. By the evening of the first day, they seem as comfortable with each other as they were in the summer.

The second seminar takes place in January. The focus of this seminar is on how to stay connected to Artsbridge ideas, bring them into their communities, and becoming involved in social action. Guest speakers are invited from other NGOs who are involved in social action activities in Israel and Palestine and students are encouraged to get involved either in those organizations or in another of their choosing. They are also asked to do some form of community service. They can do their service alone or with other members of the group. For some students, their community service is already built into their connection to the partner organizations that Artsbridge works with. For others, they may do a presentation for their school or get involved with volunteering for another organization. The purpose is to find a way to pass on and utilize the ideas they gained at Artsbridge to others in their community.

While almost all of the students participate in the first seminar, there are, at times, a few missing from the second seminar. This happens for various reasons. For some there are legitimate excuses, such as exams or family obligations. A flare-up in violence can also impact attendance. For others it is not so clear. Whatever the reasons, it can be difficult for the students who do come to the seminars to see that some of their peers are not there. This is a subject of conversation. As with anything, not everybody will "show up." The question becomes what do we do when we make a commitment and some do not follow through? How do we handle the disappointment? This is an important conversation, especially for teenagers, and for those living with the pressures of violent conflict, and pressures from peers and school. By the third seminar, most, if not all students participate.

The winter and spring seminars of 2009 were particularly challenging. Shortly before the winter seminar for the 2008 cohort, Israel invaded the Gaza Strip. There was a great deal of tension. When it came time for the winter seminar, many of the Palestinian students did not show up. The Israeli students were hurt and needed processing. We happened to have many percussion instruments where we were, and each student was given an instrument. We began a rhythm with all of the students. As the students were continuing with the rhythm, some students were asked to walk away while the others continued the music. Some would reenter the group, and others stayed away, but the rhythm continued. It proved to be an important and relevant exercise, and a useful metaphor for carrying on when others may not be able to, for whatever reason. Since that year, there have not been any seminars with that extreme of a response to an outside occurrence, though it is not unusual to have one to several students not attending the seminar. I will suggest that, over the years, our preparation for the return home has evolved and students

are prepared more for what to expect when they return home and how to manage the challenges. It is possible that this is one reason why we have more students participating in follow-up seminars, because they value the continuity and support it provides.

The final seminar, which takes place in the spring, serves several purposes. It is a time of celebration, as students receive their certificates of completion. But more importantly, it is a time to look back on the year and reflect on the experience, as well as to look forward and think about how they will continue to face the challenges ahead. The students are asked to think of one thing that they will commit to achieving in the following year. The goal is to think of something that is a challenge, but achievable. The students are reminded that this is not the end of the program, but the beginning. The real challenge was not the summer program or the last year, but how to move forward in life and maintain the ways of being and thinking that they have developed over the past year, and to continue the journey, knowing that for each of them the journey will be different. Each student takes away something different from their experience in Artsbridge. For most of the students they see it as a personal transformation. The students are, once again, reminded that they did not learn techniques at Artsbridge, but a way of being in the world, a way of engaging with others and with oneself.

Alumni Conferences

One other event that occurs roughly every other year is an alumni conference, in which all alumni of Artsbridge are invited. Many of our alumni are now in their late 20's and beginning families of their own, so we have begun to allow alumni to bring a friend or partner to the conference. These events are typically 4-5 days long and consist of guest speakers, workshops, dialogues and social gatherings. On average, there are approximately 50 or so alumni that attend these conferences, representing all years of the program. The alumni conferences are an opportunity for alumni to connect with the larger Artsbridge community and to see that they are part of a larger network. It is also an opportunity to re-engage with the ideas and philosophy that they experienced at Artsbridge. Being older, alumni are able to connect in different, and often deeper ways to the ideas presented. For many of the Jewish Israeli students, it is an opportunity to reconnect after having served in the army. Many students have stated how important it was for them to re-engage after the army and to reconnect with the way of being that they had gained at Artsbridge. One afternoon, while I was in Israel for a seminar, I received a phone call from a student from the 2008 cohort. He asked if he could meet with me and

told me that it was important. We scheduled a time to meet in a café in Haifa, near to where he was stationed in the army at the time. The next day, I waited for him in the café and he appeared in his uniform with a rifle over his shoulder (a typical sight in Israel as soldiers are often required to carry their firearm with them when they are on duty.) I hadn't seen him for several years and he shared with me that he had a few more weeks of army service to go and was looking forward to being released. After some small talk, he turned to me and said, "I just want you to know that Artsbridge was with me every single day I was in the army. I just needed to tell you that." He went on to share that, every time he had to make a decision, he thought of what he learned at Artsbridge and it helped to inform his decision. For the last year of his service, he was training new recruits. He spoke of how he tried to work with the recruits in a way that was informed by his Artsbridge experiences. I believe this speaks to the concept of identity expansion as described in the review of literature. This young man was able to maintain his identity as a Jewish Israeli, and yet he was able to incorporate the ideas he learned at Artsbridge and attempt to pass them on to his trainees. Since that conversation, I have learned that this young man has founded a center in Jerusalem that serves as a space for people of all cultures and backgrounds to come together, learn how to engage constructively through the arts, and bridge the many divides that exist.

Summary

In this chapter I explained the impetus for creating Artsbridge, as well as the rationale and process behind its development. How students are selected for participation and the criteria for their selection was discussed, as well as a general overview of the various activities included in Artsbridge along with a description of how they are implemented. This includes the orientation before traveling to the United States, the three-week summer program in the US, post summer seminars, and alumni conferences held every two years, including how they are implemented. Each element of the Artsbridge process reinforces the other and impacts each other recursively. I emphasize here that all elements are carefully considered, with input from students and staff, in order to ensure that the focus remains on constructive, relational engagement.

Chapter Six: Transformative Reflecting Dialogue– New Possibilities for Moving Forward

"The paradox of dialogue may be in the simplicity and complexity of it on the whole. It is as easy as life, but at the same time dialogue is as complicated and difficult as life is." (Seikkula, 2001, p. 191)

Introduction

The term "dialogue" is used in a broad range of conflict situations, yet the characteristics of the form of dialogue utilized is often not specified. Within the Israeli/Palestinian context, various scholars discuss encounter programs that engage in dialogue without discussing the distinct methodology used (Hammack, 2014; Maoz, 2011). As Maoz (2011) describes, most encounter groups claim that their dialogue programs follow either the coexistence or confrontational model, with some, more recently, utilizing a narrative model. What I am suggesting in this dissertation is that whichever form of verbal engagement is used, the challenge remains the same – that is, how do we engage participants in a way that will provide a space for deep listening and transformative moments, in order to create new possibilities for moving forward together. I will also argue that the philosophical lens through which we view and engage in dialogue is an important aspect that is often neglected. I am proposing that the lens of relational construction provides a useful and important frame for the understanding and engagement of dialogue within contexts of intractable conflict. I begin this chapter with a comparative analysis of dialogue and other forms of communication often utilized within encounter programs with Israeli and Palestinian participants. The second part of this chapter will present the theoretical foundation for the practice of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD), including an overview of those scholars who have made significant contributions to how dialogue is framed from the perspective of relational construction. Finally, the third part of this chapter will present a thorough description of Artsbridge dialogue, which integrates relational dialogue with reflecting dialogue. I will discuss how and why it was developed, and how it is utilized within Artsbridge.

Comparison of Debate, Discussion, and Dialogue

Before going into detail about Artsbridge dialogue, it may be helpful to stress what dialogue is not. Many of the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students, in programs that bring them together, take the form of either debate or discussion. One of the premises of this dissertation is that, in the case of intractable conflict, debate and open discussion are not necessarily useful and are often detrimental. They differ significantly from the type of dialogue discussed here. Table 5 shows a comparison between discussion, debate, and relational dialogue.

According to David Bohm (1991) dialogue is not discussion, nor is it debate. As Bohm states, "These forms of conversation contain an implicit tendency to point toward a goal, to hammer out an agreement, to try to solve a problem, or have one's opinion prevail" (http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/dialogue_proposal.html). Dialogue, states Bohm, requires participants to reexamine the assumptions and perceptions that are brought into the dialogic space. He (1996) argues:

> The object of a dialogue is not to analyze things, or to win an argument, or to exchange opinions. Rather, it is to suspend your opinions and to look at the opinions—to listen to everybody's opinions, to suspend them, and to see what all that means. If we can see what all of our opinions mean, then we are *sharing a common content*, even if we don't agree entirely. It may turn out that the opinions are not really very important – they are all assumptions. And if we can see them all we may then move more creatively in a different direction …. Everything can move between us. Each person is participating, is partaking of the whole meaning of the group and also taking part in it. We can call that a true dialogue. (p. 30-31)

Debate: I Win You Lose

There are certain scenarios where debate may be useful, such as in analyzing various solutions to problems. Debate, in and of itself, is not destructive. However, in situations of intense conflict, it often devolves into repetition, entrenchment, and rhetoric (Chasin et al., 1996). In debate the goal is for one side to emerge as the winner and the other as the loser. An assumption that is typically made is that there is only one right answer. The speaker wholeheartedly and enthusiastically defends their assumption as a truth, and arguments are presented with the aim of proving the other side wrong. In a debate, each side is an advocate for their particular perspective or opinion, which leads to the critique, and often condemnation, of opposing points of view. Each side will listen to the other with the goal of finding flaws in the other side's argument, while developing their counter-argument.

Debates seek a conclusion that determines the winner (Chasin, 1996; Yankelovich, 1999).

Many students come to Artsbridge with the expectation that the dialogue sessions will be a form of debate. In some cases, students arrive with notecards, with their arguments laid out neatly for them to draw from. Others have their arguments so deeply ingrained through their collective narratives that notecards are not needed. Within the Israeli/Palestinian context, a group that engages in a form of debate will have considerable difficulty reaching any form of understanding and will often leave with a more entrenched view of their own narrative (Maoz, 2011, 2018). As discussed earlier, the collective narratives of Israelis and Palestinians are virtually mutually exclusive. The competitive nature of debate rarely allows for new meanings or understandings to emerge from the dialogues.

Discussion: Let's All Talk

Discussion differs from relational dialogue in that, typically, discussion has preset goals and each party presents their ideas and shares information in an attempt to seek answers and/or solutions to a problem. Often this is at the expense of listening for understanding. Each side listens to the other with the aim of finding places of disagreement or to insert one's own perspective (Yankelovich, 1999; Berman, 1997). The primary goal of discussions is usually to increase clarity and understanding of the issue at hand, with the assumption that there is a stable reality, or truth. Value is placed on the 'rightness' of a statement, and attempts are made to persuade others as to the truth of your side. Often, discussions will assume that the parties involved are on an equal plane, and there is little to no attention paid to identity, status, and/or power differentials. Feelings may be acknowledged, but are often discounted as inappropriate, or deemed irrelevant. Generally, an attempt is made to avoid areas of strong conflict and difference in order to retain relationships and avoid violent language (Maoz, 2011). In the case of a confrontational methodology, rather than avoiding areas of strong conflict, the approach is to confront those areas directly, leading to the potential for the paradoxical effect of further hardening opposing positions (Maoz, 2011). Discussions may be open ended or aim to reach a solution (Berman, 1999).

Table 6 provides a side-by-side comparison of debate, discussion and relational dialogue.

Table 6
A Comparison of Debate, Discussion and Relational Dialogue

DEBATE (Monologic) *If I'm right you are wrong*	DISCUSSION (Monologic) *I can speak louder than you*	RELATIONAL DIALOGUE (Dialogic) *How can we go on together"*
- Oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong. - Assumes that there is a right answer and one side wins. - Listening occurs in order to find flaws and counter arguments. - One advocates for one perspective or opinion. - Calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs. Debate defends assumptions as truth. - Each defends their position and aims to prove the other wrong. - Affirms a participant's own point of view. - Causes critique of the other's position. - One searches for differences. - One searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position. - Winning is the goal. Debate implies a conclusion.	- Ideas are presented. - Seek solutions and answers. - Often assume an "equal playing field" with little or no attention to identity, status and power. - Individual contributions often center around "rightness". - Seen as working towards finding the "truth" or reaching consensus. - One listens only to be able to insert one's own perspective. Discussion is often serial monologues. - Tends to encourage individual sharing, sometimes at the expense of listening to and inquiring about others' perspectives. - The more perspectives voiced, the better. - Can be open or close-ended.	- Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding. - Encourages curiosity. - All participants are treated as equals. - Participants speak as individuals, from their own personal experience. - New meanings and understanding emerge through the telling of personal stories. - Exploring identities and differences are key elements in both the process and the content of the exchange. - Calls for temporarily suspending judgments. - Invites introspection on one's own position. - One listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and points of connection. - There is the tensionality of holding one's own while allowing the other to enter. - Remains open-ended, without the need for agreement or consensus. - The aim is to find new meanings and ways to move forward together.

Note. Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on the discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility. https://ipsdweb.ipsd.org/uploads/PDAC/ComparisonofDialogueandDebate_0310.pdf) and Chasin et al., 1996).

Tracing the Roots of Dialogic Theory

The history of dialogic theory can be traced to several scholars, including Mikhael Bakhtin (1981), Martin Buber (1958), and David Bohm (1990), among others. While their views differ in some respects, there are several unifying concepts between their various ways of thinking about dialogue. One commonality lies in their critique of Cartesian philosophy, which attempts to seek certainty from within an autonomous self. As Kenneth Gergen (2009) states, "From the early writings of Descartes, Locke, and Kant to contemporary discussions of mind and brain, philosophers have lent strong support to the reality of a bounded being. In many respects, the hallmark of Western philosophy was its presumption of dualism: mind and world, subject and object, self and other" (p. xxi). Such dichotomies, Gergen argues, result in inherent competition and divisions. Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933) an American social worker, management consultant, and philosopher, spoke of the idea of relationality in her writings on the nature of being and on integration as an ontological principle (Whipps, 2014). Follett critiqued the duality of individualism, arguing that "our being in the world is a process of 'progressive integrations' with others and with the world around us, a process of ceaseless interweavings of new specific responding" (1924, p. 134).

A social constructionist framework, as discussed in chapter 2, challenges the presumption of an individualist view of the person. With a focus on the individual, communication becomes limited by the representations and assumptions that we hold "within" our *selves*. In other words, from an individualist perspective, communication is monologic (Sampson, 2008). Monologism, according to McNamee (2013), is our "taken for granted way of being in the world" (p. 189), with its focus being on the individual, or what Sampson (2008) calls the *self-contained individual*. As McNamee (1996) contends, "Monologue disregards the response of the other, and the speaker assumes the position of objective observer, evaluator, and an intentional agent/actor whose actions have certain effects on their objects" (p. 146). Martin Buber (1958) made a significant contribution to dialogic thought with his seminal work that made a distinction between two modes of conversation: the "I-It" and "I-Thou." The "I-It" represents a subject-object relationship, indifferent to the other, while the "I-Thou" represents a relationship that is mutual. Maurice Friedman (2001), philosopher and biographer of Martin Buber, writes of the "I-Thou" relationship: "What is essential is not what goes on within the minds of the partners in a relationship but what happens *between* (Italics in the original) them (p. 25).

Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), in describing the distinction between dialogue and monologue, explains that the utterances of each participant in a monologic exchange are designed only to achieve his or her own ends. He goes on to explain:

Monologism denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding on an equal footing, another and equal *I (thou).* For a monologic outlook (in its extreme or pure form) the *other* remains entirely and only an *object* of consciousness, and cannot constitute another consciousness…. The monologue is accomplished and deaf to the other's response; it does not await it and does not grant it any *decisive force.* (pp. 292-293, italics in the original)

Expanding on this idea, Sampson (1993) describes monologue, as opposed to dialogue, in the following way:

> When I construct a you designed to meet my needs and desires, a
> you that is serviceable for me, I am clearly engaging in a
> monologue as distinct from a dialogue. Although you and I may
> converse and interact together, in most respects the you with
> whom I am interacting has been constructed with me in mind. Your
> sole function has been to serve and service me. (p. 4)

Bakhtin (1981) sees the monologic, self-contained individual as a "hermeneutic and self-sufficient whole, one whose elements constitute a closed system presuming nothing beyond themselves (p. 273). As a boundary is created to separate oneself from the other, one is also constructing an 'other' "whose qualities ensure that my own integrity will remain unscathed and intact" (Sampson, 2008, p. 37). Gergen (2009) argues that, in order to ensure one's superiority, the other is necessarily positioned negatively, thereby distorting any interaction and creating distrust.

I would like to bring attention to the connection between the descriptions of the monologic, self-contained individual and the challenges faced by many encounter group dialogue programs. With a focus on debating or discussing the negatively interdependent narratives of Israelis and Palestinians, each group is focused more on their argument and less on to whom they are speaking. This, then, identifies two challenges with traditional forms of what many encounter groups call dialogue, which I will discuss below.

The view of the monologic, self-contained individual presents significant challenges in conflict situations, as is the case in encounter groups between Israelis and Palestinians. Over the years, these programs have utilized many different forms of interaction with varying results. Hammack (2012) and Maoz

(2011) suggest two different challenges that, they argue, interfere with the efficacy of those programs. They are the competing narratives of victimhood that these groups tend to feature, as well as the power asymmetry that exists between the Jewish and Palestinian students which appears to play out in more traditional versions of encounter group dialogue. Studies of group encounters between Palestinians and Israelis have shown that the power asymmetry between the Jewish Israeli group and the Palestinian group has a negative impact on intergroup contact (Maoz, 2000). Hammack (2011) argues that in the coexistence model, Jewish Israeli dominance can be perpetuated through patterns of dialogue, with the Jewish Israeli group attempting to shift the conversation from structural change to interpersonal coexistence. This has the effect of negating the goal of the Palestinian group, which is the promotion of political change and equality (2011).

Another interesting outcome is explained by the dual process model proposed by psychologist Serge Moscovici (1980; Maoz, 2000). The model relates to the power asymmetry that exists between a majority and minority, as is the case with Israelis and Palestinians. While the majority in power tends to overtly control both the direction and content of the encounter, the minority exerts a more complex influence. Moscovici's model states that the minority exerts a different form of influence, which expresses itself indirectly. In encounters between Israelis and Palestinians, Maoz (2000) after extensive field work, argued that Palestinian participants, as well as their facilitators, attempted to shift the group discussions more toward political issues while the Israeli group tended to focus on non-confrontational issues and apolitical topics. Maoz suggested that the behavior of the Palestinians is indicative of their attempt to enhance their own national identity, in addition to exerting their influence as representatives of the minority (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Maoz, 2000; Moscovici, 1980; Suleiman, 2004). Several of the art and film projects created by the students expressed this challenge. It is often the case that the Israeli student would want to create an art piece about something unrelated to the conflict while the Palestinian student wants to create something directly related to the conflict. Artsbridge is unique in how it engages the students with these issues in that these conflicts amongst the students are negotiated. Through extended conversations, often with either an art or dialogue facilitator, they are challenged to find a way to express the disagreement they are having through their art piece. An example of this can be seen in Figure 3 with the film, "We Agree." Other examples will be noted in Chapter 7.

Figure 3

"We Agree": Image and Narrative of Film Created by Students in 2019

We Agree – A Film About Resolving a Conflict

We made a film about our Journey in trying to make a film. In the film you will see the difficulties we went through while developing and working on the film, what our first ideas were for the film, and how different these ideas are. The conflict is resolved by having the film continue to represent our differences.

We struggled a lot with agreeing on an idea for our film. We both wanted completely different things from the film and couldn't find any common ground, so after a lot of long conversations and with the help of Artsbridge and many staff members, we finally developed an idea on which to base our film, an idea that we both agreed on.

In contrast to the coexistence model, discussions concerning the confrontational model intentionally relate to the conflict and existing power asymmetry in an attempt to empower the minority Palestinian group. As discussed in Chapter 4, this has the potential effect of simply reversing the power dynamics within the encounter situation, with the Palestinian group feeling more empowered. However, as studies have shown, the Israeli group ends up feeling threatened, and/or alienated (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Hammack, 2012; Maoz, 2011, 2018).

In any encounter where historical narratives are discussed, conversations tend to stay stuck on trying to prove who the real victim is and who the real oppressor is (Ben Hagai et al., 2013), with both sides presenting the case of their "side." Adherence to the dominant narrative offers benefits to members of a group by allowing them to feel validated and providing the support of like-minded people (Becker et al., 1995). While this identification with one's dominant narrative often affords them a sense of empowerment and safety, it also creates challenges. When bringing the Israeli and Palestinian teens together to engage in dialogue, adherence to those dominant discourses makes engaged, constructive dialogue extremely challenging if even possible at all. The deeply held, opposing narratives

brought by the students tend to create an environment which reduces the issues to a win/lose binary argument, leading people to feel the need to take a stand on one side or the other. Any person who is either unsure or conflicted about their belief, may feel that their voice is not welcome or will not be accepted (Becker et al., 1995). Additionally, according to Sagy (2002), in encounters between Israelis and Palestinians, discussions of collective traumatic events such as the Holocaust and the Nakba (see Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007)" led to a heavy silence or to verbal violence. The result was a feeling that the group had reached a dead end and was paralyzed in despair because of the other's impenetrability" (p. 266).

Social psychologists (see, e.g., Bar-Tal & Salomon 2006; Green & Estree 2003), noting the role of collective narratives in promoting hostility between connecting sides, suggest that the road to constructive engagement needs to include the generation of narratives that promote mutual understanding. Complex and inclusive understandings are more likely to be achieved through respectful dialogue about the narratives held by different parties than by demand for a single, uniform consensus. I suggest that relational dialogue is a path to constructive engagement, and that this is one of the positive outcomes of Artsbridge dialogue.

The challenges discussed above can be exacerbated by either debate or discussion. In a debate, whoever has the stronger argument, and often the louder voice, tends to win, thereby silencing the others. The end result is that neither group feels heard and no new understandings emerge. With discussion, while everybody usually gets to speak, participants are more focused on what they are going to say than they are on hearing what others have to say. Similar to debate, many do not feel heard and new understandings are difficult to achieve.

The kinds of conversations discussed above represent monologic conversations which revolve around the speaker's communication of their own thoughts and ideas without consideration of the listener. This often acts to silence the other. What happens in response to the speaker is that the listener is no longer listening to *hear*, rather they are listening to form a response. In other words, they end up speaking *at* one another (monologue), and not *with* one another [dialogue] (2006). An example can be seen when observing many dialogues between parties in conflict - rather than listening to one another in order to understand the other, they are listening to respond – or as William Isaacs calls it, "reloading" (1999). This is often the case with encounter groups that bring Israelis and Palestinians together.

McNamee (2013) notes that, in order for a dialogue to occur, "conditions of curiosity are fostered, despite differences in values and beliefs" (p. 189). The conditions for dialogue require that participants engage each other with respect and curiosity (2013). As I will discuss later in this dissertation, curiosity, is a

particularly important concept when members of the communities involved in the encounter are impacted by differences in power and status. In the following paragraphs I will review how dialogue from a constructionist standpoint supports the *withness* of dialogue (Shotter, 2010).

Foundations of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD)

The foundational premise of TRD is not unique to Artsbridge. Organizations have been using similar forms of dialogue in community conversations, mediation, organizational and leadership work, and in family therapy. In my own practice as a psychotherapist, I have successfully been using relational dialogue with couples and families deeply entrenched in conflict. In many ways, the intense conflicts that impact families and couples in conflict share commonalities with protracted conflict as experienced by Israeli and Palestinian groups. There are, however, several aspects that differentiate Artsbridge dialogue from other forms of relational dialogue. Artsbridge students are trained in a form of dialogue that has roots in Family Therapy. It utilizes parts of different dialogue models, including elements of the dialogic model developed by the Public Conversations Project (Becker et al., 1995; Chasin et al., 1996), as well as the work of Tom Andersen (1987, 1991), who developed the approach of working with reflecting teams.

The Public Conversations Project

Developed in Boston, Massachusetts in 1989 by a group of family therapists, The Public Conversations Project (PCP) was founded with the aim of exploring the possibility that the way family therapists work with interpersonal conflict could be adapted for use with people involved in intercommunal conflict (Chasin et al., 1996). They developed a model of facilitation that they utilized in their work with communities struggling with intense conflict, including conflicts between both sides of the abortion issue, stakeholders in the Northern Forests of the United States, as well as in work on college campuses and in religious institutions (1996). Their form of relational dialogue, according to PCP, has four guiding objectives. They are: "(1) preparing participants for a journey into the new; (2) creating a safe context; (3) avoiding the old debate; and (4) fostering the co-creation of a new conversation" (Becker, 1995, p 152). One project brought activists together from either side of the abortion debate. They began with guaranteeing participants that they would not have to engage in activity that was uncomfortable for them. The meeting began with a buffet dinner, at which time they were asked to share something about themselves that did not relate to the issue of abortion. After the meal, the facilitator

invited the participants into what they called "a different kind of conversation." One of the requisites was that they speak from their personal vantage point–from their own lived experience–rather than as representatives of any particular position. They were asked to share their thoughts and feelings, and to ask questions of curiosity. Several weeks after that evening, participants were contacted and asked for their reflections on the experience. In general, while they did not necessarily change their fundamental views on abortion, participants did feel that they had a more complex understanding of the issue, and no longer saw it in such black and white terms. They also spoke of how the experience humanized those on the other side of the issue (Chasin & Herzig, 1992; Gergen & McNamee, 2001). As you will read later in this chapter, while there are similarities between PCP's approach and the Artsbridge approach to dialogue, there are several aspects that differ, such as the use of reflecting team practices as developed by Tom Andersen, as well as some of the goals, which include teaching Artsbridge students how to engage constructively so that they may take those skills back into their home communities, and also to help participants understand a new way of being in the world.

Reflecting Team Practice

Reflecting team practice had its origins in Norway, through the work of Tom Andersen, a professor of social psychiatry at the University of Tromso. Andersen (1987) was influenced by the work of Gregory Bateson, Humberto Maturana, members of the Milan team in Italy (Barbetta, 2017), the Ackerman Institute in New York (2017), as well as the work of Harlene Anderson and Harry Goolishian (1986). Maturana, as noted by Andersen (1987), argues that the views of the multiplicity of meanings that constitute our world should be seen as a both/and, and not either/or. Part of Bateson's (1972) influence was his idea that the sharing of different versions of the same world can influence the person's attitude to that world, making it different than it was before. This difference, or what Bateson called "The difference which makes a difference" (1972, p. 459), has the potential to help families who seem stuck find a new way to move forward from their entrenched position (Andersen, 1987). Bateson's ideas are not only useful for working with families, but also for working with groups in conflict. While the elements of reflecting dialogue have been used to develop the Artsbridge method of dialogue, some adaptations have been made to ensure its relevance for larger groups of adolescents who are from the Middle East. The reflecting team process will be described in detail later in this chapter.

Transformative Reflecting Dialogue

Artsbridge dialogue is premised on the idea of the "withness" of dialogue, with a movement away from monologue and towards constructive engagement. Students learn that dialogue is not about arguing about the conflict, determining who is right or wrong, who is the real oppressor, or even whether there is a solution to the conflict. They learn an entirely new way of engagement – of relating. Israeli and Palestinian students who arrive in the United States for the three-week summer program, often come armed with their well-honed arguments with the intention of proving their side "right" and the other side "wrong." Israeli and Palestinian students are deeply entrenched in the meta narratives of their respective societies which tend to focus on trauma, loss, and past victimhood (Hammack, 2011; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Yildiz & Verkuyten, 2011). From the moment the students come together at the orientation, they begin to realize that conversations at Artsbridge will be different than anything they have experienced before. They will not only experience a new way of being in conversation with each other, but they will learn new ways of relating – to each other and to the world around them. They will be engaging in and learning about relational, transformative dialogue, which includes the concepts of relationality, tensionality, and transformation.

Relationality

The word "Dialogue" comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means 'the word' and *dia* means 'through'.... David Bohm (1996) posits that this derivation suggests a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through and between us. This concept can be visualized in the diagram drawn by Tom Andersen at a gathering at the Salem Center in 2006, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Visual Representation of a Conversation

The person to the left is talking and the person to the right is listening. The listener does not only listen to every word, but does also see how the talker receives her own words. The listener will notice that some of the talker's spoken words are not only received and heard but they do also move the talker. These movements of the talker can be seen or/either heard. (Anderson, 2006)

Note: From personal meeting with Tom Anderson, 2006

The term dialogos describes a process of meaning making and understanding that happens *between* persons rather than within persons. Bakhtin (1984) describes the process of dialogue as polyphonic, a responsive, multi-voiced activity. As such, our words and actions carry the beliefs, values, and stories from all our lived experience (1981). Dialogue is a responsive, situated activity – it differs from the inherently monologic, modernist tradition (McNamee, 2012) that prevails in Western society. Rather than focus on what is happening within the minds of individuals in conversation, a relational stance is concerned with what is happening in the "in between." As Bakhtin (1984) states, "Truth is not to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching… in the process of their dialogic interaction" (p. 114). Relational dialogues are spaces of uncertainty and multiplicity.

In his comparison of "I-It" and "I-Thou" relationships Buber argued that human existence itself is relational, and that it is only through relation that we fully open ourselves to others (1958). To Buber, dialogue, in its ideal form, is a relational process in which self and other (I-thou) are interconnected and both self and other are altered in dialogue. Friedman (2005) relates to Buber's thoughts when he emphasized that:

> Genuine dialogue can be either spoken or silent. Its essence lies in
> the fact that "each of the participants really has in mind the other or
> others in their present and particular being and turns to them with

> the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself
> and them." The essential element of genuine dialogue, therefore, is
> "seeing the other" or "experiencing the other side. (p. 141)

Dialogue, suggests Isaacs (2002), proposes a quality of interaction that goes beyond interpersonal subject-object exchange. It invites ontological inquiry as much as a problem-solving activity, and it challenges the traditional premise that communication is the 'exchange' of anything – such as meaning or messages" (p. 206).

In her discussion of dialogue from a relational perspective, McNamee (2013) discusses the concept of a relational ethic, which suggests that dialogue is an ethic of relationally sensitive practice and respects the diversity of ideas and values. True dialogue is an intentional, collaborative practice, with all sides working together toward common understanding; it is not focused on achieving agreement. All positions in a dialogue are treated respectfully and as equals.[16] When we engage in dialogue, we are asked to suspend our judgements and to be open to listening to the other in order to understand. One does not look for areas of disagreement. Rather, the aim is to find meaning and points of connection. Dialogue remains open ended, without the need for agreement or consensus. The hope that stems from dialogue is that participants find new ways of moving forward together. Therefore, dialogue is not about proving one's position as right, or disproving the other's position, nor is it about the transmission of "meaning, knowledge, or information to another" (McNamee, 2013, p. 9). Contrasting dialogue to discussion and debate, dialogue is not concerned with deliberately trying to get participants to reach agreement, or to alter or change behavior. Dialogue presents the opportunity for deeper and/or new meaning to emerge (Bohm, 1991).

Tensionality

In contrast to more common forms of communication, such as debate or discussion, relational dialogue can be said to be about both/and, as opposed to either/or (Montgomery & Baxter, 1998). Stewart and Zediker (2000) characterize dialogue as a "tensional, ethical practice" (p. 231). In describing this ethical

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[16] While all sides are treated equally in the dialogic setting, this does not connote the idea of "equal partners with equal values seeking equal outcomes" (McNamee, 2013, p. 189). Rather, when all participants in the dialogue space are treated equally, the conditions are more conducive to creating genuine dialogue that has the potential to bring to the surface the inequalities that exist between the conflicting parties.

tensionality they argue that "moments of dialogue emerge as meters traverse several interrelated, ethically-charged sliding scales" (p. 231). One of the primary scales that they discuss is "letting the other happen to me while holding my own ground" (p. 232). As McNamee (2008) states, in paraphrasing Stewart and Zediker (2000), tensionality is produced "when one holds one's own position while simultaneously remaining open to the (often very oppositional, contradictory) position(s) of the other(s)" (p. 10). For Bohm (1980) tensionality can be noticed in a way of thinking that he named *suspension*, which he considered to be one of the prerequisites for dialogue. Stewart et al. (2003) explain Bohm's concept thusly:

> For dialogue to emerge, a participant neither accepts his or her beliefs and opinions as reality nor rejects them completely. Rather, the interlocutor observes that he or she is experiencing beliefs and opinions and suspends judgment on them in order to examine the ways they shape his or her perspective and one's ability to experience and respond to others in dialogue. (p. 29)

Bohm (1980), in his own words, states:

> If we can all suspend carrying out our impulses, suspend our assumptions, and look at them all, then we are all in the same state of consciousness . . . a common consciousness. It may not be very pleasant… But if people can share the frustration and share their different contradictory assumptions and share their mutual anger and stay with it… then you have a common consciousness. (p. 33)

Between Israeli and Palestinian students at Artsbridge, that tensionality is palpable in the dialogues as they learn how to listen deeply to those with whom they strongly disagree, and it is that tensionality that opens space for new meanings to emerge (Bohm, 1980; McNamee, 2008; Stewart & Zediker, 2000, 2003).

Transformative

The tensionality and relational quality of the type of dialogue we are discussing is what allows for transformation – for opening opportunities for adversaries to bridge their deep divides. This does not necessarily mean that adversaries will suddenly agree with one another, but, as several Artsbridge alumni have expressed, "I don't agree with what they said, but I can understand where they are coming from." From a constructionist perspective, this might be considered as an "openness to diverse understandings" which will create space for new meaning to develop; with a focus on what we can construct together (McNamee, 2008). At

Artsbridge, this is done through the sharing of each of their personal connections to the conflict.

One of the conditions necessary for opening a transformational space is the suspension of "knowing." Harlene Anderson defines this as assuming a stance of not knowing. According to Anderson (2003), "knowing interferes with dialogue: it can preclude learning about the other, being inspired by them, and the spontaneity intrinsic to genuine dialogue" (p. 5). A stance of not knowing suggests that we suspend certainty of what we assume to be true, whether they be facts, truths, beliefs, or assumptions (2003). It is difficult to be open to listening to other perspectives and possibilities if one is already certain that they know the answers, facts, and/or truth of whatever is being discussed. This is a challenging concept for participants who hold such deeply held beliefs about the conflict in which they are living. As I will explain later in this dissertation, emphasis is placed in Artsbridge on creating the safe spaces that are conducive to allowing oneself to suspend the beliefs that are often held so dearly.

The Premise of Artsbridge Dialogue

If one were to posit a simple answer as to what the purpose is of Artsbridge dialogue, it is to engage the participants in constructive conversations and teach them the skills for sustaining those conversations once they have returned to their home communities. One cannot have a useful conversation about strongly held beliefs and difficult topics unless one first learns how to constructively engage with others. Students come to Artsbridge having had varied experiences with different types of dialogue, debate, and conversation. Generally, students have described their previous experiences as consisting of loud arguments, with one side trying to shout out the other and trying to prove their "side" right and the other "wrong." Students, indicating that they are "familiar" with dialogue, have suggested that dialogue is about not only proving their side right, but "teaching" the other side the "facts." When asked if they found these ways of having conversations useful, the general consensus was that they were, in fact, not useful; although some said that they felt better afterwards because they felt like they accomplished something. Nura describes her previous experience with these words:

> The dialogues compared to Artsbridge were very – it wasn't about listening, it was about – okay, this is the topic. Prove your point. This is how it was and when the facilitator tried to take it to places like to make it more calm, so it was too late. Everyone was

> crying and everyone was out of the dialogue because this was our goal. Each person wanted to just prove a point, so we were all fighting. I didn't find myself in that program. I felt like it was not my place, even when we came back here to Palestine. I didn't want to see half of the people that I met there.

The point raised by Nura is an important one. Once a conversation gets heated and people are arguing and saying hurtful things, it is often difficult to return to calm and to begin to build trust and safety in the group.

In the 2016 cohort several students were adamant that they did not need to learn a new way to "do" dialogue. The story of Amir and Ilana as described in Figure 5, is an example of what can happen during a discussion of heightened sensitivity. Dialogue at Artsbridge is not a place to argue the "facts" of the conflict, it is not about persuading the other "side" about what the "truth" is, nor is it about changing minds or about reaching consensus. The power dynamics between the parties in conflict, while not explicitly addressed, is inevitably addressed as the dialogues develop. This differs from other types of communication used in more traditional encounter programs, where either the issues of power dynamics are ignored in order to avoid tension, or they are addressed directly in a way that may lead to defensiveness on the side of those who hold more power (see chapter 4 regarding dialogues in various types of encounter programs).

Figure 5
Story of Amir and Ilana[17]

On the first day of dialogue in the 2016 summer program the students entered the room and sat down. The students that year were a savvy, independent, bright group of Israeli and Palestinian teenagers.

We were about to begin when one of the students spoke up: "We don't need to learn how to do dialogue. We already know how". A few other students agreed, while others remained silent. In the vein of co-creating the dialogic space, and after some discussion, the facilitators agreed to have them give it a try. One of the Jewish Israeli students, Ilana, wanted to begin the conversation. She began by telling the group why she loved being Israeli and why she felt so proud of her country, her heritage and her family. She shared the story of her father, who held a high rank in the Israeli army.

Amir, a Palestinian Israeli, was beside himself, jumping in to correct Ilana. "How can you be proud of your army? Don't you know what they do? Let me tell you the facts!" Tears started welling up in Ilana's eyes as she listened to Amir. One of the facilitators asked Amir why it was so important for him to share his facts with Ilana? "Because she needs to know the truth! Facts are facts," responded Amir. The facilitator continued to be curious about Amir's need to ensure that Ilana understands the "facts" – the "truth". Amir became frustrated with Ilana's tears. He stated that he could not understand why Ilana was crying… He was just telling her the facts.

After much frustration and tears, facilitators began discussing the possibility of exploring a different way to have a conversation. The group agreed to give it a try. Ilana, still upset by Amir's reaction to her comments, agreed to allow one of the facilitators interview her. In interviewing Ilana, the facilitator began by asking her what it was like for her to hear Amir's words. She expressed her sadness and hurt. Afterwards the facilitator asked Ilana to share where her love and pride of Israel came from. She shared the story of her grandparents who often speak about not being able to visit the graves of their family members who died in Eastern Europe, and the sense of loss that that brings.

Four students were asked to be on the reflecting team along with the other facilitator. One of the students who volunteered was one of the Palestinian students who, originally, did not feel that they needed to learn a new way of dialogue. After Ilana was finished, the conversation was turned over to the reflecting team. Each member of the team shared what resonated with them when hearing Ilana's story. When it came time for one of the Palestinians to share her reflection it was possible to see tears in her eyes. She shared that she resonated with Ilana's story. It reminded her of the stories of her grandparents who are not able to go back to their homes that they were forced to abandon during the Nakhba. She also shared that she was surprised that she was able to connect with Ilana, a Jewish Israeli, about such a personal story.

This was an important moment for the group, as well as a healing moment for Ilana. She felt heard.

Eliora describes another type of experience that she had in another program that brought Israelis and Palestinians together. As Eliora explains:

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[17] This story was retrieved from my dialogue notes from 2016, as well as from memory and discussion with the students involved.

> …we had some dialogues, but it was very, very much different because it was always the Israelis and then the Palestinian groups. The dialogues were all Israelis or all Palestinians. And that was very -- yeah, that's what I was thinking. Like the Israelis were talking and everybody else was listening but they couldn't be an active part of the dialogue. They were interviewing us and being like, okay, what do you think about that and this and this. And tell us your experiences and stuff and then the other group would go and they would ask the same questions, but there was no interaction.

In the example that Eliora shared, the facilitators, in an effort to avoid conflict, did not provide the opportunity for the students to interact with one another. This type of dialogue does not help the students learn how to have difficult conversations with one another and has the potential to leave the students feeling frustrated.

The Elements of Artsbridge Dialogue

The dialogue in Artsbridge is meant not only to provide the space to speak about difficult topics in a way that allows for constructive engagement with the other, it also teaches participants *how* to engage in difficult conversations constructively. While there are no expected outcomes for the dialogues with regard to specific content, nor set curriculum, there are intended goals, and clear guidelines. Specifically, by the end of the three weeks, the hope is that students will:

- Learn how to speak in a way that allows others to hear them
- Be able to ask questions out of curiosity rather than agenda driven questions
- Gain the ability to truly listen
- Develop a better understanding of the conflict and its complexity

This dialogic process aims not to achieve compromise or reach a solution or conclusion, but to help participants develop new understandings that allows them to move forward in new and constructive ways. It is also hoped that students will begin to develop empathy for those they do not agree with, while developing the capacity to appreciate complexity, to sit with uncertainty, to hold multiple narratives, and to develop an understanding of "both/and" versus "either/or." As Stewart and Zediker (2000) explain, it is about being open to hearing the other while also

standing your own ground, with the goal being to find new ways of moving forward together.

Creating a Relational Space

There are many elements that contribute to the creation of a relational space. I define relational space here as a space that feels safe to the participants and facilitators, and that is conducive to constructive dialogue. This would include creating the sense that participants can feel free to take a "risk" … to be vulnerable. The physical aspects of the space as well as methodological components of the dialogue itself are also important.

The Physical Space

One important aspect of a relational space is that it is seen as safe. The first step in that process is setting up the physical space. The facilitators set up the dialogue room before the students arrive. The necessary number of chairs are set up in a circle, with all participants, including facilitators sitting within the circle. Facilitators ensure that the space is quiet and enclosed so that there will be no interruptions during the dialogue sessions. There is always a whiteboard or flipchart available in the event that it is needed. It is also important that the dialogue space is designated to be used only for dialogue and serves no other purpose during the program.

Timing

For the past several years, Artsbridge dialogue has taken place in the morning, after the morning meeting and before lunch. The timing is significant. For the first few years, dialogue was held in the afternoons in order to accommodate the schedule of one of the facilitators who was commuting to the program. In 2012, when that facilitator was no longer working with the program, it was decided to change the dialogue to the morning as was originally intended. This was done for several reasons. First, having the dialogue in the afternoon did not allow for the art component of the program to be fully utilized as a therapeutic modality, or as a follow-on from the dialogue. Also, three hours of dialogue in the afternoon proved to be difficult for the students to focus and maintain their energy. Once the dialogue was moved to the morning, directly after the morning meeting, students were generally more attentive and engaged. It was also interesting to note that the art class in the afternoon began to take on a more developed role in the program, and became more integrated with the dialogue, which will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Language

Spoken language is a powerful tool and can often be used either to include or exclude others. English, being the native language for neither the Israeli nor the Palestinian participants, is the primary language spoken during the program.[18]

While all students accepted to Artsbridge are required to have a command of the English language, there are times when it might be important for students to be able to share thoughts in their native language. To limit the challenge of language becoming a barrier to communication during dialogue sessions, students are given the option of asking another student in the group to translate for them, if they feel a strong need to use their native language to express an idea. Facilitators intentionally do not act as translators in order to mitigate the power differential between student and facilitator. There is extensive conversation about the power of language and its ability to include or exclude. Students are encouraged to notice who is around them if they are speaking in their native language, and to be sensitive to the power that language holds.

It is interesting to note that, perhaps, as we encourage students to think about how they speak and how their words will be interpreted by others, that speaking in a non-native language automatically requires participants to think more carefully about how they say things and invites the listener to pay more attention to how they understand what the speaker is saying. This could be an advantage as we encourage students to pay more attention to the words that they use. As one Palestinian student from 2010 noted:

> I think for me the dialogues were extremely insightful just because, again, I heard about other people's struggles that I didn't even know existed. I thought you would think you would have your own struggles, but you never think about what other people are going through.

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[18] It should be noted here that, while English is the common language for the participants, it does limit eligibility for the program to only those participants who have access to the study of English. While this is not a problem for many of the students who learn English as a second language in their schools, students from lower socio-economic neighborhoods often lack that opportunity. One possible remedy for this would be to run after-school programs that focus on English language acquisition in communities where it is not offered in the schools. While this would be ideal, it is a costly and complicated endeavor.

New Beginnings

Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD) is introduced to the students in the June orientation session which takes place in Israel for all Palestinian and Israeli students. Because it is so different from what they have experienced previously, it is important to introduce the process of TRD to them ahead of the summer program in order to prepare them for what is to come. On the first day of dialogue in the summer program, the students are welcomed into the dialogue space by the facilitators. They are told that the space will be used solely for dialogue and nothing else. They are informed that it is their space, and their responsibility, together with the facilitators, to determine how it will be developed into a safe space. After the initial introduction, a conversation is opened about what is needed in order for the dialogue space to feel safe for everybody. The question is also raised by the facilitators as to why creating a safe space is important for dialogue. The students are then requested to do some brainstorming around what is needed for creating a safe dialogue space. Interestingly, one issue that arises almost every year is whether it is considered ok to "yell" in dialogue. Some students suggest that it would not feel safe, yet others suggest that yelling is part of their "culture" and should, therefore, be allowed. This process of determining the rules for safety can take time. It is important that the students are equal participants in the process of developing the guidelines and that it is not pre-determined by the facilitators. If there is disagreement regarding any of the elements suggested, the group determines, together with the facilitators, how the disagreement will be resolved. While the students work with the facilitators to develop the guidelines for dialogue, the facilitators work to ensure that certain guidelines are included in the list. If they are not raised by the students, they will be suggested by the facilitators.

The elements are as follows:

- Confidentiality: details of the dialogue are not shared with others outside of the dialogue group.
- What happens in dialogue stays in dialogue: Students are requested not to continue conversations started in dialogue outside of the dialogue space
- No judgments or critiques of what others say
- No interrupting others when they are speaking
- No blaming

For some groups it can take one 3-hour session, for others it has taken up to 3 sessions to finalize the guidelines. Often, some from the group will express frustration and say, "why don't you just tell us what the rules are?" "Why are we

wasting time on this?" These are important questions, which will open the conversation about personal and group responsibility, and which will help to reinforce the idea that the students are equally responsible (along with facilitators) for the group and what happens in the group. It is made clear to the students that the list may be revisited at any time if anybody in the group does not feel safe or feels that something needs to be altered. A written list is created on poster board and hung in the dialogue room, serving as a reminder that can be revisited if and when necessary.

The Details

Below is a detailed description of Artsbridge dialogue, which includes the various dialogic positions. Table 7 outlines the four positions that are included in the model. While reflecting dialogue was originally formulated with only three positions: speaker, interviewer, and reflectors, Artsbridge added the position of meta-reflector in order to allow the participation of all students in the group, and to assist them in noticing any dialogic shifts that occur during the process.

The structured dialogues that take place in the first 90 minutes of the dialogue session are based on the model of reflecting teams. Within this model there are four dialogical positions: speaker, questioner, the reflecting team, and the meta-reflectors[19] (Longin & Nathan, 2010).

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[19] The position of meta-reflector was added as an adaptation to the traditional reflecting team model as envisioned by Tom Andersen. The meta-reflecting position provides opportunities for the entire group to participate and will be discussed.

