Musicians for Peace: How Israeli-Palestinian Music Coproducers Aim to Contribute to Conflict Transformation

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Abstract

This thesis explores the aims of Israeli-Palestinian musical coproducers while contributing to conflict transformation. Inspired by the growing number of collaborative and multicultural artistic initiatives in conflict contexts, this thesis will seek to establish starting empirical evidence of musicians' intentions in disputes. Through the conceptual lens of conflict transformation, it will focus on the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, using the first account of the Dugri Duo to investigate the musicians' aims. These aims' plausibility will be checked by analysing if they resonate with other musical coproducers' work. It conducts an exploratory study aiming to examine the claims made by the theoretical literature and possibly provide fresh insights. The research will start with three hypotheses drawn from the literature: musicians aim to challenge conflictual narratives, leverage trauma, and inspire to educate their audience. By engaging in an interview and a qualitative content analysis of the most relevant musical coproducers in Israel-Palestine, the thesis will investigate the plausibility of these hypotheses, leaving spaces for new revelations.

Keywords: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Coproduced Music, Conflict Transformation, Music in Conflict

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Introduction

"Me and Uriya have a saying, 'We do not have a solution, but we have an approach',"** (Annex1, 1:08:00) says in our interview Sameh SAZ Zakout, a Palestinian rapper who started dedicating his life to the Dugri project. He and his partner, Jewish-Israeli educator and now rapper Uriya Rosenman, decided to pursue a collaborative social venture to "straight talk" the harsh reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With their collaborative music, education, and community, they attempt to trigger a change in their audience and take a first step in constructing a mutually beneficial future. The Dugri Duo aims to influence the dynamics of the conflict, hence transforming it. Even if unique, the Duo is neither the first nor the only one pursuing this objective through co-produced music. Ensembles, Choruses, Orchestras, and Youth Initiatives have risen since the 1990s Oslo Accord period to promote a multicultural and coexisting model of society. Reaching out to millions of people between live concerts, media, and social media, these musical ventures became a proper and influencing part of the cultural ethos in Israel and Palestine. Time passes, and difficulties have obstructed these musical projects, forcing them to change, adapt, and find new aims and goals (Belkind, 2021). This research will delve into the contemporary manifestations of collaborative music production to understand their intent and goals in conflict transformation.

To take a step back, this thesis is building on theoretical literature that considers the relationship between art and its audience as a central tool to influence conflict transformation. Art can provide and generate spaces for dialogue, bridging conflict, and opening negotiation for the people. It provides the tools for recognising and understanding the opposite side and empathising with it (Bang, 2016; Kollontai, Yore, 2015; Naidu-Silverman, 2015). Indeed, empathy is one of the main ways arts can provoke change in the individual through 'emotional manipulation' (Bentz et al., 2021). In this way, art uses emotion to push its audience to act toward transformation and open up to the Other (Roosen et al., 2017). Artistic endeavours in conflicts can function as an educational tool as well. Audiences, often overwhelmed by ideologies and narratives that aliment disputes, can find a break in art as it provides new imaginaries and proposes ideas that escape the normalised violent 'truths' (Naidu-Silverman, 2015).

However, as the literature is rich in theory it needs to include empirical research, especially on the Israeli-Palestinian case. Indeed, studies on Israeli and Palestinian art focus on self-determination and representation of the history of both communities (Gandolfo, 2010; Guilat, 2019; Roei, 2012), while the so-called 'Art for Peace' is left aside in the academic milieu (Bernard, 2012; Gesser-Edelsburg, 2011). Art for Peace in Israel and Palestine aims at reconciliation and addresses both populations to innovate the old, normalised narratives and allow dialogue and comprehension (Nathan et al., 2014). Research on the topic is still relatively thin, if at all, on case studies. It mainly

focuses on art aesthetics, omitting the artist's perspective and art framed as a communicative act. Hence, to quote Kollontai and Yore (2015), "the numerous projects throughout the world where art, music and film are used as components of peace-building demonstrate that there is a growing need to develop interdisciplinary research in this area" (p.1).

Art can be particularly relevant in intractable conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian one. These conflicts are rooted in the meaning-making and the construction of reality of the involved population. Hence, the social and psychological levels of interaction become central to the conflict, and critical reflection and dialogue become the main transformational actors (Bar-Tal, 2007; 2013; Coleman et al., 2014). In this regard, art becomes a provider and a facilitator of change by constructing the basis for communication, confrontation, and critical thinking. Coming together in front of, and thanks to, an art piece is the first step toward transformation. In this regard, music becomes a perfect channel as it lacks political interests, "It is communication in its purest form" (Hanna, 2015, p.132). As agnostic and possibly amoral, music, especially collaborative music, becomes an ideal candidate for communities to get together and build trust. In the case of collaborative music, this can happen both by listening to or participating in the production. Thanks to its representative nature, coproduced music respect one of the requirements for being influential in social change, namely to be accessible and reach broad audiences coming from both communities (Roosen et al., 2017, p.90). Coproduced collaborative music transcends geographical location in a context where borders define identities and violence, escaping the segregation reality.

All these theories and studies build on the belief that art has an inherent and undeniable relation to its audience, highly defined by the artist's intentions. The artists aim to address their audience in a particular way to evoke and trigger specific responses (Zangwill, 1999). Done consciously or unconsciously, these intentions become a defining element of art, placing themselves in its heart. For this reason, to understand artistic products and their possible effects on the audience, one has to inquire into the possible and plausible artists' intentions. Thus, before approaching the measurable effect of art on conflict, the artists' aims and goals must be defined. The first step is to generate empirical evidence about these intentions. In this regard, coproduction and collaboration in music can be particularly relevant for analysing artists' aims. While a lone musician might not reflect on their intention as it is unnecessary, two or more musicians have to come to a compromise and negotiate intentions, making them transparent for their partners and themselves before starting to work. This process makes them self-reflect and projects their aims clearly in their creative process. Given this information, this research intends to answer the question: How do Israeli-Palestinian musical co-producers aim to contribute to conflict transformation?

This inquiry attempts to define the plausible key intentions that musicians tend to have in the myriad of existing ones to establish a starting point for future research on music in conflicts and its effects. The focus here is not to generalise and define every artist's intention. Instead, it takes a first step to fill the gap left by the literature and establish empirical evidence of significant intention categories for future research to follow up. Three main propositions were derived from the literature to direct the research between the vast possible intentions. These are the basis for the following questions: How do musical coproducers aim to challenge the established conflictual narratives in Israel and Palestine? If so, to what extent do musical coproducers aim at leveraging traumatic experiences and emotions to trigger change? Lastly, do musical coproducers intend to inspire, to educate their audience on coexistence ideas?

Naturally, this exploratory study has to leave space for fresh insights that the literature might not have theorised. Thus the question is, what other key intentions come up while analysing musical coproduction, and how do they relate to each other?

The research will delve into one central case study to answer these questions. The Dugri Duo will first be examined through an interview conducted by the researcher; then, their music and social practices will be considered as well. The Dugri will not be considered representative of all the other artists' intentions; instead, it will be examined how far their understanding of their aims fits with the literature, resonates in their work and others as well, and if it can provide new ideas and insights. Comparative content analyses will determine if the Dugri case's intentions resonate with other musical coproducers' work, thus establishing their plausibility.

2. Literature Review

As this is a study of art potentiality in politics and society, one needs to explore the studies on the effect of art on public audiences. Once the first point is understood, the literature on how and if art can be relevant in conflict transformation processes will be explored. Finally, an overview of the studies of community art in Israel and Palestine, focusing on peace art and coexistence project, will follow. It is essential to bear in mind that in what follows, 'art' will be used broadly, meaning that it will be the umbrella term for visual, performative, and musical artworks.

2.1 Art and Audience

When dealing with art, it is inevitable to include its audience. Scholars of audience theories have argued that art and audience are intangibly connected and mutually dependent. In the study of this relationship, two leading schools of thought come up. The first is heavily based on theoretical studies, arguing for the problematic dynamics between art, its intentions, the audience, and the

experience (Lukes, 1991; Shelley, 2010; Zangwill, 1999). Here the arts' intention is a focal point in art's nature and the actual or dispositional relation with its audience. Art intends to address a specific audience and/or address it in a particular way. Believing art can relate to its audience without a clear intention is implausible. Thus, audience theorists believe that art can bear a relation to its audience, but it has to be conjoined to a reference to its intention (Zangwill, 1999, p.315). Further, scholars analyse art in terms of its audience (Lukes, 1991; Shelley, 2010). In a study, Lukes (1991) analyses different relationships between art and audience, using the proposition *of, at,* and *above.* For the sake of this research, the most relevant is art *at* its audience (p.70). It is mainly concerned with breaking the status quo and challenging or transforming the political beliefs of its audience. A good example is *Dada* art, which tried to rupture and oppose the bourgeoise art and lifestyle. This art does not accustom any audience and instead tries to dismantle audiences' prejudice and illusions. However, even if this art is the most radical toward its audience, it is still heavily dependent on and limited by its audience. This is simply because Dadaism needs the bourgeois to have something to criticise and rebel against.

The general agreement implies that even if in different forms, there is or can be an intangible relation between art and the audience, although it is not necessary. Nevertheless, to say that art bears an essential relationship to its audience precludes the explanation of this relation. Even if heavily developed in theory, this perspective misses many points. First, art and audience theorists focus more on the possible relation that can form and not on the results of this relation. As this research looks forward to more empirical evidence of this relation, the literature leaves a gap that does not consider questions such as how the audience is triggered to transform or how the art piece acquires political relevance due to the context in which its audience is immersed. Further, ontologically, the audience is always addressed broadly, for instance, without questioning the difference between individual relations with art and community audience. This essay will assess part of the gap left by these scholars, looking at how this relation could stimulate action through individual and community transformation.

Theoretical literature ignores the psychological appeal and influence that art can have on the audience. The second school of thought mentioned above focuses on psychological and social research to fill this gap. The studies under investigation range from art therapy's results in individuals and communities to art as a medium of communication able to trigger social change (Bentz et al., 2021; Kapitan et al., 2011; Roosen et al., 2017). "Art is a transformational act of critical consciousness" (Roosen et al., 2017, p.64) seems to be the central claim on which these studies built up and what they try to demonstrate. A group of researchers undertook a study in Nicaragua proposing a social activist art therapy to boost community development and individual

strengthening. They focused on traumatised communities following the work of the Canter NGO, which aimed at social change by transforming oppressed members of society into the protagonists of building a more human and sustainable reality. These scholars and the NGO employed the participatory action research (PAR) methodology, which involved some community members participating in art therapy retreats. Thanks to that, they discovered that creative art therapy for social transformation was effectively having an impact. Not just achieving the participants' social activism and personal development but convincing them to commit to educating the members of their families and communities toward emancipation and social transformation. Creative art therapy's educational, cross-cultural, healing, and awakening features demonstrated that it could have a societal impact while dealing with traumatised communities connected to oppressive societal structures (Kapitan et al., 2011).

Another demonstrated case of art's societal impact concerns the communication of the climate change crisis. Again, scholars tried to demonstrate how art can educate audiences and engage them in transformative processes (Bentz et al., 2021). Literature compares art and scientific communication, asserting the former as a potential and effective alternative to the latter. Psychological and social research helped demonstrate that artworks can involve narratives and use metaphors that prompt awareness, reflection, and attention while enhancing group identity and shifting social norms. Moreover, art can help visualise and make climate change real, triggering personal and positive emotional responses that would bring change (Roosen et al., 2017). Through powerful aesthetic means, art can provoke emotional and political responses that personalise thematic like climate change, linking issues to the life of their audiences.

A strong point of agreement across the literature is the emotional power of art. For instance, several studies have demonstrated that artworks that stimulate emotional reactions to environmental risks can trigger the tendency to act. Inspirational emotional responses seem the most productive in social transformation as they provoke positive responses that will likely have longer-lasting results. Thus, one of the specific functions of art in this context is emotional manipulation – meaning not eliciting emotions but also modifying them, aiming at cooperation and action on a social and political level (Bentz et al., 2021; Roosen et al., 2017, p.104). Finally, Pelowski and Akiba (2011) claimed a five-stage process that involves the psychological processing of art to demonstrate how it can be transformative and life-changing.

Overall, the literature has demonstrated on a scientific and social level how art can influence and transform its audience, eventually provoking social and political change. Thus, art can be claimed to be a facilitator of social change. However, these studies briefly mention the long-term effect of transformation facilitated by artworks or artistic, educational initiatives. Bentz (et al.,

2021) refer to a positive survey done one year after their study; nonetheless, it does leave open the question if it is enough to assert long-term results. Another point where research is rather general is the extent to which artwork has to be shared among society to achieve its transformational aims. Nevertheless, these studies are instrumental in building the foundation of this research. Indeed, this work does not aim to demonstrate music's psychological effects on people. Instead, it uses the knowledge that art directly affects its audience members to build a logical argument involving art and conflict situations.

2.2 Art in conflict transformation

As the relation between art and its audience was explored, an element is still to be engaged, or rather the role of this relation in conflict contexts. Exploring the literature, it emerged that most relevant studies focus on art's role in social processes involving conflict transformation. Ranging between the theoretical and more empiric studies, scholars argue that the previously mentioned art's properties can be applied in communities that deal with conflict and have a transformational impact.

