



Arab American University–Jenin

Faculty of Graduate Studies

**Role of Higher Education in Promoting the Palestinian
Identity: AAUJ as a Case Study**

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**This thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master`s degree in Conflict
Resolution and Development**

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Arab American University - Jenin

School of Graduate Studies

**The Role of Higher Education in Promoting Palestinian Identity:
AAUJ as a Case Study**

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Declaration

I declare that this Master dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work, unless stated otherwise. I confirm that this Master's thesis is my own work and I have documented all sources and material used; no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement.

All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information, including graphs and data sets, have been specifically acknowledged. To my best knowledge, this Master dissertation has not been accepted in any other previous application for a degree, in whole or in part.

Name:

Signature:

Dedication

To my beloved Palestine and Syria;

To my late grandfather, Mohammed Tawfiq Al-Haj Hasan Al-Hafi— one of the cofounders and leaders of the Arab Nationalists Movement, an anti-colonial movement that rebelled against the British Mandate and the Zionists occupation of Palestine and contributed to building awareness of Palestinian identity;

To my mother and father who planted in me the love of homeland and knowledge-seeking;

To my brothers and sisters

To all my friends and all those who supported me in this effort, I dedicate this work.

Acknowledgment

Now as my thesis has been completed, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who supported the study from the very beginning. I am also indebted to the people who have made the required information accessible to me. My gratitude especially goes to my supervisor, Dr. Mufid Qassoum and the members of the Defense Committee, whose insightful feedback helped be much in putting the pieces together. Finally, I would like to deliver my sincere thanks to my colleagues and friends.

Abstract

Role of Higher Education in Promoting the Palestinian Identity: AAUJ as a Case Study

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This work examines the role of Palestinian higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity. It takes the Arab American University– Jenin as a Case Study. Chronicling all the crises and transformations that the Palestinian Identity has undergone, the present work focuses on post-Oslo Palestine, a stage typically identified with a decline of political awareness. Year 1993 was a turning point in the history of the Palestinian Cause, with Oslo Accords– and the ensuing concessions– threatening the fundamental principles of the Palestinian identity. The Palestinian politics has reached a critical predicament, which has produced a disoriented state and mixed up mystification in terms of identity and national existence.

The study consists of six chapters, in addition to the results and recommendations. I set out from the assumption that university curriculum, faculty members, student movements and university administration do not play a role in promoting Palestinian identity. The author utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The main method was a questionnaire that gathered information from students on the role of university curriculum, faculty members, student movements and university administration in promoting national identity. The sampling included 435 respondents (420 students and 15 employees from the AAUJ). The secondary tool involved personal

interviews and focus groups. Data were analyzed using t-test for independent samples, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), least significant difference (LSD) test, and correlations coefficients.

The findings suggest that the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity received an average rating of 2.77 with a standard deviation of 2.11. On Likert scale, this is a moderate rating of that role. The results suggest that the most influential factor in the promotion of national identity is the faculty members, with a mean of 2.96. In contrast, the rating for the role of the student movements in promoting the Palestinian identity was the lowest, at 2.56.

The analysis found no statistically significant differences at an alpha level of $\alpha = 05.0$ associated with 'gender' and 'place of residence' in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity. The factor 'gender' has a significant bearing on the views of students on the role of 'Faculty Members' variable. The mean for females who drew a positive relationship between 'Faculty Members' and promoting national identity is by far higher than the mean for males. On the other hand, the analysis suggested a statistically significant difference at an alpha level of $\alpha = 05.0$ associated with 'year of study', 'political affiliation' and 'faculty', except for the role of student movements within 'year of study' and the role of the university administration with 'political affiliation' and 'faculty'.

Answers elicited from the interviews with academic and administrative staff suggest that the university should strike a balance between the academic content and the inclination to promote the national identity through the courses within the academic programs. A fundamental goal of the philosophy of education should focus on

consolidating the notion of national identity. Being a link between the community and the students, the university is a channel for passing societal values to the students.

The study concluded with a set of recommendations addressed to the AAUJ faculty members, students and administration.

The faculty members, being the spearhead of national education, are advised to raise issues and prompt in-class discussions on patriotism and national identity. Impartial treatment, not based on political affiliation, is expected from professors. A responsible professor helps students develop a sense of identity, making them proudly identify with their patriotism. Professors can always encourage students to participate in non-curricular activities to enhance national awareness and critical thinking.

The student movements must have an effective role in consolidating efforts in furtherance of the national aspirations of the students. In doing so, they should abandon partisan polarity, respect others, build tolerance and focus on issues of common national concerns. Part of the effort should be channeled to help survive the adverse effects of the Palestinian internal divide and the decadence within the parties, which affected the performance of the movements, in order to regain the confidence lost between students and student councils. It is also critical at this stage to appreciate the global changes associated with technology and cyber networking. The student movements must be resilient and able to utilize technology and social networks in educating students about their national identity.

It is very important to have a combination of academic courses and courses related to the Palestinian politics, culture, identity, history and heritage. The university

administration should cooperate more with the students and maintain more effective communication, feedback and discussion of matters of mutual interest. It can streamline procedures for effective participation in national, social and cultural events. Part of the academic content should be designed to help students identify with their national politics, history and heritage. The university can, for example, draw strategic plans and allocate all the financial resources needed to create departments for social sciences and research, human development, humanities and literature. These are needed to understand the historical context and the different stages for the evolution of the Palestinian identity. It is also necessary for AAUJ to draw policies that would assimilate the 1948 students within the surrounding community, together with students from the West Bank and Jerusalem. Integration-oriented activities, such as seminars and other gatherings, would be a unique opportunity for students from different backgrounds to get to know others. Palestinian nationalism national should be a shared and unifying authority for all.

Table of Contents

No.	Table	Page
-	Approval	i
-	Declaration	ii
-	Dedication	iii
-	Acknowledgment	iv
-	Abstract	v
-	Table of Contents	ix
-	List of Tables	xi
	Chapter 1: Study structure and literature review	1
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	Statement of problem	5
1.3	Study hypotheses	6
1.4	Scope of the study	7
1.5	Rationale	7
1.6	Study Objectives	8
1.7	Literature Review	9
1.8	Structure of the study	21
	Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework	23
2.1	Introduction	24
2.2	Terminology	24
2.3	Arab first encounter with identity issues	27
2.4	National identity	29
2.4.1	Elements of national identity	30
2.4.2	The concepts of belongingness and allegiance	34
2.4.3	Globalization and expropriation of national identity	35
2.4.4	Theories on national identity	37
2.4.5	Globalized elite	39
2.4.6	The dialectic of globalization and national consciousness	40
2.5	The role of education in promoting national identity	43
2.5.1	The role of university faculty members in promoting identity	48
2.5.2	Role of student movements in promoting identity	49
2.5.2.1	May 1968 events in France	50
	Chapter 3: The historical context of the Palestinian identity	54
3.1	The Palestinian identity in the late days of the Ottoman rule	56
3.2	Palestinian identity between 1918 and 1948	58
3.3	The Palestinian identity between 1948 and 1967	60
3.4	The Palestinian identity between 1967 and 1991	61
3.4.1	The 1987 Intifada	64

3.5	Distorted Palestinian Identity in the post-Oslo era (1993-2007)	65
3.5.1	Identity rupture	68
	Chapter 4: Higher Education in Palestine	71
4.1	Background of Higher Education in Palestine	72
4.2	Palestinian Higher Education Institutions	76
4.2.1	Arab American University-Jenin (AAUJ)	78
4.3	Challenges to Higher Education in Palestine	78
4.4	The Palestinian Higher Education Council	81
	Chapter 5: Methods, Sampling and Findings	82
5.1	Study Methods	83
5.2	Study Population	84
5.3	Study Sample	84
5.4	Study Tool	89
5.5	Study Procedures	91
5.6	Study Variables	92
5.7	Statistical processing	92
5.8	Results related to the main question	93
5.9	Results related to the hypothesis	97
5.10	Results of the interviews	107
	Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations	115
6.1	Discussion of the results of the study questions	116
6.1.1	From the students' perspective	116
6.1.2	From Faculty and Administrative Staff Perspective	121
6.2	Discussion of the findings related to the hypotheses	124
6.3	Recommendations	125
	References	128
	Interviews	137
	Appendices	138
	المُلخَص بِاللُّغَةِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ	144

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page
1.	Distribution of the sample by gender	86
2.	Distribution of the sample by place of residence	87
3.	Distribution of the sample by year of study	87
4.	Distribution of the sample by political affiliation	88
5.	Distribution of the sample by faculty	88
6.	Consistency coefficients for the questionnaire and its items	89
7.	Ratings of items scored on the Likert Scale	93
8.	Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ curricula	93
9.	Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ faculty members	94
10.	Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ student movements	95
11.	Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ administration	95
12.	Arithmetic averages (means) and standard deviations: AAUJ Curricula, Faculty Members, Student Movements and Administration	96
13.	Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Curriculum	97
14.	Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Faculty Members	97
15.	Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Students Movements	98
16.	Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: University Administration	98
17.	Correlation Coefficients for exogenous and endogenous variables	99
18.	Independent t-test for gender	100
19.	Results of F- test for Place of Residence	101
20.	Results of F- test for Year of Study	102
21.	LSD- test for Year of Study	103
22.	Results of F- test for Political Affiliation	105
23.	Results of independent t-test for Faculty	106
24.	Research variables and related indicators	107
25.	Ratings of items on the Likert scale	107

Chapter One

Study structure and literature review

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Statement of problem

1.3 Study hypotheses

1.4 Scope of the study

1.5 Rationale

1.6 Study Objectives

1.7 Literature Review

1.8 Structure of the study

1.1 Introduction

Literature on the Palestinian identity, its formation and its crisis has flourished during the last two decades, with much debate taking place over such dimensions. Of particular importance was the chronicle of the history of the Palestinian people, where the identity has emerged as a result of different events, most importantly during the last two decades following the 1993 Oslo Accords. Year 1993 was a turning point in the history of the Palestinian Cause, with such Accords– and the ensuing concessions– threatening the fundamental principles of the Palestinian identity. The Palestinian politics has reached a critical predicament which has produced a disoriented state and mixed up mystification in terms of identity and national existence.

There is scarcity of literature on the role of higher education in promoting identity. As a matter of fact, the development role of the Palestinian higher education institutions is significant. By providing the infrastructure for building an effective human capital, Palestinian universities have indeed helped in bolstering national concepts among young Palestinians, raising awareness of identity based on scientific and intellectual foundations. In doing so, universities have harnessed all their potentials to meet the national needs of the Palestinians.

Enhancing the identity of students is one of the most important messages of the higher education system. The term ‘identity’ concerns the essence of a concept, its characterization and differentiation. It is the collective conscience– with all aspects and colorings– of a group of people, including the values, traditions and elements of

adapting to the consciousness and the inclination of the community, as well as the resolve to live a decent life within the borders of one maintained entity.¹

According to Mahmoud Meari², the national identity is a sense of association with a particular group or groups of people who share a common language, history and culture– the elements which help in shaping a community’s consciousness, awareness of identity and distinctive character.

The crisis of identity is usually exacerbated when the concept of citizenship is absent, which obliterates the sense of a unified identity and political allegiance; hence the indiscriminate loyalties and identities within one community and the emergence of disbanded sub-identities.

The adverse effect of globalization has deepened the identity crisis. The considerable advancements in technology, capital crises (over-accumulation) and the crisis of legitimacy– which swept the capitalist economies and gave birth to the new world political order (neoliberal) – have made market forces transcend national borders. This has coexisted with a decline in the role of the welfare state, more power of transnational corporations (the main driver of neoliberal globalization), rise of multinational companies, moving factories from developed economies to nearby countries, and restructuring of the global labor market in accordance with the neo-liberal division of labor, allowing for the emergence of a transnational capitalist class or a neo-liberal historical bloc with goals transcending international boundaries. All these

¹ Cole, Lisa (2017, June). Collective consciousness defined. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/collective-consciousness-definition-3026118>.

² Meari, Mahmoud. (2008). “The evolution of the Palestinian identity across the Green Line” (in Arabic). *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, No. 74-75 Spring-Summer, p. 41.

factors have made many Palestinians adopt Western identities, whereby the culture of consumption and capitalism overrides the national culture.

It was within this context that the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel signed the Oslo Accords, which turned to be destructive to the Palestinian national project- directly shaking up the Palestinian identity among the ‘Oslo generation’, especially university students- the sample of this study. According to Jamil Hilal, the conditions that prevailed after the Oslo Agreement resulted in an increase in unemployment rates, especially among young people and graduates, and the mentality of the ‘employee’ came to replace the mentality of the ‘freedom fighter’.³

Equally adverse was the Palestinian internal divide which started in 2007 following Hamas control of the Gaza Strip. The cleft of the Palestinian political system into two parts was one of the reasons for further fragmentation of the Palestinian identity, which already suffered regional splits after the occupation (1984 land, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem)– a predicament where a single national identity underlying a unified goal became virtually impossible.

For better understanding of the correlation between the formation of national identity and Palestinian higher education institutions, it is necessary to know the role of the higher education system in promoting national identity and building political awareness. In order to tackle national problems, such as identity crisis, universities should be breeding grounds that nurture Palestinian national identity through different channels: curricula, faculty members, student movements and university administration.

³Hilal, Jamil. (March 15, 2016). Identity, National Culture and the Disintegration of the Palestinian Politics (in Arabic). Retrieved from <http://www.masarat.ps/ar/content/>

1.2 Statement of problem

The present study examines the role of the Palestinian higher education system in promoting national identity. The Palestinian national identity– which is in the first place shaped by the collective culture and the national narrative of the history– is fragmented. The Palestinian political nationalism has been broken up into local sub-identities shaped by geography, with the decline of the role of the PLO and its institutions and the absence of a unifying state. The state-building project has failed, and the Palestinian Authority, which was formed in 1994, has come apart into two authorities in two discontinuous regions vying for power.

It is of particular importance, however, to recall that the split in Palestinian politics by geography does not mean the demise of the national identity. Following the Nakba in 1948, the national politics was extremely shattered, but the national identity found its way to rise from under the rubble.⁴ It has become clear that the waning sense of nationhood resulted from political failures to stop fragmentation.

Through my work with the students at the Deanship of Student Affairs at the Arab American University-Jenin (AAUJ) for several years, I could spot a decline in the Palestinian national identity. That was the main driver behind choosing the topic of this thesis. I am particularly interested in identifying and demonstrating the role of the AAUJ in shaping the Palestinian national identity among students. AAUJ is very unique because on its campus one can encounter students from different backgrounds, specifically thousands of students from the 1948 land and some students from the

⁴ Hilal, Jamil. (2017). The question of identity and youth in historical Palestine and the exile (in Arabic). Retrieved from <http://samanews.ps/ar/post/299708/>

Diaspora along with their counterparts from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. I examine the ways by which AAUJ helps in solving the identity crisis through several channels (curricula, faculty members, student movements and university administration). I will look into these channels in my qualitative and quantitative approaches (namely questionnaires, focus groups and interviews with AAUJ employees, decision-makers and members in the Students Council).

Using these methods, I will try to find answers to one major question and four sub-questions:

How do AAUJ employees see the role of higher education institutions in promoting identity?

1. What is the role of the university curriculum in promoting students' identity?
2. What is the role of university faculty members in promoting students' identity?
3. What is the role of the university administration in promoting students' identity?
4. What is the role of student movements in promoting student identity?

1.3 Study hypotheses

1. The curriculum does not play a role in promoting Palestinian identity among students.
2. The faculty members do not have a role in promoting Palestinian identity among students. If there is such a role, it is insignificant.
3. After the Oslo Accords, the role of student movements in promoting Palestinian identity among students has dwindled.

4. The university administration does not have a role in promoting Palestinian identity among students.
5. There are no statistically significant differences between the study variables regarding the role of higher education in promoting Palestinian identity.
6. There are no statistically significant differences between the individual variables (gender, place of residence, year of study, political affiliation and faculty) regarding the role of higher education in promoting Palestinian identity.

1.4 Scope of the study

I focus on the role of the higher education system in promoting the Palestinian identity. I take the AAUJ (in the north of the West Bank) as a Case Study, with the study sample comprising AAUJ students and employees. The research will be conducted over the 2016/2017 academic year.

1.5 Rationale

Identity studies are important for the Palestinians. They are particularly important in settings where different people from different backgrounds come together, with issues of identity becoming quite relevant, especially when we talk about a nation that has been disintegrated by ruthless calamities. AAUJ is a place that accommodates thousands of Palestinians coming from different backgrounds, with very large gaps in perceptions about the surrounding conditions. It is one of the few places that bring large groups of young people together on a semi-permanent basis. Therefore, it is a perfect place for teaching and advocating the Palestinian national identity.

The Palestinians suffer an identity crisis. There is no agreement as to what constitutes a Palestinian national identity; nor is there a single conclusive definition of that identity among AAUJ students. The reasons for this perplexity are adequately explained in Chapter 3 of this study. I hope that the results of this research will contribute to raising awareness of the Palestinians of their own identity. I also hope that my thesis will be an effective contribution to the literature on the role of higher education in shaping the national identity for the Palestinians. By way of writing my thesis, I will particularly focus on two specific aspects:

1. The efforts of universities in promoting the Palestinian national identity: I will examine the extent to which the university curriculum is identified with identity, and the level of involving identity issues by university staff, university administration and student movements;
2. The previous studies and related literature: Informed by previous studies, I will measure the portion of identity education/teaching/advocating within Palestinian universities. I believe that my thesis will be the first attempt to do so at AAUJ.

1.6 Study Objectives

I seek to identify the views of students and staff of the role of the Palestinian higher education institutions in promoting national identity. Institutions of higher education play a key role in the development of society. They help invest in and develop human resources and youth capacities. One important responsibility of these institutions is consolidating national grand themes and values that contribute to strengthening patriotism.

I will discuss the role of the AAUJ in shaping the Palestinian national identity among students. AAUJ is very unique because on its campus one can encounter students from different backgrounds, specifically thousands of students from the 1948 land and some students from the Diaspora along with their counterparts from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This geographic, socio-economic, political and cultural diversity will lend my thesis more reliability.

Building political awareness is one of the key responsibilities of institutions of higher education. For example, Palestinian universities are enabling platforms where student movements started to emerge. At first, students started to voice their concerns by claiming the rights of students. This has later developed into a nucleus for political parties that heralded student councils in Palestine. These councils were the birthplaces for many Palestinian political leaders. For example, Fateh leader Marwan Barghouti contributed to the formation of the student council at Birzeit University in the 1980s. He then led the Fateh movement in the struggle against the occupier in the 1980s, 1990s and during the first decade of the 21st century. Barghouti is now serving a life sentence in the Israeli prisons; but he is still the leader and probably the most influential person among Fateh leaders.

1.7 Literature Review

A huge body of literature dealt with the Palestinian identity, but there is always disagreement as to the time such identity started to emerge. In his book *Palestinian Identity: Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, Rashid Al-Khalidi argues that the roots of Palestinian identity predated the emergence of the Palestinian public consciousness of this identity. The Palestinian identity developed during the Nineteenth

century, emerged as something that could be identified as a distinct nationalism in the early years of the Twentieth century, and before WWI. Al-Khalidi drew on the work of theorist Benedict Anderson who described nations as “imagined communities”, linking the emergence of media discourse and consciousness to the feelings of the self and the others on the assumption that it is possible for an Arab individual or a group to coexist with three identities: national identity, Arab identity and Muslim identity. The loss of the state and the failure of a nation-building project have impeded the emergence of a Palestinian identity linked to the land. Khalidi describes the Arab population of British Mandatory Palestine as having "overlapping identities", with some or many expressing loyalties to villages, regions, a projected nation of Palestine, an alternative of inclusion in a Greater Syria, an Arab national project, as well as to Islam. Nevertheless, Palestinian Identity was the first to demonstrate substantive Palestinian nationalism in the early Mandatory period, Khalidi argues.⁵

Khalidi divided the evolution of the Palestinian identity into different stages. The first was before World War I, when the idea of identity was confined to the elite and educated people living in cities. This stage ended with the events of the Nakba in 1948. The second stage followed the Nakba, which Al-Khalidi considered the cornerstone of the formation of the Palestinian identity. The third stage started when the Palestinians who lived outside Palestine advocated the Palestinian nationalism and began to re-build the Palestinian national movement in the 1960s. The fourth stage resulted from the Oslo

⁵ Khalidi, Rashid (1997). *Palestinian Identity: Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. Columbia University Press.

