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The Early liberation ideology of the Palestinian Struggle: Rights, Mobilisation and Popular Sovereignty

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Abstract

Dispersed across various states following the collective tragedy of the late 1940s, Palestinians nevertheless organised themselves into a coherent national movement during the 1960s and 70s. In exile and at home, they created local and ultimately national structures which eventually facilitated the expression of Palestinian concerns in international arenas. These shared spaces for democratic debate and participation served local communities, while also linking different exiled communities to each other, across the geographical dislocation of displacement. Using the conceptual frameworks of liberation and "discursive space" across thought and practice, this thesis will examine some of the early texts documenting strategies articulated and deployed by the Palestinian liberation movement between 1964 and 1970.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research has examined the diverse organising strategies articulated in Palestinian foundational texts and speeches during the period of 1964 to 1970. These years saw the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the main representative of the Palestinian people. As it grounds the analysis in the largely forgotten history of the early liberation tradition, the thesis will examine the conditions for the emergence of a specific conception of rights in this period, and the role particular visions of how to claim these rights played in the development of institutions, organisations and associations.

The term "Palestinian National Movement" refers to the various groups, political parties, intellectuals and individuals who were united by the project of national self-determination, despite differences in ideology, local and international alliances and organizational structure. The tensions and developments in the debates and stances taken throughout the period of 1964-1970 not only relate to wider debates in the Arab world or internationally but reflect positions that are far from homogenous and which may not be mutually compatible in practice. The ways in which these stances jointly form a discursive space[1] will be the focus of this thesis.

The thesis begins by examining the conceptual ideas of the Palestinian national liberation movement alongside its organisational practices, in order to recover some of the detail of thought and action adopted by the movement in its early years. This history has been largely ignored by scholars of the field. The questions guiding the present account of the liberation tradition are: how did this tradition conceive of rights, how were the main liberation strategies articulated, what were the factors that contributed to these strategies, and what structures and institutions were put in place to actually claim rights in practice?

Whilst the language of rights was not adopted by the Palestinian national movement between 1964 and 1970, it is implicit in many of the claims that were made. Using the frameworks of liberation and

[1] L.A. Flores, "Creating Discursive Space Through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82, no. 2 (1996): 142-156.

discursive space to explore the way rights were conceptualized during this period, will help to facilitate the aim of the research to draw connections between past and present (and thought and action), and to make early liberation ideology relevant to the present language of rights - in particular the Right of Return, which is discussed by many scholars in the field as embodying the movement, and all other "national" rights. While addressing the conceptualisation of rights in general, the thesis uses the debates about the Right of Return as a means for examining the wider discourse on rights established within this tradition of liberation. The Right of Return also provides an inclusive umbrella under which the participation of displaced Palestinians is centralized.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will sketch two points of rationale for the research (which also provide some context and background), and further develop the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide the research. These will include a critical analysis of some of the positions involved in existing literature on liberation ideology and how it relates to the Palestinian National Movement. I will also provide a brief overview of the methodological underpinnings of this thesis, which will be developed at greater length in Chapter 2 and outline the overall structure of the remainder of the thesis.

Background, Rationale and Significance

There are various points of history and context that could be considered background to the topic of this research. Chapter three outlines the background to the national movement: its historical trajectory and its major influential texts. Below I will discuss two points of background currently prominent in the public sphere: refugees and displacement, and what is described as the "peace process."

The current and recent wars in the Middle East have foregrounded questions of displacement across the region. The ongoing war in Syria, together with the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, have led to one of the largest instances of forced displacement in recent times. "Syria is the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time, a continuing cause of suffering for millions which should be garnering a groundswell of support around the world." says Filippo Grandi, UNHCR High Commissioner.[2] Over the course of summer 2015, scenes of thousands of refugees landing on the

[2] UNHCR, Syria Emergency https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html (accessed May 12, 2019).

beaches of Greece, and long lines walking across Europe exposed Western audiences to the human reality of forced displacement.

For Palestinians displaced from Syria and Iraq, these recent wars are the latest in a series of multiple displacements they have suffered on a commonplace basis. Palestinians were expelled en masse from Palestine in 1948 and 1967, Jordan in 1970, Lebanon in 1982, Kuwait in 1993, Libya in 1993, Iraq in 2003, and Syria from 2011 to the present: in addition to many smaller yet significant deportations of individual Palestinians, especially members of the Palestinian national leadership.[3]

Dispersed across various states following the collective tragedy of the late 1940s, Palestinians nevertheless organised themselves into a coherent national movement. In exile and at home, they created local and ultimately national structures that created a unified and cogent voice. This coherence was reflected in the PLO, which represented Palestinian national interests on international arenas for some time.[4] In a period of unprecedented mass displacement of people from their home countries, Palestinian refugee experiences of overcoming significant geographic and political barriers to create cohesive national structures is worth returning to in order to examine what lessons might be offered to refugees struggling for their rights today.

There have been various stages of the official and internationally sponsored peace process between the Israeli state and the PLO. The most prominent began with the Madrid Talks, and transpired in the Oslo Accords of 1993. By the early 2000s, after years of Palestinian disillusionment with the Oslo Accords, another major stage of the US-sponsored peace process began. As in previous stages, the process dominated mainstream public debates both within the Palestinian national movement and in the global media, eclipsing other important issues and events of the period, as well as influencing how these marginalized issues and events were framed. Much of the public focus of international think tanks and policy was on the technical concerns of state building, and economic and geographic viability, discussed at a distance from the everyday material lives of Palestinians.

A separate set of publications by BADIL Resource Centre for Palestinian Refugee and Residency Rights put forward a more critical and thorough analysis of the peace process, asking questions about whether the process offered a valid and fair opportunity for Palestinians to build an independent

[3] Mahmoud El Ali, "Forced Secondary Displacement: Palestinian Refugees in Arab Host Countries." *Al Majdal*, 44 (2010): 22-28.
[4] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power, and Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 54-61.

state.[5] In particular, the series argued that the process offered no opportunity for Palestinians across the diaspora to participate in negotiations and state-building. In a paper that discusses the need to reinstate the basic principles of successful peace-making, Dr. Karma Nabulsi explains the relationship between popular sovereignty, collective rights and public participation.[6]

Nabulsi argues that not only are Palestinian representatives side-lined in processes largely driven by global geopolitical interests, the official peace process has also not provided a mechanism for Palestinian grassroots participation, and no way that the diversity of interests among Palestinians, depending on their situation and individual points of view, can be incorporated into the process of state-building. Nabulsi's paper asserts that a legitimate and sincere process must contain mechanisms through which different interests can be represented in the context of international negotiations. It discusses the important question of participation in democratic processes and peacebuilding, and the need to maintain the centrality of the concept of popular sovereignty.

This question has been debated in different ways and in different national contexts throughout the emergence of modern nation-states[7], but it poses specific challenges in the context of national liberation movements, as discussed by Frantz Fanon in the context of the Algerian struggle against French colonial rule, and by Palestinian scholars in the context of the national movement.

Research on a model that upholds the rights of all Palestinians to democratically shape their future is particularly urgent given the effective collapse of the peace process we are witnessing today, and the uncertain future of the Palestinian national movement. As the role that Palestinians are allowed to play in the US driven process is increasingly marginalized, it becomes important to re-examine the

[5] BADIL is a Bethlehem-based organisation founded by popular committees from the Palestinian refugee camps. Their role was to create policy papers that reflected Palestinian popular concerns, particularly those of the refugees, in relation to the peace process. The series are available on the BADIL website: http://www.badil.org/en/publication/research/working-papers.html?limitstart=0. See in particular Nabulsi, Karma. *Popular Sovereignty, Collective Rights, Participation and Crafting Durable Solutions for Palestinian Refugees*. Working paper no. 4. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, 2003 and Welchman, Lynn. The Role of International Law and Human Rights in Peacemaking and Drafting Durable Solutions for Refugees. Working paper no. 3. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, 2003. The views outlined in these papers reflects considerable issues raised in popular demonstrations, and the Arab and international media. See, for example, Said, Edward. *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*. Vintage, London, 2001.

[6] Karma Nabulsi, *Popular Sovereignty, Collective Rights, Participation and Crafting Durable Solutions for Palestinian Refugees*. Working paper no. 4. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, 2003.