Firstly, it is essential to understand that conflict transformation is a long-term process of examining the roots and dynamics of a social conflict and using that understanding to redirect the conflict's energy towards building positive relationships (Arai, 2013). Once this concept is comprehended, one can argue that art can be an agent for change as it creates a social space for dialogue, interaction, and empathy. Marcuse claims that this space can enable people to imagine something different from their daily reality and has the potential to create a new consciousness and challenge established realities. Art can raise awareness and understanding of injustices, move the human spirit towards effecting social change, and enhance awareness of themselves and others (Kollontai, Yore, 2015; Naidu-Silverman, 2015). In the previous chapter, it was highlighted that the transformational potential of art starts from individual impact, which then projects into social and community changes. Scholars that deal with art and conflicts argue the same, focusing on art's emotional and emphatic influence on the individual. This is considered by many scholars a fundamental element in constructing peace and understanding the 'other' (Bang, 2016; Kollontai, Yore, 2015). Emotions appear to be again one of the leading factors for social transformation in conflict contexts as well. Clark (2019) synthesises the importance of creative activity and arts in conflict transformation in five points: a change agent, able to rebuild connections with others, healing, having access to non-rational embodied information, and an alternative to legislative justice.

As much as these studies seem ideal and theoretically applicable to real situations, they often lack empirical evidence. Nonetheless, this is not always the case. For instance, scholars have

investigated the use of artistic practices in Cyprus, Pakistan, Nepal, South Africa, Bosnia Herzegovina, and Northern Ireland (Naidu-Silverman, 2015; Tselika, 2019; Zelizer, 2003).

In their ways, in all these places, art had the role of a contact zone addressing the various issues of division in the respective conflicts. In Northern Ireland, for example, many initiatives grew out of art addressing conflict resolution narratives and are still working today through cultural means toward community engagement. In South Africa, similarly, in the aftermath of the apartheid, art challenged the status quo and identarian division. Their success was measured in the growth of artistic initiatives concerning conflict and sectarian separation in these countries, ending in big festivals, expositions, and other cultural events (Tselika, 2019).

Zelizer (2003) addresses art-based transformation efforts within the larger framework of civil society initiatives for peacebuilding. Within this, the author analyses the role of art in Bosnia-Herzegovina during and after the war. While art did not intervene in trying to find conflict resolution, it was successful in its intent of working on fostering relations between groups fragmented by the war. The role of art in Bosnia was relevant for what concerned the post-conflict peacebuilding process, as it facilitated intergroup interaction. The success of these artworks and projects in their community ended up in huge festivals like Sarajevo's (Zelizer, 2003). Cyprus is another example where artistic practices influenced the communities to resist ethnonational segregation. Particularly in Cyprus' case is the artistic collaboration between the two conflicted communities. When cross-contact was restricted, there was a solid bi-communal effort to make art the means through which the two communities could be re-acquainted (Tselika, 2019). Indeed, since 2003 when restrictions were abolished, these joint artistic initiatives have gathered and brought together a growing number of Cypriots, transforming the grassroots artistic effort to challenge the status quo into a communitarian commitment.

Lastly, the Pakistan case is enriching as it implies ideological extremisms. In those territories, there was a clash within the use of arts and culture, especially in youth formation (Naidu-Silverman, 2015). The extremist forces within Pakistan understood that they could shape young people's ideas and identities concerning violence, discrimination, and hatred through arts and cultural products. Recognising the struggle of cultural spaces and the artistic power to forge peace, NGOs and non-state actors have started using it to counter extremism and engage the youth on peace, human rights, and reconciliation issues. These organisations, such as CYADD, managed to change many youths' lives, especially in the reintegration of the ones exposed to violence. CYADD had reached approximately 100'000 youth, and in this way, used artistic initiatives and products to fight fundamentalism and violence directly. Among the success factors, Naidu-Silverman (2015, p.18) lists the importance of broad outreach and the engagement of critical masses on issues of

peace and reconciliation, the use of local traditions and art forms to engage the public, and the creation of alternative narratives to fundamentalist discourses about the history and present.

Scholars provide a satisfying overview of artistic practices' potential in conflict situations; nevertheless, a critical assessment can reveal some unanswered questions. For instance, much of the art discussed here is aim-based and, as the previously discussed art *at* the audience, fundamentally depends on this aim. Then the question arises of whether one should assess such art's value depending on the social value of its aim. Does a 'conflict artwork' lose its value if it loses its aim? Further, the position and agency of the artist within this framework are unclear. It is left undebated if the artist is just an individual or a facilitator or himself an activist for peace and transformation. Furthermore, there is an ontological issue while approaching conflict and peace. Both can have many different causes, drives, and ideas contained in them, and literature tends not to acknowledge them. For instance, what differences can there be approaching a protracted historical conflict compared to a contemporary 'flash' one? On the other hand, what type of peace can art promote? Is it peace based on liberal values or Occidental models? Lastly, there is an issue of legitimacy. Should the change that art influences act on a systematic level, or is it enough to change a few lives to recognise an artwork or practice as legitimate and effective in conflict transformation? This research aims not to answer all these questions but will address some while analysing the musical practices in Israel and Palestine.

To map out the relevant literature, three main intentions stood out. To educate, to leverage emotions and human recognition, and to function as a space for constructive communication and dialogue. These three do not necessarily exclude each other. Instead, they are often the by-product of one another. If the primary intention of artists is to educate, that same education might create space for emotions in one's consciousness, which later might bring to dialogue with the adversary actor. Similarly, leveraging emotion can move someone to inform themselves and re-frame certain narratives. Specifically, the third is not just a primary intention but the overall goal of all the artists' intentions. Creating a space for constructive dialogue and mutual understanding can be considered art's primary tool for change. Dialogue can make adversary parties understand each other's concerns and issues, triggering self-reflexivity and leading to a re-elaboration of the core rationales and patterns of the conflict. Artists finally aim at that goal, not necessarily resolving the conflict but implementing the social structural basis for conflict transformation.

3. Community Art

As the broader relationship between art and conflict was explored, these paragraphs will provide an overview of the work done on Israeli and Palestinian art both in their community and as a form of peaceful expression.

3.1 Representing Self-determination in Israeli and Palestinian Art

Among the most prominent arguments in the academic debate about artistic production in Israel and Palestine is the work on visual sources as one of the few Palestinians' ways of expression: thus, central to their active self-determination and identity (Fisher, 2010; Gandolfo, 2010). For Palestinians, artistic expression meant embodying the past, the present, and the future in contrast to the Zionist narratives and colonial enterprise (Gandolfo, 2015). Ankori's book '*Palestinian Art'* (2006) sums up and covers the main issues tackled by contemporary Palestinian artworks, among which there are loss and ties of homeland, memory, alienation, religion, and revolutionary nostalgic art (Laïdi-Hanieh, 2007). While the debate on Palestinian artistic production and performativity is more uniform, the academic discourse around the Israeli side is more fragmented and complex. The latter varies from art intrinsic to Jewish and Israelite values – as religion, Zionism, and nation – to literature concerned with the critical nature of contemporary Israeli artistic production. However, common elements came out of the research. The literature shows how different types of artistic production reflect on two main themes, namely what it means to be Israelis and the framing of the Others (Amir, 2021; Guilat, 2019; Roei, 2012; Sperber, 2011).

3.2 Art for Peace in Israel and Palestine

Although very relevant, a slightly less present discourse in the academic debate concerns peace and art in Israel and Palestine. Approached as an educative topic, 'peace art' makes viewers believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not static and proposes fantasy solutions (Bernard, 2012). Popular culture, theatre, and street art suggest that people want to imagine a future of political change that stands for a deep desire for peace (Bernard, 2012; Gesser-Edelsburg, 2011). Artists often face the challenge of not hiding the harsh side of the conflict while showing and representing a pacific future (Gesser-Edelsburg, 2011). At the same time, peace art emerges from the victimisation narratives frequently used to explain the conflict, usually promoted by foreign artists such as Banksy. While the latter narrative proposes a vision where Palestinians are not in control of their condition, peace art "has a great deal to say about the contemporary interaction between Palestinians and Israelis" (Gould, 2014, p.102). Lastly, this art is seen as a way to educate, produce, and promote dialogue and peace (Nathan et al., 2014). Thus, peace art provides an insight into contemporary relations between Israelis and Palestinians. It does this through the creation and the exposition of a different future where peace and dialogue are central to the dynamic of those lands.

3.3 Coexistence Music

Musical and artistic enterprises have been taking place in conflict zones for a long time, even though literature did not expand much on them. Music focused on social inclusion in Turkey, South Africa, and Mexico or addressing violence in Cambodia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Ireland. However, artistic and musical collaboration in conflicts appears primarily in the education-to-coexistence area. Musical collaboration that proposed coexistence occurred from the Middle East to South American countries (Hanna, 2015). In Israel and Palestine, musical collaboration often took place under the name of coexistence projects. The latter were multicultural projects aimed at bridging the conflict by bringing musicians, dilettantes and professionals from both sides to play together. The project should provide a space to communicate through music. Musical aesthetical production should have functioned as a site for negotiation and transcendence, bridging cultural and ethnic differences. These projects were driven by the multiculturalist ideals popular during the Oslo Accords (1993) period, initiating a short shift in cultural attitudes and practices. The cultural trajectory expanded and diversified, aiming at a multicultural and polyglot musical production. Short-lived, this period ended at the beginning of the new millennium, after the killing of Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin (1995) and the uprisal of the ultra-nationalist Likud party (1996), giving birth to the Post-Oslo era (Belkind, 2014, p.83; 2021).

Ethnonational tensions, Jewish hegemony, and authoritative responses to dissent voices dominated the beginning of the millennium, making the multicultural initiative's life more difficult. The musical coexistence initiatives faced the overwhelming neo-Zionist ideas that spread throughout the country. They provided an alternative of shared spaces and life through cross-cultural aesthetic and social encounters, promoting an ethos of civic partnership. Building community, partnerships and imaginaries were tools to evoke human centrality in the highly ethnonational context in which they operated. Indeed, the efforts of multicultural musical projects were and are encroached upon by the violent reality of occupation and extremisms (Belkind, 2021). For instance, some examples of multicultural musical projects could be: the Jaffa AJCC (1993), aiming to bring the residents together in educational activities and music, the Arab Jewish Youth Orchestra AJYO (1957) or the Western-Eastern Divan Orchestra (1999), established with the idea that music can serve the basis for intercultural conciliation (Belkind, 2021, p.44; Bergh, Sloboda, 2010). Some of the projects born in the 1990s did not survive the post-Oslo era and the Second Intifada, as they were obstructed both by the governments and a general distrust feeling. In the last decade, new ones arose again, such as the Heartbeat project and the Jerusalem Youth Chorus, involving Arab and Jewish youth in music, or the System Ali, making music in a mixed ensemble and providing the space for fellow debutants to get involved in coexistence music (Hanna, 2015).

Nonetheless, these multicultural projects received different critiques from musicians and intellectuals. Multiculturalism was seen as a way to side-step the crucial societal disputes with the justification of the right to be different. Moreover, it was seen as a romanticisation of the Other, the Arab, and did not contradict Jewish hegemony. It was seen as masking the violence of authority with discourses of equality and respect for differences, finally not freeing itself from the power of neo-liberal capitalism and nationalist ideology (Belkind, 2021, p.87). Further, Palestinian musicians claimed they could not play with Israeli until Palestinian houses were still being destroyed and killings were happening. Differentiating between weak and strong peace, they believed that without strong peace, any musical collaboration would have been "unrealistic" and "dishonest." Finally, they stated that every musical collaboration for Palestinian musicians was a reminder of all the failed peace processes that left them in misery (Wong, 2009, p.279). Nonetheless, musical collaborations are still taking place, making themselves heard by many.

4. Research Design

4.1 Constructivist conflict transformation

Worth a mention is a set of concepts and frameworks that directly interest the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The latter falls below the label of intractable conflict: a prolonged, viciously violent conflict with severe implications for the involved and global communities. In such a conflict, parties cannot win or do not believe in the possibility of a peaceful resolution, thus continuing the confrontation for long-lasting times (Bar-Tal, 2007; 2013; Coleman et al., 2014). Intractable conflicts are rooted in how we make sense of the world, in a sense of reality shaped by a long process of meaning-making through social interaction (Coleman et al., 2014, p.714). Thus, psychological and social processes are central to the conflict, and change is to be brought from critical reflection, dialogue, and confrontation. As previously explored, these are capacities and levels on which art is used to work on, to trigger conflict transformation. Bar-Tal (2007; 2013) develops a sociopsychological framework to analyse intractable conflicts. The belief behind this approach is that human beings are the ones to create, protract, and, thus, end conflicts. Even if leaders are in charge of making decisions, society members are equally involved in these conflicts. Together, the two form a sociopsychological repertoire of beliefs, norms, emotions, and ideas, which has to change on both levels to transform the conflict. The sociopsychological framework tries to unravel this set of beliefs underlying the possible evolution of the conflict (p.18).

Conflict transformation is another concept often mentioned but has yet to be analysed. It is essential to differentiate it from conflict resolution, conflict management, and the various forms of peacebuilding. Even if one could argue that they all fall under the same field of analysis, conflict

transformation emphasises the need for systematic change in social structures, relationships, and contextual conditions that gave rise to the conflict (Kriesberg, 2011). Differently from the previously mentioned concepts, conflict transformation does not necessarily aim at resolving the conflict; instead, it acknowledges its endurance and focuses on its evolution. There are different ways in which a conflict can transform: actors, issues, rules, and structural transformations. All of them encompass a reframing of the discourses that constitute the social structure of the conflict. This comes of use especially in Azar's intractable protracted social conflicts, where peace seems unachievable, but the transformation is not. The latter happens through a choreography of the previously mentioned elements. However, 'structure' is the most relevant to this research. It means a transformation in the relationship pattern between the conflict actors. When issues in conflict concern particular asymmetries, such as power relationships determined by ethnicity or class, a social structure transformation can be a precondition for conflict evolution. Musicians can aim at this transformation through a fifth element, at the level of events that make the day-to-day history of the conflict settle long patterns of antagonistic, destructive behaviour and negative communication (Miall, 2007). Musicians may alter these flows and open the possibility of de-escalation and re-framing of the conflict, stepping in the social structural transformation of the conflict.