Agreement (1993), where the re-establishment of the Palestinian society had taken place simultaneously with the redefinition of the Palestinian identity.⁶

Khalidi refutes the literature that links the emergence of the Palestinian identity to the struggle against the Zionist movement. He does not accept the view that Palestinian nationalism was merely a response to Zionism, but he does appreciate the importance of the intense struggle between them, which has made it particularly difficult to see Palestinian identity as distinct.⁷

Mahmoud Musleh (1998) has a similar view to Rashid Khalidi's. He writes that the evolution of the Palestinian identity was not out of a sudden. Rather, it was heralded by overlapping identities: Ottoman (1856-1918), Arabism (1908-1914) and Arab nationalism (1918-1920). He argues that the Palestinian identity became a collective character of the Arabs of Palestine after 1920, focusing on the idea that the Palestinian identity crystallized over many historical events well before the establishment of the Zionist state in 1948.⁸

Imad Abu Rahma (2011) reached the same conclusion in his Master thesis. Abu Rahma linked Palestinian national consciousness to the modern historical events— from the decadence and the demise of the Ottoman Empire to colonialism and the resulting division of the Arab region. The Zionist threat, he argues, had made the Palestinians more aware of their nationalism. Yet, this awareness fell short of shaping an

⁶ Khalidi, Rashid (1997). *Palestinian Identity: Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. Columbia University Press.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Muslih, Mahmoud. (1988). *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

independent national identity, which always overlapped with other identities, namely Muslim and Arab.⁹

Other writers were more inclined to the belief that the evolution of the Palestinian identity was more closely linked to the calamities brought by colonialism. Abdul Rahim Al-Sheikh (2013) contends that the Palestinian identity had emerged and crystallized in the context of adverse events that plagued the Palestinians in modern times. It, he writes, started with the British Mandate and became full-fledged after the 1948 Nakba. Al-Sheikh believes that the Nakba was a turning point in the history of the Palestinians because it has impacted all of the Palestinians and it will remain in the memories of every single Palestinian. After the Nakba, the Palestinian identity became an association with the homeland which was taken by the Zionists who threatened their very existence and broke down their social and cultural structures. Drawing a linkage between Palestinian identity and suffering (from the 1948 Nakba, through the 1967 setback, through the pogroms against Palestinians in their homeland, to the massacres perpetrated against them in the exile) is the key to understanding the Palestinian identity, he writes.¹⁰

Al-Sheikh concludes that the Palestinian identity is there, but it lives a crisis. The events have not helped the Palestinian national identity harness all its potentials. Despite all sacrifices, it has so far failed to achieve the dream of return. The solution to the crisis

⁹ Abu Rahma, Imad. (2011). The impact of the peace process on the Palestinian identity (in Arabic). (A Master thesis, in Arabic). Gaza: Al-Azhar University.

¹⁰ Al-Sheikh, Abdul Rahim. (2013). Palestinian Communities and the Future of Palestinian Identity (in Arabic), Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference: The Palestinian Center for Policy and Strategic Studies Research, 17-18 January 2013. p.70.

¹⁰ Ibid, p 78.

in Al-Sheikh's view requires a rethinking of the strategies, so as to align goals with the real capabilities.¹¹

Faisal Hourani (2003) is a proponent of the latter view. He reckons that external variables, including the occupation and Jewish settlement, have strengthened the national identity of the Palestinians. He writes that after colonizing the Arab region, the unified Arab national movement was fragmented into narrower local movements, but without losing their ties to the Arab nationalism. It was within this context that the Palestinian National Movement started to emerge. It was shaped right after Palestine fell under the British Mandate in 1917. Two years later, however, it started to break from the Arab movement. After the 1948 Nakba, it emerged as an independent identity, but it remained emotionally associated with the broader movement in the Arab region.¹²

The same view was held by Faisal Darraj (1996), who seems quite sure that the 1948 Nakba was the main factor that gave birth to the Palestinian national identity. He also believes that Palestinian identity does exist, but it lives a crisis. After the Nakba, he argues, the Palestinian identity came to characterize new terms in the Palestinian history: the refugees, the exile, the camp, the Diaspora.¹³ The tragedies the Palestinians have to go through in the exile and in their occupied homeland have produced awareness of oppression and awareness of ways to overcome it.¹⁴

¹²Hourani, Faisal. (2003). *The roots of Palestinian rejection 1918-1948* (in Arabic). Ramallah: Muwaten, p 225.

¹³Darraj, Faisal. (1997). "On the Palestinian cultural identity" (in Arabic). *Al-Karmel*, Issue 50.

¹⁴ Ibid, p 75.

Darraj, however, admits that the cultural identity of Palestine is closely linked to the Arab identity at large. Likewise, one cannot talk of Arab identity without having to discuss the Palestinian identity. The Palestinian national identity is, therefore, correlated with historical events that marked the development of Arab nationalism. For the Palestinian identity to thrive and for the efforts to pay off, there must be a corresponding prosperity in Arab nationalism.

Maher Sharif (1995) had a broader view when he related the emergence of the Palestinian national identity to the time when the Zionist settlers started to arrive following World War I (i.e., during the British Mandate). In spite of the absence of political, administrative and geographical unity of the areas that would be envisioned as 'Palestine' in the wake of World War I (Palestine was then part of the larger Levant), the Palestinians were able to see the Zionist threat to their homeland, which helped in shaping an early Palestinian political awareness that was completely different from the ideas that prevailed in other parts of the Ottoman Syria.¹⁵

Historian Philip Hitti talked about the emergence of a distinctive Palestinian character that retained Arabic language and literature. That character involved unique life and attachment to the land, as well as clear social and cultural patterns. These values had not seen any tangible change since 1919. Hitti continues to say that the Palestinian identity was deeply rooted and it was of a secular national Arab character, but it was threatened by the Zionist settlement.¹⁶

¹⁵ Sharif, Maher. (1995). *The Quest for an identity 1908-1993* (in Arabic). Center for Socialist Research and Studies in the Arab World, p. 19.

¹⁶ Al-Sheikh, Op. Cit.

Abd al-Fattah al-Qalqili and Ahmed Abu Ghosh (2012) have a very far cry.¹⁷ They argue that the Nakba undermined the Palestinian identity. The authors say that the Palestinian identity did exist, but it was expropriated after the Nakba. In the second half of the 1930s, the Palestinian consciousness was at such a zenith that different scholars would refer to the Palestinians as a 'nation'. The armed Palestinian revolution of 1936 was the strongest manifestation of the Palestinian identity, as it opened the horizons for popular and political relationships between Palestine and the surrounding Arab countries.¹⁸ Though the identity was blemished, the Palestinian awareness of their distinctive nationalism had survived, supported by three elements:

1. Discrimination against the Palestinians in Arab countries after the 1948 Nakba;
2. The spread of public awareness among the Palestinians. The Palestinians who lost their economic resources had to seek education so that they could make a living. With high levels of schooling, they could forge ways to keep their identity alive; and
3. The Israeli seizure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967 brought the Palestinians face to face with the occupying power, which has strengthened their attachment to their national identity.¹⁹

Zuhair Sabbagh (2008) jibes with the analysis by Abdul Fattah al-Qalqili and Ahmed Abu Ghosh that the Palestinian 1936 revolution had helped in shaping the Palestinian identity. The Palestinian intellectuals fought the acquiescence that

¹⁷ Qalqili, Abd al-Fattah and Abu Ghosh, Ahmed. (2012). *The Palestinian national identity: peculiarity of formation and context* (in Arabic). Badil, p 23.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp 24-25.

dominated the Palestinian farmers following decades of oppression. Palestinian intellectuals succeeded in replacing this inert culture with a national culture of struggle. However, after the division of Palestine and the 1948 Nakba, the collective Palestinian national awareness started to wane. The Palestinian identity had undergone various developments that have influenced it positively and negatively. The Jordanian identity which came to replace the Palestinian identity between 1948 and 1967 did not withstand and soon gave way to the Palestinian national awareness.²⁰

So did Bayan Al-Hout (1994), who talked of two phases for the emergence of the Palestinian national identity. She says the first stage started with the birth of the Palestinian national movement in the early 20th century, while the second stage began right after the 1948 Nakba and continued through today. Yet, she believes that the political character of that identity had only emerged with the creation of the PLO in 1964.²¹

According to Mohammed Al-Bishtawi (2009), the Palestinian national identity is in a state of confusion and internal conflict at the popular and official level. He argues that after the fall of ideologies, the struggle for identity is no longer ideological, but rather a struggle for political legitimacy and a conflict over power. These challenges have created a state of opposing bilateralism. To tackle such a dilemma, there is a need to reunify political action. Such efforts should be internal because external factors

²⁰ Sabbagh, Zuheir. (2008). Palestinian identity since its emergence (in Arabic). Proceedings of the Conference on Palestinian Identity, 21-23 March 2008, Ramallah.

²¹ Hoot, Bayan. (February 1994). "The crisis of the Palestinian national identity: causes and challenges" (in Arabic). *Al-mostaqbal Al-Arabi*, No. 180, pp 30-51.

would be no more than painkillers whose effect will soon vanish. Al-Bishtawi believes that the Oslo Agreement has only contributed to Palestinian political discordance.²²

Al-Bishtawi, together with Abdul-Fattah al-Qalqili and Ahmed Abu Ghosh, discerns that the Oslo Accords were detrimental to the Palestinian identity. The Accords and the ensuing concessions by the Palestinians have distorted the national sense of nationhood. Al-Bishtawi says that the Oslo stage marked a decline of Palestinian resistance in the exile and constrained the Palestinian action in the occupied territories. The Oslo Agreement has entrenched the occupation and demeaned the role of the 1948 Palestinians and the Palestinians in the exile.²³ According to Al-Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, the post-Oslo stage abolished the Palestinian National Charter. By doing so, it is the most inimical threat to the Palestinian identity, only second to the Zionist settlement enterprise.²⁴

Abu Nada (2014) shares Rashid Khalidi, Abdul Rahim Al-Sheikh and Faisal Daraj the view that the historical events, especially the Nakba and the exile, have helped shape the Palestinian national identity. He argues that the Palestinian identity did not emerge as a collective value within a well-established political, legal and social framework of known geographical borders. Rather, it transpired as a natural part of the Muslim and Arab identity in time of turmoil. In its evolution, the Palestinian identity was dictated by the policies of integrating– or otherwise excluding– the Palestinians in their places of refuge. With the outbreak of the Palestinian revolution– and the resulting

²² Bishtawi, Mohammed. (2008). Palestinian identity in 100 years, 1907-2007 (in Arabic). Proceedings of the Conference on Palestinian Identity, 21-23 March 2008, Ramallah.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, Op. Cit., p27.

conditions– and later the signing of the Oslo Agreement, as well as the Palestinian political divide, the Palestinian identity has taken a character with well-defined boundaries and colors.²⁵

According to Abu Nada, the envisioned Palestinian identity is the nostalgia, the historical and cultural framework, and the protective shield for Palestinian existence. It makes the Palestinians a nation even though they are dispersed around the world. It is the reservoir of the Palestinian shared memories of space and time.²⁶

In a book on Palestinian communities, an analysis by Abaher Al-Sakka (2013) suggests that the Palestinian identity had taken shape before Zionists started to arrive in Palestine. He maintains that the history of the formation of the Palestinian identity was associated with four elements: First, the birth of nationalities in the Arab region during colonialism and later liberation; Second, the association between identity and the formation of modern state in the Arab region toward the early 1940s following the fall of colonialism; Third, Palestinian patriotism was a product of a historical process linked to the rise of post-Ottoman nationalism (a simulation of Turkish nationalism) which had made inroads during the British colonization; and fourth, the struggle with the Zionist colonial enterprise, which sped up the sense of attachment to homeland among the Palestinians.²⁷

²⁵ Abu Nada, Ashraf. (2014). “The imaginative Palestinian identity: evolution and crisis” (in Arabic). *Center for Arab Unity Studies*, issue 423, p 82.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Sakka, Abaher. (2013). Palestinian social identity (in Arabic), Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference: The Palestinian Center for Policy and Strategic Studies Research, 17-18 January 2013.

Al-Sakka defines the term Palestine as "the homeland of the Palestinian identity". In the early 20th century, the definition would change according to the existing context. First, Palestine was known as Sothern Syria. The 1936 revolution played a key role in shaping the emerging nationalism. The revolution adopted a national discourse underlying multiple identities: Arab, Muslim and Palestinian. These identities continued to exist until the 1948 Nakba, after which an independent national identity started to emerge in the face of the Zionist colonial enterprise. This form of identity was further revamped after the 1967 setback. The Fateh-led Palestinian revolution, which started in 1965, adopted an authentic national discourse, indentifying the Palestinians with their ancestors, the Canaanites, who settled Palestine 6 thousand years ago and continued through today. The ideologies of armed struggle, as established in the national consciousness of the colonized nations, continued to be a main characteristic of the Palestinian national discourse until the signing of the Oslo Accords, after which the revolutionary discourse gave way to a peaceful rhetoric consistent with the international law.²⁸

Al-Sakka termed the crisis of the Palestinian identity as "insomnia of identity", considering it a fragile identity for several reasons: the absence of a social project that eliminates the tribal mentality; the Palestinian internal divide and the ensuing partisan polarity; land discontinuity (West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza Strip, and the 1948 land); and discrimination based on the region (West Bank against Gaza, Ramallah against northern West Bank towns, etc.). Al-Sakka focused on the social dimensions that were a major cause for insomnia.

²⁸ Sakka, Abaher. (2013). Palestinian social identity (in Arabic), Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference: The Palestinian Center for Policy and Strategic Studies Research, 17-18 January 2013.

In a study on the evolution of the Palestinian identity, Mahmoud Meari (2008) talks of two identities among the Palestinians: the religious identity and the national identity. After the Oslo Agreement, he says, the Islamic movements used Oslo disappointments to promote their ideologies, which helped create a new Islamic awareness that was taken up along with the Palestinian national identity. The results of Meari's questionnaire suggested a significant decline in the number of people who identified themselves as Palestinians (versus Muslims or Christians).²⁹ The study found a strong religious identity, especially Islamic, in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority. The percentage of those who identified themselves as 'Muslim' increased from 17% in 1994 to 43% in 2006. In his remarks, Meari says such a decline can be attributed to a set of factors: the failure of the peace process; the reoccupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; the deterioration of the economic situation; and the high unemployment rate. This has weakened the Palestinian Authority and increased Hamas supporters, and thus the Islamic identity.³⁰ Disappointed by Oslo and the stalled peace process, the people would find refuge in Islamic movements, Meari writes.

Some Zionist historians believe that the Nakba and Zionist thought cast a shadow on the chronicling of the Palestinian identity. Baruch Kimmerling believes that the Palestinian identity predates the Zionist myths that aimed to emphasize the ancient roots of the Jews in Palestine. He says the Palestinians made their narratives way before the

²⁹ Meari, Op. Cit.

³⁰ Ibid.

Zionist narrative of the homeland, thus Zionism cannot be considered the only factor or the only reaction that formed the Palestinian identity.³¹

Remarks on previous studies

The previous studies, published between 1994 and 2014, provided valuable information, enriched the topic of the study, and were important references for the researcher. However, the studies dealt in part with the topic of the study, and they did not cover all the aspects of identity. Some have linked the evolution of the Palestinian identity to the historical events that took place in Palestine– from the deterioration and the demise of the Ottoman Empire, through colonialism and the resulting division of the Arab region, the armed struggle against the Zionist project, to Oslo and post-Oslo events.

1.8 Structure of the study

Chapter One: Introduction, statement of problem, hypotheses, scope of the study, rationale, objectives, literature review and remarks on previous studies.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework/basic concepts and the role of higher education in promoting identity.

Chapter Three: The formation of the Palestinian identity from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the Oslo stage.

³¹ Budeiri, Mousa. (1998). Readings in Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity: The construction of modern national consciousness* (in Arabic). retrieved from www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/mdf-articles/.pdf

Chapter Four: Higher education in Palestine.

Chapter Five: Methods used, including:

- A questionnaire targeting students from the Arab American University-Jenin (quantitative approach)
- Interviews with AAUJ staff and focus groups with students (qualitative approach)

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Terminology

2.3 Arab first encounter with identity issues

2.4 National identity

2.5 The role of education in promoting national identity

2.1 Introduction

The section provides a review of the concepts and theories underlying identity issues. It first introduces the term and its linguistic and pragmatic meaning. Then, it summarizes the related theories, particularly within sociology and psychology. Part of the Chapter will be devoted to discussing Arab identity and Islamic identity as key components of the Palestinian identity. Finally, we will shed light on the role of the Palestinian higher education system (curricula, faculty members, university administration and students' movements) in promoting the Palestinian identity.

2.2 Terminology

The concept of identity has garnered great attention from social and political studies and social psychology. It is always associated with the grand historical events in the history of nations. Much more attention has been given to identity studies during the post-cold war era in the early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the world's ethnic, religious and national conflicts.

There is a set of characteristics that form an identity. It is in the first place a unity of thoughts and feelings that distinguish one person from another. It is a coherent sense of self that is based on stable values and on the conviction that one's actions and values are harmonious. Identity is a sense of integration, knowing what is wrong and what is right.

Abdul Fattah al-Qalqili and Ahmad Abu Ghosh argue that identity can only be defined in relation to national sentiment. It is from the national sentiments that the

individuals derive their sense of identity and belonging. Identity, they authors say, is the feeling of a group as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, symbols, values, language, politics and goals. In this sense, there is no personal identity in isolation from the collective identity.³²

Mohammed Radwan (1999) maintains that very few concepts have been meticulously spotted by scholars. Identity is on top of them because it is an interdisciplinary field that takes from anthropology, sociology, psychology and political science, which makes any attempt to delimit its borders all the more risky.³³ It is the case that the approaches to studying identity are as diversified as the domains within which identity studies falls. For example, an American political scientist would define identity from a political perspective.³⁴ Others see identity as a pure philosophical concept (e.g. Scott Campbell).³⁵ Halim Barakat, a Syrian thinker, approached identity from a social perspective. Identity, he wrote, is the awareness of the self and the common destiny of the physical and spiritual space that a group of people occupies in a social structure. It is driven by the common traits and interests that determine the direction of the people and their goals for themselves and others and push them to work together to establish their existence and preserve their achievements.³⁶ Barakat continues to say that identity expresses a state when humans feel they belong to a

³² Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, Op. Cit., p 10.

³³ Radwan, Mohammed. (October 1999). "A crisis of a concept and a dilemma of an identity" (in Arabic). *Fikr and Naqd Journal*, issue 22.

³⁴ Huntington, Samuel. (2004). *Who are we? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. Simon and Schuster.

³⁵ Campbell, Scott. (2006). "The Conception of a Person as a Series of Mental Events", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 73: 339–358.

³⁶ Barakat, Halim. (2000). *The Arab community in the twentieth century: research on changing conditions and relations* (in Arabic). Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, p 62.

society, a nation, a group, or a class within the framework of belonging to the human race. In this sense, identity is our knowledge of what we are, where we are heading, and for what reason.

Ali Hilal believes that a human being has two identities existing together: Individual identity and collective identity that may be narrowed into a small group or expand to include a whole nation. Hilal points out that the latter takes the form of partisan affiliation or popular organizations that are better embodied in the ruling political system that represents the nation on the official level and works as a guardian of its history and heritage.³⁷

On the other hand, Nadim Bitar criticizes the metaphysical definition of identity, which is based on the existence of a mental identity and a collective structure. He provides a social definition: identity is a set of general traits that characterize a group of people or a nation at a certain historical stage.³⁸

Philosophers approach identity from a pure abstract reflective viewpoint. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* summarizes his views of identity. He forms his own definition of what identity involves. "Identity is no longer an identity given its self-sufficiency. Rather it is an identity in light of the totality of conditions that produced it in the first place."³⁹

³⁷ Hilal, Ali. (2000). *The Arab League, Current State and Ambition* (in Arabic). Proceedings of the Symposium organized by the Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut.

³⁸ Bitar, Nadim. (1952). *The boundaries of national identity* (in Arabic). Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, p22.

³⁹ Moyar, Dean. (2017). *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel*. UK: Oxford University Press.

John Locke is another philosopher who reflected on what makes a personal identity. He is known to associate identity with ego and personality. He argues that taking up a personal identity is essentially the result of reasoning and interaction with the surroundings. “This being premised, to find wherein personal identity consists, we must consider what person stands for; — which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive,” Locke writes.⁴⁰

Obviously, all these definitions have one thing in common— that identity is a set of characteristics by which individuals can identify themselves in relation to the social group they belong to. These qualities distinguish individuals in one group from individuals in another; i.e., there is an organic correlation between the personal identity and the collective identity.⁴¹

2.3 Arab first encounter with identity issues

The term ‘identity’ is relatively new in the works produced in the Arab region. The most famous Arabic lexicons fail to provide the meaning of the term as it is perceived nowadays. Majdi Abdel Hafiz points out that Arabs did not need to focus on identity issues because they ran a huge empire that spread over the world’s three

⁴⁰ Locke, John. (1836). *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, book 2, chapter 27. Tegg and Son.

⁴¹ Abrash, Ibrahim. (2004). *The question of identity in the Palestinian constitution, and the requirements of human development* (in Arabic). Birzeit University.

continents. It follows that they never suffered an identity crisis.⁴² This interpretation does not stand the most limited scrutiny, simply because there were other empires whose literature is fraught with studies on identity (e.g., the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire).