[7] Fischer, F. "Participatory governance as deliberative empowerment: The cultural politics of discursive space," *The American Review of Public Administration* 36, no. 1 (2006), 19-40.; Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Manin, Bernard. "On legitimacy and political deliberation," *Political Theory*, 15, no. 3 (1987), 338-368; David Beetham, "Liberal democracy and the limits of democratization," *Political Studies* 40 (1992), 40-53; Bevir, M "Democratic governance: Systems and radical perspectives," *Public Administration Review*, 66, no. 3 (2006), 426-436.

ideological and organisational underpinnings of notions of participation and democracy in the context of the national movement. It is thus not the ambition here to examine the details of how peace processes have developed concretely in different arenas or at different times over the past two decades, but rather to investigate the thought and action of Palestinian liberation movement in the period 1964 to 1970, in order to reassert their centrality and importance to any state-building process.

Theoretical Frameworks

In outlining the shortcomings of the peace process, Nabulsi invokes a well-established tradition in Palestinian political history, which can be described as one of "liberation". The lineage of a distinct Palestinian conceptual and organisational model grounded in ideas of democracy and popular sovereignty will be outlined in chapters four and five. The principles underlying its thought and practice draw upon notions debated in the period of the French Revolution[8], and have found echoes in anti-colonial struggles for self-determination across the globe.[9]

In ideological terms, liberation theories share many fundamental assumptions. While they analyse the factors that have led to the current status quo, they often include a utopian dimension, and are motivated by visions of "what should be" rather than "what is". Broadly speaking, liberation theories are also shaped by their specific contexts. Thus, certain theorists such as Antonio Gramsci[10] have taken their point of departure from inequalities within a context of independent states, while others such as Fanon[11] have theorised the implications of colonisation. A distinction can also be made between contexts of struggle for sovereignty within a territory and struggles which, like the Palestinian case, must be theorised across displacement and exile. The way these differences manifested in the early Palestinian national movement will be discussed in chapter four.

The difference between state and non-state actors and institutions, and the way they are globally and legally framed is important to an analysis of Palestinian liberation ideas and manifests in various

[8] As Nabulsi notes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, 1762, is generally regarded as the "most influential canon of modern democratic theory and articulation of popular sovereignty."
[9] cf. Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (Grove Press, 1988): ??; B.R. Simpson. "Self-determination, human rights, and the end of empire in the 1970s." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, no. 2 (2013*),* 239-260; B. Rajagopal, "Counter-hegemonic International Law: Rethinking Human Rights and Development as a Third World Strategy," *Third World Quarterly*, 27, no. 5 (2006), 767-783.
[10] Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971).
[11] Fanon, Frantz *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (Grove Press, 1988), 57-64.

dimensions. The aspiration to change structures and practices of inequality interacts with a number of key concepts regarding organization, agency, legitimate action, political representation, democratic processes and participation. Non-state actors operate under conditions that can make their claims and ability to struggle for those claims more precarious.

Statehood has been defined differently at various periods in international law and by diverse international organizations. Common features include population, territory, legitimacy and sovereignty. The boundaries between states and non-states are somewhat fluid, to the extent that notions of legitimacy and sovereignty vary, even though both states and non-states have entered international agreements (or refrained from doing so), and may be bound by stipulations of international law.

The early liberation strategies examined in the thesis use mechanisms of international law. While these mechanisms are not the primary focus of study here, their implications are important to the broader conclusions of this study, and in particular to an understanding of decisions made by actors at any given period of time while representing national interests. In this respect, the thesis is informed by the work of Simpson[12] and Rajagopal[13] concerning the place of liberation movements in international law and institutions.

A further dimension is recognition by other states and international bodies. States can be considered from the perspective of territory or sovereignty, understood as nations: but also derive legitimacy from the extent to which they are able to maintain functional institutions, serve the needs of their populations and respect international obligations. Deciding who can legitimately represent the will of the people or how it should be expressed is not something given once and for all, but encompasses a variety of forms and processes, as discussed by Hague, Harrop and McCormick, who define politics as "The process by which people negotiate and compete in the process of making and executing shared or collective decisions."[14]

[12] Simpson, B.R. "Self-Determination, Human Rights, and the End of Empire in the 1970s." *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development* 4, no. 2 (2013*),* 239-260.
[13] Rajagopal, B "International Law and Social Movements: Challenges of Theorizing Resistance," *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law* 41 (2002), 397; B. Rajagopal, "Counter-Hegemonic International Law: Rethinking Human Rights and Development as a Third World Strategy," *Third World Quarterly*, 27, no. 5 (2006), 767-783.
[14] Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and John McCormick, *Comparative Government and Politics. An Introduction*. (10th ed.) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 6

Despite distinctions in approach and context, liberation theories share certain common features, most notably an attentiveness to practical aspects of political struggle. There is a further, more manifest connection in that many theorists of the liberation tradition have engaged with each other, and various liberation movements have drawn from both theorists and practices of other movements. Fanon's work, based on his reflections and experiences of the Algerian War of Independence, during which he witnessed the brutality of French repression, has been influential, not only for liberation struggles, but also for later reflections on race. Fanon notably argues for the use of armed resistance in the face of oppression, and his thought has exercised considerable influence on liberation theories and was read widely during the anti-colonial period of the mid-twentieth century.

Antionio Gramsci's work on hegemony has also been influential.[15] Power is not only exercised by direct force, but through hegemonic forces, which rule through "consent" using various systems of belief and normative ideas and practices perpetuated through the different institutions of society. For the practice of formulating and strategizing liberation, Gramsci's theorising of the way hegemony works opens up the possibility to understand how hegemonic practices can be challenged and undone. Emancipatory thinking is not only concerned with describing mechanisms through which hegemony operates, but also in finding strategies for change.

The notion that power is exercised through consent is also a feature of Foucault's writings about discourse and knowledge. Discourse in a Foucauldian sense could be summarised as the body of dominant beliefs and practices at any given time, which shape what we can do and imagine. While state institutions play a role in power structures, Foucault stresses that power is everywhere, and operates through discursive practices. "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart".[16] Since discursive practices (behaviour and knowledge) define what is 'true' and 'normal', change comes about by challenging previous beliefs and behaving differently. Although texts play a significant role in codifying norms and shaping beliefs, the contestation of ideas must also take place in practice.

These points of theory have particular relevance for the Palestinian liberation movement, to the extent that the creation of new institutions provided places for new practices to develop. The self-determined trajectory of the PLO after 1967 challenged the hegemonic idea that the liberation of

[15] Gramsci, A *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 501-512.
[16] Foucault, M *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin, 1998), 101.

Palestine and the return of people to their lands, homes and villages depended on the salvation of the Arab states, in particular Nasser's Egypt and Arab nationalism. Various grassroots gatherings across exiled Palestinian communities contributed to the challenging of hegemonic ideas related to the social and political status of Palestinians.

Given that the focus of the thesis is to trace debates in the Palestinian liberation movement over time, and to situate various standpoints in relation to each other, the analysis will draw on the concept of "discursive spaces". The term space here encompasses theoretical conceptualisation, forms of expression and social spaces for mobilisation. Discursive spaces are dynamically produced and change across time and different configurations of thought and practice, while also situated within wider frames. This reflects Foucault's ideas about the networked nature of discourse and knowledge creation:

> *"The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full-stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network."*[17]

Foucault also argued that discourses are repressive by preventing other thoughts to be expressed. "The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said."[18] The concept "discursive space" has been to discuss strategies where marginalised and silenced groups struggle to create spaces to communicate their concerns, to express what lies in the "hollow" and the "not-said". Examples of work on discursive spaces include thinkers from the Chicana feminist movement[19] and reflections on participatory governance.[20]

The practices and discourses of the PLO will be understood as forming a historically situated political tradition and a discursive space, formed through and within liberation and rights-based thinking and action. The choice of the term "tradition" helps to emphasize the way ideas and practices adhere to, contest, develop, and challenge other liberation practices from other contexts of

[17] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 23.
[18] Ibid. 25.
[19] L.A. Flores, "Creating Discursive Space Through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82, no. 2 (1996):
[20] F. Fischer, "Participatory Governance as Deliberative Empowerment: The Cultural Politics of Discursive Space," *The American Review of Public Administration* 36, no. 1 (2006), 19-40.

struggle. This more detailed focus, together with a focus on the geopolitical frame of some early political discourses of Palestinian liberation, makes it possible to thoroughly analyse the way liberation and rights were theorized.

