

The Dynamics and Consequences of Occupational Deprivation on Displaced Individuals

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### **Abstract**

Following wars and natural disasters, individuals and their families face displacement from their native land and relocate to a new location where they become refugees. As occupational beings, people find meaning in their environment and build their identity through engaging in meaningful occupations. The environment plays a role in shaping the behavior of individuals as it enables or constrains engagement in occupations. The displacement experience leads to depriving those individuals the ability to perform occupations that link them to the environment and allow them establish their identity. Using occupation-based, as well as non-occupation-based models, the author looks at the consequences that result from the occupational injustice that individuals experience following their displacement, and the various forms of adaptive behaviors they develop in order to restore their identity. In order to understand such dynamics, the displacement experience of three-populations is reviewed: African-Americans, Jews, and Palestinians.

*Keywords:* displacement, participation, occupation, engagement, environment

### The Dynamics and Consequences of Occupational Deprivation on Displaced Individuals

According to Rowles (2006), “Home” is the place where people belong. It provides individuals with a sense of identity, a source of security, and facilitates both physical and psychological well-being. Home is the place where individuals surround themselves with the familiar, feel comfortable and embedded; and are able to find a point of orientation in the world. Often, home is a place where an individual has resided for some time, which encapsulates history, and where people experience social stability (Newton, 2008; Rowles, 2006). Home is a place that people build an emotional attachment with, and would only leave involuntarily due to natural disasters or *human-caused events* that lead to displacing them against their will, which results in traumatizing and disconnecting them from a place that they had become attached to, and called home (World Bank, 2001).

According to El Hinnawi (1985), the environmentally displaced are “those people who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life” (p.4). It is estimated that more than 10.4 million individuals around the world became refugees by the end of 2004 (United Nations Relief & Works Agency [UNRWA], 2006). As a result of this involuntary relocation, people experience a sense of physiological, economical, and social inferiority that impact all aspects of their daily living (Amnesty International, 2003; Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005).

Events such as displacement can have a great negative impact on individuals, their families, and communities. Over the years, individuals related to their communities through cultural, spiritual, and social contexts, resulting in developing sense of belonging, after which, they aligned themselves with the community through adopting cultural beliefs and practices of

the community. To foster this sense of identity, individuals engage in mutual activities within their communities, and negotiate *participation* in meaningful occupations to align themselves, and to seek acceptance in the community they desire to belong to (Wenger, 1998).

As “occupational beings” (Clark et al., 1990, p. 300), individuals engage in orchestrating daily occupations in the environment as means of adaptation to changing life events (Yerxa et al., 1990). These occupations that individuals carry out to seek meaningfulness are “doing culturally meaningful work, play, or daily living tasks in the stream of time and in the contexts of one’s physical and social world” (Kielhofner, 1995, p. 3). Since occupations are carried out within a particular physical, social, political, and historical environment (Yerxa, Clark, Jackson, Pierce, & Zemke, 1989), the displacement of individuals and their families plays a pivotal role that leads to creating an imbalance in the ability to *carry out daily routines* that typically characterize these individuals as well as their families (Zemke & Clark, 1996).

Through out life span, an individual selects meaningful occupations that facilitate their ability to achieve preeminence (Jackson, 1996), and occupational competence. These occupational choices take the form of daily practices, activities and habits, and allow individuals to achieve sense of self-worth. While engagement in occupation is a human nature, and since occupation maintains the mind and body, enforced “idealness” could do damage to the mind and to the body (Slagle & Robeson, 1941). Unlike travel or short-term illness, when *occupational disruption* (Whiteford, 2004, p. 223) may occur, in case of displacement, individuals do not have control over their destination, time frame, accommodations, company, or over the social aspects of their disposition (Goldstein, 1996).

Consequently, the imbalance that results from the removal of people from the environment that they belonged to leads them to adapt their acquired occupational roles in order

to meet challenges proposed by the new environment (Lavin, 2005). Law (1991) asserted that in interacting with the environment, the individual would need to deal with various types of out-of-control elements including cultural, social, institutional, and physical contexts that occur outside the individual, and elicit a response in the individual's behavior.

In this paper, the author will attempt to understand the occupational alienation experience from the perspective of the three displaced populations in their search for occupational justice; will explore motives that drove these populations to react in ways they did following their displacement; and will assess values/beliefs they developed in their struggle to preserve their identity following their displacement.

In order to examine these constructs and paradigms, and to explore the patterns of occupational reengagement individuals choose following their displacement, the author will examine the experience of three populations who experienced occupational alienation chronologically: African-Americans during the 1800s phase of slavery; the Jewish experience in the 1940s; as well as the experience of the Palestinian people following their displacement in 1948. Despite time differences, these populations shared surviving "chronic disabling conditions through which they are marginalized or socially excluded" (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005, p. 1).

### **Identity**

According to Souza (1999), people living in the community take it upon themselves "to rescue responsibility from the dilution" (as cited in Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005, p. 5), as lack of responsibility can be an issue that may become a threat to a society through its development. With identity defined as "a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5), both Wenger (1998) and Christiansen (1999) contended that individuals shape their own identities by

participating in activities, and through their ability to affect, and to control these activities.

Christiansen (1999) viewed occupation as the principle means through which people develop and express their personal identities. As an instrumental element to social life, identity provides a context for deriving meaning from daily experiences, and for interpreting this meaning over time. As a result, identity appears to provide individuals a framework, or trajectory, for goal setting, and as a source of motivation (Wenger, 1998). Christiansen asserted that competence in the performance of tasks and occupations contributes to identity shaping, and that the realization of an acceptable identity contributes to coherence and well-being. He concluded that performance limitations and disfigurement that sometimes result from illness or injury have identity implications (Christiansen, 1999).

As for Guanipa and Guanipa-Ho (1998), Identity, which is “an internalized, self-selected concept based on experiences inside the family and outside of the family” (p. 2), serves to complete developmental tasks that one needs to evolve as an integrated sense of self, which leads to defining personal goals and direction in life. Bronfenbrenner (1977) studied the mechanism of establishment of identity, and concluded that identity is determined by various factors including the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and the environment at one end, and the interactions of an individual’s unique world multifaceted components on the other.

On the other hand, Wenger (1998) provided an understanding of identity through exploring the concept of belonging. She contended that engagement, imagination, and alignment are distinct modes of belonging as they “expand identity through space and time in different ways” (p. 181). As engagement entails the “definition of common enterprise in the process of pursuing it in concert with others” (p. 184), it leads to engaging in shared activities, and in accumulating shared experiences that fosters a sense of belonging.

As for the second mode of belonging, imagination, which entails “recognition of the experiences of others, while defining a trajectory that connects us to an extended identity” (p. 185), imagination serves, for example, to enable a group of strangers who work on similar goals to realize a sense of belonging. The third mode of belonging, alignment, which requires “investing energy in a directed way, finding common grounds, and imposing one’s views using own power and authority” (p. 186), alignment brings individuals together through shared beliefs, and passion that can be different for each individual, but meet with those beliefs of others at the at end.

