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**Tracing the Decline of the Arab Involvement in the Palestinian Question
From the Arab-Israeli War to the Normalization with Israel: Neorealist and
Constructivist Insights**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for A Master's Degree of Arts in Anglo-American Studies**

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Tracing the Decline of the Arab Involvement in the Palestinian Question
From the Arab-Israeli War to the Normalization with Israel: Neorealist and
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Dedication

To myself, for coming this far.

To my Mom and Dad, for the love, support, and
prayers.

To my dear friends and classmates, Rayhana, Hiba,
Khouloud, Amira, Safaa, Saya, and Wisal for
making this year and the last one of the happiest
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this year.

Abstract

The 2020 controversial normalization agreements between Israel and various Arab nations, such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan, represented a major shift in the Middle East, especially in the context of the Palestinian crisis. Referred to as the Abraham Accords, these agreements have sparked both excitement and disapproval. Some perceive them as tactics to enhance regional security and oppose Iranian influence, while others consider them a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. This Normalization process itself was a result of years of historical accumulation, political developments, and changing regional relationships. The Arab world's position on the conflict has shifted significantly through the years, starting with a firm dedication to the Palestinian cause that sparked the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, then transitioning to a dwindling support and eventual reconciliation with Israel. This change was influenced by various factors such as the disbandment of the Arab Higher Committee, the detainment of important leaders, and the inability to carry out the 1947 partition plan, all of which led to a decline in Arab backing for Palestine. Furthermore, the Arab League's capacity to make unified decisions has been weakened by events such as the Arab Spring uprisings and the Syrian civil war, leading to decreased focus on the Palestinian issue. Israeli undercover connections with numerous Arab countries, particularly the Gulf monarchies, have become increasingly apparent, exacerbating rifts within the Arab world on this matter. This research aims to chronically follow the historical transition from conflict to normalization, delving into the underlying causes and justifications for this change using historical analysis and theories of international relations, such as neorealism and constructivism.

Key Words:

Normalization, Israel, Arab, Abraham Accords, regional security, betrayal, Palestinian cause, Arab-Israeli war, Arab Spring, Arab League, Neorealism, Constructivism.

Résumé

Les accords de normalisation controversés de 2020 entre Israël et plusieurs nations arabes, telles que les Émirats arabes unis, Bahreïn et le Soudan, ont représenté un changement majeur au Moyen-Orient, en particulier dans le contexte de la crise palestinienne. Connus sous le nom des Accords d'Abraham, ces accords ont suscité à la fois de l'enthousiasme et de la désapprobation. Certains les perçoivent comme des tactiques visant à renforcer la sécurité régionale et à contrer l'influence iranienne, tandis que d'autres les considèrent comme une trahison de la cause palestinienne. Ce processus de normalisation est le résultat de plusieurs années d'accumulations historiques, de développements politiques et de changements dans les relations régionales. La position du monde arabe sur le conflit a considérablement évolué au fil des ans, passant d'un engagement ferme en faveur de la cause palestinienne, qui a déclenché la guerre arabo-israélienne en 1948, à un soutien décroissant et à une réconciliation éventuelle avec Israël. Ce changement a été influencé par divers facteurs tels que la dissolution du Comité supérieur arabe, la détention de leaders importants et l'incapacité à mettre en œuvre le plan de partition de 1947, ce qui a conduit à un déclin du soutien arabe à la Palestine. En outre, la capacité de la Ligue arabe à prendre des décisions unifiées a été affaiblie par des événements tels que les soulèvements du Printemps arabe et la guerre civile syrienne, entraînant une diminution de l'attention portée à la cause palestinienne. Les relations clandestines d'Israël avec de nombreux pays arabes, en particulier les monarchies du Golfe, sont devenues de plus en plus apparentes, exacerbant les divisions au sein du monde arabe sur cette question. Cette recherche vise à suivre chronologiquement la transition historique du conflit à la normalisation, en explorant les causes sous-jacentes et les justifications de ce changement à travers l'analyse historique et les théories des relations internationales, telles que le néoréalisme et le constructivisme.

ملخص

تمثل اتفاقيات التطبيع المثيرة للجدل لعام 2020 بين إسرائيل والعديد من الدول العربية، مثل الإمارات العربية المتحدة والبحرين والسودان، تحولاً كبيراً في الساحة السياسية في الشرق الأوسط، خاصة في سياق القضية الفلسطينية وقد أثارت هذه الاتفاقيات حماساً من جهة واستنكاراً من جهة أخرى حيث يرى البعض أنها تكتيكات لتعزيز الأمن الإقليمي ومواجهة النفوذ الإيراني، بينما يعتبرها آخرون خيانة للقضية الفلسطينية. عملية التطبيع هذه كانت نتيجة لتراكمات تاريخية، وتطورات سياسية، وتغيرات في العلاقات الإقليمية على مدار سنوات. موقف العالم العربي من النزاع تغير بشكل كبير على مر السنين، بدءاً من الالتزام القوي بالقضية الفلسطينية الذي أشعل الحرب العربية الإسرائيلية عام 1948، ثم تحول تدريجياً إلى تراجع في الدعم إلى ان انتهى بالمصالحة والتطبيع مع إسرائيل. تأثر هذا التطور السياسي بعوامل مختلفة مثل حل اللجنة العربية العليا، وغياب القادة المهمين، وعدم القدرة على تنفيذ خطة التقسيم التي سنتها الأمم المتحدة عام 1947، وكلها أدت إلى تراجع الدعم العربي لفلسطين. علاوة على ذلك، تراجعت قدرة الجامعة العربية على اتخاذ قرارات موحدة بسبب العديد من الأحداث مثل انتفاضات الربيع العربي والحرب الأهلية السورية، مما أدى إلى تقليل الاهتمام بالقضية الفلسطينية مع الوقت. وفي جهة أخرى ظهرت العلاقات بين إسرائيل والعديد من الدول العربية، وخاصة دول الخليج العربي على الساحة بشكل متزايد، مما زاد من الانقسامات داخل العالم العربي حول هذه المسألة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تتبع الأحداث التاريخية بداية من الحرب الإسرائيلية العربية إلى غاية التطبيع، حيث تهدف إلى كشف الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذا التغيير باستخدام التحليل التاريخي ونظريات العلاقات الدولية، مثل نظرية الواقعية الجديدة ونظرية البنائية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

التطبيع، إسرائيل، العرب، الأمن الإقليمي، الخيانة، القضية الفلسطينية، الحرب العربية الإسرائيلية، الربيع العربي، الجامعة العربية، الواقعية الجديدة، البنائية.

List of Acronyms

AP - Associated Press

AL - Arab League

BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

DFLP - Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

EU - European Union

FPLP - Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

IDF - Israel Defense Forces

JSTOR - Journal Storage

Hamas - Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Islamic Resistance Movement)

PA - Palestinian Authority

PLO - Palestine Liberation Organization

PNA - Palestinian National Authority

UN - United Nations

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

US - United States

Table of Content

| | |
|---|----|
| General Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter One: Origins and Historical Background of the Arab-Israeli Conflict..... | 4 |
| Introduction..... | 4 |
| I. How it Started | 5 |
| 1. History of the Land of Palestine | 5 |
| 2. The Rise of Zionism..... | 10 |
| 2.1 The Early Roots of Zionism..... | 10 |
| 2.2 The Emergence of Zionism in Europe | 11 |
| 2.3 The Zionist Arrival to Palestine | 13 |
| 3. Mandatory Palestine..... | 15 |
| 3.1 The Fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I..... | 15 |
| 3.2 The Sykes-Picot Agreement..... | 16 |
| 3.3 The Balfour Declaration..... | 17 |
| 3.4 British Palestine (1917-1948) | 18 |
| 3.5 Withdrawing the Mandate and the Rise of the Israeli Statehood..... | 20 |
| II. History of the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Changing Dynamics | 22 |
| 1. The 1948 Arab–Israeli War: Between the "War of Independence" and “al-Nakba” | 23 |
| 2. Between 1956 and 1967 | 24 |
| 3. War of 1967 (The Six days War)..... | 25 |
| 3.1 The Khartoum Resolution | 26 |
| 4. War of 1973 (Yom Kippur War)..... | 27 |
| 5. The Camp David Accords | 29 |
| 6. The First Palestinian Intifada | 31 |
| 7. The Oslo Accord | 33 |
| 8. The Second Intifada | 34 |
| 9. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative..... | 36 |
| 10. The 2020 Normalization | 38 |
| Conclusion | 40 |
| Chapter Two: The Decline of the Arab Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Historical and Theoretical Analysis..... | 41 |
| I. Section one: The Historical Dynamics of The Declining Arab Support: Phases of the Arab-Israeli Conflict..... | 42 |
| 1. The Emergence of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Late 19th to Early 20th Century...) | 42 |

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| 1.1 | The Palestinian Question Between the Two World Wars..... | 43 |
| 2. | Rise of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (1947-1967)..... | 45 |
| 2.1 | The Palestinian Nakba and the Arabs (1947-1949)' | 45 |
| 2.2 | Palestine and the Pan-Arabist Ideology (1950s-1960s)..... | 48 |
| 3. | The Decline of The Arab-Israeli conflict (1967 to Present)..... | 49 |
| 3.1 | The conflict under the Rise of Palestinian Nationalism..... | 49 |
| 3.2 | The Oslo Predicament..... | 50 |
| 3.3 | The Palestinian Question and the Arab Spring (2010-2017) | 51 |
| 3.4 | The Decline of Arab Financial Support to Palestine..... | 52 |
| <i>II.</i> | Section two : Neo-realist and Constructivist Reading of the Decline of Arab-Israeli Conflict: the Case of The Arab League..... | 54 |
| 1. | Theoretical framework..... | 55 |
| 1.1. | Neo-Realism Theory | 55 |
| 1.1.1. | Security Dilemma | 56 |
| 1.1.2. | The balance of power..... | 56 |
| 1.1.3. | National Interest | 57 |
| 1.2. | Constructivism theory..... | 58 |
| 1.2.1. | Identity and Norms | 58 |
| 2. | Analyzing Arab League Dynamics Under Neo-Realist and Constructivist Lenses | 59 |
| 2.1. | Arab league and Neo realism..... | 60 |
| 2.2. | Arab League analysis from the constructivism point of view | 62 |
| | Conclusion | 65 |
| | General Conclusion | 66 |
| | Work Cited | 68 |

General Introduction

The Arab-Israeli conflict, much like many enduring conflicts throughout history, serves as a poignant testament to the deep-seated scars of human discord. This specific conflict, located in the heart of the Middle East, is a struggle not just over land, but also over identity, memory, and justice. As Mahmoud Darwish poignantly expressed, "We have on this land that which makes life worth living," highlighting the deep connection and persistent spirit of those who inhabit this land. This thesis seeks to dig into the complex layers of this long-running crisis, exploring its historical origins, major events, and changing dynamics.

Structured into two primary chapters, this thesis will first explore the origins and historical backdrop of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It begins with an exploration of ancient roots and indigenous populations and progresses to significant periods such as the Balfour Declaration and the Oslo Accords, providing a comprehensive historical background. The rise of Zionism and Arab nationalism in the late nineteenth century laid the groundwork for subsequent political tensions and military conflicts, culminating in the establishment of the State of Israel and the United Nations' partition plan of 1947, which sparked the first Arab-Israeli War and subsequent regional reactions. The narrative continues through future conflicts and peace processes, including current normalization agreements.

The second chapter takes an analytical approach, applying neorealism and constructivism theories to examine Arab states' dwindling role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It examines Arab League policy and the changing dynamics of regional alliances, offering light on shifting Arab sentiments toward the Palestinian cause. This study is guided by key research issues that probe historical events, the growth of Arab state engagement, theoretical frameworks for analyzing state conduct, and the impact of recent diplomatic moves on conflict dynamics.

This thesis uses qualitative research methodologies, including historical analysis, theoretical frameworks, and critical appraisals of primary and secondary sources. Historical texts like the Balfour Declaration and UN resolutions serve as a primary resources, supplemented by scholarly works by historians from Israeli and Arab origins, such as The Israeli Historian Ilan Pappé' books *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, A History of Modern Palestine, Ten Myths about Israel*. And the Palestinian historian Rashid Khalid's works *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, as well as contemporary analyses by famous scholars such as Norman Finkelstein and Avi Shlaim. This holistic approach seeks to deepen understanding of the conflict's complexities and inform future research and policy-making in the Middle East. All of these are pursued under the Modern Language Association (MLA) 8th Edition.

The primary aim of this thesis is to contribute to the scholarly debate on the Israel-Palestine conflict by offering a holistic perspective that incorporates historical insights, theoretical frameworks, and empirical research. It seeks to provide a nuanced analysis that enhances understanding of the conflict's impact on regional geopolitics and international relations. The research questions guiding this study include: What are the historical origins and key events that have shaped the Israel-Palestine conflict and to what extend its related to the Arab-Israeli one? How have the roles and attitudes of Arab states towards the Palestinian cause evolved over time? How have the roles and attitudes of Arab states towards Isreal changed evolved over time? What theoretical frameworks can be used to analyze the motivations and behaviors of states involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict? How have recent normalization agreements between Arab states and Israel impacted the dynamics of the conflict?

In conclusion, this thesis seeks to contribute to scholarly debate by combining historical insights, theoretical viewpoints, and empirical data to present a nuanced explanation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. This study aims to improve understanding of one of the world's most

enduring and complicated wars by investigating its intricate history and shifting dynamics, as well as provide insights into its impact on regional geopolitics and international relations.

Chapter One: Origins and Historical Background of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Introduction:

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been a protracted and deeply ingrained issue in the Middle East, causing significant instability for decades. It refers to the political and military disputes between several Arab governments and Israel. The struggle can be traced back to the development of Zionism and Arab nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century. The dispute is mostly about Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs claiming the same land, with each side having their own story and sense of belonging. The area claimed by the Jewish people as their ancient God-granted homeland is likewise seen by the Arabs as historically and currently the homeland to a large Palestinian population.