Mohammed Abed Al-Jabiri (1988) considers the Arab identity from a holistic perspective. He says that Arabs, Iranians and Chinese lived similar conditions in terms of their relationship with external forces and colonialism, which contributed to the formation of their current identity. In order to build an Arab integrated identity, Al-Jabiri proposes more rationalism. He says that Arabs have not contributed much to the contemporary thought; therefore the Arab narrative on identity and belonging should be built on a critical discourse that takes into account the rapid developments in globalization, democracy, human rights and women's rights, as well as the geographical and historical contexts of such developments.⁴³

It could be the case that the introduction of the term in the Arab region is an outcome of globalization, transnational corporations, and the domination of the superpowers over the world through wars and military power. The dominated nations then borrow terms from the languages of the dominating powers and introduce them into their linguistic systems. Arabs are no exception. For decades, they have been attempting to adapt to the modern developments, taking whatever comes to them from the more powerful West. Of late, western countries have created and funded NGOs that now work in the Arab region (and other third world countries), promoting the Western

⁴² Abdul-Hafiz, Majdi. (1998). *A concept in the process of formation: cultural identity and globalization* (in Arabic). Cairo: The Higher Council for Culture.

⁴³ Bshoor, Ma'en (1998). *Arab Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (in Arabic). Al-intima Al-arabi Institute.

values in countries that have nothing but to accept the cultural invasion, which formerly occurred in the form of colonization and political domination, and now it has taken overt means. It is not uncommon to see people from the developing world using terms impinged on them by the Western invading powers.

2.4 National identity

Identity from a national perspective refers to several things, the most important of which is the national character derived from the nation, together with its social and political structures. A nation, as defined by Oxford Dictionary, is “a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory.” It follows that a nation comprises a cohesive whole, which is manifested in distinctive traditions, culture and language. It is necessary to speak a little about these concepts in order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. The sense of belonging to a particular group is a product of the processes of socialization and cultural interaction within known borders of a territory. Such identity is not produced by the desire to live and build together, but rather results from historical events and shared living conditions.

The term ‘national identity’ is often elusive, with aspects of identity conceived differently according to different ideologies of scholars. Perhaps in the Arab region and in Palestine as well, there is confusion as to what constitutes national identity and its intellectual, cultural and political aspects.

2.4.1 Elements of national identity

It is important to establish general principles as guidelines to identify the elements of national identity. A fundamental principle for approaching national identity studies is the assumption that identity should be consistent with the modern political and legal thought, which is based on citizenship as a benchmark and a legal parameter that ensures the equal rights and duties of all people within a community, as well as the relationship between the citizens and the state.⁴⁴ In a context of turmoil and social disintegration, it is critical for a nation to promote the spirit of citizenship, which would for sure maintain national identity and protect it from demoralization.

Another principle is the assumption that national identity must reflect the current reality of the people or the nation. It is not indivisible in the sense that it is not narrowed down to the attitudes of a certain group (political, ethnic, religious, social class) within the community. Such narrowed sub-identities may clash with national identity, which is supposed to be a factor of unification and a driver of politics and economic development.⁴⁵

In Marxism, identity is a form of false consciousness—the systematic mystification of the experience of the oppressed by the perspective of the dominant. As such, the individuals' perceptions of their own interests may be systematically distorted and must be somehow freed of their misperceptions by group-based transformation.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, Op. Cit., p 13

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Arora, N. and Awasthy, S. (2007). *Political Theory and Political Thought*. Har-Anand Publications.

This interpretation, however, does not stand scrutiny, simply because there are many collective identities in history that set examples of success. The concept of collective identity does not always entail an individual's submission to a dominant force.

Hundreds of years ago, Arabs understood identity as the sense of belonging to a tribe. Ibn Khaldun wrote that tribalism is a collective social and political identity, and it is the foundation of the power of the state. This tribal identity is nurtured not only through blood and kinship ties, but also through identifying with the values, traditions and the behavior of the tribe.⁴⁷

The collective identity of Ibn Khaldun evolves in line with inherited and elusive components of consciousness. For example, the nomads would develop a form of consciousness depending on the areas they settle in, and once they move to another area, they have to take up another form, and so on. Ancient and modern Arab nationalism, on the other hand, construes identity in terms of collective and shared characteristics, such as language, land, culture and history– the elements that make groups a nation.⁴⁸

Adonis looked into the Arab identity through its historical formation, specifically pre-Islam. He refuses the belief that identity is given in advance and that individuals are

⁴⁷ Garrison, Douglas. (2012). Ibn Khaldun and the Modern Social Sciences: A Comparative Theoretical Inquiry into Society, the State, and Revolution. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.ps/&httpsredir=1&article=1230&context=etd>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

products of that identity. He believes that identity is in a continuous state of evolving and that man is the creator of it.⁴⁹

Identity is a powerful factor for unifying the nation and putting social, economic and political forces in motion in order to bolster the sovereignty of the state. A Palestinian national identity– based on unity, respect, pluralism and order– is a need, just like water and food, because through it the Palestinians can win their independence and nationhood, as Faisal Darraj put it.⁵⁰

Darraj reckons that the cultural identity of the Palestinians was formed within two dimensions. The first, which he termed “formal”, involves the Palestinian ties with Arabs. The second is the true identity which has been shaped by the conditions the Palestinians experienced during the last century, particularly the 1948 Nakba. The latter identity is the driver for resistance and struggle for independence.

I do believe that aligning identity with political action is bound to help in guiding the Palestinians in their quest for nationhood and create trust and respect among the people. This must be the answer to the ruthless policies of the occupier (the bitterest enemy of the Palestinian national identity), which spares nothing to obliterate our identity and reinstate a Zionist false identity based on myths and superstitions.

The Palestinians are desperately in need for maintaining their national identity in the face of the colonial Zionist enterprise. Zionists have founded their existence on

⁴⁹Misriya, Norma. (2013). The memories of place and time: The Palestinian refugees’ imaginative vs. real identity (in Arabic), Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference: The Palestinian Center for Policy and Strategic Studies Research, 17-18 January 2013.

⁵⁰ Darraj, Faisal. (2008). Palestinian affairs: politics, culture and identity (in Arabic). PLO Higher Council for Education and Culture.

myths and superstitions, which played a prominent role in building the national identity of a false nation. They envisioned a homeland for the Jews inspired by fictitious, misleading assumptions: “Palestine is a land without people for a people without a homeland;” and “the Palestinians are only nomads who can always travel and settle in any Arab neighboring country.” For this, it is important for the Palestinians to understand that their national identity is the most precious thing they have. It is the magnet force that unites all Palestinians at home and in the exile.

According to Darraj, identity for the Palestinians transcends the individual identities found among other nations. This is because the Palestinian culture in modern time has always been identified with resistance and struggle for independence. Darraj argues that the meaning of a ‘homeland’ is germane to the meaning of the human being because all grand themes start with the human being, not from a conflict on a piece of land. The Palestinians in the exile and Diaspora camps have forged and maintained their identity even though they are thousands of miles away from home. ⁵¹

Looking at the conflict from a broader view, Darraj adds that the liberation of Palestine should be associated with a humanitarian responsibility to liberate the Jews from Zionism and its foundations: racism and hatred. Since the talk is about liberating human beings, then the universality of the project requires the deliverance of the Jewish people from the bondage of Zionism. ⁵²

⁵¹ Darraj, Faisal. (2008). Palestinian affairs: politics, culture and identity (in Arabic). PLO Higher Council for Education and Culture.

⁵² Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, Op. Cit., p 14.

Many countries have witnessed the failure of transnational identities. Countries with identities of global dimensions that transcend the national borders have not taken into consideration the fact that nations are different in their level of development and often they have different– and sometimes clashing– ideologies. For example, communism has failed in many places in the third world because it failed to notice the national particularities of each country.⁵³

2.4.2 The concepts of belongingness and allegiance

One of the most important concepts associated with national identity are national belongingness and national allegiance. The former is the state in which a human feels a need to be a member of a group. This entails a relationship that is much greater than the simple acceptance of common values. In the latter, the person acknowledges loyalty to homeland.

For decades, critical theory in the humanities and social sciences has focused on issues of national thought. Recent history of Palestine has seen prosperity of national sentiments and struggles, as well as numerous confrontations with Zionists over inclusive and exclusive conceptions of identity. The modern history of the Palestinians shows how complex are such questions of identity and belonging. Discussions of Palestinian belonging are too often embroiled in debates about whether the Palestinians all over the world have a unified view of their present and future.

Belongingness and allegiance to a country are not restricted to the people of that country. People might feel that they belong to other nations, together with their

⁵³ Qalqili and Abu Ghosh, Op. Cit., p 14..

belonging to their own. For example, millions of non-Palestinian Arabs feel they belong to Palestine, and the Palestinian cause is their main concern. For example, a young nationalist Syrian might have total loyalty to Palestine, so might an American Jew who lives in America but feels loyalty to Zionism and colonial Israel.

National belongingness and national allegiance are key terms in identity studies. We cannot talk of identity issues without understanding how and why people tend to identify themselves with a group, a family, a school, a club or a country.

2.4.3 Globalization and expropriation of national identity

The current global technological and economic development, coupled with overlapping interest between countries, as well as the neoliberal trans-nationalism (which has grown out of the heightened interconnectivity between nations and the receding economic and social significance of boundaries among nation states)⁵⁴ have impacted national identities and cultures of nations.

Al-Jabiri believes that globalization has diluted national identities and the cultural awareness of nations, making it easier for strong nations to dominate weaker ones. Globalization is a tool of the colonial capitalist powers, which are always thirsty for more power and hegemony. These powers usually infiltrate into the developing world

⁵⁴ Vertovec, Steven. (2001). "Trans-nationalism and Identity". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 27 (4).

through the local political and academic elites who have influence over the less-educated segments.⁵⁵

Al-Jabiri provides a detailed analysis of the issue of allegiance in his political reflection on democracy and human rights in the Arab region. He could detect true signs of belonging to the existing institutions and the homeland, but not to the political elite which globalization has always tried to impose on Arabs.⁵⁶

It is Antonio Gramsci who was credited with introducing the term ‘cultural hegemony’. Gramsci was concerned with how power operates: “how it is wielded by those in power and how it is won by those who want to change the system.”⁵⁷ Gramsci studied the relationship between identity, culture and hegemony, which later analysts linked to globalization– in place to strengthen the position of powerful nations in dominating other nations. Globalization strives to liberate the economy and technology to serve the great powers. Gramsci linked culture, identity and change to the superstructures that dictate social mobility. Such superstructures consist of the culture, civil society, social movements and political elites who dominate by culture, ideology or force. In other words, cultural and identity change in any society is directly linked to the superstructure, with culture being the most important component of that structure.

⁵⁵ Jabiri, Mohammed. (2005). Cultural identity, homeland, state and nation: globalization and cultural identity (in Arabic). retrieved from <http://elaph.com/Web/NewsPapers/2005/8/86908.htm?sectionarchive=NewsPapers>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Duncombe, Stephen. (2012). Theory: Cultural Hegemony. Retrieved from <http://beautifultrouble.org/theory/cultural-hegemony/>

2.4.4 Theories on national identity

A collective identity is a shared sense of belonging to a group based on interactive values and behaviors. People often seek to maintain their existence as nations by taking up a collective character that can establish stability and development.

Social psychologists have focused on the relationship between individual identity and society. George Mead argues that the “preexisting social structure and conditions shape a person’s identity, which in turn, interacts with others and shapes the new and emerging social structure.”⁵⁸

Polletta and Jasper defined collective identity as “an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connections with a broader community, category, practice, or institution.”⁵⁹ According to Polletta and Jasper, the motive for a personal identity can be from within the group or outside the group. However, a collective identity can exist only if it is approved by the group.

The collective identity is well described by the definition provided by Benedict Anderson. He said a nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”⁶⁰ He continues to say that “a nation is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in

⁵⁸ Mead, George. (2009). *Mind, Self, and Society*. University of Chicago Press.

⁵⁹ Polletta, Francesca and Jasper, James. (2001). Collective Identity and Social Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 27:1, 283-305

⁶⁰ Anderson, Benedict. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, p. 6.

which the Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Finally, it is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may occur in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship.”⁶¹

Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* is quite relevant because it rests on the debate on neoliberal issues that created a sociological system of global capitalism based on three pillars: transnational corporations, transnational capitalist class and the consumer culture. The transnational corporations and the new mechanisms and drivers of globalization have negatively impacted nationalism, while the neoliberal stage has supported the market economy, abolished the role of the national state in economic planning and established the petrodollar era.

Neo-liberalism and neoliberal hegemony influenced the Palestinian national identity by creating transformations of social structures in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, such as the emergence of a relatively large middle class of NGOs employees and staff working for the Palestinian Authority. The post-Oslo situation has resulted in high rates of unemployment and widespread inequalities among the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The mentality of the "employee" has deepened and came to replace the mentality of the ‘freedom fighter’. Although Fateh and Hamas define themselves as national liberation movements, the reality signals otherwise, with both movements

⁶¹ Anderson, Benedict. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, p. 7.

having profound associations with government institutions run by hierarchical systems that struggle for survival.⁶²

The aforementioned changes that have taken place in the Palestinian society and permeated its social and economic structures have indeed deepened social and class inequalities. The materiality that now characterizes Hamas and Fateh has made both movements abandon the competition for the real cause in order to identify themselves with the authoritarian behavior characteristic of the post-Oslo phase. The student movements in the past stages were very influential, often leading national political mobilization. The post-Oslo patterns have cast a shadow on the student movements, which have now detached themselves from national concerns.

It is germane to our research to understand these facts and how they have impacted national identity, which now suffers the crisis of having to maintain its fundamental principles at a time when the attention of the globalized capitalist elite is focused on the cost-benefit mentality.

2.4.5 Globalized elite

The emergence of Palestinian globalized elite has been discussed in details by Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar. The authors investigated the capacity of Palestinian NGOs to contribute to the elaboration of global agendas through transnational activism and global conferences. The globalized Palestinian elite consist mainly of left-wing activists, especially those affiliated with the People's Party (formerly the Communist Party). Donors support the establishment of mega NGOs in particular fields (for example,

⁶² Hilal, Op. Cit.

Palestinian agricultural relief committees). The mechanisms for the establishment of NGOs are in fact consistent with the momentum associated with a huge influx of funds, as was the case after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the commencement of the peace process.

The talk is mainly about globalized elite and a segment of players with multi-context-based positions. “Nonetheless, at least two different positions can be identified: some of the local NGOs perceive and interiorize the donor agenda as a global agenda, a natural and self-evident agenda. This agenda is viewed by them as appropriate to the international and national changes brought about by the peace process and the formation of the Palestinian national state. Thus, the recipient NGOs receive this agenda in good faith, and even defend it. Some NGO actors, on the other hand, accept projects without rigorously questioning the politics of donor policies or critically assessing the ideological implications of the project”⁶³

2.4.6 The dialectic of globalization and national consciousness

The above quote from Hanafi and Tabar is in harmony with findings by identity researchers (See Benedict Andersen; Jabiri; Gramsci; and Drraj). The capitalist states in the age of neoliberal globalization and transnational NGOs— being part of the transnational class— have destabilized national identity and directly or indirectly promoted neoliberal capitalist class consciousness. In this account, the root cause of the crisis of the Palestinian national identity is the transnational capitalist system that

⁶³ Hanafi, Sari and Tabar, Linda. (2006). *The Emergence of Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*. Palestinian Institute for Democracy Study- Muwatin and Institute of Jerusalem Studies. P. 30.

emerged in Palestine following the signing of the Oslo Accords. It is not uncommon to see managers and employees of the Palestinian civil society institutions, as well as businessmen and post-Oslo technocrats having loyalty to transnational donors, while the national consciousness is declining and the national identity remaining mere high-flying rhetoric.

For example, there is a large gap between the Palestinian ordinary citizen and the elite of the two authorities in Ramallah and Gaza. It is safe to conclude that for the political elite there is no longer a common national identity, which now only exists among ordinary Palestinians. This is exactly the meaning of Anderson's 'imaginative communities.'

The identity crisis is not constrained to the Palestinians. For example, how can a Saudi citizen belong to his country when the United States controls everything in Saudi Arabia? There is a large gap between the citizen's sense of belonging and the behavior of the elites and politicians who have internalized a capitalist mentality. According to Jamil Hilal, the ruling elites in the Arab region have adopted neo-liberalism as an economic and socio-cultural strategy. This has existed side by side with a decline of the role of the left and the enlightened democratic elite and consequently the decline in the role of the forces defending the interests of the disadvantaged groups. Inequalities between different classes, regions, sects and ethnic groups grew larger, together with a growing power of security and intelligence services and the corruption of politicians.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Hilal, Jamil. (Summer 2017). "Half a Century of the Israeli Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza" (in Arabic), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Issue 111.

It follows that the Palestinian citizen's loyalty to Palestine and its cause in the face of the behavior of the globalized Palestinian elite has become a major challenge. The dominance of the elites and transnational classes over the economy, politics and culture has weakened the role of the Palestinians and undermined national identity. The Palestinian elite identification with the capitalist and neoliberal system has reinforced the concept of imagined communities. The Palestinian national identity is being stripped of its patriotic element; hence the crisis. The Palestinians have become imaginary communities that are not nationally connected. They are but segments closely linked to external agendas and elites managing the Palestinian territory on behalf of the global neoliberal capitalist system.

We are not doing injustice if we assume that a single Palestinian national identity does not exist. The Palestinian farmers, unemployed and refugees in camps, on the one hand, and the Palestinian elite, on the other, have little in common. Their hopes, ideas, aspirations and concerns are not shared.

History taught us that the collective national identity is not the result of a reaction to a single event; rather, it is a continuous state that is shaped by persisting events and the social, political and cultural developments that change over time. In Chapter three, I will discuss in details the stages of the formation of the Palestinian identity and how the collective identity has changed in line with the social changes and historical events, down to the post-Oslo era- a turning point in the evolution of the Palestinian national identity.

2.5 The role of education in promoting national identity

Education is the force that shapes our present, and determines our future. It is the most important factor in the formation and strengthening of national identity. It is through education that humans form their own ideas and start to understand life around them. Identity and education are integral to one other. A school is the second place, after the family, that helps shape our characters. In real life, people are introduced to themselves in a continuous process—developing a sense of relevance and connectivity in which education plays a major role. At education institutions, identities are largely influenced and shaped. Below, I will discuss the role of education institutions and teachers in creating identity among students.

"There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world," says Paulo Freire.⁶⁵

Freire's model of education offered students the conditions for self-reflection, a self-managed life and critical agency. For him, education is central to a formative culture that makes both critical consciousness and social action possible. Education in this sense helped learners become aware of the forces that have controlled their life and

⁶⁵ Mayo, Peter. (1999). *Gramsci, Freire, and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action*. Macmillan, p 5.

shaped their consciousness.⁶⁶ What Freire made clear is that education is not about training in techniques and methods; rather, it is a political and moral practice that provides the knowledge, skills and social relations that enable learners to explore life around them.

Antonio Gramsci tried to break from the economic determinism of traditional Marxist thought. He considered the civil society as a bourgeois community in the first place. He explains how the ruling capitalist class uses education systems to maintain power in the societies. He said the culture created by education uses ideology rather than violence. The argument of Gramsci is very important because civil society organizations are the places through which the ruling classes dominate the ruled classes. The national identity is shaped through schools, places of worship, sports clubs, army, institutions, universities, social clubs and charities) to serve the purposes of the ruling classes. This is a more advanced contribution by Antonio Gramsci than Marxism in terms of the interpretation of the notion of hegemony.

The hegemony of the Palestinian elite has created an identity consciousness that is grounded in the neoliberal capitalist thought which compromises the principles of the Palestinian revolution and the struggle for creating an independent Palestinian state. Hegemony, then, is the locus of social conflict. There is a dominant class that exercises hegemony through civil society institutions against a class whose revolutionary vanguard is trying to create a new hegemony. It is at this point that Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci have an agreement on the role of education in creating hegemony or,

⁶⁶ Macrine, Sheila. (2009). *Critical Pedagogy in Uncertain Times: Hope and Possibilities*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. ix.

otherwise, emancipation. The ruling classes and elites design curricula to create generations that help bolster the position of the elite.

Paulo Freire, Antonio Gramsci and Benedict Anderson agree that identity is a social, psychological, economic, cultural and ideological product that is created by education, media, communication channels, institutional culture and the ideology of the ruling class. Freire warns revolutionary leaders of falling into the trap of using the same educational methods used by authoritarians. He does not want leaders to be caught in the trap of blind imitation, with negative consequences for the future generation, the society and the national identity. Freire also warns of reproducing and consuming the ideas they inherited from the oppressors. “At a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them. This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the middle-class oppressed, who yearn to be equal to the "eminent" men and women of the upper class.”⁶⁷

According to Freire, “as the oppressor consciousness, in order to dominate, tries to deter the drive to search, the restlessness, and the creative power which characterize life, it kills life. More and more, the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and repression.”⁶⁸ Freire continues to say that if individuals want to defeat oppression, they need first to identify its causes, “so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible

⁶⁷ Freire, Paulo. (2014). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing, p 44.