Table 7

The Four Positions in Transformative Reflecting Dialogue

Speaker	Questioner	Reflector	Meta-Reflector
Speak so that others will hear you	Ask questions that are non-threatening & have no agenda	Clear your mind of preconceptions	Pay attention to what is happening within the entire conversation between speaker and questioner
Affirming (positive, not negative)	Respectful	Open to what is going on in the conversation and self, paying attention to your internal conversation	Notice any shifts that happen in thoughts or assumptions (dialogic moments)
Speak of self, not other	Non-judgmental	Attention should be balanced between internal conversation and the conversation you are witnessing	Reflect to the group about what is noticed
Think about effect of words on others. They should be curious, interested, and wanting to know more	Questions that open possibilities	Remove yourself from the inclination to respond	Share any new thoughts or ideas that arise
	Do not make assumptions	You are not preparing an answer	
	Clarifying questions	Be in a conversation with yourself about what is going on	
	Position of not knowing and wanting to know more		
	Non-challenging		

The Speaker

The position of the speaker provides the opportunity for that participant to share their story in a safe, non-judgmental, non-critical space. In the role of speaker, the student learns to speak in a way that allows others to 'hear' them. They learn to take responsibility for choosing words that are most likely to be fully heard by the listener. The speaker is encouraged by the facilitator to speak from personal

experience, and to not speak in generalizations or as a representative of any particular group. As the speaker sits together with the interviewer, they are looking only at the interviewer, and not at the rest of the group. This creates a sense of intimacy, without worrying about how their words are being received by the rest of the group. Along with sharing their personal relationship to the conflict and how the conflict has affected them personally, they are invited to share their fears, hopes, and worries. They may also be asked to share the assumptions they have about the conflict or the "other." As they share their assumptions with the interviewer, the interviewer will ask questions that help the speaker to explore the origins of those assumptions and to explore other possibilities for understanding. An example of a question would be, "How did you come to this idea?" "Are there other voices that have supported that understanding?" "Are there times when you have noticed something that did not fall in line with that assumption?"

The Interviewer, or Curious Questioner

In the beginning of the three-week program, facilitators take the position of interviewer. They act as a model for the students, helping them understand how to ask questions, what types of questions to ask, and how to show the speaker that you are genuinely interested in hearing what they have to say. Once the students have a better understanding of the process, the facilitator will invite one or two of the students to sit with them as interviewer. By the end of the program, the goal is to have all the students experience the position of interviewer. In most cases the facilitator continues to sit with them but takes a more hands-off approach.

The interviewer learns how to ask questions, not out of a personal agenda, but out of curiosity. The questions are meant to engage the speaker in a process of sharing their personal experience of the conflict and exploring, elaborating, and finding new meaning in those experiences. Questions that the interviewer asks the speaker should invite the speaker to expand on their story and to look at their story in new ways. The interviewer will also make it clear to the speaker that they are not required to answer any question with which they feel uncomfortable. Herzig and Chasin, (2006) suggest that when participants speak about their personal, lived experience, others tend to listen more fully and begin to be more interested in learning about each other and to develop greater trust in each other. The sharing of personal stories stands in contrast to attempting to take a stand or position on a particular issue, which leads, not to the listener being more interested in hearing more, but to the listener taking a more defensive stance. In typical conversations, people usually state their old, entrenched positions on a topic, and give arguments

that support their positions, such as in a debate or classic discussion. In order to encourage dialogic communication, the facilitator asks questions that invite the speaker to communicate something beyond their "old" ideas, and that will lead the speaker to explore new ways of thinking about their narratives (2006).

To begin the conversation, the interviewer might ask more general questions that relate to the speaker's family, their community, their school, their personal interests. From there, the types of generative questions that the facilitator might ask are: "What is your experience of…", "what is your understanding of…." As the conversation continues, questions will relate to what the speaker is saying. There is no set list of questions, and no way to prepare ahead for the conversation. The facilitator is keenly focused on following the conversation with curiosity and with a focus on what has meaning for the speaker. Therefore, the facilitator should check in with the speaker to be sure that the direction of the questions is relevant to what the speaker wants to discuss. One distinction to be made here is that the facilitators, when in the position of interviewer, must remember that this is not a therapy session, and questions should not delve into deeply personal issues, but should be kept to the issues that arise from elements of the conflict. What the speaker discusses may be of a personal nature, but only as they relate to their experience of the conflict.

The Reflecting Team

After a short period of time, as determined by the interviewer and agreed upon with the speaker, they will turn to the reflecting team. The role of the reflecting team is to create the opportunity for participants to deeply listen to the conversation between the speaker and interviewer without speaking themselves. While listening intently, the reflecting team focuses on their own internal dialogue as they listen to what is being said – what sorts of images, stories, experiences and/or questions do the words of the speaker generate for them. As the interviewer and speaker turn their attention towards the reflecting team, the members of the team turn to face each other as they share their individual thoughts and ideas that stem from what they were listening to, and to their own internal dialogue. The reflecting team speaks to each other, avoiding eye contact with the speaker or interviewer. Avoiding eye contact with the speaker is an important aspect of the reflecting team. By not looking at the speaker, the speaker is free to just listen to what the reflecting team is saying without engaging directly. As the reflecting team speaks with each other, without looking at the speaker or facilitator, this frees the speaker up to just listen, as if from a distance, without concern for generating a response.

As the reflectors speak, they are aware that they are sharing only their personal reflection of the conversation, and that each reflector has their own thoughts and feelings. Therefore, they will speak in an uncertain fashion, or as Harlene Anderson calls it, from a place of not-knowing (Anderson, 2005), beginning their comments with "I'm not sure about this, but...", "I wonder if…" "I was moved by...", "I related to…". The reflectors are to share how they were touched/moved by what the speaker said, and what ideas or questions came up for them. They understand that the thoughts and ideas they share are not about whether something is right or wrong, or whether they agree or disagree. Also, they will not speak of anything that does not relate directly to what the speaker discussed. What the reflectors discuss is meant to generate new ideas and possibilities of action for both speaker and interviewer. Initially, the reflectors will each share their reflections, one at a time. Afterward, there may be a short period of time where they engage in conversation about the ideas, but the reflection should not go on for so long that it steers away from the speaker. Usually, reflections will take no more than 10 minutes.

When the reflectors are finished, they turn the attention back to the speaker and interviewer. The interviewer will then ask the speaker if there was anything in particular that the reflectors spoke about that resonated with them. The speaker is then free to discuss whatever thoughts or ideas that were generated by the reflecting team that resonated with them. Often, the speaker is surprised and moved by the comments of the reflectors. Participants have expressed that they were surprised to hear how the reflecting team understood what the speaker was saying, and surprised that there were different ways of seeing the same experience. The participants also express that the process made them feel heard, and that feeling heard was something that they, generally, had not felt before. Kenaan describes it this way:

> I felt that I was just -- I was surprised that people were so receptive to it. And the reflectors that I had, I remember them being wonderful, and just really making me feel heard. And so, I felt like, okay, like if anything, I got an experience to be heard without interruption, and now these people know me a little bit better…. And I think that that was really cool for me.

I would like to highlight here that the role of the reflecting team in the context of Artsbridge dialogue is different from what Katz and McNulty call reflective listening as utilized in interest-based and transformative models of negotiation. In the latter, reflective listening, similar to active listening, is described by Katz and McNulty

(1994) as "a kind of 'checking out' process to determine that both you and the speaker understand what he or she is trying to say." They argue that it also allows the speaker to feel heard. While the role of the reflecting team does serve those functions, it moves beyond the focus of confirming that the speaker is understood. The reflecting team speaks, not to the speaker, but to each other, allowing the speaker to listen fully without engaging. Additionally, the reflecting team reflects, not on the specifics of what they heard, but what had meaning for them – what resonated with them. This allows the speaker to hear the impact of their words on others, but it also provides the opportunity to members of the reflecting team to identify with what the speaker is saying in a personal way.

Meta-reflectors

The position of the meta-reflector was created, partly, as a way to include more voices in the conversation, and also to allow members of the group to reflect on what they noticed about the dialogue overall. What did they notice about the reflections, what did they notice about the speaker's response to the reflectors, and whether they noticed any shifts in the conversation or any new ideas that might have emerged. Those meta-reflectors that want to reflect do so at this point. While the meta-reflectors are not required to speak, it is rare that students do not have something they want to share with the group.

The Structure of the Dialogue

Dialogue sessions last for three hours and take place six days a week for the three weeks. First, there is a large group dialogue for 1½ hours which includes the entire group. This is a more formalized portion of the dialogue, consisting of a check-in, interview, and meta-reflection. After a short break, the students are divided into what are called core groups. The core groups are designed to provide the opportunity to separate the group into smaller discussion groups where they have the opportunity to discuss, more deeply, ideas that were generated by the large group dialogue. These core groups engage for another hour and a half.

Large Group Dialogue

Students arrive to the dialogue space, notebook and pen in hand, and sit in their seats in the circle. Facilitators are usually sitting on opposite sides of the circle (see Figure 6). Once everybody is seated, facilitators will begin a check-in. The facilitator will ask a question, and, going around the room in order, each person will respond to the question from the facilitators. The questions are generally simple

questions, such as: "What ideas or thoughts are you bringing into the room today?" Other times it might be, "Name something that you are still thinking about from yesterday's dialogue." They are encouraged to keep the responses relatively short so that there is time for everyone to comment. Facilitators also participate in the check-in and generally check in after the students. The students understand that when someone is checking in, no one is speaking and there are no interruptions. Often it is from the check-ins that the topic for the day is decided between the students and the facilitators, as well as who will be the initial speaker. Typically, the speaker is someone who has a particular interest or connection to the topic that has been chosen.[20] Once it is decided who the speaker will be, they move to sit next to the interviewer. A reflecting team is then chosen from amongst volunteers. This generally consists of the other facilitator(s) and representatives of the various groups (i.e., Palestinians from the West Bank – '67 Palestinians, Jewish, American, and Palestinians living in Israel – '48 Palestinians). The reflecting team is also requested to sit together. The rest of the group, the meta-reflectors sit scattered around the room.

The dialogue itself usually takes approximately 45 minutes. The first part of the interview takes about 15 minutes.[21] The reflecting team generally takes approximately 5-10 minutes, and the second part of the interview is usually about 10 minutes. The rest of the time is spent in meta-reflection and open conversation. The timing varies depending on the topics chosen, the engagement of the group and what is happening in the interview. In some dialogues, the reflecting team will have a second opportunity to share their reflections if it seems warranted. Otherwise, the facilitators will turn to the meta-reflectors after the second part of the interview with the speaker and interviewer.

Once the meta-reflectors have spoken, and if there is time left, the space is opened to general conversation on the topic. Before the group goes out for a break, the facilitators will often check in with the student who was the speaker to ask them to reflect on what it was like to be the speaker.

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[20] Facilitators work to ensure that any student who wants to be a speaker has the opportunity to do so. It is hoped that each participant will take advantage of the opportunity to do so over the course of the three weeks, but no one is pressured to sit in the speaker position.

[21] Facilitators pay careful attention to the students and how well they are staying focused. Over the years we have come to notice that 45 minutes seems to be the amount of time that is needed for a substantive process but not too long that students become fatigued.

Small Groups

After the first part of the dialogue, which lasts approximately ninety minutes, there is a short break, and the students then gather into smaller groups. During the first several years of Artsbridge, the small groups were structured by nationality. Jewish Israelis were one group, and Palestinians were the other. In the first few years of the program, when core groups were only divided by Israeli and Palestinian, Palestinian citizens of Israel ('48 Palestinians) were sometimes asked to choose which group they wanted to join. This was a stressful experience for those students, but it raised important issues surrounding identity and opened significant conversations about the challenges of identity and the unique challenges for Palestinians living in Israel. In the last several years, we decided to not limit core groups to nationality, as we felt that it was simply reinforcing the entrenched narratives that existed and caused unnecessary discomfort for the '48 Palestinians. Also, in order to alleviate the impact of calling the groups "Israeli" and "Palestinian," we divided by native language. This shift in how we named the groups eliminated some of the additional stress of having to choose to identify as either "Israeli" or "Palestinian." At the same time, we also added core groups based on gender, religion, as well as simply breaking up the large group into smaller, random, conversational groups. The core groups divided by native language are usually preferred by the students towards the beginning of the summer, or when there is a specific topic that the students feel they want to discuss in their native language. It is of note that, towards the end of the three-week program, there is less interest in native language core groups in general. By far the most popular core groups are those divided by gender. There seems to be great interest in discussing gender specific issues and their relation to conflict, and students are surprised to notice the commonalities that exist between them with regards to gender issues.

Figure 6
Arrangement of the Dialogue Space

The Dialogue Circle

- Questioner/facilitator
- Speaker
- Reflectors
- Metareflectors
- Facilitator

The Facilitators

Each dialogue group has two facilitators. In the first several years of Artsbridge, the facilitators were Israeli and Palestinian. This was considered necessary in order for the students to feel that they were represented by a facilitator. As the program developed, several variations have been explored, which includes having non-Israeli and non-Palestinian facilitators. We have had facilitators who were from Sri Lanka, India, as well as Americans with no connection to the conflict. What has become clear over time is that nationality is not as important in this model as is the facilitators understanding of the methodology and philosophical underpinnings of the program. While the nationality of the facilitators is not of primary importance, it is important that there be a balance. In other words, if there is a Jewish Israeli, then

there must be a Palestinian facilitator. There is also an attempt to balance gender. It is important that the students are able to relate and identify with at least one of the facilitators in some form or another. As the program grew to include more students, the dialogues were divided into two dialogue groups. In this case, the focus is on having diversity amongst all of the facilitators. For example, in 2018, the group of facilitators included 1 non-Jewish, non-Arab male from Sri Lanka, one non-Jewish non-Arab male from Houston Texas, one Christian Palestinian female from Bethlehem, one Jewish Israeli female living in Israel, and one Jewish female from Mexico. The fifth facilitator rotated between groups.

Facilitator Training

Training for Artsbridge dialogue facilitators consists of ensuring an understanding of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, an understanding of elements of social construction, as well as training in group dynamics. There are several meetings before the summer program begins, including a week-long training/orientation directly before the commencement of the summer program. Because the facilitation of Artsbridge dialogues is significantly different from other facilitation models, it can be frustrating for facilitators trained in more traditional methods. For this reason, Artsbridge does not necessarily seek out traditionally trained dialogue facilitators. Often facilitators come from a background of psychology, art therapy, social work, and education. Additionally, it is not uncommon for facilitators to return to Artsbridge for several summers. As facilitators note, each year of facilitation brings a deeper understanding of the process, and increased comfort level with the facilitation itself.

During the week of training before the program begins, all the staff learn TRD, as well as some of its philosophical underpinnings. There are several sessions during the week where the methodology is taught and experienced. Staff come to understand that, even though they are not responsible for the facilitation of the dialogue groups, the philosophy that underlies the process is what frames the entire program and informs any interaction the staff has with the students and/or each other. For the facilitators, who also participate in these staff sessions, additional time is spent working together as a facilitation team, getting to know each other, and working through any issues that have the potential to cause complications during the summer. These may be personal, structural, or philosophical. Facilitators who are returning for subsequent summers act as mentors to the new facilitators. If all the facilitators are returning, they can focus on deepening their understanding of the process and of each other. Other than the

first and third year of the program, Artsbridge has not had a year where there has not been at least one returning facilitator, which has been extremely useful for the flow of the dialogue groups.

Throughout the years, staff have expressed how important it was for them to receive training in the method of dialogue used at Artsbridge.

> I think it definitely helped that I was trained in the dialogue facilitation model, because that was always brought into how I facilitated any sort of talk about the art, and sort of just the expressive therapy background. So, there was never judgment, that was very clear in the beginning.   Cailin, Art Facilitator

The Role of the Facilitator in the Dialogue Room

Throughout the program, one of the consistent roles of the dialogue facilitator is to encourage the expression of deeply felt experiences of past accounts in a way that leads to new understandings rather than to the reinforcement of old antagonisms and mistrust. Over the course of the three-week summer program, other roles held by the facilitator in the dialogue space evolves. Towards the beginning of three weeks, the facilitators are mentors, role models, and educators. They are responsible for working with the students to create a safe space and ensuring that the dialogue space is maintained as a safe space for all of the participants. Secondly, they act as models for how to engage in constructive conversation. Facilitators are encouraged to be transparent. If there is a question as to how to proceed in the dialogue, they are encouraged to engage in that conversation in front of the students where possible. It is important that the facilitators are able to model constructive relationships, even in disagreement. For many, if not most of the students, this comes as a surprise, as it is often a new experience for them to witness a disagreement that is constructive and does not dissolve into argument. Facilitators act as educators as they teach TRD to the students. Teaching is not done didactically, rather through the process of the dialogue itself. Students are engaged as equals in the process and are not criticized for "mistakes." Within the process, facilitators will model a more constructive way to engage with each other. Often this is done through a reflection or question to the student/students.

As the dialogues evolve and the participants become more accustomed to TRD, the facilitators take a less prominent role. It is important to note that, while the facilitators are in a mentorship role, the goal is not to be hierarchical. Their purpose

is not to be "expert" or "smarter than" the participants. It must be stressed here that, in the dialogue room, the facilitators are on a journey, along with the participants. While they have knowledge of the process of TRD, they are regarded as equally engaging in this process with the participants. In fact, each facilitator, regardless of their nationality, is necessarily transformed along with the participants in each dialogic encounter. As Amanda, a dialogue facilitator in 2018 and 2019 states:

> I think it became part of me, part of who I am as a therapist because [in]my work, I focus on self-care, and I relate that so much to the conflict and so much to what's going on back home. So, for me, it became part of who I am and I tried to include that even when I'm working. It became a part of who I am….. I was challenged by [the power dynamic] when I was a dialogue facilitator because also, I'm Palestinian, so I was trying to be aware of my biases and my own personal story and how it comes up and the whole thing. It's a lot of emotion also involved with that because of the experiences I had…. I felt like it was a new learning and realization, and it added to my work and my personal life.

Dialogue is seen as a relational process. The facilitator does not set goals for the dialogues, nor is there an agenda for what topics must or should be covered. Issues are addressed and discussed as they arise in the conversations.

Supervision/Debrief

Each day after dialogue, the facilitators will meet as a team to debrief. Generally, these meetings are held with the director and serve several functions. First, they provide the opportunity for the facilitators to meet as a team to process the day's dialogue. Each facilitator will discuss what transpired, what they noticed was important, any struggles that they had, and how the co-facilitators connected with each other. Second, these meetings are an opportunity to think about what might be useful for the next day's dialogue. Thirdly, they provide a chance to come together with the director for further training and processing. Facilitators are able to discuss the dialogues that occurred that day and reflect on what transpired, what was meaningful, and how to think about the process. These meetings also offer time for the facilitators to process any difficult or challenging thoughts, emotions, or

ideas that came up for them during the dialogue. These debriefing sessions can focus on structural issues of the dialogue, or personal and/or interpersonal issues that may arise during the dialogue that may affect their facilitation the next day. Facilitators have expressed that this is an important part of the process and helps them engage more constructively with the students as they come to an understanding of their own internal responses to the dialogues. As Sandev, a facilitator from Sri Lanka, describes:

> I think it's an essential part of it because it's the idea that you establish that you are not neutral in that space, that you are not a neutral figure and so caring for that space has to be consistent and has to be ongoing. I think the moment you fall into that space of assuming a kind of neutrality on yourself, you miss the kind of power that you might miss in that space. Just being aware of what you're carrying into that space makes me aware that I'm not a neutral figure in that space…. there's no neutrality in that space. So, I need to continue to be curious and I need to continue to be aware of what I'm carrying into the room and to continue to be holding and caring for the space.
>
> Having those debriefs and being aware of that constantly reminds me of these things and being sensitive enough to know when something is affecting you or maybe not, but then be able to debrief how something affected you just largely because it goes back to what I was saying about modeling.

In my interview with Amanda, she describes supervision this way:

> **Amanda:** After the dialogue, I don't feel like talking about it for some time, but then when we meet afterward, we work out things with (the director), and when (the director) gives us a different insight, and we process things, so I'm ready to go back the next day with an understanding of what just happened. And that played a huge role for me. I learned a lot from those meetings, from listening to the other group experience – that was another dialogue. That was like the dialogue that's happening within me, with my co-facilitator and the other facilitators and (the director).

> **Interviewer:** Would you say that there was anything different about the way that we did supervision from other types of supervision that you've received?

> **Amanda:** I felt more paid attention to, like what was going on with me. It was special in the way that it also included dialogue. I think sometimes we did an interview, and we did reflect, so adding that component.

Overarching Goals of Dialogue

> "I learned a lot of ways to speak in order for people to want to listen to me. I'd rather be clear and honest – I learned that from Artsbridge, like speak my truth and that's only my truth, I'm not representing anybody. At some point, I had a shift in the program because I felt like I am here representing my people or something and then I realized, no, I am representing myself. This is me speaking. I realized the difference between my background, what people and what my culture taught me, my background, my religion, etc., and who I am. There is a difference. I discerned from that and I chose the beliefs and the ways I want to represent myself and that was really, really intense."   Jaleel

As the positions taken in TRD are considered: the speaker, questioner, reflecting team, and meta-reflector, it is important to note that each of these positions mirror the elements of a constructive conversation: Asking questions out of curiosity rather than an agenda, speaking in a way that allows others to hear you, and truly listening to what the speaker is saying. It is stressed to students that Artsbridge dialogue is not a technique; it is a way of being in the world. As the participants become more adept at TRD, they begin to internalize the ideas. Towards the end of the three weeks, there are more open dialogues. The students seem to develop a sense of when a topic is getting hot and will ask to switch to TRD. It is also possible to notice that, towards the end of the three weeks, more conversations about some of the more difficult topics are being had outside of dialogue. Often, the conversations are held in the dorm rooms at night and

counselors are there to unofficially oversee the conversations. As one student noted in her conversation with the interviewer:

Lea: After the day was over, and I was there with N and R in the room, I had a lot of things like, to say. And I found out that I'm very -- that I sometimes prefer to take a step back, and not to say my intuition (thoughts) right away.

Interviewer: And has that been helpful for you, is that a good thing to know about yourself?

Lea: I think yes. I think that I have now, much less pressure to say something if I don't really feel that I resonate with it. I can find myself very often just listening, and saying supportive things; rather than to say my opinion, to say this is like, I feel… I found out that my feelings are not necessarily the main thing to say.

Interviewer: (Hebrew translation) I mean good or bad. What do you think, if we did the dialogue differently, might have happened, in the room at night, when you had those conversations?

Lea: Honestly, it's hard for me to imagine a different way to have dialogues, seriously. I see this and it's like -- I think how I would do it another way, and I'm not sure. But I think it was good. I think I needed the time to think and to process. The way that -- because the way the dialogues were, I had the opportunity to listen, and to think about it more deeply.

Interviewer: So that's what I'm asking. If the dialogue wasn't the way it was, would you -- do you think those would have turned into arguments? Or do you think because of the way the dialogue was in the morning, the three of you could talk about it in a more open way, without arguing?

Lea: Yeah. I think that if the dialogues were made another way -- so I think maybe we weren't able to talk about it without getting into arguments. Even there, I often had a harsh thing to say. But because of the way the dialogue was, and because I'm not the only one to raise doubts and thoughts, it was more a – it made, for N, for example, more able to understand what I'm saying,

> and to listen to it. Even if I had something that was hard to say. Yeah.

The overarching goal for dialogue, then, is to work, in conjunction with all the other components of Artsbridge, to teach participants a way of being in the world, and a way of engaging with others. It is important that the students begin to understand the complexities that exist, and that there is not just one way to view a situation – that through listening to other perspectives, they are able to generate new possibilities for understanding. It is hoped that one of the important outcomes of this process is that the ideas learned and generated within dialogue will be transferable to other aspects of the participants' lives – that the dialogue is not just a method for having difficult conversations, though that is an important role. It is also to offer the participants new possibilities for being in the world, for seeing the "other" in relation to themselves, and for seeing themselves as constructive, relational, human beings, and of course, to understand that …. it's complicated.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the dialogic component of Artsbridge which is Transformative Reflecting Dialogue (TRD). The foundational history and reasoning behind its use was explicated. While most descriptions of other encounter programs define their dialogue as either coexistence, confrontational or narrative, Artsbridge dialogue differs in that its focus which is not on what is discussed, but on the process of the engagement. Facilitators play a more active role than in most situations, as they model constructive engagement and maintain a tight structure as the students are learning a new way of engaging.

In the following chapter I will review how the arts are incorporated into Artsbridge, including the various elements and their rationale. The value of the arts will be explored in the context of intractable political conflict.

Chapter Seven: The Arts in Artsbridge–Creative Communication

…Art never stopped a war and never got anybody a job. That was never its function. Art cannot change events. But it can change people. It can affect people so that they are changed… because people are changed by art – enriched, ennobled, encouraged – they then act in a way that may affect the course of events… by the way they vote, they behave, the way they think. (Leonard Bernstein, Conductor, Composer, Pianist)

Introduction

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the various theories of Art Therapy, Expressive Therapies and the use of art in situations of conflict. The second part of this chapter will focus on how and why the arts are utilized in Artsbridge.

Since the earliest record of human history, the arts have been used to communicate. Cave drawings appear to be the original form of written communication (Kaplan, 2007). The arts have offered glimpses of humanity's collective history, and have chronicled a wide spectrum of emotions and experiences. Just as letters are the tools of written communication, and various sounds provide the tools for spoken language, colors, shapes, lines and images are the language of visual art. Art speaks to us in ways that words cannot (Malchiodi, 1998). Throughout history, art has served "as a means of reparation, rehabilitation, resistance and transformation, and has been used to restore physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being (1998, p. xiii).

A human's earliest way of knowing is preverbal (Allen, 1995). Children have a natural ability to play and to create, uninhibited. Sadly, this natural ability diminishes as we grow (Allen, 1995; London, 1989). As we become socialized, we are taught to draw within the lines, images are required to be represented by specific colors, such as green for grass, blue for sky, and so on. Our creative endeavors are critiqued and we learn to feel embarrassed and judged.

Most of us do not create art beyond kindergarten, as societies often prize intellectual discourse, reading, writing and mathematics. Dominant Western culture places higher value on rational-cognitive ways of knowing and tends to dismiss or ignore completely emotional and embodied ways of knowing (Lawrence, 2005a). However, research indicates that artistic ways of knowing help us to experience the world in more holistic ways, and deepen our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world around us (Lawrence, 2005a). As Lederach (2005) states, "Art and finding our way to our humanity are connected. Politics as usual has not shown itself particularly capable of generating authentic change for the good of the human community" (p. 162). Lawrence and Mealman (2001) suggest that we must expand our view to include artistic endeavors, since cognitive processes represent only a portion of human capacity.

Within the realm of intractable conflict, art has the capacity to engage participants in ways that cognitive processes and rational deliberations seem to limit (Cohen, 2006). Art changes the discourse around conflict and peace by providing new languages, both verbal and nonverbal. It is through the arts that humans "engage their somatic, sensory, cognitive, affective, and symbolic faculties to manipulate and organize natural phenomena such as light, color, sound, proportion, and movement" (Wood, 2015).

The Arts and the Conflict Continuum

Cynthia Cohen (2015) discusses the unique qualities that the arts bring to peacebuilding. Much like dialogue, the arts evoke the qualities of attention and response that can best be understood with the framework of what she calls the *aesthetic experience* (2015). Cohen describes aesthetic experiences as "intensely felt human apprehensions of the world, engendered by engagement with nature and with certain human-made forms and processes" (2015, p. 5). Cohen goes on to explain the relationship and interplay between the work being perceived and the perceiver. This interplay opens up the senses of the perceiver, which allows them to receive the work and notice how it resonates within them, much like the relationship between the speaker and reflecting team in dialogue described in Chapter 8. The aesthetic experience incorporates a multiplicity of human capacities including the senses, as well as cognitive, emotional and spiritual faculties which, in turn, "provide opportunities for individual and collective learning, empathy, imagination, and innovation, all of which are central to peacebuilding efforts" (2015, p. 6).

Expressive Arts Therapy: Multiple Modalities

Much of how Artsbridge utilizes the arts stems from the ideas and foundation of Expressive Arts Therapy (EAT), which its founders grounded in post-modern philosophy. This aligns it with the overarching framework of social construction that informs the work of Artsbridge (Levine, 1999). Expressive Arts Therapy has its beginnings as a specific discipline in the 1970's at Lesley College Graduate School (now Lesley University) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, through the efforts of Shaun McNiff, Paolo Knill, Norma Canner, and others. Interestingly, the founders themselves consider the use of the term "Expressive" to be a misnomer, as it has come to connote art as "self-expression," or in other words, an outward representation of inward feelings (Levine, 2011). Rather, they see art as the creation of an alternative world of the imagination. The artist creates art in relation to others and their surroundings. The art could be considered a co-production between the artist and their world. McNiff, Levine, Knill, and others disagreed with the Cartesian concept of duality. As discussed earlier, Descartes considered the mind to be a self -contained entity populated by ideas and separate from the body. Without the concept of the mind being a separate entity, art, then, could not be a manifestation of what is contained inside it.

In contrast to individual creative art therapies, such as visual art, music, or dance therapy, Expressive Arts Therapy developed outside of an established psychological framework, and as a "theory indigenous to the arts" (2011, p. 21). This was considered to be more appropriate to aesthetic experience itself, rather than situating it within another psychological foundation (2011). Paulo Knill formulated the theory with the notion of "intermodality" which informs EAT, and is distinctly different from the creative arts therapies in that it utilizes a multiplicity of modalities (Knill, Barba, & Fuchs, 2004). The rationale for the intermodal nature of the field is that in a multimodal experience (i.e., moving from one modality to another within a given experience), we are able to access all of the sensory capacities.

Poiesis

Another foundation of EAT, according to Levine (2011), is the concept of poiesis, through which artistic expression can be understood. Taken from classical Greek, poiesis originally signified the act of making something that did not exist before, in this context, art-making in particular. The concept of poiesis helps to understand art-making from a perspective that is different from our accustomed way of thinking, which implies that art-making is a specialized activity and that the

artist draws from some internal source for their production. Rather it is "an extension and development of the basic capacity of human beings to shape their worlds" (p. 23). Levine suggests that this capacity for world-building makes the arts uniquely suited to social action and social change. The arts have the distinction of being performative. Even visual arts can be considered performative in the act of viewing. Because the creative work is viewed and experienced, it affects us. It 'touches' and moves us, transforming both the creator and viewer. Levine calls this "aesthetic response" (2011). This response can be understood as affecting the creator of the art, as well as the other viewers. In a sense, the art becomes a physical manifestation of a dialogue, and therefore has the capacity to transform both the viewer's and the creator's understanding. Michael Shank and Lisa Sinrich (2008) note art's ability to communicate and transform the way people think and act, thereby changing the dynamics of relationship.

The Unique Qualities of Art-making

The unique qualities of the arts have a great deal to contribute to the field of conflict transformation and transformative learning. Engaging with the arts facilitates the development of skills and capacities for more constructive engagement with conflict. The transformative power of the arts also helps to foster new perspectives that enable participants to develop more cooperative relationships (Bang, 2016). The arts also have the ability to restore and support capacities that are most needed for the transformation of conflict, including abilities that are often diminished by violence. According to Cohen (2015), these capacities include "listening reflexively, speaking in a way that allows others to hear you, being curious, the ability to understand and withstand complexity, as well as the ability to tolerate the tensionality of contradictory ideas or elements (2015). These capacities are the very capacities that are also developed and supported through TRD as experienced in Artsbridge. One can begin to see the interwoven threads of the various elements of the Artsbridge process.

The Use of Metaphor

Poetry and other uses of metaphors engage the imagination and may also serve as useful tools for constructive conflict engagement in complex situations. Coleman and Deutsch (2014) explored the use of metaphors and engagement with the imagination of a ''desirable future,'' where parties are assisted in imagining desirable future relations and thinking about how to reach that end from their current situation (p. 487). Poetry, for example, may aid in this effort with its impact

through metaphors to "enliven and restore the capacity to imagine" (Cohen, 2005, p. 96). This and other forms of aesthetic engagement allow communities to "engage the complexities of a painful past in order to shape and affirm the more nuanced moral sensibilities they need to construct their future" (Cohen, 2005, p. 97).The ability to imagine a different future also requires the capacity to hope – something that is negatively impacted by prolonged, violent conflict.

Imagination and Hope

What is it about the arts that allows for the development of these capacities and what is their relationship to the transformation of violent conflict and to relational resilience? Whether one is engaged in the creation of an artistic element or is positioned as the viewer of it, the arts encourage the development of imagination and hope.

So often in protracted conflict, individuals lose their ability to imagine a future that is different from their present situation. They lose hope that change is possible and that an end to the violence is achievable. As Kalmanowitz (2013) suggests, "hope does not simply come, it needs to be created, imagined, inspired and stimulated" (p. 317). As Maxine Green (1995) notes, "Imagining things being otherwise may be a first step toward acting on the belief that they can be changed" (p. 22).

Imagination can be described as "the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses" (retrieved from: https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/imagination). According to Kalmanowitz (2013), the ability to imagine something that is "not present to the senses" can contribute to an individual's motivation to continue. By creating an alternative world of the imagination, artwork shows us possibilities that are not visible within our everyday awareness. It allows us to transport ourselves from our current world where we feel hopeless and unable to act and allows us to be transported to an alternative world, thereby freeing us to visualize new possibilities that were not previously apparent (Knill et al., 2005).

In his book the *Moral Imagination*, John Paul Lederach (2005) discusses a certain kind of imagination as being necessary in order to transcend violence. He calls it the "moral imagination." Lederach goes on to state that this type of imagination is mobilized when "four disciplines and capacities are held together and practiced by those who find their way to rise above violence. Stated simply, the moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity

that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence" (p. 5). In order to achieve this, it is important to understand the nature of protracted conflict as well as the challenges it creates, and we must explore the creative process itself as it applies to social change (Lederach, 2005).

On the Role of Empathy

While hope and imagination are important elements in constructive engagement with conflict, empathy has also been found to be an important factor. The definition of empathy, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary is, "the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner" (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy). Fisher (2014) states that conflict between groups engages mechanisms at both the individual and group levels which exacerbate the initial incompatibilities. Without mechanisms and resources available to help the groups engage constructively, there is the potential for socially destructive forms of engagement (Bang, 2016). Empathy has been shown to be one of the factors that has the capacity to mitigate intergroup conflict.

Deutch (2014) describes how "empathic concern allows you to sympathetically imagine how someone else feels and put yourself in his or her place" (p. 48). Several studies have explored the impact of empathy on intergroup relations with positive results. Batson and Ahmad (2009), in their review of research and theory relating to relational and empathic processes, not only showed the potential of empathy to have a positive impact on improving intergroup relations, but they also acknowledged that the arts contributed to the improvement of intergroup relations through the stimulation of empathy. The question then, is how empathy is fostered through the arts. Lawrence (2005) suggests that, "Art engages all of our senses, awakening our imaginative and intellectual capabilities" (p. 8), while arts-based approaches expand our cultural perspectives by honoring different ways of knowing and learning. This allows individuals to engage with the world more holistically and thereby deepening an understanding of self, others, and the world" (p. 1). The arts operate on a holistic level – physically and emotionally, according to Cohen (2015). "The arts can open and enlarge someone's worldview and enhance understanding of another's, leading to empathy and inclusion" (p. 3).

The Art of Social Change

The use of art in dealing with conflict has not always been taken seriously. However, according to Katherine Wood (2015), of The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) it seems that the arts are now becoming an element of peacebuilding practice globally, and in a variety of ways. There is involvement from individual artists, art therapists, international organizations, academic institutions, as well as civil society (2015). Artistic endeavors have included youth programs, art and expressive therapy programs that work with traumatized populations post-war, community programs that bring people from various populations together to attend an arts activity or engage in a short-term art project such as mural painting (Zelizer, 2003). *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, edited by Marian Leibman (1996), includes essays by various art therapists who describe their work with a variety of populations using a variety of arts techniques. There are many NGO's and individual artists utilizing the arts in the service of various stages of conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Several notable programs include the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, created by Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said. According to their website, "the origins of the West-Eastern Divan lie in the conversations between its founders, Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim. Over the course of their great friendship, the Palestinian author/scholar and Israeli conductor/pianist discussed ideas on music, culture and humanity. In their exchanges, they realized the urgent need for an alternative way to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The opportunity to do this came when Barenboim and Said initiated the first workshop using their experience as a model. This evolved into the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra that global audiences know today" (Retrieved from: https://west-eastern-divan.org).

Several initiatives have stemmed from Barenboim's and Said's orchestra, including a music school for youth in Ramallah, and The Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin, which is a conservatory for talented, young musicians from the Middle East, North Africa, and around the world (https://west-eastern-divan.org).

Other notable initiatives include Theatre of the Oppressed and Playback Theatre. Theatre of the Oppressed was developed by Brazilian theatre visionary and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Augusto Boal (1931-2009). It is a form of popular community-based education that uses theater as a tool for social change. Playback Theatre was created by Jonathan Fox and Jo Salas as a form of applied theatre. Through improvisation, the trained actors portray moments in the lives of the audience or group members, who then watch them enacted on the spot, using

music, movement and dialogue embodying the heart of the story (http://www.mandalaforchange.com).

An interesting project in the United States is chronicled by the documentary *Concrete, Steel and Paint* from New Day Films, directed by Cindy Burstein and Tony Heriza. The film "tells the complex story of men in prison, victims of crime, and an artistic partnership that helps break down barriers between them" (Retrieved from https://www.newday.com/film/concrete-steel-paint). The documentary follows the process of the groups of prisoners and families of slain citizens coming together to create a mural that would represent healing for the community. The original idea was to create one mural, but when the group of victims and inmates could not unite on an idea for a single mural, the decision was made to create two different murals. While the decision was made to create two separate murals, both the families of the victims and the perpetrators worked together on both murals. As the project progresses one can see how mistrust gives way to moments of human contact and common purpose. The film illustrates the power of art to act as a catalyst to facilitate dialogue about difficult issues.

Another initiative in the United States is RAW Artworks, which utilizes the arts in a program supporting the inner-city youth of Lynn, Massachusetts. It was here that I had my first internship as a master's student at Lesley University and worked for three years subsequently as an expressive arts therapist. The RAW program is rooted in art therapy, offering free programming to youth ages 7-19. Programs consist of after-school arts groups, a film program for older students, and a mentorship program for high school seniors. According to their website, "RAW provides a safe space, both emotionally and artistically, for kids to reveal 'what is really going on in their lives'. RAW creates endless opportunities for them to build meaningful relationships with their peers and RAW staff. Kids begin to see and hear each other, realizing they have more similarities than differences. Many of our youth rely on these trusted relationships to help navigate the complexities of their lives" (retrieved from https://www.rawartworks.org).

While Artsbridge can also be considered an arts-based program, I suggest that what makes Artsbridge unique and enhances its impact is precisely how the arts are used in the program as well as how the arts coordinate with the other elements of the Artsbridge methodology.

The Arts in Artsbridge

Within Artsbridge, the arts play an integral role, serving multiple purposes throughout the program. While the engagement in a collaborative art experience is,

in and of itself, a valuable element of the program, it is the fact that it is integrated with all other aspects of the program that enhances its impact. The students are introduced to the arts from the very beginning of their journey with Artsbridge.

Not everybody comes to Artsbridge with training in the arts, and some students feel more comfortable with the arts than others. For many of the Palestinian students, participation in Artsbridge is their first foray into the arts, with the possible exception of folk art or traditional music. Art education or arts programming is not readily available either in the West Bank or within the Arab communities in Israel, nor is it seen as a useful component of the education system. Education serves a very practical purpose for the vast majority of Palestinians. It is designed to provide students with the intellectual skills needed to pursue a career that will provide them with economic security and allow them to support their families. For many Palestinians, it is seen as a way out of an oppressive situation. Arts programs, both in school and in extracurricular form, are readily available to most Jewish Israeli students. Because of the requirement to speak English, students who apply to Artsbridge, generally, come from schools and communities that provide more opportunities for extracurricular activities, which often include arts programming. Many of the Palestinian students come from private schools, since they are seen as providing a better education than the public schools for Palestinians in Israel or Palestine. Private schools for Palestinian citizens of Israel also have more autonomy in what they teach as they are not directly under the ministry of education. Most of the private schools in Palestine and in the Arab communities in Israel are run by religious institutions.

Art during the Summer Program

> *"Art inspires, produces an unwillingness to settle for what we have and a desire for something better. It is the product and producer of creative activity, change; it is essential for continuous development."* Russel L. Ackoff

Morning Meeting

The arts are incorporated into many aspects of Artsbridge programming, starting with the morning meeting, held each day after breakfast. The morning meeting provides an opportunity for all students to come together to check in as a group and to start the day together. Morning meeting provides the opportunity to focus the students and prepare them for the day ahead. It is also a space where

relationships and social dynamics are explored creatively. These meetings are not unlike an expressive therapy group, though the focus is on relationship rather than on personal issues.

A variety of warm-up and team building activities are utilized depending on the group. As trust is built and the summer progresses, activities will respond more to what is happening in the program in general. Activities may involve visual art, movement, verbal expression, or simply conversation. As the summer progresses and students feel more comfortable with each other, topics will begin to delve deeper into interpersonal relations and how they are being impacted by the program. Kenaan and Raida shared their reflections on the morning meeting in their interviews.

> I think that was a big thing in morning meeting, when we'd go around and we'd check in, and, doing that every morning. Sometimes you're like -- it passes you, you've said something, and you're like, why did I say that, that was so dumb. -- but I was thankful, for an opportunity to just -- you have the light on you for just a second, and you get to think, and you're like, oh, what do I want to share with this group, for a brief moment. And it doesn't have to be anything special. It can be like, I woke up, and I was really tired, but I'm here anyway.... it was a really nice space for me, as I remember it.   Kenaan

<div align="center">***</div>

> Having to get all together in the morning and sharing our hopes, like it made us feel -- it gave us like -- hope for the day, and really wanting to see what this day might bring.   Raida

The Art Studios

Each day, from 3 to 6pm, six days a week, students head to the art studios. When students first arrive at the beginning of the three-week program, one of the first things they do is choose which art form they would like to focus on. In the first few years of the program, they were able to choose between visual arts and filmmaking. Currently, in addition to those mediums, students are able to choose music and dance. Theatre is sometimes offered as an elective. All efforts are made to accommodate a student's first choice. However, there must be enough of a

balance between ethnicities in the groups so that they can be placed in multicultural pairs or triads. While the students choose the medium they wish to work in, they do not choose with whom they will be working. These choices are made by the staff, to ensure that the pairs/triads are fair and balanced, that students are not choosing friends, and that nobody feels isolated. To this end, several factors are taken into account. For example, the level of experience with the chosen art medium, personalities of the students, age, etc. The goal is not to choose students who might become "friends" but for whom the challenges faced will not be so overwhelming that the work will not be constructive. In other words, while it is impossible to foresee the outcome of a project, it is important that the challenges teams face are not insurmountable or irreconcilable from the start.

Predetermining the composition of the teams does not guarantee a challenge-free process by any means. On the contrary, the process of working with someone from a different cultural background provides ample opportunity for conflicts to arise, whether they be personal or technical.

Building a Space for Creativity to Thrive

Similar to the dialogue group, art facilitators initiate a conversation with the students about what they will need in order to ensure that the art space is a safe space, conducive to creativity and openness. Generally, care of the space and of the materials is also included in that. Students are responsible for making sure that the equipment and materials are taken care of and kept in good condition.

The three-hour studio time each day serves many purposes. First, it provides students with another way to have voice. The arts provide students with new language, and new opportunities for communication. Often, when the dialogue has been particularly challenging, students will enter the art studio and request time to just "do art." The art facilitator is prepared for this and will use several different art activities that are geared towards providing a calming, healing environment. Despite difficulties and tensions from the dialogue sessions, students must enter the art room ready to continue to work together on their art project. Some groups may choose to work silently while others choose to continue conversation while working on their art. However, the key is that they choose to work together. They continue the process, either verbally or nonverbally, to create something together. The message here is important: one does not have to like somebody in order to work together. Eventually, over the three weeks, trust is built, along with a sense of teamwork.

Building Trust in the Art and in Each Other

Each day in the art studio, before work begins on collaborative art projects, students begin to work both separately and together on creative warm-up and trust building exercises. These exercises are meant to allow team members to get to know one another, become more comfortable with each other and to develop a basic level of trust. These exercises are also geared towards encouraging creative thinking and problem solving.

Draw Only What You Are Told

One activity, designed originally as an ice breaker and to encourage students to move beyond the conventional observational mode of drawing, also serves the purpose of beginning the process of working together and depending on the other.

Students work in pairs for this activity. Each student chooses a somewhat small object with interesting shapes, surfaces or materials. The two students sit back-to-back. One student sits blindfolded holding the object, while the second student is facing an easel with drawing paper and a drawing utensil. The blindfolded student holding the object then describes the object to the student who sits in front of the easel, giving whatever descriptive details necessary, but without naming the object or giving clues as to its function. Figure 7 shows a photo of students engaging in the process. Afterwards, the students trade places (Gazzard, 2004).

Figure 7
Students in the Summer Program Working on a Warm-up Activity

The film class begins with students learning the technical aspects of using the camera, shooting scenes, and writing storyboards, etc. Instructors teach the students the skills needed through as much hands-on work as possible, utilizing various short exercises to get the students comfortable with the equipment.

Dance and Music also have their own versions of warm-up activities but with similar goals. In the dance class, one of the first goals is to provide the opportunity for the students to become comfortable expressing themselves through movement. While some students come with some dance experience, others have never had any formal dance training. Warm-ups include stretching, freestyle dancing, mirroring your partner, and learning to tell a story through dance. Participants engage in these exercises as individuals as well as in their pairs.

Different art facilitators/therapists have used various activities over the years for warm-ups, but the goals remain constant. Team building, encouraging creativity, learning skills, and therapeutic effect. As mentioned, when the dialogue has been particularly challenging, students often enter the art studio and request time to just "do art". The art facilitator will then initiate activities that are geared towards providing a calming, healing environment.

"…there are things that you cannot say, and you don't feel the strength, or you're not that courageous to say it in dialogue, but

you have the personality to reflect it through art. So, art could also help in that. It can help you to reflect your ideas; how you feel, or you don't have to reflect your ideas through art, you can just pull out all of the anger that's inside you by drawing this piece or by, I don't know, this sculpture. It can give you a free mind, and it can help you relax, free your mind, push everything out, and at the same time, it can help you reflect this while doing the art." Yasmina

The Collaborative Art Project

Creating a joint work of art helps students to avoid being locked in the monologues that define their interactions with one another back home. Working nonverbally, they are able to avoid the conflict-laden language that keeps them stuck and often unable to communicate constructively. Verbal language is often loaded with triggers that evoke strong ideological positions. As students focus their attention together on their project, verbal trigger points are minimized in the process of learning and creating in the language of art. Engaging in a nonverbal process, they learn to communicate with each other in a more open, flowing and generative process of artistic creativity.

The students enter their art classes knowing that they will work on a collaborative project. By the second or third day, teams begin to think about and plan what they will create together. For the visual arts, each team chooses a place in the studio that will become "their space." They are encouraged to create that space in whatever way feels comfortable for them, as long as each member of the team agrees.