The modern conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews began in the early twentieth century, culminating in a full-fledged war in 1947 and morphing into the First Arab-Israeli War in May 1948, following the Declaration of the State of Israel. This chapter will look at the major factors that led to the establishment of Israel and the subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as the events surrounding World War I, such as the Balfour Declaration, which stated that the British intended to establish an independent Jewish state in the region of Palestine.

The chapter will also examine the significant impact of World War II and the United Nations' decision in 1947, which resulted in the partition plan for two separate states, the birth of the new state of Israel, an Arab-Israeli conflict, and various Arab reactions to all of these critical events. Furthermore, it will follow the major historical stages of the Arab-Israeli conflict, beginning with the first Arab-Israeli conflicts and progressing through the establishment of peace procedures to the most recent normalization accords with Israel. By

studying these significant historical occurrences, the chapter hopes to provide a comprehensive perspective of the Arab-Israeli conflict's growth across time, from warfare to normalization.

I. How it started?

"History lies at the core of every conflict. Only a true and unbiased understanding of the past can offer the possibility of peace. In contrast, the distortion or manipulation of history will only sow disaster." With these few words, the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, have initiated his controversial book *Ten Myths About Israel* (7), the main inspiration behind this part of the research. Ilan Pappé's quote speaks to the heart of every conflict, highlighting how our understanding of history shapes our path to peace. He insists on the need for an honest and open exploration of the past, where we embrace different perspectives. By doing so, we can work towards reconciliation. However, when history is twisted or used to serve agendas, it only deepens wounds and fuels conflict. Urging recognition that the road to peace starts with a genuine, human approach to history, one that seeks truth and empathy over manipulation.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a classic example of how historical deception, even in the most recent past, contributes significantly to the war's continuation and diminishes chances for a peaceful resolution (Finkelstein 13). Examining the historical foundations of the Arab-Israeli conflict provides insight into how past events have impacted and fueled current tensions, with the goal of providing a better understanding of the conflict and its future potential.

1. History of The Land of Palestine

One of the most prominent examples of historical debates is the different narratives of the Israel-Palestine conflict, which has always been a multifaceted and tense one, with numerous parties giving their interpretations of the past. One of its main contentious grounds of dispute is the Israeli claim that the land of Palestine was an empty land before the migration of the Jews, who asserts that the territory was deserted and that Jewish settlers brought civilization and culture to the region (Pappé 13). However, historical evidence paints a very

different picture, which indicates that the land that is now known as Israel or Palestine was actually inhabited by a thriving Palestinian population long before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. With archaeological findings and historical documents supporting the presence of indigenous communities in the region with a rich cultural and historical heritage that dates back centuries (Abu Hussein and McKay).

The geopolitical space today called Israel or Palestine has been a recognized country since Roman times. With a rich and diverse history, that stretches back millennia. Situated at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe, Palestine has been a land of significant geopolitical importance throughout the ages. From its ancient roots to the modern era various civilizations, empires, and cultures, each leaving its mark on the land and its people (Pappé 14), have shaped Palestine.

Palestine's rich history predates Roman times, since one of the earliest mentions of the world "Palestine" dates back to Roman times when the land was designated as "Palestina" (Masalha 143). According archaeological evidences traced human habitation back to prehistoric eras proving that over the centuries, the region was home to diverse indigenous peoples like Canaanites, Philistines, and Israelites, each leaving a unique cultural and religious imprint on the land (Martin 2).

The Israeli historian Illan Pappé mentioned in his book *A History of Modern Palestine* that from 3000 BC and for another 1500 years onwards, it was the land of the Canaanites. In around 1500 BC the land of Canaan fell under Egyptian rule, not for the last time in history and then successfully under Philistine (1200-975), Israelite (1000-923), Phoenician (923-700), Assyrian (700-612), Babylonian (586-539), Persian (539-332), Macedonian (332-63), Roman (63BC-636CE), Arab (636-1200), Crusade (1099-1291), Ayubi (1187-1253), Mamluk (1253-1516) and Ottoman rules (1517-1917). Each rule divided the land in a certain administrative way that reflected its political culture and time. But apart from the early Roman period and the

early Arab period when vast population were moved out and in, the society remained-- ethnically, culturally and religiously the same. Within what we recognize today as Mandatory Palestine this society developed its own oneness and distinctive features (27-32).

From the mid-seventh century onwards, Palestine's history was closely linked to the Arab and Muslim worlds (with a short interval in the medieval period when it was ceded to the Crusaders). As the second-holiest destination in Islam after Mecca and Medina, it was sought after by numerous Muslim dynasties and empires from the country's north, east, and south. Naturally, because of its advantageous location and fertility, it also had other attractions. The cultural richness of some of these past rulers can still be seen in parts of Israel and Palestine, although local archaeology gives precedence to Roman and Jewish heritages and hence the legacy of the Mamelukes and the Seljuk, those fertile and thriving medieval Islamic dynasties, has not yet been excavated (Walmsley and Schick).

Considerably more pertinent to comprehending modern-day Israel and Palestine is the Ottoman era, which began with their takeover of the region in 1517. After 400 years of occupation, the Ottomans left behind a legacy that is still evident today in a number of ways. The importance of the Ottoman presence is attested to by the legal system of Israel, the land registration (The tapu), the religious court records (The sijjil), and a few architectural treasures. Upon their arrival, the Ottomans discovered a predominantly rural, Sunni Muslim culture, with small Arabic-speaking urban elite, while the Christian population was likely between 10 and 15 percent. However, the exact percentage of Jews before the rise of Zionism is uncertain, it probably approached 2 to 5 percent according to Ottoman records, which stated that the population of what is now Israel/Palestine was 462,465 in 1878. 403,795 Muslims were representing an 87%, 43,659 Christians as 10%, and 15,011 Jews as 3% (Mandel 188).

It is necessary to understand that Palestine during the Ottoman period was a society like all the other Arab societies around it. It did not differ from the Eastern Mediterranean countries

as a whole. Rather than encircled and isolated, the Palestinian people were readily exposed to interactions with other cultures, as part of the wider Ottoman Empire. Moreover, being open to change and modernization, Palestine began to develop as a nation long before the arrival of the Zionist movement. In the hands of energetic local rulers such as Daher al-Umar (1690–1775), the towns of Haifa, Shefamr, Tiberias, and Acre were renovated and re-energized. The coastal network of ports and towns boomed through its trade connections with Europe, while the inner plains traded inland with nearby regions. The very opposite of a desert, Palestine was a flourishing part of Bilad al-Sham (the land of the north), or the Levant of its time. At the same time, a rich agricultural industry, small towns and historical cities served a population of half a million people on the eve of the Zionist arrival (Doumani).

In the late 19th century, Palestine had a primarily non-Jewish population, with only a small Jewish minority that was notably opposed to Zionist ideology. The population, dispersed throughout villages numbering nearly 1,000, and an affluent urban elite living along the coast, plains, and mountains, was on the verge of defining its identity in the face of oncoming Zionist annexation. Like elsewhere in the Middle East, the concept of nationalism emerged as a powerful force, fueled by both internal and external factors. American missionaries arrived in the early 1800s and instilled nationalist ideas alongside Christianity, mimicking America's own culture of self-determination. This ideological infusion fostered a desire for autonomy among Palestine's educated elite, reflecting comparable movements throughout the Arab world (Sammy).

Meanwhile, throughout the Ottoman Empire, a move toward Turkish-centric nationalism generated dissatisfaction among non-Turkish subjects, particularly Arabs. This nationalist enthusiasm, combined with secularization trends, resulted in the creation of secular national identities, which were particularly popular among minority communities such as Christians (Khalidi). In Palestine, Christians and Muslims found common ground in nationalist

aspirations, as seen by the proliferation of Muslim-Christian communities after WWI. However, the emergence of Zionism demanded unwavering loyalty from the Jewish community, precluding similar cross-religious alliances witnessed elsewhere in the Arab world (Muslih).

Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian historian, demonstrates in his book *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* how forces such as modernity, the demise of the Ottoman Empire, and European imperialism in the Middle East created the framework for Palestinian nationalism long before Zionism emerged. This nationalism was obvious in the identification of Palestine as a geographical and cultural entity, which eventually evolved into a political identity. Despite the absence of a sovereign Palestinian state, Palestinians felt a strong sense of community and belonging. This cultural identity was evident in many elements of Palestinian life, including language, customs, and rituals (22-29).

Furthermore, during this period of time Palestine was recognized worldwide as a separate country on maps according to plenty historical records (“Israel & Palestine: The Maps Tell the True Story”), and what reinforced the land’s significance is the widespread adoption of the term "Palestine" to refer to the region, not just as a geographical entity but also as a cultural and later political entity. For instance, the early 20th-century newspaper “Filastin” exemplified this by its use of the term "Palestine" to refer to the country, highlighting the people's deep-rooted connection to their land (Shomali). Hence, despite the absence of a formal Palestinian state, the cultural landscape of Palestine remained distinctly clear so far, characterized by a shared sense of belonging among its people.

The 19th century in Palestine was marked by significant transformations, including the Ottoman Reformation, European invasion, and the rise of Zionism. During the first decades of the 19th century, Palestine's identity as a geopolitical entity became more defined due to Ottoman administrative reforms, those reformations, also known as the Tanzimat (Biger 23),

was a series of reform acts initiated by the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19th century. These reforms aimed to modernize the empire and strengthen its position against European powers.

However, in Palestine those “Tanzimat” led to the empowerment of the new urban elite. Some historians related that to the increased European economic and political influence in the region, facilitated by those reforms that paved the way for the presence of European consuls and merchants in the area. The Tanzimat reforms also led to the emergence of a national and secular society in Palestine, supported by the secular education introduced by American missionaries (Dowty 3). All those combined factors marked the beginning of the end for the Ottoman Empire, as it struggled to adapt to changing dynamics while facing territorial losses and internal reforms, ultimately side by side with the increased European presence and influence in the region.

2. The Rise of Zionism

The claim that was highlighted by Ilan Pappé in the beginning of this chapter, that “Palestine was a land without people”, goes hand in hand with the claim that the “Jews were a people without a land”. Which can be considered as the traditional aspiration of the core ideology of Zionism, which emerged as an intellectual and practical movement in Europe in the late 19th century, with its origins tracing back centuries earlier.

2.1. The Early Roots of Zionism

Recent scholarship, such as Shlomo Sand's "The Invention of the Jewish People," argues that Zionism began as a Christian colonization enterprise and later became Jewish. Sand's work demonstrates how the Christian world, notably during the Reformation, accepted the belief that Jews were destined to return to Palestine as a result of divine prophecy. This link between the end times and the Jewish return to the Holy Land resonated with Protestant theologians such as Thomas Brightman the sixteenth-century English clergyman, who represented these notions

when he wrote: “Shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain the prophets do everywhere confirm it and beat about it.” (544)

Brightman was not only hoping for a divine promise to be fulfilled; he also, like so many after him, wished the Jews either to convert to Christianity or to leave Europe all together. A hundred years later Charles-Joseph of Lign, an Austro-Hungarian field marshal, stated in the second half of the eighteenth century:

“I believe that the Jew is not able to assimilate, and that he will constantly constitute a nation within a nation, wherever he may be. The simplest thing to do would in my opinion be returning to them their homeland, from which they were driven. As is quite apparent from this last text, there was an obvious link between these formative ideas of Zionism and a more longstanding anti-Semitism.” (Baruch 20)

Around the same period, François-René de Chateaubriand, a notable French writer and politician, stated the Jews were "the legitimate masters of Judea." He influenced Napoleon Bonaparte, who wanted to enlist the assistance of the Jewish population in Palestine, as well as other residents of the region, in his endeavor to dominate the Middle East at the turn of the nineteenth century. He promised them "return to Palestine" and the establishment of a state (Sawafta). Therefore, it is safe to say that Zionism began as a Christian colonial endeavor before evolving into a Jewish religious and political ideology.

2.2. The Emergence of Zionism in Europe

Zionism arose in Europe in two distinct ways. It first developed in the center sections of the continent as an intellectual conceptualization of European Jewry's dilemma, and then in Eastern Europe as a practical solution to that predicament. At the heart of the intellectual movement stood Theodor Herzl, a Viennese Jew who at the age of thirty abandoned an unsuccessful career as a playwright and journalist to lead the Jewish national movement on a

course that would end with the colonization of Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century (Pappe).

Herzl is generally regarded as the founder of the Zionist movement, yet he did not invent Zionism. The term “Zionism” itself was first publicly used in the early 1890s by the Jewish writer Nathan Birnbaum, to distinguish the political movement from the efforts of “practical” settlement. In 1896, Herzl published His famous work “The Jewish State”, which served as the manifesto of the young movement. Herzl's concept of a national solution for European Jews was not original, but rather based on intellectual Jewish proto-nationalism that evolved in Eastern Europe in the 1850s. This movement ushered in a time of Jewish cultural revivalism and renaissance, in which experts abandoned religious dogmatism in favor of reason and science to solve the Jewish situation in Europe (Kornberg).

Furthermore, Herzl's motivation by the Dreyfus incident in France felt a sense of urgency that the scholars did not, prompting him to advocate for Zionism as a remedy to anti-Semitism throughout Europe. The Dreyfus affair, where a Jewish officer named Alfred Dreyfus was falsely accused of treason due to anti-Semitism, convinced Herzl that assimilation was not a viable solution. He believed that European Jews needed to leave for Zion, the land of Israel, to rebuild themselves as a European nation outside Europe. In 1897, he ultimately created the World Zionist Organization (WZO) at the First Zionist Congress in Basel (Woollen and Cahm 734).

Herzl initially sought support from the Jewish elite in the West, but was met with greater passion and support from the impoverished and persecuted Jewish populations of Eastern Europe. Despite initial criticism from Western diplomats and financiers, Herzl's idea gained popularity, recruiting intellectuals throughout Europe (Klausner 11). Along with 200 of his friends and delegates from Eastern Europe, Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress in Basle

in 1897. Here, Zionist ideologues from all over Europe not only discussed the making of a Jewish Athens but also expressed a desire for a Zionist Sparta.