While individuals can experience loss of choice and identity following the forcible removal from their own environment, such feelings can develop even following an act of domestic displacement. In their study of a group of nursing home residents, Green and Cooper (2000) argued that key factors linked to participation in activity among the group of nursing home residents who participated in the study included control over and choice of activity. To realize a sense of meaningfulness, individuals seek to engage in occupations that make life ultimately meaningful (Meyer, 1922). In 1997, Howard and Howard found that the removal of individuals from their geographical belonging led to a sense of meaninglessness among the study group due to the inability to recruit one’s active and creative potential to extract meaning from the environment.

### **The Environment and Behavior**

In addition to identity, the environment plays a role in shaping the individual’s behavior and opportunities. Individuals carry out their daily routines within a particular environment that enables or constrains engagement in occupations (Yerxa et al., 1989). For this purpose,

occupations provide the link an individual uses to relate to, and to make sense of the environment he/she lives in (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005).

As to further reflect the impact of the environment on an individual, Yerxa (1991) argued that the individual should be studied in context, in the “myriad of environments in which occupations are performed, where the focus should be on the individual in all of his or her complexity; and the whole lifespan should be considered, as should the highly individualised experience of occupations” (p. 200).

Accordingly, displacing individuals not only would lead to removing them from their chosen environment, but also will force them away from the familiar environment that they need to engage in occupations that are most true to their identity and humanity (Yerxa et al., 1990). As a reaction to this disturbance in their natural environment, individuals take it upon themselves to activate their adaptive nature to respond to in order to restore a meaningful life style for themselves, and to re-inject order in the society (Reilly, 1962). This adaptive behavior leads to a negotiation between the available resources and limitations against a background of personal meaning. While the outcome of these negotiations may feed into the sense of self-fulfillment related to a previously established perception of well-being, it does not necessarily appeal, or turn to be satisfactory to the expectations of a displaced individual.

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed *the International Classification, Disability, and Health Model* (ICF) as a classification of health and health-related domains. The WHO views functioning and disability as multi-dimensional phenomenon that an individual experiences at the level of the body, the person, and society. The impact of the environment on function in relevance to dealing with restrictions in the individual's *participation* in educational, economic, social, cultural and political activities is recognized in the ICF. Further more, the

model asserts that the personal and environmental contextual factors can either facilitate or hinder a person's social and economic participation in society (Stewart & Rosenbaum, 2003; WHO, 2001).

The interaction between different constructs in the ICF model includes health conditions, components of disability, as well as the personal and environmental contextual factors that influence an individual's behavior (Diagram 1.1). Environmental factors as the "physical, social and attitudinal features that together characterize the environment in which a person lives, from climate and terrain to architectural characteristics and legal and social structures" (WHO, 2001, p. 8) are recognized in the model.

Besides the ICF, non occupation-based conceptual models support the influence of the environment on behavior. Proponents of the social cognitive theory (SCT), which focuses on learning within a social context, believe that people learn from one another through various methods, including observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1973, 1977). Bandura (1977) reported that learning is to a far extent acquired through observation and modeling of others. The social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of "continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences" (p. 22). According to Bandura, the environment that an individual (observer) lives in can influence his/her behavior in four ways: (a) a model reinforces the observer's behavior to enable the later to receive acceptance of own behaviors; (b) a third person may reinforce the behavior in order to provide cultural support; (c) an individual may model a behavior as it produces personal satisfaction, and (d) the environmental influence can be evident when the model receives reinforcement for the behavior, after which, the observer shows increased frequency of the modeled behavior, a phenomenon known as "vicarious reinforcement" (Bandura, 1977, 1986;

Ormord, 1999). These premises provide theoretical base to understand the origin of behaviors that people who belong to the same community adopt, and to how behaviors evolve as a result of individuals' influence on one another.

Further, to clarify environmental impact on behavior, Bandura (1991, 1989) identified four elements that act as extrinsic enablers of performance (a) the natural environment, (b) built environment and technology, (c) culture and values, and (d) social supports and social and economic systems. Should these elements become inactive, the environment may constitute a barrier to achieving mastery and to extract meaning.

Over a life span, an individual's identity constitutes a framework for goal setting and as a source of motivation (Christiansen, 1999) within the context of the environment. Numerous studies have reflected the impact of the environment on an individual's behavior and occupational choices. Christiansen and Baum (1991) indicated that the greater the "fit" between the person, environment, and occupation, the more optimal occupational performance will result, which in turn will influence development of adaptive behaviors. Goldstein (1996) argued that occupational therapists facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations as they recognize that individuals not only shape their environments, but as well, are shaped by the environments that they live in. As a result, and while people act locally, they need to realize the global impact of their behaviors (Souza, 1999, as cited in Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005), as the choices that people make "have powerful and potentially international significance" (p. 7).

In her study, Wilcock (1999a), realizing that as people go about shaping themselves, they consequently, shape the world through the choices that they make in relation to engagement in daily occupations; she urged that such process contributes to an individual's health, and that of the community. As people are confined or obstructed from participating in self-shaping

occupations, changes related to their health and behavior may take place resulting in dysfunction, disease, disability, or death (Wilcock, 1999a).

### *African-American Slavery*

In the early 1800s, accounts of slavery in the United States of America describe the fight that the slaves carried out in the resistance of their displacement both from their own selves, as well as from their homeland. As the European settlers were in need of laborers to work on the plantations to keep the economy solvent in the new colonies, the use of indentured servants brought the first Africans to America in 1619 (Sylvester, 1998). Their white masters sold them as property, and as slaves, they were appraised along with pigs and sheep. The slaves had to work from sunrise to sunset, and many experienced starvation, torture, and at times death (Hine, Hine, & Harold, 2003; Sertima, 2002). In 1705, the Virginia slave codes became effective, and dictated that slaves are held by the masters as real estate, needed written permission to leave their plantation, and can be punished or killed for resisting the master (Africans in America, 1998a).

As a result of these practices, the enslaved African-American people were unable to freely participate in “culturally meaningful activities in the stream of time and in the contexts of their physical and social world” (Kielhofner, 1995, p. 3), which led to developing a feeling of oppression and humility among the slaves who moved to restore their dignity through adopting occupations such as building strong family networks, turning to religion, practicing new art forms, and even by playing a new kind of music (Davis, n.d.; Hine, Hine, & Harold, 2003).

An abolitionist, Fredrick Douglass (1818-1895) described in his narrative, *narrative of the life of Fredrick Douglass, an American slave*; which he first published in 1845 slavery's effect on all aspects of the life of a slave. As a child, he strived to wipe out his illiteracy in an effort to gain freedom and to shape his identity. To his masters, this act constituted a threat. After

the master's wife started teaching Douglass how to read, Douglass overheard his master, Mr. Auld, telling her how inappropriate it was for her to give a slave such a skill, as a slave "should know nothing but to obey his master and to do as he is told to do" (Douglass, 1845, p. 36). Mr. Auld believed that learning would spoil the slaves as they will be difficult to keep once they learned how to read (Douglass, 1845).