Each team works independently to develop an idea for their art piece. The art facilitator is available to offer advice and to encourage students to think deeply about what they want to create. The instruction that is given to the students is that they may choose any topic they would like, and any medium that they feel would best represent their idea (within physical and economic constraints). Often, the instructor will sit with the students to discuss the message that the students want to relay, and what medium might best represent their idea. The only requirement for the final product is that each of their voices is represented in the piece. Once the project is completed, each team writes a narrative that discusses the meaning behind their choice, why they chose that particular topic, and what it was like to work together. This narrative is exhibited alongside the art at the Showcase.

However, before that narrative is written, the teams must confront the challenges and obstacles that lie within the process of a collaborative project.

The Challenges of Creating the Joint Project

Art and dialogue facilitators help students to broaden and deepen the meaning of their art by asking questions that help the students process their ideas, and to think more deeply about the message they are trying to convey. Often, conflicts will arise as the students try to decide what the subject of their artwork will be, what role each member of the team will play, what style or medium they will use, etc. Issues such as which materials and tools to use, what topic they want to focus on, what types of images, words, or instruments best represent their ideas, and so on. When these conflicts arise, facilitators are there to engage the team in conversations that will help them to move beyond the conflict towards an idea that has meaning for each of them. Through developing joint works of art, students learn the value of collaboration, and learn how to engage with conflicts constructively. They also begin to grapple with the idea that working together does not necessarily mean that they must compromise, or give up something in order to reach agreement, rather they can find a way to incorporate their thoughts and ideas in order to create something new. Not all of the challenges faced by the art teams relate to the conflict. Figure 8 shows a photo and narrative of the art project completed by Ahmad and his two partners.

Figure 8
"The Breach": Artwork and Narrative Created by Ahmad and his Partners in 2014

The Breach

We decided to make this piece after a hard dialogue that we had. We talked about the army and being enemies with one another. We talked about the reasons why we can't be friends, or together. For our art piece we decided to make two rooms. The wall in-between the two rooms expresses society's reasons for why we can't be together. In the piece, the people in each room want to reach each other, but they can't.

We wanted to show the different lifestyles — one Israeli, one Palestinian. Both of the insides of the rooms are similar to each other but the outsides represent differences between the two, like the differences in the pain and fear they experience.

We had several challenges while making this project. It was hard for us all to agree on one idea. We started late on making our project because we had so many ideas but couldn't agree on one. We're all from different places and because of that it was hard to agree on what the main idea of our piece should be about. There was a struggle to find equality for all of the voices in the project, but we eventually figured it out. We gradually started to understand each other, and it changed from "your idea, my idea," to "our ideas." In the end, we learned how to "go with the flow!" We learned to listen to one another and made new connections with each other.

We hope that the audience takes away the idea of unity. We needed to be unified in order to make our project. Even though we are involved in one of the hardest conflicts in the world, we still hope for liberation from it. Even though these two nations — Israel and Palestine — are separated by the conflict, there are so many people still fighting to be united. We want to be seen as humans, and right now, our society is losing its sense of humanity. We have hope, and we want to be able to live in peace together.

For Ahmad's team, the challenge was one of style and personality rather than the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Not only could they not agree on a topic, but one of the members of the group was constantly changing their mind about what they wanted to create, much to the chagrin of her partners. Throughout their struggles over the course of the project, and the conversations with the facilitators, they began to recognize that conflict comes from many sources. With the help of a facilitator, they were able to learn how to engage with each other in order to find a way forward to completing their project. It was a valuable lesson, albeit a challenging one. Ahmad shared his feelings about the art process:

> . . . so, the idea that you can really express about your feelings, your situation, your everything through arts. This is an idea that

> stays in my mind forever, especially after we finished our structure that we made at that time. And in the showcase, we've shown it to others and people have a good and positive comment about it. So, I felt that I'm heard through arts and this is cool, this is something.

Despite their challenges, they were able to work through their differences to complete their project. In the end, Ahmad found value in the process of creating the art, and the power that he felt as people witnessed the work he created with his team. In our conversation, five years after his participation in the summer program, I showed him an image of their art project. Through viewing it years after it was created, it held new meaning for him. As he noted:

> There is a small thing that I didn't remember. It was how Palestinians see others, like how we in Palestine see Israelis and how Israelis see us. Before I [saw] the picture, I focused on the two guys in this room and the other room [that] are trying to reach each other. Yeah, that's what I focused on. But after I saw the picture, I saw that there was something real that still exists today, how Palestinians see Israel through this small hole and how Israelis see Palestinians through this small hole and how the world sees us from outside.

I believe that, in many ways, this speaks to the power of art in helping to create new understandings and meanings for people. Art is not static. Meanings evolve through our experiences. Five years later Ahmad was able to view his art through the lens of experiences he had since his time at Artsbridge. His experience was no less valuable than it was when he created the art, but it had evolved to include new meaning. He was also able to share his understanding that he now sees that Israelis and Palestinians, in the context of their conflict, are not able to see the "whole picture." Rather they see each other only through a small hole.

Transformations

Through developing joint works of art, students learn the value of collaboration, and learn how to engage with conflicts constructively. In the process of working together, it is not uncommon for a team's art project to transform or change completely, occasionally, several times within the three weeks. Often, when the

students first form their work teams, they do not know each other well. Sometimes they cannot agree on an idea. Other times they agree right away on an idea without much forethought. As they get to know each other, and as the dialogue sessions begin to delve into deeper issues, their thoughts evolve and become more complex. Also, the art facilitators, as well as the dialogue facilitators regularly connect with the teams to ask questions about their projects and ask questions that help them explore their ideas further, and more deeply. The story of Yaakov and Mohammad as represented in Figure 9, is an example of how a project might evolve.

Figure 9
The Story of Yaakov and Mohammad in the Visual Arts Class

Yaakov and Mohammad were relatively quiet students. Neither had really engaged with people from the "other" side before, however they shared in their lack of art experience. Their first attempt at a collaborative art work was an image of two hands clasped together, one with an Israeli symbol and one with a Palestinian symbol. The two hands were surrounded by a peace symbol. In the beginning, they described their creation as their "image of peace". When asked to explain this further, neither had much more to say. Each day one of the facilitators asked them about their art, to explain a little more, and each day the two students would say the same thing. "It's about Peace... you know...peace".

After a week of the same question, the students expressed frustration. The art facilitator stated, "Yes, I understand that it's about peace, but could you help me understand that idea a little more? What do you mean by peace? What is peace to you?" Finally, the Israeli student said, "I don't know! I don't know what it means.... I don't even believe in peace! Ever since Rabin died, I don't think there is any hope for peace!" To this the facilitator responded, "Wow, so you are trying to create something that you don't even believe in. That must be so difficult!"

The facilitator then asked the Palestinian student if he knew that this is what Yaakov was struggling with. Mohammad responded that he did not know that. The facilitator then asked if he, Mohammad, could identify with that feeling and he said, "Well, yeah. I guess it was the same for me when Arafat died." To this the facilitator responded, "So, you both have something in common. You both have a sense of hopelessness about peace after experiencing a similar tragedy. Is there a way that you might be able to express that idea in your art project?"

With that new understanding, the students began to work on a new idea.

Their newly formed idea was to create a replica of a grave. On that grave was an image of Yitzhak Rabin facing one way to the left, and on the other side was a picture of Yasser Arafat, diagonally across from the image of Rabin. If you look closely at the images of Arafat and Rabin, shown in Figure 10, you will notice that they are almost touching, but not quite, thus representing the disappointment of having come close to peace and then not having it realized.

Figure 10
"In Our Memory": Artwork and Narrative Created by Students in 2009

In Our Memory

Our first idea involved creating two hands, a peace sign, and the Israeli and Palestinian flag. It was good to work together because we felt that we had good communication and we really enjoyed the process.

During the three weeks our opinions and thinking were transformed through the dialogue group experiences. As a result we decided to change our project idea, and explore the idea of where the conflict might have gotten worse. We feel that Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat were moving towards peace before Rabin was killed. We wanted to focus on this perspective. We wanted to create a piece that represented a graveside memorial to the two leaders. We used specific colors to represent the different groups on both the Israeli and the Palestinian side. Orange represents the Israelis that did not want peace, while the blue represents Israelis that wanted to talk about peace after the death of the leaders. Yellow represents the Fatah group, who would like to have peace talks, while Green represents Hamas, who are not willing to have peace talks.

We feel that the final project accomplished our goals of conveying a clear message about the continuing conflict in our region.

The artwork that the students create together is meant to help them think more deeply about ideas. Along with the dialogue, a creative process helps to create deeper understanding and richer conversation. With these two young men, as with

many of the students' projects, the art assists in providing the space for new meanings and understandings to emerge.[22]

Film/video Class

Due to the varied roles in filmmaking, students choose who will film, direct, edit, etc. As in all of the art classes, the only requirement is that each voice is represented in the final presentation. Because of the nature of the medium, work in the film class is somewhat different than the visual arts class. Before students can begin to create their films, they must learn various technical aspects, including use of the camera, shooting scenes, writing storyboards, etc. As in the visual arts class, students are put in their teams from the beginning. Instructors will teach the students the skills they need through as much hands-on work as possible, utilizing various short exercises so that students become comfortable with the equipment. Students can choose the particular genre that they want to use for their final video. Teams have, in the past, used still frame animation, documentary, black and white, comedy, storytelling, and other genres in order to express their ideas.

Because there are many different roles in filmmaking, the students need to determine who will take on what role. Who will film, who will direct, etc. Again, the only requirement is that each voice is represented in the final film. Additionally, teams are allowed to ask students or staff from outside of the film group to act in their films if needed.

As with visual arts, students come to the class with varying levels of expertise – from never having used a camera to having taken classes in filmmaking. When the teams are created, skill level is taken into account, trying to create a balance between skill sets. All students must learn the technical details of creating a video. Skills like creating a storyboard, shooting the video, staging, lighting, creating the frame, as well as how to create any particular effect that they are looking for. After filming, students must learn how to edit, do the sound, include music and put the finishing touches on the film. In the case of filmmaking, it is sometimes

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[22] Yaakov and Mohammad (pseudonyms) were part of the 2009 cohort. I suggest that, especially in the early years, many students had the understanding that they were going to be participating in a "peace" program, leading them to feel as if they needed to create an image that suggested something positive. It is only after deeper conversations in dialogue and encouragement to think beyond the naive concept of peace that deeper meanings and ideas begin to emerge. This is not the case with every group, but this was the case with this particular team. In subsequent years, I believe Artsbridge has been clearer that it is not a "peace" program. This story was retrieved from personal notes, as well as from memory.

advantageous to put students together who have an equivalent level of skill so that they can work at a pace that is comfortable for them, and not feel held back or overwhelmed by the process. However, this can create its own challenges. Students who have a higher level of expertise might also have stronger opinions about what kind of film they would like to create. So aside from ideological challenges, there might be an added challenge of negotiating what type of film to create. This is also a challenge for novices, but not to the same extent, as they are learning the skills together. Learning how to negotiate these creative decisions requires similar skills to what they are learning in dialogue, and helps to reinforce the concepts. As these challenges arise, facilitators are there to engage them in constructive conversations that help them arrive at a path forward.

The summer of 2014 was a challenging time for the students as Israeli forces invaded Gaza two days after the student's arrival. In addition to the typical challenges of creating a joint art piece, the additional stress of the conflict back home weighed heavily on the students. Figure 11 depicts the story of one of the film groups who had a particularly challenging time with their project.

Figure 11
The Story of Yousef, Adina, and Nancy[23]

Yousef was a young Palestinian from a relatively small, conservative village in the north of Palestine. Adina is a young Jewish Israeli woman from the north of Israel whose family emigrated from Russia when she was a small child. She had never before met a Palestinian. Nancy was a young Jewish American from Boston, Massachusetts.

From the beginning, the students struggled with deciding on a topic. Yousef wanted to create a video about the conflict and the violence against the Palestinian people. Adina wanted to create a fun, light video, and Nancy was leaning towards Adina's idea. They were struggling to find agreement. There were many conversations with the facilitators who would come to the film room to check in with the students. The conversations revolved around what the students wanted to create and the meaning behind the ideas.

This team of students was part of the 2014 cohort which began two days before Israeli forces entered Gaza for Operation Defensive Shield. Sometimes the three students would sit in the film room and talk, and other times they would sit outside with a facilitator, or take walks on the campus. Throughout the difficult conversations, Yousef, Adina and Nancy got to know each other, and learned a bit more about each other's culture and personal stories.

Eventually, the students came up with the idea of doing a stop-frame animation using origami flowers. The flowers were gradually splattered with red to signify blood. When they were almost completely covered in red, two hands appear – one with a Palestinian flag drawn on it and the other with an Israeli flag. As they begin to part the flowers, the space clears to reveal news clips of some of the violence that was happening during the current round of violence in Gaza and Israel. At some point, two white origami flowers appear with the caption, "is there another way?" At that point, the red paint splattered flowers gradually begin to lose the red and return to almost white. There the film ends.

The students spent a great deal of time sitting together to create the origami flowers, creating quiet moments, as well as opportunities for conversation which, I believe, provided the space for them to get to know each other and to listen to one another. A still-frame of the video and the narrative written by the team is shown in Figure 12. This project exemplifies, as do several other projects, the challenges created by the different reasons that Israelis and Palestinians have for participating in encounter programs as well as an expression of the complex power dynamics

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[23] The story of Yousef, Adina, and Nancy (pseudonyms) was retrieved from personal notes, as well as from memory.

that often exist between them, as expressed by Moscovici's (1980) dual process model.

Figure 12
"Pick a Flower": Still-frame of Video and Narrative Created by Students in 2014

Pick a Flower

Our film is about the impact that the conflict in Israel and Palestine has on people from both sides. We represented the people with handmade origami flowers. Using the stop-motion technique created a form of visual poetry. We used this technique because we wanted to create a simple movie that could better reach the audience's hearts and minds. Stop-motion film consists of the process of taking a series of photographs in a row to create a movie. In our process, we added a small effect in between each photograph to make a change in the image. We also splatter painted the flowers with a color that was most similar to blood. We were excited about the stop-motion technique because it was a chance for us to mix film and art together, using two different mediums in our project.

From the beginning, we found it difficult to come up with a common theme for our movie. We each brought different ideas to the table, so we had a number of conversations with each other about all of our ideas and how we could come up with a common idea. Because of our different backgrounds, it was more challenging for us to be on the same page. Eventually, we decided that we wanted the film to be stop-motion and somehow connect to the conflict. We felt that it was important to represent the suffering that goes on in war. Since people are fragile and flowers are also, we chose to represent the people using flowers.

We faced a lot of challenges. We decided to delete some of the images of suffering that we had taken from the internet because we wanted the audience members to remember the video and its message and not just the graphic images that we had thought about including.

The project was very emotional and we learned from the challenges that we faced and from each other. We realized that even if people are coming from different backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs, we can still make something that contains everyone's voices.

Dance and Music Classes

> So, when I made my project in Artsbridge about dance, I did it with Eliora and she was from Israel and I was from Palestine… At first, I didn't know how to dance and Eliora was a good dancer, actually… I had to connect and I had to communicate with her in order to benefit from her and build something between us in order to get out a good dance. We managed to do that. It wasn't very easy since I didn't dance at all, but it was actually interesting to work with her and it was good. We had to get a story out of our dance and we made a dance depending on us two and a wall between us…. At the end of the dance, we got to reach out and break that wall between us, which was very meaningful and we had fun doing that.   Ghada

The dance students spend time exploring their personal relationship with conflict, not necessarily related to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Dancing can be a sensitive issue for psychological, as well as cultural reasons and the instructor needs to be aware of what issues may arise, whether they are related to body image, trauma, or cultural norms regarding touching. Once the students are paired, they can begin to work on their collaborative dances. The dance instructor will usually have the students work on one group dance, as well as their paired dances.

Music, also, has unique challenges in that students generally need to have some experience with music if they are going to play an instrument. Those who want to participate in the music group either play an instrument or are able to sing. However, we have had students who want to participate in music even though they do not play an instrument. They are able to work on lyrics or are able to learn a percussion instrument, or will participate in the final production by singing. All of these issues are worked out in the first couple of days. The music class is divided into pairs or small groups to work on their projects. Each group is responsible for writing the music, as well the lyrics. They are able to ask others in the group to help them perform their piece if they need other voices or instruments. Along with the small group pieces, the class will also tend to work on a group composition.

The Showcase

The Showcase represents the culmination of three weeks of hard work by the students and provides the opportunity for everybody to celebrate the

accomplishments of the group. At the end of the three weeks, and in preparation for the exhibit, the groups are required to write narratives that describe their artwork; the meaning they ascribe to their chosen topic, why they chose this particular piece and medium, and what it was like to work together. (Facilitators are there to assist with translation, but all thoughts are those of the students). Their written narratives are displayed along with their completed work at the exhibit. There is significance to the writing of the narrative. Firstly, it allows the students to process their experience of the last three weeks. Secondly, the process of verbally articulating an experience that they had through creative means, helps them to make the connection between the artistic process and the dialogic process. Through the entire process, the students are learning to have voice through their art, but they are also learning how to work together to build a new constructive narrative that represents each of their voices.

Members of the outside community are invited to this exhibit, which we call the Showcase. This final showcase is an important aspect of the summer program. Firstly, it allows the students to witness the impact and power of their work on others. For the students it is deeply moving and empowering to see that they can have a profound effect on the audience. For the audience, it is also a moving, emotional experience. It allows the audience to have a deeper understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and its effects on the youth, while also providing a sense of hope that an end to the violent conflict might not be impossible. There is also time for the students and audience to interact. During the first half of the Showcase, art students stand by their work and provide explanations and answer questions as people observe their art. During the second half of the Showcase, the student films are shown, and the musicians and dancers perform their pieces. There is also time for the audience to ask questions of the performers and creators of the various film, dance, or music pieces.

The Showcase represents an end goal for the students, which is a highly motivating element. Creating a collaborative project with somebody is, at the best of times, challenging. When you couple that with your partner being somebody who is not only a stranger, but also somebody whom you might consider to be your enemy, it becomes daunting. For some, the project goes fairly smoothly despite challenges. For others, the urge to give up can be tempting. At these moments, it is important to have an end goal in mind. At the end of the three weeks, the Showcase provides a great source of pride as the students realize that they were able to complete a task that presented so many challenges and that, for many of the students, was not considered possible. Providing an opportunity for students to complete a challenging task, and to do so with somebody they had assumed they

could never work with – their so-called enemy, provides not only a sense of accomplishment, but also instills a sense of hope that change is possible.

Creative Thinking and the Generation of Hope

With the development of artistic skills also comes the challenge to imagine new possibilities and opportunities. Because of the protracted nature of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, which spans over generations, the majority of the members of each society know no other reality but that of the conflict. In other words, teenagers living in Israel and Palestine have never experienced life without this conflict. Therefore, the conflict becomes an essential component of each group's history and it is institutionalized into each side's political and social life (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). In turn, institutionalization of the conflict influences the perception that no reality can exist aside from that of the conflict (Azar et al., 1978). It does, in fact, become an integral part of their identity. By teaching young Israelis and Palestinians various artistic modalities and challenging them to creatively express their voices, and to create an artistic piece together, we challenge them to stretch their imagination - to imagine a different future, one that does not include violent conflict. As Levine (2011) notes, "By creating an alternative world of the imagination, the artwork shows possibilities that are absent or dormant within our every-day awareness" (p. 28).

Expanding Perception Beyond the Self

Societies exert great efforts to inculcate their values, norms and ideologies in their younger generations. At the same time, adolescents themselves are actively engaging with their social surroundings and developing their own unique political understandings (Flanagan & Sherrod 1998). Adolescents, by their nature, are already exploring their identity and can be passionately attached to their emerging beliefs, experiencing them as integral to their sense of identity. Situations of protracted conflict generate sets of beliefs, i.e., collective narratives (Salomon 2004), that are composed of the collective memories of members of their communities both present and historic (Bar-Tal & Salomon 2006). As Artsbridge students work closely with their creative partners – the same individuals that they have been raised to see as enemies – they struggle with the dissonance between their respective collective narratives, and their experience of engaging constructively with their so-called enemy.

The assignment to produce a work of art together for public exhibition serves as a vehicle for students to direct their attention and energies outside of themselves

and away from each other, towards the artwork that they are producing. With the creativity that the artistic process entails, students can imagine, create and express new, more inclusive, complex and dialogical narratives that acknowledge and respect, rather than alienate, their partners' narratives. As noted previously, students are given the freedom to choose the content and form of their joint artistic creations. They choose whether or not the content of their artwork will specifically address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, thereby allowing them to modulate the intensity of their experience as they work together. As they engage with each other, cooperating, negotiating and resolving conflicts as they arise, they learn that they can work with someone they have considered to be their enemy. Working together to produce art, they learn skills of constructive engagement in a less emotionally laden setting, and not in the context or the language of the conflict that has defined their lives back home. As their artwork takes form, it engages with its creators, having its own voice and making its own contribution to the conversation between the artists and their art. It provides its own messages, which take on new meanings for its creators as they see their ideas embodied in something external to themselves. As they create a piece of art, write about it and share it with an audience, they discover the impact of their art on an audience. Students experience their intended meanings being grasped by their audience, and witness the power of their voices as the audience responds to their work. Presenting their work as partners to an audience, they share strong experiences of connectedness and empowerment.

The process of making art together over three weeks allows students to develop skills, get to know their partners, discover that they can succeed at constructive relationship building over time, discover that their art has its own voice and agency, and integrate these evolving changes with reflective awareness that is cultivated throughout the training activities of art, expressive therapy, reflective dialogue and participation in informal community activities. Together, these experiences deepen and expand their influence on the students' growth and sense of empowerment (Nathan et al., 2015).

Summary

This chapter provided the rationale for how and why the arts are utilized in Artsbridge, as well as a detailed description of their use. In addition to a description and goals of the afternoon art classes, the expressive therapy program in the morning as well as the showcase at the end of the program were described and explained.

   The qualities of the arts, specifically how they are utilized in Artsbridge were discussed, including their capacity to instill a sense of hope and empowerment within the students, and the development of the capacity to learn how to engage constructively in order to work together to create a work of art. The following chapter will elucidate the recursive, interconnected nature of the dialogic and artistic components of Artsbridge.

Chapter Eight: The Art/Dialogue Connection

While all of the components of Artsbridge work together to constructively influence the participants, the elements of the art and dialogue programs represent complementary discourses that create a generative process for the students as they explore ideas both through verbal and visual language. While students learn to engage constructively through dialogue in the morning, they then engage through a creative process in the afternoon utilizing a variety of art media. While I believe that an artistic process, in and of itself is a constructive, generative, and healing process, I suggest that working with a partner(s) to creatively develop an idea that they must then implement through their chosen medium enhances the generative capacity of the artistic process in the context of communities in conflict. This chapter will include a discussion of the unique relationship between the dialogue and arts elements of Artsbridge. This chapter will also include some of the responses to the interviews that relate to how the students and staff see the connection between the two components of the program.

Intermodality: Multiple Ways of Imagining

Because Artsbridge methodology incorporates multiple modalities, students are able to process their experiences in multiple ways. A particular theme that may be processed nonverbally in the morning meeting may be explored both verbally in the dialogue training and nonverbally in yet another medium and in the execution of their art projects. This interconnection between multiple modalities increases the capacity for meaning making, creativity and imagination (Nathan et al., 2015). Conversely, inter or intra-personal issues that arise in other areas of the program are able to be processed in the expressive therapy meeting in the morning (morning meeting).

The Artsbridge dialogue process engages the participants in a way that teaches them to listen deeply to one another, speak in a way that allows others to hear them, and to be curious about, and open to, the others' narratives. For most of the participants, this is a new experience. Engaging in this new way in the morning's dialogue sessions can be emotionally challenging in many ways for the students. Firstly, they are asked to participate in a dialogic process that is very different from what they are accustomed to – one that takes discipline and focus, especially as they begin to engage in this new way. They are being challenged to not fall into the

well-honed practices of argumentation and debate. For many, they are hearing for the first time, stories and ideas that are new for them and that conflict with their own narrative of what is true and good. In the afternoon, participants move into the art classes, where they have the opportunity to engage with each other in a different environment, and to process concepts in visual rather than verbal modalities.

In the collaborative art projects, participants are learning how to put skills they gain in dialogue into action as they navigate the creation of a joint art piece where each of their voices must be represented in the piece. Several participants noted how the skills they learned in dialogue were able to be put to use in the art rooms.

> . . . when we had challenges in dance or in art, so we used techniques we learned in dialogue to try and solve what we feel because when me and Mina became stuck, after I calmed down a little bit and took a breath, I thought about what we did in the dialogue that day and it wasn't very different, so I took what I learned there.   Eliora

<div align="center">* * *</div>

> I think it was amazing that people took that self-control from dialogue, and brought it into, okay, maybe there's a place for this idea, and that's what I was talking about. About listening to the shy person, and saying, you haven't spoken in a while, maybe you'd like to speak.   Kenaan

Towards the end of the three-week summer program as the team projects come to completion in the art classes, participants, along with their partners, write about the finished product and the process by which they created it, providing them with the opportunity to reflect on the experience, switching from the non-verbal process of creating the art, to the written process as they write their narrative. This movement, from a verbal, cognitive process to a non-verbal creative process, and on to a written process is, I suggest, similar to the concept of "intermodality" (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005) that informs Expressive Arts Therapy. That is not to say that dialogue is not creative, or that the art is not cognitive. I will argue that it is a false dichotomy to suggest that dialogue is cognitive and art is creative. There is interplay between the two, and both provide the space for creativity, imagination, and new understandings to emerge.

Knill, and others in the Intermodal Expressive Therapy tradition speak to the nature of various artistic disciplines and how they interact and combine through the movement between modalities in the service of deepening meaning making, and moving towards imagining new possibilities (2004). Jaleel and Raida provide an example of how some participants perceived the recursive nature of the art and dialogue:

> It was very important for us to move forward and coexist in the program, as well as do art. I don't think we would have been able to do art and do activities together without the dialogue because in the dialogue is where we come to agree or disagree or agree to disagree or learn about each other's backgrounds and accept each other and learn about ourselves and come to certain agreements. …you go into dialogue and there's all these words and feelings and emotions and intensities… and then you go into the art studio and you just express it all as creativity. …. it's important to have the dialogue and with the dialogue to sort of integrate it, the art aspect is really important. Maybe they go hand-in-hand in a way. What's that one word I'm looking for? Maybe a symbiotic relationship.   Jaleel

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> … I mean, the dialogues kind of made us feel frustrated and sad, and then we had to like, shake it off during the art projects. And what we heard, it went through us, and then it went back through our art projects… the stories we heard in our dialogues… It made us feel different about the conflict, and then what we felt, we expressed it in our art project.   Raida

Participants were asked about the connection between the art and dialogue in both the interviews and in some of the post-program questionnaires. The responses of the participants were varied as to their understanding of the connection. Some described how the dialogues influenced their ideas behind the art piece, while others suggested that the art influenced the dialogue. Others noted that the art was therapeutic, especially after difficult dialogues. Some students articulated that the dialogue and art were connected in multiple ways, while there

were a few students who did not seem to notice a connection. For example, Nara stated the following:

> Not very connected to each other. That's how I felt. I don't know, maybe it's only for me but I didn't feel that there was a connection between them. When we did the art, it was mostly fun and when we did the dialogue, it was dramatic and intense. Maybe it was supposed to be the opposite things; you have fun and then you have everyone going the opposite.

In 2012, Artsbridge switched the timing of the art and dialogues sessions, with dialogue moving to the mornings and art in the afternoons. It is interesting to note that the few responses that did not seem to see a connection were from years when the art was in the morning and dialogue in the afternoon. Nomi, a participant from 2012, noted the following:

> I remember at some time in the middle of the summer program, you changed up the schedule. Like it always had been art then dialogue, and then in the middle, I think that you changed it to dialogue and then art. But it's much smarter, I think. I believe that, not in a conscious way, it really influenced the art; the fact that we needed to deal with it, after dialogue.

Deepening the Conversation

Many participants discussed how ideas that arose in dialogue became, not only the subject of their artwork, but also contributed to the depth of meaning in their collaborative project. As they developed a deeper understanding of conflict and its complexities, they worked to express that in their artwork. The following comment was made on an anonymous questionnaire:

> Making art with people really [contributed] to the quality of the dialogue… but the quality of the dialogue–when the dialogue became deep and painful and meaningful–then the projects were a little less about just ridiculous things. They lost their clichés and tackiness and [were] rich and the real part.
> Anonymous, 2014

Many of the projects that the students created were meant to articulate new understandings that they gained from the dialogue. For example, Figure 13 shows the image and narrative of "River of Stories," which spoke to how they viewed the role of stories in either connecting or separating people. As they claim, the boat is kept in balance by the different narratives that were represented by the scrolls. Interestingly, they left it up to the viewer to determine in which direction the boat was heading.

Figure 13
"River of Stories": Artwork and Narrative Created by Students in 2016
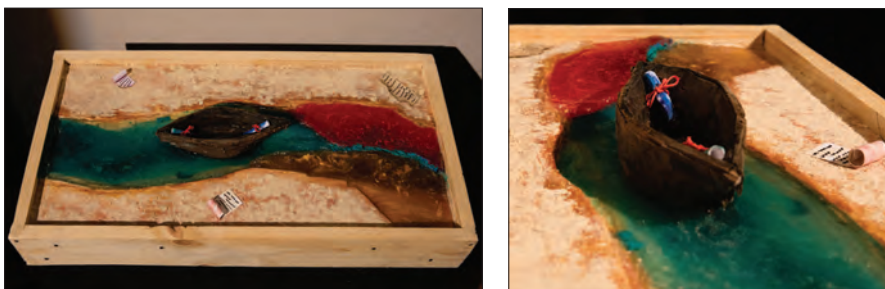
River of Stories

In creating the sculpture, River of Stories, we first asked if the sea is connecting or separating people physically and emotionally. We wanted to keep to the idea of water, which then led to this piece representing a river flowing between 2 different sides. However, people can have different stories so we include the scrolls to convey that these stories are part of their identity and that it is important to listen to those stories so we can have a better understanding of the bigger picture.

The colored resins represent two different sides of a story. The boat is kept in balance by the scrolls, which represent two individual narratives. The viewer of the piece is encouraged to decide in which direction the boat is heading...

When we worked together we quickly established a good connection with each other. This was helpful during the process as there were clear ups and downs, which we were able to overcome. We noticed that, as the project progressed, there were even more difficulties connected with the creation of the physical components of the piece, such as the resins we were working with. These resins symbolically represent the intense differences that can exist as societies shape themselves.

Many students talked about how they were able to engage in deep conversations with their partners as they were creating their art. Often, the discussions related to topics that arose in dialogue. At other times, the conversations revolved around anything *but* the dialogues as participants desired a

relief from the intensity of emotions in many of the dialogue sessions. Whether they spoke about the dialogue or chose not to, it is clear that a majority of the participants in the interviews found value in their conversations with their partners. Below are comments from three of the participants.

> The art or the teamwork that we were doing together, it can affect the dialogue because now, we are talking with someone who we know from the art part. So, it's not an unfamiliar person; we can talk on a different level, or go into deeper things. Mahmoud

* * *

> … without the dialogue, we could not have done the art and without the art, we could have not done the dialogue. . . Because our projects depended on that, depended on the dialogue, so when we made our project, we had to learn more about each other and just understand the conflict deeper in order to make the project.   Ghada

* * *

> Because …, you wake up and you go to the dialogue and sometimes it was really hard. They were hard topics so of course it influenced you and it affected you for the rest of the day. So, we talked about stuff; the things that we agreed on, the things that we didn't. …I think that the dialogues were kind of like the reason that we came to Artsbridge, because we were, like, we have to talk about this and make peace and everything. And then the art was kind of non-conflict related, even though we were with partners who were from the other side. So that was a way for us to kind of talk and be a part of the conflict, without actually talking about the conflict. Which I love, because we were able to discuss whatever we wanted to. So, we talked about everything about the conflict sometimes and sometimes we would talk about the conflict and our experiences. But nobody told us what to say or what to talk about, which gave us total freedom for about three hours. I feel like in dialogue, you get

> into pretty personal places and then the art after it helps you release it and if there wasn't dialogue, you wouldn't go with yourself to those deep places.   Eliora

In 2009, the second year of the program, Artsbridge was still fine tuning its dialogic process, and working towards more in-depth training for the dialogue facilitators. Figure 14 shows a clip of a video titled "The Collision" along with the story of its creation. What is important to note here is the connection between the dialogue and the art, and how richer meanings emerge through the relationship between the two. Conflict that arises in Artsbridge is processed in multiple ways so that, rather than avoiding the conflict, participants learn through the experience as new understandings emerge.

Figure 14
"The Collision": Still-frame of Video Created by Students in 2009, and the Story Behind it
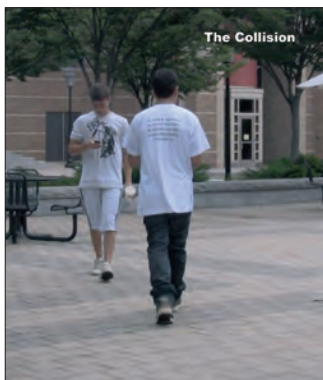
The Collision

In 2009, towards the beginning of the three-week program, an interesting event happened between 2 students –Jamal and Aaron (pseudonyms). Jamal, a Palestinian, and Aaron a Jewish Israeli were both17 years old.

Jamal came from a large, well-known, Muslim extended family who all lived in close proximity to each other within a family complex. Jamal's grandfather lived in the house next to his. When Jamal was 10 years old, the Israeli army came, with little warning, to demolish his grandfather's home. Jamal witnessed this and witnessed his grandfather and cousin barely escape the house before it was destroyed. According to Jamal, and to his parents, this had a lasting effect on him.

Aaron grew up in West Jerusalem. He was popular in school and enjoyed a middle-class upbringing. Although he lived in Jerusalem, his daily life was not directly affected by the ongoing conflict.

Jamal and Aaron did not spend time with each other outside of the regular programming. At one point midway through the three-week summer program, Jamal shared his distress at his grandfather's loss of home at the hands of the Israeli army. As he continued to speak, he shared his thoughts that the reason for the entire Israeli/Palestinian conflict was because Israel wants all of the Palestinian land. He then looked at Limor (pseudonym), his conversational partner, and said, "If the Jews didn't want to take all of the land there wouldn't be a war. Why don't you just all go back to where you came from?" At hearing this, Limor, who was born and raised in Haifa, a city on the northern coast of Israel, looked at Jamal, and with tears in her eyes said, "but I don't have anywhere else to go. I've lived in Haifa my whole life". Jamal's eyes widened and he sat silently for a moment. He had repeated a narrative heard so often, but one he had never really thought about in depth. In that moment, the narrative that he had held so dearly did not seem to make sense. He was not sure what to do with this new information from Limor.

During the next day's dialogue, the process of exploring what happened the previous day began, along with its underlying challenges. The facilitators interviewed both Aaron and Jamal. During the interviews they were able to delve deeper into their reactions and how it impacted the group. The interviews of the two students led to greater understanding for them and for the entire group.

One of the film teams created a video about the event, called, "The Collision". The video told the story of two young men: one Israeli, the other Palestinian. They accidently bump into each other while walking on the street. The Israeli notices a Palestinian symbol on the t-shirt of the Palestinian, and the Palestinian notices the Jewish star around the neck of the Israeli. This causes both to remember images of the conflict from news clips and the strong emotions that they evoked. At the end of the video the message was, "A single bump can contain so much judgement". This film project created an opportunity for the students to process what happened in the dialogue, representing a visualization of the complicated stories that exist when two people who are considered enemies, meet. While Jamal and Aaron did not become close friends, they maintained a respectful relationship throughout the rest of the program.

Expressing the Process

As the participants begin to engage in conversations about more difficult and challenging topics, they are attempting to process what they are hearing and the many emotions that arise. Figure 15 shows how some of the art groups used their art project to express some of the emotions that they were experiencing in the process. In "Feelings Tower," the team was able to find a way to express the fragility they were experiencing as they began to hear and understand things that were so different from what they had held to be true.

Figure 15
"Feelings Tower": Artwork and Narrative Created by Students in 2010

Feelings Tower

Our daily dialogues left all of us with feelings of confusion and uncertainty. This complex combination of emotions interested us, thus we wanted our art project to directly define our thoughts.

Our project deals with the experience that people have when they are engaged in deep conversations. The complicated feelings and emotions cause a feeling of instability which leads to a new level of understanding when we all experience these feelings at the same time. Since we have a lot of feelings, we chose to symbolize those feelings in different shapes of cubes, each of which represents a single emotion. Consequently, we built an unstable tower which represents the dominating feeling of instability....one more major emotion and the tower might just fall down.

Working together on our project was hard sometimes. It was difficult to compromise, but usually we cooperated together and were considerate to each other. When we built the tower, we had a disagreement about the final shape. In the end, we found a common solution that everybody could agree on.

Allowing a Healing Process to Take Place: Gaining Relational Resilience

Along with the creative, relational components of the arts in Artsbridge, the healing aspect is significant. Engaging in the dialogues, as mentioned earlier, is a challenging process, as the team that created "Feelings Tower" was able to

express so vividly. Moving from the dialogue to the art allows students the space to not only process information from the dialogues, but to relieve the stress and tension that arises from the dialogues in a constructive way. That release, while working with their partners, allows for a relational engagement that enhances empathic responses. As Raida states:

> … So, it was kind of a stress reliever, and like a way to handle the sadness and the stress, and the conflict, in a healthy way. So, we also shared ourselves and every story in each art project, I think.

In addition to relieving stress and helping to process constructively, the arts also help students to work through their upset. They learn that, despite being upset, frustrated, or stressed, they have the capacity to continue to work collaboratively with their partner to create a joint work of art. Mina and Eliora, in their joint interview noted the following:

> **Mina:** … when we would have dialogues and let's say it was a hard dialogue that day and it really touched me, so I wouldn't want to be doing anything, to do maybe art or dance that day. And then, seeing I have a partner and if I don't work with that partner, we won't go anywhere and that would affect them and then we only have that short amount of time to build something. So, that would just push me.
>
> **Eliora:** I don't think you remember this, but when you came, when you had days that you came very stressed out and angry to dance, you didn't leave dance in the same way. You left dance happy and a different person. You might not remember it now, but I do. There were days that you didn't want to come to dance and you forced yourself and it just changed your day, for real.

In the above conversation, one is able to notice how Eliora was able to "hold the space" for her partner who was struggling. As Eliora expressed, the art allowed for a transformation in her partner, from stress and anger to being able to work together and work through the difficult emotions. For Mina, the project was a motivating factor, allowing her to "push through" her difficult emotions so as not to let down her partner. In a sense, Mina and Eliora were developing relational responsibility, by caring for, and understanding the needs of their partner.

Mina: … being together in that same art project won't let you stay mad at that person. "Oh, he's in my face for another three hours now and now I have to deal with it." And then, you just find a way in the same day to get out of it, maybe it would take more than one day.

Eliora: Because we also know we have the same goal in the end. We have the same goal - we want to reach the same thing. We want things to be okay in the end. So, some days, yeah, you have to force yourself, but it's worth it.

Mina: I remember one day, we didn't actually talk, we just did our dance without even talking. You were like, "Okay, let's just do this and this and this." And we were mad at each other, but we were still talking.

For some students, the arts provided not only a release for stress, but also a way to utilize their voice in a way that may feel more comfortable than in dialogue. As Yasmina explains:

. . . in the morning, we used to have these dialogues, talk about everything and in the afternoon, we would be doing our art project to reflect our ideas in this art, to reflect how we're feeling through art. It's like therapy. It was really nice because there are things that you cannot say, and you don't feel the strength, or you're not that courageous to say it in dialogue, but [can] reflect it through art. So, art could also help in that. It can help you to reflect your ideas; how you feel, or you don't have to reflect your ideas through art, you can just pull out all of the anger that's inside you by drawing this piece or by, … this sculpture. It can help you relax, free your mind, push everything out, and at the same time, it can help you reflect this while doing the art.

The art project and narrative created by Yasmina and her partner in 2013 is represented in Figure 16. As you will notice from the narrative that the students wrote, they persisted with their project despite technical challenges and comments by others. Eventually, Yasmina was able to feel comfortable enough to speak up in dialogue and to be interviewed by a facilitator. I suggest, here, that not only did the safety that was created in the dialogue space allow for this, but having the opportunity to express herself through art with her partner and persisting despite challenges helped her gain enough confidence to speak in front of the group.

Figure 16
"Inside Outside": Art Project and Narrative Created by Yasmina and her Partner in 2013

Inside Outside

The message we wanted our project to convey is that one shouldn't judge others by what they see on the outside. On the outside, one might see one thing, but on the inside, something else entirely may be present. We thought a turtle would symbolize this message nicely. We created the turtle's shell out of tough material such as nails and screws, but we left half of the turtle exposed. When you look at the nails, you see something very hard. But if you look from the inside, you see something good and pure, natural and soft.

We didn't have any trouble with one another while working. We found that we think very similarly and therefore did not have disagreements regarding the process. However, we did overcome obstacles in other ways. For example, at one point in the project, it started to fall apart. The nails were causing it to be too heavy. People tried to tell us to use different materials but it was really important to both of us that it be made of nails and cotton and we were not going to give up on that idea.

We were very attached to our idea and so we figured out how to use chicken wire to hold it together. Once others understood that we weren't going to give up, they brought us soft, natural sheep's cotton. And in the end, we built it as we'd imagined it - mostly metal - nails and chicken wire, and soft, pure cotton.

What surprised us most about the process is that we felt people around us were unsure about our project, but we didn't lose hope in it. Even when it fell apart, we stuck to our idea. We didn't anticipate the problems but we're glad they happened.

What we both took away from the difficult process of making this piece is to never give up on something you truly want to do and believe in.

Summary of Part II

In summary, while the value of the dialogue and arts components of Artsbridge provide for constructive engagement and growth for the participants, it is the unique combination of and relationship between the two components that allows for the development of relational resilience, through what many participants have described as a profound experience. The value of intermodality was also presented in this chapter. Providing the students with a multiplicity of ways to process their experiences allowed for the deepening of meaning making, as well as the movement towards imagining new possibilities for their future.

Part II presented a thick description of the elements and processes utilized in Artsbridge in order to elucidate the process that helps its participants move beyond the destructive impact of intractable conflict on their lives, and towards more constructive engagement with the world around them This process includes the use of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue and artistic experiences. This section also provided an exploration of the interconnected, recursive relationship between the artistic and dialogic elements of the program. I have argued in this section that it is the unique combination of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue and collaborative artistic practices that allows for the development of important elements necessary for the development of relational resilience.

Part III of this dissertation describes the methods used in this thesis, which is a constructionist, grounded theory approach. An analysis of the interviews conducted for this research is also provided, leading to the 6 themes derived from the data, and to the primary theme of relational resilience. The concept of relational resilience from a relational constructionist perspective is described and compared to other understandings of resilience.

PART III: METHODS AND FINDINGS

Chapter Nine: Methodology

"…it didn't change me, it just activated sides of me that I haven't seen in the past…. I can talk maybe -- not whenever I want to, whenever I felt that it's right to talk…. And there, I just realized that I just got so much information from other perspectives. I heard of people's stories, and that really got me interested in the conflict, first of all. And really, in knowing more. Just knowing more, I just really wanted to know more. I started wanting to change something, or maybe be a part of something that I never thought that I would want to be a part of."   Munir

After having provided a detailed description of the Artsbridge process, this chapter introduces the research methodology for this study, which utilizes a qualitative, grounded theory approach from within a relational constructionist framework. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of the impact of Artsbridge, as understood by the participants. Qualitative grounded theory and a relational constructionist framework will be discussed in-depth. Study participants, procedures, means of data analysis, data trustworthiness, as well as my position in the research, are also reviewed.

I would like to reiterate here the purpose and nature of this work, with its emphasis in constructionist research on forming the future. Where traditional research is interested in identifying causality (e.g., what causes people engaged in intractable conflict to move toward resolution), constructionist research is interested in how the research process itself opens new possibilities for understanding (i.e., creating new meanings and therefore opening new possibilities). A strong

argument can be made for this future focus in research when we compare, as Gregory Bateson (1972) did, the difference between the material world (e.g., a person kicks a stone) vs. the social/relational world (e.g., a person kicks a dog). In the former, the speed and length of travel of the stone is determined (caused) by the size and weight of the stone, the force of the kick, the surface texture, etc. In the latter case, there is no universal determination. One dog might bite the kicker in response. Another dog might run away. And yet another might jump up and lick the kicker's face. The above example helps to understand how the social/relational world is not equivalent to the material world and, therefore, cannot be completely understood through the examination of cause-and-effect relations.

The Questions

The Artsbridge process represents a unique way of working with teens living in the midst of intractable conflict. Before exploring with participants their experience of Artsbridge and the influence they feel it had in their lives, I provided a detailed description of the process, with an emphasis on the interconnected/recursive nature of its elements, and situated the process in the myriad of encounter programs that exist for Israelis and Palestinians (chapter four). This thesis is not an evaluation of Artsbridge. Rather, it is an elucidation of the Artsbridge design and process, including its use of Transformative Reflecting Dialogue and the arts, and expressive arts therapies, from within the frame of social construction. The research on this program is also conducted through this lens. In other words, a social constructionist stance informs both the design of the program itself and the ways in which this research is conducted. From this perspective, I respond to the following questions in this thesis:

1. How does Artsbridge enable participants from both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to move beyond the destructive impact of intractable conflict on their lives towards more constructive engagement with the world around them?

2. How do participants of Artsbridge experience their participation in, and impact of, the Artsbridge process?

This thesis provides answers to these questions as it looks at how Artsbridge helps young adults find constructive ways to relate to living in regions of protracted conflict. The response to question 1 is laid out in part II as a description of Artsbridge in the context of current literature. This chapter will begin a response to question 2.

Chosen Methodology

I chose a retrospective, qualitative, grounded theory methodology from within a constructionist epistemology for my research as it allows for a rich exploration of how Artsbridge engages with Israeli and Palestinian teenagers and what their experience and understanding is of the process and of its impact on their lives. Grounded theory is a method for studying processes, and this study was conducted in order to better understand the Artsbridge process, and to conceptualize each participant's experience, through a process of rich exploration of the interviews. This exploration led to the development of the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience (AMRR).

There are various ways of using qualitative inquiry, ranging from the more traditional models to a social constructionist model. Social constructionist qualitative inquiry differs from a more traditional approach in several ways. First, a modernist model considers research to be interpretive of an existing reality (Camargo-Borges, 2017). A relational, constructionist orientation to research is considered to be "future forming" (Gergen, 2015). In other words, rather than merely trying to "understand" a particular extant phenomenon, a social constructionist approach helps participants to understand what certain situations and/or events mean for them. Within the research process, the focus shifts from merely describing or interpreting, to the generation of new meanings. Additionally, the focus of the research moves from self-contained individuals to the interactive processes. Therefore, rather than identify the unit of analysis as the individual, a relational constructionist qualitative inquiry sees the unfolding, interactive process, amongst the participants themselves and the participants and the researcher, as the focus of analysis. Qualitative inquiry thus moves from simply expanding understandings to generating new possibilities for moving forward.