⁶⁸ Freire, Paulo. (1998). *The Paulo Freire Reader*. Continuum, p 58.

the pursuit of a fuller humanity. But the struggle to be more fully human has already begun in the authentic struggle to transform the situation. Although the situation of oppression is a dehumanized and dehumanizing totality affecting the oppressors and those whom they oppress, it is the latter who must, from their stifled humanity, wage for both the struggle for a fuller humanity; the oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle.”⁶⁹ This is the reason why the education system of the oppressed must be completely different from that of the oppressors.

Freire concludes that the most appropriate method for a revolutionary leadership in its quest for liberation is not “libertarian propaganda. Nor can the leadership merely implant in the oppressed a belief in freedom, thus thinking to win their trust. The method lies in dialogue. The conviction of the oppressed people that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own consciousness.”⁷⁰

This literature is relevant to the Palestinian identity crisis. Educational institutions and educators, in particular, can learn a lot from the guidelines identified by Freire. Educators are human elements that have a decisive role in creating a liberal generation of students who are aware of their national identity. The curriculum and strategic plans can be designed in such a way that resists subservience and rejects divide, corruption, nepotism, favoritism, consumer culture, and the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. These are misfortunes that have infested the Palestinian society after Oslo and adversely impacted the Palestinian patriotism.

⁶⁹ Freire, Paulo. (1998). *The Paulo Freire Reader*. Continuum, p 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p 14.

The education systems have always helped in shaping national identities. Schools and universities are the channels through which individuals become aware of their political and national issues. The education system passes the society's values, beliefs and aspirations to the young generations, making them aware of their national goals.⁷¹

Nevertheless, where higher education only seeks to produce students with a mere degree, the society is in a dilemma. The crisis in the Palestinian education system can be summarized in few words: Educational institutions produce students who are not fully aware of their national identity; and thus they are easy preys to surrendering to oppression and subservience. Few students are lucky enough to have creative teachers who can implant creative-thinking into preexistent course contents based on dialogue and participation. Dokalli Balnour summarizes the most important roles of higher education in political, economic, social and cultural development:

1. Disseminating knowledge, promoting national identity and developing social intellectual attitudes by providing a common political thought.
2. Creating a broad, educated social class that guarantees a minimum level of learning for all segments of a society as a minimum of knowledge and good citizenship.
3. Building manpower with technical skills in different areas of expertise.
4. Changing patterns of thinking and establishing democracy.⁷²

⁷¹ Barnhardt, Ray. (1981). "Culture, Community and the Curriculum." The Center for Cross Cultural Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

⁷² Balnour, Dokalli. (2005). Higher education and the labor market (in Arabic). Proceedings of the Symposium on Higher Education, Khartoum, p 3.

2.5.1 The role of university faculty members in promoting identity

Technically speaking, university educators are heavily involved in the delivery of civic, moral and national education. They are, therefore, morally responsible for implementing citizenship education. Professors are also responsible for developing and promoting a cohesive national identity through discussions, academic materials and research. The faculty member is, thus, considered the most important element in influencing students and shaping their thought— a driver for creativity and thinking outside the box and in liberal ways of dialogue.

Freire explains that the rationale for libertarian education lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. Freire's criticism of the dominant teaching models led to his democratic model of 'problem-posing education', where students develop their power to understand in a critical way why they exist in the world. The students come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation. This model has provided a guideline through which students come to understand what it means to come to cultural voice and what it means to understand national identity.⁷³

The efforts of a revolutionary educator must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. Such efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in the nation and its creative power. To do this, professors should be partners of the students. Yet only through communication can human life hold

⁷³ Freire (2014), Op. Cit.

meaning. “The teacher thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students thinking. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible.”⁷⁴

The inspiring teachers have great influence on their students when these teachers are self-aware and when they are better able to empower and influence students. One area where self-awareness is particularly important is when teachers have regard of their cultural beliefs and national identity. To understand one's national identity requires full understanding of one's own culture. A healthy relationship, based on respect and understanding, between students and teachers enhances the creation of a democratic atmosphere and promotes discussions on issues of the society and the nation.

2.5.2 Role of student movements in promoting identity

At universities, students come in contact with other students with different political and cultural backgrounds. This has a bearing on the way adult students understand nationhood. It is at universities that the notion of national identity may be redefined, springing from the desire to know more and to understand more. This desire is a driver for many students to engage in the activities of student movements. This eagerness, which comes at a critical stage of developing identity, is a more profound and critical stage in exploring and refining the idea of national identity. In a higher education context, two conditions are very important in the process of developing a national identity: the direct social interaction between the members of the same generation; and the freedom in choosing the intellectual, political and ideological content for dialogs.

⁷⁴ Freire (2014), Op. Cit., p 77.

This natural relationship between the notion of national identity and the participation in the activities of student movements— in the sense that the issues of national identity motivate participation in discussions— supports the argument on the decisive educational role of the student movements in promoting national identity. The student movements have an essential role in enhancing the psychological unity of the students— with such unity always associated with the development of political awareness.

Current rationales of identity education have emphasized the importance of equipping university students with the ability to participate in political, cultural, economic, and social dialogs. Among other social channels, universities are the most effective vehicles for introducing young people to political participation. Some studies found significant correlation between affiliation with political parties and national awareness. Makkawi (2002) found that students who are politically active have a high degree of the sense of national identity, and that national identity is the most important driver for engaging in student activities.⁷⁵

2.5.2.1 May 1968 events in France

On March 22, far-left groups and university students occupied an administration building at Paris University in Nanterre and held a meeting to protest class discrimination in the French society and the political bureaucracy that controlled the French higher education system. Later, more than 20,000 students, teachers and supporters marched towards the Paris city center. The police responded with tear gas

⁷⁵ Makkawi, Ibrahim. (2004).” National identity development among Palestinian student activists in the Israeli universities.” *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice*. 5 (2), 19-59.

and hundreds of students were arrested. In the following day, most of the students who had been arrested were released. Professor Alan Gismar, the general secretary of the French Universities Union, called for a national strike in all French universities. The government's ruthless reaction brought on a wave of sympathy for the students. More than a million people marched through Paris on that day. Public opinion supported the students, and in the weeks that followed, approximately 401 popular action committees were set up in Paris and elsewhere to take up grievances against the government and French society. The protests had succeeded in ousting the government and portended the birth of a democratic, national political system. On May 29, President de Gaulle fled to a French military base in Germany.⁷⁶

That movement began with occupying the Sorbonne. A few weeks later it developed into a massive movement throughout France, involving students, trade unions, politicians and academics. It resulted in a new political landscape which generated intellectual debate that questioned values, ideas, culture and politics. The education system saw structural changes that brought social and liberal thought.⁷⁷

The students engaged in the protests used revolutionary language, slogans, narratives and direct references to their revolutionary background, including references to the French Revolution. Student activists appearing in media preferred to talk about the development of their awkward views than the free-play and enjoyment that

⁷⁶ Dogan, Mattei. (1984). "How Civil War was Avoided in France". *International Political Science Review* 5 (3): 245–277.

⁷⁷ Klimke, Martin and Scharloth, Joachim (2008). *1968 in Europe: A History of Protest and Activism, 1956–1977*. Palgrave Macmillan

supposedly accompanied the month-long occupation of the Sorbonne.⁷⁸ This had helped the revolution spill-over, from the university to the working class and the other trade unions, which joined the revolution thanks to the shared language of communication.

May 1968 is a key turning point in French modern politics, representing liberation and national aspirations. If any, the May Revolution showed that students are the torch and the fuel for social change. May 68 has influenced the French society for decades and it is still influencing it. It is considered as a cultural, social and moral turning point in the history of the country. As simply put by Alain Geismar (a revolutionary of the time), the movement succeeded as a social revolution, not as a political one.⁷⁹

The May Revolution was a departure from the stereotypical thinking that the working class is the vanguard in every social revolution. This working class has been replaced by university students. This French model succeeded in practice because Nanterre and the Sorbonne universities, not factories, were the starting point and the stronghold. The students led the movement and the revolution resounded everywhere and later joined by the working class, but leadership of the revolution remained in the hands of the students.

The 1968 Revolution questioned the legitimacy of well-established intellectual currents and institutions. The revolution protested an educational system which was detached from reality and entrenched in worn-out traditions inherited from the nineteenth century. While some influential thinkers— such as Sartre, Michel Foucault

⁷⁸ Velmet, Aro. (2010). *40 Years is enough: Myth and Memory in French Commemorations of May 1968*. University of Pennsylvania.

⁷⁹ Erlanger, Steven. (29 April 2008). "May 1968— a watershed in French life." *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/29/world/europe/29iht-france.4.12440504.html>

and Gil Dulloz– supported the May 68 Movement, others were against it. Raymond Aaron described the 1968 events as “psychodrama”, in which “everyone involved imitated their great ancestors and unearthed revolutionary models enshrined in the collective unconscious.

Chapter Three

The historical context of the Palestinian identity

3.1 The Palestinian identity in the late days of the Ottoman rule

3.2 Palestinian identity between 1918 and 1948

3.3 The Palestinian identity between 1948 and 1967

3.4 The Palestinian identity between 1967 and 1991

3.5 Distorted Palestinian Identity in the post-Oslo era (1993-2007)

This chapter provides an outline of the evolution of the Palestinian national identity in the contemporary historical context, namely after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the ensuing identity crises in the Arab region following the colonial invasion of Palestine and the Arab countries and the threat of the Zionist enterprise. The review will cover the consequent events— the 1948 Nakba, the beginning of the Palestinian revolution, the 1967 setback, the radical shift in the strategy of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Oslo and post-Oslo political divide of 2007 and its implications for the national politics. The evolution of the Palestinian identity has been divided into stages— each with its own identifying characteristics— along with the relationship between these individual stages and the formation of the national identity.

The Palestinian identity has taken shape in the context of decisive events in the history of Palestine:

- The collapse of Ottoman Empire and the birth of Arab Nationalism;
- The British Mandate and Zionist Colonialism (1918-1948);
- The 1948 Nakba and the start of the armed struggle (1948-1967);
- The 1967 setback and the ensuing events (1967-1991): The setback of the 1967, the radical shift in the strategy of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the First Intifada; and
- The Oslo phase, the Second Intifada and the internal divide.

Historians disagree on the origins of the Palestinian identity. It is, thus, a daunting job to try to identify a date for the emergence of Palestinian nationalism as it exists today and as it developed over time side by side with other identities, including Arab nationalism and Islamic identity. For some Historians, the Palestinian nation has existed

since the time of the Canaanites who settled Palestine thousands of years ago.⁸⁰ However, most historians are of the view that the modern Palestinian national identity had been produced by the changes in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. The British Mandate and the results of 1947-48 Nakba broke the Palestinian leadership, dispersed a large portion of the Palestinian people and invoked a more specifically national element in Palestinian identity.⁸¹ In some accounts, Palestinian patriotism was a product of a historical process linked to the rise of Arab post-Ottoman nationalism (a simulation of Turkish nationalism) which had made inroads in the late days of the Ottoman Empire and during the British colonization.⁸²

3.1 The Palestinian identity in the late days of the Ottoman rule

The Ottoman Turks ruled Palestine for about four centuries (1516-1918). At that time, Palestine was part of the Great Syria. However, in 1864 Jerusalem was separated administratively from the Great Syria and administered directly by the Threshold in Istanbul.

There was almost unanimity in allegiance to the Ottoman Empire and acceptance of its sovereignty as an Islamic state. Most people identified themselves as Muslims first and viewed the Ottoman state as a continuation of the Arab-Muslim Caliphate. Therefore, the Palestinian society, like other Arab societies, did not feel a real need for a national identity. This remained the case until the arrival of the European economic,

⁸⁰ Dabash, Ahmed. (2005). "The Roots of the Palestinian Identity since the Ancient Ages." (in Arabic), *Samed Aliqtisadi*, No. 141, p. 11.

⁸¹ Khalidi (1997), Op. Cit.

⁸² Darwaza, Mohammed. (1950). *The Origins of the Modern Arab Movement* (in Arabic). Sidon: Almaktaba Alasriya.

social and intellectual influences, which led to the emergence of nationalism. “The period between 1870 and 1914 saw a Europe that was considerably more stable than that of previous decades. To a large extent this was the product of the formation of new states in Germany and Italy, and political reformations in older, established states, such as Britain and Austria.”⁸³

When the Arab nationalist movement emerged in the late 19th century, the Palestinian elite joined it and took part in the formation of national associations and parties. The sense of belonging to the Arab blood was stronger than allegiance to their independent administrative, geographic and regional units in the Ottoman era. That sense had given birth to the nationalist ideology. Arab nationalism asserts Arabs as a nation and promotes the unity of Arab people, celebrating the language and literature of the Arabs, calling for rejuvenation and political union in the Arab region.⁸⁴

However, the dream of a political union in the Arab region was easier said than done. The task ahead was fraught with untold difficulties and obstacles. Soon, toward the end of the century and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, most Arab countries came under control of colonial powers. There were the political divisions into many artificially created states, which led to the emergence of individual national identities in each Arab country.⁸⁵

The modern Palestinian patriotism has its roots in nationalist narratives that emerged among the peoples of the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. Following

⁸³ Ashford, Montgomery. (2009). *A Pocket Guide to European History*. Umbrella Books, p 142.

⁸⁴ Dawisha, Adeed. (2003). "Requiem for Arab Nationalism", *Middle East Quarterly*, pp. 25-41.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Sykes–Picot Agreement came to divide the Ottoman Arab provinces into areas of British and French control and influence. This was followed by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which gave the Jews a homeland in Palestine. The artificial borders that the colonial powers (France and Britain) forced between Arab provinces were meant to defeat any Arab political union. The Palestinian patriotism started to gain grounds to strengthen Palestinian resistance against the British Mandate and the increased Zionist settlement occurring there.

3.2 Palestinian identity between 1918 and 1948

With the engraving of the British Mandate of Palestine out of Greater Syria, the Palestinians had to make the best they could to form a collective identity. The Palestinian thought underlying the resistance of colonialism at this stage was driven by a combination of Arab and Palestinian national identities. The anti-colonialist movements had their roots in Arab nationalism, yet they focused on the Palestinian national identity, in particular. The path of political and social development of the Palestinian society after the World War I was by far different from the context in which other Arab individual nationalities emerged. Other Arab countries won independence and formed constitutional entities between 1920 and 1946.

The Palestinian modern nationalism became fully delineated during the interwar period in response to Zionist immigration and settlement.⁸⁶ One of the most important events that took place during that period was the massive rise of the Zionist immigration to Palestine in the 1920s, which threatened Palestinians in their homeland.

⁸⁶ Gelvin, James. (2016). *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*. Cambridge University Press.

The tension between the Palestinians on the one hand, and the British army and the Zionist gangs, on the other, started to mount, leading to the 1929 Buraq Revolution, and later the 1936-1939 Great Revolution which demanded Palestinian independence and the end of the policy of open-ended Jewish immigration and land confiscation with the stated goal of establishing a Jewish National Home.⁸⁷

The Palestinian Great Revolution was a main factor for the formation of the Palestinian identity struggle. The Palestinian intellectuals were part of it, helping in rooting out acquiescence among the people. In their heightened resistance, the Palestinians rejected the 1939 White Paper, which called for the establishment of a Jewish national home in an independent Palestinian state within 10 years, rejecting the idea of partitioning Palestine. It also limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 for 5 years, and ruled that further immigration was to be determined by the Arab majority.⁸⁸

During World War II, the conflict between the Palestinians and the Zionist movement became both vertical and horizontal, taking place at all levels. The British Mandate, meanwhile, began to take a three-pronged approach: supporting the Zionist movement, avoiding direct clashes with the Palestinians, and preparing for the end of the Mandate. To calm tension and propose a solution to the conflict, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 recommended the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine no later than August 1, 1948 and partitioning Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state.

⁸⁷ Kelly, Matthew. (2017). *The Crime of Nationalism: Britain, Palestine, and Nation-Building on the Fringe of Empire*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.

⁸⁸ Caplan, Neil. (2015). *Futile Diplomacy, Volume 2: Arab-Zionist Negotiations and the End of the Mandate*. London: Routledge.

3.3 The Palestinian identity between 1948 and 1967

The 1948 Nakba of 1948, the establishment of the Zionist state and the division of the remaining parts (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) between Jordan and Egypt had forestalled efforts of the Palestinian National Movement to reunite the land. The Palestinians had to take different identities: Palestinian, Jordanian and Egyptian.

The Nakba was the first and the most tragic event in the history of modern Palestine. Touching every single Palestinian, the Nakba has profoundly affected the Palestinian national identity. The Palestinian national movement collapsed and gave way to Arab nationalist movements which called for Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine. That period also saw the emergence of religious and socialist parties (such as the Arab Nationalist Movement, the Baath Party, the Arab Socialist Party and the Syrian National Party), which also supported the Palestinian cause and called for driving out the Jews from Palestine.⁸⁹

The Nakba has seriously weakened the Palestinian national movement; however, it has made the Palestinians more emotionally and spiritually attached to their national identity. The year 1948 triggered a struggle that has been unfolding for around seven decades, making the Palestinians the pioneers of Arab nationalism.

One outcome of the Nakba was Palestinian refuge. Camps for refugees are highly politicized spaces. The camp emerged as a national landmark and a symbol of a Palestinian history. It is a symbol of attachments to the rights and preservation of authentic Palestinian memory. It is a place for passing oral historical narratives from

⁸⁹ Abu Rahma, (2011), Op. Cit.

one generation to another. The camps' schools and streets are named after the Palestinian villages and cities, while Palestinian Arabic is still heard spoken by old and young Palestinians.

In the 1950s and the early 1960s, the Palestinian political discourse in Arab countries and in other parts of the world took the form of resistance narratives against the Zionist enemy which strengthened its control of the land and grew more powerful. On the other hand, models from Arab and international liberation movements inspired the Palestinian mobilization. These were building blocks for creating the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1965. The PLO, which was originally managed by the late Egyptian President, Jamal Abdul Nasser, became an exclusively Palestinian platform led by Fateh.

3.4 The Palestinian identity between 1967 and 1991

The 1967 setback had weakened Arab states, but it was a trigger for more revolutionary action by the Palestinians. The resistance gained popular support from Arabs, and the Palestinian factions— after assuming the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, recognized the armed struggle as the only form of the liberation of Palestine. The National Charter rejected all alternative solutions to the liberation of Palestine.⁹⁰

After the 1970 events, the Palestinian resistance factions left Jordan, thus losing the longest line of confrontation with the occupation. With some Arab regimes fearing Palestinian revolution spillover to their territories, enthusiasm of Arab states with that

⁹⁰ Hourani (2003), Op. Cit.

revolution started to wane. This had forced the PLO to seek more peaceful and less radical solutions. In its eighth session in 1971, the Palestinian National Council held that the armed struggle is the main form, but not the only one, in the struggle against the occupier.⁹¹

The relative victory Egypt and Syria achieved in the 1973 war and the emergence of the role of the Arab oil-exporting countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, helped these regimes in their influence over the Palestinian factions, which had clout on the official policies of the PLO. To survive those currents, some factions (the Democratic Front and Fateh) proposed a transition program, which was a draft for the later “Ten-point Program” adopted by the Palestinian National Council in 1974. The plan program demanded the creation of a national authority over every part of Palestinian territory that is liberated in order to complete the liberation of all Palestinian territory. The plan made it clear that the liberation of Palestine may be partial (at least, at some stage). The plan also emphasized armed struggle, but it did not rule out other methods. This allowed the PLO to engage in diplomatic talks, and provided recognition for future concessions made by the Palestinian leadership.

Year 1974 marked a turning point in the history of the Palestinian cause. During the Rabat Conference in that year, the Arab League recognized the PLO as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people. On November 13, 1974, Arafat arrived at the UN headquarters in New York and delivered his famous speech

⁹¹ Towam, Rashad. (2013). *Diplomacy of national liberation: The Palestinian case* (in Arabic). Retrieved from <https://fada.birzeit.edu/bitstream/20.500.11889/125/1/The-Diplomacy-of-the-National-Liberation-The-Palestinian-Case.pdf>

(the gun and the olive branch). On November 22, the UN General Assembly issued its 3236 Resolution, which recognized the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, allowed United Nations contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization and added the Question of Palestine to the U.N. Agenda.

During that time, three factors had come to play a major role in the shift of the PLO to peaceful resolution– and thus impacted the Palestinian national identity:

- The defeat of the PLO in the combat with the Jordanian regime: The PLO became aware of the fact that the Arab countries surrounding Palestine have drained the PLO powers. With the longest frontier with Israel, Jordan had offered an ideal support base for resistance action. By this dispersal, together with losing the Lebanese base, the PLO lost two major assets that it had developed for years.
- The international aspect: The PLO came to know the international requirements for accepting it as a representative of the Palestinian people.
- Pragmatism: The PLO may have been clear on the immediate objectives that specific military operations were expected to achieve. Yet, the PLO was working for passive objectives, such as protecting its political status, gaining American political recognition and bringing international pressure to bear on Israel to withdraw from the land it occupied in 1967. This has harmed the Palestinian national identity.⁹²

⁹² Sayigh, Yazid. (1986). "Palestinian armed struggle: Means and ends." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 16, no. 1, pp: 95-112.