Through out his life, Douglass (1845) contemplated the injustice of slavery that resulted in limiting his occupational choices, "who gave the white man the right to enslave people?" (p. 41), he reflected:

The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men" (p. 41)

Douglass saw no major differences between colonization and slavery. The impersonal meanings and intents of occupation carried similar characters of slavery, as for the oppressed; both produced a culture of solidarity, sense of intellectual oppression, inability to determine destiny, and poor socioeconomic status (Douglass, 1845; Sertima, 2002). As a result of his displacement from his true self, and due to the inhumane suffering, Douglass became so miserable to the extent that he contemplated committing suicide:

I often wished myself a beast; I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. I often regretted my own existence and wished myself dead and for the hope being free, I have no doubt that I should have killed myself or done something for which I should have been killed (Douglass, 1845, p. 41)

Due to a growing sense of despair and frustration, Douglass engaged in a physical fight with his master, Mr. Covey, where Douglass demonstrated his will power as he resisted the efforts of the master to tie him down. On multiple occasions since that incident, the master attempted to break down the resilience demonstrated by Douglass, which the later, continued to nurture over the next few months in a way to restore dignity. Douglass asserted that the incident took him from “the tomb of slavery to the heavens of freedom” (Douglass, 1845, p. 63).

Further, Douglass continued to share the values of freedom, equality, and right for social justice with his acquaintances to empower them. He acted as tutor, taught them how to read, motivated them to resist, and shared his hopes and dreams with them. Douglass managed, eventually, to slip the bonds of his master after he forged free man's papers of a black sailor, and was able to escape in 1838 (Douglass, 1845; Thomas, n.d.).

In his later years, Douglass became the superintendent of the entire system of the Rochester area, which was an important station on the Underground Railroad during the 1850s. Despite of his position, and out of belief in his mission, and identity, he sheltered and fed hundreds of fugitives in his house (Douglass, 1845; Sertima, 2002).

At the same time, another abolitionist, Harriet Tubman (1820–1913), one of the most resilient Underground Railroad's conductors took Douglass's acts a step further, and managed to help some 300 slaves to find freedom. Not only would she help them run away, but Tubman was so strongly grounded in her beliefs to the extent that she would even carry a gun to threaten the fugitives if they became too tired or decided to turn back (Africans in America, 1998b).

### ***The Jewish Displacement***

Jews are among many populations that have demonstrated adaptation in reaction to displacement. In the early 1940s, oppression, hunger and genocide fueled the Jewish resistance

against the Nazis in the Third Reich. The number of Jews in the Old Reich went from 170,000 to only 15,000 between the years 1941 and 1944 (Ben-Sasson, 1969). The large-scale manhunt of Jews did not exclude women or children. As a result, Jews in Europe responded to this oppression in various ways as to restore *occupational balance*. In rejection of the displacement from their identity and locale, and as rumors regarding the Nazis' intent to deport the ghettos' inhabitants to the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland, an organized Jewish resistance took place, and eventually led to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1941-1944). Even though many ghetto fighters believed that armed resistance by a small number could not save them from destruction, they continued to fight for the sake of saving the Jewish honor and to avenge the Nazis' massacres of the Jews (Levin, 1985; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [USHMM], 2009, ¶ 5).

This resistance adopted both armed, as well as non-armed forms. While the non-armed resistance included activities such as non-compliance with Nazis displacement policies; armed resistance including acts of sabotaging against Nazis' infrastructure, collecting, hiding and/or stealing weapons; freeing prisoners, and even blowing up German military trains. Civilians also shared in defending their *human rights*, and were involved in repairing weapons, making clothes, feeding the fighters, smuggling money needed to support the uprising, and even through increasing rate of pregnancy among the women (Ben-Sasson, 1969; USHMM, 2009, ¶ 4). On the other hand, the Jews in camps and ghettos responded to the Nazis' oppression through recruiting spirituality in support of resistance efforts. This included the creation of Jewish cultural institutions and religious observance as a conscious attempt to preserve the history and communal life of Jews despite the all Nazis' efforts to eradicate them from memory (Burleigh, 2000; USHMM, 2009, ¶ 6).

For Jews, engaging in this spiritual resistance was an attempt to maintain their humanity, personal integrity, dignity, and sense of civilization in the face of Nazis attempts to de-humanize and to degrade them. This spiritual engagement is seen as to be motivated by human's intrinsic need for mastery, competency, self-identity, and group acceptance (Christiansen, 1999; Fidler & Fidler, 1979).

The determination to fight and to defend the Jewish population led the Jewish fighters to go further in their preparations to stop the Nazi's oppression. As a result, they were able to build up stocks of weapons including axes, iron gloves, and knives. In addition, the fighters used household ingredients; such as old electric light bulbs filled with inflammable material, to build Molotov cocktails and hand grenades (Levin, 1985).

By 1952, more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons moved from their homes to camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. As to restore *natural events*, both religious and non-religious schools opened doors for students, organized athletic clubs, coordinated tournaments among teams of the different camps, and some 170,000 publications were in circulation. Following World War II, and the liberation of the Jews, the Allies moved to return Jewish displaced persons to their homes, but many refused, or felt unable to return (Elazar & Weinfeld, 2000; USHMM, 2009, ¶ 7).

As the Jewish displaced people in the camps experienced lack of autonomy, and restricted *mobility*, they chose British-controlled Palestine as their desired destination to restart a new life. While the British Army acted to block Jewish immigration into Palestine, Jewish soldiers from the British Army often assisted Jewish illegal immigration. From 1945-1948 more than 100,000 Jews immigrated illegally into Palestine (USHMM, 2009, ¶ 8). Among one of the prominent people who endured persecution in Eastern Europe, was Menachem Begin. In mid

1940s, he became the leader of a militant underground group whose goal was to drive British forces out of Palestine, in order to transfer the country to the control of the Jewish people. He fought the British “with every weapon available, that he was branded the name of the preeminent terrorist in the area” (Carter, 2006, p. 41). In 1977, Begin was installed as the Israeli 6th prime Minister. Later, the United States recognized the state of Israel, and the Congress passed the *Displaced Persons Act* in 1948, authorizing 200,000 displaced persons to enter the United States (Carter, 2006; Elazar & Weinfeld, 2000; USHMM, 2009, ¶ 8-11).

### ***Palestinian Displacement***

Following the establishment of the state of Israel in the Palestinian land in 1948, and similar to the Jews fighters, due to *demographic changes* in Palestine that followed the Jewish immigration (Carter, 2006), the Palestinians launched various acts of civilian and military resistance intended to restore their identity and to block the conversion of the farmlands, the primary source of income for them, into settlements.