To analyse a conflict in relation to its cultural rationales and products, Constructivist theory, among others, seems the most suitable. The claim is that conflictual societal structures are socially constructed through identity formation, interests, discursive practices, knowledge and norms, ideologies, history, and culture (Jackson, 2009, p.172). The historicity and cultural nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict make constructivism a fitting theory to analyse conflict transformation and social change. As was discussed before, artistic practices can trigger social action by shaping identities and consciousnesses. Art can be a change agent if one follows the constructivist approach, where conflicts are constructed by identity and norms. This framework not only perfectly fits whit the intent, interest, and methods of this research but can enrich it with social theoretical backups.

4.2 Co-produced Music - Sources

This research will inquire into co-produced collaborative music. This definition encompasses all the genres and types of musical productions that involve members of both Israeli and Palestinian communities and encompass an equal share of the creative process. This choice is motivated by two main rationales. Firstly, analysing actors with a broad range of representativeness and reachability would be ideal while examining conflict transformation. Co-produced music can fit these requirements as it represents both communities, reaching out to millions and potentially innovating the conflict narratives with unconventional contributions. Secondly, this research focuses on

musicians' intentions, which can be unconsciously present or well thought out. Co-producing music pushes musicians to put their aims and ideas on the table to negotiate and compromise. This process forces musicians to make their intentions clear to their partners and themselves, being them reflected in their music. For this reason, co-produced music becomes an ideal place to investigate intentions. While sampling the sources, other means were used. For instance, the co-production had to happen between an equal and balanced number of participants from both communities. Further, relevance in the cultural milieu was considered while choosing the sources, as projects that have reached broad audiences become more influential than local ones. Even if excelling in quality, these projects are pretty thin in quantity, which means that the number of relevant co-productions is limited and is not the most frequent phenomenon in Israel-Palestine. However, this research considers all the major contemporary ones that still produce music.

The Dugri Duo demonstrated to be an ideal case study under these requirements. The Duo, formed by a Jewish-Israeli and a Palestinian, come from very different backgrounds and have grown up absorbing the traditional narratives of the conflict. Their music directly addresses the conflict and the conditions both communities have to live in, reaching millions worldwide. Naturally, they cannot be considered representative of the musical milieu and have their limitation, such as gendered voices and their agenda within the conflict. Nonetheless, they remain a great case to investigate intentions. Other case studies will be analysed as well. The latter involves Yael Deckelbaum and the Mothers, a group composed of female singers coming from Jewish, Palestinian, Christian, and secular backgrounds; the Jerusalem Youth Chorus (JYC), an initiative composed of Israeli and Palestinian youth; different orchestras among which the Galilee Chamber Orchestra, the Divan Orchestra, and the East and West Jerusalem Orchestra; the rap ensemble called the System Ali that encompasses Jewish and Arabic members.

4.3 Interviews and Content Analysis in Co-produced Music - Methodology
The Dugri Duo is central to this research as the primary case study to investigate key intentions in musical co-production. As Dugri is not necessarily representative of other musicians, the research will look into other co-produced music to establish the plausibility of the results and see if the discovered intentions resonate in their work. The Duo will be analysed under three aspects: interviews, music, and social practices. An open-ended approach will first guide the Dugri investigation to discover what new intentions might not be theorised by the literature, avoiding 'cherry-picking' the information that demonstrates this thesis argument. Secondly, Dugri will be addressed following the research hypothesis, investigating three areas: the challenging of conflictual narratives, emotional leverage on trauma, and inspiration used as an educational tool.

This research is an exploratory analysis; it does not try to establish all musicians' aims in Israel-Palestine but to discover empirical evidence of the key plausible musicians' intentions in conflict transformation. Therefore, a semi-structured qualitative interview with the Dugri Duo is more appropriate than quantitative structured interviews. The interview aims to discover insights into collaborative musicians' aims, ideas, and backgrounds. These topics are often embedded in dialectical processes rather than clear answers. For this reason, the fluid nature of semi-structured interviews and the liberty they leave to the interviewee enable deep insights to come up and highlight personal perspectives (Given, 2008). The researcher has entertained the interview systematically, from broader questions leaving space for fresh ideas, and later guiding the interviewee into the research hypothesis, trying not to influence their answers. The whole interview orbited around the intentions of the Duo, firstly letting them explain their aims, ideas, and processes and subsequently suggesting the intention that came up from the literature to see if they related to them or were extraneous. This enabled the researcher to check if the literature propositions could be empirically demonstrated meanwhile generating new ideas.

Similarly, comparative qualitative content analysis will approach the music and social practices of both Dugri and the other case studies. They will be analysed in function of what came out of the interview, both from the hypothesis and open-ended parts. This will serve to do a 'plausibility check' of the intention suggested by the interview, considering them as empirical evidence. Music will be regarded as a communicative act bearing a specific meaning and intention rather than analysing the art's aesthetic. Qualitative content analysis makes valid inferences from data to their context, where data is the content of the communication. This technique encompasses 'what' a message communicates, 'who', 'why', 'how', the 'effects' and 'on whom'.
It addresses questions regarding a communicative act's psychological, institutional, and cultural surroundings (Krippendorff,1989). Thyme et al. (2013) propose a method to analyse art's content qualitatively. Similarly to traditional content analysis, it works through codes and pattern recognition, although on two levels. The manifestation level, closer to the original concrete message, can be seen as a phenomenological description of the art piece. The abstract latent meaning, distant from the original product, can be seen as a hermeneutic interpretation. Music will be approached by looking at patterns of symbolic and concrete meaning communication. Once these patterns are discovered, deductive reasoning will lead to the inference of the musicians' intentions.

This research aims to gather empirical evidence of the musician's intentions. The latter is not the by-product of their music's meaning-creation, instead is tied to musicians' first-account thoughts and beliefs. Therefore, referring back to the research question, directly turning to the

musician to find an answer makes logical sense. The interview is the fittest methodology to achieve this goal, as it provides the researcher with the tool to find the answers directly from the analysed actor. Moreover, interviewing provides the empirical features necessary for this research to limit speculation. Nevertheless, to establish the plausibility of this evidence, one has to check if they resonate with other musicians' work. Considering music as a communicative act, we are to understand the musicians' intentions and goals by qualitatively understanding the content of these music initiatives. Qualitative content analysis enables this research by providing the right tools to infer communicative means.

4.4 Limitations

This research might face different limitations. Firstly, the language barriers between the researcher and the primary sources, often in Hebrew or Arabic, may limit the scope of this analysis. Secondly, personal biases and interpretative flows might bring some speculation to how the sources will be approached and the results understood. However, the research will try to control this possibility by maintaining objective perspectives that follow the logical patterns between the sources, helping itself with the interview. While the range of the sources analysed will not be a limitation, as collaborative music enterprises are not so numerous in the territory, the space in which they will be analysed might be. Some of the analysed musical ensembles have an extensive repertoire, and this research does not have the means to approach them all.

4.5 Three Hypothesised Intentions

The literature has individuated three main areas through which arts can influence conflict transformation: education, emotional manipulation, and space generation. Nevertheless, this may not necessarily fit or may be modified according to the nature of the conflict. For instance, this research hypothesised different aims for art to pursue transformation in the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Firstly, intractable conflicts are deeply rooted in underlying narratives normalised in everyday relations between the actors. To achieve change, the arts have to address these narratives and go further by challenging them. To subversively challenge them becomes a possible intention of musicians in conflict transformation. It is common for communities to be profoundly scarred by traumatic experiences in protracted conflicts. In this regard, musicians could intend to leverage this trauma to trigger or evoke change and reflection in their audience. Lastly, the audience might need an opportunity to escape an intractable conflict's violent and complex reality. Perhaps, musicians may intend to become an educational inspiration for their audience. The artists analysed in this research are all collaborative and represent the voice of both the communities at

stake. The collaborative musicians' goal may be to represent both communities by bridging the conflict and creating space for dialogue.

5. Analysis

The following chapter will analyse the interview and the musicians' content. It will be divided into four sections. Firstly, it will expose what came out of the open interview, exploring the fresh insights Dugri provided to the researcher while answering broad questions about their intentions and process. Then, given what was gathered from the first layer of the interview, the following section will use both the interview and content to delve into the hypothesis mentioned above. To each proposition will follow a section focused on the Dugri and one that compares the other case studies. Lastly, a discussion section will explore the main findings related to the hypothesis and leave space to discuss the new ideas and intentions not drawn by the literature.

5.1 Dugri – Let's Talk Straight about Intentions – Interview

The encounter of a Jewish Israeli educator, Uriya Rosenman, and a Palestinian rapper, Sameh SAZ Zakout, gave birth to a great and noble initiative, the Dugri project. Originally Arabic and nowadays used in Hebrew slang, 'Dugri' means 'straightforward', to speak freely saying what is on one's mind. That is what the duo is doing through their music, through their rap songs, lectures, workshop, and shows. To take a step back, this venture developed after Uriya's two-year interview project around Israel, gathering the most information from Jews and Arabs. The aim was to learn the leading narratives that dominate the conflict, how they differ, and what aliments them. What, in Uriya's words, was a spiritual journey led him to Sameh, an already-established rapper who lived his life between peace camps and mixed communities. Together they used the information gathered to produce a song where the two straight talk, dugri, to one another – spitting all the stereotypes and narratives that keep the two communities so far from one another, even if sharing the same land. Given the success of '*Let's Talk Straight #1*', which reached approximately half a billion people through media and social media, the two decided to continue their project, looking for new music, collaboration, meeting, and spaces where to let their voices be heard. This research is one of the spaces where they contributed, through an interview, inquiring about their intention and how they relate to the hypothesis of this thesis.

  Indeed, what came out of the interview is that the Dugri are motivated by the desire to communicate an internal journey. Coming from opposite backgrounds, the two had to open themselves to one another, eventually becoming best friends and opening to the 'other side' of the conflict. What both describe as an internal journey as human beings consisted in sitting down and talking, discovering, learning, and doubting the knowledge and truth they grew up in. It brought

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them to say, "Enough is enough!" (Annex1, 00:01:20). Enough of what seems to be the most frequent term in the interview: 'manipulation'. Throughout the discussion, the two heavily highlighted how the decision-makers, politicians, and the media had lied to the Israeli and Palestine populations. These lies divided and segregated the two communities, ultimately feeding a conflict that profits a few and damages the most. This manipulation is at the base of their intention. To straight talk out of these lies, of these manipulating narratives, is what the Dugri are aiming at while producing their content. Their music aims at "putting everything on the table" so that the young generations, still in time to make a change, can identify and resonate with their message. They are ultimately creating awareness and awakening critical thinking so that people may come together to emancipate themselves from the lies fed to them until then, building a future together. Music is the tool they use to express the journey they went through in order to provoke it in others as well.

Authenticity is vital in Dugri's music: the authentic communication of one's process and how it was influenced by meeting the other side. The duo does not intend to preach and distance themselves from peace and coexistence politics, as they believe it does not address the complexity of their reality straightforwardly. Indeed, they distance themselves from politics and focus on and recognise the grassroots society. They do not aim at changing the world and political structures; they intend to change the human being, the individual, as they are "in the business of changing themselves" (00:15:30). The motivation, intention, and goal of Dugri fall all under the same idea. Their cause and motivation are to "get free" from the mechanism and lies surrounding them. A strong distrust of the political and elite authority motivates them. For this reason, they intend to raise awareness and talk straight to their audience, to communicate the journey that made them realise how the conflictual system is corrupt and self-alimenting. In this way, they hope to awaken the individuals and bring them to take action for their mutually beneficial future.

Their intentions, motivation, and hopes are so close to one another due to a concentration on what can be done in the present with the tools that they have. They both know their music will not resolve the conflict and that it is "hard to build, so easy to destroy". For this reason, they do not focus on some far-reaching goal that one day might be achieved; the Dugri concentrate on making their intention concretely influence their audience. Such primary intention comprises different elements that can be defined as sub-intentions. These have their specific aims, but all converge under the umbrella of the primary one, reinforcing it. The three intentions hypothesised by this research are not the main ones for the Dugri but rather sub-intentions that serve their primary one. The following sections will explore these hypotheses by considering them as sub-intentions and how they resonate in other case studies and relate to Dugri's primary intention.

5.2 Subversive re-framing of established conflictual narratives

The narrative structure of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict traces back to before the independence of the Jewish state, deeply infused with trauma, self-determination, and diasporic feelings. It is essential to acknowledge that these narratives do not necessarily determine the future of the conflict. Outdated and highly instrumentalised, the knowledge that they carry is accused by our Duo of feeding the conflict for the benefit of a ruling elite. The two take a clear stance on the topic, believing that recognising the conflict history should be the start of the change, not what stops it. History and narratives have been modified and manipulated by the ruling elite to keep alimenting the conflict, letting the two communities be divided by walls. The duo explains how these narratives are continuously re-proposed over and over by the "screaming leaders" and the media to the population, preventing them from opening up to the other side. Hence, one of Dugri Duo's objectives is to challenge these narratives.

Undoubtedly the musical style of the Duo and the lyrics recall subversive music. Hip Hop, or Rap, is music born in the African American community to express the struggle of living in the American ghettos and the discontent against the institutions that ignored or worsened the decaying realities of their world. Reference to the African American racism struggles goes further by referring to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the George Floyd episode of 2020. The BLM and the 2020 events, connected to the subversive uprise against the institutions, are directly referenced in Dugri's second main song, *'Munfas – Let's Talk Straight #2'* (2021). The chorus repeats the chant "I Can't Breathe", which was screamed by the vast masses rioting in the US against police brutality. Here they compare the Jewish and Arab communities and voices suffocated by the ruling class, and they call for thinking out of the box and taking action. Indeed, in an Instagram post, the duo writes, "Where I [they] come from, there are dozens if not hundreds of cases of 'Floyd Palestinians'" (Instagram post, Dugri page, May 2nd). The Ali System composed a freestyle called *'I Can't Breathe'* (2020), where they make similar metaphors and comparisons as the Dugri, claiming how their society is suffocated by hatred and lies. To return to the Dugri, the 'Straight Talk' style also does not endorse political correctness or whitewashing; instead, it is disturbingly honest and touches sensitive topics without filters or limitations. In their first song, they exemplify this style at their best. 'Spitting' out at each other all the stereotypes that aliment the segregation of the two populations, they embody these narratives and at the same time question them by highlighting their hypocrisies.