3.4.1 The 1987 Intifada

Following the 1982 Lebanon war, the Palestinian leadership has lost its ability to resist and narrowed its scope of maneuvering. The Palestinian action was restricted to diplomacy in the Arab and international arenas. In the midst of PLO decrepitude broke out the first Palestinian Intifada. The Intifada brought a substantial shift in the Palestinian politics. It moved the Palestinian power centers to the Palestinian occupied territories after it had remained for decades in the Diaspora. The Palestinian 1987 intifada united the Palestinians in the Diaspora and their brethren in the occupied territories. This was clearly demonstrated by the formation of the unified national leadership which declared the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people until fulfilling self-determination and establishing an independent Palestinian state.

The intifada was a natural continuation of resistance action. It identified itself with the collective national identity— a resounding announcement that the Palestinians have the right to determine their own destiny, no matter what it takes. It was an innocent massive action that came as a legitimate reaction against the Zionist oppressor. The Intifada was unique because no state could claim it had influence over it. No state could stop it or affect its course. It was a genuine turning point in the evolution of the modern national Palestinian identity.

Although the Intifada was geographically confined to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, it transcended all borders and echoed in every Palestinian community outside homeland. By this, it has reconstructed the collective Palestinian identity and reinvigorated the national sentiments in all Palestinians around the globe.

The PLO's attempt to hijack the Intifada was one of the main reasons why the Intifada eventually faltered. The 1991 Madrid Conference was the first time that true representatives of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories would take on an international platform to speak on behalf of Palestinians at home. The 1987 Intifada reestablished the PLO as an indispensable player in any solutions that would be sought for the Palestinian cause. The PLO read the Intifada in its Arab and international context and rushed unwisely to diplomatic solutions, which aborted the Intifada and took the PLO to a dark tunnel of negotiations with Israel sponsored by the United States. While the PLO could have used the Intifada to score effective political gains, it unfortunately chose the trouble-making path which led to nothing but more compromises.

3.5 Distorted Palestinian Identity in the post-Oslo era (1993-2007)

On March 6, 1991, US President George H. W. Bush delivered a speech before the Congress, outlining his administration's vision for the Middle East region based on the territory-for-peace principle and Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. The administration envisioned the achievement of peace treaty through negotiations that lead to the fulfillment of Palestinian rights and ensuring security for Israel. Guided by the initiative, the US Secretary of State, James Baker, moved to set the international and regional stage to launch the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and convene a conference in Madrid to settle the conflict-generated issues.⁹³ However, the effort was short-lived. Eventually, the PLO leadership negotiated an alternative agreement secretly

⁹³ Karna, Adam. et al. (2015). *Time for a Change: The Role of the United States in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Rockefeller Center for Public Policy: Dartmouth College.

in Oslo. The agreement largely sidelined the United Nations and allowed the United States to claim its position as a sponsor of peace talks.

By this, the United States set the stage for the Oslo Accords, signed in 1993 by the PLO and the government of Israel. The Oslo Accords and the consequent repercussions were ebb of the Palestinian action abroad, a constraint on the Palestinian national action at home, a reinforcement of the occupation, and a factor that deepened the division of the people and the land.

The Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements— signed on 13 September 1993 between the Zionist occupation government and the Palestine Liberation Organization at the White House in Washington— states:

“The Government of the State of Israel and the P.L.O. team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the "Palestinian Delegation"), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.”⁹⁴

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the PLO succeeded in carving and fostering an independent Palestinian political identity and a national movement. The Oslo Agreement was the demise of that movement. The signing of the agreement isolated the Palestinians in the exile. Those in Lebanon became more isolated by the Lebanese

⁹⁴ Lane, Dave. (2008). *International Documents on Israel & Palestine 1915 to 2008*. Lulu.com.

government, which then had concerns of an international plan to resettle the Palestinians there and change the demographic and sectarian composition of the country. The Palestinians became an independent sect in a country with many sects. Libya, considering Oslo as a liquidation of the Palestinian cause, pushed many Palestinians out of the country. The Palestinians of the exile had always been the responsibility of the PLO, which maintained this position despite its political setbacks. Things changed after Oslo, and the PLO politics became more focused on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At stake was the national identity, which suffered lack of a unifying body of reference, let alone the dispersion of the Palestinian communities in different countries with different affiliations (the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the 1948 land, etc.). Some of the 1948 Palestinians, though they are not majority, have identified themselves as Israelis. Some of them vote for right-wing Zionist parties in the elections of the Knesset. Data show that 19 percent of the Palestinians voted for right-wing Zionist parties in the 2009 elections. This figure rose to 23 percent in the 2013 elections.⁹⁵ Finding themselves isolated by the PLO politics, the 1948 Palestinians have no qualms (or they might have) taking part in the Zionist elections, and even voting for Zionist parties. Those Palestinians have to accept the farce of Zionism democracy that gives the 1948 Palestinians the false rights to choose their representatives. The Palestinian Authority in Ramallah supported the formation of the Arab Joint List and encouraged Palestinians to vote for it. Through the Communication Committee, it gave the 1948 students at AAUJ a day off to participate in the elections of the last Knesset.

⁹⁵ Sabbah, Adnan. (2016). The destination of the Palestinian nationalism. Retrieved from <http://m.ahewar.org/s.asp?aid=511997&r=0&cid=0&u=&i=0&q=>

3.5.1 Identity rupture

A perilous challenge to the Palestinian identity is the decline of the role of the PLO and the dominance of the Palestinian Authority over the Palestinian politics. With the PLO, which represented all Palestinians, set aside to make room for the Palestinian Authority (which only represented the interests of a branch within Fateh in a limited autonomous region), Palestinians became divided into conflicting groups. Another challenge is the rise of the political Islam movements which have Islamic identity. Many members in these movements are simultaneously aware of themselves as Muslims. A third challenge is identification with different extended families. According to Jamil Hilal, the prevailing system has entrenched loyalty to extended families. The crony-based behavior can still be seen in the appointment of public staff, even ministers.⁹⁶

These challenges have created a shock-like effect, grievances and frustration among the Palestinians, at home and abroad. Luckily, when the Palestinians are sick of something, they do not discharge their anger against each other because there is always a shared enemy: the occupation. The peak of the indignation took the form of popular uprising against the occupier. In September, 2000, the Palestinians set off the Second Intifada. The demonstrations and shooting broke out all over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Islamic factions (specifically Hamas) were fully engaged in the resistance action. At that time, political representation was an arena of rivalry between the PLO and Hamas.

⁹⁶ Hilal, Jamil. (2006). *The Palestinian middle class: chaos of identity, reference and culture* (in Arabic). Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies.

Tensions escalated between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas following Hamas win of the 2006 parliamentary elections. Relations between the two main Palestinian political parties, Fateh and Hamas, were then marked by sporadic factional fighting. This became more intense after the two parties repeatedly failed to reach a deal to share government power, escalating in June 2007 and resulting in the split of the Palestinian Authority in 2007. As of August 2007 the Palestinian Authority became split into two polities, each seeing itself as the true representative of the Palestinian people: the Fateh-ruled Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and the Hamas Government in Gaza.

The split has weakened the Palestinian national identity and left resounding impacts on the Palestinian patriotism. Officially, Palestinians had two governments, but on the ground they had no state. It is a mockery that a promising national liberation project abandoned liberation and focused all its efforts to settle disputes between factions, leaving millions of Palestinians suffering blockade and military occupation, and millions more suffering the anguish of the exile. The fragmentation of powers between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has undermined the unity of the Palestinian political representation. The enmity between the two factions challenged longstanding assertions of a unified Palestinian national identity.

The transformations of the PLO are articulated and substantial, both at home and abroad. The organization has been liquidated by the state of imbalance suffered by the Arab region. These transformations did not occur in sporadic time periods, but in approximate intervals: the 1967 setback, the 1970 civil war, the 1973 war, the invasion of southern Lebanon and the occupation of Beirut in 1982, the 1987 Intifada and the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, which was virtual the demise of the PLO. The

organization's existence has become nothing more than a formality, for several reasons, including the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987, which marked an important shift in Palestinian political and social life by moving the Palestinian power centers to the Palestinian occupied territories after it had remained for decades in the exile.

These shifts have been turbulent to Palestinian identity and memory. The transformations have redefined ideas and perceptions. The conflict between the two identities, the Muslim and the national (and the resulting divide between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip), has added to the already existing rift in Palestinian patriotism and national identity. Geography and history were also intentionally misrepresented to further the interests of the ruling elite, thus the strengthening of the detachment between the political elite and the people. The revolutionaries grew richer and began to abandon the revolution basic principles underlying the creation of the PLO.

Chapter Four

Higher Education in Palestine

4.1 Background of Higher Education in Palestine

4.2 Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

4.3 Challenges to Higher Education in Palestine

4.4 The Palestinian Higher Education Council

4.1 Background of Higher Education in Palestine

Higher education plays a leading role in all-out community development: building knowledge, strengthening human capital, developing skills, enhancing the capacities of a society and increasing material, intellectual and cultural productivity. Universities have long been vital and powerful drivers of innovation. When they are effective, universities function like assemblers of talent. In the past few decades, the history of comprehensive development in many developed countries of the world has relied heavily on the development of higher education and on its associated research and development centers. Higher education has a role in creating and fostering human, economic and social capital, all of which play a key role in shaping national identity, supporting culture, enhancing individual and collective awareness and institutionalizing the positive and reciprocal relationship between the individual and the group.

The roots of the Palestinian higher education system date back to the 1940s, when Palestinian students began to enroll in institutions of higher education outside Palestine, especially North American, British and Egyptian universities. Admission requirements were demanding, and only well-off families could afford the expenses of higher education.⁹⁷ Attempts by the Palestinians to establish a university in the first half of the 20th century were thwarted by the British Mandate under pressure from the Zionist

⁹⁷ Shbeeb, Sameeh. (2012). The current state of higher education in Palestine and the prospects for development (in Arabic). Retrieved from <http://www.shuun.ps/page-359-ar.html>

movement, because a Palestinian university would harm the Hebrew higher education in the country.⁹⁸

The development of higher education is relatively new. Two-year colleges (such as Birzeit College in Ramallah, Al Najah College in Nablus and Arab College in Jerusalem) have existed since the 1950s. These institutions— which focus on teacher training, technical education or liberal arts— were either run by the government or by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). It is only since the 1970s that universities came into existence. These institutions were part of a Palestinian collective effort to preserve their identity as well as to provide young Palestinians with the opportunity to pursue higher education after it became increasingly difficult for them to go abroad for such studies. However, the sector has expanded only since the transfer of education from Israel to the Palestinian National Authority in the 1990s.⁹⁹

Prior to 1967, many young Palestinians studied at Syrian, Lebanese and Iraqi universities. Seeking higher education rested on a conviction that resisting the occupier was only possible through a well-educated generation. Qadri Tuqan, a Palestinian educator and one of the founders of An-Najah College was a fervent advocate of pursuing higher education. He believed that the Palestinians must learn and write about the importance of knowledge and building national universities and curricula in order to have an educated generation that can lead the people in the liberation process. Touqan identified the pillars of an effective education system, one that can produce a generation

⁹⁸ Ottoman, Saleem. (2000). *Challenges facing postgraduate students in the West Bank universities* (in Arabic), An MA thesis, An-najah National University.

⁹⁹ European Commission (2012). *Higher Education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*. Retrieved from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/oPt.pdf

with a forward-looking mentality, one that can influence the surroundings and lead a revolution against the oppressor (the occupying power). “Knowledge is not everything; morality is not everything; yet knowledge and morality together are everything,” Touqan wrote.¹⁰⁰ Reflecting on the approach to resisting the occupier, Touqan championed organization and planning based on figures and statistics rather than improvisation. He called for rewriting history in such a way as to highlight the favors the Arabs lent to humanity in the different fields of science.

After the Israeli seizure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, the Palestinians had to plan and think for themselves. The absence of intellectual leadership forced people with social, intellectual and economic influence to take the lead and carve an independent education system. In the 1930s, Haj Amin al-Husseini called for the establishment of a university in Jerusalem, but he didn’t live to see that dream come true.¹⁰¹

Later efforts to establish a university in Palestine failed (e.g. the initiative by George Shabar in 1947), and it was not until 1972 that the Palestinians could transform Birzeit two-year College into a university. In 1973, the Frere Schools in Jerusalem became Bethlehem University and in 1980, The Sharia College in Hebron transformed into a university. Three years earlier, An-Najah College in Nablus developed into An-Najah University. In 1978, Islamic University in Gaza was established, followed by the announcement by four university colleges in Jerusalem that they formed Al-Quds

¹⁰⁰ Khalidi, Walid, et al. (2009). *The 1948 Nakba: Causes and solutions* (in Arabic). Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies.

¹⁰¹ Abu Maleeh, Mohammed. (2009). Haj Amin al-Husseini, Immigrant of the twentieth century (in Arabic). retrieved from <http://www.alquds-online.org/index.php?s=47&id=744&skw=>

University in Jerusalem. Other public, NGO and private universities were founded later, particularly Al-Quds Open University and the Arab American University in the West Bank town of Jenin.¹⁰²

Since 1996, Palestinian higher education has made quantum leaps: increasing the number of institutions in the West Bank and Gaza to 16 universities and 27 two-year colleges, with enrolment growing from 28,000 in 1994 to 130,000 in 2010, to 218,415, in 2017, including 133,032 females and 85,383 males.¹⁰³

However, the system has been criticized for lack of a strategic plan for development, insufficient scientific research and poor funding in some universities, which results in a seriously negative impact on the quality and relevance of higher education in the Palestinian labor market. Between 60-70 percent of the operating budgets of universities are covered by tuition fees. Since there is no regularity and consistency in the payment of tuition fees, budgets of universities suffer yearly deficits. The amount of USD 20 million has been allocated to higher education in the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) budgets every year since 2002. In 2009, this amount was raised to USD 34 million, and in 2010 the amount was increased to USD 40 million. In 2011, the higher education budget was significantly increased to USD 90 million.¹⁰⁴

The fragile correlation between academic programs and the real needs of the labor market is a common problem in all national development programs. For example, the high percentage of students studying social sciences is a major contributor to

¹⁰² Shbeeb (2012), Op. Cit.

¹⁰³ Ministry of Higher Education <http://www.mohe.pna.ps/moehe/factsandfigures>

¹⁰⁴ European Commission. (2012), Op. Cit.

unemployment among graduates. The high student/teacher ratio is another factor that leads to low standards of teaching and learning.¹⁰⁵

Through my professional experience as an employee at the Deanship of Student Affairs at AAUJ, I accidentally meet with many students who show through their behavior that the main concern for them is to obtain a degree and they rarely seek to develop their soft and hard skills. The curricula and teaching methods have failed to encourage critical thinking and the capacity to apply logic in solving problems. This has a major impact on the goals and mechanisms of the Palestinian national struggle for freedom and self-determination. Therefore, part of the tertiary education system should be focused on strengthening student creativity and building skills. Critical thinking should be nurtured, so that the pool of graduates would be aware of market needs, as well as cultural values and national concerns.

4.2 Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

There are 16 universities in the West Bank and Gaza:

1. Birzeit University
2. Arab American University
3. An-Najah National University
4. University of Bethlehem
5. Al-Azhar University
6. Islamic University of Gaza
7. Al-Aqsa University

¹⁰⁵ European Commission. (2012), Op. Cit.

8. Al Quds Open University
9. Polytechnic University of Palestine
10. Al-Quds University/ Jerusalem
11. Hebron University
12. Khodori Institute
13. Gaza University
14. Israa University
15. University of Palestine
16. Palestine Ahliya University

The law regulating tertiary education in Palestine recognizes three different types of institutions: governmental, public (established by Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private. Most higher education institutions are public. The universities offer programs leading to bachelor, master and doctorate degrees.

Universities are concentrated in major cities, such as Gaza (the Islamic University, Al-Azhar University and Al-Aqsa University). Other areas in Gaza, particularly the southern area, have no universities. However, during the second intifada, branches were opened for students unable to reach Gaza city. Due to the small area of the Strip, students do not live in student dormitories. In the West Bank, students stay in student hostels because the Israeli military checkpoints make it very hard to commute daily between the West Bank towns.

4.2.1 Arab American University-Jenin (AAUJ)

I will narrow down my spatial research scope to the AAUJ, whose faculty and students comprise the study sample. AAUJ is the first private Palestinian university, founded in year 2000, in collaboration with California State University (CSU) in Stanislaus and Utah State University (USU) in Logan. CSU approved AAUJ's first Curricula and gave the needed expertise to start the university. USU provided the faculty members and administrators to run the university in its first two years. AAUJ has around 11,000 students (according to the Deanship of Student Affairs, 2017).

Located in the northern West Bank town of Jenin, AAUJ is very unique because it has around 4445 students from the 1948 land. It is, thus, an educational, social and national Palestinian platform that brings together all Palestinian students from all areas: the West Bank, Jerusalem and the 1948 land. It does not, however, have students from Gaza due to the Israeli blockade placed on the Strip. AAUJ is a perfect place for social and cultural diversification, which helps create national consciousness and contributes to shaping the Palestinian national identity.

4.3 Challenges to Higher Education in Palestine

Higher education in Palestine is constrained by a host of challenges produced by two main factors: the Israeli occupation and the structure of Arab societies. Sharif Kanaana points out that everything related to higher education is produced by hierarchical factors, including immediate and distant ones.¹⁰⁶ First, there is the

¹⁰⁶ Kanaana, Sharif. (2012). Higher education in Palestine: Current state and the prospects for development (in Arabic). retrieved from <http://www.shuun.ps/page-359-ar.html>

nightmare of the Israeli occupation, which has for decades thwarted the efforts to build a system that better regulates education. This has produced a system that is governed by different conflicting references: the competent ministries, the political parties, the extensive families and the resulting nepotism. Kanaana believes that the Arab communities view higher education as a mere degree for social prestige.

To an extent, what Kanaana says is true. Sometimes the appointment of faculty and staff members at universities and government institutions is based on nepotism rather than on an objective evaluation of ability or suitability. For example, some institutions offer employment to a relative or a member of the security services, despite the fact that there are others who are better qualified and willing and able to perform the job.

There is a problem with the way the PA allocates funds to different universities. So far, the allocation has been based on the number of students in each university, thus encouraging high recruitment of students rather than focusing on the quality of education. Removing the cap on student numbers, unfortunately, makes the universities compete for attracting more students at the expense of quality.

With limited financial resources, universities have for decades suffered chronic financial deficits. Consequently, the abilities of universities to provide well-developed academic programs, quality research, quality education and specialized consultancy services have declined.¹⁰⁷ The system has failed to plant in its students lifelong habits of

¹⁰⁷ Jafari, Mahmoud and Lafi, Daren. (2004). Matching higher education graduates with market needs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute. Retrieved from <http://mas.ps/files/server/20141811142725-1.pdf>

careful observation, critical thinking, creativity, moral reflection and articulate expression.

Equally detrimental is the lack of coordination and cooperation between universities. In an effective system, universities must interchange ideas, data and knowledge and coordinate to overcome the problem of program overlapping. This is not, unfortunately, the case in Palestine, where universities vie for recruiting as many students as they can.

For the holistic development of students, there should be a room for extracurricular activities. The main goal of such activities is personality development. Universities should help students take up their study in a healthy environment that fosters intellectual development. The level of extra-curricular cultural and intellectual activities– that promote and deepen students' identity awareness and build a politically educated generation– is very low in the Palestinian universities– a major challenge to developing awareness of national identity. For example, at AAUJ, students are reluctant to take part in political activities, such as sit-downs in solidarity with prisoners. In post-Oslo Palestine, national identity issues are no longer the concerns of higher education students. Once were main producers of Palestinian national leaders, universities are now nothing but institutions producing people with academic degrees. Baramki (1996) disagrees with this, arguing that the Palestinian universities are “the natural microcosm where faculty, staff and students are able to practice democracy and freedom of speech.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Baramki, Gabi. (1996). “Palestinian University Education under Occupation.” *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

The large number of universities in the occupied Palestinian territories is another challenge. In one town, it is not hard to find two or three universities. Horizontal expansion in the number of universities produces poor academic and intellectual outputs, simply because each university would compete for recruiting the largest possible number of students.

4.4 The Palestinian Higher Education Council

The Council for Higher Education was established in 1977 as the need grew for coordination among the institutions of higher learning, and for the provision of support and guidance in planning. Initially, the council consisted of a general assembly of 40-50 members, including representatives from the universities, professional associations and the elected mayors of the major towns in Palestine.¹⁰⁹ Currently, the Palestinian higher education sector consists of 43 post-secondary educational institutions (including 16 universities) awarding intermediate diplomas, bachelor degrees, master degrees and PhD degrees.