From the outset of this study, it was my intention to remain as open as possible to exploring the data as it emerged from the interviews, which led to the utilization of a constructionist grounded theory approach. Grounded theory was introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, with their book titled, "The Discovery of Grounded Theory." Originally, Glaser and Strauss assumed a positivist stance, where data stood on its own in an external world that was there to be discovered (Charmaz, 2000). They also believed that the data speaks for itself and is separate and independent of the observer (Clarke, 2005; Charmaz, 2019). Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory also suggests that the researcher remains neutral regarding the data. As for the researcher remaining neutral, that includes the researcher's interaction with the research participants - focusing on the data

rather than how the relationships can shape the data. Some years after the introduction of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss, and arguing that grounded theory as originally conceived was becoming too narrow and rigid in its application, Kathy Charmaz introduced what she named "constructivist" grounded theory, and later, a constructionist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008). Charmaz argued that a social constructionist approach encourages innovation, allowing researchers to develop new understandings of what is being studied (2008). A comparison of a positivist/objectivist vs constructionist grounded theory approach is shown in Table 8.

Table 8
Comparison of Objectivist vs Constructionist Grounded Theory Methods

	Objectivist Grounded Theory	**Constructionist Grounded Theory**
Reality	Out there to be found.	Constructed in relationship.
Data	The data reveals the meaning "Data stands on its own".	The data are social constructions and evolve throughout the study.
Research method	Adherence to pre-established methods.	Sensitive to how contextual factors influence the research process.
Researcher	Must remain objective and neutral. Is separate from the data.	Allows for subjective interpretations. The researcher and the respondents are part of the analysis, and co-construct the data. Prior knowledge should be examined in order to understand how it influences the researcher and research.
Research Process	Follows strict guidelines.	Emerges from the interaction.
Research Questions	No preset questions prior to data collection. Questions become clear during data analysis.	Can and should be altered if more significant questions arise.

Note. Adapted from Charmaz, 2016, 2008; Sebastian, 2019

Birks and Mills (2015) consider grounded theory research to be a process in which a theory or model is generated from the analysis of the data. In contrast to a more objectivist theory which considers that models or theories are discovered, a constructionist viewpoint is that theory is constructed by the researcher, who views the world and the data through their own unique lens (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

Situating Myself

In constructionist qualitative inquiry, the researcher is invited to be as visible and as vital as the research-participants. Simon (2014) argues that, according to social constructionist systemic principles, the researcher is not expected to be neutral or objective, rather to 'own our prejudices and work with them' (p. 20). To say that I am not biased would not only be inaccurate, but would do a disservice to the aim of this dissertation. In contrast to Glaser and Strauss's premise that the researcher remains neutral, constructionist research suggests something different. According to Saldaña (2011), a researcher's life experiences, knowledge, training and world view influence how one approaches and navigates the research. It is understood that researchers in qualitative research are not bias-free, neutral, or objective. That does not suggest that there are no guidelines available to enhance credibility and trustworthiness in the research. One element of trustworthiness in the data is to be transparent about the steps taken in gathering and managing the data, which I describe later in this chapter. My training as a therapist from within a constructionist framework has taught me to remain curious, and to listen deeply to what the client is saying. This allows me to remain open to ideas that emerge, rather than making assumptions. As discussed in Chapter two, Anderson refers to this as a stance of "not knowing" (2005). She describes this stance as being characterized by an attitude of openness and respect for what the interviewee deems important, as well as a curiosity about and connection with the other person (2012). It is with this stance that I approached my interviews with research participants. This stance allowed me to remain curious and open to the ideas of the participants, while also being attentive to my own internal thoughts and biases. I have worked closely with each of the research participants through their time in Artsbridge. Rather than being an impediment to the research, I suggest that my familiarity with the program, as well as with the interviewees allowed for richer conversation than might have been possible otherwise. Because I was familiar with their experience, I was able to ask questions that related specifically to certain situations that might not have arisen with an outside observer.

Throughout my work with Artsbridge since its inception in 2008, as well as in conducting this research, I have strived to continuously explore and acknowledge my biases, checking in with myself as to how my biases might influence my understanding of the research process and the data. This was particularly relevant in how I conducted the interviews with the participants. Often during the interviews, I would check in with the participant to ensure that I was understanding their remarks in the way that they intended. Additionally, if there was doubt, I would

check back with a participant after the interview to ensure that my interpretations were representative of their views. Due to the busy and transient nature of the lives of adolescents and young adults, it was not possible for me to ask each participant to review the transcript. However, where possible, I did check in.

Throughout the 14 years of running Artsbridge, I have learned a great deal, not only about the lived experience of the participants, but also about how my personal narrative has influenced how I see the world. As such, my understandings of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and of the people whose lives are most impacted by it, has evolved significantly. My identity as a Jewish American woman is, in many ways, intertwined with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Growing up in a home where Israel was very much seen as the home of the Jewish people and a safe haven from a threatening world guided my worldview in the beginning of my life. Opening my eyes to the complexity of the conflict and the multiplicity of narratives surrounding it has been a gradual awakening for me. When I began to develop the concept of Artsbridge in 2007, it was with the goal of helping young people explore those complexities by providing them with tools and finding ways to be more open to the multiplicity of narratives that exist in the region. It was my hope that my experience as an art therapist and psychotherapist, working from within a social constructionist framework, would help to inform the work. A constructionist framework not only informed the work but opened possibilities for engaging with the participants in a way that allowed them to be open to complexity and to withstand and compensate for the significantly negative impact of living amidst intractable conflict. There is no doubt that the students and staff who participated in Artsbridge have been integral to the development of the program and to developing the process used in Artsbridge, as well as to the current research. In a sense, the participants may be considered as co-researchers in this endeavor, as their voices throughout the years have been invaluable in the evolution of Artsbridge. With each year we have learned through their experiences as they gave voice to their understanding of the process. This, in and of itself, represents the participatory nature of constructionist research.

In addition to acknowledging my bias regarding the conflict and my narrative, I was also keenly aware of my role as director of the program when I conducted interviews with participants - students as well as staff. With each interview I made clear that I am sensitive to the potential power dynamics that my role represents, and attempted to mitigate that by making clear to the participants the importance of providing as authentic a response as possible to the interview questions. On several occasions I reiterated during the interview the importance and value of providing authentic responses and not to worry about providing responses that may

seem critical of the program. Along with the interviews conducted, I reviewed questionnaires that were filled out by participants after the summer program. While I did not include information from those questionnaires in the data, it was useful to notice that the responses given in those anonymous questionnaires were similar to responses given in the interviews, thereby helping to insure the authenticity of the responses in the interviews.

Study Participants

Utilizing a purposeful sampling approach, the participants for this research were drawn from students and staff who had been involved in Artsbridge since the first year of its inception in 2008 until the 2019. My goal in selecting participants was to gain as broad a perspective as possible as to the experiences of the Artsbridge alumni. As Creswell (2013) explains, the purpose of using a grounded theory process is to select information-rich cases, in order to yield broad insights and understandings. Creswell goes on to describe the reasoning behind purposeful sampling as being able to "purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (p. 156). A detailed breakdown of participant demographics is listed in Table 9. In order to achieve a broad spectrum of experience, I strove to find study participants that represented each year that the summer program ran[24], as well as a representative sampling of Jewish Israeli, '48, and '67 Palestinians. In total, there were 25 interviews with alumni of the program (representing approximately 10% of the total number of alumni); eight Jewish Israeli participants, eight '48 Palestinians, and seven '67 Palestinians (which includes East Jerusalem). This number also includes one Jewish American who was living in Israel at the time of the interview, as well as one participant whose mother was Jewish Israeli and father was Palestinian. Additionally, two parents of alumni were interviewed as well as four former staff members - 1 art facilitator and 3 dialogue facilitators. All participants were initially interviewed individually. However, in a subsequent round of interviews I chose to interview two pairs of students who had developed friendships during the program in order to explore their relationship more deeply. In addition, two of the Palestinian students (one from 2010 and one from 2018) were interviewed together due to timing and

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[24] The year 2009 is not represented in this study due to the unavailability of alumni for that year. Additionally, Summer programs were not run in 2011, 2015, and 2017. During those three years, alumni conferences were held in Israeli/Palestine for all alumni of Artsbridge programs. In all, there were a total of 9 cohorts, and 3 alumni conferences.

transportation issues. One of the challenges in finding participants was the availability of the participants at the times that I was in Israel/Palestine. Many students were either studying abroad or in the Israeli army during the time that I was conducting the interviews. Therefore, along with purposeful sampling, convenience sampling was conducted based on availability of alumni at the time interviews were conducted. In keeping with grounded theory methodology, as ideas began to emerge from the data, I contacted other alumni whom I felt could add thicker description to the data. In all, 26 in-person interviews were conducted during four independent trips to Israel/Palestine from December 2017 through March, 2019. In addition to in-person interviews, 5 interviews were conducted via Zoom when the COVID 19 pandemic prohibited travel. In all, 31 participants were interviewed.

Table 9
Breakdown of Interviewees Including Year of Participation, Nationality, and Gender

	Name	Year participated	Nationality	Gender	Role
1	Alana	2008	JI	F	Participant
2	Sulha	2008	PI	F	Participant
3	Dafne	2010	JI	F	Participant
4	Nara	2010, 2014, 2016	PI	F	Participant, Counselor
5	Mahmoud	2010	PI	M	Participant
6	Lina	2010	P	F	Participant
7	Jaleel	2012	P	M	Participant
8	Kedma	2012, 2016	PI & JI	F	Participant, Counselor
9	Nomi	2012, 2016	JI	F	Participant, Peer Leader
10	Lea	2013, 2019	JI	F	Participant, Counselor
11	Eliora	2013	JI	F	Participant
12	Yasmina	2013, 2016	P	F	Participant, Peer Leader
13	Rami	2014	JI	M	Participant

	Name	Year participated	Nationality	Gender	Role
14	Samach	2014	PI	F	Participant
15	Ahmad	2014	P	M	Participant
16	Kenaan	2016	JA	M	Participant
17	Shaina	2016	JI	F	Participant
18	Ramzi	2016	PI	M	Participant
19	Munir	2016	PI	M	Participant
20	Raida	2016	PI	F	Participant
21	Samira	2016, 2019	P	F	Participant, Counselor
22	Eliora	2018, 2019	JI	F	Participant
23	Mina	2018, 2019	P	F	Participant
24	Ghada	2018	P	F	Participant
25	Nura	2019	PI	F	Participant
26	Amanda	2018, 2019	P	F	Dialogue Facilitator
27	Cailin	2013, 2014, 2016	American	F	Art Facilitator
28	Sandev	2016, 2018, 2019	Sri Lanka	M	Dialogue Facilitator
29	Lilach	2018, 2019	JI	F	Dialogue Facilitator
30	Ms. A		P	F	Parent
31	Ms. H		P	F	Parent

Note: N=31. Nine Jewish Israeli (JI), 8 - '48 Palestinians (P), 10 - '67 Palestinians (P), 1 mixed nationality (Israeli/ Palestinian, 1 Jewish American, 1 Christian American, 1 Sri Lankan. All names of students are pseudonyms.

Data Collection

Data was collected utilizing a semi-structured interview process. While there was a general outline for the interview questions[25], it was important to engage with the participants in a generative conversation. Gergen cites Ruthellen Josselson (2013) when he states that "the interview is a complex relational process and can unfold in ways that either invite or suppress the respondent's offerings" (2014, p. 50). Charmaz (2006) suggests that grounded theory allows for the emergence of new ideas during the research process. Therefore, it is possible that interview questions will be modified during the study (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Urquhart, 2013). As I reviewed the transcripts, initial themes began to emerge and I adapted the questions in order to explore some ideas in more depth. Also, as I conducted the interviews with the study participants, the conversation often veered away from the scripted questions and towards topics that were generated from the conversation itself. Often, these meanderings in the conversation generated rich conversations that might not have been elicited had we stayed rigidly with the interview questions. Interviewing the alumni and former staff of Artsbridge was an evolving process. With many of the interviews, new meanings and new understandings emerged from the conversation. For example, participants were asked to look at an image of the artwork that they created when they were a participant in the program. (In the case of film and dance, students were asked to view the video along with the interviewer.) As many alumni looked at their artwork during the conversations, they were able to discern shifts in how they see the world and understand the artwork. New meanings emerged for several alumni as they viewed their artwork during our conversation.

One example of this exploration of meaning could be seen in the interview with Jaleel. Figure 17 shows the art piece that he worked on with his partners in 2012 as well as the narrative that he and his team members wrote together. Below are excerpts of the portion of the interview with Jaleel about his art piece.

> **Interviewer**: When you're looking at this art, what are your thoughts about it?
>
> **Jaleel**: Super-interesting. He is holding the teddy bear.

[25] The questions which framed the interviews are located in Appendix B. Other than the demographic questions in the beginning of the interview, the questions are meant to be used as a guideline.

Interviewer: Do you remember what the title is?

Jaleel: "A Childhood Never Dies."

Interviewer: Can you discuss your experience with the art component of the program?

Jaleel: … It was a great opportunity for me to participate and open up to that world of exploration and infinite possibilities of making an art piece and just the process – I learned so much about myself during the process, like the things that I was doing, how I was doing them, like I never knew I could do certain techniques. It required so much detail and so much delicacy and attention. After I finished, I felt it was a great accomplishment and I felt so good, especially sharing it with other students and all of us being immersed in a similar experience and then looking at different projects that everybody did.

Interviewer: What was it like working with your partners?

Jaleel: It was good. I think we had some ups and downs, you know, sometimes we had some arguments about certain things and that's part of the process and that's how we grew. We had a great time. There was a lot of laughter, a lot of exploration, a lot of adventuring, a lot of techniques that we explored. It was interesting, like the perspectives that we all had. Like, when there was a thing we wanted to do, it's like, "How do we do this? How about we try this? Why do you guys want to do think? What do you think that means? What does that mean for you?" And there was a fine line of meeting in the middle, like making sure not to impose any of the ideas on others like, "I think it's best to do it like this," but they might think something else. … It was really interesting to … just collaborate on a beautiful art piece, although we're from totally different sides and different nations, I guess, and different background and peoples. This art piece just united us. It just proved, really, that it's possible to make something beautiful and creative be in the middle, and share ideas and perspectives and being honest and adventure and explore and dive deep in the ideas and the emotions and produce something magnificent.

Interviewer: Was that a surprise for you?

Jaleel: Now that I see it and think about it, yeah, it's quite profound. I didn't think about it like that at the time. I was just like, "Yeah, whatever, art piece, art project, Artsbridge." …

Interviewer: You actually just talked about what the topic or the subject of your art piece was. Does that idea still resonate with you today?

Jaleel: Yeah.

Interviewer: It sounds like it resonates more than it did before?

Jaleel: I think so because now that I'm looking at it, it's like, yeah, we are children, we are innocent, we're very vulnerable and safe, ambitious, optimistic – all these things – and then all of a sudden, we grew up and realize that childhood is fading away, just like this person looking at the grave. The grave represents the childhood and it's full of magical colors and shiny glitter and stuff like that, and he's holding the teddy bear and he doesn't want to let go. At a certain point, that teddy bear represents that little piece that he will never forget and he will never give up about his childhood and we all have this thing, this one little thing about the childhood that I always carry with me, for example…

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say about this piece before I take it away?

Jaleel: I think it's really cool now that I'm looking at it. Wow, it brings back so much. That teddy bear is great, like behind the back, I'm keeping this. I'm letting go of… wow, yeah… letting go, this piece is really profound in that thought, like letting go of the childhood and surrendering to everything we dearly love and appreciate in a way and just the power of letting go and maybe holding on to the teddy bear – I don't feel like we necessarily want to hold onto the teddy bear, it's just the teddy bear sort of like wants to come with us – it's inevitable for a little part of our childhood to come with us.

Figure 17

"Childhood Never dies": Artwork and Narrative Created by Jaleel and partners in 2012

Childhood Never Dies

We wanted to show the message that it's important to take a bit of childhood with you as you grow older because it will make life simpler and more pure. We were originally inspired by each other to come up with our idea, which is centered around a quote from a poem that reads,

"Childhood is not from birth to a certain age and at a certain age.... childhood is the kingdom where nobody dies"
Edna St. Vincent Millay

To us, this means that childhood is a big part of a human being's life. It's not that nobody dies, it's that when you're a child, you don't worry about death. Somehow, the childhood stays in you. If you take a bit of hope from childhood this will create simplicity, happiness, and better surroundings. As a child you are more open to meeting different cultures and different people, you don't judge. When you become an adult, you leave a lot of feelings and behaviors relating to childhood behind. We wanted to represent this by showing a young adult, maybe in his twenties, standing over a grave, mourning the "death" of his childhood.

It was very exciting to work with so many different materials on this project including clay, wire, leaves, glitter, etc. At times it was hard to work with some of these materials because we didn't know how to use them, but we figured it out eventually. It was also difficult to represent how challenging reality can be. We thought it would be easy to portray childhood with different colors and materials. With childhood, we didn't have to think as much about how we were going to express it. After taking time to think about what each of us wanted to do, everything became easy. With time, nothing is impossible. Everything we made also represents who we are and what we care about for the future.

Conversations like the one with Jaleel are representative of the importance of open-ended conversations and allowing the process to happen. Through the conversation, Jaleel was able to derive new meaning from the artwork created in 2012, seven years before this interview was conducted. The conversation also brought up memories and meanings that he had not thought about recently.

Documentation

All in-person interviews were recorded using a Philips Voice Tracer recorder and online interviews were recorded via Zoom with the prior permission of the participants. All interviews were transcribed verbatim via an outside transcription service with confidentiality guaranteed via contract. All recorded and transcribed interviews are stored in a folder on a secure computer.

In addition to the transcribed interviews, anecdotal data was collected from exit questionnaires filled out by students either at the end of the summer program or

during one of the 3 follow-up seminars post summer program once they are back in their home communities. Notes that I took during the dialogues were also used anecdotally as well as the notes of the dialogue facilitators. These notes were used in the writing of several vignettes throughout this thesis.[26]

Images of the artwork that the students created and the narratives that they wrote with their teammates regarding their art piece have been shared throughout this dissertation. As each team completed their art piece, they were asked to write a narrative that addressed the following questions: What is your art piece about, why did you choose that topic, and what was it like working together. The narratives were then displayed along with the art at the final student showcase. Additional images and narratives are included in an appendix to this dissertation.

Throughout this dissertation I have used excerpts from the interviews to illustrate a thought or idea. Any direct quotes from participants used throughout this dissertation were derived from the interviews conducted for this study. Where direct quotes were used, I have noted that, along with the first name of the participant.

All names of students in this study are pseudonyms for privacy considerations, as well as for, in some cases, safety considerations, as some fear reprisals if they are found to be participating in programs with Jewish Israelis.

Coding and Data Analysis

Charmaz (2019) stresses the emergent nature of constructionist grounded theory, as well as the idea that one approaches the data without preconceived notions about what the data will show. After each interview was conducted, I listened to the recording and took notes on the interviews. After the recorded interviews were transcribed I once again, listened to the recordings while reading the transcript to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. While the transcriptionist was skilled in understanding accented English, I felt it was important to confirm the accuracy of the transcription. This also gave me the opportunity to review the interviews again before beginning the initial coding. Figure 18 provides an illustration of the grounded theory design process utilized for this study.

Transcripts of the interviews were uploaded into the data management software, Nvivo 12 in order to aid in data management. All coding was conducted manually from within Nvivo.

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[26] Wherever notes from the dialogues are utilized to relay a story, I have made mention of that in a footnote.

Figure 18
Grounded Theory Design Framework for this study
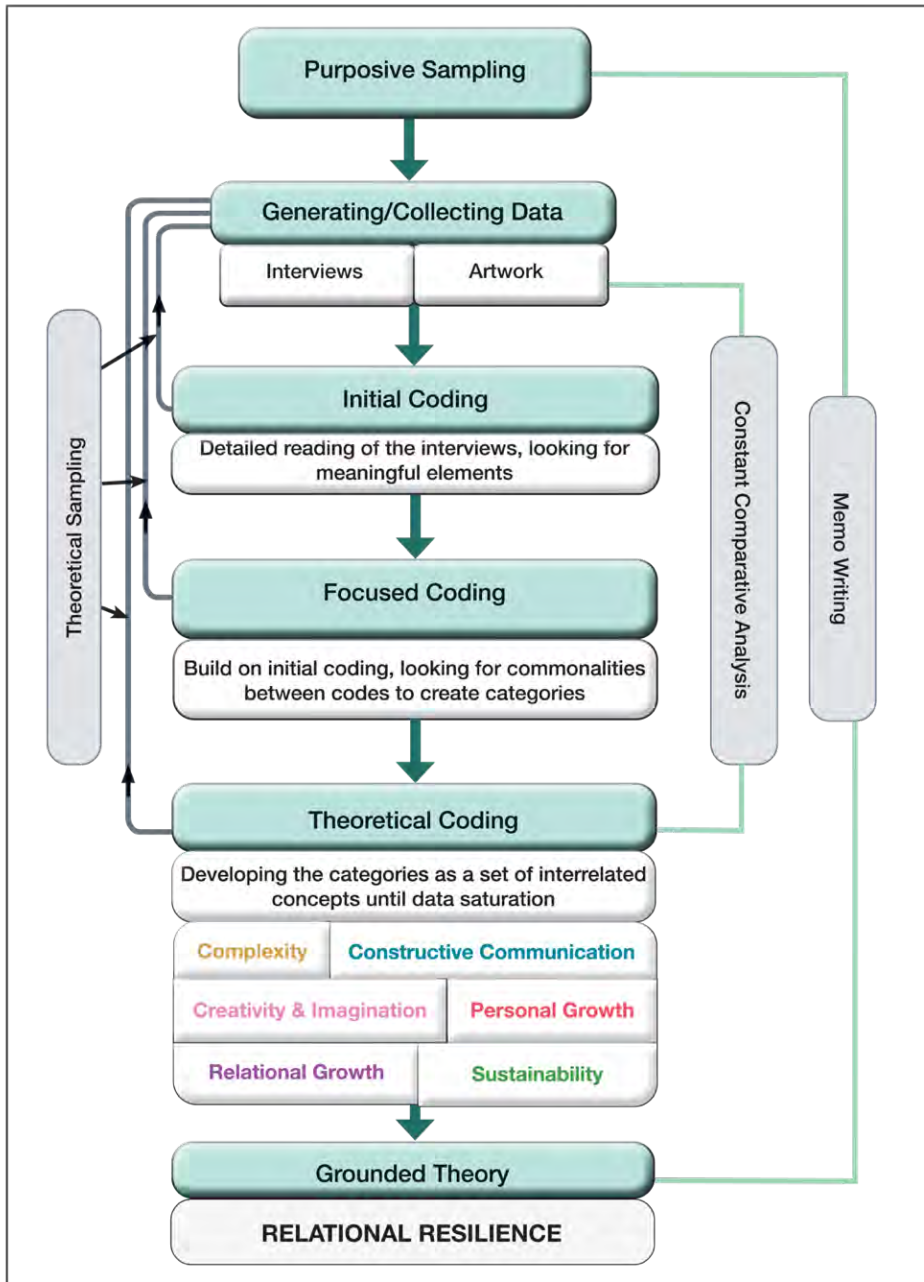
Theoretical Sampling

Theoretical sampling is one of the methods used, along with comparative methods and memo writing that helps develop theoretical categories as they emerge, helping to insure robust analysis (Charmaz, 2012). Unlike objectivist research, theoretical sampling in this context relates to sampling for the development of a theoretical category rather than for population representation. Within this study, while I had started this research with a representational sample of participants, as the research progressed and categories were beginning to emerge, I reached out to other participants that I felt would add rich information to help further develop a particular category. For example, after reviewing and comparing the individual interviews of Lea and Samira I decided to go back and ask them to join together with me in a conversation to further explore some of the ideas raised in their individual interviews.

Memo Writing

Memo writing and constant comparison are two distinctive features of grounded theory. Memo writing is defined as a stage between data collection and the writing of a draft (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser, 1998). According to Charmaz (2008) memo writing helps to capture ideas as coding progresses. Rather than just summarizing the data, memos provide the opportunity to engage with the data. It is through memo writing that, as Charmaz notes "the grounded theorist's ideas emerge as discoveries unfold" (p. 166). Memo writing was conducted regularly in Nvivo throughout the study.

Constant comparison is a process of continuously comparing instances of data in a particular category with other instances (Charmaz, 2006). Birks and Mills (2011) suggest that constant comparison is the process of analyzing, reanalyzing, and comparing new data to existing data. As I began to review transcripts of the first round of interviews, I began the process of comparing each incident of code to other instances. As new interviews were transcribed, I continued to compare codes derived from each interview with those of other interviews. This continued throughout the coding process, allowing me to explore the data in more depth and develop an understanding of emergent patterns and themes. Constant comparison also allowed me to think about what additional information might be useful, leading me to reach out to relevant individuals to interview that might be able to provide more insight into a particular idea. By comparing data, I was also able to notice similarities and differences in how participants related to certain experiences. This allowed me to notice any patterns that might be developing that related to the

demographics. For example, it was interesting to notice if there were commonalities between participants from particular years of Artsbridge. Additionally, I was particularly interested in noticing how a participant's experience was perceived based on their nationality, and whether there were patterns emerging that were specific to a particular nationality. Often, I would also check back with a participant, asking them to review the interview to check for accuracy, or to ask them to expand on a particular idea that was shared during the initial interview. For some of the participants it was challenging to reach out to them considering their stage in life. As I mentioned, many were studying abroad, in the Israeli army, traveling, or were busy beginning new families.

Stages of Coding

Coding in constructionist grounded theory is done in three stages: Open/initial coding, focused/selective coding, and theoretical coding. The first level of coding in grounded theory requires that the researcher remain open to all theoretical possibilities. According to Charmaz (2006) it serves the purpose of mining the data for analytic ideas that may be useful to pursue in further data collection and analysis. Initial Coding was conducted after carefully reading the transcripts as they were completed multiple times. At this stage I began to code the interviews by highlighting and assigning a word or phrase of description to any piece of data that was not peripheral, such as demographic data, or parts of conversation not related to the research. This initial coding allowed me to notice which ideas were appearing more frequently, plus many other patterns and important insights. This critical initial step helped me deeply focus on each interview, and assisted me in thickening my understanding of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Urquhart, 2013). Additionally, it allowed me to remain open to emergent themes while avoiding the overemphasis on any one aspect early in the research as suggested by Charmaz (2006).

The second level of coding in grounded theory is selective coding. According to Urquhart (2013) selective coding assists in sorting codes into categories that are deemed important for the research study. It is during this stage that key concepts begin to emerge. Once there were no new open codes, I began the process of selective coding, sorting the initial coding into categories and subcategories. It was during this phase that I began to notice major themes beginning to emerge from the data. As I sorted the data into larger categories, I continued to look for patterns that were beginning to emerge. Through this second stage of coding, I was able to look for connections, as well as any outliers that existed. For example, a few of the

participants mentioned that they did not notice a connection between the art component and the dialogic component in the program, while the majority of participants were not only able to notice the connection, they were able to articulate the meaning that the connection had for them. After doing some more exploration of the data, I was able to notice that the couple of students who did not notice the connection had participated in the program in the early years, when the art sessions were held in the morning and dialogues were in the afternoon.[27]

Once I felt that selective coding was completed, I began a more focused level of coding where the codes were grouped into potential themes as they emerged. During this phase of coding several categories emerged, leading to the primary theme of relational resilience.

Data Trustworthiness

Within a positivist, empiricist frame, research is judged on the basis of reliability and validity. Reliability speaks to the replicability of the findings, and validity speaks to the connection between the researcher's description of "what is" and what is "really there" (Burr, 2015). For constructionist research, there is no "true" definition of the world out there waiting to be found. Rather, all knowledge is historically and culturally specific, rendering the concepts of reliability and validity inappropriate for constructionist research. That being said, there are ways to judge the quality of constructionist qualitative research. Stenbacka (2001) suggests that the criteria for evaluating quality in quantitative research is based on the "purpose of explaining," while the concept of quality in qualitative research is "generating understanding." According to Charmaz (2006, 2014), a constructivist grounded theory approach put the emphasis on interpretation and abstract understanding as opposed to explanation. She goes on to suggest that "such theories aim to understand meanings and actions and how people construct them" (p. 315). Charmaz proposes four main criteria for constructivist grounded theory research. They are credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness (2021).

Credibility

The criterion of credibility requires a sufficient amount of relevant data in order to make systematic comparisons through the research process, as well as for "asking incisive questions about the data" (p. 315). In selecting research participants for this study, I insured that there was representation from the various

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[27] See Chapter 8 for an explanation of the art/dialogue connection.

years of the program, as well as from the relevant nationalities and social backgrounds. Additionally, I attempted to find participants that represented a variety of experiences in the program. Having been involved in the program since its inception enabled me to have an understanding of the participants, which aided the selection process.

Reflexivity throughout the research process is also an important criterion for helping to determine the quality of the research. Charmaz calls this methodological self-consciousness (2017). This type of self-consciousness requires the researcher to continuously dissect our worldviews, and examine our 'selves' in the research process, including how we make meaning and which actions we take throughout the research process. Throughout the process of the research, it was important to me to constantly check in with myself as to how my worldview and position might influence my interpretations or my actions. Throughout the interviews, when I was unsure or had questions, I checked in with the participants to be sure that I was capturing the intent of their words. Checking in with peers and other staff of the program was also important in helping me to maintain awareness of my position. This skill has been an important part of my practice as a therapist, my work with Artsbridge, as well as within this research process.

The concept of *originality* relates to whether the research offers new insights or provides a new way to conceptualize a particular problem. This research offers new ways of working with members of societies engaged in intractable conflict, assisting them in finding new ways of moving forward to more constructive engagement. This leads us to the concept of resonance, which is the demonstration of the construction of ideas that provide new insights to others (Charmaz, 2021).

Usefulness relates to whether the research provides new understandings to the research participants' experience – in this case, that would be the understanding of their experience in Artsbridge and how it connects to their lives moving forward.

In addition to the above criteria for determining quality in qualitative research, scholars add the concept of transparency and rich, detailed description (Schram, 2003; Charmaz, 2014). Part II of this dissertation provided a rich, detailed description of the processes utilized in Artsbridge. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a range of participants that represent a broad spectrum of Artsbridge. Excerpts from those interviews were used, not only in the grounded theory analysis, but also to provide illustrations of concepts discussed throughout the dissertation.

Summary

In summary, this chapter reviewed the methodology utilized for this study, which is known as a retrospective constructionist grounded theory. My roles in the research and in Artsbridge were clearly laid out as was a description of my background, my connection to the program and the research, including the potential biases that may have influenced how I collected and analyzed the data for this PhD thesis. How I chose the interviewees and a description of them and the additional data I collected was also outlined, including some participant-selection limitations that occurred due to COVID and participant accessibility. Additionally, the steps that I took to ensure that I was staying true to the voice of the interviewees was reported. In the next chapter I will provide the analysis of the held interviews and related data, along with explanations of emergent themes.

Chapter Ten: Themes in the Data

Through a constructionist grounded theory process six major themes emerged that might be best described as elements of relational resilience. I will be describing each theme along with their subthemes and provide examples of each.

Before I delineate the six primary themes that emerged from my exploration of the data, I would like to stress the challenge of breaking down the elements of what has become the overarching theme of this dissertation – relational resilience. Though I have attempted to deconstruct the concept of relational resilience, breaking it down into separate themes, I would like to acknowledge a challenge in creating distinct themes from within a relational approach. In a sense, all of the themes represent part of the unfolding process of developing relational resilience. I argue here that it is the interconnectedness of the themes that allows for the development of relational resilience. Therefore, there is some overlap amongst the themes. Figure 19 illustrates the six primary themes and their subthemes.[28]

What follows are descriptions of each of the themes with examples of the coding levels for each of them. For each theme there is a table that shows a sampling of the raw statements derived from the interviews, how they were initially coded, and then the result of the focused coding.

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[28] Appendix C provides a listing of the themes and subthemes along with the corresponding numbers of total respondents and individual occurrences for each subtheme.

Figure 19

Diagram of Major Themes and Subthemes that Emerged from the Interviews
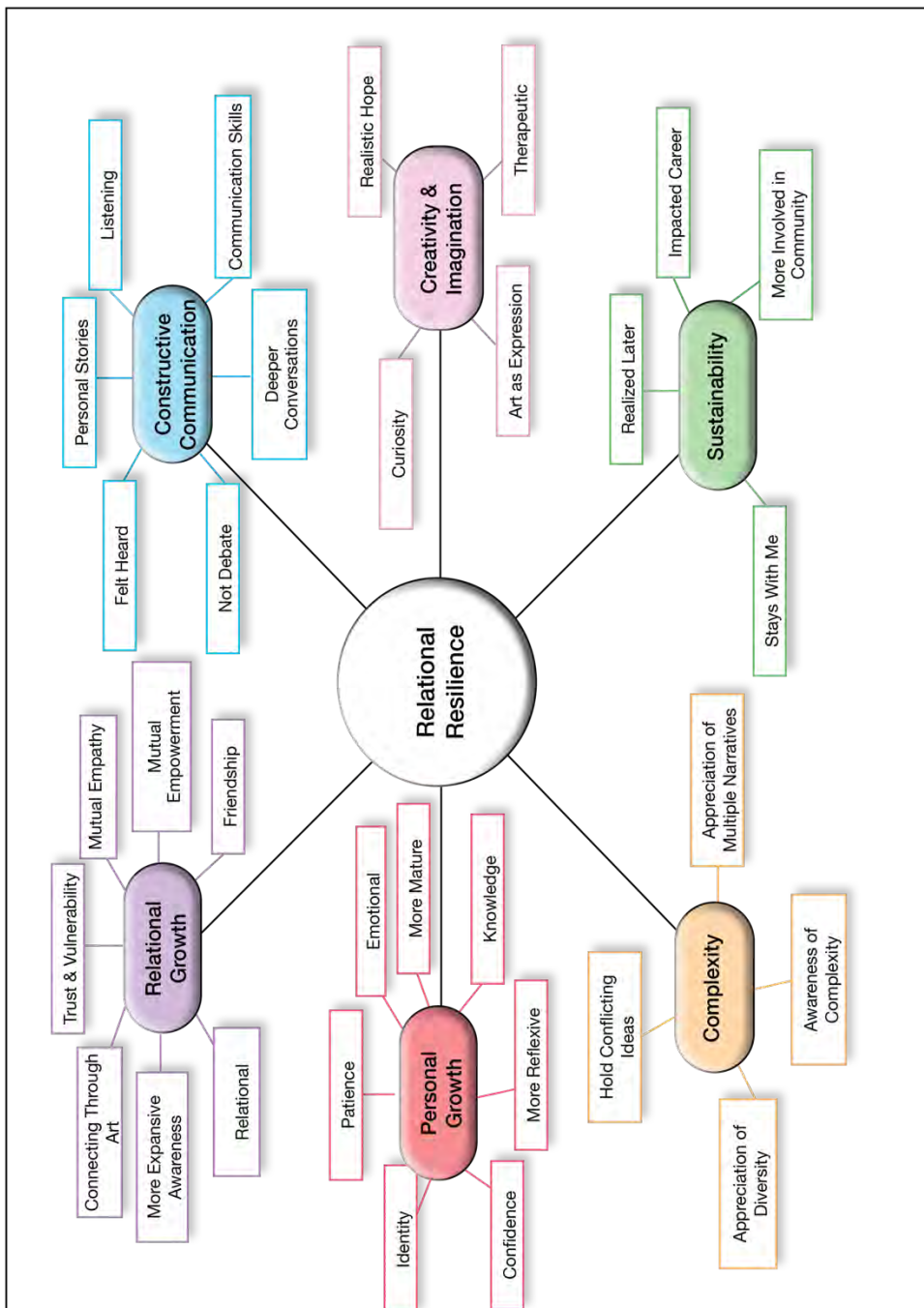
Complexity

As Bar-Tal (2018) notes, one of the challenges of intractable conflict is the inability of those living in its midst to think beyond their deeply held belief in the righteousness of their side and the evil of the Other. Conflict narratives have the effect of simplifying difficult concepts as it renders members of society unable to see or appreciate viewpoints or narratives that deviate from their own. The theme of "complexity" relates to a participant's ability to appreciate ideas in multiple ways and to understand that there are many ways to understand a particular idea or concept. John Paul Lederach (2005) in his discussion of moral imagination, discusses the need for "the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity" (p. 5) as one of the four criteria necessary in order to rise above violence.

Several participants noted that they didn't realize how complicated "it" was, meaning the conflict, or that the complexity of the conflict now seems clearer after participation in the program. Another participant mentioned that they no longer see the conflict as black and white. I placed these comments under the primary theme of complexity. The primary theme of "complexity" includes several capacities, including: (1) Better awareness of complexity; (2) Appreciation of diversity; (3) Appreciation of multiple narratives; and (4) The ability to hold conflicting ideas. Table 10 illustrates the levels of coding for the theme of "complexity."

Additionally, participants noted that, when speaking with or listening to somebody whose narrative is different than theirs, they may not agree, but they can understand where they are coming from, and that, as several participants noted, they are now able to maintain a friendship/relationship with those with whom they may not agree. Others commented on the idea that they can now appreciate people who are different from them or have ideas that are different from theirs. For example, Nomi always considered herself to be liberal and, in that, she always understood that everybody is the same, because "human is human." However, her participation in Artsbridge helped her realize that there are differences, and that there is value to those differences. Educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1993), in writing about her concept of social imagination warns of the "blurring over of differences" (p. 219). She contends that when there is an unwillingness to see difference, and when boundaries are blurred, the result is that the minority is subsumed and important voices are silenced (Guyotte, 2018). Maxine was speaking of racial issues in the United States, and Guyotte raised the argument of the Black Lives Matter movement and its counter, "all lives matter" (2018). While I am not comparing racism in the United States to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, it is

possible to see some parallels in how minorities or oppressed populations might be impacted. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between "everybody is the same" and "all are equal." Nomi, through her participation in Artsbridge, was able to begin the process of noticing difference and seeing its value. Similarly, the ability to appreciate the validity of a narrative that is different from one's own, is an important step in breaking down the negative impact of conflict narratives, or as Kelman (1999) describes it, the negative interdependence of Israeli and Palestinian Identities. Along with the ability to understand multiple narratives is the concept of being able to hold conflicting ideas. Being able to appreciate, or be aware of, complexity is an important part of being able to identify with the positive aspects of one's culture while also being able to see that their culture may be harming others. The concept of complexity is also particularly important for Palestinian citizens of Israel, who must struggle with being a citizen of Israel, but also being Palestinian. The question is, how does one navigate conflicting identities without negating one side or the other. Nara was able to better navigate this challenge after Artsbridge. As she states:

> Me being kind of in the middle and I still go a bit to the Palestinian side but I also don't block the Israeli side and I know that I have the ability or I can. You kind of just find your place in this conflict. Now, I know that I am Palestinian and I'll always go to the Palestinian side more but I will also understand the Israeli side because I can.

Table 10
Coding Levels for the Theme of Complexity

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• Each time a person spoke I was convinced. At the beginning I was conflicted by the fact that I had so many opinions but I later learned to accept that. • Not the truth, but that there's another side to the story. I love Israel, that didn't change, it's my home, it's where I grew up. But now, I'm just more open-minded to what others have to say and to their truth – it might not be my truth – but to their truth.	Hold Conflicting Ideas	Complexity
• In dialogue people actually told their opinions and I saw that the same story can be told twice, in a different opinion and be totally different. • I learned that there more ways than what I see. This is something I learned in Artsbridge. • Now, I know that I am Palestinian and I'll always go to the Palestinian side more but I will also understand the Israeli side because I can.	Appreciation of Multiple Narratives	
• But then after the program, I was able to understand that they too are humans like us, they do have skills and talents and passions and that friendship is possible regardless of the wall between us. • It also has opened my mind to diversity and accepting diversity and being immersed in diversity.	Appreciate Diversity	
• This is what they think and what they believe and they can do whatever they want. It's up to them. And we can agree to disagree, we can. • We have different opinions and it's okay for us to not think the same way, to not agree, and that's really powerful.	Awareness of Complexity	

Constructive Communication

It is not surprising that every participant noted something about constructive communication. For almost all of the participants, Artsbridge dialogue is like nothing they have ever experienced before. Table 11 illustrates the levels of coding for the theme of "constructive communication."

While the majority of participants spoke positively about the process, most of the participants found it frustrating in the beginning. Even some of those who spoke of the value of the dialogue commented on how frustrating it was in the beginning.

As Munir notes:

> The first week of dialogue was very hard for me. I wanted to talk all of the time. There were a lot of times that I really wanted to say to the interviewee or the interviewer, you're wrong, you're brainwashed, you're wrong. I don't know, I just wanted to attack. Maybe attack isn't the right word -- not attack physically, just attack verbally and say no and shout, and give my opinion. Because then, I thought my opinion was the right opinion.

Eliora speaks of a similar frustration:

> In the beginning, it was really hard. I couldn't say whatever I wanted to. I couldn't and it was really hard for me. Sometimes I wanted to yell and, like, say whatever I felt like saying but I couldn't.

Rami brings up a different type of challenge, which was that he felt that he did not receive any "answers." As he says:

> But the conflict… I think that Artsbridge really didn't touch the conflict much, but the fact [of it], and what was going on and who against who, and what happened, what should be done. So it didn't really…. It changed my emotional relation to the conflict. To people like -- both sides, actually. But I didn't feel it helped me to get a more clear view about the situation. Like, [a] more distinct opinion. But for myself, I'm still confused. And I still can't stand behind any strong opinion fully.

Rami had hoped that Artsbridge would give him answers to the conflict, as well as more details/facts. So, while he acknowledges personal growth and gaining skills in constructive communication, it seems that his ability to live with the complexity of multiple narratives was still challenged at the time of the interview.

Most of the participants mentioned that they learned how to listen, and that this was one of the more important elements that they gained from Artsbridge, speaking about how learning to listen allowed them to develop a deeper understanding of the conflict and of those affected by the conflict, including those they considered to be their enemy. A majority of the students also mentioned that listening to personal stories was very powerful and, again, allowed them to expand their awareness and be more open to complexity as well as to empathizing with others. Bar-On (2006), Bar-On & Kassem (2004), and Maoz (2011), suggest that there is power in personal stories about living in the conflict, noting that they provide the opportunity for increasing the understanding of the complexities of, not only the other group's personal and collective narratives, but also of one's own group. By providing the space for deep listening within a transformative dialogue model, participants were able to gain deeper insight into their own narratives, and also gain empathy for the 'other'. Several participants noted that the capacity to listen deeply, once developed, expanded beyond the dialogue room into private conversations with the group, in how they worked with their partner in their art project, as well as with others when they returned home.

Lederach (1995) notes:

> Process matters more than outcome. [...] At times of heated conflict too little attention is paid to how the issues are to be approached, discussed, and decided. There is a push toward solution and outcome that skips the discipline of creating an adequate and clear process for achieving an acceptable result (p. 22).

The skills participants are acquiring during their participation in Artsbridge seem to be helping them engage more constructively, not only while in the program, but also, when they return home.

Table 11

Coding Levels for the Theme of Constructive Communication

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• It gives you tools, like tools you can -- you can remind yourself to be more curious about stuff. • I learned … ways to speak in order for people to want to listen to me. • Artsbridge [made] me realize [it]was problematic trying to win, and trying to argue with facts, or trying to out-force another party.	Communication Skills	Constructive Communication
• Because the way the dialogues were, I had the opportunity to listen, and to think about it more deeply. • It's the way she can manage to have even the most difficult of conversation in a very calm manner. • It's a way to know people, and a way to broader conversations.	Deeper Conversations	
• And just really making me feel heard. • You understand that everyone was listening, and everyone was understanding. • I was asked some questions. I answered them. I felt heard, like I'm free to answer whatever I want.	Felt Heard	
• The practice of, while someone else is speaking, not to be thinking about what you want to answer, but actually listening to what they have to say. • Being openminded in conversation and listening and not being afraid to share our opinions and truths, being mindful of the words we use. • Because the dialogue is just to listen, and experience other people, and listen and be curious and understand.	Listening	
• Before Artsbridge, it was like saying, no, you're wrong, I'm right. I'm telling my perspective. But now it's bringing another way of dialogue, of trying to question things, or trying to let other people think. • It gives you the space to really… from a pure place … not thinking about how people are going to respond to this	Not Debate	

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
and not thinking about what debate you're getting yourself into. • I never felt like it was biased in some way. So I felt like everybody got a chance to speak, and not to be judged.		
• I used to hear the Israeli side all the time and then I heard the Palestinian kids telling a totally different story and how they see it and what they feel inside. It was very interesting to see other points of view. • It made me feel like I can understand someone being brought up on a different story than the one I was brought up on. • Listening to stories that they told, that I thought were not true, really made me realize the more depth of the conflict.	Personal Stories	

Creativity and Imagination

For the vast majority of young Israelis and Palestinians life has been subsumed by intractable conflict, sometimes violent and other times, simmering. That being the case, it is difficult for them to imagine life other than in violent conflict. Paradoxically, it is imagination, or as Maxine Greene calls it, "social Imagination," that allows people to envision a different future – one not defined by the conflict in which they have grown up. And yet, it is the nature of intractable conflict and living in the midst of violence that imagining a brighter future seems beyond reach and requires too much risk. As Maxine Greene notes, "Imagining things being otherwise may be the first step toward acting on the belief that they can be changed" (1995, p. 22). All of the participants related in some way to the theme of Creativity and Imagination. I have included "curiosity" and "realistic hope" as subthemes within the major theme of "Creativity and Imagination" because of the inter-relationship between curiosity, creativity and imagination. Regarding the concept of realistic hope, one must be able to imagine a future different from what is in order to have a sense of hope. Table 12 illustrates the coding levels for the theme of "creativity and imagination."

While participants spoke of the creative process and their experience of creating the art project with their partner(s), some also spoke of the therapeutic quality of the arts and how helpful that was for them.