History, Methodology and Authenticity

The political traditions framework articulated by Hazareesingh and Nabulsi[21] has heavily influenced the analysis of this research. Hazareesingh and Nabulsi identify three fundamental properties of political traditions. Firstly, they "seek to articulate a coherent relationship between past and present; secondly, they "operate through a distinct set of institutions"; and finally, they "embody a distinct and relatively coherent set of ideas and normative propositions about the world".[22]

Hazareesingh and Nabulsi also provide the basis for the methodology employed in this thesis. Like theories of discourse, they posit the fundamental link between discourse (as text), and the opportunities for action that discourse offers. Their framework has elaborated on the concept of "archivally based political theory" which "provides a rich and complex understanding of the political sphere […] that is necessary in order to engage in theorizing about political questions".[23] For Hazareesingh and Nabulsi, the political sphere is perceived as "an active, dynamic force which can define the very identity of a political actor, and decisively shape […] the deployment of political discourse and rhetoric", and is for them vital to the analysis of any political tradition.[24] The context within which a political movement emerges and operates, what Hazareesingh and Nabulsi term "political sphere", is thus not only a discursive space within which political actors position themselves and others, but can also be understood as a given discursive apparatus and historically situated trajectory of practice (supported by distinct processes and relations).

In the context of liberation movements, the relationship between discourse (as language) and action thus becomes a central concern. The research also draws from the work of the so-called Cambridge School of political theorists to help analyze the relationship between discourse (as language) and action of the early Palestinian national movement. Quentin Skinner identifies "two distinguishable dimensions of language". The first "has conventionally been described as the dimension of meaning, the study of sense of reference allegedly attaching to words and sentences". The second facet "is best

[21] Sudhir Hazareesingh and Karma Nabulsi, 'Using Archival Sources to Theorise About Politics', in Leopold, David, and Marc Stears. *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150-170.
[22] Ibid, p. 169.
[23] Ibid, p.150.
[24] Ibid, p. 154.

described as the dimension of linguistic action, the study of the range of things that speakers are capable of doing […]".[25] Skinner sees historical texts in general, and archival documents in particular, as windows onto political action as well as intellectual thought. By considering written sources within their original contexts, the political spheres in which they were formed, debated, and concretely used, we can trace their implications for political practice.

The analysis of documents and statements understood as constituting historically situated discourse entails choices which necessitate a theoretical reflection both on the role of the researcher in this process, and on the function of discourse in political movements. Any historical account expresses an ideological and historically situated standpoint in its framing, the selection of documents examined, and the interpretations arrived at. It runs the risk of normalizing particular situations or the positions ascribed to different groups, giving voice to certain actors while silencing others. Historical accounts can thus be understood as representations of a state-of-the-world and of the various actors.

Foucault has emphasized the constructed character of such narratives: "we have in the density of discursive practices, systems that establish statements as events".[26] Foucault further stresses the inherently contradictory character of statements in historical narratives: "historical descriptions are necessarily ordered by the present state of knowledge; they increase with every transformation and never cease, in turn, to break with themselves".[27]

Understanding history as being a socially and historically situated narrative will necessarily problematize the relationship between text and factuality. Berkhofer has summarised the inherent tensions in history-telling from this point of view, arguing that: "Any understanding of context necessitates contested methodologies, hence contested histories, as part of the political struggles over both the nature of social reality and the ways of understanding it."[28] John Pocock similarly contrasts "what takes place when concepts are abstracted from a tradition" with "what takes place when they are employed in action within that tradition".[29] This thesis will take heed of such methodological

[25] Skinner, Quentin. *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*. Cambridge: (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 7-8. See also Skinner, Quentin. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas" in *Visions of Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57-89.
[26] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 145.
[27] Ibid, 5.
[28] Robert F. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 237.
[29] J. G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12.

considerations as it proceeds to trace both the thought and practice of the Palestinian liberation tradition through primary and archival sources.

The political traditions framework adopted by this thesis facilitates an analysis of the development of political thought over time. Hazareesingh and Nabulsi identify three distinct advantages in analyzing political thought across time: it equips scholars to recover "what has been lost, or written out of our theoretical narrative" and recaptures the "breadth and vigour of past traditions of thought" which are "often bolder, more creative and more imaginative in their thinking than we appreciate". Finally, it acts as "a corrective against the tyranny of the present, which manifests itself in the assumption […] that the theoretical challenges we face today are unique".[30] Crucially, these factors contribute to "a broader, richer, and more robust understanding of the nature of political thinking, and in particular its connections with political practice."

The thesis also draws on the historical theories of Robert Young[31] to clarify its framing and perspective. For Young, a significant dimension in how history has been told is the colonial power relationship, and the ways historical narratives are used to justify the status-quo. This context is obviously relevant to any study of the thought and action of Palestinian liberation.

The above concerns have guided the piecing together of archival sources and documents to retrace the Palestinian national movement's thought and action between 1964 and1970. The literature review undertaken suggests that archival sources have not been systematically used in historical accounts of the period. This history thus remains largely unwritten, and excluded from scholarly accounts, in particular theories of revolution and democratic change. By a systematic examination of archival sources, the present thesis aims to address this research gap, to contribute a more informed and richer understanding of the Palestinian liberation tradition, how it conceived of rights and liberation and theory and practice, and how this relates to concrete political practice.

Chapter Outline

The thesis unfolds in three main chapters, reflecting the three parts of the research question. Following a chapter on methodological approaches (Chapter Two), Chapter Three will shed light on

[30] Sudhir Hazareesingh and Karma Nabulsi, 'Using Archival Sources to Theorise About Politics', in Leopold, David, and Marc Stears. *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 170.
[31] Robert Young, *White Mythologies* (London: Routledge, 2004), 32-61.

how the liberation tradition conceived of rights, analysing how its particular understanding of rights emerged from the local, regional, and international political context of the Nakba and its aftermath.

Chapter Four examines what the liberation tradition's conception of rights entailed on a theoretical level, exploring ideas about how Palestinians were to claim their rights. This chapter forms the heart of the thesis, and illuminates two related, yet distinct, approaches to the right of return that underpinned the development of the liberation tradition: the 'formal diplomatic approach' first put forth by Ahmad Shukairy following the formation of the PLO, and the 'popular approach' advocated by the various Palestinian factions that sought to build on the institutional legacy of the PLO while taking its arguments concerning the claiming of rights in a different direction.

Chapter Five analyses the structures that were established in order to claim these rights in practice, centring on the popularisation of the PLO and the organisational work that was carried out around it. Finally, the concluding chapter summarises my findings and reflects on the implications of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

As the purpose of the thesis is to recover the history of a particular tradition that remains poorly understood in terms of its emergence and development, the primary method relied on in this thesis is one of process tracing. In order to reconstruct the broader political context of the emergence of the PLO, I will engage in the analysis of discourse found in a wide range of archival sources and documents, alongside close attention to organisational and institutional structures. This will allow me to advance better-informed theories regarding the different currents of thought and practice advanced by the PLO during this period, and conceptions of rights in particular. Since the research question involves three sub-clauses, each of which is examined explicitly in a dedicated chapter, the three core chapters of the thesis each rely on specific methods, which contribute to the broader project of process tracing.

Methodology and Sources

The main objective of this thesis is to trace the process through which the Palestinian liberation tradition developed and to elucidate the core positions advanced in the investigated period regarding rights and strategies to achieve them. As explained in the introduction, the Palestinian debate on rights centred on the crucial issue of the right of return. This thesis thus uses the discussions around this core right as a means of closely tracing the creation and development of a broader rights language within the liberation tradition. Ultimately, this project investigates how this tradition unfolded and evolved over time, highlighting the competing approaches and models it sought to respond to. While the overarching methodology adopted in the thesis is thus one of process tracing[32], each chapter relies on a specific subset of methods, as well as a particular constellation of sources; thus, the broader approach can be characterised as 'mixed methods'. The discussion that follows lays out the methodology adopted in each chapter in further detail, discussing both the primary method applied and the type of sources used in each case.

Chapter Three seeks to understand the broad conception of rights put forth by the liberation tradition by a detailed analysis of the broader political context in which the liberation tradition crystallised, in order to then identify how it materialised, what conception of rights it put forward, and why this

[32] Sudhir Hazareesingh and Karma Nabulsi, 'Using Archival Sources to Theorise About Politics', in Leopold, David, and Marc Stears. *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150-170.

conception was articulated in the way it was. Specifically, the chapter describes and analyses the solutions, decisions and practices imposed on Palestinians between the beginning of the exile from 1947 to 1949 and the founding of the PLO in 1964.

In order to accomplish this goal, Chapter Three draws on a range of secondary sources that explore this political context and highlight its most salient characteristics. The major topics discussed in these secondary sources were identified by examining abstracts and keywords provided by the authors and subsequently reading those articles that touched on the overall concerns of this thesis. I supplement my analysis of secondary sources with a thorough engagement with primary sources.