Their style, content, and how they communicate their message indicate a subversive way of challenging the conflict. Nonetheless, the Dugri use another term while saying their "compass is their doubt" (00:43:40). They "use art to doubt the narratives" (00:39:09): to doubt things that they

once considered to be true, and that now they reject. They doubt the narrative that the conflict can be just won or surrendered, as politicians advocate, and that silence the moderate voices that want to live. Questioning and doubting knowledge normalised in the conflict can also be regarded as a challenge, although not in a traditional sense. The Dugri do not propose a solution and do not re-frame the conflict. Instead, questioning the established narratives aims to provoke an internal change process led by critical thinking and awareness. This process should trigger change and action in the audience by letting them be the origin of the re-framing, which reconnects with their primary intention.

5.2 i. Shared Doubt and Challenging

Yael Deckelbaum and the Mothers' (Y&M) most famous song '*Prayers of the Mothers'* (2016), supported the march of hope, led by the movement of "Women Wage Peace", in which thousands of Israeli and Palestinian women marched together in a joint prayer for peace. Unlike the Dugri, this song has a ritualistic style, made of more archaic sounds and choruses in a contemporary key. It uses symbolism and traditional tunes —considered by Naidu-Silverman (2015) fundamental to reach out to the native people— to look similar to a holy prayer for peace. In this way, peace becomes more religious than conflict, where often religion gets instrumentalised. The song recalls a chant, probably addressing the march for which it became the anthem and continues to resonate with millions worldwide. The connection with the peace movement suggests that the song's content is intrinsic to activist messages and ideas. For instance, the 'wind' comes across the song many times. Symbolically, the wind stands for change: the saying 'wind of revolution', eliminating the old and bringing the new, is often used (Rhys, 2021). 'Melting walls' and 'opening gates' are used by Y&M to address changes in the material and spiritual conditions of the two populations. Unlike Dugri, their language does not directly address the conflict's narratives, although it provides a symbolical spectrum as communicative as straight talking.

Y&M question that a different future is impossible and believe that reconciliation is more accessible than how the narrative frames it, achievable if one acts. Their call for collaborative action, primarily directed to women, is the way through which they challenge the conflictual narratives. Similarly to Dugri, their intention is not to directly challenge the narratives of the conflict but rather give the tools and trigger a transformation process in the audience that will bring them to challenge and eventually re-frame the established narratives. Another feature Y&M shares with Dugri is the distrust in authority. In their song '*Take Me Home'* (2017), Y&M call out politicians for not being representatives of the people's will but instead following their warmonger interests. Demonstrating how they position themselves in contrast to the narratives of "fake

security" proposed by political elites and highlighting that at the centre of the conflict, there are just people that want to live.

"I met the one who is nothing without me" (Jerusalem Youth Chorus, 2019, min.00:00:45) sings an Arab young man, referring to the intrinsic bond between Jewish and Arabs, contradicting the narrative that sees the two as necessarily divided and incompatible. This idea appeared in other musical pieces such as Meir Ariel's "*Pain Song"* (n.d.), where he sings, "At every sentence that you say in Hebrew, sits an Arab (…)". The JYC, in their song with MELINDA (2019), express their struggle and hopes. They sing lines about police brutality, boiling blood, and reasons to love. Alternatively, more 'dugri' in the '*It's time to Wake up'* (2020) song, the youth mention the already heard lies that fed them up, alimenting the conflict and the absolute need to wake up and "rise up" against these narratives. Most importantly, they propose singing, their singing, as the key to freeing themselves. Their singing is a metaphor for their voices, the voices of the youth that want to live in peace, which becomes the primary weapon to emancipate themselves from the conflictual narratives.

A resemblance with the Dugri comes across here. Both intend to call for the people to get free from the narratives and lies that aliment the conflict. The voices to be heard, the moderates' voices repressed by the conflict, are reconfirmed to be the ones that have to rise. Indeed, as the YJC call to "force the limbs and unify" and "rise and sing for our pain", all the musicians and musical pieces analysed in this section share the intention of provoking and triggering action in their audience. Through straight talking, religious symbolism, and freedom metaphors, they challenge the static nature of the conflict, aiming at awakening their audience to make them the protagonist of the change that has to come.

5.3 Emotional Leverage and Community Deep-Rooted Trauma

Trauma, or traumatic experiences, is often recalled in co-produced music within the conflict. Nonetheless, it is probably the most complex issue that musicians can address. To touch upon trauma without falling into instrumentalisation seems to be a big challenge for musicians. Handling trauma can evoke emotions on a deeper level of consciousness, provoking positive and constructive change. At the same time, the topic's sensibility can trigger rejection and quick harmful or destructive answers. As Dugri confirms, in the Israeli-Palestinian reality everybody has lived through trauma, especially regarding diasporic feelings, violence, and oppression. Thus, as much as it is challenging to address, it is even unavoidable when dealing with the complex reality of the conflict. The Dugri assess both in their song and in the interview that they address two communities suffering from PTSD with their straightforward style. Indeed, especially in their first video, "All

about Trauma" (00:47.42), the Dugri talk about the loss of land, military service, violence and racism, the Nakba, and terrorism, with no fear or delicacy. Nonetheless, even if trauma is addressed in their song, it is not clear if it is part of their intention to build change from it.

"There is no way to use trauma to get to your goal" (00:47.42), they state in the interview. They do not aim to leverage or instrumentalise trauma but try to hear from it. They do not seek to find painful places and use them to achieve their intention; contrarily, they focus on what they want to communicate. Nonetheless, a few minutes before, in the same interview, they claimed that their content touched upon painful places without political correctness to evoke emotions and encourage talk about the harsh reality of the conflict (00:13:09). This duality can be interpreted in two ways. The first would be a misunderstanding between the interviewee and the interviewer. Dugri intended to express that one should not use trauma to achieve goals such as visibility or fame. The second would mean that the use of trauma in one's music does not result from a clear intention. In the musicians ' consciousness, the desire to talk about and acknowledge the trauma through discussion differs from wanting to explicitly mention trauma to provoke reactions and change. The common denominator between this confusion of intentions is the will to creatively address trauma to communicate the message of emancipation, which Dugri believes. Change and transformation in the audience then become a possible byproduct of this addressing, while not the primary intention of the artist. As previously mentioned, trauma is one of the most complex matters in arts, especially if you are deeply involved. Thus, stating one's intention can result in confusion rather than the clarity that distinguishes their other aims. It is to be noticed how this sub-intention also aims to contribute to their main one.

5.3 i. Trauma as common ground

Bearing what came out of the interview in mind, one can approach other musicians' work. For instance, in Y&M, the first element to be analysed is the ensemble's name. Apart from the indicative gender of the group, 'The Mothers', in a conflict situation, refers to one of the worst traumas that someone can experience, the loss of a child. The group addressed the mothers who lost a child or whose child's security is at stake, evoking a maternal emotional involvement in their music. In their song '*Prayer of the Mothers'*, Y&M acknowledge and relate to this trauma and uses it as a starting point to sing for change. Like a 'no more' chant, they start from the trauma to claim a transformation to stop unnecessary youth deaths. To do that, the song refers to the relationship between a child and its mother, focusing on the mother's possibility to nurse and grow her child without fearing for their life. This kind of trauma can risk alimenting hate and revenge sentiments. However, the ensemble highlights the commonality of this pain and calls for change. It addresses

Israeli and Palestinian mothers to get together and act for change based upon their shared sentiments. "Bring them peace," says the '*Prayer of the Mothers',* encouraging the mothers to act toward the peace of their children. Analysing the work of Y&M in the key of the Dugri interview, one could say that the group do not effectively leverage traumatic experience to achieve or manipulate a specific emotional response. Instead, traumatic experiences are addressed as a common ground and used to unify. The difference between the just-stated intentions is thin but fundamental to understanding the aims of the musicians.

Another pattern that often comes across when musicians deal with trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is inevitably the attachment to the land. From Y&M's '*The Land'* (2017) to JYC's '*Home'* (2014), the musicians refer to the diasporic feeling that characterised the history of both the communities involved in the conflict. Reconciliation to the land, the bare connection to the soil, and the happiness of returning home are usually used in these songs. Addressing the Diaspora is not new to art in those territories, especially in Palestinian art, although these musicians propose them in a different key. For instance, while scholars like Ankori (2006) explain that a common theme is the loss of the land, distinctively, this music proposes the return and reconciliation with it. The difference between the two symbolises how one is focused on division and the past, while the other proposes reunification and a new future. Thus, trauma takes a different form.

Another type of mention of traumas is found in the Ali System. The ensemble makes music tackling life in the peripheries and how it is to live as a minority in Israel. Similarly to the Dugri, they approach sensitive topics critically and hard-hitting, trying to maintain authenticity. In this way, they address many of the difficulties that Arab and Jewish people face in the suburbs, such as poverty and discrimination. Again, unpleasant experiences or trauma are framed as uniting people, transcending their religious or ethnic backgrounds. Indeed, this analysis showed that these artists have one common intention regarding community trauma. Musicians aim to propose trauma as something shared by the two communities, not dividing them. They intend to propose trauma as the common ground from which the Israeli and Arabs should unite to act toward a mutually beneficial future.

5.4 Education through Musical Inspiration
The reality of a protracted intractable conflict is highly disillusioning and generates scepticism about possible transformation. The narratives that fed the population and the traumatic experience that affected every side inevitably generated a climax of distrust and reluctance in a new future. To break the wall created by these feelings, musicians must first provide hope and encouragement. Inspiration is undoubtedly a term that frequently comes across in Dugri's interview, especially

regarding the educational aspect of their work. The literature claims that inspiration is one of the most effective social tools for positive and long-lasting outcomes (Roosen et al., 2017, p.104). Thus, the musicians may aim to inspire their audience to let them then approach an educational process leading to understanding and awareness. In this regard, Uriya explains that this side of their content and project is fundamental due to his educational background. Indeed, he says: "the educational aspect of our work is a huge one because our work is supposed to inspire. It is supposed to open people's eyes towards a different perspective or aspect of reality hidden from us during our day-to-day." (00:52:22)

The Duo meets with students, youth audiences, and everybody willing to listen to them to inspire them. The Dugri do not mean to substitute leadership or provide an inspirational political alternative. Nonetheless, they aim to communicate their trust-building journey. In this regard, their friendship becomes symbolic and encouraging: since they made it, everybody can. Uriya says, "Follow me", acknowledging the other side, being able to shake hands and apologise. The Duo is inspirational and educational by being an example of what is possible and showing the process of making it possible. They aim to evoke emotion to open up their audience to education. The Dugri intends to inspire, achieve, and transmit awareness about the complexities of their reality and to go over the superficial level proposed by the mainstream narratives. Sameh explains that music is particularly useful for their project because music can inspire people. "Music (…) will not stop the bloodshed (…), But music at least can give you time or a short period to breathe, understand more, and sometimes even try to enjoy your life" (01: 11: 49). Thus, music mixed with education provide the right inspiration and triggering point to reflect. The Dugri bring one step further the educational feature of their content by dedicating a slice of their project to that. They host workshops and lectures in their communities and internationally to explain their content and promulgate their inspirational message.

5.4 i. Ensembles and Orchestras Inspiring and Educating

A similar project can be found in the Ali System. More than the pioneering work of the ensemble that, with music, tries to achieve social and political change in civil equality, they opened a set of educative activities and spaces. The System Ali house hosts artistic activities, workshops, conferences, and many other projects to raise awareness and sensibility in young artists about topics such as segregation, racism, or police and gender violence (System Ali, n.d.). Similarly to Dugri, they believe that the mixture of art and music with education is an excellent tool for establishing spaces for collaboration, respect, and tolerance. Notwithstanding their music's inspirational features that promote a shared society and an inclusive discourse, System Ali encourages the youth to

engage with the arts as an inspiration process. They aim to promote art as a space for community encounters through partnership and collaboration in the production process. They intend to establish a creative platform from where a new generation will lead to another societal model. In this sense, art is not necessarily what inspires, but engagement with it, especially in collaboration, does.

Following these principles, engaging in collaborative music becomes inspirational and educational in two main ways. First, playing and pursuing an artistic process with your antagonist is inspiring and educational for an audience, as it provides an example to follow and inspirational educative content. Second, engagement in musical practices is itself educational and bridges the conflict for the artists. While all the musicians analysed in this research exemplify these ways, the joint orchestras may do it at their best. Indeed, this might be the most 'ancient' manifestation of coexistence music, taking form in many projects such as the Galilee Chamber Orchestra, the East and West Jerusalem Orchestra, and the Divan Orchestra. In particular, the latter is considered the most long-lived and *par excellence* example of coexistence musical initiatives.

Similarly to the Dugri, the Divan Orchestra started from the friendship of one of the most renowned Palestinian scholars, Edward Said, and a Jewish-Israeli conductor, Daniel Barenboim. Born out of the lack of space and means to communicate positively, the orchestra aims to provide alternative ways to address the conflict and learn that there are partners for peace on each side. They aim to fight ignorance through humanism and collaboration, enacted in the dialogue created by the universal language of music ("Divan Orchestra Web portal", n.d.). Commonly with the other orchestras, this reflects in their music, mainly played by young musicians and showing different imprints from Western to Eastern symphonies. These orchestras aim to bridge and transcend the conflict, establishing a stage where music can educate constructive dialogue and interactions. Inspiring becomes a self-process for the involved musicians —as confirmed by the Dugri in the interview—a step forward to opening to the other side. The large number of musicians involved and the dialectic space they create aim to become a symbol of coexistence for audiences that will find a break from the conflict, perhaps a possibility for learning and being inspired.