The first Zionist Congress, held in Basel in 1897, culminated in the development of the Zionist platform known as “the Basel Program”, the formation of the Zionist Organization, and ultimately brought together Zionist ideologues to discuss the formation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. However, the Second Congress of 1898 emphasized the importance of colonizing the land, with the goal of mobilizing a large number of Jewish settlers to occupy the region and build a nation. At the Third Congress in 1899, Theodor Herzl proposed seeking a chartered lease from the Ottoman Sultan for Palestine, but his efforts were unsuccessful as the Sultan rejected the request (Segef 75).

Although he fared no better in the courts of European monarchs or the antechambers of presidents, His rejection by the political elite and establishments identified Hertzels later on as a visionary and a savior, which resonated deeply within Zionist thinking, especially among Israelis in the aftermath of World War II. Hence, Herzl's legacy endured as a symbol of foresight and determination for Zionists and Israelis. His vision played a major role in transforming the Jewish life in Europe to supporting the colonization of Palestine (Stanislawski).

2.3.The Zionist Arrival to Palestine

Towards the late 19th century, a pragmatic faction emerged within the Zionist movement, distinct from Herzl's vision. Known as "territorial Zionists," led by Haim Weizmann, were driven by a combination of passionate nationalism and socialist ideology. They sought sanctuary in Palestine because of rising anti-Semitic violence in Eastern Europe, particularly Russia (Sack 16). Following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, a wave of pogroms fueled Jewish flight. Many people moved to the United States, while others, particularly students, joined national groups throughout Europe. The first wave of Jewish

immigrants, known as the "First Aliya," came in Palestine in 1882, believing that immigration would lead to a better life (Raider 3).

Those early pioneers, known as haluzim, settled in Palestine, drawn to the image of American westward expansion. They founded Zionist colonies, led by charismatic figures such as Moshe Lilienblum and Leon Pinsker, and advocated for Jewish immigration to Palestine. Despite their financial difficulties, they obtained assistance from Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who initially sponsored the settlements (Patai and Schama). However, disputes emerged as Rothschild's interests conflicted with those of the settlers, prompting him to withdraw his backing in 1899. The Zionist Organization for the Settlement of the Land of Palestine then took over Rothschild's backing. Initially, the Ottoman government opposed Zionist immigration and enacted regulations to limit Jewish immigration. However, British pressure in 1888 led to the easing of these restrictions, albeit not entirely removing those (Khan et al.).

However, the first arrival of Zionism and Zionist ideologies to Palestine can be traced back to the early twentieth century, when Jewish immigration to the region increased considerably. The First Aliyah, which took place between 1881 and 1903, saw a significant inflow of Jewish settlers to Ottoman-controlled Palestine, fueled by economic hardships, persecution in Russia, and the growth of nationalist parties such as Hibbat Zion and the Bilu Movement. These early Zionist settlers wanted to build agricultural colonies and lay the groundwork for a future Jewish country. The spread of Zionist books and ideas, such as the 1911 translations of the Jewish Encyclopedia published in Arabic newspapers, was critical in familiarizing the local Arab populace with the Zionist philosophy and objectives (Halperin 1068-1078).

The first waves brought between 25,000 and 35,000 Jewish immigrants to Ottoman Syria, including Palestine. Seeking to establish a presence in the area. These early Zionist settlers were motivated by the vision of creating a national homeland for the Jewish people in

Palestine, drawing upon historical and religious ties to the land. They began buying properties, purchasing land and initiating agricultural endeavors laying the framework for the construction of Jewish colonies and the slow expansion of the Zionist movement in the area. Making the beginning of a transformative process that would shape the demographic, cultural, and political landscape of the region in the years to come.

3. Mandatory Palestine

3.1. The Fall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I

The Ottoman rule over Palestine, commencing in the 16th century, entrenched the region's connection to the broader Ottoman Empire. Organized into three states – Jerusalem, Gaza, and Nablus – under the Damascus Province, Palestine assumed strategic importance within Ottoman governance. Despite its religious significance to Muslims, Christians, and Jews, tensions persisted, particularly in Jerusalem, where sacred sites remained fiercely contested among various denominations of Christianity. The Ottoman administrative methods dominated Palestine, maintaining order amidst the chaos wrought by Western incursions in the 19th century (Kumar 74).

Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire's rule in Palestine was distinguished by a centralized administrative organization that kept a firm grip on the region. The empire nominated local governors and awarded economic positions to particular families, influencing the social and political environment of Palestine. This hierarchical organization enabled the Ottomans to wield power and authority over the local inhabitants (Mather 471). However, eventually their governance of Palestine ended by the fall of the Empire in the aftermath of World War I, after an over 400 years rule. Its decline came as a result of the empire's defeat in the war along with numerous internal and external problems that eventually contributed to its demise.

Internally, the Ottomans faced economic and political instability, as well as rising nationalism sentiment among its various ethnic and religious groups. Externally, the growth of

European colonial powers, particularly the British Empire, posed a threat to the Ottomans' rule of the Middle East and Palestine. The Ottoman Empire's decision to cooperate with the Central Powers during World War I proved calamitous, resulting in defeat and the loss of territory, including Palestine. Following the war, the British Mandate for Palestine was established, thus ending the Ottoman Empire's authority in the region (Evrensel and Minx).

3.2. The Sykes–Picot Agreement

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a secret treaty signed in May 1916 by British and French diplomats, Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot, respectively, during World War I. The agreement sought to split the Ottoman Empire's Arab territories between French and British spheres of influence, except the Arabian Peninsula. The Allied Powers made the agreement official at the San Remo Conference in 1920, and it was further revised to form the current Middle East. The agreement's primary goal was to divide the region into areas where France and Britain would have influence and control, with the understanding that they would recognize and protect an independent Arab state or confederation of Arab states in exchange for Arab assistance in defeating the Ottoman Empire (Rogan 286).

The agreement outlined that Britain would get control over modern-day southern Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and southern Iraq, along with a small area containing the ports of Haifa and Acre for Mediterranean access. France was designated control over southeastern Turkey, the Kurdistan Region, Syria, and Lebanon. Russia was to receive Western Armenia, Constantinople, and the Turkish Straits as per the earlier 1915 Constantinople Agreement. Notably, the agreement proposed an "international administration" for Palestine as quoted in the Sykes–Picot Agreement: "Palestine, because of the holy places, should be under an international regime" ("Sykes-Picot Agreement - World War I Document Archive"), meaning that Palestine, due to the presence of holy sites would be placed under international administration, rather than being directly controlled by either France or Britain (Kattan).

However, this was short-lived, as in 1920, it gave way to complete British rule over the area under the guise of "Mandatory Palestine". This change of Palestine's government to British rule was a turning point that paved the way for rival Arab and Zionist nationalist organizations. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, in particular, brought attention to the British government's false promises made to both sides, which exacerbated already existing tensions and complexity in the region (Mikaberidze 861).

3.3.The Balfour Declaration

A statement declared by the British Government in 1917, amid the height of the First World War, endorsing the creation of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. The proclamation was included in a letter sent to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland on November 2, 1917, from British Jewish leader Lord Rothschild, by Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour of the United Kingdom. The statement said: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."(Balfour) Marking a significant shift in British policy towards Palestine, laying the groundwork for the eventual creation of Israel.

On November 9, 1917, the declaration's text was made public for the first time by the press, Highlighting how the declaration also contained a crucial promise to safeguard the rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine, stating: "Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine" (Balfour), paving the way for the Zionist movement's hopes for a Jewish state in the area.

Tensions and difficulties in the area resulted from the declaration's support for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, which was at odds with Britain's earlier commitments to the Arab populace. Although it was stated in the declaration, the Zionist movement gained momentum and made it more difficult to carry out the pledge to defend the rights of the non-Jewish populations in Palestine. The complicated history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and

the legacy of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine are interwoven, reflecting the competing interests and aspirations that have defined the dynamics of the region for many years (Hurewitz).

3.4. British Palestine (1917-1948)

The British Mandate in Palestine, established in 1920, had a profound impact on the region's future, shaping the course of Arab aspirations for self-rule. Despite promises of autonomy, Palestine remained under a strict colonial administration that lacked representation and local involvement (Fieldhouse 115). Unlike other places under British rule, Palestine was not equipped with the necessary institutions for self-governance when the British left in 1948, leaving the region vulnerable to internal conflict and uncertainty.

The mandate's roots lie in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the geopolitical changes following World War I. Motivated by the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, the mandate prioritized Zionist goals over Arab self-determination, sparking tensions and laying the groundwork for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Henry et al. 128). This move dashed Arab hopes for an autonomous Palestine within a federated Syrian state, fueling discontent with British rule.

The mandate period in Palestine was marked by waves of Jewish immigration and the rise of nationalist movements among both Arab and Jewish communities. Internal divisions among Arab nationalist factions, including influential families like the Ḥusaynīs and Nashāshībīs, added to the complexity. The Ḥusaynī family, notably anti-British, wielded significant power, while Jewish organizations, led by the World Zionist Organization, pursued different strategies, from cooperation to pushing for a Jewish state. Despite British efforts to control tensions, conflicts over land and immigration persisted, leading to clashes like the 1929 Arab revolt (Brown and Segev).

The Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 marked a significant turning point in Palestinian history, representing the first sustained violent uprising by Palestinian Arabs in over a century. Sparked by religious and nationalist fervor following the death of Sheikh ‘Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām, the revolt quickly escalated into widespread violence and unrest. Arab demands for independence and opposition to Jewish immigration and land acquisition were met with a forceful British response, resulting in thousands of casualties and significant damage to Arab nationalist movements (El-Eini). The revolt ultimately failed to achieve its objectives, leading to the dissolution of the Arab Higher Committee and the arrest of key leaders, while leaving Palestinian Arabs dispirited and divided .

Amidst escalating tensions, British efforts to address the Palestine question through partition were met with resistance from both Arab and Jewish communities. The Peel Commission's recommendation for partition was rejected by the Arab population, who viewed the proposal as a threat to their sovereignty and homeland. Subsequent British initiatives, including the 1939 White Paper, which limited Jewish immigration and land acquisition, further strained relations between Zionist and Arab factions, marking the end of the Anglo-Zionist entente. Despite this, Zionist institutions in Palestine continued to strengthen throughout the 1930s, laying the groundwork for the eventual establishment of a Jewish state (Kolinsky).

In 1947, Britain decided to relinquish its Mandate over Palestine and brought the issue to the United Nations, which recommended a partition plan dividing Palestine into Arab and Jewish States, with Jerusalem under UN administration for ten years. The Jewish population of Palestine accepted the plan, while the Arab population and Arab States rejected it. This proposal was not legally binding and was never implemented. The partition plan was influenced by the racial attitudes towards Jews and Arabs in Europe during the first half of the 20th century, shaping the perception of the conflict as a clash between two nations rather than European

settlers and Arab natives. The failure to implement the partition plan contributed to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, affecting identities and peace processes in the region (Wallach).

In 1948, following the expiration of the British Mandate, Israel declared independence based on the right of self-determination recognized by the League of Nations and the UN. This declaration did not specify borders or the capital of the new state. The 1948 Arab-Israeli War ensued, with Israel ultimately defeating the Arab armies and expanding its territory beyond the UN partition plan, establishing the state of Israel on three-quarters of Palestine (Rogachevsky and Zigler). The drafting of Israel's Declaration of Independence during this period shed light on the political, diplomatic, and value-based dilemmas faced by Israel's leaders as they navigated the path to independence and shaped the foundational political text of modern Israel (Caden and Arielli).

3.5. Withdrawing the Mandate and the Israeli Statehood

Britain, in agreement with the United States, collaborated to address the Jewish crisis, which received widespread sympathy in both the United States and Britain. Winston Churchill pushed hard to overturn the 1939 White Paper, which was the cause of Nazi-expelled Jewish suffering. Harry Truman, who studied the Old Testament and believed Palestine was a pure Jewish land, was concerned about the Jews (Davidson 174). Without consulting the State Department's Division of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), he asked Clement Attlee's Labour government to allow Jewish refugees to enter Palestine. The British government welcomed the initiative but requested collaboration in finding a solution for Zionists, Arabs, and the current situation of Jewish refugees in camps.

Following various commissions and an Anglo-American Committee, the United Kingdom concluded that this matter is "insoluble". Furthermore, tensions between the two communities that lived in Palestine increased and turned into clashes. As a result, the subject was moved to the United Nations, which was unable to govern the mission. In May 1947, the

United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was established to resolve the Palestinian issue (sable 102).

Based on its report, the UNSCOP made the decision to establish two separate nations for economic cooperation and an international area under UN trusteeship. The discussions were recorded in the 181(II) resolution. This suggested that the British Mandate over Palestine would be terminated shortly. Harry Truman, who "had faith in Israel before it was established" (US Congress 7), offered a plan to the United Nations in March 1948. Because the Jewish agency was satisfied with both the UN plan and the American proposal, the United States voted for either. Palestinian Arabs, like all Arab leaders, opposed the proposals and desired a single autonomous state for the majority Arabs and the existing Jews. More immigration was strongly opposed by Palestinian Arabs.

In May 1948, The British Mandate came to end leaving the conflict to continue. Following the civil war that took place during the British Mandatory period, Israel declared independence on May 14, infuriating neighboring Arab governments. The United States was the first to acknowledge it. On May 15, the Arab-Israeli conflict broke out. It is worth noting that Britain had indirectly contributed to the strength of Israel's army. Britain strengthened Israel more than ever before, whether by training the Haganah, weakening the Arab Liberation Army following the Great Revolt, or even leaving or losing British strategic armaments to militant Jewish organizations (Rodgers).

Subsequently, a Coalition of a number of armies from the Arab League, which encompassed Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Transjordan worked together to rival Israel. The Arab army entered Palestine, or the Israeli lands as Israeli forces invaded most of the territory of the two states meant by the UN partition resolution. Despite Israel's initial lack of preparation, with support from France, the U.S., and primarily Czechoslovakia, Israel managed

to match the Arab forces. Key contributions included well-trained American aviators, French arms shipments, and Czechoslovakian armament contracts (Macmillan 74).

Following successful operations, a UN-brokered truce was declared, but peace proposals were rejected by both sides. Hostilities resumed, with Israel bolstering its forces through immigrant recruits. In a notable event, Israeli forces attacked the British Royal Air Force (RAF) in Sinai, risking war with Britain. However, conflict was averted thanks to recommendations from British commanders (Waage).