Chapter Four focuses on what this broad conception of rights entailed theoretically, in terms of how these rights were to be claimed. It seeks to answer this part of the research question by examining the development of two approaches to the right of return within the liberal tradition, namely the 'formal diplomatic approach' first put forth by Ahmad Shukairi at the time of the PLO's incipience, and the 'popular approach' subsequently advocated by various Palestinian factions. This latter approach sought to build on the institutional legacy of the PLO, while advancing a distinct set of arguments around how to claim the right of return. Since Chapter four investigates the precise debate over *how* to claim this right and traces the evolution of the liberation tradition throughout this discussion, the chapter seeks to isolate the specific arguments that were made regarding how to claim rights within the broader conceptualisation of rights that emerged from the political context of the 1950s and 1960s. It will further strive to understand against whom these arguments were directed, and how the respective ideas advanced by the 'formal diplomatic approach' were interrelated.

To this end, I will examine a collection of primary documents, Leila Kadi's *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement.* This collection is the first of its kind in English; it comprises numerous documents from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Fatah, and various Palestinian factions, including key foundational documents that provide crucial insights into how these key players sought to claim the rights of Palestinians under international law, and specifically the right of return. The focus of this chapter is thus a close analysis of what these documents reveal with regard to what members of the broad liberation tradition saw as the most promising avenues for claiming Palestinians' rights, what some of their initial disagreements were, and what ideas came to form the accepted core of this tradition as it developed over the years. It will also incorporate close readings of Shukairi's memoirs, which

provide intimate insight into the development of his formal diplomatic approach and elucidate similarities and differences with the later approach advanced by popular movements.

Finally, Chapter Five takes the analysis beyond discourse and ideas and sheds lights on the practical structures that were put in place in order to effectively claim these rights. Since the PLO was the main vehicle through which rights were claimed in practice, the chapter focuses on the popularisation of the PLO and the practical actions that were carried out both through it and around it. This chapter takes advantage of the historical literature of the PLO and its work, particularly regarding the right of return. It relies on secondary sources, together with contemporary analysis from the period in question, for example articles published in the revolutionary journal *Shu'un Filastiniyyah*, in which many key debates around the theory and practice of liberation took shape.

Reflexivity

Numerous conceptualisations exist with respect to reflexivity, and which stance a researcher can or should adopt.[33] Any research project is historically and socially situated, that is, affected by the historical and social context in which it is conducted, by institutional constraints and opportunities, as well as being an expression of the individual standpoint of the researcher in relation to the object of study (see Merriam et al[34] on the significance of insider versus outsider perspectives). As outlined in the introduction, the topic for this thesis is strongly influenced by the moment in history that we are living in: a time when the geopolitical conditions for liberation movements have considerably shifted compared to the period being examined, and during which liberation theories have become marginal to the articulation and negotiation of balances of power in international arenas. Not only have the key topics within Palestinian ideological discourse and practice changed since the period investigated here, but this is also very much the case in scholarly investigation, mainstream media, or political agendas in the Arab world and in Europe. While the investigated period witnessed a gradual expansion of recognition and engagement internationally in the ideas carried by liberation movements, neoliberal agendas appear to dominate debates today. At the same time, although certain liberation struggles met some measure of success, such as in the case of Algeria, other movements, including the Palestinian national movement, appear to be losing several of the achievements they

[33] L. Finlay, "Negotiating the Swamp: The Opportunity and Challenge of Reflexivity in Research Practice," *Qualitative Research* 2, no. 2 (2002): 209-230.
[34] Merriam, Sharan B. et al. "Power and Positionality: Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status Within and Across Cultures," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 20, no. 5 (2001), 405-416.

had gained. For the Palestinian case, the rupture is so great, that it even becomes difficult to retrace the processes and conditions prevailing in this relatively recent period of history.

The institutional context in which this thesis is written clearly plays a role, both in how the topic is framed and in how arguments are presented. Besides issues such as the format, use of mainly English-language literature and sources has a major impact. The location of the institution in Sweden also means that the content must be presented in a manner that is accessible to readers who are not necessarily familiar with the field.

Finally, my own positionality, lived experience and identity as a Palestinian born in Lebanon and having studied in England and Sweden as well as at an American university in Lebanon influences my understanding of the subject matter, offering me multiple frames of reference for the interpretation of both primary and secondary sources. The reading can thus take on a hybrid character. On the one hand, my reading is informed both by the relative proximity and the distance in time, while on the other, my own position as a Palestinian educated in Europe allows me to draw on both Palestinian and European traditions of thought, as well as offering me possibilities to shape hybrid representations of the processes that are investigated.

Validity and Reliability

Notions of validity and reliability developed historically within positivist research paradigms, and criteria have been geared towards quantitative methodologies. Several attempts have been made, either to reconcile implications for notions of validity and reliability of underlying ontological tensions with respect to qualitative methodologies, or to develop alternative conceptualisations of these constructs. Thus Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba[35] have argued for the notion of 'trustworthiness' in qualitative research, based on the constructs of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability. The intrinsic tensions inherent to choice of framework for discussing issues of validity and reliability are for the present thesis compounded by the fact that the topic itself concerns a highly contested area, involving the interpretation and representation of normative statements that challenge established balances of power.

[35] T.A. Schwandt, Y.S. Lincoln, and E.G. Guba, "Judging Interpretations: But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Evaluation," *New Directions for Evaluation* 114 (2007), 11-25.

The significance of standpoint for the type of knowledge which is produced was first theorised by Nancy Hartsock.[36] Sandra Harding has argued that the neutrality ideal in science:

> *"...certifies as value-neutral, normal, natural, and therefore not political at all the existing scientific policies and practices through which powerful groups can gain the information and explanations that they need to advance their priorities.*"[37]

To counter this type of hegemony, Harding advances the notion of 'strong objectivity'.

Standpoint theory has been criticised for essentializing belonging to social categories (such as gender, ethnicity or class), rather than underscoring the fluid and complex character of identity. The assumption of an epistemic advantage for marginalised groups has been contested.[38] However, the second-wave standpoint theorists have addressed this criticism. Thus, Wylie[39] argues that standpoint theory does not have to presuppose an essentialist definition of social categories, nor does it entail automatic epistemic privilege. Kristina Rolin[40] has further developed reflection on standpoint theory, by raising the point of what what kind of evidence is relevant for the thesis of epistemic advantage that socially grounded research perspectives can have, and what the alternatives are for a particular research question.

Although the notion of epistemic advantage can be debated, the argument made in feminist standpoint theory that statements made by oppressed groups will contain less bias that statements made by individuals from dominant groups (by the very dynamics of oppression) remains relevant to the purposes of this thesis. Standpoint theory expresses the fundamental interest in presenting the voices of members of oppressed or marginalised groups, which motivates the approach adopted in this thesis. Belonging myself to the group in question (as well as to other groups with a stronger position, to the extent that I am a Master student on an English-language programme at a European university), standpoint theory also concerns the value of my position as researcher. Considering the uneven opportunities to contribute to discourse and knowledge production, shaped by the persistence

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[36] Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism" in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science,* edited by Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, 283-310 (Boston, MA: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1983), 283-310.
[37] Sandra Harding, "After the Neutrality Ideal: Science, Politics, and 'Strong Objectivity,'" *Social Research* 59, no.3 (1992): 568-69.
[38] cf. Kristina Rolin, "Standpoint Theory as a Methodology for the Study of Power Relations," *Hypatia* 24, no. 4 (2009), 218-226.
[39] Alison Wylie, "Why Standpoint Matters," in *Science and Other Cultures: Issues in Philosophies of Science and Technology,* edited by Robert Figueroa and Sandra Harding, 26-48 (New York: Routledge, 2003), 26-48.
[40] Kristina Rolin, "Standpoint theory," 218-226.

of colonial discourse,[41] it can be argued that the position of the researcher with respect to global power structures becomes even more important.

In line with the arguments of Wylie and Rolin, the thesis does not claim to present the only or most valid reading of the investigated documents, but rather aims to point to the divergences in conclusions depending on the approach chosen for examining this period of history, and to the possibility of multiple alternative readings. One of the most crucial aspects for validity is the delimitation through choice of research question, and through the choice of investigated materials. For this thesis, the delimitation was motivated by the research gap found in the preliminary literature review.