Prior to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Palestinians owned approximately 87.5% of the total land in Palestine (now known as Israel), while the Jewish population owned about 6.6% (Brynen, & Al Rifai, 2007; Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories [Btselem], 2008). Following the creation of the state of Israel, the Israeli government enacted legislation to expropriate the Palestinian land to Israel. As a result, 75% of the native Palestinians were expelled to neighboring countries in order to provide the Jewish immigrants the land needed for them to live in (now known as Occupied Palestinian Territories [OPt]) (Amnesty International, 2003; Palestinian Monitor, 2008; United Nations [UN], 2005). Hundreds of homes, mosques, churches, schools, and businesses were demolished. Today, about five million Palestinian displaced individuals (refugees) live in 58-refugee camps in five neighboring

countries or nearby towns (Brynen, & Al Rifai, 2007; UNRWA, 2003). In order to accommodate new comers, the Israeli government continued to build new settlements, and according to Amnesty International (2007), the number of Israeli settlements and outposts in OPt in 2007 exceeded 235 (Btselem, 2008).

As a result, the displacement of the Palestinians disengaged them from *participating* in meaningful occupations through which they act most true to their humanity, resulting in *occupational marginalization*, which deprived them the ability to engage in authoring their storied actions (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004; Yerxa et al., 1990). Occupational marginalization takes place “when some social groups more than others are denied or restricted in making choices and decisions about their participation in everyday occupations, often resulting from invisible expectations, norms, and standards” (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004, p. 81).

Moreover, the ability of the Palestinians’ to participate in activities of daily living (ADLs), as well as independent activities of daily living (IADLs) became restricted as the Israeli government enacted numerous laws that impacted all aspects of *domestic lives*, including restriction of *mobility*, house demolition, confiscation of farmland, and outlawing the drilling of wells in the OPt. Water needed for hygiene and household use became scarce as Palestinians received 3.5 times less water supply in comparison to their Israeli counter partners who received 350 liters per capita per day (Btselem, 2008; Lavin, 2005; UNRWA, 2005).

In an attempt to control the violence that erupted in the occupied Palestinian territories in rejection of such *occupational injustice*, the Israeli government instituted a closure policy in 1993, which it intensified later in the year 2000. More than 700 checkpoints were erected in the Palestinian territories, and a 700 kilometer separation wall is currently under construction with an intention to separate the Palestinian occupied territories from Israeli settlements (Amnesty

International, 2003; Btselem, 2008; United Nations [UN], 2005). In 2003, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) examined the issue of Israel's construction of the fence/wall inside the West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem. In its advisory opinion, the ICJ, found that the wall violates international human rights and that Israel also has an obligation to put an end to the violation through terminating the construction of the wall in Occupied Palestinian Territories international law (Amnesty International, 2007; UN, 2005).

The World Bank (as cited in UNRWA, 2005) referred to the recession in the Palestinian economy as to be the worst in modern history attributed to movement restriction:

Since February 2006 new population groups have become food insecure (or more food insecure) in addition to the pre-existing food insecure groups...Several factors account for this deterioration in economic conditions, which has led, among other aspects, to the rise in the sense of food insecurity on the part of the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The most significant factor is the system of movement restrictions imposed by Israel on the free movement of Palestinian goods and labor.” (p. 30)

Similar to the African-American and the Jewish populations, the Palestinians realized loss of *human rights*, and a sense of *occupational alienation*, especially, following the erection of the separation wall in the Opt, which deepened the segregation and marginalization among the Palestinians, restricting their ability to fully *participate* in the society, and locking them up behind invisible prison bars (UNRWA, 2005).

The Israeli army's widespread destruction of schools, closure of educational institutes, and the ever-present danger to schoolchildren and to staff led to a large number of casualties and arrests. Many educational facilities became military bases or prisons, in 2004, Palestinian universities sustained over \$4.85 million worth of infrastructure damage, exam passing rates

declined dramatically, and classrooms became congested (Palestinian Monitor, 2008; UNRWA, 2005). On the other hand, the frequent road closures paralyzed the Palestinian health system and children, who are particularly vulnerable to this policy of collective punishment, were deprived essential vaccinations, dental care, and other necessary early intervention programs. The rates of respiratory infections in children and infants surged, and due to rapid deterioration of public services, such as water and sanitization, waterborne diseases continued to be on the rise (Amnesty International, 2003; Btselem, 2008; UNRWA, 2005).

Besides the physical suffering they experienced under the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian children experienced psychological consequences. As a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian children were subject to various types of violence including witnessing death of family members, friends, and neighbors. They endured check point harassment, as well a destruction of their homes and schools, which resulted in serious psychological effects on many children, as well as on their heath. An overwhelming number of Palestinian children now show symptoms of stress, sleep disorders, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, as well as ongoing thoughts of death (Amnesty International 2003; Btselem, 2008; UN, 2005).

In addition, the restricted *mobility*, disruption of *natural events*, and *demographic changes* heavily impacted the socioeconomic status of the Palestinian people. With unemployment rate up to 39.7% in areas such as the Gaza Strip, and poverty rates up to 70%, it's estimated that 75% of the Palestinians live below the poverty line of two dollars per day, leading to high rates of malnutrition especially among the children (Btselem, 2008; UN, 2005; UNRWA, 2005).

The displaced Palestinians realized that the neighborhoods that they grew up in and have always belonged to, are no longer homes for them, but for new settlers. The Palestinians who found themselves forced to change established routines, needed to adapt to a new habitat, and to adopt new *daily life routines*. Additionally, they found themselves no longer able to engage in many of the meaningful occupations that have typically provided them a sense of fulfillment, and only were able to engage in occupations that the occupier allowed for them to perform. The new routines (e.g., standing in food lines, adhering to military curfews, experiencing full body searches, waiting at checkpoints, fearing unpredictable house searches, etc.) were ones that they had to engage in and to get used to. Such unsolicited, meaningless roles bred frustration and a sense of insufficiency among the Palestinians. Consequently, living in such a disabling environment resulted in developing a strong sense of occupational deprivation that eventually led to a Palestinian armed resistance (Btselem, 2008; Lavin, 2005; Palestinian Monitor, 2008).

Kronenberg and Pollard (2005) urged that as sociopolitical conditions become barrier to access, people experience *occupational apartheid*. *Occupational apartheid* “is more or less chronic established environmental (systemic) conditions that deny marginalized people rightful access to participation in occupations that they value as meaningful and useful to them which jeopardizes their health and well-being” (Kronenberg, 1999, p. 25). It describes circumstances that go beyond the description of *occupational deprivation*, and takes place based on the premise that “some people are of different economic and social values status than others” (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005, p. 65). This perception restricts or limits opportunities of social participation and results in

Consequently, as a means of rejecting this *human-caused apartheid*, the Palestinians led decades of resistance against Israeli occupation forces, which eventually led to the Palestinian

uprising in 1999. During the uprising, acts of resistance included the targeting of Israeli military bases, smuggling weapons, and carrying attacks against Israeli targets (Palestinian Monitor, 2008). Similar to the African-American resistance in the 1800s, and that of Jews in 1940s, for the Palestinians, their resistance resembled the self-initiated, goal-directed, and personally satisfying adaptive skills to handle life changes. Nelson (1988) asserted that people take such actions in response to the physical and socio-cultural circumstances external to their circle of control. While acts of resistance may appear to be the extreme, or out-of-ordinary behavior to some, Townsend (2003) indicated as *participation* in life is at “core concept for human, resistance results from the need to protect self and ways of living, including occupation patterns, routines, beliefs, culture and privileges” (pp. 4-5). Reilly (1962) advocated, “normal occupational roles needed to be understood before it was possible to identify and address occupational dysfunction” (p. 302), accordingly, it is imperative to understand the cultural values, norms and occupational patterns of a population prior to establishing an argument related to dysfunctional vs. ultimate occupational functions that can be associated with defending one’s way of life.