An armistice involving all warring parties marked the war's end, known as the War of Independence to Israelis and the Nakba to Arabs. Over 750,000 Palestinian Arabs were displaced from their homes, with entire villages and provinces uprooted. Israel expanded its territory beyond the allocated borders, reaching countries it had been at war with. Despite UN Resolution 194 promising the right of return for displaced Palestinians (Hammami), it was not however never fulfilled.

II. History of the Arab–Israeli conflict and the Changing Dynamics

The Arab-Israeli conflict began in the twentieth century, arising from earlier intercommunal violence in Mandatory Palestine. With the establishment of Israel in 1948, the conflict escalated into a major international issue. The Arab-Israeli conflict has resulted in at least five major wars and several lesser conflicts. It has also been the site of two significant Palestinian uprisings “intifadas”.

1. The 1948 Arab–Israeli War: Between the "War of Independence" and “al-Nakba”

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War (1948-49), also known as the "War of Independence" by Israelis and al-Nakba by Palestinians, began in November 1947, following the UN Partition Plan and the subsequent 1947-48 Civil War in Mandatory Palestine. The concept called for the formation of Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. The Arabs had rejected the plan, whereas the

Jews had welcomed it. For four months, amid constant Arab provocation and attack, the Yishuv was mostly on the defensive, with rare retaliation. By March 1948, however, the United States had aggressively sought a temporary UN-approved trusteeship rather than quick partition, known as the Truman trusteeship proposal. But the Jewish leadership opposed this (Morris 79).

Jordanian, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, and Saudi forces invaded Palestine following the British withdrawal and the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. This invasion however was condemned by the US, the Soviet Union, and UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie, but it received support from Taiwan and other UN member states (Tucker). Both Jewish and Arab militias had launched battles to dominate area inside and outside the established lines, resulting in an open war between the two communities. And the Arab states announced their intention to establish a "United State of Palestine" in place of Israel.

According to the Arab Higher Committee, Jews will account for no more than one-seventh of the Palestinian population in the future. Only Jews who lived in Palestine prior to the British mandate and considered the UN Plan invalid because Palestine's Arab majority opposed it; they also claimed that the British withdrawal resulted in a lack of legal authority, forcing them to protect Arab lives and property (Morris 66).

About two-thirds of Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from Jewish-controlled territory, with the remainder becoming Arab citizens of Israel. All of the relatively smaller number of Jews in Arab-captured territory, such as Jerusalem's Old City, left or were expelled. According to the official United Nations estimate, 711,000 Arabs were refugees during the war (Albadawi). The conflict ended in 1949 when Israel and its warring neighbors (Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria) signed various Armistice Agreements that established Israeli control over the Jewish state's territory and little more than half of the Arab state's territory. Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip, while Jordan occupied the West Bank, until Israel captured both in June 1967 during the Six-Day War (Sela 58–121).

2. Between 1956 and 1967

Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula and British and French forces landed at the port of Suez in 1956 as part of a joint Israeli-British-French operation. The official goal of the invasion was to keep the warring parties apart, but the true goal of Great Britain and France was to defend the interests of investors in those nations who had been impacted by Egyptian President Nasser's decision to nationalize the Suez Canal (Varble).

They provided justification for the invasion by claiming that it was necessary to restore Israeli shipping rights via the Straits of Tiran, which Egypt claimed were within its territorial waters, and to halt attacks against Israeli civilians. Under pressure from the United States and other countries, the invading forces decided to leave, and Israel withdrew from the Sinai as well, in exchange for the UN Emergency Forces being stationed there and assurances that Israel would be able to move its goods freely. Egyptians, as opposed to British and French, were left in charge of the canal.

This period also saw the emergence of Nasserism, the founding of the United Arab Republic in 1958 and its collapse in 1961, Syrian plans for the diversion of water from the Jordan River; continued Fedayeen raids, mostly from Syria and Jordan, and Israeli reprisals, and the increasing alignment of the Arab states with the Soviet Union, who became their largest arms supplier. In 1964, the PLO was established by mostly Palestinian refugees mostly from Jordan. The Article 24 of the Palestinian National Charter of 1964 stated: "This Organization does not exercise any territorial sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the Gaza Strip or in the Himmah Area" (Sela 62).

3. War of 1967 (The Six days War)

A false report from the Soviet intelligence services to Nasser that Israel was gathering forces close to the Israeli-Syrian border set the stage for the Six-Day War. Following heightened hostilities between Israel and Jordan and Syria, namely the Samu Incident, the situation in the

conflict was also extremely severe. General Mohamed Fawzi arrived in Syria on May 14, 1967, for a one-day visit. He confirmed the veracity of the Soviet information and stated that there were no Israeli military personnel approximately the Syrian border (Slater).

Nevertheless, on May 14, 1967, Nasser announced Egypt's complete mobilization, referencing the shared defense pact with Syria. The next steps taken by Egypt were the deployment of 100,000 troops to the Sinai Peninsula, the evacuation of UNEF peacekeeping forces (UNEF II) from the Sinai Peninsula along the Israeli border, and the closing of the Straits of Tiran on May 21–22, 1967 (which, in accordance with one possible interpretation of international law, "blocking all shipping to and from Eilat... a casus belli"). With its partially activated reserves included, the Israeli army could muster up to 264,000 soldiers (Tomkys).

After international diplomatic attempts to resolve the problem failed, Israel launched surprise airstrikes on June 6, 1967, which destroyed the entire Egyptian air force while it was still on the ground, sparking the start of the Six-Day War. Jordan and Syria started bombarding Israeli sites despite Israel's appeal for Jordan to stop attacking it (Oren 64). Furthermore, Hussein first resisted sending useless bomber raids, but eventually complied after Nasser insisted on a solid Egyptian win.

Later in the day, as fighting broke out on other fronts, attacks were launched against additional Arab air forces. The Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula were taken over by Israel after a ground incursion into Egyptian territory. Israel chose to launch an attack after the Egyptian front saw quick and unexpected success. On June 7, they took the West Bank from Jordan, and on June 9, they successfully took the Golan Heights from Syria (Oren 65).

- **The Khartoum Resolution, UN Resolution 242, and peace proposals**

The Khartoum Resolution of September 1, 1967, was adopted at the end of the 1967 Arab League summit, which was held in Sudan's capital city of Khartoum, following the Six-

Day War. The resolution demanded the creation of the Kuwaiti-led Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and put an end to the oil boycott that the Arab countries had announced during the Six-Day War. Regarding the dispute with Israel, it stated:

The Arab Heads of State have agreed to unite their political efforts at the international and diplomatic level to eliminate the effects of the aggression and to ensure the withdrawal of the aggressive Israeli forces from the Arab lands, This will be done within the framework of the main principles by which the Arab States abide, namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it. (“Khartoum Resolution Document”)

Israel and some analysts however, interpreted the "three noes" of the resolution as a firm proof of Arab intransigence. Others observed that rather than calling for Israel's destruction, the resolution asked for Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines, and they interpreted the "three noes" to signify that the Arab governments needed to negotiate collectively rather than separately (Tessler 409–410).

The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 242, a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, after the Six-Day War. Israel, Jordan, and Egypt supported the resolution, while Syria rejected it until the Yom Kippur War in 1972–1973. Resolution 242 is still debatable today because different interpretations differ about how much area Israel would have to give up in order to comply with the resolution. Additionally, Palestinian nationalism also expanded following the conflict and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Both the Arab countries that lost the war and the recently captured regions were urged to mount armed resistance (Sela 68).

4. War of 1973 (Yom Kippur War)

On “Yom Kippur” 1973 the Jewish day of fasting, a new war has launched, that soon would be known as The Yom Kippur War, the Ramadan War or the October War, the military conflict was mainly between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria and lasted from October 6 to 25, 1973. The main battlefield of this war happened to in the Sinai

Peninsula and the Golan Heights, both of which Israel had conquered in 1967, with some fighting in African Egypt and northern Israel. Egypt's intended goal in the conflict was to establish a footing on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal and then use these victories to negotiate the return of the remaining Israeli-occupied Sinai Peninsula (Rosenberg).

On the afternoon of October 6, Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated attack on Israel from two fronts. Leveraging the element of surprise, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal with unexpected ease, experiencing only minimal casualties, while Syrian forces managed to breach Israeli defenses and advance into the Golan Heights. The intensity of these attacks, in stark contrast to the events of 1967, quickly began to deplete Israel's reserve munitions. Faced with this crisis, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir urgently sought assistance from the United States, while the Israeli military leadership scrambled to devise a battle strategy (Richard).

Initially hesitant, the U.S. rapidly shifted its stance when the Soviet Union began resupplying Egypt and Syria. In response, President Nixon initiated an emergency supply line to Israel, despite the severe economic impact of an oil embargo imposed by Arab nations and the refusal of several U.S. allies to aid in the arms shipments, giving the Israel Defense Forces the upper hand. They successfully disabled segments of the Egyptian air defenses, enabling Israeli forces under the command of General Ariel Sharon to cross the Suez Canal and encircle the Egyptian Third Army. On the Golan front, Israeli troops, despite suffering heavy losses, repelled the Syrians and advanced to the edge of the Golan plateau along the road to Damascus (Hughes 13-15).

The Egypt and Syria's surprise attack on Sinai and Golan made progress in the first 24 to 48 hours before the tide started to turn in Israel's advantage. The Syrians had been driven completely from the Golan Heights by the second week of the conflict. Israeli forces had crossed the Suez Canal (where the previous ceasefire line had been) and cut off the Egyptian

army in the Sinai to the south, right before a UN ceasefire went into action. They had also struck at the "hinge" between two invading Egyptian armies.

On October 22, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 338, calling upon all parties to cease hostilities within 12 hours and to immediately start negotiations ("Security Council Resolution 338: Ceasefire in the Middle East"). However, fighting continued for several days, leading the UN to reiterate its call for a cease-fire with Resolutions 339 and 340. Under mounting international pressure, the conflict finally ended on October 26. Israel signed a formal cease-fire agreement with Egypt on November 11 and with Syria on May 31, 1974.

In order to sustain the cease-fire between Israel and Egypt, a disengagement agreement reached on January 18, 1974, required Israel to withdraw its forces into Sinai west of the Mitla and Gidi crossings, while Egypt reduced the bulk of its forces on the canal's east bank. A UN peacekeeping force created a buffer zone between the two forces. The Israel-Egypt agreement was strengthened by another inked on September 4, 1975, which included more troop withdrawals and the enlargement of the UN buffer zone.

On March 26, 1979, Israel and Egypt made history by signing a permanent peace agreement that led to Israel's full withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and to the normalization of ties between the two countries. Following the conclusion of the Yom Kippur War, "a new phase in Israeli-Egyptian relations" was initiated, which culminated in the signing of the Camp David Accords (Pryce 23-31).

5. The Camp David Accords

The Camp David Accords, signed on September 17, 1978, by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, were the result of twelve days of confidential negotiations at Camp David, the U.S. presidential retreat in Maryland. The two

framework agreements, signed at the White House and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter, included one that directly led to the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty, known as "A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel." This agreement earned Sadat and Begin the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize. The other framework, "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East," addressed the Palestinian territories but was formulated without Palestinian participation and was subsequently condemned by the United Nations (Quandt 94).

The Camp David Accords emerged after 14 months of diplomatic efforts involving Egypt, Israel, and the United States. It all began when Jimmy Carter took office as President, marking a new phase in the search for peace in the Middle East. Initially, the focus was on resolving the broader conflicts between Israel and the Arab nations. However, this gradually shifted towards seeking a direct agreement between Israel and Egypt (Brown and Stein 157).

When the US president at the time Jimmy Carter assumed office in January 1977, he was determined to reinvigorate the peace process, which had stalled during the previous year's presidential campaign. He took a different approach than his predecessor, Henry Kissinger, opting for a more comprehensive, multilateral strategy based on recommendations from a Brookings Institution report. The 1973 Yom Kippur War had complicated matters, making it challenging to achieve the goals outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (Ovendale 858).

Both of Israel's Prime Ministers during this period, Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin, harbored doubts about an international conference. Begin, who took office in May 1977, officially supported the idea of reconvening such a conference and even entertained the idea of Palestinian involvement. However, behind the scenes, Israel and Egypt were secretly laying the groundwork for direct talks. Although Begin had previously shown some willingness to return the Sinai Peninsula, he staunchly opposed relinquishing control over the West Bank, posing a significant hurdle to future negotiations (Brown and Stein 158).

On the other side Egypt's Sadat's journey towards peace with Israel began with murmurs in February 1971, marking Egypt as the instigator of numerous peace-oriented actions throughout the 1970s. The world was taken aback on November 9, 1977, when Sadat announced his intention to address the Knesset in Jerusalem. Following this bold declaration, the Israeli government warmly extended an invitation, facilitated through the US ambassador to Egypt. Just ten days later, Sadat embarked on a historic three-day visit, initiating the inaugural peace process between Israel and an Arab nation. This surprising move caught Washington off guard; the White House and State Department feared that Sadat's focus was solely on regaining Sinai, disregarding the Palestinian issue (Quandt 94).

Mainly the Camp David Accords consist of two distinct agreements "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East" and "A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel. The first preamble lays the groundwork for a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, citing United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 as its basis. It comprises three main parts. Initially, it aimed to establish an autonomous self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, fully implementing Resolution 242. Acknowledging the "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people," outlining a process for ensuring their full autonomy within five years ("The Camp David Accords").

The second framework however set the stage for the peace treaty that followed six months later, focusing on the future of the Sinai Peninsula. Israel agreed to withdraw its armed forces from the Sinai, relinquishing control of the four air bases constructed there since the Six-Day War, evacuating its 4,500 civilian residents, and returning the territory to Egypt. In exchange, Israel would establish normal diplomatic relations with Egypt, receive assurances of free passage through the Suez Canal and nearby waterways like the Straits of Tiran, and impose restrictions on the Egyptian military presence in the Sinai, particularly within 20–40 kilometers from Israel. This withdrawal process was expected to take three years to complete.

