The Impact of Homeland Politics on the National Identity of Palestinians Reflected in the Diaspora

Mouna Marie Abraham

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.shu.edu/theses
Part of the International Relations Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarship.shu.edu/theses/1
The Impact of Homeland Politics on the National Identity of Palestinians Reflected in the Diaspora

Masters Thesis submitted to the Graduate Committee of Seton Hall University
In partial fulfillment for a Masters in
Diplomacy and International Relations

Dr. Margarita M. Balmaceda, Ph.D.
(Advisor)

Ambassador Azmat Hassan (Ret.) M.A., M.Sc.
(Second Reader)

By: Mouna Marie Abrahami

Fall 2006
Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgments

Chapter I: Introduction
Three Waves of Palestinian Migration
   i. Homeland Politics During the First Wave
   ii. Homeland Politics During the Second Wave
   iii. Homeland Politics During the Third Wave
Definition of Diaspora
Theoretical Framework
Literature Review on the Large Question
Literature Review on the Small Question
Policy Significance
Methodology
   i. Sources
   ii. Variables
Chapter Outline

Chapter II: Homeland Politics, National Identity, and Three Waves of Emigration

Part I
   i. Arab Nationalism during the Ottoman Empire
   ii. Implications of Zionism for the ‘imagined’ Arab Nation
   iii. The Rise of Arab Palestinian Nationalism
   iv. Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire- World War I and post war settlements
   v. Palestinian Arab Nationalism Exemplified in Diaspora: Level of Awareness- Ecuador
   vi. Broad Arab National Identity Exemplified in Diaspora: Level of Awareness- Argentina
   vii. Analysis

Part II
   i. Palestinian Nationalism during the British Mandate
   ii. Politics under the British Mandate
   iii. Palestinian Nationalism Exemplified in Diaspora: Relationship Maintained with the Homeland- Honduras

Part III
   i. Homeland politics post 1948, the creation of Israel
   ii. ‘Al Nakba’: The Catastrophe, 1948
   iii. Competing Discourses on Identity
iv. Discriminatory Politics toward Palestinians Exemplified in Diaspora: Experience in the Host Country- Australia
v. Analysis and Conclusions

Chapter III: Conclusion
Closing Remarks

Appendix
Map- Palestinian Loss of Land 1946-2000
Map- The Royal Commission Plan for Partition of Palestine 1937
Made in Palestine Art Exhibit

Bibliography
Mouna Marie Abraham

Abstract

Homeland politics shaped Arab and Palestinian nationalism over the course of three political administrations in historic Palestine. Policy administered under the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate directly affected the national identity of the indigenous population. Just before the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, ‘Palestinian’ came to refer to the Muslim and Christian majority, and excluded the Jewish minority, as a consequence of homeland politics. This study focuses on the impact of these policies on emigrants from Palestine under the Ottoman Authority, the British Mandate, and after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

The political environment in the Middle East since the mid 1800s shaped the national identity of its inhabitants, affecting in particular the Palestinian Arabs. This thesis confirms that the impact of these changes occurred gradually over the course of the transition between colonial powers. Emigrancy were affected differently under each political administration.

Select cases of Diaspora Palestinians are chosen and differentiated by the date of departure from the homeland, to compare the political situation during that period and its impact on national identity. The impact of homeland politics on constituent national orientation is reflected in the Diaspora differently depending on the: level of awareness, relationship maintained with the homeland, and experience in the host country.

In addition to the impact of homeland politics during the above three periods, the identity of emigrants from Palestine was also affected by conditions in the host country. Certain levels of assimilation and integration also contributed to their identity distinguishing them from other Palestinians who had undergone separate experiences. The findings of this study conclude that irrespective of the above conditions, a fundamental characteristic that unites all Palestinians is that they share an attachment to their homeland and heritage.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr. Margarita Balmaceda, my advisor for this project, for her encouragement, guidance and patience. Her course inspired a large thematic base of my work. Thanks also to Amb. Azmat Hassan, the second reader. His commitment, important suggestions, and support were also a vital contribution.

Thanks also to Deans Michael Olin, Courtney Smith and Ursula Sanjamino, whose help was greatly appreciated. I am also grateful to Dr. Philip Kayal, Dr. May Seikaly, Dr. Janice Terry, Mr. Hani Bawardi, Mr. Kenneth Ayouby, and Dr. Gary David who were all generous with their time and guidance.

I am grateful to my parents Rina and Edward Abraham, and family for their unconditional support. Thanks to the Abraham, Giacaman, and Kattan families—especially Muna Giacaman, and my cousin Dahna Abourahme, who helped make my writing this thesis possible. I would especially like to acknowledge Manal Abdallah for her endless encouragement. Thanks to her family who also supported me while writing this in Birzeit and letting me use their office. Finally, thanks also to Issa Sakhleh, Hazan Khayat, and Al Salame for helping provide relevant sources.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Benedict Anderson’s theory on nationalism is relevant to analyzing the impact of homeland politics on the national identity of Palestinian Arabs, as evidenced in the Diaspora. In his book *Imagined Communities*, Anderson asserts that a nation is an imagined community. The nation is limited, whereby there are boundaries that separate it from other nations. It is also ‘imagined’ as sovereign, whose constituents believe they are free. Finally the nation is an ‘imagined community,’ in the sense that relationships are believed to be horizontal. Constituents believe that members within their nation maintain camaraderie and fellowship with each other, despite inequalities that might actually exist. A nation is ‘imagined,’ because people believe that there are others just like them, who they may never come into contact with, but nevertheless believe that these people also share common myths of their heritage.

Many nations that today are recognized as independent sovereign States were once grouped with other nations under a larger Empire. Their separate national identities developed in the midst of, and because of, apparent differences between them. Imperial forces tried to ensure that its constituents remained loyal to the Empire through a strategy of ‘divide and rule,’ and by imposing a broad national rhetoric. However in spite of this, a separate national identity developed locally and independent of imperial authority. For many, this facilitated the creation of independent sovereign States after the empire eventually ceased to exist.

Anderson’s study is particularly relevant to this thesis. Applied to the Middle East, it explains how constituents within the sovereign states like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq came to ‘imagine’ themselves as nations. Previously, they were all grouped with Palestine under the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, separate nationalism developed, in spite of the larger Arab identity that these nations also came to ‘imagine’ were shared among them. The fact that they were partitioned into separate colonies after the fall of the Ottoman Empire facilitated the creation of separate nation States in spite of a shared Arab national identity that transcended religious affiliation. All but Palestine became a

---

2 Course on *The Politics of Cultural and Ethnic Diversity in the Contemporary World*, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Dr. Margreti Balbaceda: Seton Hall University, 2013.
sovereign state after the colonial era. Instead Palestinian land was partitioned to the new state of Israel in 1948, and the “West Bank” of Jordan, and Gaza. The West Bank and Gaza were not awarded official sovereignty. Meanwhile Israel has continued to expand and develop settlements on Palestinian land in violation of international law, but especially because of this absence of sovereignty that has left Palestinians state-less. Although Palestinian nationalism existed prior to 1948, it developed independent of ‘Arab’ Jews, who instead came to identity with Israel through Zionism, a political movement for Jewish national restoration in Palestine.

The creation of Israel devastated the lives of many Palestinians who were unjustly removed from their homes on the land partitioned to the new State. An independent Palestinian State that would not exclude constituent membership on the grounds of ethnic or religious orientation was desired by the majority in Palestine prior to 1948. However, this consensus was overlooked by the international community, who were not adequately informed about Palestinian self determination when it mattered most. Concerning this Maud Mandel asserts, “...nation-state formation is a process rather than a predetermined outcome.” Understanding the concept of ‘nation’ as Anderson has theorized in his study provides insight on why Palestinians did not just blend into other neighboring Arab states, which the Zionist opposition had hoped would happen. Rashid Khalidi confirms, “Were a basic core sense of national identity not already in place among key segments of the Palestinian people, the catastrophic shock of these events might have been expected to shatter the Palestinians as a people, eventually leading to their full absorption into the neighboring Arab countries.”

This thesis discusses how homeland politics affected Palestinian national identity from the mid 1800s until the present, under the Ottoman and the British colonialist

---

2 "Israeli treatment of the Palestinians elicits criticism because it is contrary to widely accepted notions of human rights, to international law and to the principle of national self-determination. And it is hardly the only state that has faced sharp criticism on these grounds."
6 Khalidi, 22.
establishment of the Israeli State. Toward the end of the Ottoman Empire and throughout the British Mandate, Arab Palestinians wanted independence granted, if not at first to one large Arab State, to a Palestinian nation State that would place Muslims, Christians and Jews on equal standing. "Arabs insisted on an independent Palestine in which rights of minorities were guaranteed." However, the gradual Zionist influence and eventual establishment of Israel deferred this option since their mission was to create an exclusively Jewish state. Transactions such as these leading up to the establishment of Israel, facilitated the narrowing of a Palestinian national identity to Muslim and Christian membership alone. Its impact is evident throughout the Diaspora, whereby the perception of national orientation gradually shifted with the transition between authorities over Palestine. Examples of Palestinian migration during each period of political rule will be used to illustrate the impact of homeland politics on national identity through Palestinians in the Diaspora.

Three Waves of Palestinian Migration
Three periods of Palestinian emigration will be evaluated. The reason that constituents migrated in each of these periods is directly correlated to the enactment of policies that undermined their livelihoods. The three waves of migration are as follows: the first wave dates from 1860-1916 under the Ottoman Empire and during the immediate post-War transition until 1918; the second dates from 1918-1948 under the British Mandate; and the last wave includes those Palestinians who fled during and after 1948 with the establishment of Israel in Palestine. The historic context of each of these periods is relevant to understanding how homeland politics affected national identity in Diaspora.

i. Homeland Politics during the First Wave
Arabs first left the Ottoman Empire for commercial prospects, particularly to North and South America. They were primarily motivated to leave due to economic and political conditions, whose deterioration affected all sectors. Emigration was also motivated out

---

of the desire to escape the military service. Toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the Ottoman Empire was engaged in a series of wars. Many youth emigrated to escape the draft, especially at the wake of World War One.11

The Ottoman Empire was diverse in its ethnic, religious, and geographic composition. During the period under study, Palestine was part of Greater Syria and grouped with present-day Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.12 Throughout the Empire, the non-Muslim population was segregated by religious affiliation into separate groups called millets13 and represented administratively by local intermediaries.14 Although its inhabitants were treated differently depending on which millet they belonged to, scholars concluded that toward the end of the Ottoman Empire, and after World War I in 1918, there was a clear recognition of a broader Arab national identity through a shared appreciation for the culture, language and traditions that transcended religious affiliation.15 By the end of the First World War, the inhabitants of the region sought to lobby for independence as one large Arab nation.

During this period, the Zionist movement in Europe specifically targeted Palestine as the place where they would like to establish a national home for all Jews.16 This undermined the desire of Arab nationalists to include Palestine within the larger Arab State they wished to create. It also undermined the future livelihoods of the non-Jewish residents of Palestine. This information first became apparent to urban residents before reaching peasant farmers in the rural outskirts of Palestine.17 This is significant since policies were often effectuated before the fellahin-nomadic peasants who lived off of the land knew about them. The transaction costs enforced by Ottoman institutions did not

11 Musallam, 42 and 45
13 The Millet System: “Non Muslims were organized into three officially sanctioned millets: Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Jews.” Bruce Masters. Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism (United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61.
14 Ibid, 61
15 Ibid, 73
17 Muslih, 83
accommodate the fellahin way of life, who could not afford to pay taxes. In that sense, their entitlement to the land was through work, which was not formally recognized. Absentee Arab landowners instead 'hired' them to maintain their properties by living and working on the land, while they were away. They often sold the land without informing the fellahin in advance. Zionist immigrants who purchased the land from absentee Arab landowners were more inclined to evict the fellahin, who did not know that the land that they also considered their own had been sold. Naturally, they were disconcerted and revolted against the perceived invasion. The forced evacuations of the peasant farmers began just after the turn of the twentieth century.18

ii. Homeland Politics during the Second Wave

Although Arab independence was desired by the majority, the end of World War I was for France and Britain, an opportunity to benefit from occupying the region by dividing it into separate mandates. Through the Sykes-Picot Accord of 1916, Syria and Lebanon were partitioned to France; while Iraq and Palestine were partitioned to the British.19 The combination of post War recuperation and satisfying political gains played a major role in British policy, which in turn shaped national identity among the indigenous residents of Palestine.20 The conditions which narrowly defined an Arab Palestinian identity to include Arab Muslims and Christians, while excluding the Jewish population, became more widely recognized during this period despite its gradual development.

The start of the British Mandate marks the second wave of Palestinian emigration. The Zionist movement continued to undermine the economic status of the indigenous Muslim and Christian population.21 Policy under the British initially favored the

18 Khalidi, 99-102
19 Ibid, 159; Mussilh, 101
20 Khalidi, 159-160. In reference to the Sykes-Picot accords of 1916 and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which promised a Jewish National home in Palestine, he suggests that the British and other Allied powers underwent these agreements in secret before they were revealed by Leon Trotsky in November of 1917 after the Russian Revolution. He states, "The issuance of the Balfour Declaration and the revelation of the Sykes-Picot accords by the Bolsheviks- both in November 1917, only weeks before Jerusalem fell to Allenby Forces- had an enormous impact in Palestine. Suddenly the Palestinians found that their country was being occupied by the greatest imperial power of the age, Great Britain, which had made secret arrangements for its dispossession with France, and had publicly proclaimed it's support for the Zionist movement in Palestine- aspirations some Zionist spokesman had denied, but many Palestinians feared."
expansion of Jewish settlement and labor to develop Palestine. However, this eventually undermined Palestinian businesses that did not receive the same support. As a result many Palestinians left to find work abroad, especially the Christian Arabs of Palestine.22 They joined their families that emigrated under the Ottoman Authority to avoid military conscription. Some stayed indefinitely while others made only commercial relations abroad, and intended to return to their homes.

