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Palestinian Identity in Exile

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Abstract

The aim of this Thesis is to explore the modernized Palestinian identity in exile. The exploration should depict how the identity of Palestinians is affected by ‘Orientalism’ in mass media as well as exploring how social aspects in different regions impact shaping identities. The thesis will remain under the context of sociological perspective. The thesis will also focus on writers such as Edward Saeed and his works, along with other writers and sociologists. The paper will conduct new findings about collective identities and how it impacts Palestinian lives in exile. The findings will be conducted by collecting quotes and the subjects are in the Palestinian society from countries such UAE, Ireland and America. Finally it will discuss the possibility of cultural continuity in regards to the findings and social theory.

This thesis aims to establish the difficulties of identification of oneself through the lens of a westernized society and perhaps the world. The thesis aims to create a new conclusion on the experience of Palestinians living the diaspora and how that is a life changing experience. This thesis does not intend on only delivering different exile experiences, rather it will focus on why those experience are shaped in terms of sociological perspectives.

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Introduction:

This thesis aims to analyze contemporary Palestinian identity in exile. The analysis will develop based on sociological perspectives in relation to culture, collective narrative, historical factors, and the unique contemporary narratives of Palestinians in the diaspora. The analysis will develop based on sociological perspectives in relation to culture, collective narrative, historical factors, and the unique contemporary narratives of Palestinians in the diaspora. By utilizing a sociological perspective, collective narratives and personal experiences of modernized Palestinian culture and identity may be examined from a diasporic point of view. Thus, many of the narratives stem from writers who have experienced exile. Moreover, the thesis aims to exhibit the individuality and uniqueness of Palestinian identity through observations on currently exiled Palestinians globally. All cultures are unique, yet the Palestinian diaspora has produced an interesting set of common goals.

In the thesis I should use a number of terms that require clarification of the context they will be used in. Exile is defined as the state or a period of forced absence from one's country or home in Webster Dictionary. However, the definition of exile in the thesis will be in reference to Edward Said's definition of exile. Said explains exile in his book *Reflections on Exile*, "it is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (Said, 2000). As such, Said's definition is more descriptive of the situation of the diasporic context within a Palestinian narrative and underscores Exile as more than the expulsion from one's native land by authoritative decree. The context in which the word will be used throughout the paper is the tumultuous condition it carries along with the experience.

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With regards to the “Palestinian people”, this term will be in reference to the ethnic group who were in Palestine for centuries before the invasion of the Israel State.

Furthermore, the thesis explores the “Nakba”, an Arabic word that means ‘catastrophe’. The word is used by Palestinians to refer to the catastrophic events that took place during 1948 and the consequences that follow. Its context is always negative and is associated with great distress. The “Nakba” is an event of calamity. The reference of calamity is to the establishment of the Israeli state, hence the beginning of the Palestinian diaspora.

In this thesis I will also refer to the ‘other’ according to Said, the concept of the othering is: the referral to how the West (the occident according to Said), has the privilege to define a lower class in a passive manner. In this case the Occident refers to Britain, America and Israel mainly. The expression will be used not to point out differences and degrade a lower class but to point out how the defining of the Occident has become the reality the Orientals live today (Said, 2000). The ‘other’ will be used in two contexts in the paper. First as defined by Edward Said. The second is the reversed meaning using the occident as the ‘other’ to the Palestinians, in other words Israel and more specifically, Zionists.

As for the conflict in question, the conflict in this thesis is in reference to the Palestinian and Israeli conflict of geography on politics, war and military, right to the land of Palestine.

The definition of modern Palestinians will develop in the final conclusion of this thesis. Yet the meaning aims at exemplifying Palestinians in the diaspora and how the exile has revolutionized their being into modern identities of hybrid cultures but somehow retain a Palestinian identity.

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The thesis consists of three chapters; the first two chapters will each examine a factor that contributes to Palestinian diasporic identity. The first chapter discusses examining Palestinians in the West and in exile. The chapter will also discuss media representations and poor recognition of Palestinians globally. Then the chapter will examine how this poor recognition has played a role in molding the current Palestinian identity. Finally the first chapter will examine the importance of pictorial texts to the Palestinian narrative. The pictorial texts will be explained thoroughly and a set of chosen pictures will be presented to draw a possible contemporary Palestinian collective identity.

The second chapter will examine the “Nakba” and its repercussions. The chapter attempts to present the diasporic context. It focuses on the “Nakba” that produces the Palestinian identity. It also includes how the generations born in exile have developed imaginary homelands. In addition to how those generations cope with neglect and denial of their existence within other cultures.

The third chapter in the thesis will analyze research data from interviews with Palestinians in exile. It will summarize the possibilities of Palestinian cultural continuity in exile. Also, the third chapter will attempt to methodically inspect the nature of contemporary Palestinian identities in exile.

Throughout the history of social sciences and understanding society and individuals within, a prominent concept has been a key theme in all the studies: identity. Sociologists acknowledged the importance of identity in the late 1970s and ever since-studies on identity have increased massively. Perhaps because societies have advanced in the way they cohere and interact (D. Fearon, 1999). To date, defining one’s identity may not depend on ethnic

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background, religious beliefs or nationality. Instead self-identification may be one that reflects interests to groups of sexual interests, non-religious beliefs and practices, or lifestyles. According to Erik Erikson, Identification to a group is a fundamental unit of the makeup of self-awareness (Izenberg, 2016). Nevertheless the group an individual decides to group themselves is based on sociological factors that control one's life.

Modern day Palestinians are not extensively studied. There is not sufficient information about the sociology of Palestinians in diasporic accounts. The writings on the topic are plentiful, but are either very specific to a certain community, argues a certain agenda or holds a nationalist view. Hence this thesis aims to look at the identity of those who live in exile and examine the complexity of their being, regarding cultural and social aspects that surround the subjects. The writings on the topic of the Palestinian identity remain a derivative of Edward Said's works. Said's prominent definitions on the Palestinian conflict are always referred to by other writers. His work on the Palestinian identity and being remains the most influential, perhaps because he is one of the exiled community and has closely examined the exiled community and lived among the occident viewpoint. Since this research represents a thesis based on sociological perspectives, inclusive cultural aspects, I will attempt to formulate a definition of a collective contemporary identity based on the collected data. Research is based on academic books and writings from writers such Edward Said and Ihab Saloul. The formation of the final definition of contemporary Palestinian identity in exile is based on a qualitative analysis through interviewing a number of the exiled Palestinians globally. Based on the interviews the qualitative analysis will be constructed on a sociological aspect. Interviews are chosen as the qualitative method for extracting information about people's experiences, views and feelings. The interviews will analyze extracted quotations from longer interviews with people of the Palestinian community in

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exile from different regions such America, United Kingdom, UAE and Ireland. Among the quotations extracted is an analysis of the precedence of the qualities that dominate this cultural identity. The findings in the last chapter will be analyzed through sociological perspectives and psychological perspectives.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PALESTINIAN ORIENT AND PICTORIAL TEXTS

The Palestinian contemporary identity in exile is a complex one. It is an identity that is poorly explored. The Palestinian identity is one that is highly influenced by nationalism, yet if examining closely, the common factor to analyze when looking at identity is stories and representations of the common narratives. This chapter will furthermore examine the issues of looking at the current Palestinian conflict. The chapter will do so by looking at the pioneer writers on the Palestinian conflict, then reflecting on media representations of the Palestinian identity, and lastly at the importance of pictorial texts in defining the modern identity of Palestinians.