The Camp David Accords had a significant impact on the Arab–Israeli conflict. For Egypt, the agreements resulted in the repatriation of the Sinai Peninsula and resumed diplomatic relations with Israel. However, the Accords were welcomed with diverse reactions throughout the Arab world. While some saw them as a pragmatic step toward peace, others felt deceived, certain that Egypt had jeopardized Arab unity and the Palestinian cause. The agreements failed to address the larger concerns affecting Palestinians and other Arab nations participating in the war, prompting Egypt's temporary exclusion from the Arab League.

6. The First Palestinian Intifada

The First also known as the First Intifada or the Stone Intifada, was a prolonged campaign of protests and civil disobedience by Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories and Israel. This uprising was driven by deep-seated Palestinian frustration over Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which had lasted nearly twenty years since the 1967 Arab–Israeli War. The Intifada started in December 1987 and lasted until the Madrid Conference of 1991, although some consider its end to be the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 (Peters and Newman).

The uprising began on December 9, 1987, in the Jabalia refugee camp after an Israeli truck collided with a civilian car, killing four Palestinian workers, three of whom were from Jabalia. Palestinians claimed the crash was a deliberate act of revenge for an Israeli's death in Gaza days earlier, a claim Israel denied, insisting the collision was not intentional despite the heightened tensions. The Palestinian response included protests, civil disobedience, and violence, such as graffiti, barricades, and widespread throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli forces and infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza. Civil efforts included general strikes, boycotts of Israeli institutions in the occupied territories, economic boycotts, refusal to work in Israeli settlements or buy Israeli products, and refusal to pay taxes or drive Palestinian cars with Israeli plates (Lockman).

In response, Israel deployed about 80,000 soldiers. Human Rights Watch criticized the initial use of live ammunition by Israeli forces during riots as excessive and disproportionate. In the first 13 months, 332 Palestinians and 12 Israelis were killed. Following international criticism over images of soldiers beating youths, Israel began using semi-lethal plastic bullets. Over the six-year intifada Israeli army killed at least 1,087 Palestinians, including 240 children. On the Israeli side, 100 civilians and 60 soldiers were killed, with more than 1,400 Israeli civilians and 1,700 soldiers injured, often by militants not controlled by the Intifada's UNLU (Afflerbach and Strachan).

The intifada saw significant internal Palestinian violence, with an estimated 822 Palestinians executed as alleged Israeli collaborators from 1988 to April 1994. Israel reportedly obtained information from about 18,000 compromised Palestinians, though fewer than half had confirmed contact with Israeli authorities. The Second Intifada followed from September 2000 to 2005.

The Intifada was notable for Palestinians acting together and independently, without leadership direction or aid from neighboring Arab nations. Its success gave Yasser Arafat and his supporters the confidence to moderate their political goals. At the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers in mid-November 1988, Arafat achieved a majority for the historic decision to recognize Israel's legitimacy, accept all relevant UN resolutions since November 29, 1947, and embrace the concept of a two-state solution (Shlaim 466).

7. The Oslo Accord

The Oslo Accords were a series of agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) aimed at establishing a peace process for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution. These agreements led to limited self-governance for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by creating the Palestinian

Authority (PA). Although the accords aimed to resolve the conflict by May 1999, the deep-rooted complexities of the decades-long hostilities ultimately derailed the process, leaving the most challenging issues unresolved into the 21st century (Makovsky).

Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed the first Oslo Accord known as Oslo I, on September 13, 1993. The former was the Israeli prime minister, and the latter was the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization “PLO”. The agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership began after a secret negotiations in Oslo, Norway. Resulting in both the recognition of Israel by the PLO and the recognition by Israel of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in bilateral negotiations. Both sides also pledged to end their decades-long conflict (Al Jazeera).

To meet that goal several steps would need to be taken, including the phased withdrawal of the Israeli military from the Palestinian territories it had illegally occupied since 1967, and the transfer of authority to a Palestinian administration, except for final status issues, including the status of Jerusalem (the eastern half of which is occupied Palestinian land) and Israel’s illegal settlements, which would be negotiated at a later date. The accords therefore led to the creation of the supposedly temporary Palestinian Authority (PA), and the division of territory in the West Bank into Areas A, B and C, denoting how much control the PA has in each. Which to this day administers limited rule over the two areas (Hassan 70).

Although The Oslo Accords had initially raised hopes for progress of the Palestinian question, by granting limited self-governance, they ultimately left key issues unresolved, such as the status of Jerusalem, refugee rights, and final borders. This perceived failure allowed Israel to continue expanding settlements, which deepened the occupation. Consequently, many Arabs view the accords as having stalled the Palestinian quest for a viable and sovereign state, leaving their core aspirations unfulfilled and the conflict ongoing.

8. The Second Intifada

The Second Intifada also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, was a significant Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation 2000 and 2005. Tensions escalated after Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon's controversial visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, with more than 1,000 heavily armed police and soldiers on September 28, 2000, leading to a major protest across the country. The move sparked widespread outrage among Palestinians who had just marked the anniversary of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre, for which Sharon was found responsible for failing to stop the bloodshed, following Israel's invasion of Lebanon (Finkelstein).

But Even prior to Sharon's controversial move, frustration and anger had risen year after year among Palestinians on the backdrop of the refusal of successive Israeli governments to abide by the Oslo Accords and end the occupation. Diana Buttu, a Ramallah-based analyst and former adviser to the Palestinian negotiators on Oslo, told Al Jazeera Arabic news network that: "Everybody, including the Americans, were warning the Israelis that the Palestinians are reaching a boiling point, and you need to calm down. Instead, they turned up the fire even more" (qtd. in Al Jazeera). Hence, Sharon's visit was the spark that lit up the Intifada, but the groundwork was laid in the years before that.

Since according the Oslo agreement by May 4, 1999, there was supposed to be an independent Palestine, Buttu noted, adding from the start of negotiations in 1993 until the start of the Intifada "what we saw was a fast expansion of Israel's settlements, But in fact, the number of settlers doubled from 200,000 to 400,000 just in that short period from 1993 to the year 2000". At this point It was clear what was happening on the ground was designed to ensure that there wasn't going to be an independent Palestinian state (qtd. in Al Jazeera).

The first days of the uprising were characterised by large non-violent demonstrations

that included civil disobedience and some stone-throwing. It started in Jerusalem and quickly spread to the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. The demonstrations were met with excessive force from the Israeli authorities that included rubber-coated bullets and live ammunition. Soon thereafter followed military incursions involving helicopters and tanks into heavily populated Palestinian areas (Baber and Zeitlin 842–868).

During the initial days of the second Intifada, an estimated 1.3 million rounds of ammunition were fired by Israeli soldiers, despite minimal violence from Palestinians in the early stages. This revelation was made by the then-director of Israeli military intelligence. The excessive Israeli violence indicated a lack of interest in a swift resolution to the conflict, aiming instead to militarize the Intifada. Additionally, the use of force by Israeli forces was seen as an attempt to provoke Palestinians into military confrontation. It was noted that Israeli leaders viewed the Intifada as a distraction from the construction of settlements, using it as a cover for their agenda (Finkelstein).

In the first five days of the Intifada, 47 Palestinians lost their lives and another 1,885 were wounded. Amnesty International's findings revealed that the majority of Palestinian casualties were innocent bystanders, with 80 percent of those killed in the first month posing no serious threat to Israeli forces. Meanwhile, during the same period, five Israelis were killed by Palestinians. Analysts have argued that the excessive use of force by Israel played a significant role in transitioning the phase of Palestinian popular resistance in the Second Intifada into armed rebellion. According to some assessments, the level of Israeli aggression and Palestinian losses made it unsustainable to maintain the non-violent nature of the Intifada (“Palestinian Intifada,” Al Jazeera).

The Second Intifada serves as a pretext for Israel to advance its security interests, expanding into territorial claims over the Jordan Valley, Jerusalem, and settlements. Despite two decades passing, Israel persists in rejecting Palestinian rights, evidenced by ongoing

settlement expansion and home demolitions. Palestinian officials argue that international silence emboldens Israel to commit human rights violations. Challenges such as the Trump plan and annexation attempts aim to coerce Palestinians into accepting fragmented statehood, but Palestinians remain resolute in their rejection, insisting on ending the occupation and achieving their rights under international law.

9. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative

The Arab Peace Initiative, also known as the Saudi Initiative, is a proposal consisting of ten sentences designed to address the Arab-Israeli conflict. It gained endorsement from the Arab League at the Beirut Summit in 2002 and was re-affirmed during subsequent Arab League summits in 2007 and 2017. The Saudi-brokered Peace Initiative, which was endorsed by the Arab League's 22 members outlined comprehensive steps to ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Laiq).

Arab leaders collectively offered Israel recognition of its right to exist and a normalization of diplomatic ties in exchange for its complete withdrawal from Arab lands captured since 1967. The plan, first floated by King Abdullah, then crown prince of Saudi Arabia, called for the restoration of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital and a "fair solution" for the 3.8 million Palestinian refugees, including but not limited to the Syrian Golan Heights and Israeli-occupied territory in southern Lebanon (Reiter).

Barack Obama, the US president, said in an interview to the Al Arabiya news station on January 26 that he appreciates the Saudi peace plan. He said the US remained committed to protecting its long-time ally Israel, but also believed that there were Israelis who recognized the need for regional peace and would be willing to make the necessary sacrifices to achieve that (Associated Press). However, The Saudi plan was based on UN resolutions 242 and 338 that collectively called for Israeli withdrawal in exchange for peaceful ties with its Arab neighbors and the "respect for the right of every state in the area to live in peace within secure and

recognized boundaries”.

It also reaffirmed an Arab League resolution taken in June 1996 at the Cairo Extraordinary Arab Summit that “a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the strategic option of the Arab countries, to be achieved in accordance with international legality, and which would require a comparable commitment on the part of the Israeli government”. The Arab League also proposed the Arab Peace Initiative at the height of the second intifada in 2002. Though the plan was supported by George Bush, the then US president, and Tony Blair, the then British prime minister, it was opposed by factions in both the Arab and Israeli camps (Laiq).

Syria opposed the use of the term “Normalization”, while Palestinian factions such as the armed wing of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade rejected the Saudi plan outright. The plan also did not receive full diplomatic backing, as only 10 of the 22 heads of state were able to attend the Beirut summit. Israeli authorities also barred Yasser Arafat, the late Palestinian president, from travelling to Lebanon to attend the sessions when it said it would not guarantee his return to Ramallah, the Palestinian administrative capital. On the same day the plan was announced in Beirut, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 20 people and injured more than 160 others at the Park Hotel in Netanya, Israel. (“Latest Suicide Attack Overshadows Arab Summit”).

On March 29, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield, a massive Israeli military operation in the West Bank, in response to the Netanya attack. Israeli military forces briefly occupied Ramallah, Jenin, and Nablus. More than 500 Palestinians and 29 Israeli soldiers were killed in the four-week military operation. The Saudi-initiated peace plan did not resurface as a viable deal until the Arab League summit in Riyadh in March 2007. This time, 21 heads of state attended the summit (Libya did not send a delegation) and fully re-endorsed the peace plan.

Though Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, supported the plan, the official Israeli

response says there are several items in the Saudi-brokered plan, which are unacceptable. Israeli peace negotiators have objected to the repatriation of some 3.8 million Palestinian refugees. Shimon Peres, the Israeli president, said in October that Israel would not rule out negotiations with Arab countries because of the Saudi plan. “We accept the Arab peace initiative in order to bring peace to the entire region,” Peres said in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, after talks with Mubarak. He said that while he does not accept the entire Saudi plan and it “needs to be negotiated” further, its spirit is “correct” (CNN).

10. The 2020 Normalization

The 2020 normalization agreements between Israel and several Arab states have ushered in a one major shift in the regional political arena. Beginning with the Abraham Accords signed by Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in August 2020, followed by agreements with Bahrain in September and Sudan in October, and later with Morocco in December, the wave of normalization has upended the longstanding Arab consensus tying official recognition of Israel to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Federico-O’Murchú).

It started with the 2020 Israel–United Arab Emirates normalization agreement, officially known as “the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement” a Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel, was initially agreed upon in a joint statement by the United States, Israel, and the UAE on August 13, 2020. The agreement marked the UAE as the third Arab country to normalize relations with Israel, following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994 (Federico-O’Murchú).

In this context, the UAE has framed the agreement as a strategic maneuver to bolster regional security and counter Iranian influence in exchange for normalization, the UAE secured a substantial arms deal with the United States, including access to advanced F-35 fighter jets. Yet, this decision has sparked vehement criticism from Palestinian leadership, denouncing it as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Consequently, the Palestinian Authority has withdrawn its

ambassadors from the UAE and Bahrain in protest (Heller and Holland).

Bahrain, another key player, has faced internal opposition to the normalization agreement, with protests erupting against Israel and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, the Bahraini government has proceeded with the agreement, citing anticipated economic benefits and improved regional security. Similarly, Sudan's agreement in October 2020 has been met with resistance from some political factions, advocating for a two-state solution and expressing concern over ongoing Palestinian grievances. Despite this, the transitional government of Sudan has stood by the normalization deal, underscoring its potential economic advantages and enhanced regional security (“Arab Normalization with Israel in 500 Words,” Al Jazeera).

Morocco's entry into the normalization fold in December 2020 has also evoked mixed reactions, with some embracing the move while others protest against it, echoing sentiments for a two-state solution and citing ongoing Palestinian issues. Seen as a strategic move to bolster regional influence and secure US recognition of sovereignty over Western Sahara, Morocco's agreement underscores the multifaceted geopolitical dynamics at play (“Morocco Latest Country to Normalize,” BBC News).

The Palestinian Authority (PA) quit its chair of Arab League meetings in protest and recalled their ambassadors to the UAE and Bahrain. However, after Joe Biden's victory in the US presidential elections, it reinstated both ambassadors and announced a return to security coordination with Israel halted earlier this year in protest against President Donald Trump's proposed Middle East plan that overwhelmingly favored Israel (Michael 385)

This step set back efforts for Palestinian reconciliation between the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip and the PA in the West Bank, which were forged in the face of growing regional isolation, according to analysts, While Saudi Arabia has not yet formally recognized ties with Israel, it has toned down its rhetoric, expressing on more than one occasion its desire to

normalize relations. Simultaneously, Riyadh continues to peddle the official line of not recognizing Israel until a two-state solution has been agreed, with occupied East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter One has traced the historical evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, offering insight on the various narratives and interpretations that have molded the region's past. Using a historical analysis technique that examines historical events, narratives, and scholarly papers to explain the intricacies of the Israel-Palestine conflict along with the broader Arab-Israeli one.