With the study of Honduras, Palestinians from Bethlehem in particular, came to join family that previously settled abroad for commercial interests.23 They were motivated by increased business competition between Arabs and Jews in Palestine, from heightened tension that arose with the increase of European Jewish settlers migrating to Palestine, many of whom were illegal immigrants.24 The steady arrival of Jewish immigrants exceeded the legal quota granted them under the British Mandate for entry into Palestine.25

The sale of businesses or property from absentee landowners to the Zionists also hurt the Arabs of Palestine for enforcing a policy that discouraged non-Jewish employment on the land. As mentioned previously, Zionist settlers that purchased land in Palestine from absentee Arab landowners often evicted the peasant farmers without prior notification.26 This continued into the 1940s. Palestinians across both urban and rural sectors became equally aware of the underlying factors that motivated what eventually became a large scale Jewish immigration from Europe.27 Over time these policies affected the national orientation of Arab Jews throughout the Middle East, but especially

23 Ibid, 56.
24 “In addition to its emphasis on the development of its military character, the Ezel’s activities focused on illegal operations aimed at smuggling Jewish immigrants into Palestine.” AriePerliger and Leonard Weinberg, “Jewish Self-Defense and Terrorist Groups Prior to the Establishment of the State of Israel: Roots and Traditions.” Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions 4, no. 3 (2003): 100.
25 Barbara J. Smith, 66.
26 “Los sionistas de la izquierda se proponían crear en Palestina una clase trabajadora judía; esto debía lograrse mediante la implementación del slogan del empleo exclusivo de una mano de obra judía, el que en efecto, prohibía la población nativa trabajar en granjas o fábricas judías. El Fondo Nacional Judío fue especialmente firme en este sentido, al aplicar su política de arrendar tierras o presuntos colonizadores.” Weinstock, 7
27 Keinan, 583
in Palestine. The polarization between Palestinian Arabs and Jews developed from policies enacted on behalf of imperialist and Zionist aspirations, but also among other Arabs who falsely associated Arab Jews with the Zionist movement. This facilitated the nominal divide that separated the Palestinian Arabs from the Arab Jews within their communities, resulting in the gradual shift that narrowed an Arab Palestinian identity to just Muslim and Christian confessions by 1948.

iii. Homeland Politics during the Third Wave

The Zionists were successful at persuading the international community to establish their national home in Palestine, considering their situation after the Holocaust and other broad acts of anti-Semitism against European Jews. However a Jewish State in Palestine was founded in 1948 at the expense of Palestinians innocent of these crimes, who were “terrorized” by Zionist groups before and after the creation of Israel.

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 marked a third wave of Palestinian migration, and is remembered as “Al Nakba.” The term is used in reference to the forced removal of Palestinian Muslims and Christians from their homes upon establishment of the new State of Israel, who fled for this reason alone. Many joined their families abroad. Others lost their livelihoods, both agricultural and commercial as a

28 "The other dimension of Zionism’s displacement of Palestinians was the displacement of Arab Jews from the Arab world..." Elia Shoahat. "The Invention of the Mizrahi." *Journal of Palestine Studies.* (California: University of California Press, 1999) 29, no. 1, 1-12.
29 "The situation led the Palestinian Arabs to see all Jews as at least potential accomplished of Zionism. Had the Arab nationalist movement maintained the distinction between “Jew” and “Zionist,” as even some Zionist historians have recognized, it might have won Arab Jewish support for the anti-Zionist cause." Ella Shoahat. "The Invention of the Mizrahi." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 (1999): 13.
30 "These upheavals in the world around them, upheavals that impinged directly on the structure of the lives of the entire population, made possible any at the time necessary, extremely rapid changes in attitudes and consciousness on the part of the people of Palestine." Khalidi, 160.
31 The following citations describe the activity of two Zionist militant groups, the Etzel and the Lehi: "The *Etzel’s* terrorist campaign against the Arab population lasted until the end of the ‘Arab Uprising’ in 1939 and included more than 60 attacks. As an attempt to characterize the *Etzel’s* activities in this period leads us to note its four major activities: assassination attempts, attacks on transportation routes, shootings, and the use of explosive devices. These attacks occurred in various cities (such as the shooting at Arabs in the downtown area of Haifa in June 1938, and a month later at Arabs walking near the Sheari Tzeder Hospital in Jerusalem) as well as at more isolated areas (such as the killing of two Arab on the beach in Bat Yam in March 1937, and the killing of two other Arabs in the fields near the Hefor valley that same month)... The *Lehi* continued its terrorist activities even after the United Nations’ declared the founding of Jewish and Arab states, living side by side in November 1947." Perliger and Weinberg, 100,101,102.
32 The catastrophe.
consequence of the Zionist expansion and conquest of Palestine. This is a turning point in Palestinian history for the traumatic experience caused by this forced removal of Palestinians from their homes. “Between 1944 and 1961 the Christian population of Jerusalem declined from 29,350 to 10,982” many of whom joined relatives that migrated previously to North and South America. Peasant farmers who based their livelihood on agriculture, and survived through income generated from the land lost everything with no compensation. Faced with limited options, some stayed behind as displaced Palestinians, while others fled to neighboring regions, especially Trans-Jordan (Jordan), Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

Evaluating the reasons that constituents chose to leave the homeland during these three waves of migration, and the perceptions they carried with them during different periods of political authority, reveals the gradual influence that homeland politics had on the national orientation of inhabitants throughout Palestine and the surrounding region. The massive migration of Palestinians to live abroad resulted in their qualification as an ethnic group in Diaspora.

Definition of Diaspora

The Palestinian Diaspora community is relevant to the discussion of national identity among the Arabs because it reflects constituent national orientation at different periods of authority. Palestinian emigration persisted while important political developments (homeland politics) transpired gradually over the course of the Ottoman, British and after the establishment of the Israeli State. Exposure to the shift in policies with each new regime, influenced emigrant perceptions on national orientation differently, depending on when they left. Homeland politics affected national identity gradually under each phase of political rule, thereby skewing constituent perceptions in the Diaspora.

33 Khalidi, 99.
35 “The overwhelming majority of those in the camps and registered for relief were either peasants who had owned their own homes and land in Palestine or tenant farmers and sharecroppers who had tilled plots in or near their native villages. Unlike those who had experienced urban life, who had received an education, or who had businesses contacts abroad, the peasantry was uniquely deprived because its source of livelihood, the land, was lost.” Pamela Ann Smith. “The Palestinian Diaspora, 1948-1985.” Journal of Palestine Studies (California: University of California Press, 1986), 15, no. 3, 93.
36 Gonzalez, 28.
Diaspora is defined as a “dispersion (as a people of common national origin or of common beliefs): spread (as of a national culture): exile, scattering, migration.”

However, the definition of what constitutes a people in Diaspora varies. According to Nancie L. González, “a true Diaspora” includes persons of all ages and gender; implies that they have migrated to more than one region in the world; and that the migrants feel they are unique and maintain myths from their heritage. However, Sari Hanafi suggests that generations that have assimilated in the host country cannot be considered part of the Diaspora. He states: “The majority of Palestinians in North and Latin America and a portion of the Palestinians in the Arab countries who emigrated before 1948, can be classified as ‘assimilated.’” A large majority of the Palestinian migration to North, Central, and South America prior to 1948 was motivated by economic hardships. They sought work abroad as permanent or temporary members within the host country. Robin Cohen in his classification of the Palestinian Diaspora concludes that it “had been born” following British withdrawal in 1948 and the official establishment of the state of Israel and would therefore be classified a “victim” Diaspora. However, according to Gary Hamilton’s study, the Palestinian Diaspora began as a “trade” Diaspora and could be classified as such even though initial migration plans were temporary, and later became permanent.

Nancie Gonzalez accepts this view, although Palestinian migration since 1948 is what she calls “a true Diaspora.” She also views the events of 1948 as the primary foundation uniting Palestinians in Diaspora. She states, “The Palestinians, since they are divided in their religious or ‘confessional’ allegiances are today primarily united by their sense of outrage and frustration over their exclusion from what to them has been their homeland since time immemorial. Even without a recognized state of their own, since

Theoretical Framework

The large research question of this study asks how homeland politics affected national identity in Diaspora. Scholars have previously assessed the impact of homeland politics on national identity, but in different contexts. In this thesis, it is predicated on the emergence of nationalism during three stages of authority over Palestine: the Ottoman, British and the Israeli - and its influence on the national orientation of inhabitants as evidenced in the Diaspora.

The time period of this study starts during the mid 1800s, the latter period of the Ottoman Authority over greater Syria. It is followed by the post World War I British occupation, the creation of Israel in 1948, and its consequent occupation of historic Palestine. The phrase homeland polices refers specifically to the way policy was enforced during each stage of authority. The policies implemented were motivated by imperial aspirations and often worked to the disadvantage of the indigenous groups residing on the land. They are partly responsible for shaping the socio-economic and national identity of Palestinian society over time. Explaining the historical context and the emergence of nationalism is essential to analyze the impact of homeland politics on Palestinian national identity. It catalyzes the analysis on the gradual development of nationalism, and how this is reflected in the Diaspora. Thus the specific issue that this paper will address is in an effort to answer the central question - how do homeland politics affect national identity in Diaspora- is how Palestinian identity in the Diaspora developed in light of the changing political situation in the Middle East since the turn of the twentieth century.

The impact of homeland politics on national identity is reflected differently in the Diaspora for a variety of reasons. The difficult living situations dictated by policies administered were unique to each stage of political authority; which diversified the factors that caused Palestinians to leave their country, and the intended duration abroad. It also influenced their level of integration upon arrival and the extent to which they

43 Ibid, 37.
would maintain correspondence with the homeland. This coupled with policy toward immigrants in the host country, and other social norms, affected national identity as a group in Diaspora. A transnational identity became common among Palestinians that settled abroad and integrated into new societies and cultures. This issue is a relevant factor that affects national identity. Living outside one’s homeland for an extended period of time contributes a transnational characteristic that distinguishes them from those of the same origin that stayed behind, or who also settled abroad, but in different countries. The level of integration is relative to individual preference and experience, but regardless suggests that identity is shifting pending on one’s environment. However, the focus of this thesis is the impact of homeland politics in Palestine on the national identity of its inhabitants, as evidenced through the Diaspora.

**Literature Review on the Large Question**

The following books most closely suggests ways that homeland politics affect national identity in Diaspora: *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland* by Julianne Hammer; *Impact of Homeland Politics on Palestinians in the Mahjar (the North American Diaspora): The Case of the People of Birzeit, 1948- Present* by Elias Essa George; and *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* by Helena Lindholm Schulz. These books provide a current portrayal of the Palestinian Diaspora experience by interviewing immigrants throughout the world and describing the impact of homeland politics on Palestinian identity in the Diaspora.

Hammer writes on exiled Palestinians who visited Palestine for the first time since their expulsion. George researched a Palestinian community from Birzeit that settled in the United States and examines if political involvement while in the Diaspora measures immigrant assimilation to the host society. Schulz documents Palestinians across the Diaspora, highlighting the lives of both refugees and immigrants specifically in North America and Europe; showing how identity was shaped in conjunction with political developments in the Middle East among immigrants adapting to and becoming part of another nation. The evidence from these sources suggest that departing from Palestine was a direct consequence of homeland politics, which varies depending on the time
period, political group in power and the impact it had on the constituents- their political, social, religious affiliation, and occupation, and original residential area in Palestine.

In Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland, Julianne Hamlcer supports the concept that Palestinian identity has been shaped by a series of historical events; each helping to create a multi-faceted identity under one larger Palestinian nation. The people all identify under this term, yet being 'Palestinian' has come to embody many different experiences and thus categorizations within the general group. There are Palestinians living in the homeland, those who are displaced within historic Palestine, and who are refugees outside their country. There are those born outside Palestine and others who emigrated to find work and improve their economic status. Her study is important to this research because it supports the notion that homeland politics did not have the same impact on all its constituents but forced some to lead different lifestyles. She confirms in her conclusion: “Palestinian identities have developed differently in different host countries. Many factors influence the formation of identities.”44

Hammer’s study specifically focuses on the Palestinians born in exile and their experience upon return to the homeland, based on oral testimonies. She states the purpose, which is to contribute a new variable to the study of exiled Palestinians-the level of awareness between others like them across different regions in the Diaspora. She states:

“While researching the Palestinian Diaspora communities and communicating with many Palestinians in different locations, I realized that Palestinians do have a sense of shared national identity, but in reality the different groups of Palestinians know relatively little about each other... Living in different cultures and settings has produced particular lifestyles, value systems, and beliefs. Also, such factors as class, economic and legal status, and political affiliation influence every Palestinian identity, although each has a self-perception that still pictures Palestine as one unified country with a language and cultural values, whether or not that is true of its present.”45

This source testifies that as a consequence of events in the homeland, Palestinians who emigrated to different places, and for different reasons as result of the political situation;

44 Julianne Hammer. Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the search for a homeland. (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005), 220
maintained their own personal relationship with the homeland and held onto specific elements of the culture and heritage based on memory, family, and personal experience.

This is also confirmed in the study by Elias Essa George, *The Impact of Homeland Politics on Palestinians in the Mahjar (the North American Diaspora): The Case of the People of Birzeit, 1948- Present*. He shows how a Palestinian identity is maintained in the host country in spite of a certain degree of integration and assimilation. This is based on the idea that adapting to one’s surroundings shapes a person’s identity, contributing separate transnational experiences throughout the Diaspora. With Palestinian emigrants settled throughout the world, each destination has added a new element to their sense of self, making them different from those who settled elsewhere and embraced other characteristics from that society as their own.

Scholars have asserted that there is a direct link between how involved an ethnic community might be in the politics of its homeland to determine their level of assimilation within society. However, George’s study suggests that there is no direct link and that assimilation is a slow and gradual process not necessarily accomplished by either first or second generation immigrants.46 He also shows that the level of assimilation is not directly linked to political involvement, especially in the case of Arab Americans, and the Palestinians specifically. George’s study attempts to develop the hypothesis that, “there is no link between the degree of assimilation and the political behavior of Arab Americans in the new country, a point tending to call into question a debate over assimilation in the broader sense.”47 He selected an immigrant community originally from Birzeit for this study and found that they did not abandon their heritage and appreciation for their ethnic background in spite of integrating into American society.