### ***Occupational Injustice***

As with occupations, enabling approaches are pivotal in enabling growth or enabling destruction through participation choices in daily life. Enabling and participatory approaches provide basis for empowerment for oppressed or marginalized people. When unable to participate in meaningful occupations, individuals develop a sense of injustice. Occupational injustice, a term coined by Wilcock and Townsend in 1997, (as cited in Townsend, 2003), as an extension of social justice (Townsend, 2003), and occurs “when *participation in daily life routines* is barred, confined, segregated, prohibited, undeveloped, disrupted, alienated, marginalized, exploited, or other wise devalued” (Townsend & Whiteford, 2005, p.112). The

Jewish people who lived under the Nazi oppression were barred from *participating in daily life routines*, and consequently employed all resources to restore their sense of self-worth. The Palestinian children who endured the daily curfews adapted to such *human-caused events* by throwing stones at the Israeli army vehicles. According to Bandura, such behavior is one that observers learn from models in the society, a concept he termed “observational learning” (Bandura, 1977). The modeling of such social learning serves as means of searching for identity and as a substitute for previous roles (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005).

According to Townsend (2003), occupational injustice leads to deprivation and marginalization of individuals. As a result, their *occupational rights* are compromised. As occupational beings, through social inclusion, individuals have the right to have equal privileges in their ability to engage in health-promoting, meaningful occupations of choice, which provide enrichment in daily life. Following displacement out of native land, the three populations referenced in this paper (African-American, Jewish, and Palestinian) lost their ability to engage in occupations of choice, and were no longer able to make choices relevant to the basic needs. Bateson (1996) asserted that the capacity to perform meaningful occupations is a key to personhood. As a result, the act of displacement not only led to occupational injustice, but as well an inability to realize occupational fulfillment, and to behaviors that others perceived as dysfunctional or unwarranted.

According to Btselem (2008), Palestinians living under Israeli occupation experienced various forms of injustice, including the restriction of movement as a result of the separation wall, recurrent curfews, as well as a result of the checkpoints. These checkpoints, which have banned the Palestinians from over 700 kilometers of roads, are operated by the Israeli Army, and lead to prolonged time of waiting (up to a day long) before people are allowed to pass by.

Regardless to age, at checkpoints, the Palestinians, personal belongings, and vehicles are checked out before they are allowed to resume their trip. People who are trying to go from one point to another within the same town cut off by the wall have no choice except to go through these checkpoints built out of iron gates, fences, or concrete. Such movement restriction, not only has impacted the ability of people to move around and report to work, but has resulted in tremendous hardship for older adults, pregnant woman, individuals with illness, as well as for those with disability (Amnesty International, 2007; Btselem, 2008).

For years, the checkpoints have limited the Palestinians' access to essential health services and caused medical complications, births at the checkpoints, and even to deaths. In one case, a Palestinian father described the events that took place in 2007 at one of these checkpoints as he was trying to get his 6 months old son to the emergency room:

“We arrived at the checkpoint at 12.45am. From there it was another 10 minutes to the hospital. The soldiers stopped us. There were five soldiers. I told them that my baby was sick and urgently needed to get to the hospital in Ramallah. I spoke to them in Hebrew. They asked for our *IDs*. The driver and I gave ours but my wife had left hers at home in the hurry. I told the soldiers and they said we could not pass without her *ID*. I begged them to let us pass. They looked in the car and saw that there was nothing and that the baby had problems breathing and his limbs were trembling. I told the soldiers that every minute, every second mattered; that the baby needed oxygen urgently. They told us to wait and I kept pleading with them. Then the baby died. It was 1.05 am. I told the soldiers. They shone a torch into the car and saw that the baby was not moving any more and told us that we could pass. We drove to the hospital anyway. There it was confirmed that *Khaled* had died.” (Amnesty International, 2007, p. 5)

## **Occupation and Health**

Many studies evaluated the impact of occupational deprivation on health (Bateson, 1996; Doble & Santha, 2008; Whalley-Hammell, 2004; & Wilcocok, 1999b & 2003). Wilcocok (1999b, 2003) urged that individuals shape an accepted self through negotiating balance between doing, being, and becoming which is an essential construct to healthy living and wellness. Through out their lives, and by means of careful selection of various occupations, people engage in a process of negotiation to feed their sense of agency (Whalley-Hammell, 2004; Wilcock, 1999b). Individuals engage in doing occupations that facilitate ability to be true to oneself; and consequently realize becoming through achieving self-actualization (Wilcock, 1999b). Those living under occupation with no control over daily life routines, and facing unpredictable events have limited opportunity to realize occupational fulfillment or to develop self-actualization (Lavin, 2005).

Based on their understanding of the value of occupational engagement for human well being, and of the possible impact of life-threatening illness on occupational functioning, Lyons, Orozovic, Davis, and Newman (2002) employed the doing-being-becoming framework to explore the place of occupation in the experiences of individuals who lived in a hospice setting. The results indicated that experiences of doing were evident in accounts of losing and maintaining meaningful occupations. The residents expressed a sense of being through occupational engagement in social relationships and self-exploration that enhanced feelings of self-worth. The intervention promoted sense of becoming through engagement in various types of occupations that provided fresh learning opportunities. The study reflected the sense of occupational deprivation that those clients experienced, and the value of reengagement as a way of providing avenues of reestablishing sense of worth (Lyons et al., 2002).

In another study where Doble and Santha (2008) studied the relationship between health and occupational participation, the authors advocated that enabling occupational needs, including individuals' needs for accomplishment, agency, companionship, pleasure, lead to enhanced well-being, and positive consequences on health. In another study, Whalley-Hammell (2004) argued that role changes that occur following an injury or displacement from the self lead to occupational deprivation, and may result in alerting behavior. The study concluded that humans have a need to achieve meaning and choice as means of self-shaping after experiencing health crisis. Through exploring and "engaging in meaningful occupations, individuals realize abilities and limitations, and consequently, develop self-esteem" (p. 155).

So as to reflect the impact of occupational engagement on health, in 2002, the WHO moved away from *healthy ageing* concept, and introduced the term "*active ageing*" (Walker, 2002), defined as "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age" (WHO, 2002, p. 12). In addition to placing emphasis on need for physical activity, the expanded definition refers "to continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civil affairs" (p. 12).