Source criticism

The materials used in this thesis fall under three broad categories: secondary academic literature (books or peer-reviewed articles), UN resolutions and other international documents, Palestinian primary sources. To the extent that the Palestinian cause is a contested issue, it can be expected that the political analysis in such works will reflect the normative evaluations and positions of their authors. Although certain details in the sequence of historical events have been debated, the present thesis is concerned with the legal and institutional regimes affecting the lives of Palestinian refugees, and possible divergences concerning the detail of events do not substantially affect the conclusions drawn here with respect to the overall context in which the investigated debates within the Palestinian movement took place. Significant factors for the purposes of this thesis were changes in legislation, the outcomes of armed conflict and peace negotiations, which have been extensively documented elsewhere and which often represent the official standpoint of state actors.

Again, UN resolutions and the documents of international organizations reflect official positions and are publicly available. It can be argued that informal negotiations and talks on the margins of official conferences are likely to have played an important role, both in the wording of the ensuing resolutions or declarations and in the interpretation which was given in practice. Such considerations are certainly important, but the present analysis does not focus on informal aspects surrounding the elaboration of major international documents.

[41] cf. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture*, 85-92 (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

The main focus of this thesis is on the content of Palestinian documents pertaining to the development of different strategies for the national movement within the investigated period. It would be futile to aspire to cover the entire mass of documents produced in the period, but by combining several collections and different types of archival materials, it is hoped that a number of the main arguments in the Palestinian debates will emerge.

Measurement and Theme Identification

A quantitative analysis of content in the investigated documents has not been conducted. The selection of relevant passages in this body of material was guided by the research questions and the delimitation of the study. The purpose of a closer reading of these passages was not to identify themes or categories, but to clarify how the arguments found in the passages relate to international documents and the larger body of reflection in the liberation movements of the period, as well as to differing notions of democracy and political representation.

Ethical Reflections

Since the thesis consists of an examination of documents available in the public domain, it does not entail the kind of ethical considerations that are usually necessary when informants or experiments are involved. The study does, however, relate to the wider ethical question of the responsibility of research to support social justice, and to reflect on whose viewpoint counts as well as what can be understood as desirable social developments.[42]

Earlier Research

To obtain an overview of existing research in the field and identify the areas where this thesis could make a contribution, a preliminary literature review of work was undertaken in 2015 using the search term 'Palestine liberation movement' and updated in April 2019. Findings have been summarised in Appendix A. Additional literature has been found through consulting the bibliographies of these works, and by using the search term 'Palestine' alone. Although numerous works have been written on the Palestinian movement in the years 1964 to 197O, relatively few capture the nuances of the Palestinian liberation tradition or situate the PLO within a broader international tradition of anti-colonial struggle and national liberation. Exceptions are notably Espiritu, Gentry, Sayigh and

[42] Lester-Irabinna Rigney, "Internationalization of an Indigenous Anticolonial Cultural Critique of Research Methodologies: A guide to Indigenist Research Methodology and its Principles," *Wicazo sa review*, *14*, no. 2 (1999), 109-121; Sandra Harding and Kathryn Norberg, "New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies: An Introduction." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 30* no. 4 (2005), 2009-2015; Norman Denzin, "Critical Qualitative Inquiry," *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*, no.1 (2017), 8-16.

Sharabi.[43] However, none of these works has comprehensively examined the archival material of the movement for the period in question. The present thesis therefore proposes to address this research gap and will explore the conceptualisation of rights in PLO documents and statements from the period 1964 to 1970. The conceptualisation of rights, as well as the organisational structures the PLO established to achieve its goals will here be analysed as part of a distinct Palestinian liberation tradition, which drew on and contributed to a wider discursive space of anti-colonial liberation movements. Both primary and secondary sources will be used. Whereas much existing literature on the PLO is confined to the study of political elites, this thesis will foreground the crucial role of institutions, lower and mid-level cadres, and people in the communities who participated in establishing the revolutionary infrastructure and institutions that allowed the thought and practice of national liberation to thrive.

For the purposes of this study, the historical stance and framing adopted in much of the existing analysis of the Palestinian national movement deserves particular attention. Much of the scholarly accounts exhibits two interrelated approaches. Firstly, they constitute teleological accounts of the history of the Palestinian national movement, reconstructing doomed trajectories that culminate in its supposedly inevitable downfall. Titles such as *The PLO: The Road to Defeat* or *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Movement* [44] offer a variety of explanations for what happened, variously attributing the movement's perceived demise to incompetent leadership,[45] class interest[46] or failed military tactics.[47]

A second, concomitant tendency exhibited by certain academic accounts of the Palestinian national movement involves what can be termed a 'statist' approach, in opposition to a 'liberation' approach. This perspective attributes the PLO's failure to the policies and solutions it adopted, arguing that the Palestinian leadership augured the movement's failure when it decided to pursue a limited state – as

[43] Evyn Lê Espiritu, Cold War Entanglements, Third World Solidarities: Vietnam and Palestine, 1967–75," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 48, no. 3 (2018): 352-386. Caron Gentry, "*Women in Revolutionary Organisations*. Dissertation/ Thesis (University of St Andrews, 2003); Yezid Sayigh, "Armed Struggle and State Formation," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 4 (1997): 17-32; Hisham Sharabi, "Liberation or Settlement: The Dialectics of Palestinian Struggle," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 2, no. 2 (1973): 33-48.
[44] Abd el-Satar Qasim, *The Road to Defeat* (privately published, 1998); Jillian Becker, *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Movement* (USA: Authorhouse, 2014), 41-49.
[45] Rashid Khalidi, *Under Siege: P.L.O. Decision Making during the 1982 War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 304-350.
[46] See for example "Roundtable on Palestinian Diaspora and Representation. Part II: A Positive Model or Doomed for Failure?" http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/6082/roundtable-on-palestinian-diaspora-and-representat#part2 (accessed May 16, 2016).
[47] Yazid Ṣayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 72-91.

outlined in the Ten Point Program adopted in 1974, or the two state solution formally adopted in 1988 – as opposed to a more rights-based solution.[48] By focusing primarily on the solutions to the conflict proposed by the movement, this literature has drawn attention away from the concrete popular organising being undertaken amongst Palestinians during the period in question. Both these approaches thus posit an inevitable failure of the movement as such, and are concerned with analysing factors that may have contributed to this situation. The research stance within these research strands thereby contributes to normalising the current status quo and does little to shed light on the rationale for the strategies within the liberation movements, or on how power balances may evolve in a longer time perspective. It can therefore be argued that such research contributes to an implicit legitimisation of current power balances.[49] By contrast, the present thesis strives to replace the Palestinian liberation tradition within the larger context of liberation ideologies and movements of the period. To achieve this, alongside a detailed examination of key elements in its revolutionary thought, the thesis will conduct an analysis of significant organisational features of the movement.

Historical Context

The Palestinian national movement can be situated within the broader tradition of national liberation movements, which shared many core principles, including self-determination, popular sovereignty, mass mobilisation and armed struggle, profound social change, cultural liberation and internationalism. These movements converged around the transnational initiatives such as the 1966 Tricontinental Conference, which PLO delegates attended, the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL), and the Non-Aligned Movement. Declarations, statements and documents from revolutionary Cuba, the Algerian Front de Libération National (FLN), the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa (to reference just a few movements), uphold the primacy of rights in the struggle for national liberation, which is consistently conceived of in terms of democracy and popular sovereignty.

The democratic principles around which Palestinian popular movements mobilised, which this thesis will analyse through a close reading of founding documents, resonated throughout the Tricontinental arena. For example, ANC's Freedom Charter demanded "a democratic state, based on the will of all the people" where the "rights of all people shall be the same, regardless of color, race, sex or

[48] Ibid, 124-126.
[49] cf. Robert Young, *White Mythologies* (London: Routledge, 2004).

belief".[50] The FLN's 1954 Proclamation asserted "respect of all fundamental liberties without distinction of race or religion" as key to achieving the goal of national independence; while the 1963 Algerian Constitution called for the "construction of our country in accordance with […] the effective exercise of power by the people". National liberation movements of the period also shared a bottom-up, popular model of political organisation for profound social change. Frantz Fanon, a major theorist and member of the FLN stated that, "the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up". He also emphasized that, "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is the land…which will bring them bread, and, above all, dignity," spotlighting some of the core concerns this thesis will address in the Palestinian context.[51] While this thesis does not aim to make a comprehensive comparison between the various positions adopted by these movements, a few examples will nevertheless be given in the analysis of the various Palestinian stances, to illustrate some of the interconnections between the formulation of rights and conceptualisations of democracy.