5.5 Discussion

The analysis suggests and partially confirms the research's hypothesis on the musicians' sub-intentions. They are accurate to a certain extent as they vary in manifestation. For instance, the intent to subversively challenge underlying narratives of the conflict manifests itself through doubt. Doubting and questioning a particular narrative can be considered as a challenge since it is an uncomfortable, disruptive act toward normalised knowledge. Even if musicians do it in their characteristic way, such as straight-talking or through symbolism, they all use doubt and

questioning to challenge what is commonly agreed as the lies that the political elite has fed them for decades. Motivated by emancipation and a strong desire for freedom, doubting, instead of oppositional political claims, results as the tool musicians use to express their distrust toward the authorities and the narratives they propose. However, this doubt is aimed not at the politicians but at their audience. By doubting and questioning, they intend to trigger critical thinking and awareness in their audience to bring them to re-frame the reality of the conflict by themselves. In this way, coproduced music reflects the intention suggested by the literature claiming that art aims at challenging and re-shaping established realities and truths (Kollontai, Yore, 2015; Naidu-Silverman, 2015), although not being a leader in this process but providing the audience with the tools to do it. Indeed, it reinforces the belief that art can use metaphors, reflection, and unconventional narratives to trigger social shifts and identity formation (Roosen et al., 2017).

While the intention to challenge conflictual narratives seems evident in the musicians' actions and ideas, the relation with trauma is shadier. Scholars have widely discussed the emotional power of art in conflict, often claiming artists aim at evoking certain emotions to raise awareness and activate change as a sort of emotional manipulation (Bentz et al., 2021; Roosen et al., 2017). While this seems a conscious and wilful intention in the literature, this study has demonstrated that the relationship between musicians and emotion-evoking is much more complex. The musicians fully involved in a traumatic experience cannot escape it but, at the same time, do not want to instrumentalise it. As this concerns the personal sphere of the musicians, Dugri's interview helps to understand what is a conscious intention compared to what could be a by-product of one's creative production. Nonetheless, a common denominator exists in the relationship between musicians and trauma. While usually politicians and media use traumatic experiences as a rationale for division, contrarily, musicians aim to emphasise and frame trauma as the unifying ground between the communities. Even if not equal, trauma is, between the many differences, the one thing the two populations share. Musicians aim at setting trauma as a common ground base to call for unity and stop the violence. Acknowledging each other's traumas is proposed as the starting point for building a mutually beneficial future. Different from the literature's framing, it still emphasises empathy for each other's trauma as a means for recognition, leading to a common effort for change (Bang, 2016; Kollontai, Yore, 2015).

Lastly, inspiring has been considered one of the artistic ways most likely to trigger positive, long-lasting transformations in conflict (Bentz et al., 2021). Educational art's features are theorised to give the population a break from the conflictual narratives and find alternatives (Naidu-Silverman, 2015). In the case of coproduced music in Israel-Palestine, the two combine, intending to fight reluctance, distrust, and ignorance. The musicians aim to be an example people can follow.

They aim to prove, exemplify, and inspire the process of trust-building and dialogue the audience has to pursue to achieve transformation. Their music aims to inspire people to undertake change as it provides motifs that go against the status quo, becoming closely revolutionary. At the same time, they do not aim just at inspiring with their music but making musical practice the way in which people can get inspired. Participating in musical activities and collaboration aims to build partnerships and open the practitioners to others. Indeed, many musicians and ensembles have parallel activities to their music production that aim at mixing music and education.

However, one has to consider that, as Dugri says, collaboration is often seen as normalisation. Hence, the collaboration between a Jew and a Palestinian is often seen as normalising the brutalities and violations to which Palestinians are subjected, and sometimes vice versa. For this reason, while dealing with inspiration and education, musicians might find many difficulties in reaching out to the audiences most affected by the conflict. 'No collaborations without strong political peace' is often heard (Wong, 2009, p.279). In this regard, musicians need to combine all the analysed sub-intentions if they want to reach out and inspire the communities. As challenging conflictual narratives, addressing and acknowledging traumas can assure the audience that the musicians are not trying to whitewash or normalise the abuses and violence. In this way, they let the audience open themselves to be inspired and educated by the message the musicians want to communicate.

5.5 i. New intentions

The previously analysed and discussed intentions were revealed to be sub-intentions that combine under primary intentions highly present in the Dugri and eventually shared by the other inquired artists. Literature mistakenly considered sub-intention as primary ones working on their own and briefly mentions, if at all, their correlation and what appears to be plausible main intentions of musical coproducers in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict transformation.

The musicians are pooled with the same intent of triggering the internal transformation of their audience and calling them to act. For instance, doubting the narratives that fed the conflict aims to trigger the critical thinking and awareness that will lead the listener to act and emancipate from the lies. Addressing trauma as something shared by the segregated communities aims to unify the audience and act to stop the spreading of more traumatic experiences. Inspiring to make the audience aware and educated of their reality's complexity and open up to dialogue with the other side encourages them to act and work for a mutually beneficial future and societal model. All these converge into the musicians' aim to call the people to be the protagonists of their change. They provide the awakening tools for the people to rise and to make their voices heard from the

grassroots level, the ordinary people, against the lies that the top level continued to feed them. Indeed, all the analysed musicians aim their music at the ordinary audience. Some focus more on youth or women, but generally, they all aim at the so-called moderates. There is a prevailing belief behind this choice, which is that the majority of the people, the moderates, have no reason or benefit from hate; instead, they want to live everyday life without fearing for their future. Musicians aim at the moderates to trigger their desire for emancipation from the ruling class, encouraging them to make their voices heard. Indeed, agreeing with one claim scholars made: art, as music, aims at changing the individual to transform society rather than the contrary (Bentz et al., 2021, p.689).

Another intention that emerges from the musicians' production and analysis, but is not mentioned by the literature, is to represent the voice of the moderates. While politics do not represent and suffocate the latter, music becomes the way in which these voices can be acknowledged and heard. Musicians "do not have a solution but have an approach" (1:08:00). By representing the moderates' voices, the musicians aim to provide these communities with a launch pad and support. They explicitly affiliate with them, differently from peace politics. While calling them to rise, the musicians aim to do the first step for the moderates, amplifying their voices and agency through their songs and works. Unlike political representatives, who propose something for the people, they function as the megaphone of the people's voice.

Regarding silenced voices, the interview suggested that a possible intention is to amplify the women's voices in the conflict. The Dugri explain that they will soon focus on women's voices by expanding their collaboration with female artists. They claim that although half of the population is female, their voices are not heard enough. Indeed, this commitment is already pursued by Y&M, which in this research has been analysed under other terms but whose primary interest is to make women's voices loud and clear, highlighting the intent of gender equalising the voices and narratives of the conflict. Lastly, this research mistakenly considered the creation of spaces for dialogue as a goal rather than an intention. Indeed, it can be considered a goal, but it often overlaps with the musicians' intentions. Especially larger collaborations, such as choruses or orchestras, pursue the provision of spaces for dialogue and interface as their primary aims. They aim to function as a bridge between communities for the people in the orchestra as well as the external ones.

6. Conclusion

This research aimed to provide empirical evidence of the musician's intentions while contributing to conflict transformation, in the specific case of coproduced music in the intractable Israeli-Palestinian music. It intended to provide a first step of case study-based results in a highly theoretical field. To do so, it answered the question, 'How *do Israeli-Palestinian musical co-producers aim to contribute to conflict transformation?*' by conducting an interview and a qualitative comparative content analysis. The study focused on the Dugri Duo by interviewing them and gathering their account of their intention to see if it resonates with other musicians' work. This research was exploratory as it left space for new insights and provided an empirical basis for what was theorised by other scholars, especially following three hypotheses.

The study revealed that musical coproducers have multiple aims, here divided into two layers: primary intentions and sub-intentions. The latter has been labelled this way because they all converge into the primary ones. The ones investigated each answer the sub-question previously posed. These sub-intentions partially confirm what has been claimed by the literature. Musical coproducers aim at doubting and questioning the narratives that continue to feed the conflict and benefit what is addressed as the governing elite. Commonly motivated by their distrust in authority, musicians aim at doubting established narratives to challenge the lied 'truth' that fed them, to trigger their audience's critical thinking leading to social transformation. Addressing sensitive issues through 'straight talk' was very useful for this aim in the Dugri case. At the same time, other musicians use similar language or symbolism and metaphors to pursue the same intention successfully.

Another way musical coproducers aim at contributing to conflict transformation is related to the community trauma of their community. Contrary to what could be claimed from the literature, they do not aim at leveraging or emotionally manipulating it to achieve a specific goal. Musicians acknowledge and address both communities' trauma, aiming to transform it into a common ground. While trauma is usually used as a dividing element by media and politics, these musicians aim to emphasise how it should be a unifying actor. They intend to make shared trauma, between the many differences, the place that would get the population together to empathise, recognise, unify and act to prevent the further spreading of traumatic experiences. Naturally, they focus on characteristics shared by the two communities, such as diasporic feelings, violence and war, and loss feelings. Indeed, even if more nuanced, confirming the literature hypothesis on the importance of emotions in art in conflict transformation.

Lastly, the third sub-intention hypothesised in this thesis confirms what was stated by previous studies. Musical coproducers aim at inspiring their audiences, letting them open up to be

educated by the coexisting message they are trying to communicate. At the same time, they aim to educate through participation in musical activities, letting them be inspired and educated by the music they produce. In this way, they aim to bridge the conflict, providing a platform for positive interaction and communication. Notwithstanding all the social work musicians do to educate through lectures and workshops. However, while education and inspiration are often analysed separately, here they have been approached together, showing how often they are consequential. Ultimately all the mentioned sub-intentions were revealed to be complementary, often overlapping, and working together toward the primary one.

All these intentions converge in the aim of triggering the internal awakening and transformation of their audience, calling them to act and be the protagonist of the social transformation. The musicians intend to trigger emancipation desire in their audience, leading them to free themselves from the reality that keeps them in conflict. Thus, musicians aim to change individuals to influence conflict transformation ultimately. Another primary intention in the analysis is to be the moderates' voice, their amplifier and vehicle for being heard and starting to change. Often suffocated by the conflict, the moderates' voice becomes central for all the analysed artists, and their intentions are born from these people's lack of space for expression. Indeed, the so-called moderates, or everyday people, are the ones these musicians mainly aim at while trying to contribute to conflict transformation. A belief and aim from the Dugri that resonates in other musical collaborations is that change starts from the moderates' voice by providing them with the right tools to transform themselves as individuals and then the contexts around them. A final intention, which may need further investigation, is that musician aims at transforming the conflict by equally gendering the voices and narrative of the conflict by letting the women's voice be heard and relevant. As a last remark, all the analysed musicians seem aware that their work will not resolve the conflict; thus, they do not aim at it. However, they still try to structurally change its dynamics, as they aim to transform the day-to-day interaction between the communities, following the underlying belief that at the centre of the intractable conflict are human beings with the power to change (Bar-Tal, 2007;2013).

In this process, the role of the musicians remains to be seen. The discovered intentions suggest a similarity with non-violent activism, where the moderate population is addressed and is pushed to adhere to a cause and act rather than attacking directly and systematically the system. In this sense, a collaborative musician is a non-violent activist. However, it was outside the scope of this research to demonstrate this; instead, further research should use this research as a starting point to investigate it. Moreover, this research has laid a first brick in understanding the effects of music on conflict transformation by mapping out some plausible relevant intentions from which to

start an inquiry. To analyse their effect, a further step would be to consider them as a whole rather than singles. Finally, future studies should contextualise the work of musical coproducers in relation to civil societies and NGOs that operate toward conflict transformation to have a more comprehensive picture of how these actors could work together in the future development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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Annex1

Attached is the interview transcript between the author (Guido) and the two members of the Dugri Duo (Sameh and Uriya). The transcript is published with the consent of the two musicians. The author lightly edited the transcript, but it has been left as original as possible.

Guido [00:00:05] Perfect. Again Hello for the recording. We already introduce ourselves. I would go on without taking more of your time with the first questions. I'm going to open with some general questions more open-ended and I'm going to become more specific afterward. The interview is going to be semi-structured. So, I have a set of questions, but probably is going to follow the flow of the discussion with some follow-ups. As I told you, I'm interested in the intentions of the musicians who are co-producing this music while trying to address the situation, the context around them, and especially in terms of conflict transformation. So my first question would be, what are your intentions while co-producing your music and while talking straight through music?