To address the challenges we summarized earlier, there should be a national plan in place to introduce measures to align the programs offered with factors such as economic and social development. The curricula should be more flexible and more responsive to national needs. This requires more intervention by the Higher Education Council, which can, within its powers, have a role in redesigning curricula and help in creating a higher education fund.

¹⁰⁹ Baramki, (1996), Op. Cit.

Chapter Five

Methods, Sampling and Findings

5.1 Study Methods

5.2 Study Population

5.3 Study Sample

5.4 Study Tool

5.5 Study Procedures

5.6 Study Variables

5.7 Statistical processing

5.8 Results related to the main question

5.9 Results related to the hypothesis

5. 10 Results of the interviews

In this chapter, I provide an outline of the methods used to determine the population and the sample of the study. I also explain the methods and validity verification tools, as well as the design of the study and the statistical methods used in data analysis.

5.1 Study Methods

The Mixed Approach

The mixed method refers to the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or inquiry. The basic premise is that such mixing allows for more utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.¹¹⁰ The mixed approach is particularly relevant to identity and education studies. Identity studies are interdisciplinary and elusive, and thus no single approach can cover all of their aspects. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods, I have gained in breadth and in depth understanding of the subject matter, as I was able to overcome the weaknesses inherent in using a single approach.

The Content Analysis Approach

The Content analysis approach is a research method for studying various texts and oral communication. Researchers use content analysis to quantify patterns in communication, in a replicable and systematic manner. One particular benefit of this

¹¹⁰ Bulsara, Caroline. (2015). Using a mixed methods approach to enhance and validate your research. Retrieved from <https://www.scribd.com/document/251893008/Using-Mixed-Methods-Approach-to-Enhance-and-Validate-Your-Research>

approach is analyzing social phenomena in a non-intrusive manner, in contrast to or collecting survey answers.¹¹¹

The Historical Approach

In this effort, I traced the evolution of Palestinian identity over history and the role of the Palestinian higher education system in promoting that identity.

The Statistical Approach

For more validity, I used statistical analysis of the study questionnaire using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS).

5.2 Study Population

The study population is composed of AAUJ students (around 10,339) and employees (539, including 303 staff members and 236 faculty members).

5.3 Study Sample

The sample consisted of 495 AAUJ students with regular study in the second semester of 2016/2017. The researcher retained 420, or 85%, valid questionnaires—around 4.5% of the study population. The sample also included 15 employees (3% of total employees). Tables (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) show the distribution of the sample by the different variables according to the following equation:

¹¹¹ Alan., Bryman. (2011). *Business research methods*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

The minimum sample size (n)

$$(n) = p\% \times q\% \times [z/e\%]^2$$

Where:

N: the minimum sample size required

P%: the proportion belonging to the specified category

q%: the proportion not belonging to the specified category

Z: the z value corresponding to the level of confidence required

E%: the margin of error required

The adjusted sample size n is calculated as:

$$n \div \{1 + [n/N]\}$$

Where

N: the minimum sample size

N: the total population

$$\text{The minimum sample} = 50\% \times 50\% \times [1.96/5\%]^2$$

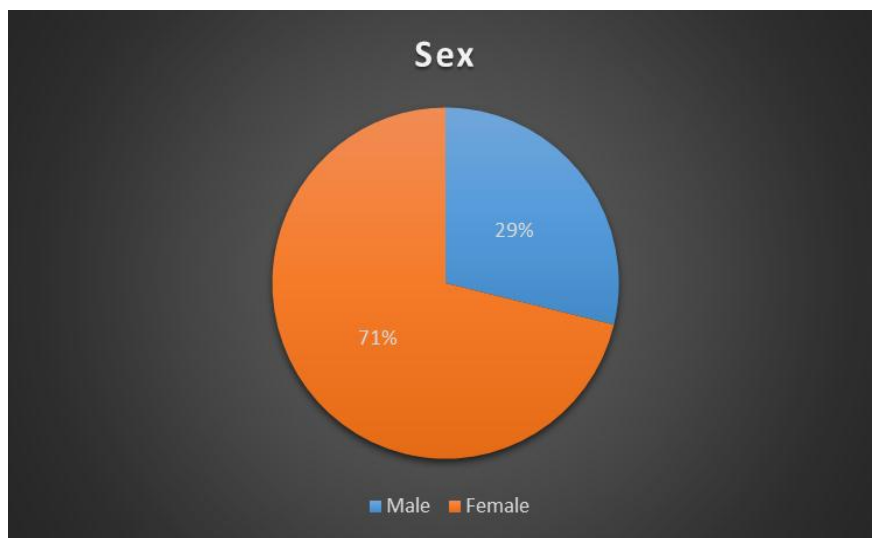
$$= 384.16$$

$$\text{The adjusted minimum sample size} = 384.16 \div \{1 + [384.16/9,000]\}$$

Minimum Sample size = 369 observations (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).¹¹²

Table (1): Distribution of the sample by gender

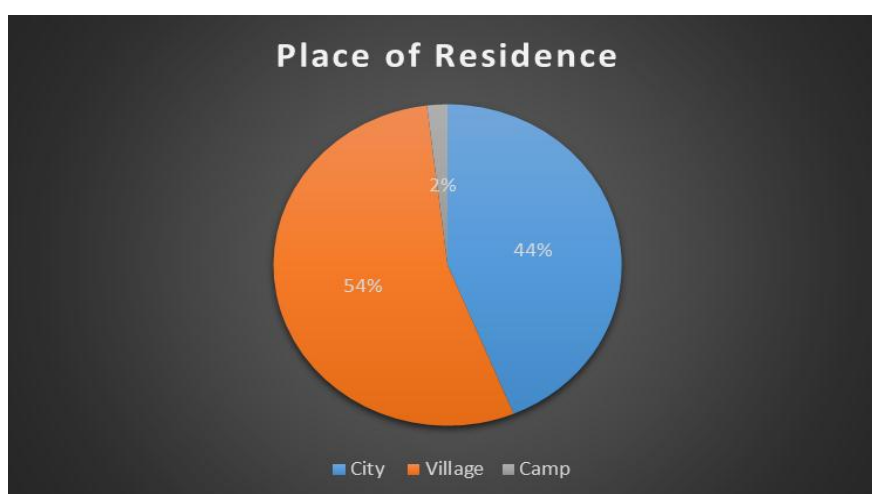
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	121	29%
female	299	71%
Total	420	100%



¹¹² Krejcie, Robert and Morgan, Daryle. (1970). "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities." *Sage Journals*, Volume 30 issue 3, pp: 607-610.

Table (2): Distribution of the sample by place of residence

Place of residence	Frequency	Percentage
City	184	44%
Village	228	54%
Refugee camp	8	2%
Total	420	% 100

**Table (3): Distribution of the sample by year of study**

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage
Second year	113	27%
Third year	120	29%
Fourth year and higher	109	26%
Total	420	19%

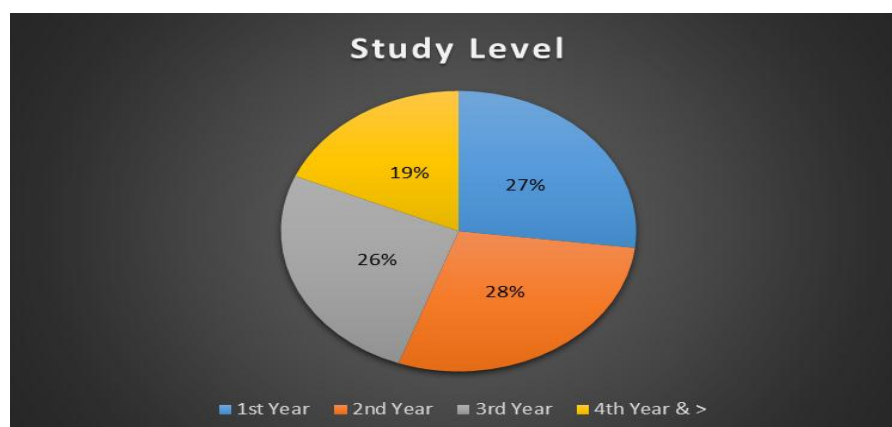
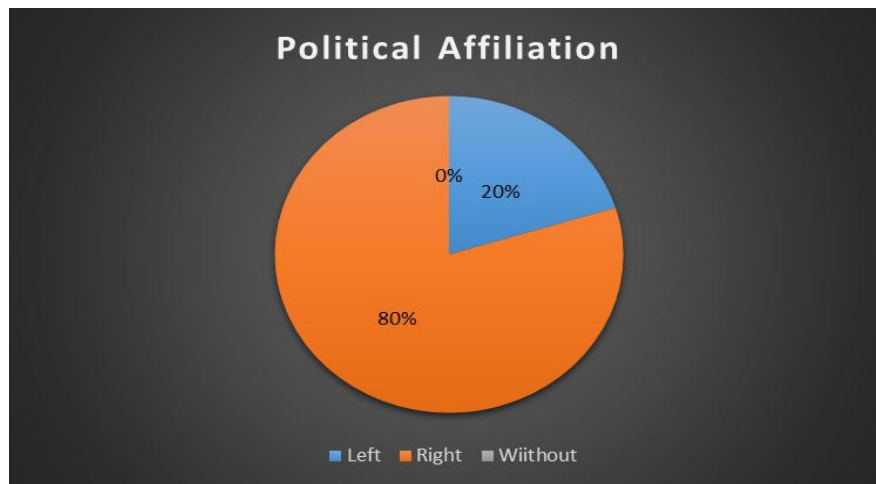
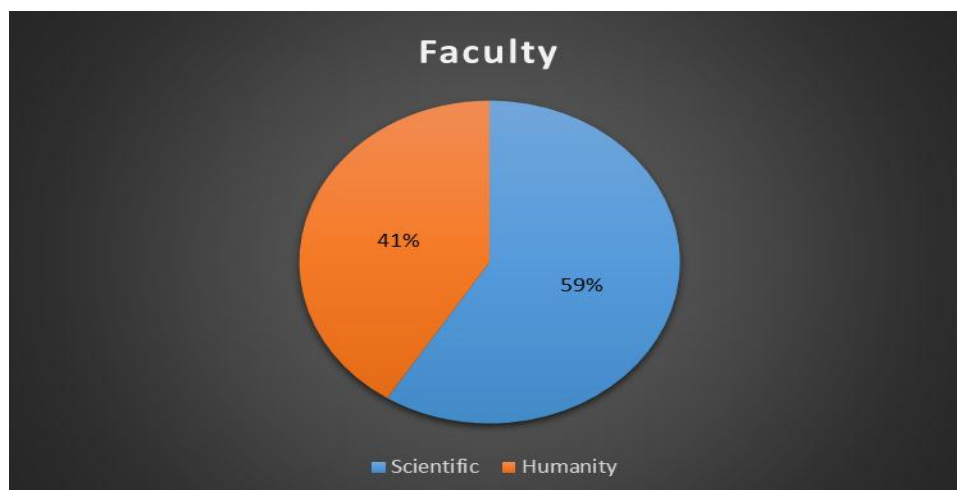


Table (4): Distribution of the sample by political affiliation

political affiliation	Frequency	Percentage
Left-wing	85	20%
Right-wing	335	80%
Nonpartisan	0	0%
Total	420	100%

**Table (5): Distribution of the sample by faculty**

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Sciences	248	59%
Humanities	172	41%
Total	420	100%



5.4 Study Tool

To answer the study questions and test hypotheses, I used two tools: a questionnaire (statistical analysis) as well as interview and focus groups (qualitative analysis)

First: Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed as a tool for collecting data from literature on the role of higher education in promoting national identity. It was also used to provide a review of previous studies.

5.4.1 Validation of the tool

The tool was given to a group of reviewers (Appendix 3) who were asked to express their opinion on the content of the questionnaire in terms of language and suitability as well as alignment of each question/statement with the item it measures.

5.4.2 Tool Consistency

Consistency Coefficient

Internal consistency was measured with Cronbach's Alpha, a statistic calculated from the pair-wise correlations between items.

Table (6): Consistency coefficients for the questionnaire and its items

Item	No. of statements	Consistency Coefficient
Role of curricula	5	0.793
Role of faculty members	6	0.812

Role of student movements	7	0.716
Role of AAUJ administration	5	0.781
Total score	23	0.745

Obviously, the scores obtained are indicative of good internal consistency of the test.

As clearly shown in the Table, the average for the fourth items used in this study is 0.736, which is quite indicative. The minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha should be equal or above 0.70, according to Travakol.¹¹³

Second: Interviews

An interview in research is a conversation where questions are asked by an interviewer to elicit information. The information is elicited through alternating series of usually brief questions and answers. These questions explain a behavior the researcher wants to understand. The interviews were used in conjunction with the questionnaire to identify the role of AAUJ in promoting Palestinian identity. I conducted 8 interviews with the administrative staff and 7 interviews with faculty members to find answers to 8 questions:

1. How does AAUJ promote the national identity and nurture patriotism?
2. How does the AAUJ curriculum contribute to enhancing students' national identity?
3. It is understood that the educational process in the Palestinian universities is governed by pre-established educational principles and philosophy aimed at

¹¹³ Tavakol, Mohsen and Dennick, Reg. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53-55.

strengthening national identity among the students. What do you think about this statement?

4. Which do you think is prioritized in AAUJ educational planning: promoting national identity or focusing on academic aspects?
5. To what extent does AAUJ give its faculty members and administrative staff the freedom to discuss topics that promote patriotism and national identity and reinforce students' political engagement?
6. How do AAUJ curricula help the students be aware of national values such as identity, allegiance and belonging?
7. Do students' movements help students be aware of their national identity? How?
8. Do students and AAUJ administration cooperate in promoting national identity among students?

5.5 Study Procedures

This study was conducted in an orderly manner:

1. Building the questionnaire;
2. Identifying the sample;
3. Sending the questionnaires to respondents and recollecting them (a total of 420 usable questionnaires were collected out of 495);
4. Conducting interviews with 7 faculty members and 8 administrative staff members;
5. Processing data through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS);
and
6. Drawing out results and analyzing them as well as making recommendations.

5.6 Study Variables

A. Independent variable: The role of higher education, particularly:

- The role of AAUJ curricula
- The role of faculty members
- The role of student movements
- The role of AAUJ administration

B. Dependent variable: Promoting national identity

5.7 Statistical processing

Once answers from respondents were collected, the data were sorted out and analyzed using the SPSS.

Statistical procedures and descriptors used:

1. Frequencies, arithmetic mean and standard deviation
2. Independent t- test
3. One – Way ANOVA
4. LSD test
5. One Sample t-test
6. Pearson correlation test.

5.8 Results related to the main question

To find an answer to the main question (From the students perspective, what is the role of higher education in promoting Palestinian identity?), I worked out the arithmetic means and the standard deviations using the Likert Scale.

Table 7: Ratings of items scored on the Likert Scale

Value	Rating scale
5 - 3.67	High
3.66 – 2.34	Moderate
2.33 – 1	Low

The results suggest that the most influential factor in the promotion of national identity is the faculty members, with a mean of 2.96, ahead of the university curricula (2.80), university administration (2.78) and student movements (2.56).

Detailed results are shown in Tables (8), (9), (10), (11) and (12) below.

Table (8): Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ curricula

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Mean	STDEV	Rating
1	There is a combination of academic materials and materials related to the Palestinian national heritage needed to nurture my national values	7%	23%	22%	40%	7%	2.82	1.09	Moderate
2	I think curricula enhance my political awareness	10%	31%	23%	30%	6%	3.09	1.11	Moderate
3	I'd rather choose free electives that help me take part effectively in sociopolitical activities	11%	20%	26%	29%	15%	2.83	1.22	Moderate

4	I feel that national awareness building in curricula is relatively low	5%	17%	19%	44%	15%	2.52	1.09	Moderate
5	I feel that the curricula are identified with current national concerns	7%	22%	20%	43%	9%	2.74	1.10	Moderate
	Role of curricula	8%	23%	22%	37%	11%	2.80	1.12	Moderate

The mean and the standard deviation for the role of AAUJ curricula in promoting Palestinian identity are 2.80 and 1.12, respectively. In statistical terms, this is a moderate role.

Table (9): Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ faculty members

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Mean	STDEV	Rating
6	During classes, lecturers address issues that instill national belonging and sentiments.	10%	23%	21%	36%	10%	2.86	1.17	Moderate
7	I feel that the lecturers' political affiliation has a bearing on the way they deal with students.	11%	23%	23%	30%	13%	2.89	1.23	Moderate
8	Lecturers allow students to exchange views on political issues.	10%	21%	20%	35%	14%	2.80	1.22	Moderate
9	Some lecturers are biased with students who share them the same political views.	21%	27%	26%	17%	9%	3.35	1.23	Moderate
10	Lecturers teach in a traditional way and do not bother nurturing national values and political thought.	5%	24%	28%	28%	14%	2.78	1.12	Moderate
11	Lecturers ask students to write research papers on issues on national concerns.	10%	31%	24%	30%	5%	3.10	1.10	Moderate
	Role of faculty members	11%	25%	24%	29%	11%	2.96	1.18	Moderate

Table (9) shows that the arithmetic average and the standard deviation for the role of AAUJ faculty members in promoting the Palestinian identity are 2.96 and 1.18, respectively, which is also a moderate role.

Table (10): Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ student movements

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Mean	STDEV	Rating
12	The activities of the student movements, such as national exhibitions and festivals, help in strengthening my national identity.	5%	11%	12%	45%	26%	2.24	1.12	Low
13	Student movements play a key role in building my political, cultural and social awareness.	8%	13%	18%	42%	19%	2.48	1.17	Moderate
14	I think affiliation with a political party helps me shape my attitudes about identity and strengthen my national belonging.	8%	19%	29%	32%	12%	2.78	1.13	Moderate
15	I think that partisan education weakens the role of student movements in development.	7%	18%	36%	29%	11%	2.81	1.06	Moderate
16	Students activism helps promote many national values.	4%	10%	10%	56%	19%	2.23	1.00	Low
17	Affiliation with student movements helps strengthen my political participation.	7%	19%	27%	36%	10%	2.77	1.10	Moderate
18	Illiberal partisan identification harms the role of parties in political development.	3%	10%	42%	35%	11%	2.60	0.92	Moderate
	Role of student movements	6%	14%	25%	39%	16%	2.56	1.07	Moderate

The results for students also suggest a moderate role: 2.56 for the arithmetic average and 1.07 for the standard deviation.

Table (11): Mean and standard deviation: AAUJ administration

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Mean	STDEV	Rating
19	AAUJ administration allows students to hold political seminars on campus.	3%	12%	24%	47%	15%	2.40	0.98	Moderate
20	AAUJ administration allows students to express their	9%	18%	26%	38%	10%	2.79	1.12	Moderate

	views on university policies								
21	AAUJ administration grants students excuses to participate in political events on campus.	15%	23%	23%	31%	8%	3.06	1.21	Moderate
22	AAUJ administration allows students to take part in national events that foster patriotism.	4%	11%	20%	56%	9%	2.45	0.94	Moderate
23	AAUJ administration deals with students based on their political affiliation.	14%	29%	31%	17%	9%	3.20	1.16	Moderate
24	Role of AAUJ administration	9%	18%	25%	38%	10%	2.78	1.08	Moderate

Again, the role of the AAUJ in promoting national identity is rated ‘moderate’ by students, as shown in the figures for arithmetic average and standard deviation (with 2.78 for the former and 1.08 for the latter).

Table (12): Arithmetic averages (means) and standard deviations: AAUJ Curricula, Faculty Members, Student Movements and Administration

#	Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Rating
1	AAUJ Curricula	2.80	1.12	Moderate
2	AAUJ Faculty Members	2.96	1.18	Moderate
3	AAUJ Student Movements	2.56	1.07	Moderate
4	AAUJ Administration	2.78	1.08	Moderate
Total average		2.77	2.11	Moderate

In aggregate terms, the statistical figures for the role of higher education in promoting national identity suggest a moderate rating– at 2.77 for the mean and 2.11 for the standard deviation.

5.9 Results related to the hypothesis

H1: Curriculum doesn't play a role in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (13): Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Curriculum

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Curriculum	2.8005	.60822	.02968	94.362	419	.000

One sample t-test was used to test the first hypothesis (Curriculum does not play a role in promoting the Palestinian Identity). Building on the figures for Curriculum in Table 13 (mean=2.8, SD=.60822; t= 94.362; p=0.000), we can safely reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, concluding that there are grounds for believing that there is a role for the curriculum in promoting national identity.

H2: Faculty members do not play a role in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (14): Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Faculty Members

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Faculty Members	2.9635	.58476	.02853	103.861	419	.000

The t-test results for the role of faculty members suggest likely correlation (mean=2.9635; SD=.58476; t= 103.861, p=0.000). Again, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis– that there are grounds for believing that there is a role for the faculty members in promoting national identity– is accepted.