By analyzing Palestine's rich historical legacy prior to and following the rise of Zionism, the chapter has revealed the deeply rooted tensions and opposing ideologies that continue to drive the conflict today. Using a blend of historical materials and academic works from both Palestinian and Israeli sources, aiming to have a better understanding of historical context before addressing the ongoing conflict.

As we transition into the next chapter, a deeper exploration of the changing dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict will commence. By analyzing the evolution of Arab attitudes towards Israel and the Palestinian cause, the next chapter will seek to categorize the mentioned historical events into phases of rise, peak, and decline, while also highlighting and analyzing the shifting political relationships in the region.

Chapter Two: The Decline of the Arab Role in the Israeli-Palestinian

Conflict: A Historical and Theoretical Analysis

Introduction

The dynamics of Arab-Israeli relations has shifted significantly in recent years, with some Arab states showing less support for the Palestinian cause one side, and more tolerance toward the state of Israel on the other. Therefore, Examining the evolution of Arab attitudes toward Palestine goes hand in hand with the decreasing intensity of the Arab-Israeli conflict (Sela 58-60), revealing a complex interplay of historical, political, and socioeconomic elements. Today, changing Arab opinions toward Israel and Palestine are a defining feature of Middle Eastern politics, yet analyzing these shifts remains difficult due to their diverse nature.

Initially, Arab collective consciousness strongly favored the Palestinian cause, seeing it as linked to the larger struggle against colonialism and imperialism. This unity was visible in the early twentieth century, following significant events such as the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Arab support for Palestine has fluctuated throughout time, affected by national interests, regional geopolitics, and global diplomatic pressures. The Arab League, founded in 1945, has been a vocal supporter for Palestinian rights, although its efficacy has fluctuated, often influenced by the conflicting interests of its member states.

Theoretical frameworks such as neorealism and constructivism offer valuable insights into these shifts. Neorealism focuses on power dynamics and national interests, offering a prism through which to examine Arab states' strategic decisions, whereas constructivism emphasizes the significance of identity and norms in influencing state conduct. This chapter will explore the historical evolution of Arab support for the Palestinian cause and examines the Arab League's role through these theoretical perspectives, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the changing dynamics in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Section One: The Historical Dynamics of The Declining Arab Support:

Phases of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Examining the evolution of Arab attitudes toward the Palestinian cause alongside the shifting intensity of the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals a dynamic interplay of historical events, political processes, and changing regional relationships in the Middle East. This historical trajectory illuminates the changing attitudes and priorities within the Arab world, starting from the initial apprehension and resistance to the Jewish migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the peak of conflict during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and subsequent conflicts, and finally to the contemporary era which was marked by normalization agreements between multiple Arab states and Israel. Hence, this interconnectedness of the decline in Arab backing for Palestine and the easing of tensions with Israel, underscores the multifaceted nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict

This section will look at the complex and constantly changing attitudes of Arab nations toward the Israeli-Palestinian crisis and ultimately the broader Arab-Israeli conflict across its different phases as it emerged, peaked, and declined, shedding light on the dynamic interplay of historical events, political processes, and shifting regional alliances. Through a detailed historical analysis, it seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the trajectory of the conflict.

1. The Emergence of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Late 19th to Early 20th Century)

The Palestinian question was not born of the UN General Assembly Resolution in November 1947, unfairly dividing Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State. It emerged much earlier, when the First Zionist Congress, held in Basel in 1897, adopted the project to create a Jewish State in Palestine. Since then, there was a colonial project clearly aimed at Palestine. However, for the project to become a reality, the support of a major power was

needed. This came about with the November 1917 Balfour Declaration, in which Great Britain promised the Jews of Europe to create “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, without consulting its Arab inhabitants, who nonetheless constituted 95% of the population.

From the beginning, the Arab nations have shown unflinching sympathy with "their brother nation of Palestine." During the British Mandate period (1922–47), Arab volunteers came from all around to join the Palestinian resistance to the Zionist mission, particularly during the great insurrection of 1936–39. The Arab collective conscience saw Palestine as a "new colonial issue." Later, the Arabs would regard the expulsion of two-thirds of the Palestinian population from 1947 to 1948 (known as the Nakba) and the establishment of Israel in May 1948 as a "major collective humiliation." In the second decade of the 21st century, the Nakba is more devastating than ever, with occupation and colonialism (Qabaha 30-32).

Although the question of Palestine is primarily an "Arab matter", it is frequently more of an issue of Arab inter-state relations than a national cause to be fought tooth and nail. From 1917 until the present, Arab regimes have utilized the Palestinian issue in a form of nationalist one-upmanship, with advocating the Palestinian cause serving as a lever for political legitimacy or regional leadership, or as a means of diverting attention away from internal issues (Shlaim “The Iron Wall”).

This is not to say that Arab States' solidarity was always "self-serving" or "suspect." During various moments, Arab countries' solidarity was genuine, sincere, and unquestionably fraternal. Unfortunately, this solidarity has been ineffective, as the Palestinian conflict persists 100 years after the Balfour Declaration (1917), 70 years after the UN Partition Resolution (1947), and 50 years after the occupation of all of what left of Palestine (1967). (Thomson 27-49).

1.1.The Palestinian Question between the Two World Wars

After attending the First World Zionist Congress in 1897, Théodore Herzl stated in his journal, "I have founded the Jewish State...."it will exist" possibly five years from now, definitely fifty years on." This statement aged well since in 1947, the UN General Assembly passed the Partition Resolution. For Palestinians, this was a disaster in the making. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 "made them foreigners in their own country and heralded their expulsion" (Laurens 8). Nobody failed to notice the risk. The British repression of the Palestinian revolts of 1922, 1929, and especially 1936-1939 confirmed British backing for the Zionist project (Khader).

Palestine then became a decisive factor in the development of Arab nationalism, even its emblem. Arab populations asked that their governments come to the rescue of the Palestinian people (Muslih). Support Congresses were held almost everywhere. However, the autonomous Arab states lacked military capabilities and tangible battle experience, whereas the others remained under colonial rule and hence lacked autonomy. Thus, Great Britain, which held the mandate power from 1922 to 1948, could crack down on dissent to the Zionist goal without concern, especially as nationalism consciousness was in its infancy and divided between different opposing inclinations.

In fact, in the early 1940s, the Hashemites of Iraq and Transjordan launched two competing projects: the Fertile Crescent, which sought to unite Syria, Transjordan, and Palestine under the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq, and Greater Syria, which sought to reunite Syria and Palestine under the Transjordan Hashemites (Faour et al). Both schemes concerned Egyptians, who saw them as an attempt by the Hashemites to establish a regional force capable of confronting the Kingdom of Egypt. Egypt thus "torpedoed" both projects by inviting independent Arab countries to discuss the creation of a League of Arab States, which resulted in the Alexandria Protocol of 7 October 1944, preparing the Arab League Pact, which was signed in Cairo on 22 March 1945 (Citaristi), officially establishing the League of Arab States.

Since its inception, the League of Arab States (LAS), has prompted the Palestinians to doubt its signature problem. The LAS Council adopted 17 resolutions on December 14, 1945, 11 of which related Palestine. The League established an Arab National Fund (Sanduq al-Ummah al-Arabiyyah) to prevent Jews from appropriating Palestinian property. On September 16, 1947, the LAS Political Committee recommended sending Arab troops to Palestine if the UN General Assembly voted in favor of partition (Khasbulatov).

However, the Transjordan Hashemites had different plans. Whereas Transjordan had ratified the Arab League Pact, on April 10, 1945, King Abdallah of Transjordan (who had proclaimed himself king on May 25, 1946) revived the idea of a Kingdom of Greater Syria that would include Syria, Transjordan, and Palestine to his advantage. On November 17, 1947, a few days before the partition vote, King Abdallah secretly met with Golda Meir, then acting head of the Jewish Agency's political department, informing her of his project to annex what remained of Palestine to Transjordan (Shlaim).

Sensing what was going on between the Zionists and the Hashemites, the League attempted to form an Arab Salvation Army (Jaysh al-Inqahd al-Arabi), but instead of appointing Mufti Amin al-Husseini, an iconic figure of the Palestinian resistance, the Arab States chose a competitor, Fawzi al-Qawuqji. The Mufti then formed his own army, the Army of the Holy War (Jaysh al-Jihad al-Muqaddas), under the command of his cousin, Abd al-Qader al-Husseini. Thus, on the eve of Israel's establishment, Palestine had merely become a bargaining tool for Zionists and Transjordanian Hashemites, as well as a source of conflict among Arab states (Ronen).

2. Rise of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (1947 to 1967)

2.1. The Palestinian Nakba and the Arabs (1947-1949)

The Arabs were unable to halt the implementation of the Partition Resolution in 1947 or the establishment of Israel in 1948, nor were they able to prevent the ethnic cleansing that

occurred during this period (Pappé 335). The expulsion of a significant portion of the Palestinian population amounted to a sociocide, characterized by the displacement of Palestinians from their native land and their scattering across various regions. Additionally, the large-scale arrival of Palestinian refugees in Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon transformed the Palestinian issue into a domestic concern for several Arab nations.

The scale of the catastrophe prompted widespread demonstrations across Arab nations, with calls for the mobilization of Arab armies to liberate Palestine. While Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Transjordan deployed troops, their forces were outnumbered and inadequately equipped compared to the Haganah and Jewish militias. Moreover, some Arab units were directly under British command, such as Transjordan's Arab Legion. Additionally, there existed a rivalry between King Farouk of Egypt and King Abdallah of Transjordan, with Egypt suspecting Transjordan of prioritizing territorial annexation over the protection of Palestinian interests. These suspicions were later validated (Branislav 21-27).

Indeed, after the Arab armies were routed in 1948, Egypt, with the support of Saudi Arabia, attempted to establish an autonomous Palestinian State in the remaining part of Palestine and set up a Palestinian government under the authority of the Jerusalem Mufti. But King Abdallah caused the project to be aborted by convening a major Palestinian congress on 1 December 1948 and having them recognize his sovereignty over Palestine and the unification of the two brother countries. This was the birth of the Kingdom of Jordan (Faour et al).

As expected, the announcement of Palestine's annexation sparked widespread outrage in Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The Jericho Congress was criticized as a "dangerous diversion" and a "Great Conspiracy" (al-Mu'amarah al-Kubra). Nevertheless, with the strength of British assistance, the King was not intimidated: on December 25, 1948, secret discussions with Zionist leaders were launched to bring his scheme to completion. Clearly, Palestine was sacrificed on the altar of State ambitions (Gutwein 231-234).

2.2. Palestine and the Pan-Arabist Ideology (1950s-1960s)

The Arab loss in 1948-1949 left a great deal of bitterness and anger. Constantin Zureiq (1909-2000), one of Arab nationalism's great ideologues, published an uncompromising book titled *The Meaning of the Disaster* (Ma'na al-Nakba) in 1948, in which he condemned Arab leaders' ineptitude and divisions in dealing with "existential" threats and called for unity in moving forward. Saying that if the Palestine issue is not settled quickly, the Middle East will be destabilized.

Indeed, beginning in the 1950s, the Middle East was the scene of considerable upheaval directly tied to the Palestinian question. The Lebanese Prime Minister, Riad al-Solh, was assassinated on 13 July 1951. On 20 July 1951, it was Jordan's King Abdallah who was assassinated in the Al-Aqsa Mosque of Jerusalem, foreshadowing Anwar Sadat's assassination 30 years later, in 1981. In 1952, Egypt's King Farouk was forced into exile following the Free Officers' Revolution of 23 July 1952.

After the 1952 Egyptian Revolution, the Palestinian cause emerged as the central question for the rising wave of Arab nationalism, which advocated for the unity and solidarity of the Arab people across the Middle East and North Africa. It found a prominent advocate in Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) and marked a peak during his charismatic presidency in the 1950s and 1960s. Nasser championed both Arab nationalism and the broader concept of "Pan-Arabism", the political ideology that advocates for the unification of all Arab states into a single entity or union, which also reached its peak during Nasse's presidency (Robin 537). Central to his vision was the elevation of the Palestinian cause, which he integrated as a cornerstone of his Pan-Arab orientations, aiming for the unity and liberation of all Arab lands.

Nasser felt that the Arabs were one country and that the Arab world should be united because they shared a culture, religion, and language. Nasserism gained appeal in the Arab

world due to its solidarity with exiled Palestinian Arabs and opposition to Zionism (Mansfield 670-688). It shifted, however only partially, from the center of decision-making over the Arab world's destiny to the Arab world itself. This move instilled confidence in the Arab community, which was especially welcome following the recent shock of Palestine's loss (Khalidi 35).

The Eisenhower administration tried rapprochement with Nasser in hopes of recruiting Egypt into the anti-Soviet camp, as Turkey had done when it joined NATO in 1949. Nasser's response to US Secretary of State Foster Dulles was decisive: the actual threat to Egypt was not from the Soviet Union, but Israel. When Foster Dulles visited Israel on May 13, 1953, Moshe Sharett informed him that Israel lacked the space to accommodate all Jewish immigrants (it had already occupied 78% of historic Palestine), that it would never return to the former territory allotted by the UN, and that there was no question of authorizing the return of refugees as specified in Resolution 194 (Laurens 351).

Nasser's words possessed clarity. For the Arabs, it became clear that Israel would not be satisfied with what it had achieved and would relentlessly pursue expansion, posing a threat not only to the Palestinians but also to all Arabs. The Arabization of the Palestinian issue resulted from the inherent essence of Zionist ideology. As he referred in his speech on the nationalization of the Suez Canal on 26 July 1956: "we are waging today against Israel, that work of imperialism, established to destroy our Arab nationalism as it is destroying Palestine...." ("Speech by President Nasser" 27). His speech contextualizes stance within the broader geopolitical landscape of the time, including Cold War dynamics and the Palestinian question, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nasser's rejection of western overtures and his emphasis on the Palestinian issue reflect his Pan-Arabist political ideologies.