World's most influential people have sparked changes in world sciences, philosophies, and human development. The study of sociology is controversial and illuminates affairs never spoken of before. Hence, the controversies sparked by sociologists leads to questioning a philosopher's agenda. It is essential to question the background and environment the philosopher developed in. For example, Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist was highly influenced by Karl Marx. Therefore Durkheim's ideas derive from a certain school and understanding Karl Marx will clarify Durkheim's reasoning (Calhoun, 2007).

In order to write about a society, and culture study a case the examiner must be within close premises of the subject. So to develop understanding of societies, the examiner must live within a society for a period of time. Therefore, the most qualified person to speak for a case is one who suffered it. Nevertheless the validity of the writings must be acquired through academia, theory and experience.

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The most influential speaker of the Palestinian diaspora is Edward W. Said. Since Said embodies the tragedy of exile, his life path pursued voicing the Palestinian people and shining light on the issues of the refugees and domination of the West over the East. His writings are very influential around the world; perhaps because he wrote a new, and expressive view that exposed new boundaries to people.

The media is not always the best way to inform and enlighten oneself. The media attempts to shine light on a narrow zone of a spectrum. As a result, the media can be a biased source of interpretation of group identities. In accordance to Said's concept of orientalism, the way the West (Europe and America) views the Middle East distorts the reality of their identities. Said explores the consistency of the media representations of the Palestinians and Arabs. He expresses that the representations are a tool of colonialism. In addition, orientalism is another way to dominate the media with one narrative and disperse the Palestinian narrative and history.

In the media perceptions of worldwide events such as the Oslo peace process, peace talks seem like accomplishments of humanitarian peace process. After the Oslo Peace process both Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres have won the Nobel Peace Prize. On TV those events seemed to serve all participants, depending on which media corporations are translating those events. From the West's view point those events are major milestones in the world of peace progression. While in the orientalist's viewpoint those events are catastrophic and lead to major drawbacks in progression of their world.

According to Tajfel (1979) "The groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world." Sociologists deny the common

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belief that identity is something humans are born with, in fact it is a learning process with stages of development of this identity (Tajfel, 1979). The learning process is not of the thesis's concern, yet the factors that interfere and help shape the identity is what concerns this thesis. Hence the sociological aspect include, media, and cultural beliefs.

The idea of otherness is using reference to self in a group that gives a sense of pride. Also it is the use of negative comments on a group the person doesn't belong to point out the wrongness of that group; it is done purposefully to feel better about the group you belong to. The usage of terms like "us" vs. 'them' derives from the concepts of otherness (Said, 1979). This process is part of social categorization which is explained in the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979). Social categorization is embedded in societies. There are different ways to categorize a society, based on class, ethnicity, and social interests. This leads to a sense of social identity, categorization might lead to prejudice, and in some cases extreme racism or hatred towards whole nations or groups. For example some Palestinians may hate all Jews because they think all Jews are the reason for their miserable narrative. On the other hand some Palestinians point out that their fight against Israel is towards the Zionist ideology that is slowly attempting ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians, restricting their freedom of movement, and politically denying their rights.

Therefore, grouping people becomes an exaggerated process of pointing out the faults in the other groups and the merits of one's own group. In this thesis the issue with the modern Palestinian identity is that it is shaped in social isolation. It is an identity that is formed based on narratives heard of other people's experience, something intangible. Moreover this is an identity embedded in doubts, uncertainty and questioning of its authenticity. A Palestinian in exile is challenged to become creative in finding a sense of belonging in the social world (Said, 2000).

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The challenge Said describes is to find empathy with the Palestinians in Palestine, which is not channeled because of the privileges attained by the Palestinians outside Palestine. Life in exile has become so different than life inside of Palestine under the occupation. In addition, the ability to aspire a Palestinian way of living in exile creates a new set of cultural practices that are surely different than within Palestine.

The question remains, how can one insist on identifying as Palestinian when they are denied entry to Palestine? The issue of carrying a Palestinian passport is one that is underestimated. In a repeated scenario for many Palestinians, if they are questioned on their identification papers, a rush of confusion and insecurities is summoned upon them. Although the person is definite that those set of papers do not truly define them. Some identification papers state 'refugee', which normally implies camps, bare feet and poor conditions. In contrast, the 'refugee' might be living in a metropolitan city, renting a fancy apartment, driving a Porsche and travels plenty. Hence not all Palestinians are the same, the contemporary identity must be more exposed to international media, to clarify the invalidity of labels summoned upon the Palestinians.

If the only media representations that reflect the Palestinians are silenced, then the only portal is voiced through the eyes of the 'other', the Palestinian's other. The Palestinian identity becomes a whole lot more complicated and implied differently because it is projected through the lens of another group. Therefore it debunks the purpose of voicing and becomes a means of justification for the audiences rather than an emphasis on the issue. In other words the message from a cause becomes an explanation to the enemy. For that is why the Palestinian people feel the need to prove themselves to the western societies of their validity as people; and debunk the

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stereotypical picture presented by the Western media. As for Palestine, in films it is always represented as ‘the holy land’, and the indigenous people remain margined.

In a BBC documentary, *In Search of Palestine*, Said begins by showing a picture of his parents; he comments narrating the story behind the picture, and then he explains how he was never able to grow up in the same place his parents got married. This is significant because Said narrates his story which is a common refugee story. The narration is similar; it includes longing memories, parent’s honor, commemoration and journey. The documentary summarizes that the Palestinian narrative seems ordinary, yet it lies within extraordinary boundaries. The idea of the uniqueness is embedded within how common the factors that affect those stories, unifying their cause.

One expressive way of representing narratives is through pictures. Pictures showcase depth of meaning. According to Altman (2008), the linguistic expression in addition to a graphic expression is a complete expression with the clearest possibility. Pictorial texts are deep because they depict individual expressions of unique experiences. The images reflect the significance of preservation of stories of a culture. In some cases a picture is all what is left for families that were diminished in war. For others pictures are the only way to enrich the imagination of longing with homeland, the only light of hope that feeds this feeling. Altman (2008) also summarizes that ‘narratives can be open to a more inclusive range of texts and experiences’, which concludes the idea of Palestinian narrative. It is very common yet very unique.

The experiences of individuals are preserved through the images, since images portray documented visuals it is a speaking fact of truths. Although images are open to interpretation, they succeed at conveying messages that ought to be stronger than words. According to Mitchell

(1994), images can be understood in two ways. Specifically, representations of Palestinian set of pictures, could be depicted in the eyes of “outsider” in two ways. Firstly, understood as a collection of anonymous terrorists dressed in traditional clothes. Secondly could be defined as unique storytelling images of ordinary Palestinians who are women, farmers, poets, breadwinners, innocent children and mechanics. Moreover exhibitions that hold the same set of picture ideas, of the ordinary life of the Palestinians strive to show the normality of the lives they lead speaks of the opposing ideologies that attempt to prohibit this image from sustaining itself. Instead the prohibitions seek to subside the normality and allure light on the other image of danger and suspicion (Mithchell, 1994). Said notes that “exile is a set of photographs without texts.” Thus briefings that set a path for defining a picture is game-changing. Said expresses how valuable pictorial texts are in a diaspora.

Moreover, Mitchel explains through Said’s quotes the significance of looking at the form in which Palestinian writing is in. In addition to looking at form and content, analyzing the text and image in this way is in the same importance of analyzing the occident point of view with regards to the orientalist views. If one analyses a narrative alone, it scatters the unity of the issue. So as the expression is incomplete without its image, so is the occident’s narrative without the Palestinian narrative. The Nakba is a transition stage from citizen to refugee. The pictures depict this change with its developmental stages. In the following section the thesis aims to use pictorial texts as a metaphorical expression of the importance of the Palestinian narrative within a western narrative to form a complete picture.