The 1968 Palestinian National Charter foregrounds the right of return (asserting that "the Palestinian Arab people possess the legal right to their homeland"). The Charter also appeals to the Charter of the United Nations, "particularly the right to self-determination", and emphasizing "the right of all peoples to exercise them". This was echoed by the Non-Aligned Movement's statement of support for the Palestinian movement, which reaffirmed "the legitimacy of the struggle of the Palestinian people against colonialism, Zionism and racism to recover in their entirety their national rights",[52] and further declarations of support by leaders such as Fidel Castro and Oliver Tambo. Thus, the Palestinian liberation tradition, which this thesis will trace, located itself, and can be situated within, a broader political tradition of national liberation movements. While the thesis will focus on particular Palestinian developments, it will keep in mind this broader transnational context of solidarity in the struggle for freedom and popular sovereignty, an additional realm in which conceptualisations of rights could be articulated, reflected and informed.

[50] Freedom Charter, as adopted at the Congress of the People of Kliptown, South Africa, 26 June 1955. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/congress-people-and-freedom-charter
[51] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 30.
[52] "Declaration on the Struggle for National Liberation". 1973. 4th Conference of Head of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Algiers. http://cns.miis.edu/nam/documents/Official_Document/4th_Summit_FD_Algiers_Declaration_1973_Whole.pdf

Chapter Three: The Period after Nakba: Palestinian Refugees During the 1950's

Before outlining the model of popular organising and the conceptualisation of rights by the PLO, it is necessary to first explain the circumstances within which their praxis was formulated. Indeed, the PLO and the factions that democratised its structures from 1968 onwards were clear that their model of organising for the rights of refugees - which combined certain notions of political rights, popular sovereignty and representation – was based on both an instrumental as well as an intrinsic understanding of politics. The assessments of the situation made by Palestinian ideologues of the period underlined that the options offered by regional or international actors, as well as the space for negotiations available in international arenas did not provide means for achieving the rights of the Palestinians.

In order to describe precisely the social and political circumstances of the period, the thesis will first provide a brief historical overview of the circumstances in which Palestinians lived after the Nakba, focusing on the legal regimes that governed them in their countries of exile, the institutions of assistance and protection established by the United Nations and attempts by global powers to impose solutions on Palestinian exiled communities. This latter point is perhaps most pertinent, as it clearly illustrates in which concrete manners hegemonic regimes of the time posed obstacles to achieving the aims of the movement. This section will conclude by outlining PLO factions' responses to international resettlement strategies, and the alternative solutions that they put forward.

The Nakba and the Legal and Political Situation of Palestinian Refugees

Ever since the Nakba of the years 1947 to 1949, the issue of Palestinian refugees – and their insistence that they be allowed to realise their internationally recognised right to return to their homes – has been one of the central questions at the heart of politics in the Middle East.[53] Although vociferous discussions continue to rage over precise interpretations of this history, scholars nearly unanimously agree that the Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes against their will.[54]

[53] Pappé, Ilan. *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992), 43.
[54] See Rogan, Eugene L., and Avi Shlaim. *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The main area of historical contention has been the extent to which the expulsion of Palestinians was part of a coherent Israeli strategy (Plan Dalet) or whether it was simply the coincidental actions of local Zionist military leaders upon the backdrop of ideological support for the expulsion of Palestinians.

Many attempted to return to Palestine to visit their homes or harvest their crops, only to be shot at or deported once more. An estimated 5,000 Palestinians were deported from what then had become the state of Israel for a second time in this way between 1948 and 1951.[55]

In response to the humanitarian crisis that emerged from the violent expulsion and dispossession of the Palestinian people, the international community established two principal organizations to support Palestinian refugees. The first of these was the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA), which was established with the mandate to provide assistance to refugees. UNRWA was brought into being by UN General Assembly Resolution 302, which formally mandated UNRWA to "carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programs as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission," which had proposed a variety of infrastructure and development projects for Middle Eastern countries in their Final Report, issued in December 1949.[56] Prior to the establishment of UNRWA, the UN created the United National Conciliation Commission on Palestine (UNCCP) to "facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation to Palestinian refugees", and work towards a resolution of their situation that would allow refugees to return to their original homes "at the earliest practicable date".[57]

Since the establishment of the two organisations, UNRWA has grown into a semi-state structure operating schools, healthcare facilities and a variety of other social services across Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank. Meanwhile – in a turn of events that would prove emblematic of dominant international powers' consideration for the predicament of Palestinian refugees – the UNCCP was slowly defunded. By 1951, the Conciliation Commission's role was reduced to the publication of repetitious annual reports, which attested to an immutable situation. [58] This effectively suspended serious international action to uphold the right of return. The role of the UNCCP, UNRWA and the UN more generally will be discussed later in this chapter.[59]

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[55] *Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons 2008-2009*. Report. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, 2009, p. 14.
[56] United Nations. *General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV): Assistance to Palestinian Refugees*. A/RES/302 (IV). 8 December 1949. https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-302.
[57] United Nations. *General Assembly Resolution 194 (III): Palestine*. A/RES/194 (III). 11 December 1948 (Articles 10 and 11). https://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194
[58] Akram, Susan. "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees" in *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Qasmiyeh, Elena, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, 2014, 55.
[59] Rempel, Terry M. *Information & Discussion Brief*. Issue brief no. 5. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, 2000.

The Arab countries to which Palestinian fled received refugees in a less than cordial manner. These states were newly established, and their rulers had a variety of concerns regarding stability and the potential impact of rapid demographic change.[60] Refugees in the West Bank and Jordan came under the rule of the Hashemite Kingdom. In 1950, the Kingdom annexed the West Bank and decided to integrate refugees into its national project of state building. In 1954, Jordan adopted a citizenship law that forced Palestinian refugees residing in its territories to acquire Jordanian citizenship. Whilst the law did not explicitly state an obligation for Palestinians to acquire the citizenship, it was nevertheless the only way in which they could reclaim their basic rights to travel, free movement, employment, residency, education and registration of births and deaths.[61] Those residing in the West Bank, on the other hand, were treated differently. Their access to employment, education, and subsidized goods was very limited and they were only issued with temporary passports and were not allowed to work in the government offices or banks. The legal and social tensions created by Jordan's actions would continue to shape the relationship between Palestinians and Jordan for years to come.[62]

In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees suffered considerably. From 1948, Lebanese policy placed significant restrictions on Palestinian refugees in the country. Claiming that the presence of Palestinian refugees would shift the demographic balance in favour of Sunni Muslims, Lebanon implemented a number of repressive policies to suppress Palestinian refugees and deprive them of economic, social, civil, and political rights.[63] In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees were grouped into three categories. The first category comprises refugees registered by UNRWA and the Lebanese General Security Department, the government body responsible for monitoring and supervising Palestinian Refugees. This group was issued travel documents that allowed them to enter and exit the country freely, without obtaining Lebanese visas. The second group, who were not registered with UNRWA, received one-year travel documents permitting them to exit and re-enter Lebanon. A third and final group of Palestinian refugees held no identification papers and were entirely unable to enjoy basic rights.[64]

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[60] Plascov, Avi. *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*. (London: F. Cass, 1981), p. 76.
[61] Ibid, 80.
[62] Khalil, A. "Socioeconomic Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries."*International Journal of Refugee Law* 23, no. 4 (2011): 680-719.
[63] Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries: A People's History*, (London: Zed Press, 1979), 97.
[64] UNRWA's definition of a Palestinian refugee is not a legal one; rather it relates to the eligibility of a person to benefit from UNRWA services. This definition remains as follows: "A Palestinian refugee is any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict". Palestinian refugees excluded from this definition, and unregistered with Lebanese

In Egypt, the status of Palestinian refugees fluctuated considerably in relation to the national government. During the Nakba, a comparatively small number of Palestinian refugees made their way to Egypt, far less than Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. In the 1950s, Egypt only granted refugees temporary residency permits valid for one to six months, yet recognised passports issued by the All Palestine Government.[65] Still, Egyptian policy in this period permitted Palestinian refugees to work legally and offered financial and educational aid to counter hunger and illiteracy. From 1956 onwards, the incumbent President Gamal Abdel Nasser ushered in a series of policies that secured better protection for refugees, and effectively granted Palestinians equality with Egyptian citizens under the law. As a result, Palestinian refugees were able to travel freely in and out of Egypt, access employment in the public and private sectors, enjoy unlimited residency, education, healthcare and the right to own property. However, the policies implemented by Nasser never granted citizenship; hence Palestinians in Egypt were deprived of their political rights.