On 29 October 1956, the Israelis invaded Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. A few days later, the French and the British launched a joint offensive: this was the Suez Crisis, called the Tripartite Aggression in the Arab world. For them, no doubt remained that Israel was not the "haven of

peace” as described by Zionist literature, but an “outpost of Western imperialism.” However, Nasser emerged from the Suez Crisis with a political victory as a hero for the cause of Arab nationalism. Later He became a great Third-World leader and an architect of Non-Alignment (Pappe “Ten Myths About Israel” 47)

During this period, The Arab world experienced two key strands of political ideologies between 1952 and 1970: Pan- Arabism (*al- qawmiyya al- ‘arabiyya*), led by Egyptian Nasserist discourse; and regionalism (*iqlimiyya*), led by Iraq (*Ba ‘th*). The former called for an overarching Arab unity and expansive revolutionary and nationalistic spirit, whereas the latter embraced a realist/statist worldview in conjunction with a federal Arab unity (Muslih). Such an ideological division in the broader Arab political context swept all the way through Palestinian politics. However, as of the Suez War, the Palestinian question became an Arab question. Nasser’s Egypt led the way, while the Iraq’s Hashemite monarchy was swept aside in 1958.

During the Pan-Arabist period, political rhetoric discourse emphasized "revolutionary and nationalistic" goals, Arab unity, and a fight against imperialism and colonialism. Pan-Arabist discourse also played a significant role in shaping Palestinian self-representation. For example, until 1968, Palestinians avoided using the phrase "national" (*watani*), instead adopting figures of speech to express their connection to the larger Arab entity (*qawmi*), which protected them from the allegation of separatist (*Badarin*).

3. The Decline of The Arab-Israeli conflict (1967 to Present)

3.1. The conflict under the Rise of Palestinian Nationalism

The Arab League's establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 shifted the Arab world's perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from pan-Arabism to Palestinian particularism, emphasizing the importance of Palestinian self-organization in the struggle for self-determination (Khalidi, “Political Trends in the Fertile Crescent”). Years of

experience in war and diplomacy have taught the Palestinian people a lot, resulting in two parallel processes: self-reliance and self-organization through multiple political and popular initiatives and organizational structures (Hamdan). In the mid-1960s, resistance movements such as Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) established refugee camps due to despair over the international community's and Arab states' failure to support Palestinian claims for repatriation and self-determination.

The June 1967 war (Six Days War) reshaped the Middle East, both geographically and politically, changing how the Arab world viewed Palestinian nationalism. Israel's territory expanded massively to include East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. For the Arab states it meant crushing military and reputational defeat, leading to a unified refusal to negotiate, recognize or make peace with Israel.

For Palestinians, the war brought about the occupation of over a million people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and created 250,000 more refugees. However, it also ignited stronger and more widespread support for Palestinian nationalism across the Arab world. This period marked the first time Palestinians started to push for their national identity on their own, without relying on Arab states (Abu Sharif 25). This change became even more pronounced after the sudden death of Egyptian President Nasser in 1970. His death left Pan-Arabism and the broader Arab world without a clear leader, further boosting Palestinian nationalism (Ajami 355).

3.2. The Oslo Predicament

The expanding international community's support for the Palestinian cause during the next two decades, combined with the dramatic events of the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf War, eventually led to the Oslo peace process, which began in 1993. The process brought Israeli and Palestinian leaders together for the first time. It contained Israel's first formal mutual

recognition with the PLO and stated that bilateral negotiations were the only possible path to Palestinian statehood, but it failed spectacularly at the 2000 Camp David summit.

The Arab governments did not take a cohesive stance on the peace process. Some, such as Jordan and Egypt, supported the Oslo Accords and saw them as a chance to end the conflict, while others, such as Syria, criticized the accords for not going far enough in terms of securing Palestinian rights and called for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands occupied in the June 1967 war. Syria (aided by Iran) rejected the agreement and worked to undermine it by supporting the Palestinian factions opposed to the agreement, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad and some of the PLO factions (Bouez 263– 270).

The failure of the 2000 Camp David summit was marked by a return to violence, unilateralism, and the securitization of the Palestinian-Israeli discourse (Shlaim 24-40). It acknowledged that the peace process had hit a stalemate. In 2015, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced that the Oslo Accords were no longer binding, following years of diplomatic deadlock and failures, including the Annapolis Conference (2007) and US Secretary of State John Kerry's mediation efforts (2013-2014) (Global Conflict Tracker).

3.3. The Palestinian Question and the Arab Spring (2010-2017)

The social movements that began on December 17, 2010, in a number of Arab countries, surprised the entire globe. The "Arab exception" theory, which held that Arabs are stiff, inert, and resistant to democratic change, was undermined. Though pan-Arabist references to the Palestinian question have been very discreet in protester slogans, the fact remains that the sequence of events, the role of Arab satellite chains, the recovered sense of pride, all of this outlines a pan-Arab sentiment whose political core is the refusal of a foreign yoke, the desire for freedom, and faith in the possibility of change (Belkaïd).

The Arab people have undergone a litany of successive, multiple humiliations throughout their history, not just from persecution and underdevelopment, but also from the humiliation inflicted on Arabs in Palestine. Even if demonstrators do not wave the Palestinian flag, it is apparent that Palestine is "the mother of all humiliations" (B. Khader, 2012). Furthermore, wasn't the first Arab Spring Palestinian? when the first Intifada, which was pacific, popular, and inclusive, sparked Arab spirit in 1987. Arabs were comparing the bravery of the young Palestinians to the cowardice of their leaders. A sense of humiliation pervaded all communities, exacerbated by the second Intifada (Leech).

When Israeli tanks were destroying the Jenin refugee camp, a Palestinian yelled in anger: "Wen el arab?" ("Where are the Arabs?"). "No-one replied," comments J.P. Filiu, "for the Arab leaders were assembled at the Beirut Summit, in the absence of Yasser Arafat, confined to Ramallah, trapped in his besieged presidency" (Filiu 179). "Wen el arab" was yelled many a time during the three Israeli offensives against Gaza (360 km² and 1,800,000 inhabitants) in 2008, 2011 and 2014. The Arab Spring movements have been perverted, diverted, hijacked. Polarization, chaos and war retains all the media's attention. Since 2014, the spotlights have been focused on ISIS.

One problem eclipses another. Palestine is no longer a rallying point. The Arab States are struggling with their internal problems. The Arab people are distraught, disoriented. Doubt has crept into their minds and pessimism is rampant. Furthermore, against the background of the Arab Spring and the Syrian civil war, the role of the Arab League as a collective decision-making body had diminished significantly, and the Palestinian cause had received considerably less attention in the Arab world, while Israeli clandestine relations with many Arab states, especially the Gulf monarchies, had become common knowledge (Rubin 58-60).

3.4. The Decline of Arab Financial Support to Palestine

In recent years, Palestinian financial support has declined significantly, particularly from Arab states. This decrease is attributable to both economic and political factors. According to the Palestinian Finance Ministry, the Palestinian government's total foreign aid income fell by 84.9% in 2020. Aid from Arab countries fell dramatically, from \$265.5 million in 2019 to \$40 million in 2020 (Shaban).

Saudi Arabia, a historically vast donor, reduced its contribution from \$174.7 million in 2015 to \$32.5 million in 2020, representing an 81.4% drop. This pattern reflects a broader drop in foreign funding, with global financial aid to Palestine falling from \$538.3 million in 2019 to \$369.7 million by 2020. Palestinian leaders think that recent rapprochement agreements between Gulf monarchies and Israel have contributed considerably to the sharp drop in Arab financial support (Diwakar).

The financial situation is further emphasized by The Arab Center Washington DC . Highlighting that Since March 2020, Ramallah has gotten no funding from Arab countries. Over the first seven months of 2020, the PA received around \$255 million in foreign aid, a \$500 million decline from the same period in 2019. During the same year, Arab funding decreased by 85%, from \$267 million in 2019 to \$38 million in 2020 (Shaban).

The financial decline was timed with the COVID-19 epidemic and the Gulf-Israeli normalization agreements, which the Palestinian Authority fiercely opposed. Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al Maliki stated that several Arab countries did not support the Arab summit's resolution to offer a \$100 million financial safety net for Palestine in the face of US and Israeli sanctions. Al Maliki argued that this could be due to the pandemic's financial impact or requests from the United States.

Former US President Donald Trump, renowned for his pro-Israel views, reportedly requested that affluent Arab countries limit their financial aid to Palestinians. This political

pressure, along with the economic burden of the epidemic, has resulted in significant financial difficulties for the PA. The West Bank economy is in fast fall, with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics forecasting a \$2.5 billion loss and a 14% reduction in GDP from March to May 2020, as well as a \$1.4 billion budget deficit (Diwakar).

To summarize, the fall in financial support for Palestine is a complicated issue driven by economic downturns, political pressures, and transforming ties. However, it serves as a sharp reminder of the susceptibility of aid-dependent economies to global economic conditions and political maneuvers. Demonstrating how political events in the Middle East, such as the normalization of relations between Gulf states and Israel, have had a significant impact on the Palestinian economy and the Palestinian question overall.

Section Two: Neo-realist and Constructivist Reading of the Decline of Arab-Israeli Conflict: the Case of The Arab League.

Theories of international relations provides valuable systematic foundations for analyzing and interpreting the complex interactions among nations. They enable researchers to methodically investigate and systematically examine the fundamental mechanisms and incentives that govern international politics. This section concentrates on the Neo-Realism and Constructivism Theories as a framework because they focus on viewpoints that are particularly well-suited for understanding the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict and in this case the role of the Arab League in specific. Neorealism, also known as structural realism, stresses the anarchic character of the international system, power dynamics, and national interests, making it an effective tool for studying nations' geopolitical strategy. While Constructivism, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance of social constructions, identities, and norms in understanding the cultural and ideological components of conflict.

Choosing the Arab League as a subject of analysis in this case is due its nature as an organization that represents the collective interests of its member states, which are mainly Arab countries. Therefore, it represents their collective attitudes, and political positions, making it in this context a central actor in the Arab-Israeli conflict and a key advocate for Palestinian rights. Recent political events, such as the normalization of relations between several Gulf states and Israel, have significantly altered the League's stance and actions. By applying neorealism and constructivism, the aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how these theories explain the evolving dynamics of the Arab League and its approach and attitude toward the Israel-Palestine conflict.

I. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework that will be used in this chapter is the Neorealism and Constructivism theory. Although there are many relevant theories in international relations, such as realism and liberalism, neorealism and constructivism are more suited to explaining the Israel-Palestine conflict and analyzing the Arab League. Neorealism or structural realism addresses the security problem, balance of power, and national interests, which are among the causes of this conflict, while constructivism believes that conflicts are socially constructed and the Israel-Palestine conflict is also an identity struggle.

I.1. Neo Realism Theory

A systematic theory of international politics deals with power at the international level instead of the national level. Neorealism or structural realism claims that the behavior of a state can be analyzed by the characteristics of the state system (Waltz). Kenneth Waltz in his book *Theory of International Politics* has evolved the neorealist theory. Kenneth Waltz began to work on this theory in the 1950s, and in 1979, the theory was developed as mentioned in his book, *Theory of International Politics*. This book was written to explain the recurrent pattern of the behavior of the state and how the state collaborates in the international system. Today,

neorealists lead most international security politics. The neorealist is not only a theoretical approach but also helps to understand the different views of contemporary world politics (Rehan 5).

According to Waltz, states have an anarchic nature rather than a hierarchical structure, but there are also structural variations in anarchic systems due to the diversity between states in terms of distribution of power, Neorealism posits that states seek power not due to human nature, as classical realists suggest, but because the anarchic system compels them to ensure their survival. This theory treats states as similar entities (black boxes) whose internal politics are less important than their relative power. Diverging within neorealism, defensive realists like Waltz caution against excessive power accumulation, while offensive realists like John Mearsheimer advocate for maximizing power to secure dominance and prevent threats (Waltz).

I.1.1. Security Dilemma

According to neorealists, world nature is anarchic, so disputes and differences between states occur occasionally. In an anarchic environment, states have to look for security and deal with their own threats. States need to recognize the danger and find a counter solution for it (Rehan 6). However, this pursuit of security contributes to a security dilemma, where one state's actions to strengthen itself are viewed as a threat by others, escalating tensions. Neorealism explains that war can arise not only from aggressive intentions but also from states seeking power to ensure their safety. The theory highlights the link between war and the international system's structure, indicating that conflict often stems from rivalry within this anarchic environment (Wivel).

I.1.2. The balance of power

According to Waltz, the balance of power theory argues that states are unitary actors who seek power at a minimum; they seek power for defense purposes, and the hegemon is the

motivation behind the greatest gain of power. To achieve this goal, they employ both internal (economic and military policies) and exterior methods (strengthening or expanding alliances, weakening resistance). To compete in the system and live, there must be two or more participants. If there are more than three players, alliances become much more important, but in two-player games, internal methods are strengthened. However, the majority of states rely on the self-help system (Rehan 6).

The Balance of Threat Theory, suggesting that states form alliances to counter the prevailing threat. Hence, states prefer to align with weaker counterparts to balance against stronger powers, thus maintaining their security. The phenomenon of balancing involves states joining forces against perceived threats, with stronger states aligning with weaker ones and weaker states banding together for mutual defense. Neorealism underscores the fragility of peace in an anarchic environment, advocating for timely responses to destabilizing developments to prevent conflict (Waltz).

I.1.3. National Interest

In the view of neorealism, the prominent neorealist Kenneth Waltz redefines the concept of national interest, positing it as a product of the international system's structure rather than individual or leadership influence. According to Waltz, states prioritize their survival interests within the anarchic international system and cannot alter this imperative. While states determine their strategies to achieve national interests, sovereignty entails the freedom to choose how to address internal and external challenges, including seeking assistance from others (Waltz 96). Cooperation among states for mutual gain is delicate, as it relies on relative gains, making alliances vulnerable to dissolution if one party perceives unequal benefits. Neorealism underscores security as the foundation of national interests, with power serving as a crucial means to achieve security. In summary, cooperation among states is contingent on alignment

with their respective national interests, subject to revision or termination if these interests clash (May et al.)