The difficulties of the research on the topic is because of how information is deliberately hidden by Israel. Hence creating and establishing a Palestinian narrative is key to access the topic. The following set of pictures were collected from various sources including archives from

the United Nations. The set of pictures opt to represent the collective Palestinian narrative, to show the commonality of their condition in exile.



The Nakba. Figure 1.1 (Daily Mail, 2014)

“In this 1967 photo from the UNRWA archive, Palestine refugees flee across over the Jordan River on the damaged Allenby Bridge during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war”.

Figure 1.1 narrates the catastrophe of 1948 during the Nakba. The beginning of the Palestinian exile struggle after the Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes to never return. Even though not all Palestinian refugees have experienced the physical travel

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from home to exile, the sorrow of this experience is most referred to from the Nakba experience. Perhaps because of the distance travelled, poor conditions, and mental despair of the victims.

Also, the picture expresses the Nakba in several ways. The Nakba is the route to the deprivation of ordinary into extraordinary. Even though the people in the picture are walking in two opposite routes, they have ended up in the same turmoil in the diaspora. Thus, representing the fate of suffering for all Palestinians. Each person affected by the diaspora is affected differently and this picture represents the unity of the diasporic experience.



Figure 1.2 The Key to Home, the Hope to Return. (*An elderly Palestinian woman holds the key to her home.*, n.d.)

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Figure 1.2 represents the resolution in the eyes of the exiled, the return. The image of the key and its symbolic value is more than just a representation. Most Palestinians homes have preserved the keys of their homes even though those homes may not stand today. Hope plays a significant role in the Palestinian exile narrative, because hope is the greatest motif for the continuity of the Palestinian reality. The key is a national symbol. It is probably the only tangible aspect of home. Families inherit the key, passing it down to generations in hope to return. The key does not mean intending to go back the same exact house. Instead it signifies the right to return. It is a proof of possession of something from the holy land, probably a reassurance to oneself about the right of this land.



Figure 1.3 Then and Now (United Nations, 2014)

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“That was then this is now Palestinian refugees look at their photograph that was taken at the Rafah UNRWA clinic in 1975 at their family home in Rafah Refugee Camp the southern Gaza Strip.”

Figure 1.3 is a representation of the stranded refugees who are the only perceptible image to the public. Additionally the image is indicative of the continuity of hardship for the Palestinians. The picture is a referral to the same place shows that nothing has changed since the incident of the Nakba. Furthermore the lady in the picture is wearing Palestinian traditional clothes which depicts hope and holding onto their cultural identity. Such remarks are significant to pictorial texts because they magnify the meaning ought to be delivered. Hence instead of misinterpreting the picture, the labels help direct the meaning of this picture. The picture holds representations within representations. It shows the repercussions of the Nakba as more generations are born into the suffering.



Figure 1.4 Nowhere is home (Vox Europe, 2012)

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Figure 1.4 is a depiction of the unsettlement of exile. As the contemporary identity is explored further it tends to show that homeland largely shapes the contemporary identity. As the Palestinian community in exile seeks to establish a home, they face challenges that remind them of the impracticalities of having a complete home. As a result, the Palestinian diaspora has adopted a new home, “nowhere”. Nowhere is home to the Palestinians because they were shed off their cultural identity. This image is a duplicate of the Palestinian reality because of the Palestinian cultural genocide committed by the State of Israel.

In addition, this picture imitates the movement of Palestinians in the diasporic continent. The never-ending search of a home. The Palestinian community can establish a lot in exile. Yet there is always something to sacrifice in return to the success achieved. Sacrifice made could be in various forms, friends, family, comfort, luxury, lifestyle and more.



Figure 1.5 The End of Exile; Finding the way to serenity and ending exile. (This image was randomly selected to represent the serenity).

The series of previous pictures depict the unity of the experience of exile, regardless of the person's identity. The pictures depict the unity of experience in the sense of sorrow, change, commotion, the journey of exile and the goals. The pictures were sourced randomly, to exhibit the existence of a Palestinian common narrative. That even though those pictures were puzzled together one in exile can relate to at least one of those experiences of exile.

A question that is embedded in the Palestinian story of exile is "what lies ahead?" Figure 1.5 illustrates the dreamy nature of the Palestinian aspiration. This figure represents the impaired vision of the Palestinians. Although an impaired vision for the future of the Palestinian people lies unknown, their goals are clear and precise. On a more positive note of the image, the

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Palestinian narrative is a story of inspiration and a symbol of peace and solidarity around the world.

According to Saloul (2012), “to most Palestinians, the catastrophic loss of Palestine in 1948 represents the climactic formative event of their lives. In the aftermath of this loss, the Palestinian society was transformed from a thriving society into a “nation of refugees” scattered over multiple geopolitical borders.” Hence the choice of pictures began with the events of the Nakba because the modern Palestinian narrative begins. Saloul’s description is precise to the series of pictures. Figure 1.3 represents the nation of refugees. Figure 1.4 is another expression for the diasporic nation that has not yet found a home to return to or settle in.

In conclusion, the Palestinian contemporary narrative is a complex one that is best defined through the viewpoint of people who experienced it. Through the writings of Edward Said, analysis of the identity is more approachable since he is part of the exiled community. As for media representations the Palestinians identity is scrutinized through the lens of the western media. Hence this chapter summarizes that the use of pictorial texts can help clarify the misinterpretations of the media representations of the Palestinian people. Also that the collective narrative of the contemporary Palestinian identity can be summed up in a series of pictures presented in the chapter. The collective narrative recites the sorrow and stages all Palestinians in exile experience.

Chapter Two: Imaginary homeland: Defining Modern Palestinian Identity and Culture

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The Jewish people were always drawn into Palestine in small scale migrations. It was not troublesome, they lived in peace with other Muslims, Christians and Jewish Palestinians. Until the Balfour proclamation that read:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

In other words the British minister decided the fate of the all the Jew's nationalist future by issuing this proclamation. The proclamation acknowledged the existence of the Palestinians in Palestine, which is later disregarded by the communities that fled from the European anti-Semitism. Ironically when the state of Israel was established, Palestinians who were once acknowledged suddenly became nonexistent. "The end of a group's struggle is the beginning of another nation's troubles." The proclamation was followed by several events that lead to the dissemination of the Arab world and the beginning of social injustice in the region. After the establishment of the Israeli state arguments neglecting the Palestinian people raged. Arguments such that the word 'Palestine' is derived from a Latin name makes the country not belong to the people are ridiculous. Take into consideration the fact that Palestine has been in a series of wars and colonies with several empires such as the Roman, British, and Turkish, nevertheless the people that live in the land are still defined as 'Palestinians' today. The term coins a reference to the cultural belonging of the people to a place and a sense of identity not necessarily retain a national identity, but a cultural one. Consequently, as long as cultural continuity persists, the existence of the Palestinian people will continue live.

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Daniel Barenboim said in a discussion with Said (BBC, 1998): “For the first time in history, the Jewish people were in control of another minority. Having suffered from being a prosecuted minority for 2000 years, now they are controlling another minority.” The suffering of both nations have claimed the reconciliation of the Palestinian and Israel conflict. Perhaps because of the suffering of the Jewish people and discrimination it has become difficult for the Israelis to compromise in fear of history repeating itself. Likewise, the Palestinians feel the incompetency to reconciliation without ground breaking acclamation of any rights. In contrast to the present, the abolishment of basic human right violations still exist, unfortunately apartheid still exists. The Berlin wall that once stood as a sign of despair and hopelessness in Europe was brought down by its people, depicting the end of discrimination and war. Apartheid in Africa, Ireland and discrimination against the Jews in Europe is our modern day Palestine (Said, 2000).