H3: Student Movements do not play role in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (15): Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: Students Movements

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Students Movements	2.5578	.66620	.03251	78.684	419	.000

As the values in the Table above reveal (mean=2.5578; SD=.66620); $t= 78.684$, $p=0.000$), the results of the role of student movements has proved positive, suggesting the invalidity of the null hypothesis.

H4: University Administration does not play role in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (16): Results of one sample t test for Higher Education: University Administration

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
University Management	2.7781	.62738	.03061	90.749	419	.000

The conjecture used in the statistical test evidence indicates that the null hypothesis of correlation between university administration and promoting national identity is disproved. The level of confidence is around 95%, which is rather significant. The figures for this variable are: mean=2.7781; SD=.62738; $t= 90.749$, $p=0.000$, which gives credibility to the alternative hypothesis.

H5: There is no significant correlation between higher education exogenous and endogenous variables and promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (17): Correlation Coefficients for exogenous and endogenous variables

Correlation coefficients				
	Curriculum	Faculty Members	Student Movements	University Administration
Curriculum	1			
Faculty Members	.375**	1		
Student Movements	.340**	.267**	1	
University Administration	.133**	.245**	.314**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The guidelines for assessing the relationship are shown in the Table below:

Strength	Value
Small	0.10-0.29
Medium	0.30-0.49
Large	0.5.-1.0

Source: Cohen (1962)¹¹⁴

As shown in Table (17), there are positive correlations between the dependent variables and the independent variable. Our findings suggest that 1. The variable ‘Faculty Members’ has significant correlation to promoting the Palestinian Identity; 2. The Curriculum- though not as positively correlated as faculty members– is also significantly correlated; and 3. These two variables carry more weight than do Student Movements and University Administration. Based on the guidelines in the Table above,

¹¹⁴ Cohen, Jacob. (1962). The statistical power of abnormal-social psychological research: A review. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 65(3), 145-153.

we can arrange the variables by correlation in order: Faculty Members, Curricula, University Administration and Student Movements.

H6: There are no significant differences associated with demographic variables in relation to the role of higher education on promoting the Palestinian identity:

1. Gender: There is no significant correlation associated with 'gender' in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table 18: Independent t-test for gender

	Gender	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Value	Sig.
Curriculum	Male	121	2.6661	.68770	-2.905	.455
	Female	299	2.8548	.56515		
Faculty Members	Male	121	2.8540	.64785	-2.456	.014
	Female	299	3.0078	.55221		
Student Movements	Male	121	2.5313	.76759	-.519	.604
	Female	299	2.5686	.62159		
University Administration	Male	121	2.8000	.70711	.455	.650
	Female	299	2.7692	.59313		

The bottom line finding that can be concluded from Table (18) is that the factor 'gender' has no significant bearing on the views of students on the role of higher education in enhancing the Palestinian identity. The p-value is greater than 0.05, which gives validity to the null hypothesis on this factor across all variables except for the 'Faculty Members' variable whose p-value is 0.014; hence the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis for the 'Faculty Members' variable. At 3.0078, the mean for

females who drew a positive relationship between ‘Faculty Members’ and promoting national identity is by far higher than the mean for males.

2. Place of Residence: There is no significant correlation associated with ‘place of residence’ in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (19): Results of F- test for Place of Residence

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Curriculum	Between Groups	.328	2	.164	.443	.643
	Within Groups	154.672	417	.371		
	Total	155.000	419			
Faculty Members	Between Groups	.765	2	.383	1.119	.327
	Within Groups	142.508	417	.342		
	Total	143.274	419			
Student Movements	Between Groups	.906	2	.453	1.021	.361
	Within Groups	185.057	417	.444		
	Total	185.963	419			
University Administration	Between Groups	.061	2	.030	.077	.926
	Within Groups	164.858	417	.395		
	Total	164.918	419			

It can be concluded from Table (19) that the factor ‘place of residence’ has no significant bearing on the views of students on the role of higher education in

enhancing the Palestinian identity. The One- Way ANOVA tests rendered an F-statistic value greater than 0.05, which makes the null hypothesis valid.

3. Year of Study: There is no significant correlation associated with 'year of study' in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (20): Results of F- test for Year of Study

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Curriculum	Between Groups	2.875	3	.958	2.621	.050
	Within Groups	152.125	416	.366		
	Total	155.000	419			
Faculty Members	Between Groups	6.237	3	2.079	6.312	.000
	Within Groups	137.036	416	.329		
	Total	143.274	419			
Student Movements	Between Groups	2.039	3	.680	1.537	.204
	Within Groups	183.924	416	.442		
	Total	185.963	419			
University Administration	Between Groups	3.107	3	1.036	2.662	.048
	Within Groups	161.812	416	.389		
	Total	164.918	419			

With a 95% level of confidence, the factor 'year of study' has no significant impact on the views of students on the role of higher education in enhancing the Palestinian

identity. The One- Way ANOVA tests rendered an F- statistic value lower than 0.05, which disproves the null hypothesis across all variables except for the ‘Students Movement’ variable whose p-value is 0.204.

Table (21): LSD- test for Year of Study

Dependent Variable	(I) year of study	(J) year of study	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Curriculum	1st Year	2nd Year	-.21578*	.07927	.007
		3rd Year	-.06609	.08119	.416
		4th Year and Above	-.11194	.08902	.209
	2nd Year	1st Year	.21578*	.07927	.007
		3rd Year	.14969	.08001	.062
		4th Year and Above	.10385	.08795	.238
	3rd Year	1st Year	.06609	.08119	.416
		2nd Year	-.14969	.08001	.062
		4th Year and Above	-.04585	.08968	.609
	4th Year and Above	1st Year	.11194	.08902	.209
		2nd Year	-.10385	.08795	.238
		3rd Year	.04585	.08968	.609
Faculty Members	1st Year	2nd Year	-.12364	.07523	.101
		3rd Year	.03344	.07705	.665
		4th Year and Above	-.30323*	.08449	.000
	2nd Year	1st Year	.12364	.07523	.101
		3rd Year	.15707*	.07594	.039
		4th Year and Above	-.17959*	.08348	.032
	3rd Year	1st Year	-.03344	.07705	.665
		2nd Year	-.15707*	.07594	.039
		4th Year and Above	-.33667*	.08512	.000
	4th Year and Above	1st Year	.30323*	.08449	.000
		2nd Year	.17959*	.08348	.032
		3rd Year	.33667*	.08512	.000

University Administration	1st Year	2nd Year	-.10391	.08175	.204
		3rd Year	-.00567	.08373	.946
		4th Year and Above	-.22891 *	.09181	.013
	2nd Year	1st Year	.10391	.08175	.204
		3rd Year	.09824	.08252	.235
		4th Year and Above	-.12500	.09071	.169
	3rd Year	1st Year	.00567	.08373	.946
		2nd Year	-.09824	.08252	.235
		4th Year and Above	-.22324 *	.09250	.016
	4th Year and Above	1st Year	.22891 *	.09181	.013
		2nd Year	.12500	.09071	.169
		3rd Year	.22324 *	.09250	.016

The results of the LSD test suggest that:

- At p-value 0.007 (which is less than 0.05), 2nd year respondents values are more significant for the ‘Curriculum’ variable than 1st, 3rd and 4th year respondents’ values, with a mean correlation of -.21578.
 - At p-value 0.000 (which is less than 0.05), 4th year respondents values are more significant for the ‘Faculty Members’ variable than whom 1st, 2nd and 3rd year respondents’ ratings, with a mean correlation of - .30323.
 - At p-value 0.013 (which is less than 0.05), 4th year respondents values are more significant for the ‘University Administration’ variable, with a mean correlation of -.22891.
4. Political Affiliation: There is no significant correlation associated with ‘political affiliation’ in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (22): Results of F- test for Political Affiliation

Dimensions		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Curriculum	Between Groups	8.243	1	8.243	23.479	.000
	Within Groups	146.757	418	.351		
	Total	155.000	419			
Faculty Members	Between Groups	3.573	1	3.573	10.690	.001
	Within Groups	139.701	418	.334		
	Total	143.274	419			
Student Movements	Between Groups	9.420	1	9.420	22.305	.000
	Within Groups	176.543	418	.422		
	Total	185.963	419			
University Administration	Between Groups	.206	1	.206	.523	.470
	Within Groups	164.712	418	.394		
	Total	164.918	419			

It can be concluded from Table (22) that the factor ‘political affiliation’ has no significant bearing on the views of students on the role of higher education in enhancing the Palestinian identity. The One- Way ANOVA test rendered an F- statistic value less than 0.05, which disproves the null hypothesis and validates the alternative hypothesis across all variables except for the ‘University Administration’ variable whose p-value is 0.470.

5. Faculty: There is no significant correlation associated with ‘faculty’ in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity.

Table (23): Results of independent t-test for Faculty

Dimensions	Faculty	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Value	Sig.
Curriculum	Sciences	248	2.8452	.62074	1.813	.071
	Humanities	172	2.7360	.58548		
Faculty Members	Sciences	248	3.0195	.61266	2.369	.018
	Humanities	172	2.8828	.53346		
Student Movements	Sciences	248	2.6141	.71086	2.085	.038
	Humanities	172	2.4767	.58855		
University Administration	Sciences	248	2.8081	.61448	1.176	.240
	Humanities	172	2.7349	.64487		

The figures in the Table above suggest that, with a p-value less than 0.05, the factor ‘faculty’ has no significant impact on the views of students on the role of higher education in enhancing the Palestinian identity. The results reject the null hypothesis and validate the alternative hypothesis across all variables except for the ‘University Administration’ variable whose p-value is 0.240 compared to 2.8452, 3.0195 and 2.6141– the values for Curriculum, Faculty Members and Student Movements, respectively. We found that respondents from the science faculties have more positive attitudes than those in humanities faculties.

Table (24): Research variables and related indicators

Variables	Type	Related indicators
The Role of Higher Education	Independent	Curriculum
		Faculty Members
		Student Movements
		University Administration
Promoting the Palestinian Identity	Dependent	-----

To find answers to the study questions and assess the items on the Likert scale, I assumed that if the mean of an item is between 1 and 2.33, then the rating is low; if it is between 2.34 and 3.66, then the rating is moderate; and if it is between 3.67 and 5.00, then the rating is high– See Table 13, (Iriqat, 2016).¹¹⁵

Table (25): Ratings of items on the Likert scale

Rating	Range
High	5-3.67
Moderate	3.66-2.34
Low	2.33-1

5. 10 Results of the interviews

From student's perspective, what is the role of higher education in promoting Palestinian identity?

To answer this question, interviews were conducted with 15 AAUJ faculty and administrative staff members. Before the interviews, I undertook to keep the anonymity

¹¹⁵ Iriqat, Raed. (2016). Organizational Commitment Role in Mediating the Impact of the Organizational Culture Dimensions on Job Satisfaction for MFIs' Employees in Palestine. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 7(5).

of respondents and the confidentiality of information. The interviews took the forms of answers and questions, as detailed below.

1. How does AAUJ promote the national identity and nurture national sense among students?

Answers:

- Holding national and cultural seminars and exhibitions.
- Organizing conferences on identity and national issues.
- Promoting extracurricular activities through academic departments and students council.
- Allowing student movements more freedom to voice their concerns and organize activities of common national interest.
- Integrating into the curricula content that focuses on identity.
- Increasing the number of courses dealing with Palestinian thought and history.
- Creating a democratic environment at the university.

2. How does the AAUJ curriculum contribute to enhancing students' national identity?

Answers:

- Through the courses offered (such as Palestinian Studies, the Prisoners Movement, and Zionist Studies) that are directly related to the Palestinian cause.
- Through faculty members: Professors can raise discussions on identity and national issues.

- Increasing the identity content in the courses offered, making this mandatory for all students.
- Building cooperation between AAUJ and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to make sure that the topics of identity and national issues are being adequately introduced to students.
- Inviting Palestinian intellectuals who write on identity to give lectures on campus.
- Nurturing free thinking and dialogue through the curricula.

3. It is understood that the educational process in the Palestinian universities is governed by pre-established educational principles and philosophy aimed at strengthening national identity among the students. What do you think about this statement?

Answers:

- Palestinian universities are the only platform to provide identity education; however the philosophy of the system is still short of setting the foundations for such education.
- Most of the country's universities have a vision for promoting identity and nationalization, but sometimes they choose making profits over national education.
- The higher education system is willing to promote national identity. However, more cooperation between the university administration and faculty members is needed to hold seminars and educational activities that raise the awareness of students of their national issues.

4. Which do you think is prioritized in AAUJ educational planning: promoting national identity or focusing on academic aspects?

Most interviewees answered that the emphasis is on academic aspects. However, two respondents from the administrative staff said that these two dimensions are integral and that AAUJ tries to make a balance between them.

5. To what extent does AAUJ give its faculty members and administrative staff the freedom to discuss topics that promote patriotism and national identity and reinforce students' political engagement?

Answers by the respondent faculty members:

- There is freedom in terms of designing content or changing the content of the course, but this should be in line with the philosophy of the faculty or the department.
- During lectures, professors allow their students to discuss current political, cultural and social issues.
- There is freedom, but professors should avoid highly sensitive issues, such as religious and cultural taboos.

6. How do AAUJ curricula help the students be aware of national values such as identity, allegiance and belonging?

Answers:

- The AAUJ curricula have a key role in communicating national values.

- Inviting experts to give lectures enhances the understanding of the curriculum and break up the routine of the lecture.
- The design of the curricula can motivate students to produce identity-related works that can be discussed in classroom, with all students exchanging and communicating ideas.

7. Do students ' movements help students be aware of their national identity?

How?

Answers:

- Faculty members have a unanimous agreement have that there is a decline in the role of student movements in the AAUJ and other national universities.
- The disoriented national political agenda has negatively impacted student activism, especially in the post-Oslo stage.
- Of late, the role of student movements has been restricted to basic issues, such as helping students in the registration process. There is no focus on national and cultural education.

8. Do students and AAUJ administration cooperate in promoting national identity among students?

Answers by the administrative staff:

There is an effective cooperation in promoting national values. AAUJ is open to all ideas that sustain and enhance nationalistic sentiments as long as the associated activities do not clash with the laws and regulations of the university.

Part of the secondary approach I utilized was interviewing with 8 activists in student movements within a focus group. I elicited answers from students in the focus groups on the question: **How much influence do student movements have on raising students' identity awareness?**

A student from Hamas said that building awareness is closely related to tangible activities. Hamas, he said, is currently a passive movement due to persecution by the Israeli occupation and PA policies. Before the political divide, the student movements were very dynamic in providing services to students. The dynamics were always associated with activities promoting national values and instilling patriotism. After the divide, however, the role of student movements in shared national issues declined, and now it is restricted to providing orientation services. When there is a national event, they apprehensively take part.¹¹⁶

Another student affiliated with Hamas said that the decline in the role of student movements is largely due to the Israeli occupation policies: arrests and persecution of activists.¹¹⁷

A left-wing student affiliated with the Democratic Front said the Palestinian parties—whether rightists, leftists or centrists— have departed from their main course and taken strategies different from their foundational principles, which affected students affiliated

¹¹⁶An interview within a focus group with a student from Hamas, AAUJ Campus, 9:00 am, May 24, 2017.

¹¹⁷An interview within a focus group with a student from Hamas, AAUJ Campus, 3:00 pm, May 24, 2017.

with these parties. Partisan students are being threatened of low party budgets if they angle off the mainstream ideas.¹¹⁸

A student from Fatah Youth Movement said that identity awareness is significantly declining as student movements have lost their momentum, with the main tasks narrowed to providing orientation services to students and helping in solving registration problems. Activists rarely hold identity educational and awareness activities. The political split has divided the students and some parties, especially Hamas, no longer run for the student council elections.¹¹⁹

Another student from the same party said that the student activism is stagnated; yet students are working hard to reinvigorate movements. Fateh Youth Movement and the student council at AAUJ observe national events that enhance the sense of national belonging.¹²⁰

An interviewee from the Popular Front replied that the student blocs today no longer identify with the aspirations of the Palestinian youth. Student movements are divided, even internally. There is no effective cooperation to promote awareness of the Palestinian identity. The student movements, once energetic and calling all the shots, are now only performing rudimentary activities.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ An interview within a focus group with a student from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, AAUJ Campus, 9:30 am, May 24, 2017.

¹¹⁹ An interview within a focus group with a student from Fateh Youth Movement, AAUJ Campus, 11:00 am, May 24, 2017.

¹²⁰ An interview within a focus group with a student from Fateh Youth Movement, AAUJ Campus, 8:30 am, May 24, 2017.

¹²¹ An interview within a focus group with a student from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, AAUJ Campus, 2:00 pm, May 24, 2017.

The last response came from a student affiliated with the Student Initiative. He said the student movements do not carry out their duty of raising students' awareness of their national identity.¹²²

For more credibility, I tried to make an interview with students from the Islamic Jihad, but they refused to respond. I also tried to contact with female students from Hamas, but they said they do not know anything about Hamas supporters at AAUJ because the party is currently inactive. Finally, I tried several times to communicate with students affiliated with the Party of Liberation, but each time I found their office closed, suggesting that they have no activity on campus. These limitations are very significant because they give more validity to the qualitative approach.

¹²² An interview within a focus group with a student from the Students Initiative, AAUJ Campus, 3:00 pm, May 24, 2017.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Discussion of the results of the study questions

6.1.1 From the students' perspective

6.1.2 From Faculty and Administrative Staff Perspective

6.2 Discussion of the findings related to the hypotheses

6.3 Recommendations

In this chapter, I discuss the results of the study and the findings and identify the relevance of some variables.

6.1 Discussion of the results of the study questions

Question 1: From the students' perspective, what is the role of higher education in promoting Palestinian identity?

I examined that role through different channels: university curricula, faculty members, student movements and university administration. Interviews were conducted with faculty members and administrative staff at AAUJ.

6.1.1 From the students' perspective

- **What is the role of university curricula in promoting Palestinian identity?**

The rating for the role of university curricula is moderate (2.80). In other words, the curricula can contribute to the promotion of identity through a combination of academic materials and content related to national heritage and identity. Students believe that within AAUJ curricula, free elective courses have a significant role in raising students' political awareness and identity education.

National education courses are relatively few. In post-Oslo Palestine, there is a real need for such education because the young Palestinians lack sufficient knowledge of their national issues. The Palestinian internal divide has exacerbated the already problematic situation, making the notion of national identity for many students 'enigmatic,' in every sense of the word.

This result is consistent with the findings of a study by Burhan Hafez (2010).¹²³ In his conclusions, Hafez pointed out that university curricula should be vehicles for promoting students' national values, especially identity, because the curricula contribute to building the intellectual, social, political and cultural character of the person.

• **What is the role of faculty members in promoting Palestinian identity?**

The rating for the role of faculty members is moderate (2.96). We can infer from this rating that faculty members only occasionally raise issues of national concerns during lectures.

Our analysis also suggests that some lecturers discriminate between students based on their political association. Sometimes, the political affiliation of the faculty members affects the way they communicate with their students. This would weaken the role of the faculty member and create frustration for students who feel they are persecuted.

The analysis also found that some lecturers could not align the academic content with national issues. It is somehow justified that a science professor cannot relate a chemical formula to national identity. For a humanities professor, however, this is either an intentional behavior or an indication of inadequate knowledge. Traditional teaching methods that fall short of encouraging critical thinking and dialogue are responsible for the poor cultural awareness.

¹²³ Hafez, Burhan. (2010). The role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity and political development. (A Master thesis, in Arabic). Nablus: An-najah National University.

A more robust cultural-teaching role by the professors might be possible if universities make knowledge of cultural and national issues a condition for recruiting new members. Ibrahim Makkawi (2003) says one of the main roles of the faculty member is to transfer the values, traditions and culture of the society in order to preserve identity from loss.¹²⁴

- **What is the role of student movements in promoting Palestinian identity?**

The rating for the role of the student movements in promoting the Palestinian identity was moderate (2.56); and it was the lowest compared to the other variables. The students' movement in AAUJ is inoperative; it rarely organizes political or cultural activities; and it seldom observes national events. In post-Oslo Palestine, the dynamics of student movements are shaped both by the specific characteristics of students as political actors and by the patterns of their relations with political factions. Before Oslo, the student movements contributed strongly to the development of a cultural background, which provided some of the patterns of student politics. The mechanisms the students used were well identified. Actual participation in collective action was a major source of shaping the national identity.¹²⁵ The student movements produced some of the most influential national Palestinian cadres, who became active beyond the limits of the campus.

¹²⁴ Makkawi, Ibrahim. (2002). "Role Conflict and the Dilemma of Palestinian Teachers in Israel." *Comparative Education*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Feb., 2002), pp. 39-52.

¹²⁵ Klandermans, Bert. (1992), "The Social Construction of Protest and Multi-organizational Fields", in Aldon D. Morris; Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven: Yale UP, 77-103.