1.2. Constructivism theory

Constructivism emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a response to realism and liberalism, with key contributions from scholars like Nicholas Onuf, Alexander, and Peter Katzenstein. It posits that the international system is socially constructed, shaped by actors' identities, practices, and evolving institutional structures (Park). Unlike realism's focus on power, constructivism emphasizes the role of norms, identity, and ideational power in shaping international relations. Wendt asserts that states are like central players, they construct the international system through their behavior, challenging realism's anarchic depiction (Charskykh). He argues that international relations are socially constructed rather than historically determined, with norms and values playing a crucial role. Similarly, Anthony Giddens views society as a social structure influencing human behavior and interaction. In constructivism, power is perceived and attributed by other actors, with powerful states being those perceived as such. Thus, societal norms shape behavior and societal structures in the international system.

1.2.1. Identity and Norms

The Constructivism theory emphasizes the importance of identity and norms in international relations, saying that nations' identities are socially formed via interactions with other actors, shaping their interests and behaviors (Rehan 9). Constructivists believe that states can have several identities, each with its own set of interests. For example, small states prioritize survival, but large states want global influence. States' actions are motivated by their identities, and deviations from these identities raise concerns about their rationality. Alexander Wendt In his book *Constructing International Politics* believes that collective identity and social

communication are critical, and that the international environment is complex due to differing state interests and international regulations. His perspective contrasts with realist views by suggesting that interaction shapes identities and interests, rather than actors being fully aware of their positions beforehand.

Societal norms are fundamental in this constructivism since it serves as standards of appropriate behavior for actors with certain identities. States that adhere to selected identities must follow associated standards, a process described as 'the logic of appropriateness' (Wendt). In this context Norms are divided into three categories: regulative, constitutive, and prescriptive. Regulative norms direct action, constitutive norms produce new actors and interests, and prescriptive norms define permissible behavior (Charskykh). For Constructivists norms have a life cycle and become expected behaviors once they are embraced by a critical mass of states. For example, collaborative action on climate change mitigation demonstrates how norms get ingrained in state policies and public perceptions. In summary, constructivism sees reality as socially produced, with norms, identity, and ideas as the primary variables driving international relations (Park).

II. Analyzing Arab League Dynamics: Exploring the Arab-Israeli Shift through Neo-Realist and Constructivist Lenses

The fundamental fault is in the Arab League's charter, which states that they must bind the countries that accept resolutions. As a result, the league's main shortcoming is a lack of obligation to take collective action. Many Arab states agree to establish a procedure for combined action, similar to the European Union. However, because to personality difficulties, the governments did not cooperate to achieve unity, weakening the Arab League (Rehan 30). The Arab League made the most effective historical choice by granting Palestine special status to participate in its conferences and treating its claim to sovereignty and nationalism as a permanent aspect of the organization's structure, plan of action, and political aims. From time

to time in its summits, the Arab League has discussed the Israel-Palestine crisis but did not conclude. Until 2002, Saudi Arabia proposed the Arab Peace Initiative (API) and was approved by the League. The Arab League played a side role since 1990 (Barnett 180).

2.2. Arab league and neo realism

The Arab governments' stances have frequently shifted, and several Arab countries cooperate with Israel for their own national interests. Arab states such as the UAE and Bahrain began normalizing relations with Israel for military and economic reasons, making Palestinians feel isolated by their friends. Palestinians are concerned that if Arab-Israeli ties normalize, they will be ostracized on their own. While Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan have signed peace agreements with Israel to repair relations, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain are ahead of the game.

Morocco has agreed to establish relations with Israel through US mediation in 2020, making it the sixth Arab League member to recognize Israel. US President Donald Trump announced the news, saying, "Another Historic breakthrough today! Our two great allies, Israel and the Kingdom of Morocco, have agreed to full diplomatic relations, which is a huge step forward for Middle East peace!" Egypt, the UAE, and Bahrain praised the Morocco-Israel accord. However, the Palestinian Authority rejected the pact, claiming that it would encourage Israel to denounce Palestinian rights. Although the king of Morocco had ensured that these ties would not affect our commitment to the Palestinian cause, the king had restated his assistance for the two-state solution (Jawad).

One additional explanation for why Arab League member states have relations with Israel is the security dilemma against Iran, as Iran has been secretly developing nuclear weapons and the majority of Arab League governments are hostile to Iran. Iran has declared war on Israel since 1948 and fully supports the Palestinian cause. And even provide Palestinians with military equipment. In 2020, ambassadors from Arab League countries and the United States met in

Israel to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations. The Arab League diplomats and the U.S. Secretary of State also stated to continue their support for the solution of the Israel Palestine conflict and it was announced to make an event as a permanent forum for the dialogues between the officials. Israel's foreign minister stated that “deepening ties with friendly countries of the Arab League will "first" help counter the threat from Iran” (BBC).

The summit was called "a harsh attack on the Palestinian people” by the foreign minister of Palestine. Iran has always backed the Palestinians, and recently, a 158th session of the foreign ministers’ summit was held in Iraq. In which the committee discuss the policy of Arab states relation with Iran and methods to refrain Iran from interfering in the internal affairs of Arab states in response to which Iran had issued its statements and stated that there is lack of understanding between the members states and the foreign minister of Iran commented instead of accusing Iran, the league states should look into the crimes made by Israel against the Palestinians (Middle East Monitor).

Talking about the neorealist point of view about national interest that happened in September 2020 at the Arab League summit in a virtual conference, there was a shock to Palestinians when LAS voted against a draft resolution against the UAE for maintaining its ties with Israel due to its national interests. Earlier when the news came of UAEs desire to form relations, the Palestinian Authority (PA) requested an emergency meeting to discuss the dangers of formation of ties, which were denounced by the organization. Finally, the Palestinian authority and Arab states agreed to add some points to the final declaration, which includes the stress upon the Arab peace initiative, the two-state solution, and the land for peace idea (Rehan 31).

However, a shift was seen in the league’s policy regarding Palestine and the Arab states diplomatic priorities as the league disproves any sort of condemnation of normalizing relations with Israel by Arab states. It was also said that the foreign ministers of many Arab states wanted

to include provisions that allow relations with Israel, which are clear violations of the Arab peace initiative approved by the Arab League in 2002, 2007 and 2017. This resulted in a political split due to the move of Abu Dhabi. Some more countries of the league started to maintain ties with Israel.

The above situation can be seen through a neo-realist perspective, where the UAE and other states opt for pursuing the national interests of the state to develop a military and economic relationship with Israel. Therefore, the state of Palestine renounces its chairmanship of the present round of the League's meetings as a symbolic action of protest (Al Jazeera). This is not the first time the Arab League has been ineffective in abiding by its own commitments to Palestine. However, due to the national interests of many member states, the initiative by the UAE and Bahrain to have strategic agreements with Israel has caused an identity challenge to Palestinians, although these states have started to support Palestine right to independence despite relations with Israel.

Under these situations, it is said that Israel will strengthen its position with the help of the United States and Arab states against Iran to weaken its influence and that the Palestinians will be eventually neglected, ultimately creating distance between the Palestinians and Arab states, thus the end of the API. The starting point of these assumptions began when the Palestinian authority gave up their right of chairmanship of the Arab league, and if the league remained silent on the issue of normalization of relations with Israel, then Palestine might exit the Arab league in the near future (Kharroub).

2.3. Arab League analysis from the constructivism point of view

As the theory indicates, identities serve as a framework for analyzing how governments and institutions behave in various situations. The Arab League's policymaking can be understood as the foundation of identity and norms. The policy-making process is organized by

a significant number of governments (member states). The league utilizes its Arab identity to function as a regional organization. The league brings the states together and attempts to implement common policies in each state. The Arab League's joint identity is generated by numerous national basic principles that combine to form a collective identity based on shared norms and values. Furthermore, one of the fundamental ideals of the Arab League is advocating pan-Arabism and independence, which can be traced back to the time when the league was formed. It is said that the league was successful in the unification of north Africa and middle eastern states (European Union).

Talking about the Israel Palestine conflict, the League has always promoted the independence of Palestine, granted it a full member of the League, and condemned the actions of Israel. On November 2, 2022, the Arab leaders in Algeria wrapped up the 31st summit of the Arab conference. The Arab leaders call for “collective Arab action” to deal with common challenges. As far as the Israel Palestine conflict is concerned, the summit communicates for the full membership of Palestine in the UN. The Arab League secretary General Tabboune said "Palestine is the pivotal cause to the Arab nation and states". An Egyptian diplomat and ex secretary general stated "Therefore, we were determined to continue to issue resolutions and translate them and present them to the United Nations and international organizations as happens every time” (Africa news).

Moreover, as indicated in the theoretical framework, the identities of actors can change. Due to various situations and circumstances, the identity of the League of Arab States (LAS) has changed, and as a result, the behavior toward the Israel Palestine conflict has also changed. With the rise of the Arab spring in the region, a change was seen in the league approach of dealing with conflicts. As prior to the Arab Spring, the league did not engage in the internal affairs of states. Speaking of Libya, Syria, and Sudan. The Arab League has also served as an institutional mediator and gateway institution. (Hanna).

In 2020 the Arab League emphasized the necessity for a dialogue to resolve the issue and demanded the departure of foreign soldiers from Libya (Al Arabiya News). On May 19, 2023, in Jeddah, the Arab League held its 32nd summit, and Syrian President Bashar al Assad received an invitation. He was dismissed from the league in 2011 because of the civil war in Syria, and after 12 years in 2023, Assad returned to the League. Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, greeted Bashar al Assad with open arms, and the League has observed a shift in direction. The Saudi crown prince stated that he hoped Syria's "return to the Arab League leads to the end of its crisis," which killed more than 350,000 people (El Yaakoubi and Nakhoul).

In Sudan, where the conflict is between the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 15, the declaration renounced "foreign interferences that inflame the conflict and threaten regional security and stability." The Arab League stresses the discussion and unity between the battling sides. So, now independence is not the only core norm of the Arab League, but the conflict resolution is also added to the framework of the league (Tawfik 886).

In the case of the Israel Palestine conflict, Arab league member states have also recognized Israel and started maintaining diplomatic relations with it, including the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco. However, at the recent summit of the Arab League in Jeddah, the league members reassured the focal point of the Palestinian movement and repeated the Palestinians right "to absolute authority over all territories occupied in 1967, including east Jerusalem." (Liokumovich).

The league also expressed the significance of "activating the Arab Peace Initiative," which was proposed by KSA at the Beirut summit in 2002. In addition to the independence and conflict resolution league promoting the economic activity, the member states have developed economic relations with Israel like the UAE and Bahrain. However, the conflict resolution in the member states is trivial, which means that independence is the priority and will not be

questioned. This means we can say that the role of the Arab League consisting of identity will not be changed (Rabi and Mueller).

Conclusion

In conclusion, looking into The Arab League's dynamics employing neo-realism and constructivism sheds light on the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It's like peeling back layers of intricacy to reveal what really drives Arab states' attitudes toward Palestine and Israel. What we find is a mix of national interests, cultural identity, and shared norms playing out its role within the Arab League.

Looking back, the Arab League has traditionally been regarded as a champion of Palestinian rights, but current developments paint a more complex picture. Some Arab states are pushing toward closer ties with Israel for economic and security reasons, while others maintain staunch supporters of Palestine. It's like witnessing a tug of war between pragmatism and principle.

Furthermore, as we have seen, the Arab League is not merely a bystander in regional disputes; it is also attempting to arbitrate and promote peace, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and internal divisions among its members. This demonstrates that its role is evolving in response to the changing terrain of the Middle East.

Finally, what emerges is a complicated tapestry of Arab League interests, identities, and aspirations, all of which influence the direction of the Arab-Israel conflict. It serves as a reminder that, behind the diplomatic maneuvering and political bluster, there are real people dealing with genuine problems, attempting to find a road to peace and security in a volatile region

General Conclusion

In conclusion, The Arab-Israeli/ Israel-Palestine conflict is a complicated and diverse problem that has been extensively researched and debated. This study seeks to provide a detailed picture of the war, focusing on its historical beginnings, important events, and shifting dynamics. The study takes a qualitative approach, incorporating historical analysis, theoretical frameworks, and critical evaluation of primary and secondary evidence.

The research came to a conclusion that the Arab-Israeli conflict went through three main stages, starting from its roots in the early 20th century, which was marked by the rise of both Zionism and Arab nationalism and witnessed the rising tension between the Arabs and Jew. The second phase witnessed the peak of the conflict with the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, followed by a series of wars such as the 1967 Six-Day War, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War which all had significant impacts on the conflict. The Camp David Accords of 1978 and the Oslo Accords of 1993 were the beginning of the decline phase and the first attempts to resolve the conflict through diplomacy.

The conflict is firmly rooted in a complicated geopolitical environment, with regional powers like Egypt, Jordan, and Syria playing important roles. The Arab League has also been involved in a number of conflict resolution attempts, including the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 and the Arab Peace Initiative (2002). The United Nations has played an important role in the conflict, with numerous resolutions and peacekeeping deployments aiming at resolving the situation.

However, the research recognizes numerous limitations in its methodology and scope. These include historical bias, as the study is mainly based on historical records and accounts that may be biased or manipulated. The use of neorealism and constructivism theories may not adequately represent the conflict's complexity, as these frameworks have limitations in

accounting for the complexities of human behavior and the presence of non-state players. The study is further hampered by a lack of trustworthy and complete combat data, particularly primary sources from the Arab side. Furthermore, the war is profoundly interwoven in a complicated geopolitical framework, making it difficult to isolate and analyze individual reasons influencing its continuance.

Many possible future researches can be built upon this study. These include incorporating alternative perspectives, examining the role of non-state actors, analyzing the impact of international interventions, and investigating the role of media and public opinion. By addressing these limitations and exploring new avenues of research, future studies can continue to shed light on the intricacies and complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of one of modern history's most enduring and contentious issues.

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