Motherland can be the geographical place of origin or what one regards as so. Struggles of nationalism and right to land has been an ongoing battle since the existence of civilization. Plato said, “Only the dead have seen the end of the war”. Perhaps true, the world has witnessed countless wars regardless of time. But since the 20th century the world has seen new developed and prolonged war types. For instance after the world wars, the Cold War began, hence a new era of different wars that don’t require a battlefield. Also, the post-colonial period witnessed control of political ideologies, extreme racism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, discriminate laws and other forms of injustice. This is the broad historical context of which the Palestinian narrative lies within, hence the development of a convoluted identity. The national identity is never stronger than at state of war, loss or victory. According to Evans (2016), the sense of triumph becomes more developed in the state of war. Thus since the Palestinians have been in constant turmoil of occupation, wars and exile, the national identity spurts and is a dominant part of their being.

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The beginning of the recent Palestinian dispute began with the event of the Nakba. Ironically, the Holocaust and Nakba both translate to 'catastrophe'. The defense of some groups of the Israeli official have stated plenty of times, that the Jews have suffered from the Holocaust, and that they deserve the land. Yet shouldn't the victim of a genocide reflect upon this act as outrageous and condemn it by anyone? Instead of condemning such acts, the State of Israel is attempting genocides themselves; and justifying their horror by reflecting it upon another group.

The world has witnessed plenty of bigger scale genocides and attempts of ethnic cleansing. It may seem that in the world has advanced and reached an expectancy to rid wars, but to date the world has wars that involve the world's leaders who call for democracy and peace. The holocaust is an example of a narrative of the Jewish and Israeli people; it is a story that reflects a group narrative of struggle and sorrow (*Edward Said 1986 Orientalism Full Documentary, 1986*). Later the Jews established a home in another land. After the world war a British proclamation by Balfour promised reconciliation to the Jewish people by granting them a land the Jewish believe to belong to because of religious beliefs. Therefore it is very difficult for the Palestinians to sympathize with the sorrow of the Jews misery of the holocaust. The paradox of the situation produces the emphasis on the importance of mutual sharing and understanding of the Palestinian narrative to the

"One man's victory can be another's sorrow". With the establishment of the Israeli state, began the misery of generations. The establishment of the Israeli state aimed to house the discriminated against Jews of the world, bringing back their promised land. Palestinian Muslims, Christians and authentic Jews believe that the Jew's Promised Land is Palestine, although this was until the Jews disobeyed the conditions to the reward, and hence denied this land forever. Regardless of whether this lies true or not, Palestinians do not deny the "Jews" as a whole,

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Palestinian nationals have always lived in peace with other Palestinian Jews and Christians and Muslims, it is called the land of religions. The nationals denied the Zionist ideologies that were fierce, discriminative, profoundly immoral and violent (*Edward Said 1986 Orientalism Full Documentary*, 1986).

The reference to the Nakba is the most profound to the Palestinian narrative, because it is was the most traumatic event for the Palestinians at the time. Perhaps because it was unexpected. The trauma caused from this event is what makes it the most spoken of. The Nakba has cost the Palestinians everything, their homeland, homes, farms, memories, family and normality. It was a collective experience, not a few, they were grouped and forced out of their homes. Mainly it was a collective experience of severity and heartache. Possibly because it is the event that lead to the unknown. No one knew it was permanent, it was unanticipated. The consequences of the Nakba are massive and visible. The consequences would exhaust any scale ought to measure its burden on its people. The Nakba is the beginning of the new Palestinian being. It created a collection of references to what Palestinian is. Palestinians after the Nakba are no longer defined artlessly. They are one but many, unique but ordinary, stark but indefinite (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007).

The Nakba was not just an event of establishment of the Israeli state. The event encompassed the destruction of more than 450 Palestinian villages and towns, those villages and towns are renamed with 'Hebralized' names (Saloul, 2012). More than 60 years ago the dispersion of almost 800,000 people has led to the exile of more than 10 million Palestinians around the world today. The Nakba is the beginning of the Palestinian diasporic narrative, one that shapes the present identity. Regardless of how different the conditions of the many Palestinians who still live in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, all the Palestinians share the same national identity that is they all share losses from the Nakba. Hence the product of

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the Nakba is a unique cultural experience, where communities must create a tangible path to connect with their traditions (Saloul, 2012).

In the book, *Catastrophe and exile in the modern Palestinian imagination* (2012), Saloul concludes that the modern Palestinian imagination is a repercussion of the Nakba, because the Nakba came without warning its shock ripples to the day in Palestinian consciences. Hence influencing generations post the Nakba event to constraint their experiences to one that must reconcile with this unfortunate event.

Bresheeth (2006), describes the Palestinian narrative as one that developed “from the arena of armed struggle to that of culture and memory. Resistance to the one-sided Zionist story as a struggle of Jews ‘to recover their own land’ had to take place in the cultural arena by dealing with the story of Palestine as a strategic defensive move designed to recapture ground lost to Zionism and its dominant narrative.”

People long on memories, live on them. Some say that it’s what is left for them. The culture of story-telling has descended in all tribes and area around the world. Human nature is drawn to sharing experiences with each other. Story telling is a common social practice that is a global phenomenon. The experience of the Nakba is collective; this collectiveness is reflected in the Palestinian inherited folklore. The songs, dances, stories told are very common although the culture has varied as a result of the diaspora. As described by Saloul (2012), “We became an intoxicated people who go to sleep and wake up in the love of their homeland”. The collectiveness is expressed through folklore; thus stories, pictures and songs and art are the only form of safe reminiscences for the Palestinians. In an interview Edwards Said explains the significance of storytelling for the Palestinian people by saying: “The existence of a Palestinian

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narrative compiled and fashioned by Palestinians is a form of positive proof of a national existence, of a national identity. (*Collecting Stories From Exile: Palestinians Remember 1948, Part I*, n.d.)

Since Israel strongly fights the existence of Palestine, it attempts to erase and change history to gradually rid the proof of the right of the Palestinian people to the land. Thus Palestinian families are very informative in terms of their background and struggle, stories must be made loud and clear to their children, as if it the torch they pass on. Stories of how heroic the father was to escape the obscene acts of the Israeli military, or how the mother refused to let the soldiers take away her child.

The current narrative consists of war, destruction, oppression, discrimination, struggle, and a theme revolving around loss. In an interesting article by Jumana Al-Qawasmi (2012), she explains that it is problematic if the Palestinian narrative remains one of loss and destruction. The narrative does not consist of hope, or practical path to construct a future. The existence of a narrative is vital to the survival of the culture and Palestinian affair, yet the existence of this narrative with the lack of constructive conclusions is as defective as its absence (Al-Qawasmi, 2012).

In the light of the resistance within the Palestinian identity, music is one way to ensure that heritage is a source of joy and not one of mourning and sorrow. Songs are strongly part of narratives and more importantly songs pursue sharing disputes within a narrative. The old Palestinian anthem is an example of a very famous Palestinian song that is constantly sung by various artists in different forms and constantly recreated. The pride that rings to songs that refer to Palestine as an Arabic country and as 'ours' is certified as the confirmation to the Palestinian

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cause. The songs depict the struggle precisely. It is a way to show persistence and freedom of expression. To show the ability to sing, dance even though bombs are dropped in Palestine or you are denied entry to the land is a manner of resisting the enforcement of exile. For example one song's lyrics states "Palestine is Arab", as if a reminder to offender.