The positive influence of occupational engagement on health was recognized early on, and for years, occupational therapists employed activity to facilitate recovery following injury (Kronenberg & Pollard, 2005; Wilcock, 1999a). In 1962, Reilly acknowledged that individuals can enhance the state of their health through engaging in meaningful activity. As well, Bateson (1996) advocated that the capability to perform meaningful occupations is essential for human health and completeness. Occupational engagement is the vital "involvement for being, becoming, and belonging, as well as for performing or doing occupations" (Wilcock, 2006 as cited in Townsend & Polatajko, 2007, p. 370).

The act of occupational deprivation not only leads to compromising individuals' physical and mental health, but as well, strains the ability to live a satisfactory social life. Due to loss of control over life routines and due to restricted *mobility*; displaced Jewish forced in camps and ghettos; displaced African-American slaves, as well as Palestinian refugees lost all contact with their immediate, as well as their extended families and friends. In turn, they were unable to fully engage in social life activities, which resulted in the dilution of social networks, inability to observe culturally and socially relevant holidays, and the overall dynamics of the lived social life for these populations.

There is growing evidence that participation in social activities promotes physical and mental health (Bennett, 2005; Christiansen, Backman, Little, & Nguyen, 1999; Mendes, 2005; Reid & Hardy, 1999). One study found that social activity is associated with better physical functioning, a lower risk of future dependence, and better functional recovery following illness (Mendes, Glass, & Berkman, 2003).

Further, in exploring the influence of engaging in meaningful occupations on coping and sense of well-being following chronic illness, Reynolds (2003) assessed the value of occupational reengagement among a group of people with chronic illness using art. Reynolds contended that engagement in the artistic work assisted the participants to "regain a positive sense of personal growth, status, achievement, and connection with others" (p. 125), which all appeared to promote their successful adaptation to ill health.

In recognizing the power of utilizing occupation as a health-promoting tool, Clark (1997) highlighted the tempo and temporality character of an occupation as a way to begin to generate an occupational-based global health blue print that will enable people to live a healthier life in the future. In a randomized clinical trial involving 361 older adults, researchers demonstrated

that preventive occupation could maintain or enhance health status as measured on the RAND 36-item Health Status Survey (Clark et al., 1997).

### **Engagement vs. Deprivation**

Throughout his writings, Bandura (1989, 1991) highlighted the complexity of the human personality through outlining factors that influence behavior. Unlike the behavioral simplistic understanding of a personality, he contended that individuals are neither autonomous nor mechanical conveyers of environmental influences (Crosbie-Brunett & Lewis, 1993). More over, Bandura argued that it is through their conceptualization of influences that individuals make contributions to their own motivation and actions within a holistic system of triadic reciprocal causation which includes action, cognition, affect and environmental factors that interact and contribute to the shaping of an individual's behavior (Bandura, 1978; Bandura & Cervone, 1986).

As for the displaced individuals, the environmental factors barred their ability to engage in occupations that make them feel true to themselves, and as the basic human needs; such as clean water, electricity, education, healthcare, transportation, as well as employment became a right that is either provided or withheld by others who are in control of these basics, the displaced struggled to maintain their fragmented identity, and strived to establish a sense of control their restrictive environment. This conflict consequently led to a functional impairment among the displaced related to their inability to engage in *carrying out daily routines* and occupations which have historically transitioned them from exercising their agentic role, and led to the development of a victimic identity (Polkinghorne, 1995).

The various types of barriers that the displaced populations had to deal with magnified the influence of the environment on shaping their behaviors. As humans demonstrate a wide

latitude in choice of behavior to imitate, the children of the displaced populations engaged in imitating their parents and peers in their acts of resistance. Proponents of the SCT advocate that in reacting to any given situation, individuals engage in a complex process that not only involves behaviorist principles, but also challenges these factors such as ethical/moral viewpoints, as well as the person's understanding of one's role in the world. The unsolicited occupations allowed for personal interpretation of events that yielded maladaptive reaction of aggression or reciprocal determinism (Ormrod, 1999).

In addition, for the displaced, the sense of self-efficacy was compromised due to the limitations of subjectivity in the creation of personal belief systems. For a non-displaced individual, the successful integration of recently acquired beliefs can lead to feelings of competence and feed into the sense of agency. However, for a displaced individual, the strong external elements challenge and weaken such sense of agency, resulting in the deterioration of ability to "self-regulate," which is an internal force that enables individuals to mediate external influences through choosing actions based on personal analysis of what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, and ultimately provides basis for purposeful action (Bandura, 1989; Crosbie-Brunett, & Lewis, 1993; Ormrod, 1999).

In the case of the African-American population, while cultural and value systems played a significant role in empowering their fight against slavery; as well, portions of the social system also contributed to fueling the resilience of the slaves as they sought freedom. Both elements contributed to moving the African-Americans from the victim role towards a more active participant role. In resisting slavery, the enslaved attempted to deal with slavery through adopting acts such as strengthening black family networks, turning to religion, and even by reviving traditional African dialects (Davis, n.d.). Freedom was always on the mind of the

enslaved, and running away became the most prominent form of resistance. As a newly acquired occupation, living as a run away required perfect planning of escape routes, knowledge of hiding areas, ways to find food, and being prepared for a severe punishment should the escapee be captured (Sylvester, 1998).

As for Jews, in addition to planning armed uprisings in the ghettos to resist Nazis, they planned and conducted spiritual activities that included art and poetry entertainment, printing and distributing underground newspapers, and through setting up ghetto communities' schools. (USHMM, 2009, ¶ 3)

On the other hand, the Palestinians who encountered *mobility* restrictions as a result of the checkpoints and the separation wall, became more self-sufficient, and produced more homegrown, and homemade necessities to replace these needed ones that they were unable to obtain due to curfews and checkpoints. In addition, the occupation produced a culture rich with hand-made crafts, music, and poetry. Such ability gave the Palestinians a sense of better control over their lives, and moved them further towards restoring an agentic role away from a victim role (UNRWA, 2003).

Bandura (2000) found that the individual's need to realize a sense of *human agency* in a social setting motivates one to negotiate various occupational experiences. The social cognitive theory adopts an agentic perspective on individuals, as "they are producers of experiences, and shapers of events" (p. 75). Such human need appear to provide an opportunity that allows an individual to produce and enhance outcomes of pursued occupations (Bandura, 2000). As occupations that individuals engage in are central to their existence, humans find participation in daily life occupations a core issue in their attempt to establish who they are (Wenger, 1998). These occupational processes of living can be powerful enough to generate growth or

destruction, and hold positive potential for whether people participate in the development or destruction of the community fabric, or to form or undermine identity (Townsend, 2003).

As humans function in harmony with environment an “injury or underdevelopment in an area of mental or physical functions can affect meaningful change in a person’s entire identity” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 299). Bandura (1997) contended that while an individual is partially a product of the environment through selections and transformations an individual makes, he/she participates in shaping the environment. As a key element for human function, an individual developed a perceived sense of *self-efficacy*, which affects behavior, goals, and the anticipated outcomes.