While the majority of participants found value/meaning in the art component of the program, two students expressed otherwise. One participant expressed that, while the art was fun, she did not find it particularly meaningful. The second student noted that she was not particularly happy with how their project turned out. It is interesting to note that both of these participants were in the program when art was in the morning and dialogue was in the afternoon. It is possible that this had an impact on the meaning that they derived from the art component.[29]

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[29] While our original plan was to have dialogue in the morning and art in the afternoon, we shifted the schedule to art in the morning and dialogue in the afternoon in order to accommodate one of the dialogue facilitators. However, in 2012 we were able to return to our original concept of art in the afternoon. It appears from the data that those students who did not notice a connection between the art and dialogue, or did not derive as much meaning from the art were from the earlier years where dialogue was after the art component of the program. More research would be needed to explore the significance of this. (not sure you keep needing to repeat this)

Table 12

Coding levels for the Theme of Creativity & Imagination

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
- The idea that you can really express about your feelings, your situation, your everything through arts. This is an idea that stays in my mind forever. - I feel like Artsbridge gave me a place to express this idea. - Then you go into the art studio and you just express it all as creativity and that's really beautiful. - You can try and say something to someone, and they won't listen to you, and you can sing it to them, and they'll listen to it, because it has a nice melody. And then they're hearing this song, and they're enjoying it and maybe they're dancing, and then they're like, wow, there's a message to this that I didn't even -- so that was one of the most powerful things about it for me.	Art as Expression	Creativity & Imagination
- The yearning towards learning more. Which is an idea that I started there; that's where I kind of put in the early seeds. - Trying to understand where everybody is coming from. What the reason is for everybody doing stuff, and listening and being curious. - I actually got more into listening to politics and people and being more in life, rather than just being a …teenager. - I heard of people's stories, and that really got me interested in the conflict, first, and in knowing more. I just really wanted to know more. I started wanting to change something, or maybe be a part of something that I never thought that I would want to be a part of.	Curiosity	
- I don't think we should give up, but some things that I've experienced are very disappointing. - My mind stretched like a parachute after that, it just stretched so much and it's like I sort of woke up in a way. I kind of had a sense that everything is possible. - Not pessimistic, I think I'm maybe more realistic, in a good way. I'm still very optimistic personally. I still believe in change. - It was my understanding that I probably won't be able to fix the conflict by myself.	Realistic Hope	
- I feel like it's a place to let out everything you feel in different ways. Art is the best therapy, in my opinion. Also, when we had challenges in dance or in art, so we used techniques we learned in dialogue to try and solve what we feel. - I think arts is a way of healing. And for me it's like,	Therapeutic	

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
when I'm angry, the first thing I want to do is to go do some art. • It can help you to reflect your ideas; how you feel, or you don't have to reflect your ideas through art, you can just pull out all of the anger that's inside you by drawing this piece or by, I don't know, this sculpture. It can give you a free mind, and it can help you relax, free your mind, push everything out, and at the same time, it can help you reflect this while doing art.		

Personal Growth

I am challenged by the concept of separating out personal growth from relational growth. However, while there is some overlap between the two, I recognize divergence in several aspects. For example, one may develop self confidence in some areas, such as art ability, but not necessarily in connection with others. Many participants spoke of gaining self-confidence, or more knowledge about the conflict and/or different cultures. Other participants spoke of becoming more mature, or being more patient. Yet others spoke of reaching more clarity regarding their own identity. While all of these elements are important to relational growth, they are not necessarily connected, in that one may gain more knowledge, or more patience, but not in relation to others. Table 13 illustrates the coding levels for the theme of "personal growth." Several participants noted that the experience was very personal for them and that they felt that different people gained different things from the program, which seemed to be a surprise for them. For example, Raida notes:

> And when I came back, I realized that sometimes, you have to be less selfish, and more accepting [of] the other side. And actually like, you really learn about yourself during this whole program, even though you're never alone. You really, like, get to know yourself, and I had a lot of time to think about it when I came back home. I realized how much I've changed during these three weeks, and how much Artsbridge affected me personally, in ways that I never thought Artsbridge would. Like I didn't think about, I'm going to change, like, in this particular way, but I did. Coding Levels for the Theme of Personal Growth

Table 13
Coding Levels for the Theme of Personal Growth

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• I think I got patient during that time because by the end, I was like I can handle this. • The way the dialogue changed the way I think, it made me not a better person to have conversations with but when you're in nursing, you ask a lot of questions and you have to be very patient. • I think it was a lot of being patient and willing to hear suggestions and not having the end project have to look exactly how I would have liked it to look	Patience	Personal Growth
• It really helped me think about it more deeply. It's more like I think it's definitely changed something about the way I see other people's emotions and the way I see the conflict. • Now, I make decisions more thoughtfully -- I think about decisions more. • I think before I talk, and I [have] more acceptance in hearing every side.	More Reflexive	
• It was part of my process of growing up and realizing who I am and what I think about life and the conflict. • You know, they say I'm Palestinian, they say I'm Muslim, but maybe that's not necessarily who I am and I have to choose for myself.	Identity	
• It gave me the inspiration to learn more, to volunteer more, to be more active in the community, to be a leader in the future and to become a decision-maker. • It's given me a big boost of confidence, the confidence to say my opinion without being scared of being politically correct without offending people. • It gave me the feeling that I can do it somehow. Because I did art in Artsbridge first of all that I'm really proud of, the movie.	Confidence	
• The checkpoints. I didn't realize it was that hard. I understood it was not easy, but I didn't understand it was that hard. I didn't understand that sometimes, it's impossible.	Knowledge	

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• And also, I was -- I never knew that, that soldiers don't like, [just] use guns and go shooting at the border. • I get also a lot of knowledge; we talked about subjects that are different and to see them from a personal point of view, it's really important for me. I think it gave me the opportunity to know like the truth and to know what my friends are feeling.		
• When I was there at the time, I didn't realize how much I learned and how much I grew until I went back home. • Because of all the change you go through and I think it makes you more mature.	More Mature	
• To be honest, I used to hate everyone. It taught me that not every Israeli should be the same, not just because they come from the occupation that this means that they hate us or that they want to kill me or whatever. • I can feel his grief I can feel sadness because he is a friend. But on the other hand, it is a conflict. He's a friend, he's a human who loves another human, who was also a kid - who was also a teenager my age. • It's like I can hold myself whenever I feel the need to.	Emotional	

Relational Growth

Of the six major themes, relational growth appears to be the broadest category which, considering the overall results of this study, is not surprising. Included in the theme are the subthemes of: Friendship; more expansive awareness; connecting through art; mutual empathy; relational confidence; trust and vulnerability; and mutual empowerment. While broad, I believe that each subtheme in this category relates in some way to a person's capacity to relate to others in a more constructive way. While one can argue that several of the other themes also relate to this concept, I believe that these subthemes appear to have a more direct relationship, and are elements that scholars have suggested are important in the transformation of intractable conflict, and that I argue are necessary foundations for the development of relational resilience. Table 14 illustrates the levels of coding for the theme of "relational growth."

As would be anticipated, the subtheme of "more expansive awareness" had the most responses. This subtheme differs from that of "knowledge", found under the

theme of personal growth. I suggest that one can gain knowledge without gaining a more expansive awareness. An example of gaining knowledge would be Munir's comment that he learned more about the checkpoints. Or Samach, who learned more about what it is that an Israeli soldier does beyond just using guns and standing at the border. With more expansive awareness, participants were able to notice more than just their own lived experience. As Dafne described when she went on a class trip to Poland right after Artsbridge:

> I still have the diary that I wrote which made the trip to Poland more difficult because when you're in Poland, you want [to] grasp on [to] something. And a lot of the teachers would be like, "yay Zionism", and because I was learning beforehand the complex situation, I wasn't in love -- blindly in love with my country. So, it wasn't like a place to fall back on when you're like, oh, well at least now we have Israel. Like yeah, we have Israel which we must improve.

Quite a few participants noted that they felt that they made a deeper connection with their art partner(s) as a result of working together on their project, which is represented in the subtheme of "connecting through art." For example, Samach said the following:

> …it really connect[ed] us [on] a spiritual level, because you both need to be harmonized to do one project, that combines your opinions and her opinions. And you really want to do something that's impressive, so you have to combine it".

"Mutual empathy," another element considered necessary for the development of relational resilience, was noted by many of the participants. Mutual empathy differs from the modernist concept of empathy which is more one-directional. Mutual empathy involves the well-being of each person, as well as that of the relationship. For example, Jaleel (P) states the following:

> What was useful is how we can appreciate one another and listen to one another despite the disagreement. I remember times after the dialogue room where it was really emotional and

> really intense and people cried and it's not easy. And I
> remember other times where we would disagree and have a
> discussion and then come outside and just jump around and
> play.

Similar to mutual empathy the concept of "mutual empowerment" is about the relational quality of responsibility and empowerment. Rather than "I am responsible for myself," it is about "We are responsible for our relationship, and together we are empowered."

"Mutual empowerment" relates to the concern for mutual, rather than individual growth, and constructive, rather than destructive conflict. Alana speaks of how difficult it was to hear the impact of the conflict on both sides yet despite that, they all wanted to support each other.

> …it was hard to see how both sides were affected badly with the
> conflict. And how nobody had a solution and everyone had bad
> experiences and bad emotions. We all wanted to support each
> other all the time because we were such close friends, but it was
> also sometimes hard in some issues. But I feel like it was so
> important to hear the other side, so important to do the
> dialogues, that I learned a lot from it.

Many of the art teams spoke of the challenges as they began their collaborative projects in figuring out the idea for their art piece, or deciding how to proceed with it. However, as the projects progressed, they were able to learn to work together and began to find the value in supporting each other and working together. Figure 20 provides an example of this in the artwork and narrative written by a team[30] from 2016.

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[30] Some of the artwork shown in this dissertation was created by students who were not a part of this study. Therefore, I have not included their names.

Figure 20

"Hot Spot": Artwork and Narrative Created by Students in 2016

Hot Spot

In daily life we don't pay very much attention to our identity, but when someone asks us about it, we start questioning. Words like "Jewish", "Christian", "Arab", "Palestinian", "Israeli", and "Russian" come to mind. The tip of the tornado represents the starting point of our questioning which spirals into chaos and confusion. Through this thinking we are reminded of the conflict that surrounds us in the Middle East—represented in the fire—that we don't always think about in our daily life, but that influences our personal understanding of identity.

It was very difficult for us to begin this piece because we didn't know how to show people our message of identity since our message itself was a mess. We had a lot of problem solving and disagreements about the size, material, and shape.

Towards the end of the process, we found out that we had different understandings of the meaning of our project. As we discussed it, we realized that we are on the same page and that we wanted to say the same thing through our piece. We became more patient in trying to understand what the other person was saying, we thought more about what we were saying, and became more flexible in our opinions.

Before coming here, we each thought that each alone would be the one to lead the work to the place that we personally wanted. Working together on this piece made us see that it is more important to find a common language between us. Though we wanted the piece to be special to look at, conveying our message is more important.

We invite the viewer of Hot Spot to experience the complexity that surrounds our daily lives.

While the artists that created Hot Spot did find a way to overcome their challenges, I propose that, had the focus been on commonalities and fostering a common identity, these artists would not have had the opportunity to work through some of these challenges. As discussed in chapter 8, many of the art projects begin with a superficial idea – something about peace, friendship, or unity. Through the dialogic process, the requirement that both voices be represented in the piece, and the opportunity to challenge various beliefs and understandings, the participants arrive at art projects that have much deeper meaning. Therefore, while they are creating a joint piece of art, they are provided the opportunity to think more deeply about their lived experience, that of their partner(s), and often of the conflict itself.

Another aspect of relational growth that was presented in the interviews is relational confidence, which differs from self-confidence in that it refers to the

development of confidence from within relationships, to speak and represent oneself in relationship. For example, Samach states the following:

> It made me express myself honestly, more honestly, and like now, I'm not really afraid to express my opinion. Back before I went to Artsbridge, I was more closed off in my opinion, because I didn't want to hurt anybody, and I didn't want to make people uncomfortable. But now I know that even though my opinion might make them uncomfortable, they don't have to accept it, they only have to respect it. So that really stayed with me.

With regards to the subtheme of "friendship", many of the interviewees noted that they had developed friendships from the program, and for some of them, having developed a friendship with somebody from a different background or with different viewpoints was a pleasant surprise for them. While it is certainly a positive thing that friendships were developed, I want to emphasize here that this is not necessarily a goal of the program. What is important is that participants learn that they are capable of working with somebody even though they may not agree with them and despite the fact that they might not be friends. Therefore, while friendships were developed, several participants noted that they were able to work together constructively despite their differences.

The final subtheme under relational growth is that of "trust and vulnerability." The importance of trust and the capacity to allow oneself to feel vulnerable are necessary elements in the process of allowing oneself to question one's own narrative and allowing for the possibility that there are other narratives that may be seen as valid. In a sense, this feels like a tremendous risk – one that can only be taken when one feels safe. Figure 21 contains an essay written by a Palestinian student in the 2008 cohort which describes her experience with her partner that, I believe, is illustrative of the process of developing trust and allowing oneself to be vulnerable. An image of the artwork that she and her partner created along with the narrative written by both students is shown in Figure 22.

Figure 21
Story Written by a Participant in the 2008 Program

To this day, the power of a simple art project in bridging conflict and bringing people together still amazes me. This summer, I went to Artsbridge, a camp that brings kids from both Palestine and Israel to practice something they are both passionate about: art, in all its different forms. There, art brought forth something that often gets lost and forgotten amidst the bitterness of political tension-- humanity. Art and friendship, intertwined, make a beautiful piece.

It was the beginning of camp, and everyone was assigned to partners with whom to work for the final project. I was assigned to work with Shai (a pseudonym), a sixteen-year old boy who lives in the Jewish (Western) part of Jerusalem. We agreed to be quite innovative, and to try art that neither of us was familiar with: we chose working with clay. Our idea involved making an abstract structure of two intertwining poles. The very abstractness of the structure is what appealed to me the most--in my head, perhaps ironically, abstractness translated to creative and open to interpretation, not definitive. This stems from the fact that ever since I was little, I've imagined rigid lines in art to be baffling, mysterious, and evasive, and thus, provocative to the heightened sense of imagination.

Working with clay proved to be a very challenging job from the start... it was no play dough! Shai and I cooperatively learned a technique that makes the poles hollow so that they wouldn't crack when the clay was baked. This involved making layers of loops at a specific width in order to reach a specific height. What made the project trickier altogether was the cautious relationship and limited exchange between my partner and me, one from which stemmed many uncomfortable periods of awkward silence.

Ultimately, Shai and I decided that each would work on his/her own pole and the two pieces would only seem to intertwine by tilting the direction of the poles toward each other. The silent, but apparent, pact was that I would stay away from his part and he would stay away from mine. Soon, however, we started to notice that the two poles seemed to be there, in the same place, but not really connecting.

Obviously, this separation "pact" wasn't working. And, obviously, our need to make our piece as good as possible overwhelmed our desire for comfort zones in which neither had to mingle with the "other".

Mutually, and in one of the longest conversations we had had to that point, Shai and I decided to work together. It took time, but it was definitely worth every second: gradually, but slowly, the piece was finishing up beautifully; and gradually, but slowly, Shai and I became friends.

Figure 22
"No Cliché": Artwork and Narrative Created by Students in 2008

No Cliché

We did not want our piece to be about peace or cooperation, but we wanted it to be more universal, and open to interpretation. Thus, we decided to use abstract figures to formulate our project. It is meant to be a piece that anyone can relate to and make personal meaning out of.

We were fortunate to have each other as partners. Due to the similarity in character and personality, agreement and cooperation sprung up between us, nurturing our piece and helping it flourish. However, we did have our share of difficulties. We initially made two practice pieces in order to learn and master the technique. When we finally started working on our final piece, it collapsed due to its weight. In the original exhibit we displayed the broken pieces to represent the challenges that led up to our final art piece, which is a result of our mastering the techniques and our cooperation with each other.

The type of vulnerability that is spoken of here, in the context of relational resilience, is that of supported vulnerability – which, as discussed in chapter eleven, involves the ability to allow oneself to risk emotional vulnerability, but also to judge when our trust and confidence in another person is warranted or not. This is an important caveat to trust and vulnerability, since they will be returning to their home communities, where trust and vulnerability may not be warranted in all situations. That is not to say that the capacity for allowing oneself to be vulnerable and to trust is lost - only that participants learn to appreciate when it is safe to trust and to be vulnerable and when not to be. I believe the art piece shown in figure 22, as well as the essay written by the Palestinian student, is a beautiful depiction of the gradual development of trust between the two students, through their art.

To illustrate the idea that the ability to trust and to be vulnerable does not necessarily disappear when the students return home, I cite an example from the 2015 alumni conference. Enrollment in the 4-day conference was approximately 50 alumni, which in 2015 represented approximately 30% of the total alumni population. The conference consisted of guest speakers from various NGO's, time

for art making, time for dialogue, as well as time for socializing. During the second day there were guest speakers from the Parents Circle Family Forum, as well as a talk given by one of our previous staff members who spoke about his army experience. The participants represented alumni from 2008 through 2014, which meant that several of the Jewish Israeli students were post-army service. Both presentations raised challenging issues and we had scheduled a dialogue for 2 ½ hours before lunch. We had also scheduled free time at the swimming pool directly after the dialogue and before lunch.

I am always moved by how alumni are able to move into Artsbridge dialogue so quickly after having been away from it for, in some cases, several years. The dialogue began with an interview of one of the students who was particularly challenged by the presentations. Other students volunteered to be on the reflecting team. After the interview and the reflections, we opened up the conversation to everybody. Though less structured, the conversation remained very respectful despite the difficult topic. As the time allotted for dialogue was coming to an end, the participants asked if they could, instead of free time at the pool, continue the dialogue. It was a rich conversation, and led to a discussion about the army. One of the participants who had finished his army service began to share some of the painful issues he had faced in the army, including moral challenges. People listened respectfully. The participant was struggling with sharing what was obviously painful for him. Sitting next to him was one of the Palestinian alumni from the West Bank. I watched as the Palestinian participant put his hand on the speaker's knee to comfort him as he was struggling with tears in his eyes. What was so moving was that, despite the fact that the Palestinian clearly did not agree with the activities of the Israeli army, he was able to show compassion for somebody who represented something that he deeply disagreed with. I argue that, despite being back in their home communities, alumni were able to return to the safe space that was created during their tenure in Artsbridge, and to recognize that, in this space, they were able to allow themselves to be vulnerable. I believe this speaks not only to mutual vulnerability, but also to the sustainability of these ideas after returning home to their communities.

Table 14
Coding Levels for the Theme of Relational Growth

Raw Statements from Data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• We all wanted to support each other all the time because we were such close friends, but it was also sometimes hard in some issues. • It took time. At first, I didn't feel really comfortable, but at some point, I felt like I was friends with everybody because of things we went through.	Friendship	Relational Growth
• And I feel like talking in front of other people, and seeing their reactions, you tended to choose words much more seriously. • Just being openminded in conversation and listening and not being afraid to share our opinions and truths, being mindful of the words we use.	Relational Confidence	
• What was interesting was that it was really, really powerful and it was hard to see how both sides were affected badly with the conflict. And how nobody had a solution and everyone had bad experiences and bad emotions. • I don't think I would have burst the bubble I lived in. I'd probably stay in like -- I think I would recognize problems in my society, but they'd be in my small community and not in the wider sense of being Israeli.	More Expansive Awareness	
• It meant this connection between people, like and the different levels than the dialogue. And also, you had to work together. • It was really interesting to be with that and to just collaborate on a beautiful art piece, although we're from totally different sides and different nations, and different background and peoples. This art piece just united us.	Connecting Through Art	
• Being vulnerable and sharing the truth and the opinions and listening was really lifechanging and I was 16 at the time and didn't know anybody from the group when I went. • Somebody holding space and making you feel safe and then once you develop this confidence, etc., you're like, "Yeah, I can be vulnerable with anybody. It doesn't matter because I can protect myself, I can hold myself." • I think being vulnerable is really important because this is like my raw, true self when I'm vulnerable, and there's a lot of power in that and a lot of shame that dissolves.	Trust & Vulnerability	

Raw Statements from Data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• I tried to understand that there are people who want to live also from the other side, so I have to change my ideas and some beliefs that I had before. • It affected the way I see -- when I meet Arabs in Israel, the way -- I feel like I can understand what they feel. • I also understand, what the Israeli side is about it. I understand it more strongly. But yeah, absolutely. I understand the pain, I understand the humiliation.	Mutual Empathy	
• So, we have a hand, we get help, we help each other and we may get an idea and then work on it. Like, I'm not going to do everything by myself, so it's going to be easier. • And there was a fine line of meeting in the middle, like making sure not to impose any of the ideas on others like, "I think it's best to do it like this," but they might think something else. • We supported each other. I felt there are so many differences between my ideas and hers. I felt that she has a different way of thinking than me, but at the same time, we were closer to the idea and accomplishing it.	Mutual Empowerment	

Sustainability

While it is important to understand the process of Artsbridge, and the meaning that participants derive from their experience, it is equally important to understand, not only what they take from the experience, but also what stays with them in the long term. Hammack (2006) describes the risk of identity accentuation when participants in an American coexistence program return home. In his research on two separate American programs, he suggested that many of the participants, when they returned home, were not able to maintain identity transcendence[31] in the midst of the pressure of returning to their home communities, where entrenched narratives and peer and family pressure seem too much to withstand, and ultimately, resort to what he calls identity accentuation, with its concurrent narrative of polarized identities. Scholars have written about the challenge of "re-entry" after participating in encounter programs, especially international programs (Albeck, Adwan & Bar-On, 2002; Hammack, 2006, 2011; Kelman,1999; Steinberg, 2002).

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[31] Identity transcendence was defined by Hammack (2006) as "a reduction in salience of ingroup ideology" (p. 348).

"Re-entry" as discussed in the literature, deals with experiences that initially lead to growth and change, but on return to their home communities and, facing the reality of polarization, they seem to return to a polarized self-narrative (Steinberg, 2002, Hammack, 2006). Hammack suggests that their polarized ideology may even become more enhanced. He argues that: "their feelings of ingroup solidarity increase with the perception of threat that can accompany the pressures of identity transcendence inherent in the philosophy of the programs. With enhanced ingroup solidarity naturally comes identification with the polarizing ideology that reproduces the conflict over time" (2006, p. 358).

While this current study is not extensive, the phenomenon of the negative aspect of identity accentuation upon returning to their home communities does not appear to occur in the case of the Artsbridge participants interviewed. I will suggest that one reason may be that Artsbridge does not ask students to subsume their identity into a new common identity as Hammack noted in his research on two other American coexistence programs. Additionally, Artsbridge attempts to create an environment that allows for the discussion of difficult topics in a way that minimizes potential threat to one's identity, with a focus on transformative dialogue and relational resilience. One of the goals of Artsbridge is not for participants to experience identity transcendence, as Hammack suggests. Rather, the goal of Artsbridge is more similar to what I am calling identity expansion. Identity expansion would, theoretically, allow for the benefits of a positive ingroup identity, which allows for some protection against the impact of exposure to political violence and conflict (Punamaki, 1996), including the enhancement of self-esteem (Phinney, 1991,1996), but also provide the space for the acceptance and/or acknowledgement of the narrative of the "other" without threatening their own identity. More research on this would need to be conducted.

What is clear is that, for participants interviewed for this study, positive elements of the program stay with them, even after their return home. Sustainability is noted in several areas, including increased involvement in their community, and their choice of career. Table 15 illustrates the level of coding for the theme of "sustainability." For others, it includes more constructive ways of engaging with others, or a more expansive identity. Lea, a 2013 participant puts it this way:

> It redirected the whole way my mind thinks, not [just] with Palestinians, [but] in general, with people in my life. I had a very powerful experience. This memory became my reality.

Mahmoud is able to articulate how it stays with him and continues to influence. He also notes that he was not aware of what he gained from Artsbridge in the beginning – that it was only later that he began to understand its impact.

> …maybe I'm not thinking about this …every day, but it was a big thing. But when we -- when I sit with myself and I'm trying to think about my life, or my tools, or what I'm able to [do]. It would be like, … one of the things that I had at Artsbridge, and the effects from that. It is very important to understand that Artsbridge is not a thing that you realize its benefits right away; it's a process, not like you get a tool and you're mastering it. It's not like that at all. You always learn something from it. Since then, I'm trying to develop it.

Table 15
Coding Levels for the Theme of Sustainability

Raw statements from data	Initial Coding	Focused Coding
• I didn't realize how much I learned and how much I grew until I went back home. • At first, it was confusing ... the realization of what the dialogue did to you came after. It didn't come exactly in a week or two; it came like a month after Artsbridge.	Realized Later	
• It gave me the push to study law... and not only law, to take the field where it can be about human rights and defending minorities and people who are, ... not being appreciated. ... it was actually one of the best decisions I made. • The dialogue changed the way I think... when you're in nursing, you ask a lot of questions and you have to be very patient... it made me realize that I can deal with people in a different way.	Impacted Career Choice	
• To say something in a way that the other people could hear you. Like I really think about it throughout my life. • I think when you really listen to somebody, and not just like, wait until you can answer, yourself, then you hear more things; then you realize, you see people's facial expressions in what they say, and you also hear what they're saying, behind what they're saying. And that follows me anywhere I go. • I learned how to speak up and speak my opinion and be honest and be open, and that's really helped me throughout my future in building and networking and getting to know new people and extending outside of my comfort zone. • These thought processes are so much a part of my identity right now. • It's not something that happened once a year. It's my way of living, of thinking, of everything.	Stays With Me	Sustainability
• It gave me the inspiration to learn more, to volunteer more, to be more active in the community, to be a leader in the future and to become a decision-maker. • I actually got more into listening to politics and people and being more in life, rather than just being a normal teenager. • I started wanting to change something, or maybe be a part of something that I never thought that I would want to be a part of.	More Involved in Community	

Creating the Space

In addition to speaking about the dialogic and artistic components of Artsbridge, many of the students described their experience of Artsbridge and its unique environment beyond just the dialogue and art. Many spoke of experiencing a "safe" environment during the program – an important ingredient for engagement in constructive dialogue. For example, as Yasmina a participant in 2013 and a peer leader in 2016 notes:

> It was more the environment there because even though we had to do the [dialogue], and we had to do this project for the art, what helped us get through this month was actually the environment there because it was made sure that we should feel comfortable there, speak our minds, feel like we're in a safe zone and the quality of people that were there also made us feel like home.

And Jaleel from 2012 explains the following:

> It starts with somebody holding space and making you feel safe and then once you develop this confidence, etc., you're like, "Yeah, I can be vulnerable with anybody. It doesn't matter because I can protect myself, I can hold myself . . . The most useful was to hold that space where... I don't like to say two sides, but maybe more than one perspective can meet in the same room in the middle and feel safe to share their truth and their ideas and their perspectives.

One family from Palestine had three of their children participate in Artsbridge in 2009, 2012, and 2016. I interviewed the mother, Karen. In her interview she spoke about the commonalities of the experience of her three children:

> They had been to other programs before with very different dialogue and every time they came back from somewhere, I do my little interview with them – what happened, what did you do, and how was the dialogue? And each one of them came back [from Artsbridge] and said, "It's the best dialogue I've ever been in because I didn't feel threatened, I didn't feel that I had to

> debate or attack or defend." So, they each really liked the
> dialogue.

Additionally, eight of the participants also spoke of feeling supported, either by the facilitators or the other students. Eliora explains how she felt the facilitators created a supportive environment in dialogue:

> …. the instructors were really helpful because sometimes we
> would get lost with what we say or what we think, or the way that
> we said it. And sometimes it would get really heated. And you
> were there to remind us that we're only 16 years old, we don't
> know everything, and that everyone has his rights or her rights to
> say whatever they want. I think that you were like, adults. You are
> adults but you're there for a reason and that was really helpful. It
> was like putting us onto the ground, facing us with questions that
> we wouldn't think about if it was up to us.

Ensuring a sense of safety is, I argue, critical in order to provide the space for students to take on the challenges of questioning their deeply held beliefs, and to listen to and work with those whom they consider to be their enemy. Without a sense of safety, it is unlikely that students would be willing to allow themselves to be open to those challenges.

The Artsbridge "Bubble"

While many of the participants spoke of the safe space at Artsbridge, some also spoke of the challenges of returning to their home communities. They acknowledged that the safety they felt at Artsbridge is not always possible when they are back home.

Nura, a participant from 2019 spoke of her experience at Artsbridge during her interview and of the challenges of returning home:

> . . . in Artsbridge, when you're being interviewed or you just say
> your opinion, you know that people are not going to respond to
> this, it gives you the space to - really - from a pure place, from
> your heart, not thinking about how people are going to respond
> to this and not thinking about what debate you're getting
> yourself into… Artsbridge really takes you to your personal

> place. . . And Artsbridge gives you this personal space that you
> can just express yourself in.

For Nura, the journey to that personal place was a challenge. When Nura applied for participation in the program I was impressed by her energy. In her interview for this study, she claimed that her main reason for wanting to participate in Artsbridge was for the art. In response to the question "What was your reason for wanting to participate in Artsbridge", she responded:

> To be honest, at first, I didn't take Artsbridge so seriously as I do right now. I was like, "Oh my God, it's a program with art. Sounds interesting. I love art and I don't have time to do a lot of art since I always study." I was like, "Yeah, I'll go there" and when I did the interview, I was like, "I'm going to just tell her what she wants to hear to get accepted and I'm going to – but it wasn't that fake, though. It was real, the interview, but I didn't think about Artsbridge like something that would change me because I was in a place that nothing's going to change my opinion and these programs are bullshit – sorry for the word – and I was hopeless from that place, but I was like, "I'm going to do art. I'm going to have fun and make friends, so I'm going to go there." But the main reason was to do art.

While Nura was very interested in art, she also held strong political opinions as a Palestinian citizen of Israel. When the program began, the dialogue was extremely challenging for her. When she spoke, she spoke with anger in her voice, and with strong opinions, which made her connection to the group challenging. The idea that dialogue was not simply open and students were asked to speak from a personal place was, initially, extremely frustrating for her. For two weeks, Nura expressed her frustration, by showing anger and, a couple of times, walking out of the dialogue room. Below, Nura describes her experience of the first two weeks.

> **Interviewer:** So, you got to Artsbridge. And when you think back on the whole experience, what stands out for you the most? Is there any particular thing that stands out for you?
>
> **Nura:** Yes. In Artsbridge, I got to meet people, I mean, I exposed myself to a lot of different opinions and cultures and mostly by

the Americans that I was so surprised, I mean, they weren't all the same that typical Americans we hear about. I live with Israelis, Palestinians, so meeting the Americans, they came from different cultures, different financial statures and they live in America, which is the most, like that state that rules everything in here. So, it was nice to talk to them. But also, the Israelis were different from what I expected them to be.

And there's one thing that happened at Artsbridge that kind of made a change in me, which was a conversation with one of the Israeli participants and it was about the army. So, this participant came to me and was like, "I was hurt that I heard that you won't be friends with a soldier." First of all, I explained myself and I was like, "One, two, three, blah-blah-blah..." and all the things that everyone knows. So, they told me that, "But I love having fun with you. I love who you are. I would want to stay friends with you for much longer than one year because in one year I'm going to be in the army." And it was like a long conversation, for like an hour or something. I just slept on it.

And then the next morning, I woke up. My opinions didn't change. I still believed that my case, or the case I fight for, is a case of justice and I believe in justice and freedom and democracy. I was like, "She's right. Maybe this is not all about justice all the time. Maybe sometimes we need to be more humane," and be like, "We don't always have an option." I don't know what changed in me, but I was very confused. I still have the same beliefs, but it felt like I don't want to be… – she was the first person that didn't come to [me] and was like, "Why can't you accept me?" And why this and what that? And she was like, "I just want to be your friend." I think this is the thing that I remember the most that made the change in me in Artsbridge.

Interviewer: Do you think there was anything about Artsbridge that allowed that to happen? Or do you think it would have happened anywhere?

Nura: Okay, no. I don't think so and I don't even think that the fact that it's in America allowed us to do that. There's something in Artsbridge that gives you that space that, in my mind, when I was there, I was like – so, I live in this reality, in this bubble of conflict and [whether] I like it or not, I'm going to get back here.

But, when I was in Artsbridge, I wasn't there and I was kind of... I was, ah, how do you say the word, like separated.

Interviewer: You were separated?

Nura: Yeah, I was separated from all this conflict in here. And I was more open-minded. I can say that even though it's the same person and I made a change, I came back here and I can't be that open-minded, like right now, with all the things happening and the war. So, I don't think that right now, I'm going to be the same.

Interviewer: You don't think you can be open-minded when you're here?

Nura: Not open-minded, but like, when I was in Artsbridge, I felt like I had... Artsbridge gives you the space to be like, the fact that you're considering what the other person is saying doesn't put you in any danger or put you in a place that, here, is like that [feels dangerous]. Sometimes you just don't want to hear the other side because of what is going on around you, because of the people around you, because of your family, your friends. So, in Artsbridge, it gives you the space to even hear more than to talk, which made me be like, "Okay, let's pause for a second and I'm not even going to put myself in their shoes, I'm just going to listen and try to consider that, to think about that. It doesn't mean that I have to change my mind or my opinion."

Interviewer: I hear what you're saying about how here it's harder to be open to listen to others. But when you think about this Israeli that you spoke with and were friends with, will that change? Will that go back to being the way it was?

Nura: No, not really. I will still be friends with them, but like I said... like right now, we're in here, we're in this reality, we're not in Artsbridge and sadly, the space that Artsbridge gives us, the world cannot give or the reality we're living in doesn't give us this space of safety. So, I think that when I'm talking to them, all the anger I have because of the war, because of what I'm seeing right now, and also when I came to Artsbridge, it took me some time to be like that. So, I think the reality that we're living in doesn't allow us to be...

Interviewer: What was it like to come to Artsbridge with all that anger and to feel all that anger and to have a space where you were allowed to express it?

Nura: Artsbridge really takes you to your personal place… And Artsbridge gives you this personal space that you can just, like, express yourself and I know that I can just talk and no one will respond to you – not respond in that way of like, we're not going to have a debate, which is like, this is what happens in other dialogues. But in Artsbridge, at first, I was always prepared to say something and I was like, "I was going to say something and I'm going to be prepared for what I'm hearing." And this is how it was, like kind of in the first dialogue. … And then I was talking because I wanted to talk and wanted the other people to hear me, not because I'm thinking about what their response is going to be and what I'm going to respond after, so I can prove my point is right. No. I'm just going to say what I believe in or what is my personal experience on this point, that your personal experience is a whole different thing and we're just going to say it, we're going to think about it, no one's going to judge or respond to it.

Interviewer: Do you remember when that shift happened? Did you notice it happening?

Nura: Yeah. It happened, actually, two times… There's one day that I was talking with one American participant and both of us shared the same story, the same story – just mine was in Israel and his was in America. So, the facilitators told us, "Did you notice that?" And we were both like, "Yes! We said the same thing, just in different words, different places." And then someone just said – one of the Israelis was like, "I don't think it's true. They said a whole different thing." And then I felt something like, "Wait, no, because he doesn't know how it feels. He's never been discriminated [against]." … So, I understood that I never was in the Israelis' places and it was like – so, me experiencing what maybe I did to others and I said, "They never felt like how it feels like. They never know…" No matter who has the position of power in this game, we both don't know how it feels to be the other person and as much as me and this person like, we knew, because we both know how it feels to be

discriminated [against]. Not everyone knows. So, this is why I started, like, backing off on people. I'm like, "Okay, this is their view and I'm going to just back off and let them talk, so when I talk, I can say my view. No one can come and tell me, 'No, no, no. This is not true,' or something like that."

And then I came back to this point of always responding. When we started talking about political stuff, it was very sensitive for me. I understand that not everyone understands, but I felt in one dialogue that people are taking the things I say and using them against me. Yeah, and there was the interview thing and I couldn't respond and I was, "This is not what I said," and they were like, "Nura said one, two, three." And I was like, "But this is not what I said." I felt very angry. I went out of the dialogue. I went to every single dialogue, I was like, I didn't even want to talk in a few of them. I go back to the position of the first dialogue… I saw that. And then me and you had a talk where it was like the second week or something and it gave me that switch again.

Interviewer: What did I say?

Nura: You told me that you don't have to be right to be heard and all the things that I want to say are important. But when I use a sensitive topic for the others, they won't hear me. And this is exactly what happened to me. People started talking about things that are very sensitive for me and my family and my friends, so I was like, "Yeah, I'm doing the same for them." I didn't want to listen, now they don't want to listen. We're not getting anywhere.

Interviewer: So, you had two aha moments.

Nura: Yeah.

It was around that time that the dialogue facilitators asked Nura if she wanted to be interviewed, and she agreed. Up until this time, Nura spoke only in the collective, and never from a personal space. In my interview with Amanda, a Palestinian dialogue facilitator, she reflected on Nura and that experience:

Amanda: She hid her personal story the whole time, she spoke from the collective until the very end when she spoke about her

personal experience of her neighbor who went to the army, and she felt betrayed, and she loved his mother, but then she... and that was like if I would remember Artsbridge, for me, it was those few minutes of silence after she shared her experience, that was magic. That made it all worth the whole thing. It was absolutely amazing to see the transformation. It shifted the whole group.

Interviewer: You talk about shifting, she shifted from that cultural narrative to her personal narrative, and that was a huge shift. Can you articulate why you feel that was important? What effect it had?

Amanda: Everyone else understood where she was coming from, where all this anger was coming from. She came in as very intense from day one. She was quite intense and intimidating. Her body language even scared others in the group. And that shift happened when they suddenly understood why Nura has been behaving like this, why whenever she speaks, she says something and everybody gets offended.

Interviewer: Do you think that would have happened if the dialogue were done differently?

Amanda: I don't think so because of her input of her experience and where she comes from and where she lives, that also she didn't share in the beginning. So, I think that made the key transformation. So, I don't think so, no. It's hard to tell but I think, no.

Interviewer: What do you think allowed her to make that transition?

Amanda: I think being encouraged by others sharing, she saw that happen and also, the kind of safe space was broken and built, broken, and built several times. I would also say she could trust us as facilitators, me and Sandev, that we were trying our best, through our biases, but listening to everyone kind of equally.

In my interview with Nura, she shared her feeling that, now that she is back in her home community, she felt that she cannot behave the same way now as she did then, because it is not the safe space that was created at Artsbridge.

While Nura didn't think that she could continue to be as open-minded outside of Artsbridge, she also did not suggest that this was permanent. This relates back to the concept of relational flexibility, and the idea that one must be aware of when being vulnerable and trusting is warranted and when it is not. Towards the end of our conversation together I asked Nura the following question: "Can you imagine that the ideas that you got at Artsbridge or the ways of being that you got at Artsbridge will affect your life or your decisions moving forward? This was her response:

> I think that Artsbridge isn't just a program that you go for a camp and have a summer experience and you come back... I think it leaves a mark on you that in me, like I said, I taught myself how to hear people more and how to be more accepting. I think this is a big change in a person and I don't think it's going to stop here.
>
> The other thing that doesn't have anything to do with the conflict, I was having a conflict inside myself, if I want to go study art or not because everybody is saying, "You should do what is best for you and what you love," and I love art, but the other side is saying, "No, no one's going to pay you and you're going to be broke and how are you going to feed your kids?" So, what am I supposed to do? Right now, I'm very confused on what I'm going to study in college. I think that Artsbridge helped me with this and is still helping me with my thinking.

Generally, some participants did speak of the challenge of returning home and noticing the polarized environment that they live in. However, similar to Nura, while they speak of that challenge, as well as feeling confused, all of the participants spoke of constructive change that stays with them, and there does not seem to be any indication that participants returned to their polarized narrative. I will also argue that feelings of confusion should not be considered a negative impact. It would be expected that shifting from deeply held beliefs that are polarized and concrete to a more expansive, complex viewpoint will feel, at a minimum, confusing. What is important is that these feelings are processed and that the participants are supported in that process, both during and after the program in the follow-up programs back in their home communities. This is one of the reasons that Artsbridge methodology could be considered useful as it creates space for the

processing of conflicting emotions and the confusion that comes from deconstructing entrenched, polarized narratives.

Summary

The participants interviewed for this study shared a range of outcomes related to their experience with Artsbridge. Participants spoke of personal growth, which included their ability to view their identity with more clarity, developing self-confidence, patience, the ability to think more carefully about ideas, as well as believing that they returned from the program more mature in their outlook and behavior. Participants also spoke of developing an appreciation of complexity as they began the process of questioning their deeply held beliefs about their own narrative, which included the possibility of multiple ways of viewing the conflict, as well as developing a more complex view of who the "other" is. Participants also spoke of developing skills for more constructive communication in that they learned how to truly listen, as well as how to speak in a way that allows others to hear them. Many participants spoke of the value of art for self-expression and connecting with others. They also spoke of an enhanced level of curiosity and for developing a sense of realistic, versus naive hope. One of the more significant areas brought out by the data was the area of relational growth, which included an understanding and valuing of relationships, even with those with whom they disagree. The data also suggests that some participants were able to develop a sense of trust in the midst of the "other" and of allowing themselves to be vulnerable in the face of those whom they consider to be their enemy. All participants spoke of developing a greater awareness of their relationship to the conflict, the conflict itself, as well as a deeper understanding of their own and others' narratives. The data also suggests that, while participants spoke of the challenges of returning to their home communities, all of those interviewed spoke of positive shifts that have stayed with them, even after their return home.

Chapter Eleven: Relational Resilience

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented an analysis of data based on interviews with alumni and staff of Artsbridge programs, as well as several parents of alumni. Through a constructionist grounded theory analysis, one of the primary outcomes that emerged from the research was the concept of relational resilience. This chapter will focus on this concept and the value of the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience (AMRR) in the context of intractable conflict.

The impact of intractable conflict on members of society living in its midst is profound, including increased levels of anxiety, loss of hope and life, as well as a sense of disempowerment (Coleman, 2003; Kriesberg, 1999; Lederach, 1997). Much of the literature on intractable conflict is entitative— either focusing on the individual or the group. For example, Bar-Tal (2013) discusses the socio-psychological implications that are focused on the individual as a separate, bounded being, Hammack (2011) discusses the narrative implications in his view of cultural psychology which focus on a sense of a unified community/culture. While those perspectives have important implications for how we study and engage with conflict, I argue that a relational stance, rather than a psychological, socio-psychological, or cultural psychological stance, opens new possibilities and new ways of working with members of societies living in the midst of intractable conflict. The current literature on encounter groups between Israelis and Palestinians defines encounters as either focusing on the individual (as in the coexistence models), or on power relations and social groups (confrontational models). The narrative storytelling and joint projects models are said to combine the advantages of both, but still speak of the formation of personal ties, along with the discussions of the conflict and power relations (Maoz, 2011). In contrast, a relational stance encourages "relational resilience" allowing for a movement away from a focus on conflict and towards constructive relations. That being said, Artsbridge does not ignore the intractability of the conflict. On the contrary, it recognizes the complexity and provides participants with resources that enable them to develop constructive relations with the Other under the harsh and difficult circumstances of intractable conflict.

Traditional Models of Resilience

There has been significant interest in the concept of resilience, not only in psychology, but in a variety of systems, be they family, organizational, or community systems. Brooks and Goldstein (2001), described resilience from a psychological perspective in the following way:

> Resilience may be understood as the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure, to cope with everyday challenges, to rebound from disappointments, mistakes, trauma, and adversity, to develop clear and realistic goals, to solve problems, to interact comfortably with others, and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity. (Brooks & Goldstein, 2001 in Brooks, 2005, p. 297)

Another definition of 'resilience', according to Betancourt and Khan (2008), and also utilized by Luthar (1993), and Rutter (1985) is "the attainment of desirable social outcomes and emotional adjustment, despite exposure to considerable risk" (Betancourt, 2008 p. 317). Betancourt argues for the use of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development (1979) as a framework for studying the various settings and relationships that are involved in armed conflict and its impact on children. Bronfenbrenner's model, as shown in Figure 23, defines four levels of impact that various systems have on children, with the closest level being the microsystem (family, school, and neighborhood) and the furthest being the Macrosystem (Social, cultural, historical influences). In other words, Betancourt and Khan (2008) caution against viewing resilience as simply an individual quality possessed by certain children. They argue that their construct of resilience moves beyond the more traditional concepts which saw resilience as an individual quality, as in Apfel and Simon's (1966) description of the 'invulnerable' child who is able to fare well despite difficult challenges (in Betancourt & Khan, 2008).

Rather, they, along with other scholars (Luthar, 1993; Richmond & Beardslee, 1988) advocate for focusing on 'resilient outcomes' or, as Luthar (1993) suggests, resilient trajectories faced by children under adverse conditions.

Figure 23
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory
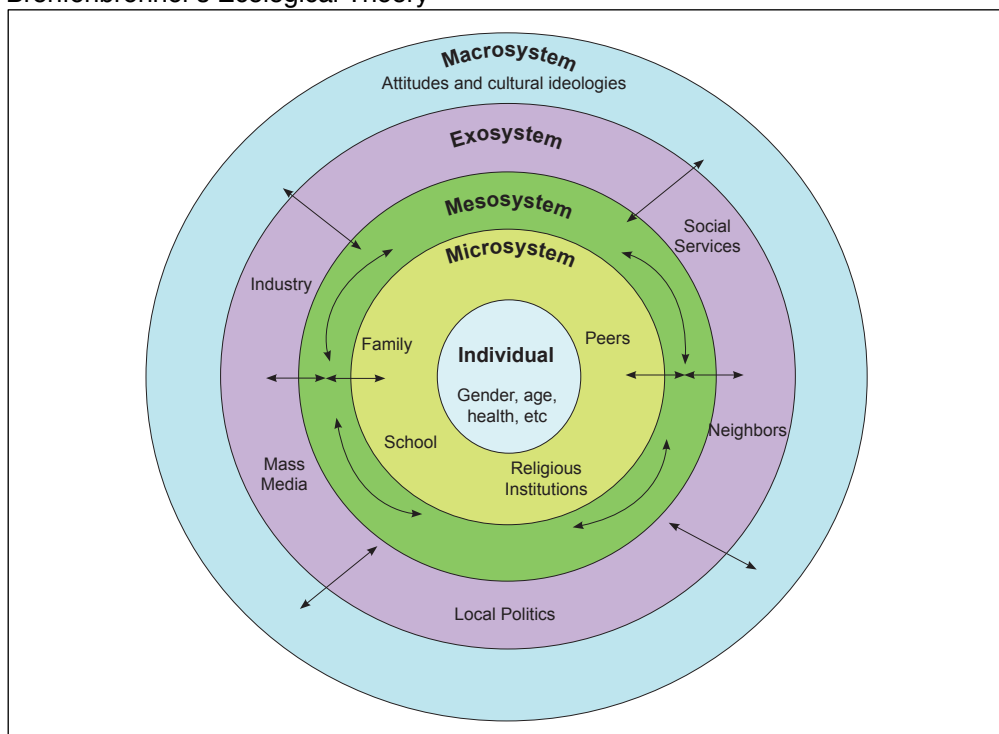
While there is a difference in how psychological and psycho-social models view resilience in children, their focus continues to be within the individual, whether it be resources within the individual that lead to resilience or outside influences that impact and work towards change within the individual. I suggest that, rather than looking at the individual as the locus of study, we look at the interactive process between participants. In other words, our focus is on the unfolding process of interaction. Therefore, while other models focus on entities—either persons or groups—the focus of the Artsbridge model is on the relational qualities of interactions between members of societies engaged in conflict.

Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT): The Stone Center Model of Resilience

In response to the individualist notion of resilience prevalent in traditional psychological and socio-psychological scholarship, The Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at the Wellesley Center for Women (WCW), developed a theoretical framework stemming from the early work of Jean Baker Miller (1976) originally titled the Stone Center Model. The theory was further

developed with Judith Jordan, Irene Stiver, and Janet Surrey in 1977 and called Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT). Originally, RCT had as its focus the experience of women, questioning the utility of psychology and therapeutic practices that elevated the concept of a "hyper-individuated, separate self." As they argue:

> The dominant (white, male, middle-class, heterosexual) culture valorizes power over others, overemphasizing internal traits, intrapsychic conflict, and striving for independence and success accomplished through competitive achievement, particularly in the culture of the 21st-century United States. To the extent that relationships are emphasized, they are viewed as primarily utilitarian and as aids to the achievement to separate self. They underemphasize the importance of connection, growth-fostering relationship, and community, and often position a person's need for interconnectedness as a sign of "weakness." (Retrieved from: https://www.wcwonline.org/JBMTI-Site/the-development-of-relational-cultural-theory, July 26, 2021)

RCT reframed the view of resilience from more traditional models. This reframing, they argued, had implications not only for psychotherapy, but also for social change (Jordan, 2004). Inherent in Relational Cultural Theory is the assumption that human beings are social, reflexive beings. As relational beings, Psychologist Linda Hartling (2003) notes, "resilience is strengthened through relationships, specifically, mutually empathic, mutually empowering, growth-fostering relationships" (p. 8).