George applies the concept of ‘homeland politics’ to the level of constituent involvement in the politics of its homeland, while settled abroad. In contrast, this thesis associates ‘homeland politics’ with the political structure in Palestine during separate phases of authority. It is a primary variable that shaped national identity and is evidenced in the Diaspora. Nevertheless, the findings in George’s study are relevant to the larger question since they contribute that Palestinian nationalism was not lost to changes that

46 George, 26
47 Ibid, 70
occurred in Palestine, and especially with the creation of Israel. There remains a deep remembrance and appreciation for the place left behind. Full assimilation does not necessarily occur in all cases and varies with each individual, destination and age-group/generation.

Schulz’s study also supports that in spite of being immigrants dispersed in different countries, Palestinians remained loyal to their heritage, collectively conscious of their history and united in the sense that they share a remembrance, conocimiento, and attachment to the land. She documents the experience of Palestinian Diaspora communities of 1948, regarding their desire to return to the homeland; their actual impressions upon going back; and their relationship with the Palestinians that stayed behind, asserting that in the Diaspora, al-Nakba is the defining experience which has united Palestinians abroad. 48

The study shows that memories have sustained the Palestinians in Diaspora regarding their collective identity as being Palestinian. However, upon return to the homeland, her study points out that they experienced some dissonance between these memories as a consequence of the political situation and felt disillusioned from the unexpected changes. For example, some villages changed dramatically, due to the political situation. In addition, those who left were scorned for leading better lives outside Palestine, instead of staying behind and suffering with the rest for their love of country and nation. Her study also cites that some Palestinians in the homeland disapprove of those who lost touch with the Arabic language. 49

These sources share much in common, highlighting that the Palestinian nation encompasses a variety of individuals with various experiences. Regardless of whether they are aware of other Palestinians in the Diaspora, they share common myths and memories, maintaining some traditions and other aspects of their heritage. These have remained important markers of identity for them in spite of other experiences outside the homeland. People still identified as Palestinian in spite of not necessarily having much else in common with others like them settled elsewhere.

48 Schulz, 227.
49 Ibid
This research is relevant to the larger question because it demonstrates that homeland politics, over the course of different periods of political influence, shaped and consolidated national identity throughout the region and, this is reflected differently throughout the Diaspora.

**Literature Review on the Small Question**

Much has been written about Palestinian identity across the Diaspora, focusing on life in the host country. Instead, this thesis focuses on nationalism throughout the Middle East and asks how the three transitions of political authority over Palestine are reflected through Palestinians in the Diaspora. The relevant literature highlights the origins and development of nationalism since the Ottoman Empire, to assess how Palestinian identity developed in light of the changing political environment in the Middle East since the mid-1800s. It is evidenced through research on ethnic Palestinians settled abroad. The following variables under study are relative to each case example: date of departure, reasons for emigrating, level of awareness in Diaspora, and experience in the host country. The cases vary, reflecting the political situation in the homeland at relevant turning points of nationalism in Middle East history. Therefore, sources that discuss the development of nationalism throughout Greater Syria are germane to the smaller question.

Mohammed Muslih explains the impact of politics in his study on *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*. His study maintains that the earliest manifestation of Palestinian identity was realized in conjunction and often shadowed by the larger Arab nationalism, especially under the Ottoman Authority. During this period, there were proponents in favor of pan-Arab nationalism and others in favor of Palestinian nationalism as a remedy for independence from colonialism. Both parties were especially cautious of Zionist plans to make Palestine a Jewish State and wanted to prevent another foreign occupation.

Muslih states:

> Herein we have the embryo of Palestinian patriotism, because after 1909 the Palestinian Arabs increasingly became local patriots in the context of their opposition to Zionism. Palestinian patriotism however, did not develop into full-blown Palestinian nationalism with its distinctive ideology and organizational

---

50 Muslih, 94-95
structure as a result of Zionism. Palestinian politics had an Arab context, and it was in that context that Palestinian nationalism was born.\textsuperscript{51}

This suggests that Palestinians were collectively conscious of slight distinctions in geographic and local traditions between other territories, like Syria, Trans-Jordan, and Lebanon. However, all connected through pride for the Arab heritage, and felt part of the larger ‘imagined’ Arab nation that comprised a major component of their identity.

Muslih’s study explains how homeland politics affected national identity during the Ottoman and post World War I period, marked as the first wave of emigration from Palestine in this thesis. For example, the European Zionist claim of Palestine was an important catalyst for Arab nationalism because it underscored the interests of the Arab majority. However, some of the elites felt that to maintain their seat in the government and dispel Zionism at the same time, was to abandon the plan to make the region one Arab state. Their justification for this was based on the belief that the territory of Palestine was in jeopardy of being turned over to the Zionists, and that the best way to counteract this was through a Palestinian nationalist movement. France and Great Britain having divided the region into colonial mandates also influenced the perception that this option would strengthen their chances.\textsuperscript{52} Lobbying for Palestine’s independence separately appeared most logical.

The study by Rashid Khalidi, \textit{Palestinian Identity: the Construction of Modern National Consciousness}, furthers the concept that strengthening constituent awareness of Palestinian nationalism was used as a tool for independence from the British against Zionism. His research explains how homeland politics affected national identity during the Ottoman Empire, as well. More importantly however, he describes the way Palestinian national consciousness developed and spread during the British Mandate; the second wave of emigration from Palestine. He demonstrates how patriotism for Palestine was transmitted through the education system, literature, and the media. These outlets served to inform others about the political situation, and the negative impact it would have on the non-Jewish Arabs of Palestine. His research suggests that publicizing the news to all sectors was a gradual process. For example, the illiterate fellahin (peasant

\textsuperscript{51} Muslih, 87
\textsuperscript{52} Muslih, 118
farmers) were dependent on others to inform them about events outside their village. Or for others residing in rural sectors, printed newspapers often arrived late.\(^5\) Such findings are relevant to this thesis since "national consciousness" among Palestinian Arabs developed in conjunction with the transition to British Authority and throughout its term. Since information spread gradually, it influenced groups that emigrated at distinct phases of political authority differently. In comparison to those early emigrants that left at the turn of the century from those that emigrated in the 1930s, advancements in homeland politics directed groups originating from the same village to categorize themselves differently depending on a variety of factors. For example, one important factor that helped influence individual categorization depended on the relationship maintained with the homeland while in Diaspora, whereby some emigrants might be more conscious of the political situation because they traveled frequently between Palestine and the host country. While persons emigrating from Palestine during Ottoman rule knew they were Palestinian and Arab, they might be more inclined to mention to immigration officials, for example, that they were Ottoman since that was the official nationalism of their passport. In contrast, there were some who identified as Arab, or Syrian (in reference to Greater Syria).

The books chosen on ethnic Palestinians settled and assimilated abroad show the reasons for migrating from Palestine, the relationship maintained with the homeland, and the intended duration abroad; all of which are unique to the political environment at the time of departure, and the specific destination under study. There were also circumstances where those that stayed in Palestine later joined families abroad because the situation at home worsened. This is relevant to the study undertaken by Hani Elturk on the Palestinian community in Australia. He documents the separate waves of immigrants that came as a consequence of homeland politics in Palestine, but which began in 1948 when Palestinian land was lost to the Israeli State. The first major wave of Palestinian immigrants to Australia began in 1948 because the creation of Israel expelled many Palestinian Christians and Muslims from their homes and livelihoods. This abrupt loss forced them to settle elsewhere.\(^\text{54}\)

\(^{53}\) Khalidi, 57.
\(^{54}\) ibid, 30
The experience for Palestinians in Honduras as documented by Nancy González in her research Dollar Dove and Eagle: One Hundred years of Palestinian Migration to Honduras, differed from the community in Australia, especially because emigration to Honduras started in the early 1900s. Palestinian immigrants to Honduras are documented as early as the Ottoman Empire for fleeing to escape military conscription under the Ottoman Authority. Thus the experience in the host country and the reasons for emigration varied in that respect between the Australia and Honduras cases. Specific factors unique to each affected the lifestyles of these communities in the host country and the type of relationship they would maintain with the homeland. Under the British Authority, Palestinian immigrants to Honduras were motivated by commercial relations and would travel frequently between Palestine and Honduras. This suggests that the early arrivals were less interested in establishing permanent ties to the region precisely because their primary interest was temporary and commercial in nature. As conditions in the homeland worsened however, they felt more inclined to settle permanently in Honduras.

Policy Significance
Considering Diaspora communities is relevant to foreign policy because it reveals problems that cause the unsettlement of people, and its impact on those that stayed behind. It also affects the inhabitants of the host society where the migrant must settle. For example, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 resulted in the displacement of Palestinians forced to flee as refugees into neighboring countries such as Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon. The neighboring Arab countries that received them were sympathetic to their situation. However, the conflict escalated, and Palestinian emigration increased. They fled as refugees crossing into neighboring Arab States, who eventually were unable to accommodate the sudden influx of refugees, denied a right of return. With the exception of Jordan, most Arab States could not consistently afford secure residency status to such a large group of Palestinians.

Such is the case with the Palestinians in South Lebanon. The creation of Israel in 1948, and the aftermath of the 1967 War caused a surge of Palestinians to enter Lebanon, seeking asylum as refugees. This over a period of years created a Muslim majority in

---

55 González, 28
Lebanon, upsetting the delicate balance outlined by the Lebanese National Covenant. This in turn created a state of instability and “State within a State” that eroded the sovereignty of Lebanon, left powerless to Israeli incursions and retaliations from the Palestinian refugees. In order for policy makers to accurately prescribe a solution to the military discord between Israel and factions in Lebanon during the summer of 2006, it is important to avoid a one-sided approach that undermines the significance of these historic events.

Currently, there are more Palestinians living outside their homeland, because of the political situation that continues to undermine their legitimate right to live on the land. Although the reasons for having fled vary according to the policies administered under each period, it is certain that the Middle East crisis is rooted in a series of policies that undermined specific groups in society, creating for the Palestinians a problem brought upon them by more powerful nations. Communities in Diaspora suggest that emigrating from one’s homeland is a survival effort to seek happiness and a better life elsewhere. This would not necessarily have to happen if better policies are formulated by those in authority that do not use institutions to serve only the most powerful among them. Policy makers might be able to identify ways to help people without making it necessary for them to migrate; by reallocating their energies to advance and improve the livelihoods of those among whom their policies might unjustly disadvantage.

Methodology

1. Sources

Correlations drawn between homeland politics in the Middle East, and its impact on the national orientation of Palestinians in Diaspora, are based on evidence provided by

Lebanon was a French colony prior to independence. French troops officially left the country in 1946. However, implications of independence began in 1943 when representatives from the two major religious groups, Christian and Muslim, met to agree on the creation of the National Covenant. Their objective was to create a system of governance that would represent all religious confessions equally in the government. The results were determined by a population census. The major religious group awarded representation in the national Parliament were the Maronite Christians, The Muslims- comprised of Sunni and Shi’is- and the Druze who are a sect of the Shi’is. Although the Government was organized by religious affiliation, such distinctions served merely as means of ensuring fair representation in the government.

relevant sources. Literature devoted to Diaspora studies and nationalism at large is the primary source. Previous scholars in the field have applied these concepts in their own research to draw conclusions on Arab and Palestinian nationalism throughout the Middle East. Their work is used to identify how homeland politics shaped national identity in Palestine. In addition, research undergone by scholars who documented Palestinians that emigrated from Palestine during the three periods of political authority under study, are used to show the impact of homeland politics on national identity that is reflected in the Diaspora. Select case studies of Palestinians in Diaspora, which clearly depict levels of national consciousness as it developed during the three periods, were chosen.

ii. Variables

Homeland politics, as the independent variable, refers to three phases of political authority under the Ottoman Empire, British Mandate, and Israeli State. It represents the transactions undergone by politically motivated interest groups in Europe and the Middle East since the mid 1800s. It also includes the transactions between these groups and the consequent policies enforced on the local population by those in authority.

The dependent variable, national identity, shifts in relation to the political situation and the policies enforced. It is not that a process of conversion occurs, but that perceptions change- the way constituents perceive who they are in relation to others within their community. For example, someone who is Christian could identify as an Ottoman, Arab and Palestinian while living in Jerusalem during the Ottoman Empire. However under the British Mandate, this person who has remained the same, no longer identifies as an Ottoman citizen. During the British Mandate, the person instead identifies as Arab and Palestinian. Furthermore, after the creation of Israel, being Palestinian becomes a distinct marker of national identity- in spite of remaining Arab- especially for being discriminated against within Palestine, and/or for being unable to live in his/her homeland because of the Israeli State. The significance of each title changes in relation to the political situation, suggesting that the dependent variable, national identity, shifts.

The hypothesis then, is that the political environment in the Middle East dating back to the late eighteen hundreds, shaped the national identity of its inhabitants, affecting in particular the Palestinian Arabs. However, the impact of these changes occurred gradually over the course of the transition between colonial powers, which
affected persons that emigrated under each political administration differently. National identity in Diaspora reflects this shift in identity. Three waves of emigration are discussed in relation to the three periods of political authority in Palestine. The date of departure distinguishes the political situation, and its impact on national identity as evidenced in Diaspora. Date of departure also determines the reason that constituents chose to emigrate under each period of authority. This in turn influences constituent awareness of the political situation while in Diaspora, depending on the relationship that constituents maintain with the homeland while abroad. Finally, date of departure also reflects experience in the host country, depending on the political situation during that period. These factors are associated with relevant examples of emigration to Argentina, Ecuador, Honduras, and Australia. The correlations are identified in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Departure</th>
<th>Three Waves</th>
<th>Reason for Emigrating</th>
<th>Homeland Politics</th>
<th>National Identity</th>
<th>Diaspora Community</th>
<th>Other Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid 1800s-1918</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>Ottoman/Palestinian</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Level of Awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Post World War I</td>
<td>Arab/Palestinian</td>
<td></td>
<td>in Diaspora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enlistment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-1947/8</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>British Mandate</td>
<td>Palestinian Arab</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Relationship to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Homeland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Israeli State</td>
<td>Palestinian/Arab Transnational</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Host Country Experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Outline
Chapter two provides historic background to each of the three periods of political authority, and is followed by examples of Palestinians migration. Chapter two is split into three parts. The way that national identity developed in the homeland during the three periods is reflected through three waves of migration and their lives in the Diaspora.