When compared with Lebanon, Egypt and other host countries, Palestinian refugees in Syria enjoyed extensive rights, regardless of when they arrived in the country.[66] However, since 2011, Palestinians refugees in Syria have continued to suffer the consequences of the on-going armed conflict. The majority have become refugees for a second time in neighbouring countries, where they often face additional barriers due to their pre-existing refugee status and local legal prejudices against Palestinians (particularly in Lebanon), or have sought asylum in the West.[67]

Finally, a small but important group of Palestinian refugees made their way to Iraq. Here, Palestinians never settled in camps, but were instead housed in old shelters rented by the Iraqi government. Refugees in Iraq were granted equality with Iraqi citizens in terms of civic rights and

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General Security, continue to be considered illegal residents by the Lebanese government. See Feldman, I. "The Challenge of Categories: UNRWA and the Definition of a 'Palestine Refugee'" *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 387-406. And BADIL, "The Forgotten: The Case of Non-ID Palestinians in Lebanon."*Al Majdal*, no. 27 (Autumn 2005).

[65] The All-Palestine Government was established by Palestinian leaders of urban notable backgrounds on 22 September, 1948, when the *Nakba* was still unfolding. The All-Palestine Government was recognised Arab League states (excepting Jordan) and theoretically had a mandate over the entirety of Palestine; however in practice it only administered the Gaza Strip, where the Egyptian administration maintained de facto political, military, and financial control. Though its official capital was Jerusalem, this institution's actual headquarters were in Gaza before moving (under Egyptian pressure), to Cairo. See Shlaim, Avi. "The Rise and Fall of the All-Palestine Government in Gaza."*Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no. 1 (1990): 37-53.

[66] Abbas Shiblak, "Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries." *Journal of Palestine Studie* 25, no. 3 (1996): 36-45.

[67] BADIL, "Palestinian Refugees from Syria: Ongoing Nakba, Ongoing Discrimination." *Al Majdal*, no. 56 (2014).

duties, and eventually the right to own property in 1997.[68] However, they faced severe conditions after the American occupation of Iraq in 2003, when almost all Palestinian refugees were displaced, with many stuck in the no-man's-land between Syria and Iraq for more than 3 years.[69]

Overall, forcible expulsion and dispossession during the 1948 Nakba and beyond left displaced Palestinians with neither effective political representation nor protection for their rights in their host countries. Palestinian refugee camps have been repeatedly destroyed in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and elsewhere; and Palestinians repeatedly displaced. This background is necessary to understand the circumstances in which a distinct Palestinian tradition of organising was to emerge, and the alternative models and claims it would put forward. While certain significant events that have since affected the lives of Palestinian refugees had not yet taken place at the time when the debates outlined below started, the consequences of lack of statehood and territory, combined with the defunding of the UNCCP, were already clear.

International and Arab Responses to the Palestinian Refugee Situation

In addition to the circumstances in which they resided, and the institutions established to protect them, Palestinian refugees were also subject to a number of international and Arab initiatives designed to achieve a more lasting solution to their plight. As this section will demonstrate, whilst international law – epitomised in the case of Palestinian refugees by UN Resolution 194 – stipulates that refugees have the right of return to their homeland, most international initiatives since the Nakba have largely attempted accommodate Israeli intransigence on the refugee question. This section will explore the internationally sponsored solutions that were imposed on Palestinian refugees between 1949 and 1968, in order to contextualise the subsequent conceptual and organisational approach of the Palestinian national movement.

International responses to durable solutions for Palestinian refugees have taken one of two forms. On the one hand, a series of international proposals have advocated the permanent resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Arab host countries as a solution. Largely channelled through UN agencies – predominantly the UNCCP and UNRWA – these proposals relied on various studies of how this might be achieved. On the other hand, successive international (mainly US-sponsored) diplomatic missions to the Middle East have proposed to resolve the refugee question as part of a broader

[68] Ghada Hashem Talhami, *Palestinian Refugees: Pawns to Political Actors*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2003), p. 67.
[69] Gabriela Wengert and Michelle Alfaro. "Can Palestinian Refugees in Iraq Find Protection?" *Forced Migration Review*, (August 1, 2006): 19-21.

package of peace to be realised in the region. These approaches, which adopted wording from UN Resolution 242, either openly set out to negate the rights of Palestinian refugees or adopt a vague language of 'solutions' that neglects a rights-based framework. We will now consider each of these in turn.

The region changed significantly after the 1967 war. Palestinians were now faced with a regional alignment that was increasingly at odds with their rights. This dynamic was reflected in the series of international peace proposals that followed the cessation of hostilities in 1967. The first was the Jarring Mission – a visit to the region by the UN Special Envoy under the terms of UN Resolution 242. Tasked with implementing the resolution, Jarring proposed that UN Resolution 242 include an exchange of territory between the belligerent states – mostly a return of territory to the defeated Arab states, in exchange for the normalisation of relations. Palestinians, however, viewed the Resolution's ambiguous reference to a 'just settlement of the refugee problem' as an indication that their rights would be ignored within a broader regional settlement. Tellingly, Resolution 242 makes no reference to previous resolutions, such as UN Resolution 194, or international legal instruments that enshrine the rights of return and self-determination, and provide grounds for Palestinians to rejoin their original homes.[70] The 'Land for Peace' formula outlined in UN Resolution 242 was carried forward by the Jarring Mission (1967) and the US-sponsored Rogers' Plan (1969). A version of this framework found its way into Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1978) almost a decade later, was largely carried over into Arab-Israeli peace agreements of the 1990s.

Proponents of the above-mentioned solutions conceive of rights as inalienable in the abstract (for example, through the ratification of customary international law, human rights law, humanitarian law and UN Resolution 194). However, when it comes to implementation and the world of realpolitik,, these same rights are treated as secondary to the political interests of states involved. Rights are therefore perceived as being optional, to be selectively implemented through international agreements without reference to the wishes of Palestinian refugees themselves. By neglecting to include any mechanisms for the participatory inclusion of Palestinian refugees, successive peace agreements have negated the legal principle of voluntariness.

[70] For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which upholds the fundamental human rights to leave and return to one's country, the Charter of the United Nations, and subsequent human rights conventions and covenants.

It was against this background that Palestinian groups began organising, with exiled refugees coming together in the Gulf, and in the refugee camps of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. The next chapter will more concretely describe the sequence of events that lead to the rise of the Fedayeen and their inclusion in the structures of the PLO. Before doing so, it is important to outline the precise nature of Palestinian objections to the dominant models being imposed upon their people – as voiced by Palestinian refugees directly, and by Palestinians as represented in their popular political parties.

Facing numerous resettlement plans, Palestinians voiced their opposition and rejection in different forms. Vivid popular objection to these plans was manifested in the formation of various popular bodies (groups, unions, organisations, etc.) within refugee society. Though these bodies played distinct roles within the Palestinian society (social, academic, militant, athletic, etc.), all were political orientated, and all held within their mandate the core goals of liberation and return. These ultimate aims were to be achieved either by preparing civil society, or by undertaking direct action against the occupation. One of the most significant organisations to emerge during this period was the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS), which was launched in 1959.

Another, more explicitly political form of organisation proliferated in the late 1950s and 1960s. These bodies clearly voiced the aims of liberation, and hence attaining the right of return, in every aspect of their operation, from the names they chose to the practices and actions they engaged in. It is not easy to map out the plethora of militant and political organisations founded during this period, since most operated in secret due to the political context they faced in Arab host countries. Among the better-known groups of the period we could mention the Arab Nationalist Movement which in 1965 became known as "*Abtal Al-Awda"*[71] or the Heroes of Return. Another active organisation was "*Jabhat Tahrir Filistin"*[72] or Palestinian Liberation Movement. The name "Al-Fatah", chosen by what soon came to be the most prominent force within the Palestinian national movement, also stands for The National Movement for the Liberation of Palestine.