Censorship on Palestinians includes censoring lyrics on TV, limiting free speech on the topic and forbidding terms such 'Free Palestine' (Saleem, 2012). Political resistance in songs is a weapon used in all parts of the world. Nonetheless the Palestinian resistance remains in its songs, the folklore consists of rich content of context of the diaspora and the hope of return. The songs call for freedom of the Zionist ideology and colonialism. Reference to war and resistance is plenty in the Palestinian songs, to the extent that it might sound violent for the sake of their nature of violence that is not true. The reason for the constant reference to war and violence in songs is because of the history that is confined to colonial history and resisting colony after colony. Hence the reference of war is to share the struggle and heartache of their identity. If Palestinian songs were compared to American hip-hop, both share themes of struggle on issues such identity, discrimination and pride of heritage (Saleem, 2012). The Palestinian kitchen is another symbol of the everyday struggle because it part of a tangible cultural aspect of the community.

Moreover, if the Nakba was summed to a consequence it would be the denial of "right to return home". The current Palestinian struggle is to find a home they can identify with, not just a safe home. To identify with a place is to feel the belonging and utter settlement. The pursuit to finding a home is an element that is constructs the modern Palestinian identity in exile.

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“The trauma of dispossession from their land into the heart of collective memory and use it as means of constructing their culture and a sense of exile” (Gvion, 2012). Earlier on, Gvion explains that even Palestinians in Palestine have a sense of cultural exile, not necessarily geographic exile. Hence this is a sign of cultural continuity endangered to the coming generations. Perhaps the identity is not about homeland as located inside of Palestine but it is the sense of abolishing the exile in culture and right to return. So if the Palestinian people are able to regain a sense of normality among all other nations, the sense of liberation would diminish the overtly referral to the diasporic narrative.

Some narratives include exile in exile. Meaning the process of exile is cyclical for the Palestinians. For example in 1948 the Nakba caused the loss of homeland, yet generations have found a temporary home in countries all over the world, ones who settled in countries like Iraq, have been exiled again in the war to another temporary home. The tragedy of exile is not unique to the Palestinian community, nevertheless its length and entanglement is one that is unprecedented to this world. Palestinians should have the right to choose whether to go back live there. Because of statelessness Palestinians are in constant search for a home, a place that will protect their rights to console.

The fear of being detained for any word or opinion we might have as a result of years of dispersion, identity confusion, refuge and oppression. Identity confusion is a result of bombardment of contradicting opinions on who the Palestinian people are, whether they ever existed. Therefore if one belongs to a country and is identified by it, they would possess freedom of speech free of fear of being detained.

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The negation of the Palestinian being. As if alien to the land. While the concept of othering looks to degrade one group in favor of another. Negation is another level of absurd practice. The degradation can be fought more easily than total denial. If one can't find a country while doing simplest tasks on the computer such as documenting your passport issue place in a drop down menu bar, not finding "Palestine" listed, forces you to choose 'Israel' as if it is forcing you to accept their existence, far worse than denying your own being.

Simply put, the denial of a Palestinian narrative, neglects the existence of its people. Hence the other narrative would prevail. The narrative of the Israeli is one that demands the return of the Israelites to a land based on Jewish Decent. There are many arguments, the main one is based on Jewish decent, although land should not be confined to one of any religious boundaries, the Israeli narrative is one constructed on discrimination. In contrast the Palestinian narrative is one that speaks of culture, landownership based on ancestry and not religion. Moreover the Palestinian narrative does not deny the right for Jews to visit their sacred monuments and ones who have always lived in Palestine to be part of this Holy land. Unlike popular belief that the Palestinians are violent demons, Palestinians rarely possess any violent intent. Looking back at the history of folk, violence speaks of self-defense and sacrifice in the case of aggression against land, family or rights.

I must say how difficult it is to write about this topic because of the constraints and discrimination we face when we freely speak of this topic. I fear that my family would be denied a visa or residence where they stay now because of spoken words from me. This is a feeling of hostility, barring someone's freedom is limitation of speech, taboo, and illegal at times.

We feel the need to prove ourselves to a world that doesn't acknowledge our existence. The labelling of The Palestinian people in exile as 'stateless', 'without nationality', even though

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those terms are subjective, they are officially used in some countries around the world to refer to Palestinians who do not hold an alternative citizenship. Stateless is a description of a political state that reflects the importance of belonging to a piece of land. Again, the use of such words poses to raise the issue of simple existence of the Palestinian people, it questions their authenticity and shouts the 'other' Zionist narrative. Reflecting on this point, clarifies why maintaining a Palestinian narrative is important. Connotations of labelling people as stateless echoes political state of worthlessness. If you are not worthy of being granted any political state, then how are you to be recognized by the world? Some exiled Palestinians are even labelled as without documentation, because when they were forced out of their homes they were denied to bring any belongings with them including passports and documentation. So till this day they are ones without any official identification. Furthermore exile is not just a geographic state, it is a state of political worthiness, national identity and question of existence.

Perhaps this neglect of international recognition has led to a collective determination to prove political worthiness and to earn a right to return, hence the unsettling feeling of not being able to belong to a home other than one Palestinians have been denied.

If an exiled Palestinian attempts to neglect their identity, everyday life will harshly remind them of just how Palestinian they are, even if the only relation to Palestine is by blood, this blood will splatter in the face of this Palestinian as a genuine reminder of who they are and where they belong. Some attempt to change their surnames to lose their identity because most surnames are a reference to a certain tribal ascendance. For example the bourgeoisie of the exiled Palestinians who have moved to the gulf and succeeded at being pioneers in the industrial sector and banking where later discriminated against, in some cases arrested, their property and profits confiscated. The viability of protecting their businesses would be guaranteed (Smith, 2016).

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Using memories as ‘authoritative sources of historical knowledge’ since the doubtfulness of truths represented by the occident the only trusted narratives are ones Palestinians share and possess. Saloul (2012) expresses two features of the current Palestinian identity, the diversity of personal memories of loss of the homeland, and the second is ‘a sense of overwhelming belonging to one another in exile’. Thus this translates to justify the cultural unity of the Palestinians of exile regardless of their hybridity of other cultures.

Saloul (2012) defines memory as a complex construction that our present experience conjoins with other images in our processed brains from external and internal worlds. Saloul adds that memories always consist of personal and shared memories. Memories are constantly mashed with current images, voices, folk stories, myths, films and more with the past and current situation. Hence it is never a pure experience.

Exploring Saloul’s articulation of the cultural depth and implication of a Palestinian narrative on identity is perhaps sociological perspective since it looks at cultural meanings. In addition Saloul depicts examples of individual Palestinian narratives to project the bigger narrative, in which he intends to show how cultural memory creates a subjective role in one’s identity yet it constitutes the Palestinian cultural identity in exile.

“This identity manifests itself on the levels of nostalgic identification with the lost homeland as well as cultural belonging to what I call “denied home”.

On another note, Saloul points out an interesting remark in regards to what Palestinian refugees are called in official referencing, ‘stateless’. Saloul describes the usage of this word as a projection of the Zionist plan, according to Edward Said in his book *Reflections on Exile* (2000), hence fulfils Said’s point on the domination and control of ‘Orientalizing’ the Palestinians. By labelling peoples as stateless this does not only have political implications and restrictions on

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movements but also has psychological and self-scrutiny. Hence even if one tries to exempt themselves from the narrative of exile, one has to seek a different identity, identification, perhaps name, and that would need much effort and work. Again, putting more effort to move away from the narrative draws one back into the narrative more strongly. Being 'stateless' is an affirmation to assure one to keep searching for a homeland, one of doubted existence.

As a further matter, Saloul describes the phenomenon of exile as one that 'has acquired a theoretical quality; something far removed from being a literal travel that contains violence and loss (of place) into travel that descends into metaphysical idealism often unleashed around predominantly nomadic realms and peripatetic institutional fashions.'" Top of Form Perhaps the uniqueness of the Palestinian identity lies within the spiritual connection between them and the place they have never sighted. The connection is established through narratives constantly heard of, through other people's memories, through images brought back from this Promised Land.