Part A of chapter two describes the first wave, from the mid 1800s-1918. It shows how the shift between political administrations during the Ottoman Empire and post war period, affected the national identity of its constituents. The level of awareness concerning this transition is emphasized in Part A as an important variable that affects national identity in Diaspora. The level of awareness of the political situation and its impact on national identity is reflected through ethnically and religiously diverse Arab emigrants to Argentina, and Palestinian emigrants to Ecuador. Part A represents the first row of table 1.

Part B of chapter two represents the second row of table 1 to describe the political situation during the British Mandate, from 1918-1948. In this period, a Palestinian identity is prioritized and a Palestinian nationalist movement develops to counteract Zionist forces. The impact of the political situation is reflected in the Diaspora. The relationship maintained with the homeland is attributed to the Palestinians in Honduras. Since the majority had no intention of settling permanently abroad, they traveled frequently between the two places whenever possible. As a result they were more conscious of events in the homeland and emphasized a Palestinian identity as a means of identification.

The third part of chapter two describes how homeland politics imposed a policy of discrimination towards Palestinians. The Palestinian Diaspora community in Australia reflects how homeland politics affected national identity during this period Palestinians were discriminated against in the homeland, and also suffered for this in the host country. In that respect, a particular level of assimilation and integration was required. Palestinians in Diaspora have acquired a transnational identity from this experience. The last row of table one associates the third wave of emigration with the establishment of Israel.
Chapter three concludes that the political environment in the Middle East since the mid 1800s shaped the national identity of its inhabitants during the course of three periods of political authority; under the Ottoman Empire, British Mandate and the State of Israel. It affected in particular the Palestinian Arabs. The examples of Palestinians in Diaspora show how the impact of these changes occurred gradually over the course of the transition between colonial powers, which affected persons that emigrated under each political administration differently. The findings of this study explain how homeland politics affects national identity in the Diaspora, and conclude that despite adopting transnational characteristics, all Palestinians share an attachment to the land and to their heritage.
II Homeland Politics, National Identity and Three Waves of Emigration

This chapter is divided according to the three periods of political authority under study, and asks how the transition between the three periods affected the consolidation of a shared national identity in Diaspora. Part I describes the political situation in greater Syria during the Ottoman Empire and its dissolution after World War I. The historic background is followed by relevant examples of how homeland politics affected national identity in Diaspora. Nationalism during the Ottoman Empire is portrayed through ethnically and religiously diverse emigrants who settled in Argentina and shared a common Arab identity. Associating with a broader Arab identity is also evident among Palestinian migrants in Ecuador during the transition that followed World War I. Both show a strong inclination toward a broad Arab identity used to distinguish national orientation during this period. Emigration in Part I is marked as the first wave.

Part II describes homeland politics during the British Mandate and its impact on national identity, as reflected through Palestinian emigration to Honduras. This group is marked as the second wave. Palestinian nationalism is emphasized during this period, as exemplified through the Diaspora community, due to its relationship with the homeland.

Part III describes homeland politics during the third period of political authority, the establishment of the Israeli State in 1948. The impact of homeland politics resulted in discrimination toward constituents for being 'Palestinian.' This is reflected in the Diaspora as well, as evidenced among Palestinians in Australia during the 1970s. The forced expulsion from their homeland which followed the Israeli State marks the third wave of emigration in this study.

This chapter explains how homeland politics affects national identity in Diaspora through the examples that follow each period of authority in Palestine. They show that identity shifts. This thesis attributes homeland politics as the ultimate instigator of this shift in identity among the Palestinian Arabs.
Part I.

i. Arab Nationalism during the Ottoman Empire

Palestine was under Ottoman rule between 1517 and 1918. The Waliyat Law of 1864 divided the Empire into separate provinces to centralize Ottoman Authority, under which Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Trans-Jordan were grouped together as greater Syria. Through this system, representatives from each province served as intermediaries elected to collect taxes and represent the interests of their local community at the central administration. In an effort to centralize authority, the Ottomans implemented the millet system, which divided persons living within the same locality by religious orientation. In spite of this, the inhabitants throughout greater Syria and neighboring Arab provinces shared much in common in addition to the Arabic language. During the nineteenth century constituents recognized a shared appreciation and affiliation with the Arab culture, which transcended religious affiliation and geographic boundaries. Although local loyalties were also felt within each province, its inhabitants shared an awareness and appreciation for a broader Arab identity, strong enough to develop into a national movement.

Arab nationalism was based on the belief that the indigenous inhabitants shared a common origin in addition to their usage of the Arabic language. The Ottoman policy of imposing the Turkish language and literature (“Turkification”) further enabled this community to feel they belonged to a separate community amidst a perceived foreign imposition through Ottoman rule. Edward Said describes this process of identity

---

54 - Palestine was also referred to as Surya al-Jumhūrīya (Southern Syria), because it was part of geographical Syria, namely the land mass that incorporated present-day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan. Muhammad Y. Muslih. The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism. (Colombia University Press: New York) 1988, 11.
56 - The Millet System: “Non Muslims were organized into three officially sanctioned millets: Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Jews.” Bruce Masters. Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 61.
58 - Masters, 97.
59 - Muslih, 38.
60 - Muslih, 2, 60.
construction and recognition when he states, "...the development and maintenance of every culture requires the existence of another, different and competing alter ego. The Construction of identity... involved the construction of opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of their differences from 'us'." Thus, identity is largely defined by environment. It is also defined by acknowledging what it is not, and thus depends on 'the other' for recognition.

Although official Ottoman policy was applied to all inhabitants of the Empire, the constituents of greater Syria defied this through an appreciation for Arab culture and tradition. This sentiment also thrived in spite of western influence through commercial trade and the presence of Christian missionaries, who also established strong connections in the region. For example, ties to the West were strengthened among indigenous Arab Christians in the Middle East, supported by the Europeans. The millet system facilitated that ties based on religion would develop. However, in spite of Western influence, and the millet system, by the nineteenth century it was certain that Arab culture and the emergence of a broader Arab nationalism surpassed other forms of identification within the Ottoman Empire.

For example, Jewish communities were widespread throughout the Ottoman Empire and inhabited the Arab countries. Only a small minority resided in Palestine while the majority lived in Cairo, Aleppo, and Baghdad. Masters quotes, "Whether Rabbinical or Qaraite, the Jews of the holy cities of Eretz Israel were almost entirely Arabic speakers in the early sixteenth century and had assimilated as fully into the Arab-Muslim culture surrounding them as their Christian neighbors." It is implied in his research that while some were indigenous to these cities, the Jewish communities in Palestine at the start of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century were diverse and

---

46 Masters, 40.
47 Masters, 51.
48 Eretz Israel is the Land of Israel. It refers to a greater Israel that extends beyond the State's modern boundaries, from "the Euphrates to the Nile" rivers. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Lexicon of Zionism. www.mfa.gov.il (2003).
49 Masters, 51
spoke many different languages; the majority of whom were of Iberian origin. A study by Ella Shohat confirms that Arab cultural identity penetrated religious affiliation among the Jewish citizens throughout the Ottoman Empire. 

Bruce Masters quotes an explanation by George Antonius in his research on the Ottoman Empire in reference to Arab nationalism. Antonius suggests “an ideological convergence of Muslim and Christian elites occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century. Together they promoted the articulation of an Arab national identity.” This is confirmed in another study that cites both George Antonius and Sylvia Haim who posit that “Arab Christians were active nationalists among other Arabs” during the Ottoman Empire. Masters furthered that “Pride in the Arab past, and the hope of creating an equally proud Arab future, lay at the heart of what was initially a literary movement…The cultural awakening had implications as it redefined the boundaries of the politically imagined community.” A strong sense of Arab nationalism developed irrespective of religious orientation. This is confirmed by the fact that Christians still felt connected to the same culture as other Muslims within their country, in spite of being denied citizenship under the Ottoman Empire, while the Muslims were not. This separation of treatment by those in authority did not divide them.

Sources also cite competition between religious groups and some alienation felt on behalf of the Christians from their Muslim neighbors as a consequence of European favoritism toward them, for some benefits they received from this relationship. Some historians have attributed this to the ‘divide and rule’ strategy of the Ottoman Empire while others blame this dissonance on Europeans alone for “stirring up ethnic tensions to advance imperial ambitions.” Irrespective of who caused what, or its outcome, the fact that both Muslims and Christians within the Arab countries were able to share a pride and

---

90 ibid
91 "The same historical process that dispossessed Palestinians of their property, lands, and the national-political rights was intimately linked to the process that dispossessed Arab Jews of their property, lands, and rootedness in Arab countries while uprooting them from that history and the culture within Israel itself...the pervasive notion of ‘one people’ reunited in their ancient homeland actively disauthorizes any affectionate memory of life before the State of Israel." Ella Shohat. "The Invention of the Mizrahim," Journal of Palestine Studies, 29, no. 1 (1999), 7.
92 George, 43
93 George, 44; Masters, 131.
appreciation for Arab culture, suggests the capacity of this group to constitute its own nation within the Ottoman Empire, and which eventually became the basis for establishing an Arab nationalist movement after its fall.

This information suggests that an Arab identity surpassed religious orientation and developed throughout present-day Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and other neighboring Arab States (Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, etc.) as suggested in Musilh's study on *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*. In spite of the Turkish influence, and other differences unique to specific localities that each resided in, a majority of inhabitants within greater Syria shared a common appreciation for a larger Arab identity. Ottoman policy was one aspect of homeland politics that affected national identity in the region. An additional factor that influenced national identity was Zionism.

**ii. Implications of Zionism for the 'Imagined' Arab Nation**

The appeal for an independent Arab State faced steep competition. In addition to European imperial ambitions, the development of Zionist aspirations in Europe also threatened the move for Arab independence, which gained increasing popularity. The Zionist movement, through Theodore Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* of 1896, proposed the idea of creating a Jewish State and a new form of Jewish nationalism with the possibility of this new State being in Palestine. Supporters of this ideology viewed it as a "movement of Jewish national restoration in Palestine" based on Jewish history, religion and culture.74 Herzl presented his work at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, where they decided that Palestine would be the most appropriate place to establish a Jewish national home. Since the indigenous Arab Muslims and Christians living in Palestine at the time were not Jewish however, they would be excluded from full membership within any new State that the Zionists wished to create in the land that is for the Palestinians also their country.

Members at this Congress created the proposal with the intent of acquiring full support from the international community to facilitate, or at the very least not prevent what would eventually be a large scale uprooting and forced removal of Palestinians from...

---

74 Musilh, 70.
their homeland. Everts in Europe served to garner the support needed to excuse this grave injustice, specifically in Russia in 1881 and the Dreyfus Affair of France in 1894, where the persecution and isolation of Jews from society, motivated them to instigate the idea of a Jewish national home. This resulted in the commencement of expansive Jewish immigration to Palestine.

By 1903, Arab politicians aware of the Zionist movement became concerned about the increase in Jewish immigration, because they sensed that their presence sought to facilitate the proposed Jewish national home in Palestine, and secure Zionist political leverage in the region. This movement was in competition with the initial plan of creating one independent Arab state that would include Palestine. Any initial distrust toward the immigrants rested in this factor alone, and not their presence within the community.

Muslih wrote about the first Jewish immigration to Palestine before the Zionist movement became public knowledge. "In 1881, the year which witnessed the start of the first wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine, the Jews numbered about 24,000 out of a population of approximately 500,000. The majority were apolitical religious Jews, who had no affiliation with Zionism. Most of them lived in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad, and Tiberias. With respect to the Palestinian Arabs, they saw no political threat in the presence of those Jews who were left to exercise autonomous control over their community under the millet system." This quote suggests that it was strictly the Zionist ideology that through immigration sought to change the economic, social and political order of Palestine, at the expense of the Arab Christian and Muslim majority. Arab nationalists sought to include

75 "La situación asumió un nuevo giro, bajo la influencia de Teodoro Herzl, que había desarrollado un nuevo tipo de nacionalismo judío en su folleto Der Judenstaat ya había convocado al primer Congreso Sionista en Basilea, en 1897 con el objeto de establecer las bases de su programa. El Congreso sostuvo que su objetivo era la lucha en pro del establecimiento del pueblo judío en un hogar propio situado en Palestina y garantizado por el derecho público. Esta versión modernizada de la mística sionista original, ahora despojada del contenido religioso y casi nesíañon que poseía originalmente, y transformado de acuerdo al espíritu del nacionalismo contemporáneo, se denomina generalmente 'sionismo político.' El mismo tenía, por cuanto se los pensaba convertir en extranjeros dentro de su propio país- suponiendo que se les permitiera permanecer donde estaban- sin siquiera consultárselos a respecto."
76 Muslih, 71.
77 Muslih, 70.
all constituents of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, and the Arabian Peninsula within the proposed Arab State.\textsuperscript{78}

iii. The Rise of Arab Palestinian Nationalism

In spite of the Arab nation that many within Ottoman territory identified with, constituents also developed local loyalties toward the specific province they resided in. The presence of Zionism in the late 1800s served as a catalyst for not only the Arab nationalist movement but also Palestinian nationalism, since the Zionists singled out Palestine as the area it sought to occupy. The Palestinian nationalist movement developed as a consequence of forces which sought to undermine its legitimacy as a community with an attachment to Palestine as its homeland. It was organized independent of the larger Arab nation to which they also belonged. They were Arab in culture and identity, but with a distinct Palestinian identity specific to their acclimatization and origination from the land of Palestine. This was predicated upon the realization that if the Zionists won the political battle with Europe, the Palestinians would lose their long sought after desire for independence, whether locally as an independent Palestine or within one large Arab nation state.\textsuperscript{79}

The cause grew urgent once it became apparent that the Zionists had no intention of facilitating a coexistence with equal rights between Jews and Arabs under one State. For the Palestinians the Zionist concept served as a real danger that they felt would thwart the legitimacy of their residence and desire to establish their own State independent of imperial rule.\textsuperscript{80} Meanwhile the immediate distrust toward the local Arab population from the Zionist Jewish immigrants at large, could be blamed not only on the dissonance in political aspirations, but also on the fact that they were ostracized from their own communities in Europe, and were hesitant to trust the local population as well.\textsuperscript{81} Or perhaps they were just being honest about their true intentions, to create an exclusively Jewish State. Many Arabs were aware of the reason behind their presence in the region and may have also acted with distrust toward the new immigrants. This was a

\textsuperscript{78} Matilh, 94.
\textsuperscript{79} Abu-Ghazaleh 1-2
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid
\textsuperscript{81} Weinstock, 5-9
stark contrast from the local Jewish inhabitants with whom the indigenous Arabs maintained friendly relations. Arabs throughout greater Syria viewed Zionism and the steady influx of Jewish immigrants from Europe as a threat to the political aspirations of both the Arab and Palestinian nationalist majority. In the mid 19th century, the total population of Palestine was half a million; where more than eighty percent were Muslim, ten percent Christians, and between five and seven percent Jewish. However between 1880 and 1914, the population grew to 690,000 due to improved security, nutrition, public health, economic growth and Jewish immigration. The highest contributor to the population growth among these however were Jewish immigrants, the number of whom increased by more than 74,000 between 1839 and 1914. Another source accounts that Jewish population expanded to 85,000 from 1882-1914. Palestinians in particular felt threatened by what seemed like a perceived derogation of their right to reside and own the land that they lived and worked on for generations.