As a result of out-of-control events; such as displacement, and as attaining desired personal or group goals may not always be possible for individuals to carry out on their own, the social cognitive theorists identifies three level of human agency that an individual may adopt to realize sense of self efficacy: personal, proxy, and collective agency. In the initial phase of dealing with a challenge, people employ their own abilities (e.g., cognitive, social, motivational) to achieve desired outcomes. Should they fail to realize aspired outcomes, a proxy agency becomes an option. This is where an individual seeks the assistance of someone with expertise and influence to realize desired level of well-being. Once the “proxy agency” level fails, a collective agency, which typically has interactive, synergistic members of shared knowledge, becomes a last resort to achieve outcomes.

While Fredrick Douglass appeared to capitalize on his personal agency skills to create desired change working mostly on his own to empower his fellow slaves; in the case of the Jewish and Palestinian people, and due to the scale of the occupier they faced, more of a collective agency process took place. The Palestinians have and continue to seek out a

referendum of the United Nations to recover their occupied lands. The escalation of the action in which the different populations engaged sought varied based on the severity of the occupational apartheid that they each had to deal with the time period of their displacement.

Wilcock (2003) recognized the impact of historical events on individuals in displaced communities. In her review of the removal of indigenous Australian children from their families between 1912 and 1962, Wilcock asserted that the deprivation of the indigenous youth from engaging in culturally significant occupations during a part of their childhood presented a clear example of occupational deprivation. According to Whiteford (2000), occupational deprivation is “a state of preclusion from engagement in occupations of necessity and/or meaning due to factors that stand outside the immediate control of the individual” (p. 201). As a result of the forceful removal of these children away from their families, Wilcock (2003) urged that three layers of deprivation have taken place. First, the children were deprived of culturally significant social environment as they had no contact with their families, and did not have the opportunity to learn about their culture. By definition, culture is “a set of values and ideas that contain the distinctive way of life of a group of people and which tends to persist through time and is transmitted from generation to generation” (Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission [HEROC], 1997, p. 218). According to Christiansen and Townsend (2004), through shared occupations, community members share a sense of “emotional support, shared beliefs, as well as common traditions and goals” (p. 146). As a result, children who are removed from their environments not only were deprived of the opportunity to interact with their families, but this displacement led to a sense of insecurity, which resulted in the development of posttraumatic stress disorder among many children (Zeldenryk & Yalmambirra, 2006).

As a focus for health professionals, the ICF model enhances activity and participation of children whose functional well-being is at risk. The environment around a child involves the family, who provides the context in which children develop. The model advocates that the family contributes to children's ultimate well-being, and should receive support in order to be able to nurture children.

As for spiritual deprivation of one's land and story, the identity of the indigenous people became linked to their native land as it not only acts as a physical, but as well, as a spiritual resource to the natives. When people are removed from their land, knowledge of their ancestors and clans can be lost. Not only does the environment where people live contribute to shaping their roles, also, the occupations that people assume typically provide protection of the their environments and of their ancestry. (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), 1998).

Further more, due to the deprivation processes, populations that are forcibly removed from own environments appear to have more tendency to experience psychological and physical health problems. Moreover, since people shape their behaviors based on knowledge; including stories, words of wisdom, cultural events and ceremonies; which they typically acquire from their ancestors and surroundings which consequently enables them to initiate cultural processes. The displacement of people from their environments appears to deprive them the opportunity to gain this knowledge, or to become fully enculturized in the environment that they belong to (Zeldenryk & Yalmambirra, 2006).

### **Occupational Therapy Practice Framework**

In support of participation and to adopt occupation-based interventions, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) occupational therapy practice framework (OTPF)

includes key elements such as client goals, environment and context, which help to support a client-centered approach. This “occupation” focused approach facilitates an individual’s ability to further engage in occupations of choice (AOTA, 2002). The AOTA contends “occupational therapy intervention involves a vital step of assessing the client’s occupational history in order to understand occupational history, patterns of living, values, habits, and priorities” (AOTA, 2002, p. 14). The habits that individuals develop and tend to practice are ones that contribute to life satisfaction. While the AOTA supports assessing and enhancing occupational performance, it views the “physical context” as a condition that influences an individual’s performance (AOTA, 2002). The AOTA describes performance skills (i.e., motor, process, communication/interaction skills) that are features of what a person does, as well as client factors (i.e., body functions and structures) that influence occupational performance. These categorizations are based on the ICF model.

### **Occupation-Based Model**

The developers of the person- environment-occupational performance model (PEOPM), recognize the environmental influence on an individual’s behavior, and suggested that occupational performance is a product of a dynamic, interwoven relationship that exists among people, their occupations, and the environments in which they live, work and play (Christiansen & Baum, 1991). In their engagement process, individuals tend to interact with continuously shifting environmental resources and challenges that lead to adaptation of behavior (alignment) in a way to reconfigure their disintegrated sense of human agency (Bandura 2000; Christiansen & Baum, 1991). The PEOPM’s developers assert that the person-environment interaction is an ongoing process that can lead to either developing an adaptive, or a maladaptive behavior (Christiansen & Baum, 1991; Christiansen, Baum, & Bass-Haugen, 2005).

To those who may not be living the experience that is demanding the behavioral adaptation, such change in human behavior may not appear to be in line with mainstream behaviors. However, to a displaced individual, the same behavior may provide meaningfulness, and further, facilitates ability to reestablish sense of belonging to the environment. Based on this understanding, the PEOPM appears to be in line with Bandura's SCT constructs in terms of providing ground for understanding adapted behavior as means of nourishing a sense of self-efficacy, and as a reaction to the changes in the environmental output.

The developers of the PEOPM provided a tool that allows enabling for an understanding of the importance of everyday performance of necessary and valued occupations of individuals and for their meaningful participation in their environments. In order to best understand these elements that influence an individual's behavior, core personal and environmental factors that influence the interaction when it takes place are identified. The human factors (intrinsic factors) include psychological/emotional factors, cognition, neurobehavioral, and physiological factors, as well as spiritual. On the other end, the environmental factors (extrinsic factors) include elements such as social support, societal policies and attitudes, natural and built environments, and cultural norms and values (Diagram 1.2). The interaction of those elements can support, enable, or restrict the performance of the activities, tasks, and roles of the individual, organization, or community (Christiansen & Baum, 1991; Christiansen et al., 2005; Law et al., 1996).

The PEOPM orientation is consistent with models that view the person and environment as dynamic and interactive dimensions of an individual's situation; similar to the ICF model, the PEOPM acknowledges that the contexts in which people live their lives play a central role in the expression of their capacity to function.