Perhaps the next generation is the hope for the survival of the Palestinian culture. Possibly because they are not closely attached to the issue they can reflect more rationally than emotionally on the issue. Maybe the next generation will establish home as a place that is remote and not necessarily land. Maybe Palestine will remain their cause rather than a country to return to.

Chapter Three: Fractured Pictures: Survival of the Palestinian Narrative

In the documentary on *In Search for Palestine*, Said expresses: “My connection with Palestine was always intellectual and cultural and spiritual but not physical. I have resigned myself to the loss of this place, but I still feel a moral commitment to it (BBC, 1998).” As Said describes his connection with Palestine, it is no different from the rest of the refugees. Said’s use of language creates a distinct relation between his home and his cause. His resignation implies his loss of hope to return and defeat. Nevertheless the interpretation of his saying complies his loyalty fighting for the cause of justice for Palestine. His commitment to Palestine is one that is academic and intellectual. Said has developed a hybrid identity because of exile; he is Palestinian at heart, yet somehow American and a humanitarian with a cause.

Since citizenship is acquired after spending a number of years in a country, defining identity has become more complicated. A simple common question such as “where do you come from?” can raise frustration in the mind of the exiled. Possibly because of the uncertainty of the sought answer. The question may translate to “what is your nationality”, or “where did you live”, or “what citizenship do you acquire”. To a third generation of exile one might be of Palestinian Nationality and a citizen of another Arab country like Lebanon, and also carry another nationality, American, and then move to a European country, Ireland. What will the reference to this person be? Palestinian, Lebanese, American or Irish? Perhaps it’s more complicated than just one reference of nationality. Hence this boils down to personal reflection of identity. If the person is culturally attached to their ethnic origin their reference would be Palestinian/Lebanese. If the person is proud to possess a citizenship then the person would identify as American. Yet, some identities are more complex so the combinations are countless. One can be of Palestinian

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origin, grew up in Lebanese camps and refers to self as American. The person could be American/Lebanese and totally disregard their origin Palestine because they feel no connection with this part of their being. Moreover, what makes a nation German, French, British, Chinese and so on? Is it their blood relation of ancestry belonging, the occupation of land, the cultural relativity to a group, religious affiliation. Conclusively the identity is within greater depth than labels, documents and decent.

To conduct findings on the current Palestinian identity in exile, the attempted research was in addition to first hand research. To project the current collective Palestinian identity, I will examine individual personal narrative, then deduct to the common denominators to collect a group identity. This chapter will conclude my findings based on interviews held to interpret contemporary Palestinians and how they identify themselves. The question was simple to provide agility with answers and so that the answers would not be manipulated by the question. Hence the question was as follows:

“Could you briefly describe how being a Palestinian in exile changed your life, experience and identity.”

The findings are based on interpretation and comparison of the data. The analysis consist of a close look on the usage of words in the quotations. In addition to word usage, an interpretation on the issues brought up in the descriptive process, will define the reflection on the modern identity concerns, attitudes and priorities.

As the thesis aims to examine the contemporary identity, I have extracted the most significant expressions from the conducted research.

Rania Mushtaha, currently lives in Dubai, UAE, described her concerns of not having a country to call home by saying; “Every Palestinian in exile seeks a piece of document, a label, a

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citizenship, a country to take us in that we can call home. A home where we can grow, develop and live as "1st class citizens" with rights. Most of all a home where we can belong and fall back on."

Mushtaha also identifies as Palestinian, even though Palestine is not the country she can call home. Mushtaha said:

"Regardless of how many generations have lived in exile, we remain Palestinians at heart, an identity one cannot shed off. Yet this identity doesn't offer a sense of social "security". I struggle with this issue as I have been stripped off one too many passports. I have spent the past 21 years in search of a citizenship and my searching continues till date."

As discussed in previous chapters, the continuous search of home and citizenship is very important for the Palestinians because it shapes a sense of 'social security' as Mushtaha described. Social security is meant to guarantee the rights of a citizens under the constitutional laws of any country. Mushtaha expressed her being Palestinian to cause her 'struggle' to reach her goal of acquiring a citizenship to be able to call a place home. Overall Mushtaha's description is clear of her characterization of her identity. She identifies as a Palestinian in exile, who does not feel home anywhere and is in constant search for a 'citizenship' knowingly that finding a home is not destined for a nation of diaspora.

Jinan Harb a student in Dubai, described her identification to being Palestinian as one that is purely based on pride. Harb stated: "Being a Palestinian is an honor and something to be fully proud of...After all, I would do literally ANYTHING just to get the chance and "visit" my occupied land." Harb refers to being Palestinian in such a way that a loyal fan would refer to the football team they support. This is a sense of social belonging. In reference to the social identity

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theory described by Tajfel (1979), being a member of a society or group is vital to the self-esteem. As Harb establishes her identity as a satisfactory one, since she can refer to a group and cause. Perhaps Harb's identity is still underdeveloped and her connection with Palestinian has not matured to spiritual connection with home and homeland. The description of spirituality and dedication to the Palestinian identity is described by older subjects in the research.

Another example of a young Palestinian, Salma Salem, studying in South Korea, expresses her sense of belonging to Palestine defining herself as "strong, ambitious and proud." In comparison to Harb's underdeveloped connection, Salem has a deeper sense of nationalism. She hopes to prove to the 'other' that Palestinians are 'invincible'. Although Salem refers to other issues of being Palestinian such seeking a citizenship, her main focus remains descriptive of pride of being Palestinian. The focus reveals that the greater part of self-identification is based on her reference to being Palestinian. Refer to Appendix (1) for Salem's full quote.

Moreover older subjects such as Mohammad Albanna describe their identity as more defined. Albanna is 62 years old, age is a factor that plays a role in the maturity of an identity. Albanna has lived in Sharjah all his life. The maturity of his identities lies within the short but precise description of his identity. The preciseness unveils the ripeness of his identity and full understanding of his relation with being Palestinian in exile. Albanna said:

"As a Palestinian in exile, my state of mind evolved from existential at first to spiritually altruistic 50 years later. A must perform and excel underdog became my professional cause, and The United Arab Emirates became my tent."

Albanna's description of his experience from being Palestinian as one essential to his being, perhaps the identity is the most important aspect that defined his direction in life.

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Interestingly, although Albanna lived all his life in the United Arab Emirates, he does not call it home. Clearly the reference to the 'tent' is profoundly a simile to being a refugee.

Furthermore, being Palestinian is referred to as a two-way process; thus a person's identity is shaped because they are labeled as Palestinian, or the person chooses to identify as Palestinian and hence adopts a national motivation and lifestyle. If one is labelled as Palestinian then one has to adapt to being Palestinian and defy the challenges drawn upon them. Otherwise a person chooses to 'be' Palestinian and exist as one.

Sama Elshahri is a Palestinian in exile, searching for a citizenship and home in Australia. Elshahri says: "Being a Palestinian in exile has only made me a stronger, wiser and tougher person." Elshahri describes her label as a Palestinian to have pushed her to being a better person. Thus forcing her to defy challenges of being Palestinian positively. Along with the spiritual and nationalist motive Elshahri identifies with, her contemporary identity is one that possesses a cause. So being Palestinian for Elshahri is a way of living. She identifies spiritually, motivated to stand up for the Palestinian cause and stir change. Therefore her contemporary identity is one proud of identifying as Palestinian yet fully aware of repercussions of the Nakba. Refer to appendix (2) for S. Elshahri's full quote.