This gave birth to an immediate awareness of the ‘other’, facilitated a gradual shift in terms of whom the Palestinians were and which groups were included within this nation. ‘Palestinian’ came to refer to Arab Muslims and Christians alone. Arab Jews of the Ottoman Empire were caught between the two competing Arab and Zionist nationalist ideologies. While on a personal level, previous friendships were not severed between Arab Jews with Muslims and Christians. The Zionist rhetoric imposed the idea that identifying as an Arab was both anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist. This contradicted the true sentiment of religious Jews who were also Arab, feeling they shared more in common with this culture than with the European Jewish immigrants. Meanwhile, the Zionist propaganda encouraged Arabs to view their Jewish neighbors as affiliated with the larger Zionist national movement, which in turn slowly began to damage perceptions at large, associating all Jews with Zionism. Identifying the ‘other’ was a gradual process, as

82 Masters, 140 Kitch, 11-21
83 Muslih, 14.
84 Ibid
85 Weinstein, 11.
86 Khalidi, 108
87 shohat, 9.
88 "The Zionist attempts to place a wedge between the Jewish and Muslim communities, for example by placing bombs in synagogues to generate panic on the part of the Jews; the Arab nationalism that failed to
information spread slowly. The Ottoman defeat of World War I, however, was perceived by the Arabs as a salient opportunity for independence. The post war period shows that homeland politics affected national identity whereby the transition between political administrations led to a shift in the official political nationalism throughout greater Syria.

iv. Dissolution of the Ottoman Empire- World War I and post war settlements

Great Britain’s victory in the First World War meant an opportunity to create a new governing authority in the Middle East. The Arab delegation within the Ottoman Authority was reassured by both the British and French that their petition for Arab independence would be fulfilled. Great Britain in particular had earlier promised to help grant the Arab nation within the Ottoman Empire its independence as a tradeoff for revolting against Ottoman rule and thus siding with the British against the Ottomans, during World War One.89 “The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence of 1916 outlined British commitments to the Arab Palestinians but failed to provide a specific policy for carrying them out.”90 The British meanwhile promised through the Balfour Declaration of 1917, to facilitate the establishment of a ‗Jewish National Home‘ in Palestine, in spite of assuring the Arabs of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq independence within a large Arab State. In reference to the Balfour Declaration, Gonzalez confirms in her study:

“This document, in effect, promised that England would aid and abet the establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine. Although well meaning- it specifically noted that this should not dislodge or disinherit the non-Jewish inhabitants of the region.”91 In actuality,

make a distinction between Jews and Zionists and that did little to secure a place for Jews, and Arab Jewish misconceptions about the secular nation-state project of Zionism, which had almost nothing to do with their own religious community identity. Arab Jews left their countries of origin with mingled excitement and terror but, most importantly, full of Zionist- manipulated confusion, misunderstanding and projections...the Arab versus-Jew bizarreness has placed Arab Jews outside the Arab world and has called up some historical memories of Arab Musulim hostility to Jews-as-Jews.” (Shohat, 12)

89 Ambassador S. Azzam Hassan (Ret.). Seion Hall University, The School of Diplomacy and International Relations. This statement is also supported in Khalidi’s study p. 159-60: “During the War and immediately after the War, the British had no direct control over the Arab territories. The British had in fact entered into three international agreements respecting Palestine. The first was the Husayn Mc-Mahon Correspondence, an exchange of letters in 1915 and 1916 between the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, and the hereditary ruler of Mecca under the Ottomans, the Sharif Husayn Ibn ‘Abd al-Aziz, in which the British promised to support Arab Independence within extremely ill defined frontiers, if the Arabs would revolt against the Ottomans.”

90 Gonzalez, 158 from Hourani (1991), 336

91 Ibid
it contradicted the true expectations of both parties, and was a precedent to justify Jewish immigration.

The behavior of representatives of the Zionist movement, some of whom apparently initially assumed that the Balfour Declaration meant that they would rapidly become the rulers of the country, and who soon began to arrive in Palestine in large numbers, only increased these initial concerns. Within a short time, many Palestinians came to believe that the British intended to carry out their pledge to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, and that this meant Jewish domination over them, although others continued to hope that this was not the case.92

Meanwhile Arab politicians and legislators to the Ottoman Authority dissented on what they wanted for the future of the region. Some wanted one larger Arab state, and others wanted the region divided into separate nations. Those in favor of the latter were concerned about what the creation of a new Arab State would have on their current status within the government. For example, if one large Arab State was in fact created, some of the older elites would risk losing their position in the government.93 For political interests, these individuals opted for the creation of separate nation states.94 Furthermore, after feeling a slight tinge of resentment from Syrian politicians toward the presence of Palestinians and Iraqis in the government, it reduced the confidence that they would prioritize the inclusion of Palestine within the new Arab state among delegates in Europe.95 As a result, some of the Palestinian elite appealed for an independent Palestinian state.

In spite of some dissenting viewpoints, all Arabs agreed that Zionism was another form of foreign domination where the interest of the majority was undermined. The Arabs were optimistic about this chance for independence with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. "Anti-Zionism became a widespread phenomenon between 1909 and 1914, after the reinstitution of the constitution and the freeing of the press... it was a process of political education that merged on Palestinian patriotism and Arab nationalism, a process that posed Zionism as a threat to Palestine and to the larger Arab cause."96

92 Khaldî, 171-72.
93 Muâlih, 196
94 Muâlih, 105
95 Muâlih, 137-138, 201
96 Muâlih, 87
Regardless of how the Arabs themselves would decide to rule the land if awarded independence— as one large nation or through local nation States— no one wanted Palestine converted into a Jewish State since this would undermine their legitimate claim to the land. Furthermore, the implications of the term, creation of a Jewish National Home within Palestine was the official terminology used in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, and different from transferring control over the entire State to the Jewish minority.  

This period is significant in the sense that a political national identity dissolved because the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist after World War I. Although there was a larger Arab national identity throughout the region, Zionism also suggested that the interests of Palestinian Arabs would be undermined, distinguishing them territorially and politically from other Arabs. The level of awareness and the need to establish their right to self-determination was felt after the turn of the twentieth century. However this level of awareness did not extend to all sectors of society in a timely manner. This is reflected in Diaspora through Palestinians that migrated to Ecuador during the Ottoman Empire.

v. Palestinian Arab Nationalism Exemplified in Diaspora: Level of Awareness - Ecuador

The first group to arrive to Ecuador from Palestine came in 1850 for commercial interests; to sell Holy Land gifts, such as rosaries, religious icons and other souvenirs. However in the years that followed, Palestinians arrived to Ecuador primarily to escape the political situation in their homeland— first under the Ottoman regime’s mandatory military draft enlistment; second under the British Mandate period where the economic situation deteriorated for the Palestinians; and third with the end of the Second World War 1945 and as a consequence of the “Zionist colonization” of Palestine in 1948. About 81 percent of Palestinian immigrants to Ecuador came from Beil Jala, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, while the remaining 19 percent originated from Haifa, Nablus, Beitzeit and other Palestinian villages.

98 Hurtado, 3.
99 Hurtado, 15.
100 Ibid
During the post war period in 1919, the census data from the municipality of Guayaquil stated that among the 330 Arabs that arrived, 29 were of Palestinian origin. Some Palestinian immigrants claimed they were of Turkish origin for those that arrived between 1897 and 1907, since they were official citizens of the Ottoman Empire, carrying Turkish passports. The census information of 1919 in Guayaquil however suggests that of the 23 Arab Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian origin in Guayaquil only about 12 percent of the immigrants described their origins as Turkish. Eighty five percent said they were Syrian, and 3 percent said they were Arab. Within this group of Arab immigrants, 25 were Palestinian. However 28 percent of these Palestinians said they carried Turkish papers while 72 percent said they were Syrian (in reference to greater Syria). This information suggests that individual categorization is highly variable. However, further investigation proves that the official documentation of some of the immigrants in the census data is not completely accurate. For example there are some families, such as the Adum family, who first arrived in 1919, but are today documented as having originated from Israel. Deeper investigation has proven that the Adums are actually Christian business traders from Lebanon, but Palestinian in origin. It was not uncommon, however for information to be misconstrued. For official purposes, one might say they were Ottoman, but feel more Arab than Turkish.

101 Hurtado, 7, Gonzalez, 54.
102 Hurtado, 22.
103 Hurtado, 22-23. The citation was translated from Spanish: “En el caso de los 25 palestinos censados en 1919, un 28 por ciento dijo que tenía papeles turcos y un 72 por ciento dijo ser sirio” This citation is followed by an explanation which suggests that Palestinians had greater access to Turkish passports than the rest of the Arab region; since the Ottoman Turks probably established more offices in Palestine, than Lebanon or Syria. That is because Palestine, with its holy sites, attracted tourism from Europe, Russia, and the Middle East since the mid 19th century (“En el caso de los palestinos podríamos pensar que tuvieron más acceso a pasaportes turcos que el resto de los árabes de la región. Es probable que los turcos (ottomanos) tuvieron más facilidades estatales para viajar en Palestina, antes que en Líbano o Siria, ya que desde mediados del siglo XIX, Palestina tuvo fuertes corrientes turísticas de Europa, Rusia y del Medio Oriente afuente a los lugares santos.”).
104 Ibid, 4. “Algunos de los apellidos que encontramos, que pensamos fueron de origen libanés, están como que nacieron en “Israel”, como el caso de José Adum (55 años en 1919) y María Adum (44) y de María Adum, hija (22). Los Adum fueron todos comerciantes, cristianos, y de origen libanés, aunque fueron censados como Israeli. Desconocemos actualmente a descendientes de apellido Adum de origen palestino.”
105 There were cases where persons changed their names or traveled with false identification. There is a specific case of someone who emigrated to escape enlistment in the Ottoman army by changing his last name and traveling with false identification. As translated from Spanish “One of those that fled was Assad Abraham Karoba, previously, Assad Kifiti Karoba who arrived to Ecuador from the city of Nablus in 1914. He was supported by his aunts to depart secretly by boat from Palestine to America, in order to prevent him
Palestinian emigration to Ecuador suggests that the way persons were grouped within the Empire did not consistently reflect the way they felt about who "the other" was across the Arab region. Although inhabitants throughout the Empire were treated differently according to religious affiliation, it did not hinder persons within Greater Syria from assimilating into Arab culture and society. Furthermore, in 1919, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist but Arab Palestinians still carried Turkish papers at the time. Some may have chosen to group themselves within this larger category, out of convenience. It is certain that one could identify with many "nations" whether official, regional, or local.

The impact of homeland politics on national identity through persons who emigrated during the Ottoman period also shows how Arab nationalism transcended religious and ethnic affiliations. The evidence suggests that the relationship between Christians, Muslims and Jews that emigrated from the Ottoman Empire during the late 1800s to Argentina, remained amicable into the 1940s, as tensions increased between Jewish immigrants from Europe with Arab and Palestinian nationalists. The level of awareness of the political situation and its impact on national identity is reflected through ethically and religiously diverse Arab emigrants to Argentina.

vi. Broad Arab National Identity Exemplified in Diaspora: Level of Awareness - Argentina

Homeland politics under the Ottoman Empire affected national identity by forging the capacity for groups within the region to 'imagine' themselves as Arabs. This is evidenced through the first emigrants to Argentina from the Ottoman Empire, who remained unaffected by the conflict through a lack of direct exposure. The Arabs that settled in

---

from being drafted in the war. The elaboration of false papers for his departure from Palestine, signifies that he had to change his name from Kafif to Abraham in order to depict "iniógnito." ("Uno de los que huyó fue Asa� Abraham Karoba, ex Assad Kafif Jaroba, quien llegó desde la ciudad de Naplua (Nablus) al Ecuador. Su salida de Palestina fue apoyada por sus tíos, quienes ante la posibilidad que Assad sea reclutado por el ejército del Imperio Otomano en Palestina para pelear en la Guerra que se avecinaba, lo embartaron a escondidas en un barco con rumbo a América. La elaboración de papeles falsos para su salida de Palestina significó tener que cambiar su apellido Kafif por el de Abraham para poder salir de inógnito.") Hurtado, 7.

---

106 Kich, 3-12
Argentina were Christians from Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq. However, the majority were Lebanese and Syrian. Emigration to Argentina began in the late 1800s to escape mandatory enlistment in the Ottoman army. A study on “Jewish and Arab Coexistence” by Ignacio Klich, documents the multi religious and ethnic emigration of Arab and Jewish emigrants to Argentina. Initial difficulties that characterize the experience of immigrants entering a new country were additional factors that ensured continued solidarity between them.