Uryia [00:01:10] Okay, Guido, first of all, a pleasure. Thank you. Everything that we are going to answer is straightforward. There is no bullshit. So, I hope that's the answer you're looking for. I started this collaboration by touring the country, interviewing Arabs and Jews and transforming their opinions into a Rap song by myself. I was not an artist. I was not a musician. I was an educator actually working for NGOs. But given my spiritual development and my internal goals in the past nine years, I was very much interested in, you know, passion projects and following stuff that I care about. And I was it was inspired by an American artist called General Lucas and his Rap song. I wanted to do an Israeli visit, and very soon I realized I don't know much about both sides. So, I sent the message to an Arab person I know. I went to interview him. 3 hours meeting blew my mind. Wow. Such amazing to hear the other side, you know, without filters. And I was super authentic. I was looking in his eyes. I was really thirsty for the knowledge. And then in a matter of two years, I did it again and again. You know, I was a student for my bachelor's because we do the bachelor's here in Israel very late because of the obligatory army service. And I was also working full-time. But in my free time, I did this passion project. Have you said what the intention was? The intention was that out of my personal journey as a human being, I never understood what the Arabs want from us while they trying to kill us all the time. You know, I couldn't understand their perspective. And to be honest, I never had the privilege of sitting with an Arab person and asking them all the tough questions. So, I did that. I asked him like: Hey, why do you shoot rifles at weddings? What's that custom? It sounds so weird. What's murder for family honour? That's such a primitive costume. And it makes us be afraid of you. You, like, from a thousand years ago. And he rolled up his sleeves and he burst into me in the meeting. He was so mind-opening that I did it again and again. And doing two years, I interviewed, like, 30 people. I had papers on papers of impressions of interviews like you're doing with us. I did it with random people without any camera open, just writing everything they have to say. Eventually, I turned these meetings into a rap song, all in Hebrew, all in my voice, a Jewish side, an Arab side, only to realize that this project has huge potential. And that's when I reached out to Sameh. He joined and it became a collaboration. I'm only giving you all this background to say right now the venture that we have, the music that we do together and the educational activities that we do are based on the intention, at least from my perspective, that we believe. Enough is enough. We have been lied to. We have been bullshitted by

our governments and the decision makers and the whole system, a capitalistic system governing over our lives. And I believe that our generation 30, 20, 40, we have the potential of understanding the other side and understanding that we were manipulated and that, you know, millions of Jews and Arabs are not going to go anywhere. We have much less drama in war and terror compared to our parents, and we have much more unmediated communications on social media and stuff like that. And that's why I believe that by using music and straight talk, we are able to put everything on the table, and encourage the younger generation to say, "Finally, fuck it, somebody's saying it the way it is and not bullshitting me". And then to create that identification and resonance for people to come together and say, okay, "I'm sorry for the Nakba, I'm sorry for that. I'm so let's build the future. They are bullshitting us." But we're trying to use music as a tool to awaken that kind of critical thinking and that kind of young people coming together through struggle. That's my thing.

Guido [00:05:00] Thanks!

Sameh [00:05:07] I think my intentions it's maybe because of my childhood. I was born and raised in Ramla that's a small city between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and growing up in a mixed community, the mixed city at the same time being part of peace camps, places where groups and communities meet there. For me, as a young kid, I was I already knew the Jewish people were who they are, and their traditions. So when I was younger, I tried many of my years to build bridges between people. So for me, when I joined where we are and we joined forces, it was from the thing that it started in my childhood that affected my music. But now we're doing something more, on my behalf. I'm doing more, something more Dugri, more straight out. The key word here is authenticity. There's something authentic. My intention is to bring yeah, the things that I hear from the Jewish people and the things I hear from Arabs because I speak both languages and I kind of understand both sides because I know the language and the slang and what's going on. So my intention is just to bring things that I went through or I saw or heard and, you know, I don't want to sound corny, but we have one life in this life. You only live once and you try to do your best, you know, try to do better, try to do a positive life and be positive by yourself. And so my intention was just to bring awareness. What's going on between the two communities of been divided, and segregated by decision-makers and politics. And actually, let's talk straight video, the first video that we did, the best ever video I ever did, reached out to millions of people that I never reached. And it means a lot to me. You know, the first video.

Guido [00:07:14] Actually, I find both your intentions very noble. When you got together, and you started thinking about the projects and making the first "let's talk straight" video, these intentions that you just told me, where they something back in your head and then you came together, and you had to put them straight down on a table to approach each other and say so this is what I want to do. Let's find a common one. Let's find an agreement with each other. I was wondering if this process had happened.

Sameh [00:08:01] I will start because all the time in our lecture as we speak about how I had doubts about his attention towards me, why he's reaching out, what this weird dude wants from me, why I should collaborate? And actually, it took us a while to build the trust. You know, every time we met, it was all the time getting to know each other, speaking about different issues. Not just about the occupation or about the Nakba, but whatever, everything. You just name it. And we, during our process of doing the song or myself to agree to join forces with Uriya, we build the trust between each other. And after a long, long, long time of working together, actually became best friends. Actually took us a while, and so the process was really interesting between me and Maria and how we met and how we spoke and how we got along with each other.

Uriya [00:08:56] I can tell from my perspective that I worked on this project for two years by myself, you know, like a student working full time at an NGO in my free time, driving to the North, driving to the South, meeting with random Arabs and racist Jews that hate Arabs, transforming their opinions into a rap song. Working on this project for two years, during which my older brother died of cancer, that really influenced me in the way I prioritize projects in my life. So when I came to Sameh, I was already with the full project, almost prepared, all in Hebrew, all in my voice. I recorded a song at the very famous Producers studio. So like I had I already had an asset, you know. I came to him and he was super cool and super nice, like the most warm Arab I met in my life, you know, like giving me very comfortable, homey vibes. And I was like, Wow, this dude is fucking charming. I need to work with him. But he was suspicious because, you know, he's used to Israel coming through to try to work with him because he can be like a token Arab, you know, because he's so fluent in Hebrew and he's so not intimidating. So people were like, "Hey, are you a rapper? Good. We need you to come to do this commercial, this collaboration. And the project would say coexistence, Yeah, Arabs and Jews together", when actually the reality is bad, Palestinians are treated or mistreated in the West Bank and in Israel there is racism, there is bad shit happening in reality that is not addressed by those peace and coexistence politics. So when he was becoming an adult, he realized that he was manipulated by people from the industry and stuff like that. And when I came to him, I was different in the way that I was just looking for a partner. When he started being suspicious, our conversations went to talk about, you know, he talked about the Nakba, for example, in 48, like the Palestinian narrative of their catastrophe, of losing the country. And I told him what Nakba? What Nakba? You're talking about 48, the U.N. decided to divide the country. We celebrated our half, and you attacked us, we won the war. Why should we call it the Nakba? And that was the first conversation. We started learning each other. I got to know his family. We talked about love, politics, history, narratives, trauma, you know, we talked about everything. It was another whole year of a process. It was like psychological treatment. He was sitting on the couch. I asked him questions. I tried to evoke these emotions, like, why are you so primitive? Why do you drive like ass****? And he was getting mad. I wrote everything down. It was really amazing. Was eventually, after two years by myself and another year with him, we released the project in a crazy time. But what I'm trying to say is that it was all developing. I'm an educator. He's a rapper who was so different in the way that we handled ourselves in the world and we were so much influenced by each other. I allowed myself to open up and learn about the Palestinian narrative. But he knew everything about Israel, and he knew it because he was born with us as a minority. Though he learned for me something different about authenticity, spirituality, the ability to be centred and to work towards, you know, something that is deep within you to find it and to take it out. So, yeah, that's my thing.

Guido [00:12:13] Is very interesting. I see the learning process you're now doing towards the other, with your songs and even all the workshops you do. But that started firstly within you, between each other, building trust, learning what are the problems of the other. I would like to ask you how you transmit this learning process. How do you channel the things that you learned about each other to the others in the talking straight way?

Uriya [00:13:09] I want to address this first because I feel like your question now is what me as an adult, who we are, is all about. I feel like what I am good at is communicating my internal journey. That's what I do. How do we do it? Well, we established a venture after the success of the video and the next video as we understood that there is something, something special about our collaboration.

And we established a venture. We do three things. We do content, education, and community. The idea of the content is to be out there with videos, music, and stuff for the younger generation to look at the content instead of it being like, "Yeah, bitches and hoes and we're so cool and rappers". The content would say something that the younger generation would be like, "Oh, finally somebody saying it the way it is. It resonates with me because they talk about the bad shit, but they talk about it from an authentic, holistic perspective". The educational, is the ability to let the younger generation meet the other side. At the younger age, for a lot of the teenagers that we work with, Sameh it is the first Arab that they actually have a chance to talk straight with because we are so inviting, and we are so engaging. So they feel comfortable to ask him, so what about this and that? And why don't you send your son to the army? And, you know, like it's a very interesting meeting for the younger generations. And the community is about constituting as a home, as a platform for straight talk between Jews and Arabs in the in the region. You see how we do it. We talk very straightforward with the audience, especially with the teenagers and they fucking love it. The fact that like a Jew and a Arab, Palestinian and Israeli, we curse on stage. We talk straight like, you know, the old education is like they're trying to pretend like everything is alright, but the kids want somebody to talk straight and they fucking love it when we hold space for that kind of complexity. Also the content, we try to go to the painful places, you know, without using the political correctness and, you know, like trying to be the opposite. We're trying to touch on the pain points in order to evoke emotions and to encourage people to actually really talk about the bad shit happening. That's what we did, at least in the first two videos. And we feel like it's working. Like doing we had a TV show. We have lectures every time, like when we practice or prepare before the show, or before a lecture. The main things I tell Sameh is two things, or he tells me. We need to remember again that right now the two most important things are authenticity and our friendship. Because it doesn't matter how much people will, you know, like blame us or talk shit to us eventually. We are two friends communicating authentically our process. I'm not less of an Israeli or less of a Jew or less loyal to my country. The fact that I'm trying to build a bridge with Palestinians, you know? So I feel like when we are able to communicate it and people bash me and I'm like, I don't give a fuck about you. I don't need to prove anything. I'm just being that way. I feel like I need to be in this world trying to be a light. And this encourages people to listen to me because we don't preach "You all should think like us" but rather we are communicating how it influenced us and how it changed us for the best. And eventually, you know, everyone wants to change the world. No one wants to change themselves. We are in the business of changing ourselves. That's it.

Guido [00:16:35] So there is even some sort of inspirational factor within you, you managed to do it, so even the others can. What you said about how teenagers see someone finally talking straight is very interesting and within the conflict and all the stuff that one can approach. Do you have some particular issues that you try to address more?

Sameh [00:17:39] Actually depends sometimes. You know, our life is complicated, and sometimes we don't choose the subjects that we want to talk about or approach. Sometimes it just comes to us. You know, living in the Middle East in general, it's more complicated to live in Israel and Palestine, more complicated. But actually one of the things that we are working on in our new projects is a new song and video is how to try actually, because we are two men, with a man in perspective about life, we need more the woman voice female voice, the woman side. One of the things we're trying to address now is how to try to bring this voice that is really, really missing in our region, not just in Palestine and Israel, all around the Middle East. That woman's voice and not heard enough.

So in our new song, we even collaborate with nice, amazing band named El Banat means the girls. And hopefully the song will be released the next month or two maximum. But our goal is this month, hopefully. And so that's actually one of the things that we are trying to approach and to deal with, because, you know, let's talk street videos. One man for us is amazing. But you know, when your community is 50% woman that's one of the subjects that we need to approach more, understand more or try to understand. So that's, that's on my mind right now.

Guido [00:19:20] I was thinking about the song 'Prayers of the Mothers'. It's Yeal Deckelbaum and the Mothers.

Sameh [00:19:33] Yeal Deckelbaum. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I know what you're talking about. Yeah.

Guido [00:19:37] I thought about it when you said that, and I also know March of the Mothers. That's very interesting that you connect with that.

Uriya [00:19:49] Yeal Deckelbaum, that's a good collaboration.

Sameh [00:19:52] It's amazing. I know her in person and she's an amazing person. We love her and her intention are really, really amazing. I know it's corny to see women walking, whatever, but, you know, it's so it.

Uriya [00:20:05] Looks like conscious.

Sameh [00:20:07] Exactly. Is not trying to save face or trying to erase or not to deal with the complicated and hard life of Palestinians and Israelis still. And she's actually working on a new album. My producer is producing her new album. And I have a movie with her to check it out..

Guido [00:20:30] Yes, actually, I saw that it is called 'Prophets of Change', but it still has to come out, right?

Sameh [00:20:36] Yeah. I'm Meeting the director this week. Yeah. For example, these kind of initiatives are amazing and really needed just now. It had to be 20 years ago but it's never too late.

Guido [00:20:56] Actually, I'm going to tell you after the interview, I thing that might interest you on the movie side. Let's continue, so I would like to shift our attention from the intention to your goals. So what are your hopes, and what do you try to achieve with your music and with your co-production with the talking straight projects?

Uriya [00:21:38] Yeah. First of all. Like. I'd like to start by saying that the. The most important thing for me in life is my spiritual development and getting free. Getting free from the mechanism. Getting free from the system. Becoming a very free spirit, you know, in this world without always reacting or responding to that kind of lie that is orchestrated around us of walls and, you know, taxes and you must do, you must work, you must commit. I don't want to be part of that lie anymore. So that's my main goal in life, you know, And from that place of spiritual, personal development, I do my art, I do my creation. And it's not like I like to say that I'm egocentric, you know, I don't feel like I can do good in this world without me being good to my self and learning how to take care of myself. Another thing that I like to say is that I don't operate anymore from a place of a desired outcome. You're saying what the goal is? I don't really have a goal like I have a journey that I'm trying to commit to have it where I want to be. But a lot of the time you plan to get from A to B and then God has his own plans and you end up in C, you know, like I could never prepare or plan that my brother will die. But once it happens, then you end up in another place that you didn't prepare and you're going with it. So it's not from a place of what is my goal, but rather what is the way I want to be. The way I want to be is the like spreading light rather than fighting darkness. I don't feel like I was told the complete truth about the world, especially about the other side. And after getting to know the Palestinian at the getting to know that there are Palestinians who

are just like me, beautiful, young, believe in life, have dreams, want to provide for their families. But for me now, the goal would be to communicate that, to encourage my people to open their hearts and minds to the other people and to work together from a civilian grassroots perspective to build a mutually beneficial future. Understand that the government and the entire system governing of our lives is a lie, and it has interests to maintain a conflict because of the weapon industry, the pharmaceutical industry, the energy industry. The entire system of control is based on the fact that we will hate each other and feed each other. And there was. So I want to build something from the grassroots level that will encourage Palestinians, Arabs and anyone who is in conflict to come together and build. To build something different, to build something new. People ask us during our lectures," Do you believe it will work? Are you trying to bring the world peace?" And I'm like, "No, I don't believe it. We will. We might just be wasting our time every time there's a terror attack or Palestinians killed by the IDF", we talk smack around the phone and we say, "Bro, let's just give it up. What the fuck are we wasting our time for?" You know, like, it's so hard to build, so easy to destroy. But we act like the people we want to be in the world. We tried to change ourselves and we tried to be the best version that we can and to encourage others to go through the same internal journey.