Elhelw described how confined he was by being Palestinian. He spoke of the burdens and hardship he suffers because he is labelled as a Palestinian refugee by international law. The variations in the pronouns used suggest that the person feels distress and this contributes to supporting the argument regarding the unified motivation of Palestinians to prove their persistence and success in different fields. Another interviewee expressed that their identity is the motif that leads their persistence and the urge to succeed. Al-Tamimi said, "I remind myself that I need to be strong and persistent, because that is who we are...I feel the urge to prove that to

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everyone”. Accordingly, the contemporary identity is linked with social success and the view of the society regarding Palestinians. Perhaps as discussed in chapter 1, the image represented in the media of Palestinians is mostly people in refugee camps, therefore Palestinians try to claim success in all aspects of society.

As the analysis continues to produce findings, the quotations denote a handful of matter that concern the contemporary identity of Palestinians in exile, regardless of their location. In those contemporary narratives the pronouns and adjectives used in the narratives express a sense of commonality. The phenomenon of the modernization of the Palestinian identity is one that has been developing since the Nakba; yet it still manifests themes that are universal to exile. The quotes bring us back to the individual and collective narratives that have been previously discussed in chapter 2. The common themes findings are shaped around include citizenship, hardship, labels and discrimination, home and homeland, pride and the uniqueness of the Palestinian narrative. For more stories from interviewees refer to the appendences.

Conclusion:

All data was collected between the periods of December 2015 until April 2016. The data identifies as significant results, patterns and focus from the primary research data I have collected to feed the purpose of the thesis.

My findings on Palestinians in exile has been interesting. The strategy used was basically face to face question and discussion and majorly through social media communication. The intended question was the same one for all the findings, to avoid any misunderstanding or interpretation. The question was “could you briefly describe how being a Palestinian in exile changed your life, experience and identity.”

Answers varied from different age groups, the youngest at 18 years old and the eldest at 67 years old. Replies also geographically varied from the east to the west. Palestinians in exile ranged from South Korea, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and the United Arab Emirates.

The findings were very interesting in the use of language by the candidates. There are common key concepts that are shared by all the replies. Perhaps the expressions used are interesting because of how it exploits the issue. All of the replies are in almost a state of confusion, while others have reached conclusions on how they identify themselves. The idea behind the quotations is to show how common the issue is but how differently it affects how a person decides to seek tackle the struggles of identity.

Strikingly no matter how different experiences are all the participants of this quest agree on some concepts. Concepts include the following:

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As a quantitative method I counted how many times common words were used to create a sense of a common identity of Palestinians in exile of 2016. The most common words used in the quotes were about home, homeland, pride associated with identifying as Palestinian and finally almost all quoted interviewees spoke about lack of rights some in a doubtful manner, as if they are not sure whether they ought to this right to have rights. As a conclusion to the interviewees descriptive terminology the Palestinian identity is associated with conceptions of fear of insecurity, frustration, along with some positive connotations such being proud to identity from the Holy Land. In relation to how exile has shaped the identity, it is clear in the use of words such 'in seek of', 'in search for', 'finding a home' and more expressions that connote as the results of exile.

In the quote by Rand Samara, a young Graphic Designer, expressed that Palestinians are 'always on the search for what we can call home'. Hence this is the regularity of the exiled, to be entitled for life-term search of home.

On the other hand exile was not only associated with negativity but with some positive connotations in the use of such words as persistence, hardworking, underdog and more interesting concepts of how being a Palestinian in exile gives no choice but to become very hard-working and try to prove to oneself that they are worthy to earn rights like anyone else. The sense of denial spurt out by the world towards Palestinians has done the opposite of what the concept is meant to do. Instead of putting out the fire of nationality it actually ignites it more. Hence, being Palestinian become the main motif and the singular drive to persistence and achievement. All the reflections on identity includes a struggles to overcome the issue of statelessness.

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The purpose of the research is to harvest new findings on the Palestinians in exile Post-Nakba and invest in their narratives as my thesis has established the importance of retaining a Palestinian narrative.

The modern Palestinian identity is one that is unified but troubled, in the sense of its contradictory nature. The Palestinian American for example is one who support the Palestinian cause and are loyal to America because they feel grateful, yet they do not support the American government that supports the Israeli narrative. Hence the hybridity of the identity is one that makes it unique. It is not broiled down to a case of nationality or ethnicity.

The modern Palestinian identity is now convoluted in its structure. It is shaped and formed differently in because of exile, one that is a result of a political crisis but an ongoing humanitarian crisis. Perhaps modern identity has developed into co-cultures that 'is possessing two cultural identities of equal significance' (Jandt, 2004).

“No group identity exists without memory as its core meaning; the sense of continuity over time and space is sustained by remembering, and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity (Latvik, 2009)”. Hence the Palestinian national identity did not develop until the World War One, as a result of the sense of jeopardy to their existence. In face the emphasis on the national identity is most common after the Catastrophe in 1947. Since the diaspora held a significant role in creating a unified turmoil and shared remembering of the events and its sequel. Even though the national identity was underdeveloped, the cultural identity was existent. The Palestinian diaspora has produced a complex hybrid subcultures within the Palestinian culture.

To reiterate, the sustainability of the Palestinian culture and identity is essential for the continuity of the exiled Palestinian narrative. In order to sustain the culture recreational solutions

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must be conducted to produce new ways for the Palestinians in the diaspora to connect with Palestine and its culture. Otherwise the Palestinians will be eternally displaced.

In a recent initiative in a school in Bethlehem the students successfully attempted to change the school uniform and engage the school uniform with their culture inheritance to represent their daily struggles with the occupation. This is a form of identity reflection in practical dimensions. Hence the initiative of constructing school uniforms that include the cultural inheritance is a way to keep culture alive and narratives survive within a cultural war that attempts to confiscate any unique identity of the Palestinian culture. Finally, the possibility of cultural continuity is very lively and achievable.

Today's refugees are tomorrow's exiled are the future's world. If the world allows nations to suffer the repercussions of the lost generations will never be in the favor of anyone. Genocide is more than a crime, war causes more than death tolls, it causes lifetime trauma for children who are tomorrow's future. How can the world cohere when enemies are engraved in the eyes of those innocents who witnessed the cold death of their whole families and solely survived with a scar on their face that shouts out their pain every time they look in mirror?

Liat Rosenberg explains in an interview (*Practicalities of Returns II*, 2016) that the world has given up on the Palestinian refugees. The conflict is one left unresolved because no one is held responsible for the diaspora. As long as the Palestinian refugee crisis is not discussed as part of the core of the Conflict, 'just peace for Palestinians is not viable'. If historical justice is not achieved through accountability of al-Nakba crimes and the ongoing repercussions of the Nakba then the refugee crisis will remain to expand and delay in the reconciliation of both nations. The narrative will continue to multiply in complication with the birth of more exilic generations. The

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Palestinian narrative would be a puzzle with a missing piece if the refugees were not taken into consideration as part of the conflict. Not only is the diaspora an issue now approaching the fourth generation, it is an issue that is left unresolved for the coming generations as well who will be born in diaspora as well.

The Palestinian collective cultural identity is committed to defy all obstacles posed on the society for their ethnic being. The restrictions imposed by Arab neighboring countries forced a reproductive system for the exile of the Palestinian diaspora. In order to put pressure on Israel Arab leaders have divided to leave Palestinians stranded in the refugee camps to retain the right to return into Palestinian land. Yet, no Palestinians have returned because of this approach. Perhaps naming those areas as refugee camps is not the most suitable name for the situation. The situation describes as stranded whole communities left denied rights to citizenship, sometimes work and denied right to schooling because of the stateless status. The situation of the exiled Palestinian refugees continue to multiply in complexity. As a result of dispossession and expulsion, a new identity has emerged.