Ignacio Klich’s study shows how Arab and Oriental Jewish emigrants to Argentina established strong business relationships while collaborating in respective charity projects. They helped each other become established despite political developments in the homeland, where competition between Arab and Zionist nationalisms began to undermine previous levels of trust. The following excerpt demonstrates that the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Argentina remained amicable in 1945 despite the political situation in Palestine:

When the Córdoba Muslim Arab Society, with an estimated potential membership of 5,000 (of which some ten per cent lived in the city and suburbs of Córdoba in the early 1940s), decided to set up a first aid and casualty facility it launched a fundraising drive. Encompassed in the publicized list of those who responded favorably to its appeal were a number of firms belonging to well known Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. Equally unusual since the Arab-Israeli wars, was the announcement of a Tucumán-based educationalist, the Arab descent Amadon Almonaiar, that he was donating a month’s salary to help in the rehabilitation of European Jewish Orphans.

107 “Los migrantes procedentes de Siria, Líbano, Palestina e Irak, así como otras minorías del llamado mundo árabe, de los cuales un 70 por ciento fueron originalmente cristianos orientales, se incorporaron a la población de la Argentina entre 1890 y 1950, y cuentan hoy con descendientes de segunda, tercera, cuarta y quinta generaciones... Pues desde mediados del siglo, como las estadísticas lo revelan, no se había registrado una presencia migratoria significativa que permitiera realimentar a las diversas identidades étnico-religiosas. Además el tipo de acudir integracionista de estos grupos y la falta de continuidad en sus relaciones con Siria y el Líbano contribuyeron a tal proceso de integración... los migrantes priorizaban la superación de las dificultades propias de su inserción en la Argentina.” Gladis Joaiani. “El Retorno de los “Turens” en la Argentina de los noventa.” Discriminación y Racismo en América Latina. Edited by Ignacio Klich and Mario Rapoport. (Buenos Aires: Nuevo Hacer, 1997) 88.

Klich also provides an example where cooperation between both groups extended to Palestinian based organizations as well, and in the midst of the Jewish Palestinian conflict in Palestine in 1937. Klich states:

> It is less unexpected to find a host of Jewish firms among the advertisers in a theatre program for a function organized by the Rosario-based Palestinian (Arab) Society of Beneficence in 1937 than among the supporters of Córdoba Arab Muslim Society’s first aid facility. This is so not withstanding the fact that on the one hand Muslims and Jews were known to have joined forces against Ottoman Syria’s Christians in certain instances, and on the other that the theatre performance, including the staging of the play entitled _Chained Palestine_, occurred while an Arab nationalist revolt was raging in Palestine.\(^{109}\)

Since the first group of emigrants were intent on settling in Argentina, it was easier for relationships to remain unaffected by the conflict that developed. The capacity of this emigrant group to directly distance itself from the political situation preserved previous perceptions of the old country and the feeling of belonging to the same heritage. As a result they were able to withstand the gradual alteration of this dynamic as a consequence of homeland politics.

vii. Analysis

Both the Argentina and Ecuador examples suggest that Arab identity prevailed in spite of the Ottoman Empire, and especially during the post war period. Arab nationalism sought to counteract foreign domination through one independent Arab State at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The Zionist political movement pushed the urgency of this cause, in addition to the development of a Palestinian nationalist movement. The elites and intellectuals who sought to circulate their respective political aspirations among specific communities for support took advantage of this opportunity to do so. However the fact that information spread gradually and many Palestinians were unprepared to deal with the sudden threat to self-determination, hindered their ability to correspond rapidly with the new developments. “In addition to their disagreement on how to react to the outside threat to their culture, there was no organized effort to oppose Ottoman rule or to complain strongly about the Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Palestinian peasants lacked national awareness at this stage. However, nationalism never was a peasant

\(^{109}\) Ibid, 4.
ideology. Therefore, opposition came mainly from intellectuals who formed small nationalist societies and expressed their opinion in letters, newspapers, or books."110

Similarly, level of awareness in the Diaspora was also delayed since some communities remained unaffected by political situation in the homeland.

Argentina was selected to show the multi-ethnic and religious Arab identity that characterized the first emigrants to Argentina. The level of awareness of political aspirations that undermined this solidarity in the homeland, was delayed for lack of direct exposure to them as they developed. The second case study selected was chosen since it depicts Palestinian emigration during the post-War period, where official national identity was in transition. During this time, the majority of a sample of Palestinian immigrants in Ecuador used the larger Arab nation to define what community they originate from. This suggests that national identity - being able to identify with another through shared experience, common origin, and/or membership within the same country - was vulnerable to homeland politics, but whose impact was not always immediate.

Both cases demonstrate that the impact of changes that resulted from the transitions in power were not always immediate, since news did not reach all sectors at once. This section has shown how level of awareness was limited to the dissemination of information during the Ottoman Empire and the transition that followed. The next section discusses nationalism and politics that developed after World War I, and how it affected national identity as reflected in the Diaspora.

Part II

i. Palestinian Nationalism during the British Mandate

After defeating the Ottomans in World War I, France and Great Britain had authority over the region. Under the British Mandate, the new territorial divisions defined through the Sykes Picot agreement of 1916 encouraged persons within the official boundaries to "imagine" themselves as a nation as termed by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities. Although the Arabs were promised independence by the British, the European powers instead divided the region into separate mandates, which would support

110 George, 39
their economies at home. The final agreement rested upon a decision made at the Allied Supreme Council in 1920 that placed Iraq and Palestine under British control and Lebanon and Syria under the French. British colonial rule further facilitated a Palestinian national identity to solidify through academic institutions and the press. Khalidi’s study asserts, “In Palestine in particular, what Anderson describes as ‘print capitalism’ thereby helped shape a broad community of interests, an imagined community that came to describe itself as Palestinian and that saw itself as under threat from Zionism, and from other directions.”

The school system provided an opportunity for the dissemination and convergence of religious and nationalist identities. There were three types of schools available to Palestinians during the Mandate period: public schools run by the government; private schools run by the natives (not including foreign private schools); and cultural and social clubs and organizations. The awareness of an Arab culture shared by many within the region co-existed with religious differences. However, there was also an acknowledgment of a separate Palestinian identity that fit within a larger Arab culture. For example, a school founded by Khalil al-Sakakini in 1909 proposed a secular education system that included students of all religious backgrounds (Jews included). The structure of the classroom was intended to instill in students, a sense of a shared Arab identity in Palestine. As quoted in Khalidi’s study, Khalil al Sakakini stated “This is the first time in the history of our country that the sons of the different faiths meet in one school and one bench”. From this quote, Khalidi shows how a nationalist movement was in progress to “elide, ignore, or resolve religious differences, or to bury them in a shared vision of the other.”

in addition to the notion of a shared Arab identity, and in spite of Britain’s attempts to keep the education standardized, a clear distinction between Palestinians from

---

111 Mushih, 177
112 Ibid, 113
113 Khalidi, 88
114 Ibid, 75
116 Khalidi, 50
117 Ibid
118 Ibid
other Arabs, was also transmitted.\textsuperscript{119} Such ideas were communicated through the material distributed in these schools. A book published in 1923 on the national geography of Syria and Palestine, is an example of how Palestine was portrayed as distinct and separate.\textsuperscript{20} Schoons under the British Mandate contributed to the consolidation of a Palestinian identity.

The press also enabled a Palestinian national movement to gain increasing popularity and recognition by its constituents, having the most “widespread impact on society”.\textsuperscript{111} However, given lack of resources to produce regular circulation of a given newspaper to rural villages, and the illiteracy factor, information was limited to the intellectual circles. Nevertheless, news spread through verbal communication, where discussions and re-telling the news for those unable to read leveled barriers to the information.\textsuperscript{122} It is noted that “news in a paper which reached a distant town or village days late was still devoured eagerly by the reading and listening public.”\textsuperscript{123}

ii. Politics under the British Mandate

During the British Mandate period, the Zionist movement strengthened its political leverage within Europe, particularly Great Britain: “Herbert Samuel, the British Zionist Jew who was appointed high commissioner for Palestine in July 1920, stated in 1919 that the Zionist movement should seek the creation of new conditions in Palestine which would enable it to set up an independent state controlled by a Jewish majority.”\textsuperscript{124} The Zionist plan was carried out initially by acquiring capital through already established institutions. While this may have been considered and recorded historically as legal and in conjunction with the Ottoman and British constitutions, it undermined other fundamental human rights principles which motivated an already oppressed community to resist them. In many respects, the institutions in place under the colonial regime created little opportunity or leverage for the indigenous population to mobilize and

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, 174
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid, 53
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 57
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid
\textsuperscript{114} Muslih, 117
inform others, gain solidarity and react in a timely manner to assert their right to own property and or in some cases, to prove ownership to the land they resided on.125

The Zionists from Europe were more economically and politically capable of accomplishing their objectives from the positions they held in Europe. Within that legal structure, it was possible for them to invest abroad. By purchasing huge tracts of land from absentee landowners, and investing in important water and business industries, they were gradually able to acquire property and social status within Palestinian society.126 These transactions were encouraged initially by Great Britain because developing Palestine in this way would be beneficial to the Crown. Jewish settlements and businesses were constructed quickly and efficiently with the support of the British, who wanted to develop the region for its national interest. Table two shows the impact of this policy.

Table 2: Population in Palestine 1914-1940127

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Jewish Population</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>85,000119</td>
<td>738,000120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>84,000120</td>
<td>752,000131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>121,725122</td>
<td>756,594133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>151,656124</td>
<td>857,073135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>175,000136</td>
<td>1,035,000137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>583,000138</td>
<td>1,887,000139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

125 Muzilh, 22.
126 Khalidi, 107.
127 Data is taken from estimations and research of previous scholars.
128 Weinstock, 11
130 Ibid. However Barbara Smith, in The Roots of Separatism in Palestine, suggests the Jewish population comprised 83,790 among a total population of 649,048 for 1922 in Palestine. p. 65.
131 Ibid.
132 Smith, 65
133 Ibid
134 Ibid
135 Ibid
136 Weinstock, 11
137 Ibid. McCarthy’s study suggests that the total population in 1931 was 860,000.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid. McCarthy’s suggest the total population in 1940 was 1,806,000.
Jewish immigration was facilitated by the British provided it did not undermine the livelihoods of other inhabitants in the region: "By the terms of the Mandate the British Administration was required to facilitate Jewish immigration on condition that the interests of the Arab population were protected. This dual obligation was expressed in the intention to encourage immigration but only so far as the economic absorptive capacity of Palestine would permit." However, the influx of Jewish immigrants eventually exceeded the agreed upon quota, which undermined their agreement with the British and revealed their true intentions to occupy the region. "The High Commissioner was forced to admit that the anti-Zionist movement was in truth 'a deep national movement'. In the face of such concrete opposition, it was undoubtedly embarrassing to Samuel that the Zionists had so far delivered none of the economic benefits they promised to the indigenous population." It instead prevented all sectors to advance in conjunction with their developments. Once it became apparent that the influx of Jewish immigrants to Palestine was upsetting the economic capacity of the Palestinian Arabs, the British enacted measures to restrict Jewish immigration, which upset the Zionists. This suggests that Great Britain switched between being sympathetic to the Zionists and the Arabs whenever it was in their interest.

National identity evolved in conjunction with homeland politics through the imposition of colonial policy. This in turn pushed Palestinian nationalism forward. The consolidation of a Palestinian identity in the homeland further implied that the identity of those in Diaspora might be altered by the impact of homeland politics; causing a shift in the emphasis placed on an Arab to a Palestinian national identity. Emigration from Palestine under the British Mandate was primarily motivated to establish

141 Ibid.
142 Smith, 67
143 "In 1939, the Etzel changed its goals and shifted its focus to actions aimed against the British forces in Palestine. The change was due both to the cessation of Arab violence on the one hand, and on the other, a list of restrictions imposed by the British on the Jewish settlements regarding various issues, including the number of Jews allowed to enter Palestine and the Jews' ability to purchase land. These restrictions were part of a series of British reforms regarding their policy in Israel (known as the 'White Book')." Pflüger and Weinberg, 101.
145 Maslih, 104
commercial relations abroad, and largely attributed to the competition from Zionist development in Palestine. Palestinians sought opportunities to compensate for this by establishing commercial relations abroad. This marks the second wave of emigration under study. Palestinians that established connections abroad, traveled frequently between both places. They maintained a strong relationship with the homeland, since they were migrating to compensate for economic setbacks that resulted from increased Jewish immigration. Therefore a stronger sense of Palestinian nationalism characterized the group that emigrated to Honduras, because of this highly developed relationship with the homeland.

iii. Palestinian Nationalism Exemplified in Diaspora: Relationship Maintained with the Homeland- Honduras

Palestinian emigration to Honduras was common among Arabs from Bethlehem, who left to establish business relations but without intending to settle permanently.\(^\text{166}\) The fact that they maintained contact with the homeland and traveled frequently between the two places whenever possible, suggests that they were more conscious of the rise in Palestinian nationalism that developed to counteract Zionist nationalist aspirations.\(^\text{147}\) In her study, Gonzalez’s cites Matiel E.T. Mogannam:

> Increased use of cement, reinforced concrete and silicate bricks, all manufactured by Jews, is replacing dressed stone for constructional purposes, and so displacing a large number of stone dressers and stonemasons, nearly all of whom are Arabs. The Arab quarryman are also being displaced.\(^\text{148}\)

In an effort to compensate for the rise of European Jewish immigrants to Palestine, some Palestinians were prevented from returning. During this period, Palestinians that left prior to 1925, who now desired to return, were denied re-entry into their country:

> A considerable number of emigrants desired to return to their country, because they did not emigrate for the love of emigration but for the improvement of their economic conditions or in an attempt to flee the horrors of continual wars. After the end of the First World War, many decided to practice their natural right of return to their birthplace. The British Authorities, however, closed the doors in their faces at a time when the doors of Palestine were wide open to Jewish

\(^{106}\) Gonzalez, 51, 89

\(^{147}\) Gonzalez, 55

\(^{148}\) Ibid
immigrants. The Palestinian Citizenship Law was ratified in 1925 with the main aim of facilitating the grazing of Palestinian citizenship to Jews coming to Palestine, according to item 7 of the Mandate Charter.\footnote{Mussallam, 47}

Initiatives were taken to inform the Palestinian community in Honduras about Zionism and its implications for Palestine. For example, La Sociedad ‘Unión Juventud Arabe’ worked to boycott English goods and claimed that “the British mandate policy in Palestine continued to disavow the voice of Palestinians, and the English Mandate Government has been established against the will of the Palestinian people.”\footnote{Enrique, 112} It also stated that they would not accept orders of English goods or participate in transactions with Jewish firms.\footnote{Ibid}

There is a contrast between the previous cases of Arab immigrants to Argentina with the Palestinians in Honduras. Specific circumstances unique to the case in Honduras show that reasons for migrating were motivated by competition with Jewish immigrants—where people left due to the discontentment toward the influx of these immigrants from Europe who were replacing Arab businesses and operating exclusively for Jewish settlers. The relationship maintained with Palestine among this community enabled them to conform to the political situation in Diaspora. This particular example of emigration to Honduras shows that homeland politics affected national identity in Diaspora by consolidating a shared awareness of Palestinian nationalism.