Through the lens of RCT, the role of therapy was to "explore and enhance the capacity for relational resilience" (Jordan, 2004, p. 29), which would lead to personal transformation and social change. The RCT model of resilience suggests the inclusion of the following notions: (1) supported vulnerability; (2) mutual empathic involvement; (3) relational confidence; (4) empowerment involving mutual growth; and (5) creating relational awareness together with personal awareness. (Jordan, 2004). In other words, RCT, rather than focusing on individual strengths, places the emphasis on relational processes (Hartling, 2003; Jordan, 2004).

Mutuality and Relational Courage

Movement towards mutuality, according to Jordan (2013), lies at the core of RCT. Rather than a focus on individual growth and/or support for the individual, the mutuality of giving and receiving support generates the beneficial effects of mutual growth. Jordan et al., (1990) note that a core element of mutuality is mutual empathy. Jordan (2013) further argues the importance of seeing that we have made a difference – that we have had an impact on each other. Mutual empathy,

according to Jordan "is not about reciprocal, back and forth empathizing…. Mutual empathy is the process in which each person empathizes with the other in mutual growth; I see that I have moved you and you see that you have moved me" (2013, p. 79).

Courage in the RCT model differs from the traditional view of courage which sees courage as residing within the individual, such as the image of the Lone Ranger, or the courageous soldier. Rather, courage is seen as developing in relation; we are either en-couraged or dis-couraged by our interactions with others (Jordan, 1990, 2013). Unlike the individualistic notion of courage, relational courage includes the capacity to act meaningfully, acknowledging vulnerability and fear. As Jordan (1990) notes, "Interpersonal courage grows in the committed and open movement of authentic being toward engaging with another person" (p. 2).

The Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience

While there are parallels between RCT and the Artsbridge model of relational resilience (AMRR), there are also areas where the two models diverge. RCT was originally developed as a response to the narrative of the dominant, white, male and its effect on women and minorities. In their model, there is the oppressor vs. the oppressed. While there are many similarities with the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, there is a unique challenge for Israelis and Palestinians specifically, and for situations of intractable conflict, generally. As discussed earlier, Israelis and Palestinians both see themselves as victims. This sense of mutual victimization renders more traditional models of resilience, as well as more confrontational models of engagement more problematic. This dissertation suggests a reframing of and inclusion of additional elements that play an important role in developing relational resilience in youth living in the midst of intractable conflict. These elements include: (1) relational flexibility to engage from a multiplicity of identities, (2) appreciation of multiple perspectives, (3) relational empowerment, (4) creativity and imagination, (5) reasonable hope, (6) holding tensionality, and (7) entertaining doubt about one's own views. Table 16 presents an overview of the three models of relational resilience: the traditional model, Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) model, and the Artsbridge Model (AMRR).

Table 16

Comparison of Traditional, 'Relational Cultural' and Artsbridge Models of
Resilience

Traditional Model of Resilience	Relational Model of Resilience	Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience
Individual "control over" dynamics	Supported vulnerability, which involves allowing oneself to risk emotional vulnerability and the ability to judge when our trust and confidence in another person is warranted or not.	Relational flexibility – inviting vulnerability through the recognition of the interdependence between beings and the appreciation of multiple forms of collaborative engagement
One-Directional need for support	Mutual empathic involvement in the well-being of each person and of the relationship	Ability to appreciate the perspective of others and work together without the need for agreement
Separate self-esteem	Relational Confidence, or the ability to build reliable relationships	Relational confidence - the ability to engage in and support mutually constructive relationships
"Power over" dynamics	Empowerment, through the encouragement of mutual growth and constructive conflict	Empowerment, through mutual growth and the co-creation of new understandings
Finding meaning in self-centered self-consciousness, or self-awareness	Creating meaning in a more expansive awareness, which includes both self-awareness and relational awareness	Appreciating complexity – Allowing for multiple ways of seeing and experiencing the world – multiple meanings without judgement
		Creativity and imagination – ability to see beyond current situation despite challenges, and to imagine new possibilities
		Ability to sustain reasonable hope despite challenges and disappointments
		Tensionality – holding the tension between listening and respecting the other's views while holding one's own views
		Ability to entertain uncertainty

Based on: Hosking (2011); Jordan, (2004); McNamee (2012); and Stewart & Zediker (2000).

Relational Flexibility

The concept of supported vulnerability from the perspective of RCT relates to the ability of an individual to risk being emotionally vulnerable, as well as the ability to judge when trust and confidence in another person is or isn't warranted. AMRR suggests the concept of relational flexibility rather than supported vulnerability, in that, while there is an ability to allow oneself to be open to hearing things that may differ from our own set of beliefs and to engage in conversations that may raise strong emotions, there is also the ability to understand the self as relational - that we hold a multiplicity of identities – how we engage and relate to others shifts as we move through various social worlds. Consider the situation where Israelis and Palestinians allow themselves to be vulnerable in the safety of Artsbridge. They will be returning home to their communities where they may be engaging with those who strongly disagree with their newfound perspectives. Relational flexibility allows students to differentiate between those with whom they feel they may engage constructively, and those who may not yet be open to hearing other alternatives and to relate accordingly. This is not dissimilar to Roccas and Brewer's (2002) concept of Social Identity Complexity (SIC), which speaks to the perceived overlap among ingroup memberships. Where it does differ is in the object of analysis. In SIC the object is located within the individual – multiple identities reside within the individual and are impacted upon by external sources. It is important to note that a key difference between the views held within SIC and that of a relational constructionist stance is that from a stance of relational construction, identities do not lie within the individual - rather, they exist and evolve in relationship with others. The RCT model requires a judgment as to who is trustworthy and deserving and who is not, leading to the potential for a sense of moral high ground - seeing those who hold different views as worthy of blame and/or judgement (Gergen, 2018), and virtually eliminating the possibility of any form of constructive engagement. Harlene Anderson (2012)) speaks of a discursive context, where each person's contribution is appreciated and valued equally. She argues, "A sense of being appreciated and valued leads to a sense of belonging, which leads to a sense of participating, which then leads to a sense of co-owning and sharing responsibility" (p. 14). In other words, appreciating and valuing the contribution of each person, despite strong disagreement, opens up the possibility for constructive engagement that might not otherwise have been possible.

The concept of relational flexibility has relevance for the unique struggle faced by Palestinians living in Israel where, one might argue, the conflict is often felt internally as they struggle with their complex identity. For Kedma, whose mother is Jewish Israeli and father is Palestinian, there are multiple challenges. She describes her experience in Artsbridge when trying to decide which dialogue group to go to:

> It was a hard experience for a few minutes basically. But again, it takes you back to real life. Sometimes you have to choose a side, and I had to do that. And I realized that once I did, it wasn't such a big deal. I could still go back to the other side, and have my own opinions about different things. So, I didn't have to be one sided.

Appreciation of Multiple Perspectives

It is argued that intractable conflict is seen to involve mutually, negatively interdependent narratives (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2012; Rothman, 1997). Within encounters between communities in conflict, the inability to appreciate that there are many ways to view the conflict becomes an impediment to constructive engagement, often leading to more polarized views as each side attempts to prove themselves right and good, and the "other" as bad and evil (2007, 2018). Developing the ability to appreciate that there are multiple perspectives within any given conflict provides opportunities for those in the midst of conflict to move away from the binary of mutually exclusive narratives and towards finding ways to move forward and work together towards new ways of relating. To be clear, this does not mean that one has to agree with the views of the other, only to appreciate how they came to those views, leading to the potential for new understandings to emerge. Transformative Reflecting Dialogue is uniquely suited to encouraging the appreciation of multiple perspectives, as it teaches students how to speak in ways that allow others to hear you, as well as how to listen reflexively. Through these capacities students begin to understand how others arrive at a different perspective than theirs. As Dafne noted:

> "… it made me feel like I can understand someone being brought up on a different story than the one I was brought up on. Even amongst the Israelis that I was with".

Nomi was able to express this sentiment in her relationship with her friend, whom she considers to be "right wing":

> I have a very, very good friend and she's talked about all of the differences with me, and she's very right wing… But she lives in Ashdod. So, a lot of the Gaza hit her home, and one time, it bombed her own room, and it's pain; I can't argue with her pain. So of course, I can understand her opinions that she has, because she had pain. And sometimes, it's hard to let go of your pain, it's really hard.

Relational Confidence

For many involved in conflict the choices are to avoid it or confront it. Within the context of the coexistence model, the option is to avoid discussion of the conflict, leading to frustration for those most negatively impacted by the conflict. This stance holds little potential for new understandings to emerge. Within a confrontational model, the choice is to confront the conflict "straight on." While this certainly allows for the power dynamics to be voiced, providing less frustration for those considered to be in the minority, the confrontational approach has the potential to alienate the very people that are needed in order to work towards change. Therefore, the potential for new understandings to emerge are as limited as in the coexistence model (Maoz, 2011). Relational confidence involves the capacity and desire to engage in a way that supports mutually constructive relationships – to be able to express oneself in a way that allows others to hear you, and to listen reflexively to the other. Artsbridge creates the space for developing this capacity, not only in the way that it conducts dialogue, but also in the challenge of creating a joint work of art. For Nara, this capacity has helped her in her career as a nurse. As she explains:

> … after Artsbridge, the way I talk to people, especially people that I don't know, my way of talking is not like accusing. It's more like they say something and I ask them a question about it. And they say something and I ask them something. I don't express my opinion, I'm asking them questions like an interview… the way the dialogue changed the way I think, it made me, not a better person to have conversations with, but when you're in nursing, you ask a lot of questions and you have to be very patient. And

> you expect the other side to be the same and it's kind of -- it's not the same but it's kind of the same. When I ask someone about their pain, I have to ask follow up questions. So, for now, I already have the way of how to do follow up questions about something someone is telling me from the dialogues... it made me realize that I can deal with people in a different way.

For Sulha her ability to build relationships in general was impacted. As she notes:

> I think that it helps me build better relationships with people. I think I'm more accepting of the differences. I'm more open to new things. And even though it does conflict with my thoughts or my way of living … at some point… it's alright.

Mutual Empowerment

Similar to RCT, and in contrast to the modernist frame of empowerment of the individual, mutual empowerment allows those involved in conflict to understand that empowerment is achieved, not through simply empowering themselves, but through mutual growth and the co-creation of new understandings. The concept of mutual empowerment, I suggest, leads away from the polarized concept of 'if I win, you must lose', to the idea that as we work together to discover new ways of moving forward, we both become empowered. Creating a joint work of art, with all of its challenges, requires mutual empowerment in order to successfully accomplish the task. Eliora expressed how she and her partner arrived at mutual empowerment:

> … because we also knew we have the same goal in the end. We have the same goal—we want to reach the same thing. We want things to be okay in the end. So, some days, yeah, you have to force yourself, but it's worth it.

Appreciating Complexity

For many of the teens that arrive to Artsbridge, the conflict seems simple – Our side is the victim and the other is the oppressor. In contrast to RCT, AMRR relates to those living in the midst of intractable conflict and to the context of mutual

victimization. RCT's original focus was on women's experience of living in a society whose dominant narrative was that of the white, male, middle-class heterosexual. While the challenges of women living within that narrative are certainly not to be minimized, I suggest that there are subtle differences. Firstly, the context of mutual victimhood and the entrenchment of the conflict requires a sensitivity to the various understandings within the conflict and to the idea that the conflict is much more complex than the simple binary of right and wrong. While differences exist between the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the challenges of a dominant narrative that minimizes the contribution and value of the other, I suggest that AMRR is also useful in situations where there is conflict or oppression and may have value in helping conflicted communities move away from the risk of entrenchment and towards more constructive engagement. Appreciating the complexity of any given situation opens up the potential to find new ways forward. As I write this dissertation, The United States is experiencing an increasing intolerance to political and religious viewpoints other than one's own, with ever-widening polarization. While this is a topic for a different dissertation, I will suggest that this increasing rigidity of thought and inability to appreciate the viewpoints of those with whom you disagree leads to ever increasing destructive conflict.

For Artsbridge students, listening to each other's personal stories and working together on their collaborative projects allowed them to begin to understand the complexities of the lives they were living, and that things were not as simple as they had thought. Eliora describes it this way:

> Listening to stories that they told, that I thought were not true, really made me realize the more depth of the conflict. Like how many levels it has and it can go into so many places in the person's life.

Sulha speaks of a different kind of complexity – that of the ability to hold different types of opinions, even within herself:

> Basically, it made me feel that I don't have to completely identify with some one thing that it's OK to feel split, to have different opinions on things. And not only the conflict but everything actually, that it's OK to not completely be with one idea that have an opinion like be with parts of the idea, and agree with something else.

Creativity and Imagination

One of the many challenges that intractable conflict presents for those living in its midst is the inability to imagine possibilities other than violent conflict. As discussed in chapter 3, most Israelis and Palestinians, and certainly the young participants in Artsbridge, have known nothing other than life in entrenched conflict. Each society inculcates its members with a particular narrative through its respective educational systems, media, and governments. Additionally, risk of an outbreak in the violence is always a distinct possibility, leaving communities feeling ever vigilant. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, when applicants to Artsbridge are asked if they could imagine there would ever be an end to the conflict in their lifetime, the answer is, inevitably, "no." If one cannot imagine something happening, how does one work towards it? Creativity and Imagination allow for curiosity and for the ability to imagine a future that is different than what exists currently. Curiosity encourages us to be open to exploring other possibilities and to imagine beyond what is in front of us. It might seem logical that it is the art component that relates to the concept of creativity and imagination. However, I argue that it is not just the art, but the combination of the art and dialogue that enhances creativity and allows one to imagine possibilities other than what is: For example, Raida discusses the impact of the interplay between the two:

> I think it [dialogue] did help form the idea. It gave us like some brainstorming ideas, or what we heard, the stories we heard, gave us inspiration about what we want to do, in order to prevent hearing other stories like that. Or like having people react to our art projects the way we reacted to the stories in the dialogues.

Ghada describes her experience with her dance project, and how they imagined what a different future might look like:

> So, when I made my project in Artsbridge about dance, I did it with [Eliora] and she was from Israel and I was from Palestine. And we had to get a story out of our dance and we made a dance depending on us two and a wall between us. And we did our dance according to that. At the end of the dance, we got to reach out and break that wall between us, which was very meaningful and we had fun doing that, so that was good.

Reasonable Hope

Within protracted, entrenched conflicts such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, a sense of hopelessness prevails amongst those living in its midst (Coleman, 2000; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). Israelis and Palestinians have lived through many cycles of failed peace processes and renewed violence, leaving them less hopeful and more resolved to living in perpetual conflict. Hope has been shown to positively influence a person's openness to new ideas, and to enhance curiosity (Cohen-Chen & Smadar, 2014; Halperin, 2016), and conversely, a lack of hope limits those possibilities. Victor Frankl (2006) in his seminal work on surviving the holocaust wrote of the power of hope and surviving the holocaust. He shared his theory on the high death rate in Auschwitz during the time between Christmas 1944 and New Year's, 1945. His theory was that so many prisoners died during that time because they expected to be home before Christmas. As Christmas passed and they were still imprisoned, they completely lost hope that they would ever see the world beyond the concentration camp. Hope, in connection with imagination, allows one to look beyond one's current existence to a different and better future. Reasonable hope suggests that one can hope, yet still accept that it may not happen as quickly as we would like. For those living in the midst of intractable conflict this is an important concept. With each peace process that occurred through the years hopes were raised that the conflict and violence would end. With each failure, hopes were shattered, leaving citizens with the feeling that there would never be an end to the conflict. Reasonable hope allows one to continue to work towards a different future despite the inevitable setbacks that occur. As Raida describes:

> And given all of the facts I had, and the stories I'd heard before, I think Artsbridge gave me another kind of hope. Like it was a light in a really, really dark place. So even now, when I think and hear about all of the horrible stuff that's going on, I remember about how Artsbridge was, and how coexistence really can happen. But we do have to do -- make a lot of effort.

Raida came out of Artsbridge with the idea that, while it is not easy, it is also not impossible to achieve a different future. She also understood that it will not happen on its own, rather one must work towards the future that one would like to achieve.

Tensionality

The ability to engage constructively with those who hold vastly different views requires the ability to maintain the tension of being able to listen to and respect the views of others while still holding onto your own views. As Stewart and Zediker (2000) argue, dialogic moments emerge in the tension between those two polarities. The idea of 'letting the other happen to me' refers to what Buber (1973) calls experiencing the otherness of the other. As relational beings, dialogic moments are where new understandings emerge. This does not, however, connote the movement towards consensus. Rather it is, as McNamee states, the process of attempting to "coordinate multiple discourses" (2013, p. 195). Within Artsbridge, students are learning how to listen to opposing viewpoints, while at the same time learning how to express their own unique perspective. This is not an easy task for those who believe that the one you are engaging with is your enemy. It is disconcerting, to say the least, to listen to a viewpoint that goes against everything you hold to be true. Yet, within intractable conflict, this is what is necessary in order to work towards new and constructive paths forward. Nura was able to articulate how her thoughts evolved during Artsbridge. She was able to maintain her stance regarding the occupation, but also allowed herself to entertain other ways of thinking:

> I still believe in the same things I used to believe in. I think that this conflict, I think, like the way of change in me (what changed in me is), the way of looking at the other side or maybe now I believe that –– I know that certain Israeli's I met there and the fact that we're friends doesn't have to affect – the conflict doesn't have to affect our friendship, but I still believe that their country is doing horrible things and I'm still against the occupation and the occupation army…

Ability to Entertain Uncertainty

Lastly, relational resilience includes the ability to entertain doubt about one's own deeply held beliefs. Similar to Harlene Anderson's view of a stance of 'not knowing' (2005; Anderson & Goolishian, 1988) entertaining doubt leaves open the possibility that there may be other perspectives and that one is open to exploring new ideas. Entertaining doubt allows us to enter a dialogical partnership of mutual, shared inquiry. It is within that space that new meanings and new possibilities emerge. Artsbridge students learn to appreciate this concept through conversations

held in the dialogue room, as well as through their collaborative art projects. In the art room, the students approach their art piece, each with their own unique perspective. In creating their art piece, their only requirement is to ensure that each of their voices is represented in the piece. It is up to them to struggle with how to do that, along with the support of the facilitators as needed. Teams find many ways to approach the task. Some achieve the task with relative ease, while other teams struggle for a variety of reasons. As might be expected, it is often those teams with participants who have the strongest viewpoints that are most challenged. One team from the 2016 cohort is an example. Haneen and Rachel (pseudonyms) were both creative young women with strong viewpoints. A still-frame of their video and the narrative that they wrote are shown in Figure 24. They were excited to be paired together with the thought that, through their strong filmmaking skills they would find it easy to create their film. What they discovered, instead, was that their strong viewpoints made the task more of a challenge than they imagined.

Figure 24
"Canvas": Still-frame of Film Created by a Team in the 2016 Cohort

> # Canvas
>
> Each person is born as an empty canvas. The experiences that we go through throughout our lives, and the way we perceive them in the present, affect our personality and make them part of who we are.
>
> Our experiences, values, and beliefs paint each canvas in different unique colors and make each and every one of us a piece of art that cannot be replaced or imitated.
>
> But what happens when an individual comes into a group of people that has its own beliefs, values and rules that might contradict or even cancel the individual's canvas?
>
> Working together proved to have its ups and downs, with a lot of back and forth about specific ideas and details. We both had very strong ideas when it came to creating our film, and at times it was difficult to come to an agreement or find the middle ground between our views. We are both strong willed but come from different places and experiences. As a team, despite our differences, we created a film with a topic we both cared about, one in which we both could find personal meaning. We were able to create the core concept fairly quickly, and retained this for the duration of production. It did become difficult as time progressed to agree upon specific details of what content should or should not be included, and so our final project contains pieces from both of our own narratives.
>
> In creating this film, we want people to find their own meaning as they view our work. We encourage viewers to reflect on what is their individual canvas and how that comes across, if it even does..

The Artsbridge model of relational resilience has as its focus the relational qualities of constructive engagement. One might argue that an individualist notion of resilience in regards to intractable conflict has the potential to lead to more polarized societies as individuals attempt to shield themselves from the negative impacts of intractable conflict. For example, as an individual attempts to gain control over their situation, or when one considers the dynamic of 'power over' rather than mutual empowerment, there is little focus or regard for mutuality, and for engaging with the "other" in a way that is mutually empowering.

Additionally, self-awareness from within a traditional model of resilience does not necessarily mean a more expansive awareness or relational awareness. Relational resilience, with its focus on relationality, and the importance of mutuality, places a focus on how one engages with others in a conflict situation, potentially leading towards constructive conflict engagement and away from destructive

conflict. While RCT moves away from an individualist model, its focus remains on change that happens within the individual. From a relational constructionist perspective, our interest is not the self-contained individual. Rather, the individual is a relational being, emerging through relational process. Individual growth is relational growth in a relational constructionist stance. This has relevance in regards to how those in conflict engage. For example, in situations where there exists an asymmetry of power the focus is not on assigning blame to those in power, or even to judge who has power. The concept of power is socially constructed and, as such, the locus of power is seen differently within different worldviews. Through a relational process lies the possibility for new understandings, including, through mutual empowerment, a joint effort in working towards constructive social change.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the concept of relational resilience, and presented the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience (AMRR), which emerged through the data as a major theme in this dissertation. The concept of relational resilience was also contrasted with a more traditional, modernist view of resilience, as well as the Stone Center's relational-cultural theory of resilience. While there are similarities between RCT and AMRR, this chapter also reviewed what sets them apart, as well as how Artsbridge engages its students to encourage the development of relational resilience as expressed in AMRR.

Once again, I would like to stress the inter-connectedness of the various elements of Artsbridge, and how they all work together to promote relational resilience. Within a stance of relational construction, it is seen as a relational process that supports the notion of individuals being relational beings, emerging and evolving through relationship. The interconnectedness of the arts and dialogic components of Artsbridge allows for a process that helps participants process concepts in multiple ways, thereby allowing them to think more deeply about concepts that arise, either through dialogues or in the art classes, or both. Through Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, students are learning how to express themselves in a way that allows others to hear them. They are also learning how to listen reflexively, and how to ask questions out of curiosity. This process allows students, for perhaps the first time, to actually hear the multiple perspectives that exist within the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. By hearing multiple perspectives, they are able to begin to appreciate the complexities of the conflict, rather than just limiting their beliefs to the narrative that they have grown up with. As they listen

and begin to appreciate these new perspectives, they are also working on collaborative projects that provide them with the opportunity to practice their new ways of engaging with others, as well as being able to have the experience of creating something new with their partner, thereby reinforcing the idea that it is possible to work together with somebody once considered to be their enemy. Through mutual empowerment, they are learning how to incorporate their ideas into building something new together. Both the dialogue and the art serve to help participants develop voice, gaining the confidence to speak, as well as to listen. Working through this recursive process over the course of three weeks, enhances their creativity and expands their imagination as they are able to explore ideas through multiple modalities over an extended period of time. Through this process, they begin to understand that allowing for other ways of understanding need not threaten their own beliefs. As one feels less threatened, new possibilities emerge for greater understanding. And finally, Artsbridge helps participants begin to see that it is OK to not have all of the answers – that the conflict is complicated – but that, despite the setbacks and disappointments, there is the possibility that change is possible.

Chapter Twelve: Discussion

Introduction

This study is an investigation into a process that utilizes transformative reflecting dialogic practices, the arts, and expressive therapies from within a stance of relational construction in order to engage youth living in the midst of intractable conflict.

Throughout my research of encounter programs working with Israelis and Palestinians I have not come across any studies that explore programs utilizing Transformative Reflecting Dialog (TRD), and which maintain relational resilience as one of its goals. I submit that the outcome of this research has shown that, by placing a focus on relational resilience as defined by the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience (AMRR), rather than on the mitigation of conflict, participants explore new ways of constructive engagement and developing and enhancing relational resilience while living in the midst of intractable conflict. This includes the prospect of developing a sense of realistic hope as well as the ability to imagine a better future beyond their current lived experience. Participating in an encounter program will not, in and of itself, bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict. Research has shown (see for example, Hammack, 2011; Bekerman, 2007; Maoz, 2017) that when the emphasis of an encounter program is placed on mitigating the larger conflict, it raises the potential for frustration, disappointment and, potentially, to increased polarization. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict will not be resolved tomorrow, and participating in an encounter program will not directly lead to its resolution. It is a long-term process involving a complex layer of factors. However, by placing the focus on relational resilience, we may provide participants with the tools they need to withstand the tragic impact of intractable conflict while developing a sense of agency to be part of the process of constructive change in both their community as well as the larger, regional community.

This, perhaps, might not be considered a traditional dissertation. It was not meant to be a program evaluation, nor does it hold answers or search for truths. It does describe and analyze an approach that, I argue, presents a new program design and paradigm for working with people living in the midst of intractable conflict. It is my hope that this dissertation provides an opportunity for readers to think about encounters between conflicting parties in a new and generative way – a

way that moves away from a focus on conflict towards the concept of constructive engagement and on to, as Lederach (2005) calls it, constructive social change, which he defines as the moving of relationships "from those defined by fear, mutual recrimination, and violence toward those characterized by love, mutual respect, and proactive engagement (pp. 42-43). Therefore, Artsbridge moves away from the end goal of peace or resolution towards helping people learn new ways to engage each other and engage with difficult topics so that new understandings emerge, and moving people from a black and white sensibility towards a more complex sensibility that includes many shades of gray. Additionally, the focus is not on changing the individual, but rather, on a relational process—on constructive ways of moving forward together—and on the development of relational resilience in participants. Artsbridge hopes to engender in its students a view that sees conflict not as a problem to be eliminated but as a challenge that provides opportunities for growth and for moving forward in new and constructive ways.

Data was derived through interviews conducted with alumni of the program, which included a representation of the various populations, including Jewish Israeli, Palestinian Israeli, and Palestinians from the West Bank. Interviews also represented a retrospective sampling from the annual cohorts from 2008 through 2019. In addition to the alumni, four former staff members, and three parents of alumni were interviewed. Through a grounded theory analysis of the interviews six major themes emerged, including 29 subthemes, all of which led to the main theme of relational resilience. I suggest that the development of relational resilience is an important aim when engaging groups in conflict, and provides the elements that scholars have argued lead to constructive engagement in the midst of conflict. This study is an attempt to respond to two main questions. Those questions are addressed in the following paragraphs.

The Research Questions

Question 1

The first question that this study sought to answer is: How does Artsbridge enable participants from both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to move beyond the destructive impact of intractable conflict on their lives towards more constructive engagement with the world around them? In response to this question, I have described the Artsbridge process in detail in part II of this dissertation. My aim in doing so was to reinforce the notion that Artsbridge places an emphasis on intentionality. In other words, not just on **what** it does, but on **why** and **how** it does what it does. This is evident in all of the elements of the program which work

together recursively, within a stance of relational construction, in order to achieve the goal of helping participants develop relational resilience. The concept of relational resilience was derived from the constructionist grounded theory analysis of interviews conducted with 31 participants, including alumni of Artsbridge, as well as four staff members and two parents of alumni. While Artsbridge does not place its focus on the resolution, mitigation, or transformation of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, its impact, as shown in the research, has a positive effect on the way participants relate to the conflict, to themselves, and to the world around them. This thesis argues that the unique qualities of the Artsbridge model of relational resilience allows for this development.

Question 2

The second question addressed in this dissertation is: How do participants of Artsbridge experience their participation in, and impact of, the Artsbridge process? This question is addressed through the interviews and the inclusion of extensive excerpts from those interviews throughout the dissertation.

The Context

The literature on intractable conflict highlights the devastating consequences for members of societies in conflict as well as for society itself. As the review of literature explicates, these types of conflicts differ from other types in their level of destructiveness, as well as their resistance to more traditional methods of resolution such as problem-solving, mediation, or negotiation (Coleman, 2014; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Kriesberg, 1993; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Bar-Tal (2007) outlines the various elements that work together to maintain and exacerbate the conflict. First, are the negatively interdependent narratives of the conflict held by Israelis and Palestinians (Bar-Tal, 2018; Kelman, 1999; Rothman, 1997). Within the conflict narrative, the collective memory held by members of the societies in conflict helps to maintain a story of the conflict that sees their side as true and good, while the other is evil, and wrong. Each of the narratives held by Israelis and Palestinians maintains that they are the victims, maintaining a story of collective victimhood. As these stories are passed down through the collective memory, a story of trauma (Alexander, 2012) is passed down through generations as well, leading to collective trauma (Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2003; Tint, 2010). Despite the destructive tendencies that these narratives hold, they also provide a sense of safety, meaning, and connection, which help to buffer members of society from many of the negative ramifications of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2012). Therein lies the

paradox – how does one attempt to counteract the negative impacts of the conflict narrative while providing the necessary and safe space that allows participants to safely explore and question their deeply held beliefs? Artsbridge addresses this question. In their interviews, participants expressed the sense of safety that they experienced, and how that enabled them to hear things that went against what they had previously held to be the only truth. Artsbridge also provided the space for them to critically explore those deeply held beliefs. I argue that this is an important distinction between Artsbridge and other encounter programs working in the region.

The Uniqueness of the Artsbridge Model

Existing types of encounter programs in Israel/Palestine today generally fall into one of four categories as outlined by Maoz. They are the Coexistence, Confrontational, Joint projects, and Narrative models (2011, 2018). Additionally, while most programs take place within Israel/Palestine, there are several that are located in the United States (Lazarus, 2011, 2017). Artsbridge offers a unique approach to engaging teens living in the midst of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, as it addresses many of the challenges faced by other types of encounter programs. Unlike coexistence programs, Artsbridge does not avoid any topic that may arise, whether in the dialogue sessions, the art programs, or in any other aspect of the program. Rather, any issue that arises is discussed and processed. However, before difficult topics are discussed, students are taught *how* to engage in difficult conversations. Therefore, rather than having a focus on *what* is discussed, there is a greater focus on *how* it is discussed. Within all aspects of the program, as issues arise, they are processed through constructive conversations informed by, or directly through, Transformative Reflecting Dialogue. During the interviews conducted for this research, many students discussed how they have acquired a new understanding and new skills that allow them to engage in difficult conversations in a more constructive fashion. For example, students have noted the following:

> I think [its] a lot about being able to discuss things that are difficult but in a way that's respectful. And not Israeli, in terms of raising your voice …And also about -- I remember we repeated this a lot, the practice of, while someone else is speaking, not to be thinking about what you want to answer, but actually listening to what they have to say. Which is something that is very important to keep.   Dafne

***

…[now] I think before I talk, and I [have] more acceptance in hearing every side. And try to understand that it's coming from another background, another perspective, that maybe if I were him, I'd see something similar, or something like that.
Mahmoud

***

I've been to other dialogues, and it's a lot of people trying to manage a big group. Usually, people who join a dialogue are very – are opinionated, and want to say what they have in mind. And are from different types – like have very different opinions. And they don't listen. So, it doesn't turn out – like there's not a real process. Or it's slower, because, I don't know, because people don't really talk; they just shout at each other…. I think what I did mostly in Artsbridge, which was surprising for me, was listen; more than talk. And I think that what happens to me more now is that I try to hear what people are saying, and try to understand where they're coming from. Compared to the way I was before; before I was more, talking right away, and not really listening. … I think when you really listen to somebody, and not just like, wait until you can answer, yourself, then you hear more things; then you realize, you see people's facial expressions in what they say, and you also hear what they're saying, behind what they're saying. And that follows me anywhere I go. It follows me when I have a conversation with someone.   Kedma

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In comparison to the Coexistence model, which has their focus on friendship and often avoids the difficult topics, the Confrontational model has a focus on addressing issues of the conflict directly. In this model the power asymmetry between Palestinians and Israelis is addressed in a way that attempts to ensure that the Israelis become keenly aware of the power asymmetry that exists between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, and their role in the oppression of the Palestinian people as well as an attempt to empower the Palestinian-Arab minority (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Maoz, 2018, 2011). Artsbridge, in contrast to the Confrontational model, allows topics to arise organically, through Transformative

Reflecting Dialogue and personal stories, as well as through the joint art projects. The interviews showed evidence that participants developed the awareness of the challenges confronting the Palestinians. However, Artsbridge does so in a way that does not attempt to reverse the power dynamics, rather, it does so in a way that allows Jewish Israelis to hear the challenges without feeling attacked or feeling the need to be defensive. I am not arguing that these issues are easy for Jewish Israelis to hear, only that it allows them to listen in a different way, in a way that allows them to truly hear the issues. The focus in Artsbridge is on *mutual* empowerment, and working together towards constructive change. Eliora, who had never met Palestinians before Artsbridge, expressed her surprise at hearing some of the stories of the Palestinians:

> I was very surprised because it was way more intense and real and raw than I thought it would be. I wasn't expecting it to be all fun and games, but I definitely didn't expect to be having adult conversations and touching the really hard things. And also, I've never met before a Palestinian that lives in Palestine. I haven't had those conversations with the actual people who are living that reality. So, a lot of things surprised me.

For somebody like Eliora, for whom this was her first experience in an encounter with Palestinians, she was able to hear difficult stories without feeling threatened or attacked. Kenaan, a Jewish participant, had this to say about his new understanding:

> Being at Artsbridge and hearing people talk about both of those things…. It definitely changed how I thought about conflict, and how I thought about the aggressor, and the oppressor, versus the oppressed. And the lines basically aren't as clear as I once imagined…. And it's very difficult to write things off like that, when you're hearing them from personal experience. And like, this is what I experienced, [and that was] my family having to escape from the West Bank, and very like – specific stories that I still remember, that basically humanized the conflict for me.

In comparing Artsbridge to the coexistence or confrontational model, a key difference is that, issues are not ignored or avoided as in the Coexistence model, yet, through the format of the dialogic component of the program, and unlike the

Confrontational model, difficult topics are able to be discussed in an environment that aims to have everybody feel heard, and with nobody feeling threatened. One of the unique challenges of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is that both sides of the conflict see themselves as victims. This is illustrated in Appendix A of this dissertation, where both the Israeli and Palestinian dominant, historical narratives are laid out side by side. By teaching and engaging Artsbridge participants in TRD, they are able to hear the multiple perspectives as shared through the personal stories of the participants. It is through those shared personal stories, where the speaker is feeling heard and respected and the reflectors are able to, not just listen, but to reflect on how what they hear has moved them, that new, more complex understandings emerge, helping participants to move beyond competing victimhood and towards mutual empowerment.

While the Narrative model of encounter also maintains its focus on personal stories, Artsbridge differs from this model in how personal stories are shared. By using TRD, participants are learning how to share their stories in a way that allows others to hear them, while also teaching how to really listen. Through the interview process, the interviewer is able to ask questions out of curiosity, which is modelled by the facilitators, helping participants understand the difference between asking questions out of an agenda, or asking questions out of curiosity. Shaina explains one of the impacts that she experienced through Artsbridge process:

> I think I developed a lot of skills and my identity. I remember when we talked there about identity, I didn't understand. Not what is my identity and not what I want to like -- where I want to go with that part, what I want my identity to be. I think just when we finish the whole process, I came to understand what is my identity and a lot about talking. How I want to talk, when, about what.

Transformative Reflecting Dialogue allows for a thickening of personal stories that generates new meaning and understanding, not just for the listeners, but also for the speaker.

Artsbridge also has similarities with the fourth model, the Joint Projects model, but there are also significant differences. The Joint Projects model is similar to the coexistence model in some of its goals, including an emphasis on commonalities and often avoiding difficult issues, according to Maoz (2011, 2018). Similar to the limitations seen in the Coexistence model, the Joint Projects model may be seen by some participants as irrelevant to their actual needs and preferences as it does

not directly deal with issues some see as important. Artsbridge maintains different goals through a different emphasis. The art component of Artsbridge is not meant to emphasize commonalities. Rather, it is to help participants explore their multiple ways of seeing the world, while learning how to engage constructively with one another. While friendship and commonalities are not relevant in this context, they do often surface. However, they do so while also allowing participants to explore and learn to value difference. Samach had this to share about her experience with the art component and her partner:

> And we, through making it and preparing it [our art project], me and E (JI) talked about a lot of stuff. And we managed to talk in English, because it's not really fair that I talk in Hebrew [as a Palestinian Israeli] and she's like -- it's her mother language. So we both found a way to connect on a level that's comfortable for both of us, and we really started talking in English. And we understood each other more, and we talked more openly, and more honest[ly]. And I understood… and I even remember our talks, bits and pieces… And she wanted to know more about my culture.

In reading the narratives written by participants after they completed their art project, many teams wrote of the challenges they faced while working together, including their often-conflicting perspectives, and how they managed to work through those challenges to greater understanding. Figure 25 expresses some of those challenges, as well as how they overcame them to develop a deeper understanding and an appreciation of difference that developed through their challenges with the art.

It is interesting to note is that, while getting to know each other through the process, the artists are also gaining new understanding about identity, and seeing that identity is more complex than simply "Israeli" or "Palestinian". The two artists that created "What's Hidden Underneath" developed an awareness of their challenges not necessarily coming from their different nationalities, but also from their different artistic styles. It is Peter Coleman's view that one approach to dealing with intractable conflict would be the development of the capacity to understand and appreciate the many complex relationships and contradictions inherent in these types of conflicts.

Figure 25
"What's Hidden Underneath": Created by Students in 2016
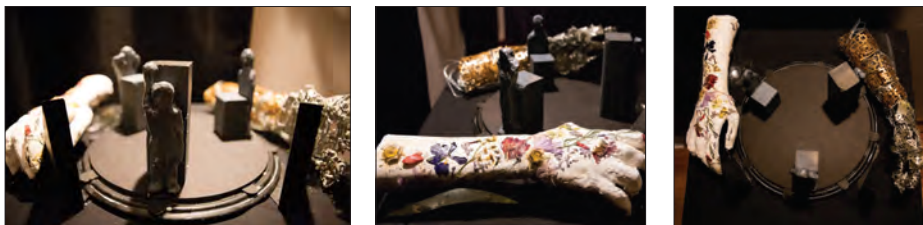
What's Hidden Underneath

This piece was inspired by the personal stories and experiences that we heard in dialogue, stories that challenged our understanding of identity. Between the metal and the flowers, we explored the differences within a person. If one chooses to move the wheel, he/she would get a deeper glimpse into their life and understand where they come from.

While working on our piece we had many disagreements and challenges that we had to work through to make this piece come to life. There were some parts that we needed to take down and start over several times. However, we succeeded to work through the challenges through compromise, listening, patience, and thinking things through.

Working together not only brought up new ideas, but also helped us learn more about each other. We were able to face all of our challenges even though we are two very different people with varying tastes.

In the end, we managed to create a piece of art that reflects the different identities that many of us have inside. The more curious you are and the more time you spend discovering the piece, the more you learn.

Through its multi-modal process, and a relational constructionist frame, Artsbridge, as the interviews have shown, succeeds in helping participants develop an understanding of the complexities that exist within the many narratives and perspectives that maintain conflict as intractable.

Artsbridge and the Emotional Context

Another element that influences intractable conflict, according to scholars (see Bar-Tal, 2007, 2012; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Halperin & Bar-Tal, 2008; Halperin & Cohen-Chen, 2014) is the role that emotions play, not only in maintaining the intractability of the conflict but also in the escalation of conflict towards intractability (Desivilya, 2004; Desivilya Syna, 2020; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995). Goldman and Coleman (2005) have argued that, just as memories are socially constructed, so are the emotions that accompany them. Chapter 3 reviewed the literature on

several emotions connected with intractable conflict, such as fear and hatred (see, Cohen-Chen et al., 2014; Gray, 1987; Halperin & Nets-Zehngut, 2008; Volkan, 1997), Humiliation (see Lindner, 2009), hope (see Averill, 2004; Webb, 2002, 2012), and humiliation (Lindner, 2009; Volkan, 2004). Each of these emotions influence how members of society view the conflict and influence their reaction to those considered to be enemies. By influencing perceptions of the conflict, emotions often create expectations for the future based on the experiences of the past as passed on through the conflict narrative. These expectations also influence the ability of members of society to hope for a peaceful end to the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2001), leading to the sense of hopelessness felt by members of society living in its midst (Tint, 2010). The MACBE model of conflict escalation as discussed in chapter 3, illustrates a systems perspective of how increasingly negative emotions, together with the other variables of motivation, affect, cognition and environment, are linked to the escalation of conflict (Desivilya Syna, 2020; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995).

In reviewing the data derived from the interviews, it is possible to see how Artsbridge impacts the role of emotions in participants' perceptions of the conflict, as well as other aspects of their lives. The themes of "Complexity," "Personal Growth," "Creativity and Imagination," and "Relational Growth," each include elements that counteract the negative impacts of those emotions through expanding awareness of multiple perspectives, allowing for the critical exploration of the narratives they grew up with, developing an awareness of the complexity of conflict, as well as developing the ability to hold conflicting ideas. The theme of "Creativity and Imagination" shows how participants developed a sense of curiosity, which helped them learn about and explore perceptions of the conflict other than their own, and showed that many participants developed the capacity for realistic hope. Yasmina shared how her participation in Artsbridge in 2013 has allowed her to hate less:

> To be honest, I used to hate everyone. It taught me that not every Israeli [is] the same, not just because they come from the occupation that this means that they hate us or that they want to kill me or whatever.

And Mahmoud explains how his anger has shifted since his experience with Artsbridge in 2010:

> I'm not like I was before, [where I was] mad [at] hearing those things, that it's not like my thoughts. But now it's -- not mad, it's like, okay, maybe I can understand. I'm not agreeing with that, but I can think that he can reach to this thinking.

Alex, from 2008 explained:

> I was sometimes confused but it really helped me to think about it more deeply. It's more like I think it's definitely changed something about the way I see other people's emotions and the way I see the conflict.

Throughout Artsbridge, all of the elements work together to engage its participants in a process that allows them to have a better understanding of the emotional impact of, not only the larger conflict, but also of their lived experiences outside of the conflict. Each of the themes mentioned above, "Complexity," "Personal Growth," "Creativity and Imagination," and "Relational Growth" showed evidence of contributing to that impact, as shared by the participants in our conversations.

Relational Resilience

The Artsbridge process shifts the focus away from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and towards relational resilience. In chapter 11 I contrasted the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience (AMRR) to a more individualist, modernist view of resilience, and to the theory of resilience as outlined in the Stone Center's Relational Cultural theory. Artsbridge and its model of resilience pays attention to the relationality between beings, while teaching and providing the space for constructive engagement rather than on change within the individual. This includes paying attention to how one engages with others in a conflict situation, leading towards constructive engagement and away from destructive conflict. The elements of AMRR and their explanations are shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Elements of the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience

Elements of the Artsbridge Model of Relational Resilience	
Relational Flexibility	Inviting vulnerability through the recognition of the interdependence between beings and the appreciation of multiple forms of collaborative engagement
Multiple Perspectives	The ability to appreciate the perspective of others and work together without the need for agreement
Relational Confidence	The ability to engage in and support mutually constructive relationships
Mutual Empowerment	An appreciation of the value of mutual empowerment, through mutual growth and the co-creation of new understandings
Appreciating Complexity	Allowing for multiple ways of seeing and experiencing the world – multiple meanings without judgement
Creativity and Imagination	The ability to see beyond current situation despite challenges and to imagine new possibilities for moving forward
Reasonable Hope	The ability to remain hopeful despite challenges and disappointments
Tensionality	Ability to hold the tension between listening and respecting the perspectives of others while holding one's own views
Entertain Uncertainty	Ability to maintain a stance of not-knowing when listening to others, allowing for the possibility that one's view may not be the only one

I propose that by not having a focus on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, participants are learning how to engage constructively in *any* sort of conflict situation. Relational resilience has a constructive impact on participants in many aspects of their lives, beyond the conflict

One might suggest that Artsbridge has moved away from the overarching goal of dealing with "The Conflict" - with a capital "C" (the Israeli/Palestinian conflict), and towards relating to conflict with a little "c" (the concept of conflict as relational). While the Israeli/Palestinian conflict has certainly had tragic consequences for Israelis and Palestinians, how one relates to any type of conflict will influence one's lived experience in many ways. One of the messages that Artsbridge instills in its participants is the idea that conflict itself is not a bad thing, it is how one deals with the conflict that can be problematic and/or destructive. As Jean Paul Lederach says: "Conflict happens. It is normal and it is continuously present in human

relationships" (2003, p. 23). As noted in Chapter 4, most encounter programs between Israelis and Palestinians work to either avoid talking about "the conflict," or address it in a way that reproduces and/or reinforces the negative aspects of conflict (Maoz, 2011, 2018). Artsbridge students learn how to engage constructively with conflict through listening to difficult, personal stories in dialogue, through working collaboratively on a piece of art over the course of three weeks, and by living, eating and engaging with one another 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for 3 weeks. Their newfound ways of being are reinforced through the seminars that take place beyond the summer program. While the conflict is not addressed directly — it evolves organically through the dialogues as students share their personal stories, and through the art projects if they decide to choose that topic. Relational resilience is developed, partially, through working through the challenges faced in the art projects, both with the process and in the relationships with their partners. Figure 26 shows how two students, Ramzi and his Jewish Israeli partner explored the conflict as they also experienced the challenges of working on a large-scale art project.

The artwork and narrative created by Ramzi and his partner illustrate how students process and explore issues related to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict regardless of whether it is a focus of the program. The difference between Artsbridge and other programs is how issues surrounding the conflict arise. With a focus on relational resilience rather than the conflict, Artsbridge does not ignore the lived experience of the students, and they are able to address issues that are of concern to them. However, they address them in ways that allow them to appreciate the complexity of the conflict in a creative way, through constructive conversations and through their art. Developing relational resilience provides the students with ways to move forward in their lives in ways that challenge the tragic consequences of intractable conflict which limit one's ability to think critically and creatively, to be able to hold onto their beliefs while allowing space for the beliefs of another, to remain curious without the fear of constant threat, and to maintain realistic hope in the face of a conflict that has been their lived experience for their entire lives.

Figure 26
"Block": Created by Ramzi and his Partner in 2016

Block

Our piece is about Struggle, fear and identity. It represents both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli story. It shows the hardships, humiliation and destruction Palestinians going through a checkpoint must deal with. The piece also represents the conflict and difficulties that an Israeli soldier currently faces as well as the inner conflict of a future recruit to the Israeli army.

The eyes represent the feeling of being watched and they are created in the green color of the army. They convey that while being watched you are always being judged which, in itself, can create fear for both sides. The eyes also represent the intense emotion of the soldiers as they perform their duty.