Finally the findings conclude that Palestinians (even ones who have a stable and successful lives in exile), are all unified by the repercussions of the Nakba. Hence making the Nakba the most profound element of the Palestinian narrative today. As a result of the Nakba being the foundation of the narrative, identities are merely similar in terms of suffering and struggle of self-identification. The suffering and turmoil of the Palestinian identity will continue in its complexity as long as the Palestinian in exile cannot link to a home, a settling place not in exile.

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This thesis paper serves a suggestive future approach to the study of Palestinian identity. Since the thesis gathered valid analysis on the current Palestinian refugees and exiled in various locations, it serves to show the commonality of their identity. Thus when studying Palestinian identity in exile, studies must consider looking at correspondence of narratives in different areas.

Since research on the Palestinian identity is limited because of political restriction, my findings suggest a new portal to other sociological studies that concern contemporary identities and aspects that shape identities. For future reference my findings conducted in 2016 are valid to examine the concerns of the Palestinians in exile in a contemporary context.

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Appendences

Appendix 1

“Nothing makes me prouder than being Palestinian, my ethnicity made me the person I am today. Because I am Palestinian, I strive to achieve greatness to prove to the world that Palestinians are invincible. I seek a citizenship, not because I am ashamed of who I am, but because being Palestinian confines you. It angers me when I see Israel on a world map. Because I am Palestinian, it frustrates me to not find my nationality when filling in an online form. And because I am Palestinian, I am strong, ambitious and proud.”

Salma Salem, South Korea.

Appendix 2

“Palestinians have been passing on their exile consequences from one generation to another. Being a Palestinian in exile has only made me a stronger, wiser and tougher person. A person who is willing to sacrifice life, family and friends to migrate to a better place to secure a better life. It also created this belonging to a place I have never visited or sighted before; yet I would sacrifice my soul just to protect a small piece of it. It made me fight for the simplest rights, such as being recognized in the United Nations like any other country, raise my voice, share a post, and sign a petition. That is what being an exile taught me”

Sama Elshahri, Adelaide, Australia.

Appendix 3

“It motivates me to prove a significant difference and make a point through hard work and that’s this difference I’m going to make will be more significant coming from me as a

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Palestinian than anybody else who has support from their government and can belong to a country calling it home. It definitely pushes you to work harder than anybody else because as a Palestinian you feel like you have no one's support but yourself”

Noora Elshahri, Ontario, Canada.

Appendix 4

“I am a first generation Palestinian-American; my father is Palestinian and my mother is Turkish ... I identify as a Palestinian first before anything else, even though I was born in the U.S. I would say that my Palestinian identity is strong, and I would almost go so far as to say living in the diaspora has made my identity stronger. I have to put more effort into connecting with my culture and my family back in Palestine, as living in the U.S. with such anti-Arab and pro-Israel sentiment makes it difficult.

... I struggle with identity, when I'm not sure whether I'm more Palestinian or more “American.” Some days I feel guilty when I say I'm more Palestinian, because as a Palestinian living in exile, how do I have a right to say I feel more Palestinian than American when I haven't experienced the plights Palestinians still living in refugee camps or under the occupation continue to face every day? Being American comes with a sense of privilege that makes it easy to forget where you come from, and can make it easy for Palestinian refugees to lose track of our goal—to return to our homeland as a free people. It's hard to continue fighting our fight from inside the U.S. It's hard to fight the masses that give the most money and support of any country to the illegal state of Israel.”

Hana Kassem, United States.

Appendix 5

"I was exiled and deprived the right to even visit my home...I became more attached and proud of the fact that I am Palestinian... There is a void in my life and an ache in my heart as long as I am far away from where I belong."

Tasneem Al-Tamimi, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Appendix 6

"You're born with a set of cultural inheritance which is then attempted to be simplified into a nationality. The trick however is this: the nation doesn't officially exist ... It's difficult feeling belonging to a place you can never go to, but yet you culturally identify with. The most significant difficulty of all, is how to find those who are like you. My life experience has really been so unique because I don't have "people". Palestinians are different, because they have been sent to exile to different countries and changed, adapted and adopted their new set of cultural practices. Knowing I don't have a nation, however, got me closer to my next biggest hometown: humanity."

Zenah Mattar, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Zenah expresses a sense of unaccomplished identity.

Appendix 7

"I was born and raised in the United Arab Emirates. I have no rights as a resident nor do I have the right to stay in the country. Most of my family lives in UAE but cannot call it home. I live in fear of losing my job because I will be forced to leave. I am currently stranded in the United Kingdom with nowhere to go. I do not own a passport and I do not have any rights. My people and I have no country that we could count on to demand our rights as people. I got stopped at airports countless times for holding a suspicious document. I am discriminated against

by the majority of the world and especially the Middle East. I have even been rejected a tourist visa for not being recognized internationally.

My priorities are not like anyone else's. I am forced to put aside all my ambitions and opportunities to prioritize finding a nationality. I live in fear of not belonging anywhere. I live fearing that I might not be reunited with my family. I live in fear of the future and what it might hold for me. I say I live but this is not living.”

Omar ElShahry, Canterbury, United Kingdom.

Appendix 8

“Born and raised in Egypt for Palestinian family have shown impact since the early days of my life from hearing different dialects, to realizing how people might perceive Palestinians before and after knowing I was one was very interesting to witness as it can become very surprising in both ways; positive or negative. So many little things had the impact from thoughts to difficult official paper work that Palestinians were obligated to. All that have had direct impact on how determined and defined I become towards success and holding tight on proving that success means persistence, adaptation and not blaming the current situation. Being Palestinian in exile is not an easy experience, however that only brings the best of us.”

Omar Elhelw - Dublin, Ireland.

Appendix 9

“I was born and raised in Dubai, it's beautiful and safe here but we as Palestinians always feel something missing no matter where we live. Always on the search for what we can call home. I think it affects us in an emotional and psychological way more than it does on where we're physically present. For example, people like me without a passport, just a documentation,

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can't travel anywhere we want. It's a hassle so we just settle and stay where we are with the paranoid feeling of being forced to leave the country we are in at any moment, where should we go then? People wonder why almost all of us suffer from constant anxiety about life in general. Here's why, if you feel like you don't belong anywhere, that alone is the top constant anxiety you will ever experience, and it doesn't go away, even if you put in the back of your head, it's still there. Let alone the judgments from people who think we Palestinians have issues, they label us claiming you Palestinians are known for being so and so. Moving to people who have zero background about history and argue with you about your right to live in your own country, or people who don't even know what Palestine is "Is that a country? Where is it located?" they ask, it gets frustrating when it keeps happening over the period of years. But at last, sadly, you become immune and go numb towards anything that has to do with your country with minimal amount of emotions to express."

Rand Samara, United Arab Emirates.

Appendix 10

"...My worries was about my wife and the new baby, what will be the next step. Will new born get the Irish Nationality. I was thinking that I will apply for you for a passport and you will belong to a country home land instead of the land which been taken from your father and grandfathersThe idea of holding identity and new home country together which you will belong to, this will give us power and enthusiasm to be excellent in all fields. I want my original country but I can't have it I want home land but I can't have it. I want to give my children education, health care, work, and house. I can't because I am Palestinian. I did challenge all these. I worked hard to give my children the best private school. I was financially able to support my family. Feeling that I can't belong to country where there are minsters for everything where

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they take care of their citizens but me I have to be minister of education, health .finance .defense and so on. I did challenge all the circumstance and made happy family. Pushing my children to have the best education...and to belong to descent country with no apartheid.”

Dr. Salem Elshahri, Dubai.