**Part III**

### i. Homeland politics post 1948, the creation of Israel

The events leading up to the creation of the State of Israel show that homeland politics under the new State imposed a policy of discrimination against Palestinians. Zionist propaganda through the media portrays Israel as the perpetual victim in spite of Israeli discrimination toward Palestinians: in denying them citizenship, the right to express themselves politically, and through the illegitimate theft of Palestinian property to accommodate the expansion of Jewish settlements, and the construction of the...
wall"/fence" disguised under the guise of national security. These conditions impose harsh restrictions against them, as Palestinians. In reality they build a pretense for the Palestinians to protest unbearable living conditions that deny innocent persons the freedom to control their own lives. The discriminatory policies that followed the creation of Israel affected national identity by stigmatizing the Palestinians as a people.

Palestinians have been portrayed through Zionist propaganda as the enemy, with no attempt to understand their situation. The impact of homeland politics in that respect is evidenced in the Diaspora. Palestinians and Arabs were historically discriminated against in Australian society during the seventies, through Zionist propaganda in the media. Palestinian migration to Australia is defined as the third wave in this study, whose emigration to this destination began only after 1948.

ii. ‘Al Nakba’: The Catastrophe, 1948

Discriminatory politics developed despite British rhetoric which promised to protect the Palestinian Arab population. When the British tried to restrict Jewish immigration, Zionist extremist groups reacted with hostility toward them. They did not trust that the British would help them establish their State. "Terrorist" activity by the Zionists, as it has been termed, escalated and was directed to both Palestinian and British constituents in Palestine.

By 1947, the British handed the issue over to the newly formed United Nations who sent a committee to Palestine to evaluate the situation on the ground. The United Nations Committee on Palestine decided that the best solution given the urgent appeal among the Jews coupled with the right of Palestinians to their land; was to partition

---

132 Article 46 of the Hague Convention provides that an occupying power is obligated to refrain from confiscating private property. In its construction of the Security Fence, Israel is violating this provision because it is confiscating West Bank land that is private Palestinian property.” Malone, 650-651.

133 “Secret aspects of Israeli democracy are at odds with core American values. Unlike the US, where people are supposed to enjoy equal rights irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity, Israel was explicitly founded as a Jewish state and citizenship is based on the principle of blood/nishtship. Given this, it is not surprising that its 1.3 million Arabs are treated as second-class citizens, or that a recent Israeli government commission found that Israel behaves in a neglectful and discriminatory manner towards them. Its democratic status is also undermined by its refusal to grant the Palestinians a viable state of their own or full political rights.” Mearsheimer and Walt, 35.

134 Perliger and Weilner, 101.
Palestine, leaving Jerusalem a trustee of the UN. However, the proposed plan partitioned 55% of Palestine to the Jews, which would be 58% Jewish, and the remaining 45% of Palestine to the 99% Arab population, who naturally were discontented by this. The Palestinians rejected the plan and as a result, war broke out between both sides. The Arab defeat in May 1948 resulted in the partition of Palestine to the new State of Israel. Khalidi asserts, “These traumatic events of 1947-49, which cost the Palestinians their majority status in Palestine and their hope of controlling the country, and cost half of them their homes, land, and property, are inscribed in Palestinian memory and historiography as al-Nakba, ‘the catastrophe.’”

May Seikaly conducted interviews among the Palestinian community in Detroit, asking them to account their experience during the 1948 al Nakba. She interviewed a wide range of constituents, many of whom gave similar accounts. The following two responses are from interviews she conducted among Palestinians in Detroit: “We scrambled, afraid and uncertain, trying to take valuables with us, but finally barely made it with our lives;” and “There were no human rights; no one cared about what happened [to the people]. To whom should one complain? This Palestinian catastrophe still goes on.” This quote suggests the lack of enforcement to protect Palestinians from crimes committed against them. The impact of a policy of discrimination against Palestinians on their national identity is discussed in the next section.

iii. Competing Discourses on Identity

The previous discussion on Arab and Palestinian nationalism prior to the State of Israel, have been confused by arguments which suggest that there was no such thing as a Palestinian people at the time of Israel’s creation, in an effort to justify the expulsion of

156 Ibid
157 Khalidi, 178
158 “The sense of loss, dislocation, fear, panic, misery, and betrayal were remarkably similar and continued to color the interviews in varying intensity. These early experiences had influenced the later lives of all respondents. Even for those who learned about these events from their parents, 1948 stood as a landmark in their lives.” May Seikaly, “Attachment and Identity: The Palestinian Community of Detroit.” Arabs in America: Building a New Future. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 30.
159 Ibid.
Palestinians from their homeland. "After the dismemberment of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, Zionists and the new Israelis went to great lengths to remove, or at least greatly lessen, any remaining presence or trace of Palestinian identity. Within Israel, hundreds of Palestinian villages were completely eradicated by bulldozer, and the names of many others were changed." The assertion that Palestinians were Arabs without a distinct relevance to Palestine as a homeland, suggest that being Arab and Palestinian are two separate identities. Scholars have shown however that historically both existed simultaneously through a "layering of identity" as Rashid Khalidi describes it. The emphasis placed on a shared Arab national identity shifted toward Palestinian nationalism; which was based on a mutual awareness of shared commonalities that always existed among Palestinians, but that surfaces gradually as a consequence of homeland politics.

Homeland politics also affected national identity for the Palestinians by delaying the simultaneous recognition of this shift in the 'layers' of identity, among all sectors. The delay was partly due to the transition of colonial authority that resulted in a shift of the official nationalism of Arabs throughout greater Syria. In addition, the dissemination of national rhetoric was limited at first to specific sectors in Palestinian society under the Ottomans, which did not leave much time for Palestinians to organize or respond accordingly. The delay was used to the advantage of the Zionists who were able to occupy Palestine with little objection from the international community. Furthermore the Zionist campaign was successful at portraying the Palestinians negatively, to justify whatever course of action they chose to deliver in establishing their State. For example one survivor recalls: "I became aware of injustice early on, when as a child of eight I encountered an Israeli soldier who mistreated my best friend because she was Muslim. This awareness was endorsed when I experienced the wrenching sorrow of a cousin's

161 "It was hard for westerners weaned on their own myth of undivided nationalism... whereby a Frenchwoman is a Frenchwoman before all else, an American an American, and so forth, to understand the multiple, layered identities so characteristic of the Arab world in general, and of the Palestinians in particular... The view applied to the Palestinians as follows: those people could either be Palestinian or they could be Arabs, but they could not be both. In support of this explanation, it can be argued that confusion about such multiple, layered identities, persist to this day among Westerners, even educated and knowledgeable ones, and about nationalities far beyond the Palestinian case." Khalidi, 184.
162 Khalidi, 184
death, burnt by Israeli soldiers, and also when my father was beaten up in our house in front of us, his kids, for having opened the front door during an imposed curfew.”

Countless acts of violence toward innocent Palestinian civilians testify unprecedented aggression.

After 1948, Palestinian nationalism appeared to have disappeared, after the dramatic loss of the War. For those forced to flee, this may have been used as protection against additional hardship and struggle upon emigration. As Palestinians became more open about their identity, they encountered severe resistance and discrimination. This is evidenced throughout the Diaspora, and particularly in Australia during the 1970s.

iv. Discriminatory Politics toward Palestinians Exemplified in Diaspora: Experience in the Host Country- Australia

The findings in this section are taken from a study by Hani Elturk on the Palestinian community in Australia. His research shows that there were three waves of immigration. The first group arrived in 1948 as a consequence of the Zionist invasion of Palestine. The second group came in the 1960s via neighboring states that could not accommodate the sudden influx of Palestinians to their countries. However, Palestinians were also denied the right of return, and found it unbearable to live as exiles. Thus, the second wave of Palestinian immigration to Australia arrived from other Arab states. They came primarily in search of an improved standard of living and better economic opportunities. The third group of immigrants began to arrive after the Six Day War of 1967, the “Black September” war between the Palestinian resistance and the Kingdom of Jordan, the beginning of the Civil War in Lebanon in 1975, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

As immigrants to a new country, they encountered some discrimination among the local community. In an effort to succeed, many hid their Palestinian identity at first because they feared another round of persecution. This began in the 1970s where Palestinians were stereotyped by pro-Zionist figures in the media. Elturk states, “As far

163 Seikaly, 29
164 Elturk, 31
165 Ibid
166 Elturk, 32
as Australians were concerned, a Palestinian was a primitive Arab Muslim who despised women and practiced terrorism by hijacking civilian airplanes and killing innocent people.\textsuperscript{167} This sort of image was portrayed for example through newspaper articles implanting a false image of Palestinians. At first response to this, Palestinians hid their identity. However over time, Australians began to understand the Palestinian problem as they became more informed about both sides of the issue. In turn, Palestinians became more open about their identity.\textsuperscript{168} His study documents the discrimination they experienced as immigrants to the country and the way that they responded to these circumstances. He states:

"In the 1970s, Australian society regarded all Palestinians as terrorists. These were the years when the Palestinians were struggling to express their national identity in Palestine and in the world, after a temporary stagnation in the struggle. Many however hid their identity, thus hoping to avoid discrimination and persecution. Because of this they were unable to counteract pro-Zionist tendencies in the media. . . With the passage of time however, Australians began to acknowledge the realities of the Palestinian problem. By the beginning of the nineteen-eighties, Palestinians in Australia were openly declaring their Palestinian-ness without shame, unlike in the sixties and seventies.\textsuperscript{169}

Eventually, they successfully established a variety of Palestinian organizations and clubs through which they participate in Australian national events. They also hold their own social gatherings to highlight and spread awareness on the Palestine question.\textsuperscript{170} Elturk’s findings on the Palestinian community in Australia show that they maintained a strong attachment to their heritage and traditions without isolating themselves from the rest of society. This suggests that in addition to their Palestinian identity, they have adopted an Australian identity as well, through integration and assimilation in society.

\textsuperscript{167} Elturk, 42
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid 41-43
\textsuperscript{169} Elturk, Hanli. The Palestinians in Australia. (Australia: The NSW Australian Palestinian Association Inc. ‘995), 41
\textsuperscript{170} Elturk, 38-39
This suggests that adapting to a new country affects national identity by adding a transnational experience, which has sculpted various facets of a Palestinian identity. Since being Palestinian has resulted in the dispersal of a nation into separate countries, it has also imposed the manifestation of new identities that are endemic to the transnational experience.

v. Analysis and Conclusions

Homeland politics affected national identity, as evidenced in the Diaspora over the course of the Ottoman Empire, British Mandate and now with the State of Israel. Date of departure was emphasized in conjunction with the three waves of migration outlined in this study, as a relevant indicator of the development of national identity among Palestinians in Diaspora. The reason for migration was another factor used to draw at specific factors relevant to the political situation during that period. The level of awareness among Palestinians, the relationship maintained with the homeland and the discrimination encountered in the Diaspora, are all correlated with the political situation in Palestine during the three periods under study. They show that specific attributes of identity are emphasized in different periods of authority as a consequence of homeland politics.

Emigrants who fled under the Ottoman Authority may have prioritized an Ottoman or Arab identity over a Palestinian, in comparison to those who fled under the British. This is especially significant since access to education was more readily available under the British, while it was not as available under the Ottoman Authority. Therefore, certain groups were more conscious than others about which category they were placed in, relatively speaking.

This chapter helped answer the larger question of this study—how homeland politics affects national identity in Diaspora—by showing that the lifestyles and experiences of immigrants in the host country after each wave, was largely dependent on the political situation in the homeland after they left. It resulted in the remembrance of specific attributes of the homeland pending on one’s personal experience. Whatever

manifestation this may have taken in the host country, it is apparent that in Diaspora all Palestinians collectively share an attachment to the land and their heritage.
Chapter IV: Conclusion

This thesis discussed the prevalence of an Arab national identity under the Ottoman Authority, and suggested that this influenced the national orientation of those emigrating. Eventually the change in administration caused the national identity of its inhabitants to shift. Arab nationalism converged with local nationalism at the end of the First World War and Greater Syria was divided into separate colonies. Palestinian nationalism became a political movement that emerged to the forefront among other political ambitions, in response to the Zionist conquest of Palestine. British policy influenced the population in Palestine under its Mandate, to distinguish Jews from Arab Palestinians.

The historic background which preceded the examples of emigrants to Ecuador, Argentina, Honduras, and Australia showed how homeland politics affected national identity in Diaspora. It suggests that the homeland- historic Palestine- having undergone a series of changes politically, eventually directed the national orientation of its inhabitants- who either resisted or changed with them, as pointed out in Khalidi’s study.