The boots represent the oppression of the Palestinians but they also represent the discipline that the soldiers have to face for the next 3 years. The boots are also an element taken from the catwalks that are above the Bethlehem checkpoint gathering area. Again there is a sense of instilled fear that serves to prevent possible actions. It contributes to the ongoing feeling of lack of freedom.

The broken mirrors represent the difference in the way that you see yourself and how the enemy sees you.

We chose the title BLOCK because it is the literal translation of MACHSOM, the word that both Palestinians and Israelis use for CHECKPOINT. The word is a powerful one as it conveys the reality of how one can BLOCK entry, words, emotions and progress to a better situation. BLOCK also conveys the reality of a physical barrier.

In working together we saw big differences in our personalities and approach. Ramez is technical and practical while E. is artistic, creative and a deep thinker. These differences did produce conflict along the way as our piece developed. However we realized we complemented each other and that our differences enabled us to make progress on a piece that we are really proud of. Creating this piece was emotional for both of us as it conveys each of our personal narratives - Ramzi as a Palestinian living in Israel, E. as a young woman conflicted with herself about the onset of Army service.

Participants consistently described the acquisition of the elements of AMRR throughout their interviews as well as the impact on their lives after their experience in the program. For example, Ahmad, a participant in the 2014 cohort, expressed how he was able to appreciate the growth he experienced at Artsbridge, but, despite his expanded awareness and new way of being, he maintained the respect he held for his parents who did not share the experiences he had. Our conversation illustrated this point:

> **Ahmad:** After I went with Artsbridge, and I got back to Palestine, I tried my best not to show any change. And even now, when I am in Vietnam – there are a lot of culture shocks that happen and

> a reversed culture shock also happens, so I try to avoid showing anything about it.
>
> **Interviewer:** What do you think would happen if they [his parents] noticed a change?
>
> **Ahmad:** I don't need them to feel it. I don't need them to see it. I need them to see Ahmad never changes. I can change into a better, into like better …. But the things that may affect their conservativity, the[ir] way of life, the style of my family and my community, I try not to show it.

At the time of our conversation, Ahmad was living and studying biomedical engineering at a university in Vietnam. Ahmad spoke of his awareness of the different cultures, and how he has learned to navigate them. This has allowed Ahmad to continue to expand his experiences and explore new cultures and ideas while still maintaining his relationship with his family – something that is very important to him.

Many students spoke of their newfound ability to appreciate the perspective of others as they work together. This was particularly evident in how they engaged in their art projects. In many of the narratives that the students wrote they spoke of, not only being able to overcome the challenge of different perspectives, but also of gaining an appreciation of the different perspectives. With regards to relational confidence, results of the analysis showed a high degree of responses that spoke of being able to engage with others more constructively, whether it was by gaining the patience to listen to others, maintaining a stance of curiosity, having the confidence to speak more authentically, and appreciating the value of constructive communication. Nara explains how, while she doesn't like to take a leadership role in large groups, her Artsbridge experience had a positive impact on her ability to engage in smaller group settings:

> **Interviewer:** So, you're in general a respectful person. I'm really curious about this idea that one of the main things that you feel like you got out of Artsbridge was being curious and the dialogue and how to have those conversations. And yet, when you're in a group with a leader, what's the difference?
>
> **Nara:** What's the difference? It's a big difference. I don't like to be the center of attention and I feel like the leader is the center of attention. But yet, when I have a conversation person on

person or three or four people, it's not like a big group. And someone says something that I'm curious about, I will ask questions and I feel the person is close to me, I'll ask even more questions that are personal. For example, in our first year of school, of university, we had two friends, they were Druze and my other two girlfriends were Maya and Maisoun[32] and they're from Lod. They're both Muslim actually and we were sitting together, the whole group, and we discovered we don't know anything about Wisam and Faraj, the two Druze guys who were sitting with us and it annoyed us. So, we had the group and we were like everyone, say one thing that we don't know about you. And then everyone said something and then Faraj's turn came and he said something like, my dad passed a year ago and then there was complete silence. But I couldn't, I had to ask more questions because I was curious. So, I asked him more questions and he answered. Today, he's one of my best friends and if I didn't have this conversation with him, I would never know like anything about him. But everyone there was just in shock and they didn't say anything and I'm sure if they said anything it'd be like, oh, I'm so sorry to hear that. Instead of building up a conversation about it. But he didn't have a problem to share it, so why would he have a problem to answer more questions?

Interviewer: So, you think that somehow your Artsbridge experience impacted.

Nara: It definitely did. The dialogue thing, the interviews, the whole small groups thing. That's definitely something I take with me to this day.

Mutual empowerment was expressed primarily in the theme of relational growth, including the subthemes of "trust and vulnerability," "relational responsibility," and, of course, the subtheme of "mutual empowerment." Ramzi describes his experience with his art partner after, initially, not wanting to do art.

That's the thing here, with the idea, when you work with someone and it's not a competition. It's not something that's

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[32] All names are pseudonyms.

> right and wrong. With time, with A, we learned to work together. I really respect her very much. …. I really had a great time working with her and I learned a lot from her and here, we got a really good art project in the end. I know people liked it. We really liked it. Personally, she made me learn a little bit about Jewish teenagers' experience, when they go into the Army. I know she has a hard time; nothing comes easy for her and she doesn't live an easy life.

Additionally, Raida speaks of her experience with her partner and how, despite their challenges they both felt successful in the end.

> At first, it was really hard because me and [my partner], we couldn't decide on the idea, and we started to fight. And then we were like, okay, we have to sit with each other and talk, and then come up with something we both agree on. And we eventually did, and both of us had our share in the film. So, it represented the both of us, and we made it the way both of us really wanted it to be. So, we had to compromise and talk about it… I feel like we came up with something that we both really liked. I mean, it wasn't perfect because we had to do it in three days.

The appreciation of complexity, developing creativity and imagination, maintaining tensionality, as well as maintaining a stance of uncertainty each permeate all aspects of Artsbridge programming. Hearing students express the idea that, while they do not agree with what the person is saying yet they can understand where they are coming from is an important example, as is "agreeing to disagree." As Jaleel states:

> What was useful is how we can appreciate one another and listen to one another despite the disagreement. I remember times after the dialogue room where it was really emotional and really intense and people cried and it's not easy. And I remember other times where we would disagree and have a discussion and then come outside and just jump around and play.

Samira speaks of her newfound understanding of multiplicity of ways of viewing the same situation. As she says:

> That there are two sides of the story, and like, just -- just give yourself like the benefit of the doubt. Like it's not -- like there are two faults in the same story, even if you're a victim, there's still a chance that there might be like, fault on you.

Samira's statement speaks of multiple aspects of relational resilience. She speaks of tensionality between her views and those of others, as well as maintaining a stance of uncertainty. Samira was a student in 2016 and has just recently received her degree in Human Rights and International law.

Developing relational resilience allows participants to take a critical stance regarding the collective narratives that inform their reality and to maintain curiosity about other ways of being. Each element of AMRR provides an important ability that, together, counteract the negative impacts of living in the midst of intractable conflict, including allowing participants to have reasonable hope from within a conflict that has endured through endless cycles of peace processes and ensuing violence. Perhaps more importantly, participants find new ways to move forward in the world towards more constructive futures and relationships. Relational resilience opens up possibilities for new meanings to emerge, as well as for new ways of relating to the world, themselves and others.

The Influence of a Relational Constructionist Framework

In addition to informing this study, a relational constructionist framework is integral to the nature of Artsbridge and to the processes that help Artsbridge achieve its goals. It informs all of the elements of the program, from management through to how and which activities are chosen and how they are implemented. This intentionality, I propose, is one of the aspects that differentiates Artsbridge from other types of Israeli and Palestinian encounter experiences. As noted earlier, I do not suggest that other paradigms have no merit. Rather, I propose that relational construction provides unique opportunities for working with members of communities living in the midst of intractable conflict. The focus on relationality, rather than on individuals as bounded beings, allows us to move beyond seeing individuals as problems, or as sources of the conflict as in more realist paradigms.

Throughout the review of literature, I have described and referred to intractable conflict mostly through a socio-psychological lens, describing the impact on

individuals as separate entities, as well as on societies as separate entities. This lens has merit as a metaphor for understanding intractable conflict and its tragic consequences. However, there is great value in viewing these types of conflicts through the lens of relational construction, which revolves around how we acquire knowledge, how we view truth, how we view the self, and how we view language (Gergen, 2009, 2015). Hosking notes that relational constructionists "center dialogical practices as ways of relating that can enable and support multiple local forms of life rather than imposing one dominant rationality on others" (2011, p. 60). In this context, meaning, and therefore narratives, are created in relationship with others. Therefore, new meanings are also created through language, not simply in the subject of our engagement, but in *how* we engage. Growing up in the midst of entrenched, violent conflict often leads to a type of concrete thinking that leads one to maintain a belief system that defies questioning and uncertainly. I have already discussed the tragic consequences of entrenched conflict. Many of the participants interviewed for this study have made comparisons between the "normal" ways of engaging that they have experienced previously, and how they learned to engage through their Artsbridge experience. They spoke of being able to truly listen to opposing points of view and to respect the different perspectives, to speak in a way that allows others to hear you, and to ask questions out of curiosity rather than out of an agenda. They also spoke about how these new ways of engaging have led to new understandings and new ways of moving forward in the world. I argue that it seems of little use to engage opposing sides living in these types of conflicts in a way that attempts to argue the "facts" of the conflict, or who bears responsibility for the conflict, as each side holds their own set of facts, and each side is clear that the other bears the responsibility for not only the creation of the conflict, but also for its maintenance. Arguing facts and placing blame leads not only to a recreation of the conflict within the encounter, but also has the potential to lead to further entrenchment into one's narrative and increased polarization. Yet, by avoiding issues revolving around the conflict, those most impacted feel frustrated that the issues most important to them are not being addressed. Relational construction offers other possibilities. By focusing on the relational qualities of engagement, we may find ways to break through the impasse of blame and shame, fear and resentment, towards more mutual understanding. By helping participants develop an understanding that their way of seeing the world is only one of many ways, and that others may have very different ways of relating to the world, we are, again, opening up new pathways for moving forward and for the mutual empowerment of participants to work towards a more constructive future.

Artsbridge pays attention to the relationality between beings, and to teaching and providing the safe space for constructive engagement rather than on change within the individual. This includes paying attention to how one engages with others in a conflict situation, potentially leading towards constructive engagement and away from destructive conflict. Seeing individuals as relational beings and focusing on the relational quality rather than what lies within the individual provides for possibilities for mutual empowerment and constructive engagement that may be threatened by a focus on change within the individual. To be clear, seeing the conflict through the lens of relational construction does not deny the asymmetry of power that exists between those in conflict, nor does it deny the oppression of those suffering from its consequences. The shift lies in *how* one engages with those issues, and from what perspective they are viewed. Relational construction allows us to appreciate the complexities of the conflict in ways that allow us to work together to create greater understanding, with the goal of, not only developing relational resilience, but also to creating constituents for constructive social change through mutual engagement.

Emergent Themes

This dissertation has sought to show how, by moving away from a focus on conflict, Artsbridge is able to provide more expansive opportunities for participants to constructively engage and perhaps even thrive in situations of conflict through relational resilience. The six themes that emerged to form the concept of relational resilience will be discussed below.

Complexity

The theme of complexity arose as many of the participants spoke of developing the capacity to hold conflicting ideas. For example, for a Jewish Israeli, they were able to value their identity as an Israeli, but still see that their country may be harming another nation. For a '67 Palestinian participant, it might be that they see the Israeli army as an occupying force that causes great harm to their people, but that not all individuals who serve in the army are evil or harbor bad intentions. For '48 Palestinians, whose identity is challenged with being a citizen of Israel, but having Palestinian heritage, several mentioned that they were able to clarify their identity through Artsbridge, and that they are able to find space for both. Roccas and Brewer relate to this as Social Identity Complexity (2002). From a relational constructionist perspective this relates to relational complexity and the ability to hold multiple worldviews. For Palestinians living in Israel, or for Jewish citizens of

Israel from Arabic descent, this is an important concept as it allows them to situate themselves within the context of conflicting identities. Several of the Palestinian Israelis spoke of having a better understanding of who they are and how they see themselves. As Kedma explains:

> …it takes you back to real life. Sometimes you have to choose a side, and I had to do that. And I realized that once I did, it wasn't such a big deal. I could still go back to the other side, and have my own opinions about different things. So I didn't have to be one sided.

Participants also mentioned that they can now understand that their way of viewing the conflict is not the only way, and that they now have an appreciation of multiple narratives. Additionally, while they may not agree with a person's understanding or perspective, they are able to agree to disagree and to maintain a friendship, or constructive relationship with those with whom they do not agree. There also seemed to be a greater appreciation of diversity, and seeing the value in different ways of being, and different cultures.

Personal Growth

Through their experience with Artsbridge, participants spoke of having experienced personal growth as an outcome of their participation. Aside from gaining more knowledge of the conflict and the Other, participants spoke of having developed more self-confidence, increasing their capacity to manage their emotions, becoming more reflexive both about the conflict as well as experiences in their personal lives. Several participants described having a greater understanding of their own identity and feeling more comfortable with who they are. Others described the ability to be more patient, which I surmise coincides with a greater capacity to listen to others.

While some of the responses coded within the theme of personal growth may also be considered relevant to the theme of relational growth and enhanced relational capacity, I felt that they were more relevant to the participants' individual rather than relational growth.

Constructive Communication

While expressing initial frustration with the Artsbridge method of dialogue, there was widespread acknowledgment of the acquisition of constructive dialogic skills,

including the ability to listen to others, even when the other is challenging their beliefs. They also spoke of the ability to engage in deeper conversations than they were able to before. In contrast to other forms of communication, participants noted that in conversations that they engaged in at Artsbridge they were able to feel heard when sharing their personal stories, and they appreciated hearing the personal stories of others as they related to the conflict. This seemed to hold, not just within the dialogue sessions, but also while working collaboratively on their art projects or during informal times.

Creativity and Imagination

Another theme that emerged from the data was the theme of creativity and imagination. This theme emerged not only from conversations relating to the engagement with arts, but also included the impact of dialogic engagement. Participants spoke of now seeing the value of curiosity and of becoming more curious themselves, as well as the acknowledgement that their participation in Artsbridge helped them develop a sense of realistic hope. The value of art as a means of personal expression, as well as the therapeutic qualities of the arts as utilized in Artsbridge were also mentioned as having been experienced through Artsbridge. Several scholars have noted the importance of a sense of curiosity and imagination in order to develop an ability to imagine a future that does not include violent conflict, and an increased sense of agency in working towards change in their current lived experience with conflict (Cohen, 2005, 2015; Coleman, 2000; Greene, 1995; Lawrence, 2012; Lederach, 2005).

Relational Growth

The theme of relational growth is composed of subthemes that all relate to an increased capacity to constructively relate to others. A number of participants mentioned that they developed friendships through the program and were surprised that they were able to develop friendships with those considered to be their enemy. While this seems to have been a significant outcome, I reiterate here that friendship was not a goal of Artsbridge. Constructive relationships that do not necessarily entail developing friendships are emphasized as a goal. For example, students who were, initially, having strong disagreements were able to work collaboratively to create a piece of art. They maintained a respectful relationship but did not consider themselves to be friends. I present this as an important concept as I suggest that friendships are not always possible in conflict situations,

yet constructive relationships still need to be maintained in order to work towards constructive change.

Significant responses came under the subtheme of more expansive awareness, which mainly related to greater awareness of the complexity of the conflict, as well as to the lived experience of the Other within the conflict. It is likely that the ability to listen deeply to the personal stories of the other, rather than engaging in a debate, or argument, allowed for the development of greater awareness of the lived experience of others, as well as being able to hear ideas and narratives that conflict with their own. While more expansive awareness might be expected to result from the dialogues, many participants suggested that it was their ability to engage in deeper conversations while working on their collaborative art projects that increased their capacity to develop a more expansive awareness.

Participants also related through the interviews that they felt a responsibility to their partner to work towards creating a joint art piece, and felt it important to support each other in the process. These two ideas fall under the subthemes of relational responsibility and mutual empowerment. Those subthemes also include responses that connected to their experience in dialogue, and working to sustain an environment that supported everybody's ability to share their personal stories without fear of verbal reprisals. This can be related to the sense of trust and vulnerability that several of the participants spoke of having experienced throughout Artsbridge. Lastly, a large majority of participants spoke of feeling a sense of increased empathy towards others, as well as feeling that this was reciprocated by the other students. As discussed in the review of literature, several scholars argue that empathy has a positive impact on the improvement of intergroup relations, and the mitigation of intergroup conflict (Bang, 2006; Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Deutch, 2014). Vollhardt and Staub (2009) showed through their study that increased empathy has the potential to lead to increased prosocial behavior among those who have experienced group-based violence.

Sustainability

While the development of the aforementioned capacities and acquisition of skills is notable, it is also important to explore if and how the ideas and new ways of being, gained through their Artsbridge experience, have stayed with them over the years, and in what ways. Emerging from the interviews conducted was a strong sense that participants had gained positive effects lasting well beyond their participation in Artsbridge. All of the participants interviewed spoke of capacities and skills gained at Artsbridge that persist still. This held for students from 2019, as

well as for students from each of the years represented from 2008 onward. For some of the participants it impacted their choice of careers, others became more involved in their communities, and most spoke of their ability to engage in more constructive conversations, including when engaging in difficult conversations. This included the development of greater relational confidence. In other words, either gaining more confidence in their ability to express their ideas, and for others it was the ability to truly listen to others with differing points of view. Paradoxically, those who had previously felt compelled to speak, were able to listen more, and those who had difficulty speaking up now found that they are more comfortable in sharing their thoughts and ideas. Ramzi came to Artsbridge with the sense that he was "just there to have fun", without expectations of learning anything new. When asked whether he noticed any changes in himself, here is what he had to say:

> Changes in myself… I think the main change was in the dialogues when we got through the dialogues and everything. All of the discussions there. Usually my discussions with other people, especially from the school and at home and here with friends, it's not the same thing. We usually talk through facts -- that's what I was used to my entire life, to talk about facts, math. Everything is calculated, you don't say anything that's not true; anything that you feel that doesn't matter. What matters is what are the facts, what is real and what is not real. What happened, what didn't. So, after this whole process, these three weeks in the U.S., I came back and I think I remember I did mention the dialogues when we had the dialogue with N. So, I actually learn[ed] that when we talk -- yeah, everything's fine -- to talk and to relate with the person. Because I didn't go there to argue with people, I went there to have fun as I said, I didn't go to argue with anyone and to be in a bad relationship with anyone else. So, what I heard was personal stories from everyone. I didn't hear, actually, my opinion is this and this. I just heard like, the story of my family, my story … So that was probably the main change or that's how I did learn to relate to people. I heard their personal stories and the personal stories necessarily affect your opinions about everything. So, it's not necessarily the facts. … If you go already to facts, maybe people can get defensive, can feel uncomfortable. So that's a thing, that's mainly what changed. Other than that, probably leadership and all of this. The ability to communicate with people in a better way because you're with

> the same people for three weeks. You [l]earn a lot of social skills, a lot of how to deal with people in tough situations... Sometimes you have tough situations and you have to learn how to deal with it, how to talk to the person.

It is important to note that the influence that Artsbridge had on participants was not the same for every person. Participants arrived to Artsbridge from diverse communities, and with a history of different life experiences. As relational beings, it is understandable that the experience of Artsbridge was just one influence in the multiplicity of experiences of the participants. That being said, I believe that each participant derived benefit from the program based on the lived experiences they came to the program with at that time. I argue that shifting the focus away from the conflict and towards relational resilience allowed for the experience of Artsbridge to have meaning for the participants in whatever capacity they needed. However, as the students go home and have additional experiences, their learning evolves with them. For example, here is what Jaleel, from the 2012 cohort relates:

> Like, when I was there at the time, I didn't realize how much I learned and how much I grew until I went back home and it was the integration part of it was really powerful.

Intractable conflicts pose unique challenges for the people living in their midst, which Artsbridge seeks to address. Through a multi-modal process that includes training in and engagement with Transformative Reflecting Dialogue, collaborative arts and expressive therapy modalities, from within a relational constructionist framework, Artsbridge aims to help students develop relational resilience, which includes the ability to tolerate uncertainty, appreciate complexity, communicate constructively, think creatively and to imagine a future different from the one in which they are currently living. Research on interventions in intractable conflicts suggest that the above qualities are important in the constructive evolution of conflict (Coleman & Deutch, 2014; Coleman & Lowe, 2007; Lederach, 2005).

I suggest that constructive change will only happen when people find ways to engage in a relational process that allows for constructive communication, mutual empowerment and an appreciation of the complexities that intractable conflict represents. I submit that Artsbridge is one small step in the process.

Future Possibilities

The Artsbridge program was initially developed as a conflict transformation program. With each year of the program, it became clearer that the program was achieving something different than its original goal. This study was conducted as an attempt to better understand the outcomes of the program and its impact on those who participate, and has led to the concept of relational resilience. I submit that this study has implications for how encounter programs between Israelis and Palestinians operate, as well as what might be a constructive focus when working with populations engaged in protracted conflict. The consequences of living in the midst of protracted conflict last for generations. I believe that the approach for engaging communities still living in the midst of protracted conflict should necessarily be different than for those communities who are beginning the process of learning to live together and heal in post-conflict situations. I propose that Artsbridge, with its focus on relational resilience, provides such an approach.

While the summer program shows great potential for constructive shifts in its participants, it is not enough. Having support systems in place when the participants return is an important factor in sustainability and growth. While Artsbridge has managed to conduct three follow-up seminars post summer program, as well as occasional alumni conferences, I believe there is a need for more continued engagement. Training facilitators working in local communities as well as running after school programs in the region would provide important support to students once they return home. Additionally, I suggest that uni-national[33] programs that run for the year before the summer program could be useful in preparing the students for engagement with the Other. These programs could help students explore their own narratives and identity before engaging with narratives that conflict with theirs, and they could begin the process of helping students feel comfortable engaging in the language of art as well as prepare them for the dialogic process utilized in Artsbridge. For communities with scarce resources, these preparatory programs could also help students with English language skills, providing opportunities for students who might not otherwise be able to participate. Uni-national programs could also address the unique needs of each community, and provide support for students who would otherwise not consider engaging with their enemy. While these concepts were part of the original Artsbridge program plan, financial and sometimes logistical limitations did not allow

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[33] Uni-national programs would work within specific communities, i.e. Jewish Israeli, Palestinian Israeli, and '67 Palestinian groups separately before bringing them together.

for their full implementation. Should the opportunity present itself and funding becomes available, it would be beneficial to attempt to implement not only uni-national programming both before and after the summer program, but also increased facilitator training in local communities so that programming could continue well after the summer program, along with more extensive post program activities, including alumni conferences and additional opportunities for alumni to stay engaged.

Other Applications

While the Artsbridge methodology was developed to work with Israeli and Palestinian teens, there are implications for its application with other populations as well as in other environments. The methodology has the potential to be extremely useful for working in the corporate environment, not only when teams are in conflict, but also for teambuilding and helping companies engage in constructive communication practices. Creating a positive work environment and helping employees learn to tolerate and engage constructively with conflict situations is important to increasing productivity and creating a positive environment and culture in the workplace. This may also have relevance in the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. In her research on diversity management within medical and educational institutions, Helena Desivilya Syna speaks of the challenges encountered by Jewish and Palestinian Israelis working together within the larger context of political tensions (Desivilya Syna, 2012, 2020; Desivilya Syna & Raz, 2011). Within a medical environment, Desivilya Syna shows the impact of the broader conflict on work relations, tending to exacerbate tensions and divisions between staff members in work-related encounters. Desivilya Syna goes on to note that the adverse circumstances of the greater conflict, specifically during times of escalating hostilities, "drastically impede transformation of the intergroup encounter into one engendering respect, humane orientation towards the other and collaboration in daily professional interactions" (2020, p. 84). While they are still able to manage reasonable work performance and provide quality medical care, the relational quality of their interaction suffers (2020). I suggest that the methodology behind Artsbridge has the potential to provide programming that would address these challenges constructively. Rather than the temptation to avoid dealing with the effects of the greater conflict and its impact on staff, engaging with the challenges in a relational way has the potential to provide opportunities for greater awareness of the challenges and joint coordination in finding constructive ways to move forward and engage.

Artsbridge methodology has potential for educational environments as well. Training educators to engage with students through mutually empowering, relational practices has the potential to enhance the learning environment and create a space where students are able to become curious learners as they navigate the challenges of everyday life.

Limitations of the Research

As is the nature of a social constructionist approach to research, this study does not provide ultimate or definitive answers, nor does it determine a singular truth. That was never the goal of this research. That being said, there are some limitations to this study. Firstly, Artsbridge was not created as a research project. Therefore, extensive, methodical documentation throughout the years was not conducted. There were no pre-program evaluations, nor were dialogues recorded and analyzed. While several people over the years urged me to record the dialogues either through voice recordings or video, I was strongly opposed to the idea as I felt it would limit the freedom with which the students shared their personal stories. It was of critical importance to me that a safe, sacred space was created, and I felt that any video recording of dialogues would impinge on that sense of safety.

Secondly, participants in the study, while representing a cross-section of alumni, represented a relatively small percentage of the approximately 260 alumni (approximately 10%). Also, because this study was not meant to be a program assessment, pre and post program interviews were not conducted, making it difficult to assess the level of change experienced by the students other than through their post-program perceptions as expressed in the presented interviews. However, I was impressed by the candor with which the students spoke, and their ability to articulate, not only what they felt they gained from the program, but also of some of the challenges they faced as well as what they did not find useful or valuable.

Thirdly, as the founder and director of Artsbridge, I held a position of power in the eyes of the participants. While having clearly expressed my hope that they speak candidly and openly about their experience, it is possible that the participants did not feel as free to share their experiences as they would have with a third party. However, I also believe that there was some benefit to my having a prior relationship with the participants in terms of encouraging generative conversation. Being familiar with the context of their experience in Artsbridge, I was

able to engage participants in richer conversations, sometimes about specific experiences that occurred.

Future Research

With respect to future research, there are several possibilities. Firstly, it could be useful to conduct a broader study of the impact of Artsbridge methodology on past participants which includes a larger cross-section of alumni. Additionally, a long-term study of at least one cohort which would explore pre and post reflections on their experience could provide useful information. Finally, a comparative study of this methodology with other types of encounter programs may provide additional opportunities for reflection.

More research is needed on the inclusion of students from other populations into the encounter with Israelis and Palestinians. In the few years that Artsbridge has included American students and, later, students from Sri-Lanka, the conversations shifted from an acute focus on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to a focus on conflict from a more global perspective. Early indications are that this provided a useful lens through which to view conflict and provided opportunities to see conflict from a variety of perspectives that were not possible when simply focusing on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. While Artsbridge has not specifically focused on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, personal stories as shared by the students necessarily related to the conflict in which they were living. I believe there are advantages to viewing conflict from a broader perspective as it provides more expansive awareness, and therefore, is advantageous for the development of relational resilience.

Conclusion

The arts and Transformative Reflecting Dialogue from within the framework of relational construction shows promise as a new paradigm for working with groups in conflict. However, it is not only the utilization of these elements that is important, but HOW these elements are utilized. I propose that it is not simply the use of art or bringing people together to talk to one another that creates constructive shifts in those living in the midst of conflict. Rather, programs must pay attention to how the arts are utilized, how dialogues are conducted and under what conditions in order for constructive change to emerge. I argue that working from within a social constructionist, relational sensibility provides a framework that can inform programs as to how to create the environment and conditions that allow for the constructive engagement with conflict as well as the development of constructive relationships

with those considered to be adversaries. All of the elements utilized in Artsbridge work together to create a space that allows for the safe exploration of entrenched narratives, as well as for the development of the ability to listen reflexively to those with whom one deeply disagrees. It also provides the necessary catalyst for participants to be able to embrace uncertainty, develop curiosity, as well as appreciate complexity. If all of these conditions are met, there is the potential to lead to the generation of new meanings and to imagine and find paths for moving forward together in new ways.

Final Reflections

When I began Artsbridge in 2007, it was impossible to foresee the impact it would have on those who participated, and, especially, on me personally. I could not know then how much I would grow as a result and how my life would be enriched. I have learned so much from each participant over the years, as well as from the staff and volunteers that devoted their time and energy to the program. My own perspective has been expanded, and I am a better person for having met the people I have because of Artsbridge, and for having listened to their stories and witnessing the challenges that so many of them have faced and are still facing.

In writing this dissertation I have gained insights that will be valuable in continuing the work of Artsbridge and I look forward to putting those insights into action. It is my hope that this study provides scholars of conflict and anybody working with communities in conflict, the opportunity for reflection into how it would be most constructive to engage members of society living in the midst of intractable conflict, as well as providing the opportunity to explore a new paradigm for engaging in that work.

Appendices

Appendix A: The Competing Narratives of a Conflict

Jewish-Israeli Narrative	Arab-Palestinian Narrative
Foundational Narratives – Ancient History	**Foundational Narratives – Ancient History**
One needs to turn to the Bible to understand the roots of the Israeli narrative, as well as to the exile of the Jewish people from Israel/Palestine and their subsequent suffering in the last 2,000 years (Scham, in Peters et al., 2012). Since the 1st and 2nd Centuries, when the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple and expelled the Jewish population, Jews have maintained the dream of returning to the land that they consider to be their home, both religiously and historically (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012). As Scham explains, "The Jewish people inherited their right to the land religiously, legally, and historically. Jews have always looked and prayed towards Zion (Jerusalem), have never relinquished their relationship to the land, and, despite expulsions, have always maintained a presence since ancient times" (2012, p. 33). It is important to note that Jews consider themselves to be not just a religion, but as a distinct people, or nation. This is in contrast to the belief that the Arabs living in Palestine never had their	Current day Palestinians are descendants of both the Canaanites and the Philistines (Tessler, 2009). The Former are believed to have lived in the land from around 3000 BCE. The latter, from which the name Palestine is derived, arrived around 1200 BCE and settled on the southern coastal plain in what is now Gaza. From then onward, Palestinians have lived continuously on the land (Scham, 2012). Palestinians see Judaism as similar to Christianity. It is a religion with no ties to any specific land. Throughout ancient history, the presence of the Israelites was short-lived in the land of Palestine, whereas the Palestinians are descendants of all of the prior inhabitants, including the Israelites. The Jewish return is simply a land-grab that is more in line with colonialism than it is based on history. Additionally, Jews who lived

own distinct nationality, but were considered to be the same as those Arabs living in the other surrounding Arab countries, with no particular tie to the Land of Israel.	anywhere in Palestine or anywhere in the Arab world were always well treated before the late 1800's (Scham, 2013).
The Birth of Zionism	**The Birth of Arab Nationalism**
Since the expulsion from the land of 'Eretz Israel' after the destruction of the second temple, Jews have primarily lived in the diaspora, with the majority settling in Europe and Eastern Europe. The total Jewish population was approximately 8 million, with some 24,000 living in what was then Palestine (Adwan et al., 2012).	The region of Palestine was conquered/colonized multiple times by various powers. From 636 to 1516 the control over Palestine, which included Jerusalem, alternated between Muslim leaders as well as Christian Crusaders. The Ottoman Empire took control over Palestine in 1516 and maintained that control for 400 years. While Christians, Druze and a small number of Jews lived in the region, it had a distinctly Muslim character (Kramer, 2008).
The Jewish people survived over 2,000 years of persecution. By the 19th century, and likely as a response to the limited freedoms accorded to Jews, and the increasing anti-Semitism throughout Europe, Zionism was born as a Jewish National movement. This virulent form of racism portrayed Jews as an inferior and a destructive force worthy of being killed (2012). While the roots of the Jewish-Israeli narrative may have a religious foundation, the Zionist movement was largely secular and tied to Jewish Nationalism, rather than religion (Scham, 2012), despite being based on the yearning for Zion and the "biblical promise that the Land of Israel was given to the people of Israel by the God of Israel" (Adwan et al., 2012, p 4). It was also based on the periods of history that Jews inhabited the land with political autonomy, and on the fact that there was a	The Palestinian national movement began to take shape in the early twentieth century largely in response to the Zionist movement and the aspirations of the Jewish people to establish a state (Ghanem, 2013).
	Both the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement were influenced by European nationalism, as well as by their respective religious traditions – Zionism by its Jewish roots (despite the fact that it was primarily a secular movement), and Palestinian nationalism by Islam (Maoz, 2013).

continuous presence of Jews in the land of Israel since biblical times (2012).

The Balfour Declaration to the Birth of Israel	The Balfour Declaration to Al-Nakhba
From 1882-1914, with the rise of violence against Jews throughout Europe, Jews began to leave Europe for Palestine. These early settlers were the original pioneers, who, rather than traveling to America came, instead, to "the land of the forefathers" to "suffer extreme hardship and deprivation while redeeming the land" (Scham, 2012, p. 38). It was during this period in time that the concept of the kibbutz (communal settlement) was created, and the Hebrew language was revived as a spoken language. The kibbutz movement established dozens of settlements across Palestine which formed a self-defense force against the constant attacks by the Arabs (2012). The kibbutzim (plural for kibbutz) were agricultural settlements, which served as a powerful response to the many years that Jews were not allowed to own and farm their own land throughout Europe. In 1917, the Balfour Declaration created a significant change in the Middle East, with the British holding a mandate over Palestine, after the end of Ottoman rule (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012). The Balfour Declaration declared the British government's view that favored the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The British made an investment in Palestine that allowed for the development of infrastructure and services such as transportation, court systems, education, and medical facilities (Adwan, 2012). The year 1921 saw riots break out as a group of immigrants organizing a May	Out of the alliance of Zionism and British imperialism, rose the Balfour Declaration which was signed on the 2nd of November, 1917, creating the pretext for the British Mandate of Palestine. This marked the beginning of many years of suffering and tragedy for the Palestinian people and went against their own claim to the land and self-determination (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012). Essentially, with the signing of the Balfour Declaration, Britain granted the Zionists land that was not theirs to give, and it is seen as an "unjust, illegitimate, and illegal promise made by Britain (2012, p. 11), essentially ignoring the rights of the Palestinians. In February of 1920 the British military governor of Palestine, General Bols, made a clear public statement that declared that "the mandate of Palestine was based on the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine", validating the fears of the Palestinians that Palestine would be transformed into a home for the Jews. This caused tensions to boil over into violence (2012) and led to several Arab uprisings during that time. It also led to the rise of Arab nationalism. Throughout the 1920's Jewish immigration to Palestine was significant, adding to the frustration

Day parade was attacked by Arabs. The unrest continued and spread to surrounding Jewish neighborhoods. During those riots, goods were looted and forty-seven Jews were killed.

Between the riots of 1921 and 1929 there was relative calm between the Arabs and Jews. During that time, immigration continued to grow and new communities were created. Between 1924 and 1929 approximately 70,000 immigrants arrived in Palestine. By 1929, there were 157,000 Jews, compared with 900,000 Arabs (Adwan, 2012). Meanwhile, as the Jewish population grew and continued to grow both economically and structurally, the Palestinian national movement focused on struggling against Zionism, Jewish immigration, and the purchase of Arab land by Jews.

On August 23rd, 1929, violence broke out during Friday prayers on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Arabs resented the new arrangements which allowed for Jews to pray at the Western Wall, just below the Temple Mount. Armed with sticks and knives Arabs began attacking Jewish passerby, thus beginning a string of disturbances and violence across the country. 133 Jews and 87 Arabs were killed in the ensuing violence, with significant numbers of wounded on both sides (2012).

Economic growth and the immigration of Jews continued in the 1930's. As Hitler came to power in Germany, many German Jews fled to Palestine. It was precisely at this time, as Jews were being persecuted in Germany, and Palestine was becoming a refuge for the Jewish people, that Britain restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine in an effort to appease the Arabs. This began a period of illegal immigration by Jews, mainly fleeing the Nazi threat (2012).

of the Palestinians, with the vast majority coming from Eastern European countries.

During the same time the British worked to pit Arab families against each other in an effort to weaken Palestinian unity and resistance to Zionism (Adwan et al., 2012). The British also created policies that weakened economic opportunities for Arab farmers by "flooding the market with imported wheat and oil just a few weeks before the wheat harvest season or olive picking, thus forcing the local products to be sold at the lowest prices" (2012). Without the ability to sell their products at a reasonable cost, farmers would incur significant debt, forcing them to sell their land to Zionist settlers. Under such harsh conditions, the Palestinian national movement continued to grow, leading to more coordinated uprisings against the Zionists.

Throughout the '30's, instability continued in Palestine. Jewish immigration intensified as Hitler was coming into power in Europe, leading to greater anger and fear amongst the Arab populations.

From 1936 through 1939, fueled by increased Jewish immigration, the threat of losing their aspirations for an independent state, the Jewish purchase of lands and job discrimination, Palestinians began a revolt that lasted three years (Adwan, 2012).

As World War II broke out, tensions continued. When the war ended, the British government passed the issue of Palestine to the

	United Nations, effectively announcing the end of the British Mandate (Terris, 2009).
The Birth of the State of Israel	**Al-Nakhba**
While Jews had suffered persecution throughout history, it was the Nazi Holocaust that proved to be a catalyst for what was to come. The end of World War II in 1947 also marked the death of 6,000,000 Jews, or 70 percent of the Jews of Europe at the hands of the Nazis. As the details of the Holocaust became known, the remaining 200,000 European Jews garnered sympathy from around the world.	On May 7th, 1947, the United Nations set up an international committee to draft a plan to deal with the question of Palestine, eventually settling on a plan to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jewish state would comprise 56 percent of the entire area of Palestine, rather than the 7 percent of the land that they owned at the time. From the Palestinian perspective it was hard to comprehend why they should pay for the suffering and torture of the Jews at the hand of the Nazis in Europe (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012).
The United Nations, in November 1947, endorsed a partition resolution that allowed for the creation of the Jewish State of Israel alongside a Palestinian state, both in the land that was then Palestine. As soon as the UN voted for partition the British began its withdrawal of all mandatory administrative personnel, signaling the end of the British mandate (Adwan, 2012).	On the 29th of November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly officially called for the partitioning of Palestine into two states, and on May 15, 1948, the day the British Government declared that it would leave Palestine, Israel declared its independence. As Israel celebrated the birth of its new state, the Arabs mourned Al-Nakhbah (The "catastrophe") - the day that commemorates the loss of the Palestinian dream of national fulfillment (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007), and the displacement from their homeland of over 750,000 Palestinians (Adwan & Bar-On, 2009). More than 160,000 Palestinians remained in what was now called Israel, facing an
Immediately after the plan was announced, Arabs began attacking Jews in several cities, refusing to accept the partition plan, thus beginning The War of Independence, as it came to be known, on November 30th, 1947.	
At that time, the Jewish population numbered approximately 650,000 and the Arab population numbered approximately 1.3 million.	
On May 15, 1948 the resolution was passed in the UN and Israel declared its independence (Terris, 2009). The next day, the surrounding Arab nations of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria attacked the newly formed state of Israel. While greatly outnumbered in manpower, newly	

formed Israel had a trained military (the Haganah), as well as a supply of weapons (2012).

The war ended in 1949 with Israel expanding its borders from the original UN resolution. The land that Israel controlled at the signing of the Armistice agreements became the official borders of Israel (2009).

uncertain future, discrimination, and what was to be a conflicted identity.

Arab armies entered Palestine as soon as Israel announced its independence, in the hopes that it would be able to halt the Zionists from expanding their area forcefully. Despite an armistice agreement, the Zionists continued their aggression and expanding their boundaries (Lutes, 2013). Attacks on the Palestinians continued. The fighting finally stopped in January, 1949, but before that, over 418 Arab villages were destroyed, obliterating any vestige of Palestinian life. Violence against the Palestinians was meant to spread terror and force the Arabs to leave their villages. The population of Arabs went from 1.4 million before Al-Nakbah to approximately 750,000 Arabs afterwards, creating approximately 800,000 Palestinian refugees, that continues to grow to this day (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012). Eventually, approximately 750,000 Palestinian refugees settled in other Arab countries, many of whom remained in refugee camps in inhuman conditions. They were not allowed to go back to their homes, they could not find work, and most of the Arab countries would not allow them to become citizens, leaving them nationless. The right of return for the Palestinian refugees and their offspring became a significant pre-requisite for any negotiated peace agreement.

The Six-Day War	The June War
Prior to 1967, Israel struggled with all that goes into nation building, including the settlement of more than 1.5 million immigrants from the 1950's through the 1960's. At the same time, it worked to establish its identity as a Jewish, democratic state. Additionally, there continued to be tension and conflict with her Arab neighbors, as well as the rest of the Arab world. Between 1965 and 1967 tensions increased, with Palestinians infiltrating Israel on several occasions, with the implicit support of Syria and Jordan, and Egypt showing signs of preparing its military in the Sinai, adjacent to Israel. (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012).	Low-level conflict continued beyond the Armistice agreement of 1949, with sporadic bouts of heightened violence. Towards the end of the 1950's a Palestinian national identity began to emerge, 1964 saw the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which became the de facto representative of the Palestinian people.
With the Mediterranean Sea to its west, Israel considered the increasingly aggressive moves of Syria to the north, Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the south to be an existential threat to its existence and, on the 5th of June, 1967, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria (Lutes, 2013) ending six days later, on June 10th, 1967, in a decisive victory for Israel. Israel's borders expanded by capturing the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem from Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The Six-Day War, as it came to be known, signified a major shift, which redefined the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Gaining control of the Golan Heights, provided the ability for Israel to control the main source of Israel's water supply. By controlling the Sinai, Israel was able to maintain a buffer zone between the Egyptian military and Israel. It also provided natural resources and tourist attractions. Controlling the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria (the biblical names for the region), provided a significant	On the 5th of June, 1967 Israel waged a preemptive strike on neighboring Arab countries in a war that Palestinians call the "Aggression of June the Fifth". Palestinians see this war as an attempt to control water resources, as well as a way to control more land (2012). The June War, which lasted 6 days, was a major turning point. Israel's goal of gaining control and occupying the entire West Bank from Jordan, as well as taking control of the part of Jerusalem that had been in Jordan's control was complete. Israel also gained control of the Golan Heights from Syria and the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza from Egypt. On June 28th, 1967, Israel annexed Jerusalem, thereby putting Arab Jerusalem, along with its Arab residents, under Israeli governance. This action was considered illegal by the rest of the world, and against international law. The war and subsequent military occupation of Israeli military conquered territories added 430,000 square kilometers to Israeli territory as well as placing an additional 600,000 Arab-

defensive barrier between Israel and Jordan, widening Israel's narrowest point significantly, from approximately 9 miles wide (14.5 km) to over 34 miles wide (54 km) (https://www.britannica.com/place/Israel; Adwan & Bar-On, 2012; Lutes, 2013). Gaining control of the Old City and West Bank (Judea and Samaria) fulfilled an age-old dream of the Jewish people, and gave them access to many of the holy sites that were off limits to them when they were in the hands of Jordan. From the Six-Day War on, land captured during that war became the subject of any negotiation between Israel and its enemies, with some Israelis believing that the land should never be relinquished, and others who felt that the land should be used as a bargaining tool, and that Israel should not occupy another's land (Adwan & Bar-On, 2012).	Palestinians under Israeli military control (Caplan, 2010). To this day, Palestinians living in the Occupied territories of the Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza remain a people with no national citizenship, and do not hold a passport to any country.
The 70's and 80's	**The 70's and 80's**
The 70's and 80's saw major shifts in relation to Israel and the Arab countries. Israel began building settlements in the land captured in the Six-Day War, increasing the frustration and rage in the Palestinian communities. Despite the rise of the PLO and the terrorist activities perpetrated by them as well as other multiple Palestinian splinter groups, Israel continued to settle the lands won in the six-day war. With this settlement rose a new type of Zionism. Having begun as a secular movement, many of the settlers in the occupied territories were religious, claiming that theirs's was a god given right to settle the land. They became known as religious Zionists. The 1970's saw the Yom Kippur War in 1973, with Egypt conducting a surprise attack on Israel on the holiest day of the	After the war in 1967, Israel began confiscating Palestinian lands, limiting the amount of farmland accessible to the Palestinians, and significantly limiting economic possibilities for Palestinians living in Occupied lands. During this time, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) which was founded in 1964, increased its influence and became the primary representative of both Palestinian refugees and Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories with Yasser Arafat as its leader. Their aim was the elimination of Zionism in Palestine by way of armed struggle as this was considered

year for Jews. The beginning of the war saw significant gains by the Egyptian and Syrian armies, but within several days, Israel was able to launch its counterattack and regain control. While Israel is considered to have won the war, it came at a great cost in lives.

In 1977, Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem - the first Arab leader to visit Israel since its founding. Shortly thereafter, at the invitation of then US president Jimmy Carter, Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin came to Camp David and reached an agreement that provided the framework for peace between Egypt and Israel.

to be the only means of regaining Palestine for its original Palestinian inhabitants.

On the 28th of September 1970 Anwar Sadat succeeded Jamal Abdul Nasser as president of Egypt, after the former's death. On the 6th of October 1973, Sadat ordered the mobilization of the Egyptian and Syrian armies in a coordinated attacked against Israel along both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. This attack came as a complete surprise to Israel and scored significant victories in the beginning of the fighting (Terris, 2009). Within several days, Israel managed to contain the threat and launch successful counter-attacks. Israel received assistance from the United States in the form of military equipment which helped Israel to overcome both the Syrian and Egyptian armies by October 24th (2009).

Despite the loss, Palestinians saw, for the first time, vulnerability in the Israeli security and military apparatus (Adwan et al., 2012). It led to the emergence of the Palestinian initiative which called for the establishment of a Palestinian state on any land that is either liberated from Israel or from which Israel withdraws.