Nowadays, however, and at a time when the story of student movements should offer interesting new possibilities, they have nothing to do but to help students in registration services. The political divide between Fateh and Hamas is the major culprit, with Fateh activists subdued by Hamas in Gaza and Hamas activists persecuted by the Fateh-ruled security services in the West Bank.

Another factor in the decline of student movement at AAUJ is the makeup of the students. Around 40 percent of AAUJ students are Palestinians from the 1948 land. Since they are typically non-partisan, they are not represented in the student council. They rarely cast votes in the student council elections because they are intimidated by the Israeli intelligence services. Many of these students reported that they were interrogated by Israeli intelligence service. This is the main reason why they avoid taking part in political activities. Few years ago, the students affiliated with the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (a Palestinian party in the 1948 land) were willing to run for the AAUJ students council by joining forces with a West Bank left party. Their best bet was the Democratic Front. After deliberation, they found dissimilarities in philosophy and attitudes. For example, the West Bank leftists disapprove of Palestinians running for the Knesset elections. When Ayman Odeh, a Knesset member from the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, visited AAUJ, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine students threw him out, and the new coalition did not stand longer.

Student on-campus activities are viewed as one of the most comprehensive social and political educational processes that the Palestinian youth enjoy. These students are organized in small groups that share similar ideological perceptions and belief

systems. “Student activists construct their national identity and express it through their membership and involvement as active group members, not as isolated individuals.”¹²⁶

- **What is the role of the university administration in promoting the Palestinian identity?**

The results of the analysis indicate that the rating for the role of the university administration in promoting the Palestinian nationalism was moderate (2.78). Respondents reported that when the university administration has policies in place to allow students to hold on-campus political seminars and conferences, it helps build their belonging and awareness of their national identity. When students enjoy free expression and they are allowed to speak out about the university's policies- and when the university deals with all students impartially- they can contribute to shaping a collective national identity.

However, the university always has concerns of disorder. Activities that are organized in an unwise manner might disrupt lectures and send the system into chaos. That is why the activities should be planned with a shared effort by the university administration and the student representatives. Equally intimidating are the concerns about the elusive job of integrating national education into academic courses.

In fact, the role of the university administration should be harmonized and coordinated with other forces within the institution. The curricula design is often consistent with the university policies and strategies. The role of the faculty members is integral to the powers granted to them by the university administration. The role of

¹²⁶ Makkawi, Ibrahim. (2004), Op. Cit.

students in forging a national identity is always a product of a strategy by the university to promote national education.

6.1.2 From Faculty and Administrative Staff Perspective

1. How does AAUJ promote the national identity and nurture patriotism?

The university administration organizes on a regular basis educational and other awareness raising activities on issues of cultural, national and social cohesion. It also organizes tours in the West Bank and the 1948 land. It gives permission to the Students Council to observe national events and other cultural activities. The university also supervises student council elections held annually, thus enhancing political participation.

2. How does the AAUJ curriculum contribute to enhancing students' national identity?

Interviewees said the university offers compulsory national awareness-building courses, such as 'Palestinian Studies', and free elective courses, such as 'Jerusalem, History and Civilization', 'Zionist Studies', 'Civil Society Organizations' and 'The Prisoners Movement'. According to some faculty members I interviewed, more time needs to be allocated to address existing national, regional and international issues and their impact on the Palestinians. For example, lecturers can allocate 10 minutes of a class time to talk about the Nakba or other topics related to identity. Within free electives, lecturers may want to ask students to write about the Palestinian identity and heritage or about their cities and villages and then present their work in front of students. This way, students

build their presentation skills, develop self-confidence and become aware of their national concerns.

3. It is understood that the educational process in the Palestinian universities is governed by pre-established educational principles and philosophy aimed at strengthening national identity among the students. What do you think about this statement?

One of the interviewees said a fundamental goal of the philosophy of the university is consolidating the notion of national identity. Being a link between the community and the students, it is a channel for passing societal values to the young Palestinians. Another interviewee said the university should officially have an assessment tool that monitors the infusion of national education within the courses offered. A third respondent said the educational process does have a prominent role in promoting identity, and the university helps in this by offering courses aimed at strengthening national education.

4. Which do you think is prioritized in AAUJ educational planning: promoting national identity or focusing on academic aspects?

Responses from the faculty members and the administrative staff suggest that the university focuses more on the academic aspects. Two respondents from the administrative staff, however, believe that AAUJ has always strived to strike a balance between the academic content and the inclination to promote the national identity through the courses within the academic programs.

5. To what extent does AAUJ give its faculty members and administrative staff the freedom to discuss topics that promote patriotism and national identity and reinforce students' political engagement?

The findings suggest that AAUJ offers its staff a unique fusion of connectedness and belonging through a variety of course offerings and on-campus activities, groups, and resources. Faculty members reported that AAUJ gives them the freedom of choosing topics that can develop students' skills and national education. Recently, AAUJ has offered 'The Prisoners Movement' as an elective course that chronicles the history of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

6. How do AAUJ curricula help the students be aware of national values, such as identity, allegiance and belonging?

Respondents said the AAUJ policy is in line with national aspirations. It helps Palestinian students identify with the history and the culture of their homeland. By offering courses that directly address issues of national concerns, it is a relevant place for building awareness of national identity. It promotes the faculties of the mind in order to produce not only specialists, but also cultivated generations that can transmit a common culture and identity.

7. Do student movements help students be aware of their national identity? How?

Respondents responded that typically student movements promote belonging to the Palestinian identity and sharpen students' knowledge of the Palestinian modern politics. However, this is no longer the case in AAUJ, they said. Due to the chaos within the political parties, there is no significant role for student movements in promoting

national identity. The post-Oslo young Palestinians have different priorities. In leisure time and social hours, rather than attending a conference or taking part in a cultural event, they prefer to go to a café or a restaurant within the campus and hang out with friends.

8. Do students and AAUJ administration cooperate in promoting national identity among students?

Staff respondents believe that AAUJ fully cooperates with student movements in issues related to patriotism and national identity.

6.2 Discussion of the findings related to the hypotheses

Eliciting answers from AAUJ students and employees, the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity received an average rating of 2.77 with a standard deviation of 2.11. On Likert scale, this is a moderate rating of that role. The results suggest that the most influential factor in the promotion of national identity is the faculty members, with a mean of 2.96. In contrast, the rating for the role of the student movements in promoting the Palestinian identity was the lowest (at 2.56) compared to the other variables. The students' movement in AAUJ is virtually inoperative; it rarely organizes political or cultural activities; and it seldom observes national events. After Oslo, it has suffered fragmentation and disorientation.

The analysis found no statistically significant differences at an alpha level of $\alpha = 05.0$ associated with 'gender' and 'place of residence' in relation to the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity. The factor 'gender' has no significant bearing on the views of students on the role of higher education in enhancing the

Palestinian identity, except for the 'Faculty Members' variable. The mean for females who drew a positive relationship between 'Faculty Members' and promoting national identity is by far higher than the mean for males.

On the other hand, the analysis suggested a statistically significant difference at an alpha level of $\alpha = 05.0$ associated with 'year of study', 'political affiliation' and 'faculty', except for the role of student movements within 'year of study' and the role of the university administration within 'political affiliation' and 'faculty'.

Answers elicited from the interviews with academic and administrative staff suggest that the university should strike a balance between the academic content and the inclination to promote the national identity through the courses within the academic programs. A fundamental goal of the philosophy of education should focus on consolidating the notion of national identity. Being a link between the community and the students, the university is a channel for passing societal values to the young generation. Respondents believe that AAUJ gives professors the freedom of choosing topics that can develop students' skills and national education.

6.3 Recommendations

- The faculty members, being the spearhead of national education, are advised to raise issues and prompt in-class discussions on patriotism and national identity. Impartial treatment, not based on political affiliation, is expected from professors. A responsible professor helps students develop a sense of identity, making them proudly identify with their patriotism. Professors can always

encourage students to participate in non-curricular activities to enhance national awareness and critical thinking.

- The student movements must have an effective role in consolidating efforts in furtherance of the national aspirations of the students. In doing so, they should abandon partisan polarity, respect others, build tolerance and focus on issues of common national concerns. Part of the effort should be channeled to survive the adverse effects of the Palestinian internal divide and the decadence within the parties in order to regain the confidence lost between students and student councils. It is also critical at this stage to appreciate the global changes associated with technology and cyber networking. The student movements must be resilient and able to utilize technology and social networks in educating students about their national identity.
- It is very important to have a combination of academic courses and courses related to the Palestinian politics, culture, identity, history and heritage.
- The university administration should cooperate more with the students and maintain more effective communication, feedback and discussion of matters of mutual interest. It can streamline procedures for effective participation in national, social and cultural events. Part of the academic content should be designed to help students identify with their national politics, history and heritage. The university can, for example, draw strategic plans and allocate all the financial resources needed to create departments for social sciences and research, human development, humanities and literature. These are needed to understand the historical context and the different stages for the evolution of the Palestinian identity.

- It is necessary for AAUJ to draw policies that would assimilate the 1948 students within the surrounding community, together with students from the West Bank and Jerusalem. Integration-oriented activities, such as seminars and other gatherings, would be a unique opportunity for students from different backgrounds to get to know others. Palestinian nationalism should be a shared and unifying value for all.

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Interviews

1. An interview within a focus group with a student from Hamas, AAUJ Campus, 9:00 am, May 24, 2017.
2. An interview within a focus group with a student from Hamas, AAUJ Campus, 3:00 pm, May 24, 2017.
3. An interview within a focus group with a student from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, AAUJ Campus, 9:30 am, May 24, 2017.
4. An interview within a focus group with a student from Fateh Youth Movement, AAUJ Campus, 11:00 am, May 24, 2017.
5. An interview within a focus group with a student from Fateh Youth Movement, AAUJ Campus, 8:30 am, May 24, 2017.
6. An interview within a focus group with a student from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, AAUJ Campus, 2:00 pm, May 24, 2017.
7. An interview within a focus group with a student from the Students Initiative, AAUJ Campus, 3:00 pm, May 24, 2017.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear student,

I am examining the role of higher education in promoting the Palestinian identity (AAUJ as a Case Study). This is a questionnaire designed as part of my Master thesis in Conflict Resolution and Development.

The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Your valuable participation will contribute towards identifying the role of AAUJ in promoting national identity. The questionnaire is strictly confidential and the answers will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Part I: Personal questions: Please respond to the following by placing a check mark (√) in the space provided.

1. Sex: Male-----Female
2. Place of residence: City-----Village-----Refugee Camp-----
3. Year of study: 2nd-----3rd-----4th-----
4. Political affiliation: Left-----Right-----Non-partisan
5. Faculty: Sciences-----Humanities-----

Part II: Please write an X in the appropriate column.**1. Role of Curricula**

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
1	There is a combination of academic materials and materials related to the Palestinian national heritage needed to nurture my national values					
2	I think curricula enhance my political awareness					
3	I'd rather choose free electives that help me take part effectively in sociopolitical activities					
4	I feel that national awareness building in curricula is relatively low					
5	I feel that the curricula are identified with current national concerns					
A.	Role of curricula					

2. Role of faculty members

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
6	During classes, lecturers address issues that instill national belonging and sentiments.					
7	I feel that the lecturers' political affiliation has a bearing on the way they deal with students.					
8	Lecturers allow students to exchange views on political issues.					
9	Some lecturers are biased with students who share them the same political views.					

10	Lecturers teach in a traditional way and do not bother nurturing national values and political thought.					
11	Lecturers ask students to write research papers on issues on national concerns.					
B.	Role of faculty members					

3. Role of Student movements

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
12	The activities of the student movements, such as national exhibitions and festivals, help in strengthening my national identity.					
13	Student movements play a key role in building my political, cultural and social awareness.					
14	I think affiliation with a political party helps me shape my attitudes about identity and strengthen my national belonging.					
15	I think that partisan education weakens the role of student movements in development.					
16	Students activism helps promote many national values.					
17	Affiliation with student movements helps strengthen my political participation.					
18	Illiberal partisan identification harms the role of parties in political development.					
C.	Role of student movements					

4. Role of AAUJ administration

#	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree	Agree
19	AAUJ administration allows students to hold political seminars on campus.					
20	AAUJ administration allows students to express their views on university policies					
21	AAUJ administration grants students excuses to participate in political events on campus.					
22	AAUJ administration allows students to take part in national events that foster patriotism.					
23	AAUJ administration deals with students based on their political affiliation.					
D.	Role of administration					

Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. How does AAUJ promote the national identity and nurture patriotism?
2. How does the AAUJ curriculum contribute to enhancing students' national identity?
3. It is understood that the educational process in the Palestinian universities is governed by pre-established educational principles and philosophy aimed at strengthening national identity among the students. What do you think about this statement?
4. Which do you think is prioritized in AAUJ educational planning: promoting national identity or focusing on academic aspects?
5. To what extent does AAUJ give its faculty members and administrative staff the freedom to discuss topics that promote patriotism and national identity and reinforce students' political engagement?
6. How do AAUJ curricula help the students be aware of national values such as identity, allegiance and belonging?
7. Do students' movements help students be aware of their national identity? How?
8. Do students and AAUJ administration cooperate in promoting national identity among students?

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Expert Reviewers

1. Mahmoud Manasra
2. Saleh Afaneh
3. Mohanned Abu Daqar

الملخص باللغة العربية

دور مؤسسات التعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية: الجامعة العربية الأمريكية - دراسة حالة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على دور التعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية: بالجامعة العربية الأمريكية - جنين - كعينة دراسية، بعد الأزمات والتحويلات التي مرت بها الهوية الفلسطينية. مع التركيز على حقبة أوصلو التي اتسمت بغياب النسق التنظيمي الإداري وتراجع الوعي السياسي، وتبني وعي مرتبط بمفهوم السلام والمفاوضات، حيث انفض الإجماع حول المشروع الوطني الفلسطيني، وضعفت البنية السياسية الممثلة في منظمة التحرير، وتراجع بشكل واضح حضور الأحزاب في الحياة السياسية والاجتماعية والثقافية كذلك. هذه الحقبة التي لها تداعيات على جيل من الطلبة الذين ولدوا بعد اتفاقية أوصلو في العام 1993 وعاشوا فراغا سياسيا تمثل في تراجع الوعي السياسي وعدم وجود حل مرحلي للقضية الفلسطينية.

تتشكل هذه الدراسة من ستة فصول ونتائج وتوصيات، اشتملت على فرضية رئيسية وهي تفترض أن المناهج الدراسية، والهيئة التدريسية والحركات الطلابية والإدارة الجامعية ليس لها دور في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية لدى الطلبة.

اعتمدت الباحثة المنهج (المختلط) المنهج الوصفي الكيفي والمنهج الكمي كإطار موجه في الدراسة. واستخدمت الباحثة أداتين هما الاستبانة (تحليل إحصائي)، لمعرفة وجهة نظر الطلبة في المجالات التالية: (المناهج الجامعية، والهيئة التدريسية، والحركات الطلابية، والإدارة الجامعية) أما الأداة الثانية هي المقابلة والمجموعات البؤرية (تحليل نوعي)، لمعرفة وجهة نظر الموظفين وبعض الطلبة المنتسبين للحركات الطلابية مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار التعدد الحزبي.

ومن أجل تحقيق هذه الدراسة أجريت الدراسة على عينة من الطلبة والموظفين في الجامعة قوامها (420) طالباً وطالبة و (15) من الموظفين في الجامعة.

وقد تمت معالجة البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام المتوسطات الحسابية، واختبار (t) لمجموعتين مستقلتين، وتحليل التباين الأحادي، واختبار (LSD) للمقارنات البعدية بين المتوسطات الحسابية. بالإضافة إلى معاملات الارتباط بين متغيرات الدراسة.

أنت الدرجة الكلية لدور مؤسسات التعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية من وجهة نظر الطلبة والموظفين بمتوسط (2.77) وانحراف معياري (2.11) وهذا يدل على دور متوسط للتعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية حسب وجهة نظر طلبة الجامعة، ومن خلال نتائج التحليل للدراسة تبين أن أكثر مجال أثر على تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية في الجامعة العربية الأمريكية هو الهيئة التدريسية، فقد أنت بمتوسط حسابي (2.96) حيث أظهرت الدراسة أن لها الدور الأكبر في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية وذلك بحيث أنها الأعلى بين كل المتغيرات.

فيما حظيت الحركات الطلابية على الدور الأقل من بين (المجالات الأربعة) التي أثرت على الطلاب في تعزيز مفهوم الهوية الفلسطينية وقد أنت بمتوسط حسابي (2.56)، في ظل غياب الوعي الهوياتي عند الحركات الطلابية أصبح هناك فجوة وتشرذم واضح بعمل الحركات الطلابية لما كانت عليه قبل أوصلو من إنجازات وطنية حقيقية وتخريج قيادات وطنية مؤثرة.

وبنقاش الفرضيات تبين عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة ($\alpha=0.05$) في دور التعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية من وجهة نظر الطلبة تعزى لمتغير الجنس ومكان السكن. بينما توجد فروق تعزى لمتغير الجنس في مجال دور الهيئة التدريسية فقط في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية لدى طلبة الجامعة العربية الأمريكية.

وأظهرت الدراسة وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدلالة ($\alpha=0.05$) في دور التعليم العالي في تعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية من وجهة نظر الطلبة تعزى لمتغيرات المستوى الدراسي والانتماء السياسي والكلية التي ينتمي إليها الطالب باستثناء الحركات الطلابية في متغير المستوى الدراسي ودور الإدارة الجامعية في متغيري الانتماء السياسي وكلية الطالب.

وأوضحت نتائج المقابلات مع الموظفين في الجامعة أنه يجب على إدارة الجامعة مراعاة أن يتم التركيز على تعزيز الهوية والوعي الفكري والوطني لدى الطلبة، من خلال الأخذ بعين الاعتبار أهمية ذلك والتي توازي التركيز على المفاهيم العلمية والمحاضرات. وأن الفلسفة التربوية للجامعة تمنح المحاضرين الحرية للتطرق للمواضيع الوطنية وذلك من خلال وجود مساقات حرة تعنى بالحركة الأسيرة وتاريخ النضال، بالإضافة لأن مساق الدراسات الفلسطينية يعتبر مطلباً جامعياً اجبارياً لكل طلبة الجامعة.

وقد لخصت الباحثة مجموعة من التوصيات أبرزها:

- يجب أن يتم زيادة المزج بين المساقات العلمية ومساقات تتعلق بالتاريخ والتراث الوطني الفلسطيني اللازم لتعزيز الهوية الفلسطينية لدى الطلبة وتعميق الوعي السياسي لديهم من خلال المناهج.
- يجب على أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية التطرق لمواضيع تعمق الوعي الوطني والهوياتي لدى الطلبة نظراً للأهمية التي تقع على عاتق المحاضر بما يتعلق بهذه القضايا التي تشذ همم الطلبة، بالإضافة للتعامل مع الطلبة بعيداً عن الانتماء السياسي. وأن يقوم المحاضرين بتشجيع الطلبة على المشاركة في ندوات ونشاطات غير منهجية وغير تقليدية لتعزيز الوعي الوطني والفكر النقدي وتعميق الشعور بالهوية الفلسطينية.
- على الحركات الطلابية توحيد الجهود والانتقال إلى دائرة الفعل الحقيقي بما يصب بمصلحة الطالب، وعليهم أن يكونوا ملتصقين بالأهداف الأسمى التي يتطلع لها الطلاب وهي التقدم الأكاديمي والوعي السياسي بالهوية الفلسطينية وعدم التعصب للحزب، واحترام الاختلافات والتعددية السياسية من أجل القدرة على النهوض والتخلص من الترهل الذي فرضه الانقسام الفلسطيني والفساد داخل الأحزاب مما أثر على أداء الحركات، وذلك من أجل إعادة كسب الثقة التي فقدت بين الطلبة ومجالس الطلبة. كما من المهم الأخذ بعين الاعتبار التعاقب في الأجيال وخلق طرق استقطاب جديدة، تماشياً مع التطور التكنولوجي وتوظيفه في توعية الطلبة بهويتهم الفلسطينية.
- على إدارة الجامعة أن تفتح أبوابها أكثر للطلبة وأن تسهل الإجراءات من أجل المشاركة الفعالة في الفعاليات والندوات التي تخص توعية الطلبة بالهوية وتنقيفهم فكرياً وسياسياً. كما يجب العمل على رسم الخطط الاستراتيجية التي تسهم في تعزيز الهوية والانتماء عند الطلبة من خلال وضع موازنات وتخصيص أقسام للعلوم الاجتماعية والبحث والتحليل، ليس فقط التركيز على التخصصات العلمية والطبية. بالإضافة للعمل على استحداث تخصصات في التنمية البشرية الشاملة ومعيقاتها فلسطينياً والتركيز على العلوم الإنسانية والآداب بالجامعة نظراً لأهميتها في فهم السياق التاريخي للهوية الفلسطينية وماهيته والأبعاد المترتبة عليه.