Sameh [00:24:55] Respect.

Uriya [00:24:58] Do you want to add something?

Sameh[00:25:00] No, actually, I agree

Guido [00:25:15] How do these intentions and hopes to achieve something change over time? If they change, how were they influenced and by what? You started to mention that every time something is out there happens or there is a killing operation, you think about giving up, but is there something else that mostly influences you even in a positive way to continue or shapes your intention from the beginning of the project to now?

Sameh [00:26:01] Two years now, we actually been meeting amazing people seriously, like they say, sometimes it's not what you achieve in life, it's the journey that you walk that you went through, that you go through. And you know, I heard it in a lot of movies, but I heard it from really smart people that the people you meet during the process, the journey you go through life, that's one of the things that and really. Uh, but then I'm not sure. Okay. Give us inspiration. We met a lot of people in the last two years. They gave us an inspiration to continue or to understand the complexity and not actually being famous or having prizes or winning million dollar. Although million dollar will be amazing if we can have one. But this is not our goals are not really make us to continue. That's one to the reactions of people that we meet the kids, especially when we meet. Last time we met, like 150 kids and you can see in their eyes that part of them believe in us or believe what we saying and who don't believe. But when people just kids reach out to you and come after the lectures, talking to us, even sometimes argue with us, just saying how much we're being touched many times by people, and you get to get to know a lot of a lot of things in our journey. So for us, what gave us the motivation is the journey that we're going through the people and the journey if we're going to achieve what we really want to do in life, that will be amazing. If not, at least we tried, you know? And that's the thing for me. What give me inspiration and I'm feeling give me more power and energy to keep going with what we are doing. Want to add something?

Uriya [00:27:56] No, I mean. I feel like I relate to what Sameh said about the amazing people. But for me, Sameh and I are friends now, very close friends, he is about to, with God's help, to get married with the woman that I set him up with. Just to acknowledge how close we are. So, like, when there is a conflict, we don't look at it as like, it's your people against my people. We look at it

as the people in charge of the manipulation against us, the sheep. We follow everything that is told. And I don't believe in the system anymore. As for me, my government is making decisions that is going wrong with the Palestinian people. It's a fact. It's evident. But the leaders of the Palestinian people are doing stuff that damages my people as well, and the Palestinian people as well. So I don't believe in the leadership. I feel like the whole system is orchestrated by very rich people who want to maintain us in conflict with this understanding. In my heart, I am not able to let go of the cause anymore. You know, like I am advocating for better future maximum well-being for maximum beings. And I feel like as long as we both feel the same way and none of us is going to the place of blame, it's your fault, it's your people. Why did you choose this government? We don't fall for that kind of vision that is trying to be pushed for from above. There is no other way but love. You know, like it's not it's not only corny and cliche. There is no other way but trying to make a better life for all the people. And since I was able to open my heart and to get to know real Palestinians, I understood, oh, they are not murderous. They're not different than me. Like I was told through the decision makers in the media and in the storybooks, that's what kids from both sides learned, that the other side is murderous and hostile, and they have something different within them. But no one is different. We are all people trying to survive. Yeah, sure. Different cultures, different perspectives about life, different beliefs. But everyone wants to provide for the family, everybody wants self-fulfillment, everybody wants a beer at the end of the day or something equivalent. And once we were able to realize that really helped us deal with the day-to-day manipulation that both of our people are suffering from.

Guido [00:30:19] It makes me happy to hear what you are saying. I'd like to pose you my last general question then I would like to focus on something more specific. You mentioned more times the teenagers, the kids and audiences. My question is about your audience. Who are you addressing? Mostly with your music. Is it everybody, or is there a specific group in your mind? How do you relate with your audience, what kind of feedback you received from it?

Uriya [00:31:49] My main audience is the younger generation. They are more open to influence and they haven't been fixated yet on what the world in our life really is. They feel like that's the place to invest. The content that we do and the education of what we do is focused on the younger generation. We use straightforward language and authenticity to just get them to be open to our messaging. We don't ask them to do anything. We don't teach them to think like us. We just communicate our journey. And for me, I was you know, I served in the special forces of the IDF, and I was a very proud Israeli defending my country, blah, blah, blah. And for me, the fact that I came from this background and changed myself and opened myself to the Palestinian narrative gives me credit in the eyes of the younger generation to say, I'm not this leftist, you know, like pacifistic hypocrite, you know, like, Yeah, lovely, lovely. I was on the front lines, but now I realize that war serves only the creators of weapon and like, people want to lives. And I feel like the fact that I'm able to communicate it in an authentic way without asking them to join me just encouraging them to ask themselves tough question to that reality that really allows them to open their hearts and minds. That being said, I want to add another thing, which is that, you know, we are asked, especially by the younger kids who, you know, they're sharp. So, they're like, oh, yeah, do you do these lectures with the Arabs as well? Did you go to Palestine to give this lecture? Because they realized they realized that the Jews are considered much more open-minded to peace talks in comparison to the Palestinians or the Arabs, like the Jewish. The Jews are a much more open audience to our kind of messaging and content compared to the Arabs or Palestinians, because for the Palestinians, even the existence of such a collaboration is a contribution to the thought that the

kill is like normalization. If a Palestinian collaborates with an Israeli by just collaborating, he is okay with whatever is happening on the ground to his people by the Israeli army or the occupation forces or whatever. What I wanted to add is that my target audience, to be honest, is any open-up human, you know, like anyone with an open heart and mind. I don't dare cherry-pick them. I don't go for let's say, target this audience. Authentically communicate my message in a creative way, in a song, in a music video, in a TV show, and hope that somebody from who can be aged 70 and it can be aged 13, but somebody will listen to it and say, Oh, wow, that's a creative way to say the truth and to speak honestly about the bad shit happening around us. So yeah, we aim for the younger generation, but we don't care. We just shake hands with anyone who is willing to.

Sameh [00:34:52] You know, we have supporters, and we have people who are like against what we doing. But actually, we have more supporters that people are against because, you know, as you asked before, there's a lot of intentions and a lot of inititives that people are doing. But what makes us different is that we're not trying to save Face reality. Not trying to whitewash reality and say, yeah, we both believe in peace and coexistence because that's eventually the goal to go to, but we're not even close to it. You know, our reality is more complicated than you see it on television, especially the European audience or European television. They don't really bring the Dugri, the Dugri daily life of people here. So by our message, we're trying to really reach out as much as people we can. And that's what happened with our first video that we reached out 5 million. We had 5 million hits on social media and we reached out. Half a billion people through regular media and social media, but was like B.B.C., New York Times. CNN just name it. Italian TV shows or Italian interviews we had done on television. So we reached out to a lot of people. So and for us, we really actually believe in quality, not quantity. But if we can reach out to millions, why not? You know, but this is not really the goal. The goal is not to doctor the whole world and try to by then say, yeah, we did it. No, we tried to reach out from age. We had sometimes shows that we had people from age 12 or 14 that like 70, 75. It's like a really diverse of age audience. In America, we had 16 shows in 19 days in America. That first US tour was really amazing and special. And then some of the shows we had a majority or most of the people were Jews. But in the end, during the end or at the end of the tour, we had more diverse and really different communities in one place. And you can see their faces and you can see how much people were affected by what we did. So. We are all, you know, want anybody who wants to hear in you a different voice about the Middle East, about Palestine and Israel, about us as people is we will more than welcome. We're more than happy to meet and to reach out. But, you know, we're rooting out people, not ethnicities or religions, just people.

Guido [00:37:41] Perfect. Thank you very much for the answers. And now, I would like to get a little bit more specific. For example, you both mentioned you've got, in a way, manipulated by these underlying narratives that are set up by politicians or people that profit from the conflict. One thing that music or art in general in conflicts can do to influence transformation is to challenge these underlying narratives. And my question is like, how do you relate to that? How do you believe, if you believe it, that part of your work, part of your music and intentions is to challenge these narratives and in what ways?

Uriya [00:39:09] In the second song, for example, the quote goes like this "leaders screaming out loud. I feel suffocated and every moderate voice is silenced" So the fact that these are the quotes that we used in our second creation goes to show that after the first video, which was a success, a Jew blamed an Arab and vice versa. We wanted to echo the mutual voice, like how we both feel tied to the same church, tied to the same faith. And like, that's a way of using arts to doubt the

narratives. We talk about our leaders as people who are just screaming out loud and not hearing the moderate voices of people who just want to live, advocating to win or to do to surrender. You know, none of us want that. We all want to live in peace. But we are injected with the narrative that we are the ones who are right. The other side is the one to blame. They are the hostile ones. They are the primitive ones. And we are trying to use our tools, which are art, rap, spoken word, collaboration, and creative methods. Instead of just, you know, going to people in the street and saying, "We'll manipulate the Arabs, don't take the other side". Instead of just going one by one, we do this art that is meant to be out there for people to look at and say, "Okay, these guys, they do a music video just like all the other people I know, but they don't talk about bitches and hoes, they don't talk about money and fame, they don't talk about all the bullshit, but they talk about our life from a critical perspective, but in a creative way, and they are super straightforward and super authentic about it. Maybe I should listen to it more". So that's the way we try to go around things. We use strong lyrics and very authentic language. We use cool music and we use very direct music videos, I guess. And the idea is to, you know, get people's attention in a maybe fun, mainstream way, but also to push the complex messaging through the back door, you know? That's my take.

Guido [00:41:27] Do you have something to add?

Sameh [00:41:34] Trying to get. Trying to understand the question more. Be more specific.

Guido [00:41:42] Yeah, for sure. So, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in academia, at least, falls under a label that is an intractable conflict. And within that, there are some narratives which are deeply rooted in the conflict and in the history of the conflict. From there, one of the hypotheses that I developed was that music could address these narratives, these established narratives, in order to influence change. Surely in your work, you approach those narratives and acknowledge them. But I was wondering if over that there is some will to challenge them or do you think that just acknowledging those narratives in such a manipulated world is enough? I hope I explained it.

Sameh [00:43:39] Yeah, I got you now more. The only thing I can add to what Uriya said is just. You know, we have it in our video; our compass is our doubt. That without a lot of things in life. And since we have been together for the last two years, I feel that I am until now, I went through a change myself by doubting things that I believed before, things that I thought were right. No, I think they're wrong or the opposite. It's hard to be a creator, like a video creator, to be a content creator. Even songwriting, especially when you are motivated by strong emotions and to be authentic, that's really hard to keep it all the time. We tried to do our best and whatever is going to, whatever is going on with the future have for us we ready. And actually, we don't give a damn about what people think about what we doing or if people doubt us, it's fine. At least we are honest with ourselves and we trying to do our best. The only thing I can add to this manipulated reality is that we live.

Guido [00:45:00] Thank you for these very interesting answers. We talked about evoking emotions as well. You both mentioned, in songs, for example in "I can breathe", and in interviews that you are dealing with PTSD communities full filled with community trauma. I imagine that this is one of the most complex things to address. And I was wondering how you address that trauma and whether it is in your intention to address this trauma in a positive way in order to trigger change or transformation in the individuals in the community.

Sameh [00:46:13] Um, actually, man, I'm going to I'm going to say it really simple. I just want to really that hopefully in the in the future when I have a kid, I know I will have a kid. We don't want them to be traumatized like us, period. So, we know that both of us are screwed because we are enough traumatized by the history that other people went through before even the Palestine-Israel

conflict. Every people, every nation in here had its own conflict and trauma. Jewish people have had their own trauma for the last 3000 years. Palestinians for the last hundred years. So everybody is traumatized. But the only thing that motivates me and my behaviour is I just want to have a different life for my future kid.

Guido [00:46:59] And how do you think you will be kind of transferred that in the music?

Sameh [00:47:06] I think by just trying to do good in this world men and to try to enlarge the inside light inside of each one of us that's already beginning or it's a process or it's you can't take it as granted, you know, it's hard to keep this gear positive. And now, especially nowadays, you know, this war or conflict or whatever happening the last few days, it's just the movie I'm feeling that I'm watching a movie last three days and. You know, it's complicated to live now here. More complicated.

Uriya [00:47:42] There's no way to use trauma to get you to your goals. You know, we don't use drama. We tried to hear from it. And like, we never sit and brainstorm all about ideas or, you know, like the creative process and then be like "Ooh, that's good. Let's use that will touch people's emotions" We don't do that. Just like when we think right now about our next to our next song, for example, we can give you a glimpse, like we did one song about blaming each other. We did another song about mutual faith and mutual scream. And the next song is about the potential party, you know like there are so many reasons to hate and fight each other, we don't need a reason to party the similarities and to party together. Sameh took me to a whole Arab party and I was the only Jew there. It was mind-blowing for me to see how similar they are to us. So that is our third song, and the fourth one, which we are writing right now, is more about the concept of scale, and scalability. You know, like the fact that everything is a scale. What I see as Arabs for them there is the religious, the secular, the very Sunni, the Shia. Just like the Jews, we have the religious ultra-orthodox Jews in Jerusalem and you have the secular people with piercing and tattoos all over the body here in Tel Aviv. So like we try to create and to do stuff from a place of what is the message we want to be communicating and something that would be long lasting. It's not that we are trying to see where the pain points are in the trauma and to leverage from it. Actually, in the first video, which was all about the trauma, we did it without any connection to what was happening on the ground. It was a coincidence of complete coincidence that the project that I worked on for three years eventually was published on the day when riots between Jews and Arabs were fighting. It's crazy, the timing. People were asking me "Oh, so you did the The Clash, so it would be good for your project", you know, it was really crazy timing. My take is that we tried to avoid I don't know if avoid, but we don't look for ways to leverage from trauma, but rather address it from a creative place and communicate what we really believe in, you know?