As for the displaced, the displacement experience appears to have created an environmental shift as a result of moving to a less-familiar environment, with lack of community support and limited occupational choices. This resulted in emotional outrage among the displaced individuals who refused the external manipulation of their lifestyles. Such reaction generated much animosity against the occupying forces, which continued to grow as those individuals experienced further deprivation of the ability to negotiate daily routines (e.g., travel, education, employment, etc.). In this context, displaced individuals would have the potential to recruit their creative self should they have had the opportunity to author their own choices, and to live self-regulated *daily life routines* in an enabling environment.

In this client-centered approach, the PEOPM developers advocate the value of assessing what the client perceives to be the occupational performance issues that may limit ability to participate in *daily life routines*. The model proposes employing purposeful client-centered strategies that can facilitate an individual's ability to develop or use resources that would enable successful performance of necessary and meaningful occupations. Based on this premise, for a displaced individual, the interaction between the intrinsic and extrinsic elements paved the way for the development of demonstrating adaptive behaviors as in a way to negotiate new meanings in the redefined environment. Such adaptive behavior included acts of civil disobedience, armed resistance, as well as non-armed resistance. Among the three populations, multiple elements including family/societal support, strong sense of belonging, well-developed identity, strongly-grounded cultural/religious values/beliefs provided sense of pride in the society. On the other hand, due to their lack of control over the external factors, those populations experienced growing socioeconomic challenges, both at a personal, as well as at an environmental level. Consequently, the removal of these populations out of the environments that has historically

furnished elements of identity and pride, led them to develop occupational alienation and injustice.

As a tool that guides assessment and intervention, the PEOPM can provide means necessary to provide intervention for displaced individuals in order to restore identity. It enables measuring outcomes of interest, and to link measured outcomes to goals based on personal choices. Based on findings of the assessment, it proposes interventions that encompass functioning at different levels of body function and structure, activity and participation (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Coster, 1998; Law et al., 1998).

### **Conclusion**

Following wars and natural disasters, individuals can face displacement from their native land and relocate to areas where they become refugees. As a result, they experience a sense of physiological, economical, and social inferiority as their displacement affects quality of life, leading to occupational disruption of their daily life routines, and can ultimately result in occupational injustice.

Occupational injustice restricts and limits ability to engage in a meaningful life style that nourishes an individual's identity and sense of efficacy. Consequently, individuals resort to negotiating new meanings in the environment, which may lead to adaptive behaviors. The displacement experiences of three populations revealed significant consequences on their ability to exercise their occupational rights, to establish sense of agency, and has resulted in deterioration of their well-being, and of their ability to *become* what makes them true to themselves. Due to the remarkable impact of the environment on individuals, removal of people from their native land leads to destruction of cultural, social and historical extension of these

populations, which has an impact on their ability to contribute to the global well-being of humanity.

As occupational beings, people find meaning in their environment and build their identity through engaging in meaningful occupations. The environment plays a significant role in shaping the behavior of individuals as it enables or constrains engagement in occupations. While displacement experience leads to depriving those individuals of the ability to perform occupations that link them to the environment and allow them establish their identity, occupational –based models, including the PEOPM, provide avenues to facilitate individuals and communities ability to reengage in meaningful occupations.

While the occupational profiles of the three displaced populations appear to carry a heavy load of occupational injustices, based on the PEOPM and ICF models, a number of reengagement strategies can be identified in order to restore capacity to live a self-fulfilling and productive life. Through engaging in identifying own goals, a displaced individual owns the opportunity to get involved in authoring a personal story, which will enable him/her to shape his/her own future, and to minimize sense of deprivation. This *occupational enrichment* would “support engagement in occupations congruent with those that the individual might normally perform” (Molineux & Whiteford, 2004, p. 127).

Consequently, this will lead to further engagement in culturally meaningful activities that can facilitate ability to revive those occupations that have previously provided satisfaction. While such reengagement process can be performed on an individual basis, it can be a congregational activity for those who have developed same level of deprivation. Such a technique will serve to establish grounds for “experience sharing” and for mutual problem solving that may lead eventually to mentoring others who may go through a similar adaptation

process. Participating in this activity will provide a displaced individual additional tools that he/she can use to overcome own struggles, while involved in helping others restore a sense of efficacy, and consequently will empower the individual feed his/her own. As a result, a displaced individual will gradually become involved in identifying own standards of occupational competence, and to explore avenues for venting and the expressing of self. Moreover, based on the documented influence of the environment on shaping an individual's behavior, the client may find engaging in modifying and building their own enabling environment to be a fulfilling experience that will compensate for the negatively manipulated one.

Through reengaging in occupations of choice, exercising cultural believes, and through practicing self-reflection, a displaced will gradually be able to redeem sense of self-efficacy and to empower own sense of human agency. This will improve ability to take a step forward towards identifying constructive/destructive behaviors through self-regulation and to assess impact of own behaviors on the environment. Due to the deep sense of deprivation, a displaced individual would benefit from developing additional coping strategies that can allow for further adaptive behavior that can enable further participation in modified occupations.

In addition, an individual could further develop adaptive behavior through modeling the struggles of other populations who were able to restore their occupational justice; and through learning about positive models in history who led revolutionary movements (e.g., Gandhi, Mandela, Martin Luther King, etc.). Ultimately, as an individual realizes occupational competence, he/she could engage in publishing his/her own story for sake of educating the public regarding "doing, being and becoming" (Wilcock, 2006, p. 202).

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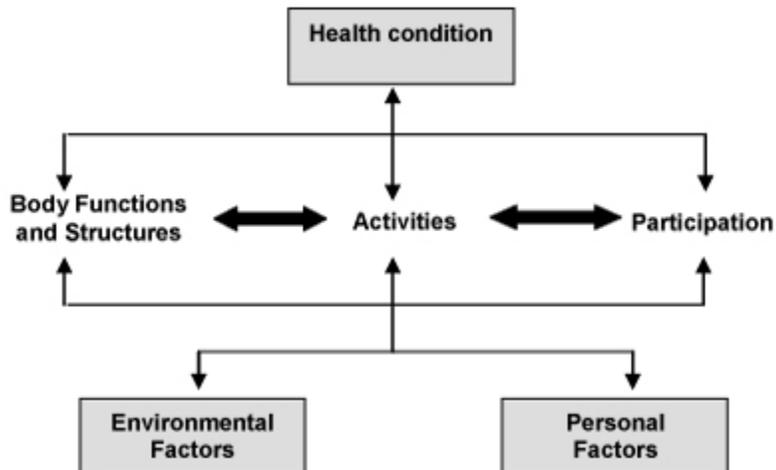
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Diagram 1.1: The ICF Model

Interactions between the Components of International Classification of *Functioning, Disability, and Health* model



Source: World Health Organization, (2001, p. 18).

*Diagram 1.2: The Person-environment-occupation-performance model (PEOPM)*



*Source: Baum, C. M, & Christiansen, C. H. (2005,p.246). Person-environment-occupation-performance: An occupation-based framework for practice. In C. H. Christiansen, C. M. Baum, and J. Bass-Haugen (Eds.), Occupational therapy: Performance, participation, and well-being (3rd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK Incorporated.*