The First Intifada	The First Intifada
In 1987 The first Palestinian Intifada (uprising) broke out, stemming from increased settlements in the occupied territories and continued frustration with the leadership of Palestinian Yasser Arafat. The intifada led to grassroots, Palestinian protests and continued violence against Israel. It also led to the founding of Hamas, with its Charter being the destruction of Israel. Hamas was responsible for many terrorist attacks, which included suicide bombings against the Israeli military as well as civilians.	Conditions for Palestinians continued to deteriorate in the occupied territories, leading to the first intifada ('uprising' in Arabic) which began on December 9, 1987. Forty years of having their rights denied, twenty years of harsh military occupation which were aimed to humiliate them and deny their identity were the foundation of the intifada. All services in the occupied territories were administered by the Israeli military, therefore, despite having to pay full taxes, services worsened and the infrastructure deteriorated (2012).
	Violence against Palestinians by the Israeli military escalated, as did Palestinian resentment and resistance. After the Israeli military fired live ammunition at a large demonstration and funeral on December 8, 1987, the intifada erupted spontaneously. There was no coordination with the PLO and no preset plans. Palestinians considered the intifada a war of attrition, and the only way to end Israeli occupation and establish their independent nation. Over the course of the intifada, from 1987 – 1992, approximately 2,000 Palestinians were killed, 110,000 imprisoned, and over 500 homes were demolished. While the intifada was nonviolent, Israel responded harshly and cruelly. On the 15th of November, 1988 the PLO declared Palestinian independence with

	Jerusalem as their capital.
	The Gulf War in 1991 brought recognition to the Palestinian cause internationally, and the end of the Gulf war diminished the intifada in the midst of strong Israeli suppression.
Hope Rising, Hope Shattered	**The Oslo Process: 1993 – 2000**
One of the most hopeful signs of peace came in 1993 with the Oslo Accords – the agreement between Israel and the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization). Led by President Clinton, with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Yasser Arafat of the PLO, the Accords led to the creation of a framework for negotiations that was meant to create, finally, a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Accords were met with great hope on the part of both Palestinians and Israel. In 1995 the Oslo II Accord was a continued process that extended the framework from the first Oslo Accord. Israelis held great hope for the Oslo Accord and an end to the conflict. Led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli government decided to stop building new settlements in the West Bank, and agreed that it would include a withdrawal in any future agreement (Adwan et al., 2012). However, in July of 1992, Arab foreign ministers, convening in Damascus in order to coordinate their position before the latest round of talks, laid down conditions for any peace agreement that were harsh and unreasonable, without showing any willingness to negotiate. At the same time, the Islamic extremist groups of Hamas and Islamic Jihad saw the Oslo Accords as a threat, opposing any peace with Israel. Hamas increased its terror activities, which led to Rabin adopting	Four years of unrest during the intifada, as well as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August of 1990, provided the stimulus for a diplomatic breakthrough. In September 1993, the Declaration of Principles were signed by the PLO and Israel, bring a sense of hope that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict might soon be close to resolution. The Declaration, which was known as the Oslo Accord after the location of the secret talks held in Norway, began a peace process that lasted seven years, and that was committed to reaching agreement (Terris, 2009). Palestinians showed a readiness to accept temporary measures that would lead to the establishment of their independent state. In May 1994 an agreement was signed leading to the first phase of the process. The agreement led to the creation of The Palestinian Authority with Yasser Arafat as its head, as well as self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip. The next agreement, called the Taba Agreement was signed on September 28th, 1995. This

extreme measures to quell the attacks and save the peace process. On September 10, 1992, sponsored by American President Clinton, the signing ceremony was held. Unfortunately, what began as a symbol of hope for peace ended with tragedy. While both sides expressed great hope for an end to the decades long conflict, others who were against the prospect of peace worked to sabotage the process.

On the 4th of November, 1995, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir – a representative of the Israeli faction strongly opposed to the peace plan which would have included withdrawing from the West Bank. This created an existential crisis for Israel, which could never have imagined that one of its leaders would be assassinated by one of its own. For many, it felt like the prospects for peace had collapsed.

After the assassination of Rabin, Israel's government started leaning more towards the right. Under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu, settlement building increased and elements of the Oslo Accords were left unfulfilled.

In the ensuing years, several more attempts at peace were made, while settlements continued to expand and Palestinian terrorism and aggression continued against the Israeli military and civilians. Finally, on September 28, 2000, more violence erupted which came to be known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. The riots occurred around the same time that the chair of the conservative Likud party, visited the Jewish holy site of the Temple Mount – also known as Haram al-Sharif, which is considered a holy site by Muslims. The violence continued despite several more attempts at arriving at peace, eventually leading to the building of a barrier between Israel proper and the

agreement called for the West Bank to be divided into three areas, excluding Jerusalem. Area A, which included six major cities, would come under civil and security control of the Palestinian Authority, and accounted for only 3 percent of the total area of the West Bank. Area B included mostly Palestinian rural areas which were to be considered a buffer zone. The PA would handle civil administration, but it would remain under Israeli military control. Area B included approximately 20 to 25 percent of the total area of the West Bank. Area C, which included border areas, settlements and Israeli military security areas would remain under full Israeli control. This agreement had the effect of splitting up the West Bank in a way that made it impossible for Palestinians to move in or out of the West Bank and Gaza cities. Frequent closures were imposed over major Palestinian cities without warning and for varying lengths of time. During those closures Israel would enter the PA areas in order to carry out arrests and to pursue "wanted" Palestinians.

The interim agreement was supposed to last no more than five years and end in a final settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338. Unfortunately, "Israel exploited the accords to create new frightening realities on the

West Bank, and the establishment of checkpoints throughout the West Bank in order to weed out terrorists and decrease violence.

To this day, the Israelis and Palestinians have not achieved peace despite many efforts and the people of both nations feel a sense of increased hopelessness – and feeling further apart than ever.

ground. It confiscated large areas of Palestinian land to expand existing settlements and to build new ones at the expense of the Palestinians' right to the land, water, and air (Adwan et al., 2012).

Palestinians had hoped that the Oslo agreement would lead to an end to the Israeli occupation which would mean better lives and greater freedom, and after five years, to Palestinian statehood. With increased Israeli settlement building on Palestinian land, and with none of their hopes materializing, Palestinians were losing hope. After seven years of the peace process, it was becoming clear that Israel would not hold up its end of the agreements.

In September 28th, 2000, The Al-Aqsa Intifada erupted. As Adwan et al. write, "It became clear that the dream of establishing a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital had become impossible" (2012, p. 327). Israel's oppressive policies in the West Bank had continued, including the continued building of settlements and the ongoing incursions into Palestinian territories by Israeli soldiers. Israeli utilized all its forces against unarmed Palestinian civilians in order to quell the violence. This resulted in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injured Palestinians, including children, women, and the

	elderly. This second Intifada unified the Palestinians living within Israel, who organized non-violent demonstrations in an attempt to show their solidarity with their Palestinian brethren. The Israeli police used extreme violence to quell the protests within Israel, resulting in the death of thirteen young innocent people. After the second Intifada, and in response to several terrorist attacks, Israel began to build a wall separating the West Bank from Jerusalem and the rest of Israel. The wall has significantly disrupted the lives of Palestinians who made their living in Jerusalem, went to school there, or had family in Israel. It has become a symbol of the oppression of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people, and contributes to the sense of hopelessness and isolation that so many Palestinians feel today.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Demographics
1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Town in which you lived when you participated in Artsbridge?
4. Where do you live now?
5. What year did you participate?
6. What age were you when you participated in Artsbridge?
7. What are you doing at this point in time?
8. What was your initial reason for wanting to participate in Artsbridge?
9.

Personal Reflections
10. As you think back on your Artsbridge experience, what stands out for you the most?
11. What are the main changes you have noticed about the way you think about *the conflict* after Artsbridge? For example, think about changes in the way you think about your side, the other side, the use of violence, the possibilities of peace, etc.
12. What are the main changes you have noticed about yourself after participating in Artsbridge that are *not related to the conflict*? For example, think about the way you have conversations with people, your abilities as an artist, your abilities as a leader, etc.
13. What are some specific things you have learned from your experience at Artsbridge? For example, think about things you have learned about yourself, your country, the other country, the conflict, art, etc.
14. Can you recall ideas that shifted for you because of your experience at Artsbridge?
15. Were there ideas that have remained with you today? Can you explain them?
16. How do they impact your life/decisions now?

While viewing the artwork
17. What are your thoughts as you witness the art you created at Artsbridge?
18. Can you discuss your experience with the art component of the program?
19. As you reflect on your art project, how do you remember the experience of working with your partner(s)?
20. What about the topic/subject of your art piece. Does it still resonate with you? Would you do something different if you created it today? What would be different?
21. What are the ideas that stand out for you?
22. Have any of those ideas changed/evolved over time?

Dialogue

23. Can you discuss your experience with the dialogues?
24. What did you find most useful?
25. As you reflect back, what are your thoughts about the dialogue component at Artsbridge?
26. How would you describe the relationship between the dialogue and the art components?

General
21. Do you think your life is at all different today because you participated in Artsbridge?
22. Is there anything else you would like to say or share before we complete our conversation?
23. Are you still in touch with anybody from your Artsbridge group?
24. If yes, how do you stay in contact with them? In person? Phone? Social media?

Appendix C: Number of Responses to Themes & Subthemes

Theme	# of Respondents	# of Responses
Relational Growth	**31**	**342**
Connecting Through Art	15	39
Friendship	16	32
Mutual Empathy	22	59
Mutual Empowerment	14	28
Relational Confidence	21	69
More Expansive Awareness	26	102
Trust & Vulnerability	7	13
Complexity	**23**	**76**
Appreciation of Diversity	6	11
Appreciation of Multiple Narratives	18	34
Better Awareness of Complexity	10	13
Hold Conflicting Ideas	11	18
Personal Growth	**25**	**103**
Confidence	12	25
Emotional	5	6
Identity	10	18
Knowledge	13	18
More Mature	13	16
More Reflexive	10	11
Patience	8	9
Constructive Communication	**28**	**144**
Communication Skills	16	35
Deeper Conversations	6	7
Felt Heard	3	4
Listening	20	61
Not Debate	5	8
Personal Stories	17	29
Creativity & Imagination	**27**	**118**
Art as Expression	20	46
Curiosity	17	39
Realistic Hope	9	24
Therapeutic	7	9
Sustainability	**26**	**96**
Impacted Career Choice	8	10
More Involved in Community	9	16
Part of My Identity	6	6
Realized Later	6	10
Stays With Me	25	54

This table represents a listing of the themes and subthemes. Alongside each theme, the total number of respondents for that theme are listed in column B, and column C lists the aggregate number of responses for that theme (adding up all of the subthemes). Each subtheme lists the number of respondents in column B, and column C lists the number of individual responses for that subtheme.

Appendix D: Additional Artwork and Narratives

The following pages show additional artwork created by Artsbridge students from 2008 through 2019.

Steps

Our mural is about the Israelis and Palestinians breaking through the wall that separates them. There is a big hole in the wall, through which we can see a road that symbolizes a start for a new way to a better life, different from what we experience now in our everyday lives.

In the picture there are eight people - four Palestinians and four Israelis, who are working together to tear the wall down. Above the wall there is a dove that is holding an olive branch in her mouth. This dove symbolizes peace between the two nations. At the beginning we brain stormed to get ideas for our piece. We came up with three main ideas and then we combined them into the big drawing on the wall. After we decided on our idea we sketched the main picture and then did research on the Internet for more specific details. We then went out and started to draw the picture on the billboard. When we finished drawing we painted the background and afterwards painted the details. At the beginning we wanted to paint the people in colors but we decided to make them all black but still different from each other. This is meant to symbolize that everyone is similar whether they are Israeli or Palestinian, yet each one still has his own identity and his own thoughts.

Working together was amazing. We had fun doing this piece as a team, and we also had plenty of time to talk and laugh together during the work.

Mural Painted by students in 2008. Acrylic on board 4' x 8'

The Hand of Social Change

Our art piece was inspired by the political slogan "Power to the People" and the film "V for Vendetta." They both speak about social change and how people need to cooperate to make it happen.

Through our art piece, we use the image of a hand to encourage and symbolize social change. In the beginning, we made a small cylinder to hang the small hands from, but later changed the frame to a big hand. With this change, we wanted to enforce the idea of the hand a primary symbol of our work.

Cooperation with each other was not difficult because we learned how to compromise throughout the process, and agreed on an idea that we were both satisfied with. In the end, we hung all the small hands on the big hand in order to represent all kinds of people coming together to make a positive change in the world.

The Dreamer
Collaborative Painting

We created a mural that addressed the conflict as well as the dream of peace. We call the girl in the middle "the dreamer." She lives on one side of "the wall" which is represented by the gray areas with the bombs bursting behind and to the right is her dream of a peaceful time.

A tree with an eye symbolizes what "the tree sees everyday, but is unable to speak of." The tree is beginning to reach over to the other side of the wall, and seems to be forming a protective canopy over the dreaming girl.

Top Image: Sculpture created by students in 2008. Wire, thread, and wood. 24" x 10"x 10".
Bottom Image: Mural painted by entire 2009 group. Acrylic on canvas. 4' x 8'.

Mother Earth

Mother Earth appears in many mythologies in different ways.

Mother Earth embodies a fertile goddess, fertile earth, and is known as the mother of all deities.

"Birds and butterflies, rivers and mountains she creates, she gives and she takes."

Mother Earth, within temptation

Our goal for this project was to reveal the secret of life. We believe that religion and everything separating people were not created from nature.

Nature is within us, we were made by nature, our roots are in nature; and even at the end we return to the same point we started, which is nature. From this point of view we can understand that we are all made from the same material.

Nature is something that unites and combines different people together.

And we think that Mother Earth embodies nature, and represents all kinds of people around the world.

We Can Do That

The first idea for our project was to go outside and draw the beautiful nature. When we came inside and saw all the many different ideas, we decided, instead, to create a piece of work with more power in its meaning. So, we discussed to make two dolls because this is something one of us enjoyed doing, and the other agreed and wanted to make these dolls into an Israeli and Palestinian. We created one Palestinian woman and one Israeli man who are standing together. They are both wearing traditional clothes. They are not thinking about war - they are thinking about peace. Originally we thought of having a dove in the project to symbolize peace, but then we realized we didn't need this. To see the Israeli man and the Palestinian woman standing together as a picture which says it all.

We made the people out of clay, and neither of us had ever used clay before. We both enjoyed using this new material. At first, we wanted to make real clothes out of fabric but we didn't have that much time. Instead, we used pottery tools to make the clothes by carving patterns into the clay. We are happy that we made the clothes this way as we think they look beautiful.

We enjoyed working together. We were able to learn about each other's lives as we worked together and this was fantastic. We had never worked with an Israeli or Palestinian before so this was a good and a different experience for us. It was nice to work with people we have never had the chance to work with before.

Top Image: Installation piece created by students in 2008. Leaves, mesh, glue, mannequin

Bottom Image: Sculptures created by students in 2009. Clay

Once...

Our project deals with different aspects of memory, which is a subject that relates to all people. Everyone has memories: good ones, bad ones and childhood memories. When we hear another person talk about their own personal experiences, thoughts may begin to fill our heads with memories of the same things or feelings. Sometimes it can be very difficult to let go of the memories that control our minds, and these thoughts begin to effect our everyday life.

Memories will always remain deep inside of us, and although they may never naturally fade away they may be ignored. The portraits of the young girl fading away represent the memories that we cover up through time. The strings represent the will to ignore and trap those memories in order to prevent us from letting them surface in our thoughts. Just like trapped memories cause a person to become closed and tired, the girl's eyes get tired and begin to close along the path. The dress represents the trapped soul of the person whose memories prevent him from living and moving forward. The nails represent the memories that control and paralyze the person. The hanger is the person's body that wants to move. We used the hanger because when we see a hanger we naturally think of movement. The dripping wax from the candles symbolizes the good memories that we have. The pieces of broken glass on the shelf are the bad memories that hurt inside of us. When the "good memories" combine with the "bad memories", it "fills the empty spaces." This creates a united whole that symbolizes the entire person. A person cannot be complete without these two kinds of memories.

In the beginning of the process we knew we were going to work together when our eyes met. We thought about what kind of art we were going to use for our project, and we realized that we had the same ideas. We then began to figure out what our project would be about. The subject came to us very naturally, and we began working right away. The process was very interesting and it was exciting to see how many similar thoughts and ideas we share. We don't think politics ever came up in our process and we found a way to communicate without paying attention to our differences. We want to be seen as humans, and right now, our society is losing its sense of humanity. We have hope, and we want to be able to live in peace together.

Installation piece created by students in 2008. Mixed media.

Look At You

The idea behind our project is that everyone wears a mask and doesn't totally tell the truth. We were interested in why people choose to wear masks. The mask can also be seen as a type of "wall." It can protect who we really are inside from the outside world and others.

We see the reflection of our masks in the mirrors and this is how we see each other. However, the mirrors in our project are at different angles and can actually reflect what is behind the mask. This allows another person in the room to see past the mask and to view the inner person.

We both wanted to work with the idea of masks and how they cover up our true selves. At times during our work and journey we felt that we wore our own masks. As we continued to work together the masks were gradually lowered until our project reflected our combined truths.

The Reflecting Wall

We had a very difficult time in finding a mutual idea. We had an imaginary wall between us so that we couldn't work together at first. We changed our ideas many times, but in the end we found an idea that we both agreed upon. We worked together and this piece is what we got!

The wall symbolizes separation. At first we were going to put whole pieces of mirror on the wall to explore the idea that both sides of the conflict are focused on their own reflections and perceptions. Then we thought we could break the mirrors to symbolize many individual reflections and perceptions of the conflict.

The ladders show that there is a possibility of both sides coming together by climbing the wall that now separates them.

The broken piece of the wall symbolizes the part of the wall that has already started to fall because of the work of the people on both sides and the fact that some people are beginning to be interested in both sides of the wall, and not just their own.

Top Image: Sculpture created by students in 2009. Plaster, wood mirror acrylic paint. 4′ x 3′ x 2′.

Bottom Image: Sculpture created by students in 2009. Wood and Acrylic paint. 24″ x 20″ x 30″.

Equidistant Images

Our original idea was to create a part of the separation wall and then to cut it into puzzle pieces. We feel that the idea of a puzzle represents the complicated issues that arise when trying to "piece together" a solution that satisfies the Israeli and Palestinian sides. We were inspired by the actual graffiti that is on the separation wall where we live.

Working together was complicated at times. The process began smoothly, but as we went deeper into the creative process we started to experience some breaks in communication. This made it challenging to work together sometimes. However, in the end we completed the project despite our struggles. The finished product represents our struggles while thinking about our own experiences, as well as our creative solution and collaborative work.

Adaptation of Guernica

First we decided to choose the famous artist Picasso, and his painting "Guernica." We wanted to depict the conflict that Picasso depicted in a contemporary light and from our perspective. It's important to remind people about what's going on because everyone knows that we want peace, but they don't always seem to understand why we need it now!

It was amazing to work together on this mural. It was nice to share our thoughts and to listen to each other. Hearing each other's voices can change everything in the process and it did with us. As we worked together we kept adding new ideas and thoughts.
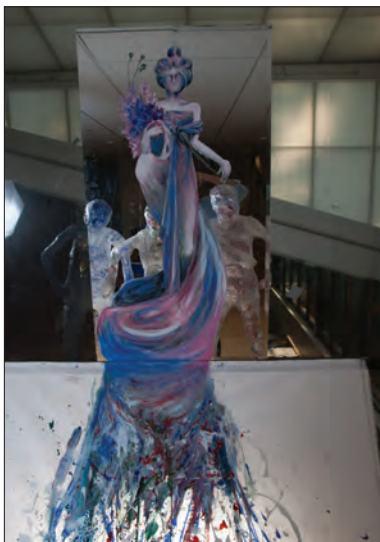
We think that the finished piece is wonderful because we can see two sides and two different ways of working, that came together beautifully.

Top Image: Installation created by 3 students in 2009. Homosote and spray paint. 4' x 8'.
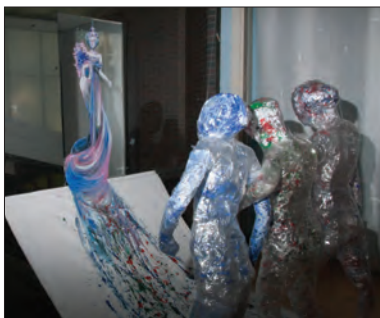Bottom Image: Mural created by 2 students in 2009. 4' x 9'.

Listen -- Get Connected

 In our opinion, music is not only our common ground, but also a powerful, broad subject. Music is expressed in each person differently, but has the same goals—to entertain and to bring people together. We used music as a tool to present cultures and ways of thinking.

 Our final project involved drawing two symbols and connecting them with music and art. On the left is Hanthala. He represents the conflict from the Palestinian point of view. He is a famous Palestinian symbol, and it is said that he won't turn around until war is over and freedom for the Palestinians is accomplished. On the right is Zaban, representing the Israeli people. He represents the Israeli worker who contributed his labor to building Israel.

 Working together was interesting. First, you want to bring your own idea to the project. Most of the time you have an idea of what the first piece will look like—but so do your partners. At this point, you need to open up your mind and be curious about what the others want, or you won't enjoy working in a group at all. So it is a challenge, but also a gift to yourself, to learn to work in a group. We enjoyed it very much, even (and maybe especially) when we weren't fully agreeing on something.

Hopeful Home

 We chose to make a house out of a box. The house is a home for our three cultures. It is influenced by our religions as well as our old surroundings back home and our new surroundings here like Boston College and New Hampshire. The concept behind our project was working together to build a home, a place where there is both peace and conflict because all families fight, but they still live together and get through the disagreement.

 Working together on the project was very difficult. It was hard to make even the smallest decisions like which color to use for the walls. We all had to compromise as we worked, and it was interesting to look back on what we have gone through together. Writing our arguments on the roof of the house was a great way for us to learn and create something from our disagreements. We learned more about each other through the arguments.

Top Image: Installation created by team in 2010. 30" x 30" x 30". Cardboard and Acrylic paint.

Bottom Image: Sculpture created by team in 2010. 40"H x 36" x 36". Carboard, paint and mixed media.

Life and Death

We chose to simulate the conflict we experience between Arabs and Israelis. We chose our box to be open in one direction, so that we could show people what goes on behind the walls of conflict, and what our real life looks like.

Our project is about giving and getting in return. On the outside of our box, we depicted trees. Trees give oxygen and shade, but in order to give, they need to get something in return, or they die. The inside of the box contains elements of our experiences and our personal lives. We wanted to make it easier for people to see behind the surface.

At first it was hard for each of us to work with the others who had different opinions and points of view. Initially we felt uncomfortable, but soon we were able to get closer and better understand each other. We learned from each other, we got many things, and we gave in return. We're really happy with how our team turned out.

Hanging sculpture created by team of students in 2010. 30" x 30" x 30". Carboard, paper, and acrylic paint.

Reflection

As a group, we wanted to create a piece that showed three bodies coming together as one. Each of us put our own thoughts into the project. We each came up with one idea and came together to tie them into something whole. We knew that we wanted to incorporate some sort of 3D sculpture with painting and drawing. At first, we tried using paper mache as our main material. We soon found out that it would take a lot of time if we used paper mache, and so we decided that it wasn't the best use of our time. We were able to experiment with a very modern art medium using clear packing tape to build 3D sculptures. Each of us helped one another to wrap our own bodies in three layers of tape from head to toe and then to carefully cut it off and retape it together! Each of us decorated one taped body in a way that represents our own individual cultures and nationalities in any way that we chose.

Although Amal became frustrated with having to stand in the same position for a long time while Hilla and Mary Rose taped her up, she found the process to be very humorous and had lots of fun experimenting with a material she had never used before. She also really enjoyed decorating her body -- through this, she was really able to express herself. Mary Rose spent a lot of time ensuring that the bodies were all able to stand in the desired positions on their own, which was at times extremely frustrating, although very rewarding in the end. Hilla was really pleased to be able to paint the woman on the mirror. It was a challenge to combine the different colors of each nationality's flag into one painting, but she truly enjoyed figuring it out.

We feel like we were fully able to accomplish everything that we wanted to achieve. Each of the bodies uses their colors as a way to separate themselves from each other, but in the mirror, all of the colors mix together to become one and become peaceful with each other. This shows the commonalities between cultures, and, more specifically, the desires, hopes, and values that all women share throughout the world.
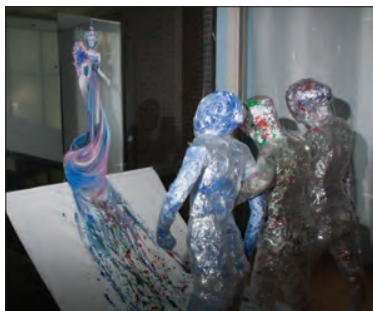

Installation created by team in 2012. Lifesize. Mirror, plastic wrap and acrylic paint.

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Installation created by team of students in 2012. Papier mâché, plaster, furniture, acrylic paint.

Solidarity

This art project represents the combination of good and bad feelings and behaviors that humans experience in life. We decided to represent them in relation to the universe, because this situation is universal, and like our planet earth, feelings and behaviors are unsettled.

At first, we wanted to use words to represent all of the negative things that humans deal with every day, but then we realized that using words limited our thinking on specific issues and topics. We decided instead to use black tissue paper to represent the negative ideas, so that everyone who looks at the piece can think about what it means to them personally.

We agreed that splatter paint was the best method for painting on the canvas. As we splattered closer to the edge, the colors became darker in order to represent our negative and bad habits. We chose to use these colors because they're all natural colors that are a part of earth and life itself. The center of the painting represents, in a way, the "clean" world, or the purity of the world and in our lives.

The final product turned out to be more significant than we imagined. Indeed, at the beginning we planned to use words that describe negative feelings and behaviors. In the end, our work became more abstract and organic. This result seems to relate directly to how our team approaches life. We realized that we had to let go of some of our strong ideas in order to create a piece that allows us to have all our voices to be heard. We didn't agree all the time and it was often hard to find something that we all love. But in the end, looking back, we had an amazing time.
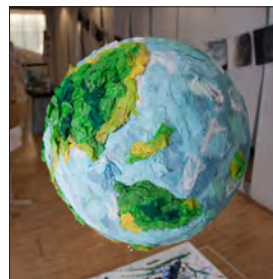
Installation created by team of students in 2012. Papier mâché, canvas, tissue paper, acrylic paint.

War Games

Our film is about a surreal game of chess played between a Jewish man and an Arab man. In our game, instead of using pawns, the players use toy soldiers to represent those fighting in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When a soldier is taken away, similar to the way a pawn is taken in a chess game, the piece is thrown off the board and replaced by another soldier. This represents how the cycle can go on infinitely. In our game, we still used regular chess pieces for the king, queen, rooks, knights and bishops. These pieces are not involved in the game and are protected by the toy soldier, symbolizing the idea that those who are higher up and more significant in the government are somewhat shielded from the difficulties of the conflict.

Our group worked extremely well together, and each member of our group had unique skills that helped turn our idea into a finished product. We enjoyed working together and it was thrilling for all of us to learn about filmmaking.consuming it was to make each feather as detailed as it was. We were all very chill people...most of the time!

Magical World

Our film tells the story of a magical world where everything is possible and only good things happen. Through the course of the film, this illusion of a perfect world is shattered. The message we wanted to portray is that there is no such thing as a perfect world, nor is there such a thing as a totally chaotic world. We live in a world which features good and evil together. In order to achieve balance it is up to us to create our own magic.

Our group had many ups and downs. We faced some significant difficulties in our efforts to combine our ideas and to communicate with each other. Eventually we began to listen to each other and really respect each other's ideas. We could then focus on our project and on reaching our common goal. The process was challenging, but by working through it we learned about each other and how to put aside personal differences.
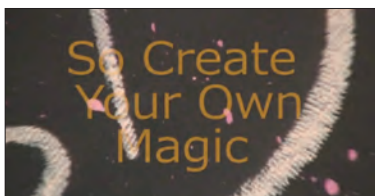
Top image: Still frame of film and narrative created by students in 2012.
Bottom image: Still frame of film and narrative created by students in 2012.

Choices

We feel like anyone who sees this piece should be able to connect with it. In beginning to think of a theme for the artwork, we looked towards the Summer Program's suggestion of "Young voices, new choices" and worked with it. Together we found materials which we felt would create a powerful image that could convey choice.

We thought of small circles made of nails within a big circle of wood. The small circles would signify the choices we made and the larger wooden circle would show the collective whole. We chose wood specifically because it seemed light, strong, and natural. We hammered in each of the nails individually which took a great deal of effort and symbolized the hard work needed to make choices.

Next, we made casts of our faces and added one of a boy so there would be three different heads. We chose to splash each with different colors because if we chose one color of skin, or eyes, it would be limited. The different colors represent different people and ideas. We wanted it to represent anyone and everyone. We believe we are all making our choices and everyone is aiming for a goal.

The strings themselves which tie the heads and nails together signify the many things that go into our choices, so they are vibrant and colorful. We thought it was important to include black string too as this brings up the point that not all choices are easy. The final thing we added was glow-in-the-dark paint. This was to show how the environment affects the choices we make. In this piece, when you turn off the light, the choices change and the glow and the dark paint shows.

Creating this work was hard work and fun. The casting of our heads was an important moment for us since it felt so different. We had to really feel safe and trust each other throughout this process. We thought we might have disagreements as we worked together, but it didn't happen. We came up with the idea together and we are very open-minded so we ran ideas by each other. We were very willing to try each other's ideas. For these reasons, we are really glad we got to create this piece together. We have a lot in common and feel it has a strong message that we're all able to make choices and get to our goals – whether in the right way or the wrong way - we are constantly making choices.

Installation created by pair of students in 2013. Wood, nails, plaster, thread, paint.
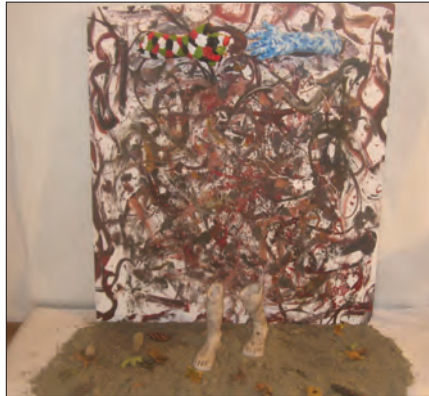
Complexity

Part 1 of our final piece is a painted canvas which symbolizes the conflict. We used random strokes and splatters to show how messy and complex we feel it is. Emerging from the canvas is part 2, the dirt, hands, and feet which is to show a solution. We wanted the legs to be standing firmly on the ground to show power. The two hands coming out of the canvas are made from our own and painted in the color of our flags. This symbolizes hope that we together can come out of this mess.

Creating this work was not easy and certainly a process. We originally wanted a sculpture of a prehistoric man which would stand for thinking, however we soon decided this was not as related to the conflict as we wanted. So, we kept the legs and that is when we considered the power element.

Working together to create this art piece was very interesting as we both came from different places and religions. Since our work was so symbolic, we needed to have a lot of discussions about the conflict and the messages we wished to share. Through this, the two of us were able to better understand the suffering of both sides and why this was. Throughout this experience we thought about many big questions and it was a great opportunity to discuss them with someone so different.

Installation created by pair of students in 2013. Canvas, plaster, dirt, paint.

Teamwork

When we started brainstorming for our piece, we had a totally different idea from the one we ended up creating. The idea was there but we weren't united in it yet. After many days of going back and forth, we were given the suggestion to try and actually get to know each other, rather than think about it as a project. So we started talking about the conflict and discovered that we both think individually and not necessarily how society wants us to and we had that in common.

In this sculpture there are four arm-like structures rising from a wood base. The colors start out dark and grow brighter/lighter as we go up. This, for us, signified what we have in common; that we are individual and prefer to think by ourselves and not what our community or society expects us to think. The whole idea of the net dome that covers the piece is to represent the oppressions/thoughts society presses upon us. The piece has abstract hands reaching out to the top where there is no oppression, where there is freedom.

We want viewers of our work to take the idea of the sculpture to their world so it will allow them to think about their experiences with their own societies.

When we met, we weren't really friends and probably wouldn't have gotten to know each other, but we're now very glad we got to be together. The process of working on this brought a lot of new experiences and challenges. We learned to compromise, to not give up, and to do the best we could to bring ourselves to a common goal. Thanks to teamwork, we made things we couldn't have made on our own. We believe that if more people practiced these skills throughout their daily lives, then perhaps our worlds could be in a much better place.

Installation created by pair of students in 2013. Papier mâché, wood, cellophane.

Back and Forth

We decided to make a film with music but no words. We wanted the music to speak the message. Our idea was to make the film symbolic rather than straightforward, but through the symbols, convey the situation as it is. We didn't want a happy ending. The conflict is not over. We wanted to leave it open and make it more realistic. We wanted to use music that would reflect the events and emotions of the scenes.

We decided to portray the events based on the timeline of the conflict. It begins with the British occupation, when people were living together, and proceeds to an event symbolizing the Nakba. It then evolves into the tug of war that represents the years of conflict. There is loss on both sides, resulting in only an Israeli and Palestinian remaining, still pulling on the rope. People had all these hopes - peace or having their country back, etc. – now they're frustrated. When will it stop, indeed?

Our hope is that this piece will be very thought-provoking. We want viewers to keep thinking about what they saw and to notice that this is still going on. It's not over and it's definitely not a dream. That's why we kept the ending open - to keep people thinking about it.

Initially, we weren't sure we wanted to use filmmaking as our medium. We went into the collaboration not very optimistic or committed, but in the end, we found that we really came to care about our project. We felt strongly about first creating the whole concept and only then beginning to film. We didn't want to be creating it while filming it. We weren't sure, however, how we wanted to end it. We just knew that we wanted the ending to make people think.

Certain aspects of the work were very difficult. For example, viewing the footage of difficult scenes from the news when we were deciding what clips to include. We had different reactions to this footage and, at first, were surprised by, and didn't fully understand, each other's reactions. But then it raised a bigger question: What is more worrisome - someone in the conflict who can't or doesn't watch the news? Or someone 16 or 17 years old who can watch it and not feel much anymore because it has become so routine?

Some of the questions posed by the film are:

When will it stop?

Is it really worth it?

What is the solution?

We both feel that it is very important to show this film back home. It must be seen back home.

Film and narrative created by pair of students in 2013.

Who Is The Enemy?

Since we were the only art group with three members, we felt a sculpture piece would be best to work on. We each felt it was important to create a piece that was based on our experience here at Artsbridge, as it was a common starting point for us all. In speaking with each other about this year's theme for the program, Young Voices New Choices, as a more specific idea, we started to notice that we had different interpretations of choice. Especially around choices found in the conflict such as Who is the Enemy? Is there one? We then began to take a deeper look into how each of us make choices. Omer spoke of considering choices by collecting facts, thinking about them carefully, and then determining a choice. Ofri on the other hand based her choices more off of perspective and considering people's internal way of being. Sana also had a different way of making choices, that is through intuition and feeling. It was then that we decided to create three sculptures; the head, eye, and heart to outline the same main idea but from three different perspectives.

We wanted them to be interactive so that the audience could really experience what it was like when we make choices. The actual act of making the sculptures was challenging for some of us but not for others. Because we had different levels of familiarity with art, we found great support from working independently but helping one another when needed. It was nice to see how the pieces evolved.

Seeing our pieces displayed and watching people viewing them at the Showcase was really rewarding. We felt like we not only were able to make a successful work of art that got our point across, but we were really able to better understand our own thoughts about choice and the conflict. We began to realize that when thinking of conflict. You need to look inside and consider others in order to get perspective and better understanding.

Before this process when we asked ourselves "Who is the enemy?", we didn't think we had an answer. Now, we believe we may have found one for ourselves; that perhaps the answer really does depend on the person.

Installation created by students in 2013. Papier mâché, cloth, paint, cellophane.

Trapped

  The first time we met to work on the project, the three of us had just left dialogue and we were tired and felt stuck. Within minutes of meeting as a group, we decided that our shared feeling of being stuck would be a good starting point for our piece. We knew we didn't want our project to be about the conflict specifically, but how conflict, in general, can influence people's lives. Therefore, we wanted to use the cage as a metaphor for any challenge that a person can face. We wanted to keep the symbol of the cage open so that viewers could choose what it meant for them. We are trying to represent the youth and the idea that, as we grow up there are many problems and things that we just inherit-for example, the conflict. Even if you don't want to be a part of it, you still carry it with you.

  We decided to represent two ways of dealing with conflict by creating two different birds. The flower bird represents one way of dealing with conflict by shying away from it and trying to avoid it altogether. The problem has exhausted the bird to the point where it feels numb and unable to attempt an escape. We used dried flowers on the flower bird to represent everything that dies when people are facing a hardship.

  We chose to create the other bird using harsh metals because metal signifies strength and power. In contrast to the other bird, the metal bird is stronger. It's trying to break through its restraints. We chose to include barbed wire to represent an additional challenge that the birds face in trying to break through the cage.

  Overall, it was challenging to work in a group, but we handled it pretty well. When someone wanted something, we had to have a group discussion before coming to a final decision. It's hard to work with other people when everyone has their own idea and imagination of the cage. We were surprised by how difficult and time consuming it was to make each feather as detailed as it was. We were all very chill people...most of the time!
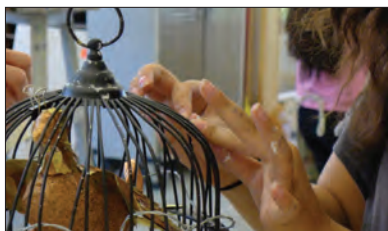
Sculpture created by students in 2013. Metals, barbed wire, organic matter, paint. 24" x 10".

The Power of Humanity

Our project represents man's inhumanity to man. In the beginning, we brainstormed ideas, and the first thing we thought of was the idea of humanity. With some discussion we agreed that one of the most common problems in the world is a lack of humanity, or people caring for one another. Both of us suffer from it, watch people struggle to live with it, and witness humans turn against themselves and each other.

To us, humanity means more than we can explain but, it seems to us, that people around the world care more about seeking power and greed than about love and caring for one another.

Therefore, we decided to portray humanity in the form of roots because it represents nature and the idea that we come from nature. We represented power and greed with the form of a diamond because we wanted it to resemble money and heartlessness.

Throughout the project, we faced no challenges working with each other. We guess that our biggest challenges were technical - creating the nest for the roots and measuring the diamond's edges.

It wasn't easy, but with each struggle, we shared a laugh and a comforting hug.

Politics did not get in our way. When we got difficult news or faced difficult things during the day, we chose to support each other rather than argue and blame one another. We related to each other as individuals and not by our politics or nationality. We found that we shared many things – the project was only one of them.

We are the perfect team!

Understanding is Growing

We believe that understanding others can help you understand yourself. Through conversations about possible ideas for our project, we found that we were both really drawn to other people's stories and how they can help you grow as a person. As a result, we wanted to do a piece about two human beings, with their own life experiences, undergoing a connection. The two figures in the center of our piece are growing out of the base while physically connecting to each other. Not only are the figures physically connecting, they are also emotionally connecting, which is represented through the flickering of lights from the tops of their heads. We decided to paint the base of our piece different colors in order to represent the different types of emotions that people might experience in their lives. We chose not to label each color a specific emotion because we wanted people to identify with the colors that they wanted. Layered on top of the colors are personal stories that we've collected from various sources about people's lives. We included this because, without being able to listen to another person's story, you wouldn't be able to fully connect with, or understand them.

As a pair, we worked really well together. We communicated well with each other, which helped us a lot during our process, since we had to continually reshape our ideas and the structure of our piece.

Working on this project allowed us to get to know each other better. Even though we are roommates, we've realized that we have certain personalities in the room and different personalities in Art. We were able to be serious while also being goofy!

Top image: Sculpture created by pair of students in 2014. Mirror, papier mâché, paint. 14″ x 14″.

Bottom image: Sculpture created by pair of students in 2014. Papier mâché, paint, led lights. 24″ x 12″.

Breaking Through

We decided to do our project about equality: more specifically, equality between men and women. The idea came out of a conversation in which B expressed that his top value is equality. R related to that, stating she values equality between men and women. So, this piece was made to show and reflect the reality of women trying to break through and achieve equality in society. Although the woman is breaking through the wall, she still has to deal with the other challenges brought on by society. This idea is represented by the presence of caution tape beyond the wall. There is always another step that she has to go through.

Working together was not hard at all even though we went through artistic challenges. There was good communication and both of us knew our individual jobs. We also made sure that both of our voices were reflected in the piece.

One of the most difficult parts of working on this piece was deciding what would help make our message the most powerful and clear. We decided that our choice of colors and materials would help us present our message in the most powerful way. Deciding how to represent the woman's figure on the canvas was also challenging. We wanted her to look like she's both tired from work and angry at society.

It was difficult to come up with a common symbol for equality, so that was an issue on which we had to compromise. Finally, we decided on the symbol of the hammer because of its relationship to communist ideals of equality.

The wall is meant to represent the stereotypes that women suffer from. The woman is breaking through the wall and thus breaking through and away from stereotypes. Our solution was to attach items that represent the stereotypes to the wall, such as a cleaning rag. Although we are from one part of the world, this woman represents all women who are struggling in their own society.

We both appreciated the teamwork that we shared and B's humor and dance moves. We also enjoyed the process of moving past talking about the specifics of the piece and onto talking and getting to know each other better.

Bas relief created by pair of students in 2014. Styrofoam, wood, cloth, acrylic paint. 24" x 36".

IDentity?

From the moment we are born, we are given information telling us who we are - Information that limits us and creates differences and distances between people. It casts a shadow that erases who you really are and does not allow people to get to know you, but instead gives way to prejudice and racism.

When good people fight each other over this unnecessary information, we all drown together.

ID is not my identity.

Our film starts from the moment a baby comes into the world. Immediately, ID cards are dropped on the baby, from these ID cards come the different people and identities that are surprised by their differences and start fighting. Together they drown in the lake until hope starts raining on them.

I am a Palestinian from the West Bank. I am a Jewish-Israeli. One of us has a green card, one of has a blue card. These cards define and limit our life experiences in a very real way.

We started developing the idea the moment we started talking to each other and realised how similar we are. Before working together, we hadn't really met someone from "the other side", we were both prejudiced against the other side because of the negative images about each other that we grew up on and that surround us. We realised that these ideas came from the "database" that is attached to us, and the ID cards that we are holding. Our working and brainstorming together taught us how much common ground we can create by talking to each other.

Still frames from film and narrative created by pair of students in 2016.

Overalls

Three different directions flow towards one center, then extend out and pass through the different pieces of our selves. All pieces come together to form a force with the same goal but different roads to reach it. In our piece we tried to create a visual of this force that flows through the three of us. We come from three different places and lead very different lives, but we share the same values. Feminism, liberalism, equality, courage to take on whatever challenges we face, and involvement in the community around us. The starting point of our piece was fashion since it is a visual medium which people use to express themselves. We wanted to create three different pieces of clothing, one for each identity, alongside a fourth shared one, but realised very quickly that that would not allowed much roomfor discussion and teamwork. If we had to do this then we will do one piece of clothing that contains all that we believe in. We wanted to create a piece of clothing that is flowy, breathable and allows free movement, so no dress or skirt would do. The overalls for us symbolize hard work and determination. More importantly they are a symbol of feminism. The only expressive parts of the figure, the hands and feet are climbing up, while the head is looking upward with hope. The fabric is see through, allowing the viewer to see clearly the red heart that is hanging inside the figure. On the fabric are imprinted sketches drawn by all three of us to create one story.

Installation created by team of students in 2016. Cloth, plaster, rope, heat transferred drawings.
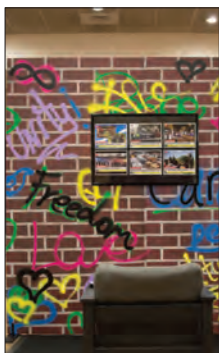
Defying the Odds

Immigration is a difficult topic for many of us to talk abouts. Immigration affects people all over the world, thus we decided to focus on it in our project. We picked a sensitive topic for many people and we tried to show the positives and the negatives about this situation.

At first, we thought of the situation with Mexico and the United States, which gave us various issues to consider. We thought of the border, of peoples' experiences, family, and anything that involved immigration. That is how our project idea came to be. We decided to include the population that has the hardest time with immigration, so we used Latin and Arab communities as the base idea for our project.

We began by looking at it from what we know for ourselves. The border for instance, was one of the things you can see so we used it to show separation between the Americans and the immigrants. When we dug a little deeper by using personal experiences to try to build onto our project it came to mind that some families meet at the border daily to see their relatives, and then we decided to use people in our project. We also spoke about propaganda and how the American media and the International media report different things, resulting in each side hearing a different story. While going into that we thought about how the border itself is a story of how both sides view the situation. We decided to incorporate visual edits to be our propaganda and we decided to paint the border with words that have relevant value to many of us. Portraying the words on the border about how each side sees immigration was hard because not everyone sees it so positively.
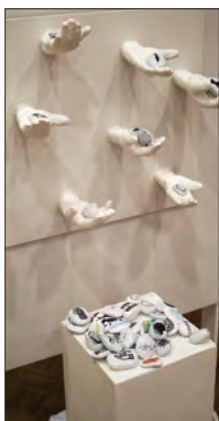
We all decided to think of words that mean something to us and words that Americans might use to describe immigrants in a positive way. We thought of all the positive words we could use and how we would find the correlation with one side and the other side of the border. We decided to use words with important meaning to us and to the actual immigrants. We also decided to incorporate media or visual edits to show what one side hears opposed to the other. All throughout the visual part of the project we chose propaganda that shows that there are some accusations and different stories to back up these differences of thought and communication.

As a team we chose to use all these elements because they show and symbolize what immigration is like in a positive and negative way. The visual edits show that people on both sides can easily believe anything if the media reports it, while the wall shows resistance to change. The wall also symbolizes an obstacle where people show defiance and love towards each other. One of the things that was most meaningful was that our people are faceless which signifies that they could be anyone in the world but still feel the same. The faceless people are meant to be anyone. They could be you, a friend or someone in your family. Our female character is an immigrant and the boy is an American teenage boy that found the female immigrant. Instead of pretending she didn't exist he chose to defy societies' standards and help her out. The woman is a number while the boy is a name this shows that immigrants are perceived less of a person than Americans. The immigrants are viewed as a number to add to the population while the Americans are seen as normal people.

Installation created by team of students in 2018. Mixed media

Inner Strength

Living and feeling like there's a blur, we feel blind. Nobody knows who we really are in this world. We feel invisible with the crowd, searching for hope, a light that can get us out of the darkness. We try so many times to find that light but we can't find it. We fail, we feel depressed, tired and stressed. But we don't give up, we keep trying until we manage to reach the light and we realize we are strong and we are not alone.

Trapped

Although we come from different backgrounds and different cultures, Artsbridge helped us get to know each other more and see how similar we are even though we were educated to believe in two different realities. Now we know how close we are no matter the wall that separates us.

With this thought we created a dance that helps us express our feelings towards each other. How did this happen? Must it always be this way?

This is our reality, we are trapped, but soon we will break free.

Still images of dances created by students in 2018 along with their respective narratives.

Growth

Our project is about the inner struggles that develop as we grow older and the backlash that comes with it and how they combine to form a feeling of discomfort, distress and helplessness - we are choked by growth and the need for it.

Its the combination of our ideas into one painting, delivering the messages we hold in our hearts and to struggle to get them out on a daily basis.

The entire process of collaborating was challenging and frustrating and at times, we wanted to burn down a building! However, we also were inspired and despite numerous conflicts nobody was physically harmed during the creative process.

One Path Divided

Our project is about our identities and how our identities are being stripped away from us by society. Our project involves both of our stories. The two figures represent each one of us. The figure to the right portrays a young palestinian striving to reach to maintain their identity, which is being deprived by the laws and discrimination against palestinians. Their identity is represented by a hatta which is the traditional palestinian scarf that floats above just out of reach. The figure on the left is representative of an individual that is struggling to break free from racial labels, the figure is bent from the weight by the rocks which represent african-americans and caucasians, in addition the weight of the labels that they're trying to break free from.

We wanted to have our voices heard through our art so we chose this project because we and others live through this struggle everyday which impacts our lives and our place in society.

It was difficult for us to find the story we wanted to create, but once we did, we got to work on our creation, and helped and supported each other. We agreed on almost everything but we also challenged each other's ideas and decided which one we liked more.

Top Image: Painting/collage created by pair of students in 2019. Acrylic paint and paper on canvas. 20" x 38".

Bottom Image: Installation created by pair of students in 2019. Wood, cloth, papier mâché.

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