Guido [00:50:00] Thank you. That's actually very useful. Both of your answers on this. What we were talking about before, from the academic perspective everything looks distant, but this is still real.

Uriya [00:50:18] And I hear I hear how much your questions are based on the knowledge that you were given in your studies. Like, I can hear it in your questions, and those are very good questions, but I'm trying to take it away a little bit from the conversations because I want you to understand that we're talking about real shit happening right now. It's not, you know, like conflict resolution or transformation. No one gives a fuck about the decision-makers and the leaders. They're all lying there or lying. It's about real people. The Palestinian mother who lost a child and the Israeli family running to shed those from rockets. Crazy stuff. Crazy.

Guido [00:50:54] And indeed, my last question is connected to the people. In your projects and music, there is a commonality of distancing from politics even if what you do is in its way political. And I was wondering, connected to your symbolic friendship, if, notwithstanding the lectures and workshops, you believe that part of your musical work is to educate and inspire? Especially at the grassroots, in everyday people. Do you believe that's part of your music, or it might be a byproduct?

Uriya [00:52:22] Yeah, I start because, you know, I'm an educator that's who I am, and I went into this collaboration as an educator and I'm going to finish it as an educator, then my dream in this world is to establish a school in the settlements. I've actually been accepted to study for my Masters in Education at Harvard next year, and I still don't know if I'm going to go, but that's that might be one of my plans for next year. And my dream is to establish a school in a settlement that makes it a settlement for Jews and Arabs in the north of the country might be in the south as well. But that's my goal in life. So I'm saying this only to go to prove to you that I'm deep into education. And I really believe that is the main tool for us to, you know, like allow humans to grow and be the best version of themselves and to create a better society. So the collaboration with Sameh is different because I'm an educator who became a musician and he is a musician who became an educator. And now I'm pushing all the way to the depth, you know, like, what is the message, what we're trying to do, you know, like communicate with the people all the way. And Sameh he's a rapper and he's a force of light. You know, every room he goes into the room, lights out. People are happy to see him. He's a super welcoming, kind of charming guy, and I'm different in the way that I'm more about that going deep into the shit, you know? That's why our collaboration is so unique because we bring different vibes. So for sure, I'm the one pushing the education aspects. I'm the one trying to bring it deeper into the messaging when it comes to the creation of the arts and Sameh is more about how to pack it and to make it more fun, more engaging, more, you know, like a pleasant on the eye and the ear and I feel like the educational aspect of our work is a huge one because the work that we do is supposed to inspire. It's supposed to open people's eyes towards a different perspective or aspect of reality that is hidden from us doing our day-to-day. And that's where I feel like my abilities come more evident. But it's very important, at least for me to say that regardless of the education and trying to be an inspiration for others to go through the process, it's also about being a bit selfish, you know, like I tried to create and it's not about, "Hey, I represent the Israeli. Please, everyone, follow me" No, no, I want somebody to hold on to unknowing leadership. That's what I want to hold. I want to say "I don't know what to do, I don't know" Seventy years we have had this conflict. All the leaders failed on finding a solution. Why should I? A 33-year-old educator would have a solution. I don't. I don't know what we should do, but follow me. I'm studying Arabic. Acknowledge the other side's narrative and trauma. I'm saying sorry for the wrongdoings of the past. And I'm holding your hand and building a bridge with any charming Sameh out there. You know, so I feel like that's the way to move forward, to encourage others to not know and to go shake hands with anyone who is willing to. Yeah.

(…)

Internal discussion of the interviewee to decide, ending up in telling the interviewer to ask the last two questions to Uriya, and then Sameh would answer the last two questions afterwards.

Guido [00:56:20] Okay. The last question. I saw in even other initiatives, like chorus or joint orchestra, that one of the goals is to create a space for dialogue in the communities. And I wanted to know if this relates to your or does not or is not a priority?

Uryia [00:56:52] Yeah. So I'll answer and go and then Sameh answer two questions. One about the community if it's not in the one. The other one was about education. If you feel like educating and

inspiring others is a main part of our job. So from my perspective, the community is the last step. You know, after you use art to evoke emotions, people are like "Oh, who said that? That's so creative. Finally, somebody using the house language". And then we do educational work. We meet with the students to inspire them. We tell them our story and the students are like, "Wow, I wish everybody would know that. And I wish, you know, I wish you would be in charge because it sounds so good". But the students are very spoiled by us. And then they ask, "Okay, so what can we do?" We want to create a home for people to meet each other. You know that young student from a family that they're absolutely for high five. We wanted them to meet, you know, and to maybe do a collaboration between them, a student from Ramla and then the student from Jaffa. So that's definitely a major aspect. Sameh took me one day to a party in Jaffa where all the people were Arabs besides me. That was mind-blowing for me, you know, just partying with them, being in the same space, understanding we're not so different. I feel like that's a major aspect of the world that we want to be doing. That's been said when it comes to calculus when it comes to the practicalities. We don't have enough people, we don't have enough money. So we are more focused on the content image, and vocational walk right now instead of the community building. And that's a pity. If we would have more team members and more money like funding, then it would be easier for us to recruit great people and build that kind of community. But because it's so hard to get people's support and money, there's not a lot of money building bridges, as you can imagine. So we are slow in the process of building a community, but that's definitely a major step. That's my perspective. Guido, It's been a pleasure.

Guido [00:58:54] Thank you very much. Actually, it was really a pleasure. And I hope to see you in Israel. I am planning to come maybe next year.

Uriya [00:59:03] We'll see you, bro.

Sameh [00:59:05] Maybe we come to perform in Italy.

Guido [00:59:07] You got to tell me if you do.

Uriya [00:59:09] Ahaha.

Uriya [00:59:13] Bye Guido.

Guido [00:59:15] Thank you very much.

Sameh [00:59:16] So the first question about educating. I did a couple of things, you know, meeting with the audience or communities. But I never did it with a partner and a partner as an educator he affected me a lot and I learned a lot from him. I'm still learning. Yeah. But back then I really learned a lot that how much education is really important to especially our communities, our region. And I thought all the time, you know, I was living in La-La Land, that I thinking that my music and being famous and making money and whatever you can, you know, make a change. But then I understood that it's not. So, for me, even "trying to educate"… I'm an artist, I'm a singer, I'm not perfect and it's fine to know it. So, I'm not trying to educate people about things. For me, the key words all the time is to make awareness, is to make awareness, because I'm aware that our situation is not Jews against Arabs, that Israel, Israelis against Palestinians. It's more complicated than that. So I'm aware but not a lot of people are aware of that because they're being manipulated by the media. There have been manipulated by politicians and decision-makers. So to try to educate these people after 70 years of war and bloodshed and no hope, no vision, no peace, it's really hard. But I think the mix mixture of music, art and education together can give us, the Dugri project more tools to deal with what want to do. That's for the educational part. We're just trying to make an awareness. About communities. That's the second question, right?

Guido [01:01:32] Yeah. And create a space for dialogue.

Sameh [01:01:36] It's hard, actually. It's hard to make space because it's 2023, and we are still in the same position Nationwide and on my behalf as a Palestinian, for my Sunni community, it's hard. We are right now talking in my amazing apartment in Jaffa, but I have family there in Gaza and they don't have electricity sometimes every day. Not every day they have the Internet. Not every day they have clean water. And they try to make now a space for dialogue when one part, like the Israelis, are in a different and better position than the Palestinians. And that's another thing we trying to address as Dugri. One of the main problems why people don't trust our project like we do is because they did the mistake to compare all the time the Palestinians and the Israelis. You can't and that's a big, huge mistake that the media, of course, you know, they're not trying, they will never make it more complicated, they try to make it simple "Oh, the Palestinians. Why the Palestinians are doing like that or why the Israelis are doing like that". Both communities don't really understand enough the complexity of their reality. At the same time, a lot of people don't acknowledge that Israelis are way more protected than Palestinians, they have a shelter to run to when you have rockets. And even I as a Palestinian can acknowledge that the Israeli army is one of the technological and most powerful armies in the world. And you can't like trying to say, no, it's bullshit, man. That's why you can't compare. You know, with all due respect to what the resistance is trying to do, you know, I believe in a different resistance and that's what I'm trying to bring to the dialogue and probably trying hopefully too one day to have this more open space and a more different reality to bring the dialogue of nations. But that being said, again, maybe I will sound corny, but even with your biggest enemy, you have to sit down and try to make a dialog because that's how we can bring the change. We don't live into 3000 years ago when you just wanted to fight your enemy and you come out and then everything will be fine. It will never happen. There are millions of Jews and Arabs in this area and nobody's going to disappear suddenly, only if aliens will come from outer space and try it all. Try to make us. That's maybe. But you know, let's be real. Let's be real. I'm not going to wake up and see Palestine is free and no more Jews or the opposite or Palestinians will be dead. No more Palestine. That's the thing that I and Uriya are trying all the time to talk to our communities and to have this dialogue and every time we meet mixed groups we try to tell them I know it's hard, I know it's not your comfort zone, you know, everybody is in his comfort zone. Are you killing him? Okay, that's how I should react. That's how the other side should react. And it's a circle of blood. The circle of no hope for both communities. Yeah, more for Palestinians. But even Israelis too would pay the price, and they are already paying the price because instead of putting the money to make the people's both people's future better in Israel, for example, and I live in Israel, you know, I understand both realities, and here in Israel now, if you're not high-tech, big company worker, it's hard to have a decent life. To have a family. You have to hustle a lot. And this is not life, you know, and if you go to Palestine, people are physically not allowed sometimes to go from one city to each different city. So that's how life is complicated. A lot of Palestinians, for example, never went to the beach, swim in the beach to see the ocean, you know, and it's weird. It's 2023 and people are stuck in this loop. So hopefully, you know, people will wake up. And actually, I think there's something happening in the world. It's not just in Palestine and Israel, it's in France, it's in Germany. It's all around the world. You know, people are waking up, people understanding that eventually at the end of the day, man. No one wants to die, and no one wants to kill each other. Nobody wants to harm any other person that he doesn't know either. And it's all about knowing the other side, trying to open your mind to a different perspective. And sometimes even if it is just if you disagree with his point of view or his perspective. You know me and Uriya have a say "we don't have a solution, but we have an approach" And that's what we trying to give to our

communities and to have hopefully more and more spaces to have a dialogue trying to communicate. You know, when you say moderate voice, the media killed this term. They say, you know, when we as Palestinian when they tell me moderate, for example, that's how you know are not being honest, the moderate voice, "it's okay to kill Palestinians, but we want peace". "It's okay to kill Jews, but we want peace". No, the moderate voices are the voices of millions of people who wake up every morning wanting to have a good job, trying to achieve themselves in their life. Hopefully, maybe one day buy a house, maybe get married, and have kids. That's the moderate voice, but their voice is not heard. The only voice is heard right now since I think 48 is the one who said, Let's kill all the Arabs, let's kill all the Jews. And that's the only voice that is heard. But it's they're not the majority. The majority of people are really simple, decent people that me and you can sit with and see. And they've been my name, manipulated to hate by politicians from both sides. But that being said, again, as I said, you can't compare because both sides have different realities. But that being said, we have to find more to try to create a space that both nations can share. And the last thing I want to add and say this year, me and Uryia, went to Memorial Day. In Israel you have the memorial, you have one of the big memorial days for the Holocaust and you have the Memorial Day for the fallen soldiers and innocent people who got killed in so-called terror attacks or in actions or violent actions against Israeli citizens or by mistake. Israeli citizens are being killed, innocent ones. So in Israel, there's a special day that it's the mixed or the Palestinian-Israeli Memorial Day where both communities acknowledge each other's pain and each one losing his beloved ones. This year you had 15,000 people in a park, in Open Park that participated. To comment, to share this common pain. Common on losing your beloved ones. You can see that this is a glimpse, even if it's really a small light in this darkness, it's something. We can see that they hold the space for seeing a Palestinian woman talking about how they killed their son there for no reason he just got shot. At the same time, they brought an Israeli guy who spoke about how he lost his sister, his beloved sister now in a bomb attack on a bus like 20 years ago. To see how both of them lost their beloved ones, staying on the same stage, and sharing their pain with us. Really? Like I said, Oh if they went through hell. And they still understand the complexity of reality. So who are we? So we can, you know, preach like, Hey, let's have a safe dialogue, I think that one day the mutual Memorial Day acknowledges both pains of people, not countries, people. It will be in the mainstream, you know, it's 15,000 people today. Tomorrow will be 150,000 people. It's just a process about a process. And I hope I answered your question then.

Guido [01:11:06] Yes, actually, you inspired me.

Sameh [01:11:11] I'm just trying to be myself.

Guido [01:11:14] Yeah, exactly without even wanting to. Well, I just wanted to ask, you were already a rapper and he was an educator, but why between many tools of music? Do you believe that music can do something better?

Sameh [01:11:49] I think music can make an inspiration. Inspiration for people. Music will never change reality. Let's be real. After our success, whatever we can see now, there's war. There are the same movies going on right now outside. And we didn't change it. We didn't stop the bloodshed. we couldn't stop the killing of innocent civilians. So reality all the time, it hits you back. But, you know, I'm trying to be inspiring or although actually I'm being inspired lately by people rather than I feel that inspire others. I think that music. At least give you this, you know, a moment sometimes if you can read music and kind of, you know, calm down a little bit, just try to put this fire down a bit and just trying to portray to reality. Music is one of you know, it could be even a way or a weapon. Depends on how you use music is music to try to make a difference in this world. Nice. If

you want to try to use it in a bad way, of course, it's your choice. But music at least can give you time or a short period of time to breathe, to understand more, and sometimes even try to enjoy your life. Okay, well, that's the only. For me, music means.

Guido [01:13:36] And that's more than enough is really great.

Sameh [01:13:42] Thanks.

Guido [01:13:44] I'm going to stop the recording and thank you.