The impact of these policies was reflected through select cases of Palestinians in Diaspora. In spite of the separate experiences that result from emigration during different periods of authority over Palestine and settling in different countries, the findings of this study have suggested that these differences have not weakened the Palestinians or their collective recognition of originating from the same place. There is a common bond which unites them regardless of where they are settled in the Diaspora. As suggested by Nancie González in her study, Palestinian Arabs in the Diaspora commonly share an attachment to the homeland- a defining characteristic to which all Palestinians relate. As a nation in dispersal all know the events of 1948 and how it affected them or their families.

It is evident that national consciousness in Diaspora before 1948 depended on the relationship maintained with the homeland. For example, while there were those who were aware of the political situation in Argentina, they did not maintain the same relationship as Palestinian immigrants in Honduras, who first arrived with no intention of settling permanently. The more frequently immigrants returned to Palestine, the greater the awareness of the political developments and its impact on the local population.

Immigrants that maintained close relations through frequent visits to family in Palestine,
while conducting business abroad, were exposed to these changes and had a better sense of any new political developments. The manifestation of this was prevalent through the competition discussed between the communities in Honduras. Palestinian emigration to Honduras, and Ecuador began early on. In Australia however, the first immigrants arrived in 1948 at the wake of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, across the cases it is evident that there remains a cultural and political awareness of events in the homeland, in spite of eventually settling permanently in the host country.

The interviews conducted in Hammer and Schalz’s study for Palestinians throughout the Diaspora confirm that a Palestinian identity in particular remained among the majority of the constituents, in spite of leading an integrated life in the host country. This was true across the cases, which varied with each individual. However both Hammer and Schalz suggest the transnational variable in their studies. Hammer asserts: “Palestinian identities have developed differently in different host countries. Many factors influence the formation of identities.” This is due to the fact that certain environments are more conducive than others to the incorporation of specific aspects of another culture. Schalz suggests this in her study but also asserts that an attachment to the homeland remained strong across the cases. This is also suggested in a study by Herbert Kelman on the interdependence of Palestinian and Israeli identities when he states, “Israelis have equated the Palestinian movement’s goal of liberating Palestine with the intention of liquidating Israel. Palestinians have seen the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 as steps in the Zionist project of eliminating the Palestinian presence in the land.”

George’s findings on the Palestinian Birzeit community in North America, confirm that as immigrants not deeply involved in homeland politics, assimilation into the host society at a superficial level has in no way undermined their attachment to the homeland. In his study on assimilation among the Birzeit community in the U.S. he concludes: “No one would deny that assimilation by individual Palestinians is taking place, but that on a collective level this is not the case.” He found instead the

173 Kelman, 589
174 George, 7.
manifestation of a Palestinian identity that was consistent across the Diaspora through the representation of their personal experiences in literature, poetry and short stories. The Palestinian experience in Diaspora was reflected metaphorically through such outlets to show that a primary characteristic of Palestinian identity is an attachment to the land, not attributed to political activity. Literary expression has expressed this feeling of adapting to call the new environment ‘home’, but which does not eradicate a deep appreciation for the first homeland. George demonstrates the way that authors have related olive, orange, and fig trees (abundant in the homeland) with the feeling of being ‘uprooted’ from the land, in the same way that Palestinians were unjustly expelled. He cites a poem by Naomi Shihab Nye “My Father and the Fig Tree” where Naomi who is a Palestinian American describes her father’s attachment to the land metaphorically through the feeling of being rooted as a fig tree is to the land. The poem as cited in his study is as follows:

Years passed, we lived in many houses, none had fig trees.
We had lima beans, zucchini, parsley, beets.
‘Plant one’ my mother said, but my father never did. What a dreamer he is. Look how many things he starts and doesn’t finish.

The last time we moved, I got a phone call.
My father, in Arabic, chanting a song I’d never heard.
‘What’s that I said?’
‘Wait till you see!’
He took me back in the new yard
There is the middle of Dallas, Texas
a tree with the largest, fattest, sweetest figs in the world.
‘It’s a fig tree song!’ he said.
plucking his fruits like ripe tokens,
emblems, assurance
of a world that was always his own.

Another poem cited by Nye in his study, portrays the same feeling of belonging to the land. In her poem “blood” the states,

175 George, 215-216
176 George, 216.
Today the headlines clot in my blood,  
A little Palestinian dangles a truck  
on the front page.  
Homeless fig, this tragedy with a  
terrible root  
is too big for us. What flag can  
we wave?

This research has focused on a specific attribute of nationalism in the Diaspora  
by asking how Palestinian identity developed in light of the changing political situation in  
the Middle East at the turn of the twentieth century. It has expanded on the previous  
discourse of national identity in the Diaspora, showing that in spite of leading different  
lives and living separate experiences as a consequence of homeland politics, Palestinians  
in the Diaspora share in common with each other, and also those not in the Diaspora— 
these living in historic Palestine and the Palestinian territories, as well as refugees in  
Lebanon and throughout the world— an attachment to the land. The events of 1948 are  
something that everyone who identifies as Palestinian relate to, and that irrespective of  
these different experiences, is something that binds them together as a nation. A  
Palestinian living in Australia may have very little in common with a Palestinian who  
also spent the majority of his life outside Palestine but in Honduras, and yet still feel a  
connection with this person as a Palestinian, not only because they might enjoy the same  
cultural traditions or foods, but most importantly because both have in common a history  
where they or their families suffered as a consequence of the politics in the homeland. As  
a result, Palestinians across the Diaspora are able to meet on this point. This idea has  
been preceded in previous studies by other scholars in the field, especially in May  
Seikaly’s research on the Palestinian community in Detroit. One respondent in her study  
also attributes national identity with the land.  

The story of Palestine is the cruelest one [of all other people], and no one cares,  
and it still goes on... It is distressing to think of 'Al-Shattat' [the dispersion] of the  
Palestinian people, the loss of land, and degrading of [our] identity.177

The findings of her study equate an attachment to the land across the interviews  
conducted. It is certain that this is true throughout the Diaspora as portrayed through the  
cases examined.

177 Seikaly, 34.
These things have happened with little recourse for the injustice the international community has acknowledged, but done nothing to remedy. In an effort to find a just solution to any conflict, it is important to understand all elements that contributed to its start. U.S. foreign policy has remained sympathetic to Israel at the expense of the Palestinians whose economic, social and political repression are the consequence of unreserved U.S. financial support of Israel since 1967. If the United States and Israel follow through with a plan to create a “new Middle East,” there will be no long term solution that benefits the majority in that region, unless terms are negotiated cognizant of historic facts and contemporary realities.

The national security argument has been used to justify U.S. foreign aid to the Israeli army. Supporting the Israeli military however has not helped Israel be-friend its neighbors, or increased security; and does not truly represent the intentions of many uninformed U.S. citizens. However, this lack of awareness works to the advantage of the Israel lobby, backed by neo-conservatives and Evangelical Christians with political tendencies. Meanwhile, many Jews throughout the world, not necessarily Zionist (including within Israel), support Israel out of loyalty and perceived justice against ‘anti-Semitism,’ but do not necessarily condone the condemnation of innocent Palestinians as well, whose origins are in Palestine. Many Jews are willing to consider additional solutions to the issue.

Regrettably U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East has been at the expense of the poor and the weak countries which are not afforded the chance to develop because of the

178 Mearshimer and Walt, 31.
179 Ibid. “It is the only recipient that does not have to account for how the aid is spent, which makes it virtually impossible to prevent the money from being used for purposes the US opposes, such as building settlements on the West Bank. Moreover, the US has provided Israel with nearly $3 billion to develop weapons systems, and given it access to such top drawer weaponry as Blackhawk helicopters and F-16 jets. Finally, the US gives Israel access to intelligence it denies to its NATO allies and has turned a blind eye to Israel’s acquisition of nuclear weapons.”
180 Ibid, 5;
181 Ibid, 48. “Jewish Americans also differ on specific Israeli policies. Many of the key organizations in the Lobby, such as the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, are run by hardliners who generally support the Likud Party’s expansionist policies, including its hostility to the Oslo peace process. The bulk of US Jewry, meanwhile, is more inclined to make concessions to the Palestinians, and a few groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace strongly advocate such steps. Despite these differences, moderates and hardliners both favor giving steadfast support to Israel.”
one sided approach of the powerful countries. This has been the source of much conflict in the Middle East, especially between Palestine and Israel.

Closing Remarks

In my own personal experience, and even those of others without relatives or direct association to the culture and people, Palestinians in historic Palestine have not refrained from giving of their homes, food and welcoming strangers in spite of being deprived of material assets on a daily basis. Just about everyone lost something, but some lost everything: their homes, jobs and family— as a consequence of the Israeli occupation; and yet it did not prevent them from the humility of outright generosity and vulnerability to those visiting their country, even as an American citizen whose government financially supports their occupation. Instead of clinging to what they still have, they have not refrained from giving in abundance.

However, in my experience while in Palestine, I have felt a sense of wanting others to understand the misery and humiliation of living under the occupation. This should not be used to define all circumstances. However, it is not a broad statement to say that there is a feeling of estrangement for those who lived outside Palestine their whole lives, and after visiting do not truly belong due to the difference in lifestyles between one place and the other. This is reflected in a deeper social division not necessarily spoken, but oftentimes felt. First, each individual living abroad carries certain values they were brought up with by their parents. Upon return they are able to take comfort in connecting to something here that was not fully understood elsewhere. However on a personal note, I do not look Arab but am by ethnicity, and often called a foreigner until discovered as Palestinian and Lebanese by descent. Upon realizing this, most Palestinians have welcomed me as an Arab and Palestinian. However, I also have experienced estrangement from those who call me ‘ajnabiye’ (foreigner) when I pass them on the street, or after explaining to them who I am and where I was born and raised. I have also felt disappointment for not having a strong command of the Arabic language, which might reflect back to them as a lack of interest on my part. Also, I did not live or know the occupation as they did. Perhaps there is an underlying belief that they earned the title of ‘Palestinian’ more than those who did not undergo their
experiences. Those who left are often accused of caring more for money, and this is not fair. But I cannot blame them... it's the worst feeling to have stayed behind on behalf of love for one's country and home, or in some cases, for an inability to leave for one's socioeconomic position, which was often determined for them by those in power-to one who had gone through terrible hardships which might have been lessened had there been more Palestinians to collectively respond to them. So, in that sense there might be a feeling of bitterness or at the very least the desire for some form of recognition to distinguish those who stayed behind. Furthermore, it is truly an act of humility to welcome and place the returnees on the same level of 'Palestinian', and to acknowledge that their support is needed. Meanwhile, it is best to remain united as a nation to have a better chance of attaining international recognition for injustices committed toward them. There is certainly a reason for why there are more Palestinians living outside than within historic Palestine, and this is evidence in itself that atrocities were committed toward the Palestinian people. I think in most cases, it was not simply a desire to become successful, as it was to survive, and this fact can be used as a voice. However even though they have been heard internationally, it seems not yet to have permeated the barrier of only hearing but also understanding. Until then, the message is not fully received.

Recognition has been quite the challenge after being judged for the way the Palestinian nation has responded to the crisis. I think Palestinians feel they are accused of something that was never their fault to begin with, and where the pain of that experience in itself is so overwhelming that it paralyzes oneself from expressing the hurt eloquently and in a way that would enable the outsider or the offender to understand how it feels. It is difficult to do this without being judged for self-pity, overly sensitive, 'anti-Semitic' or just plain offensive... and especially now, as 'terrorism' becomes the new justification to condone the disproportionate retaliation toward Palestinian civilians.

In spite of some acknowledgement of the problem, the international community does not mobilize on account of the inequitable terms that the crisis is fought on, and instead allows it to persist due to fear, guilt and national interest. So there is a sense of abandonment and despair that have brought Palestinians together, and in other ways may have divided them politically in terms of what is the best way to respond to this
problem. I think this is because some needs are more urgent and other burdens heavier to carry. As a nation that is systematically oppressed, it is not easy to surrender what they have lived through, in relation to others that have not known the same daily hardships yet also claim the distinction of being Palestinian. These feelings I believe are rooted in a sense of desire for justice and recognition.
MADE IN PALESTINE
contemporary Palestinian art

Opening Event: Thursday, March 16, 2006
6:00 PM
Opening a lecture and curators' tours will be present
Exhibition Open for Viewing: March 14 - April 22, 2006
Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Aging events of art, poetry, speakers and music will be hosted throughout the exhibition by community organizations. Check our website or gallery for details about these events!

The Bridge
521 W. 26th St., 3rd Floor, NYC
www.ajtspare.com

"A score of small butterflies, all of one kind, were settled on a damp patch of sand, their wings erect and closed, showing their pale undersides with dark dots and tiny orange-streaked peacock spots along the hindwing margins; one of Pnin's shed rubbers disturbed some of them and, revealing the celestial hue of their upper surface, they fluttered around like blue snowflakes before settling again."

Vladimir Nabokov

Above: Artwork by Hida Simokrot. "West Bank Butterfly #2", 2006. (The artwork displayed an arrangement of paper butterflies, scattered around the exhibit. This particular butterfly has a map of the West Bank on its wings).

"Made In Palestine" Contemporary Art Exhibit.
New York City. March 16, 2006
Bibliography


Bethehem Peace Center www.peacecenter.org


Hancock, Geoffrey. "Lebanon: A cockpit of Middle East and Other Politics." *Asian Affairs* 14, no. 3 (1963): 245-259.


Immigración Árabe en América [http://www.arabe.cl/immigracion.html]


(Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, 1981), I: 625


Maps
Royal Commission (Peel) Plan for the partition of Palestine: <C:\Documents and Settings\user\My Documents\Thesis Materials\Lit Summarized\Royal Commission plan for the partition of Palestine, 1937.htm>MAPS>

"Palestine Loss of Land 1946-2000." <http://65.54.114.250/cgi-bin/getmsg/PalestinianLandLoss%2ejpg?&msg=3D09427E-0EEF-4EEC-84F5-EC748BD86832&start=0&len=238884&nimage=5&curmbox=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&btr=59d20aab3423b8be4237141b44a65fbb&disk=10.1.165.200_d3532&geometry=seabrahm44&domain=hotmail%2ecom&_lang=EN&country=US&_safe=redact=%26hm__xt%3d115966051%26hm__sa%3d387c38330d9b012&ddfd2dcb7f2ead0>