After the Arab defeat of June 1967, several of these political organisations realised the importance of unity. Hence, eight militant groups merged with Al-Asifah, the military wing of Al-Fateh. Meanwhile, *Jabhat Tahrir Filistin*, *Munazamat Shabab al-Thar* and *Abtal al-Awda* coalesced into

[71] Leila Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* (Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, Beirut, December 1969), 22.
[72] Ibid, 23.

the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The founding statement of this group vigorously asserts the importance of joining forces in struggle:

> *"Palestinian organizations: The Heroes of the Return, the Palestinian Liberation Front squads (Organization of martyr Abdul Latif Shrour – Organization of the Martyr Qassam – Organization of the Martyr Abdul-Qader Al-Husseini), the National Front for the Liberation of Palestine (Youth Organization for Vengeance), and several other Palestinian groups on the homeland. These organizations have agreed among themselves to unite under the banner of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, achieving a fateful unity among these forces, realizing that the nature and dimensions of the battle and the hostile forces requires us to cluster all efforts and revolutionary ranks for our long and bitter struggle against our enemies".*[73]

The founding documents of these groups establish themselves as alternatives to what was at the time perceived by many of those engaged in the Palestinian cause as a failed, classic Palestinian and Arab model, which sought to attain rights through diplomatic channels and classical wars, and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. However, they also describe their formation as an urgent response to repeated attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause, through international resettlement plans and projects. This standpoint is illustrated by the following examples:

> *To resist all political solutions ... in Palestine and all projects aimed at liquidating the Palestinian cause or its internationalization or imposing guardianship on the people and their struggle*[74]

> *All those who have handled our cause failed because we were always excluded. Therefore, it was our people in desperate need at the forefront of organizing the movement, led by the organization of the revolution, that sees righteous way to address the people's ambitions*[75].

[73] *PFLP. The founding document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/13/founding-document-of-the-popular-front-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-december-1967/

[74] Fatah. The Founding Document of Fatah. *"Bayan Harakatuna"* (Statement of Our Movement), 1965. http://www.fat7.8m.net/8.htm.

[75] Ibid.

> *The armed struggle is the main curriculum for our protracted conflict that we are waging against occupation and against attempts to liquidate our struggle through attempts at settlement, which have begun again in some areas of the Arab homeland and impose a totally unacceptable occupation upon some parts of our Arab land*[76].

The challenge was to overcome the impediments of physical separation by creating a popular national institution that could express the aspirations of the Palestinian people independently of their geographical location. As we will see in subsequent chapters, this process began as a three-way struggle over Palestinian representation between the Arab states, an older, traditional Palestinian leadership, and groups of young revolutionaries known as the *fedayeen,* or freedom fighters. Consisting of more than a dozen organisations, the *fedayeen* (henceforth 'the parties') sought to overcome the debilitating political inertia forced upon Palestinians by the regimes under which they lived. The means they embraced was a popular revolution, based on armed struggle, aspiring to mobilise Palestinians towards the realisation of their national rights in the face of Arab and international indifference.

[76] *PFLP. The founding document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/13/founding-document-of-the-popular-front-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-december-1967/

Chapter Four: The PLO and the Collective Conceptualisation of Rights

Having examined the origins and the context which the Palestinian refugees lived in, this section will proceed to outline how the nascent PLO conceived of rights in response to international proposals of the period. It will start by discussing the circumstances that led to the establishment of the PLO and its conception of rights, which was epitomized in the speeches of its first chairman Ahmad Shukairi. It will then move on to explain how this conception of rights evolved through the efforts of the 'fedayeen' or Palestinian freedom fighters, outlining how their ideas built upon and developed those established by Shukairi. Chapter Five will then explore how these principles were put into practice within the organisational structure of the PLO. Most of the important notes on organisational structure have been deferred until Chapter Five, where they will form the subject of a separate discussion.

The Founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

In January 1964, a large Arab summit was convened to discuss the Israeli threats to Arab countries, the occupation of Palestine, and the expulsion of Palestinians. In attendance was Palestinian lawyer Ahmad Shukairi, who was the representative for Palestine. During this meeting, Arab states decided that a separate organisation ought to be established to represent the Palestinian people and Shukairi was appointed to head the delegation tasked with forming the PLO.

Following the summit, Shukairi visited a number of Arab leaders and met with Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, the refugee camps and other places of exile.[77] By May 1964 the PLO was able to hold the first meeting of it legislative body, the Palestinian National Council (PNC), which convened in Jerusalem. The meeting included representatives of each Arab state, as well as around 350 representatives of Palestinian communities within Palestine and in the countries of exile.[78] The Palestinian National Charter of 1964 stated that Palestine is an Arab land and that the liberation of Palestine is the duty of all Arabs and Palestinians. The Charter also stressed the role of PLO in organising and mobilising Palestinians and preparing them for national liberation and return to their land. The Charter also made clear that the PLO does not hold any kind of sovereignty over the West Bank or Gaza Strip – a position certainly adopted to assuage the concerns of Jordan and Egypt over their respective claims to these territories.[79]

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[77] *The Palestinian Arab Documents 1965*. (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1965), p. 6.
[78] Ibid, 77.
[79] Palestine Liberation Organization. "Palestine National Charter of 1964." https://ecf.org.il/media_items/977 http://www.pac-usa.org/the_palestinian_charter.htm

The PLO under Chairman Ahmed Shukairi

As the founder and principal architect of the PLO, Shukairi was responsible for drafting many of its organizational documents, as well as shaping the language adopted by the organization in its formative years.[80] This section sets out a number of his key terminological choices, explains their political context and considers the importance of Shukairi's contribution in this early period. The analysis will predominantly focus on Shukairi's speeches, which he delivered to a variety of international audiences between 1964 and 1969, and which were influential in shaping Palestinian national discourse during the period in question.

The right of return of the refugees remained a key priority and appeared frequently in public discourse of the period. At the time of the establishment of the PLO, the question of return was articulated by Shukairi in ways that resonated with Palestinian, Arab, and international audiences and placed the refugee question at the heart of regional politics. In his speeches, Shukairi sought to highlight the political character of the Palestinian refugee experience, and rarely discussed the question of refugee return in isolation from wider geopolitical alignments. Indeed, the question of return was subsumed under the broader concept of 'national liberation', which insisted on uniting Palestinians around a national rather than sectional agenda.[81]

Addressing Palestinians in the immediate aftermath of the January 1964 Arab summit, Shukairi emphasized the visceral nature of Palestinian political disenfranchisement, insisting that, "days and nights have passed and we have been burning with desire to struggle for our stolen homeland".[82] This struggle, in his view, brought together all Palestinians, regardless of whether or not they were refugees. While recognising the sociological fact that Palestinians were divided between refugees and non-refugees (i.e. those that were displaced in 1948 and those that remained on their lands in historic Palestine), he emphasized that both groups required liberation, arguing that:

> *The refugees amongst us are dispossessed from their homes, experiencing suffering and deprivation. As for the resident Palestinians, their connections with the beloved homeland*

[80] Rashid Hamid, "What is the PLO?" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 4 (Summer, 1975): 94.
[81] Ahmad Al-Shukairi, in *Ahmad al-Shukairi, al-A'maal al-Kamila, Kalimat wa Khotab, Vol.5*. (*Ahmad Al-Shukairi: The Complete Works, Words and Speeches, Vol 5.*), ed. Khairieh Qasimiyeh (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-Arabia, 2006), 36.
[82] Ibid, 17.

have been severed. All of us, refugees or residents, are joined in a vow to liberate our holy land[83]

Accordingly, the right of return became an essential component of a broader national vision that was reflected in the notion of "liberation". This concept addressed Palestinian needs and rights in collective, rather than sectional terms, uniting all Palestinians regardless of their geographic location or political/legal status.

While Shukairi and Palestinian leaders of his generation were keen to address Palestinians internally along these lines, they were also careful to not to localise the notion of liberation. Indeed, they appealed to established frameworks that had a deep historical resonance in this period, far transcending the limits of the Palestinian cause. In Shukairi's speeches he placed the Palestinian struggle in a broader Islamic, Arab and global anti-colonial experience that expanded the Palestinian cause into a struggle of regional and global significance.

Shukairi utilised Islamic history in two ways: to mobilise Palestinian and Arab audiences, and to communicate major dilemmas that confronted Palestinians dispossession and return. For example, in his speech in Cairo University in May 1965, Shukairi compared the Palestinian refugees with the 'mohajireen' or companions who accompanied Prophet Mohammad on his migration from Mecca to Medina.[84] This framing sought to change the image of a refugee community that was either pitied or vilified, into a community struggling for a just and noble cause, and worthy of support and solidarity. In this vein, Shukairi stated: "Mohammad Bin Abdullah (Prophet Mohammad) was a revolutionary migrant prophet as our people today are a revolutionary and migrant people".[85]

The Islamic framing of the mohajireen also aims at highlighting the responsibility of Arab communities towards the Palestinian cause. After all, when the Prophet and his companions escaped from Mecca, they were hosted by the residents of Medina (known as Ansar), who helped the Muhajireen fight their way back to Mecca. By utilising this framework, Shukairi was secularising a religious narrative, deploying the rhetorical tactic of relying on an established and widely accepted moral framework to imbue the question of return with a political meaning, elevating its status in Arab and Islamic minds.

[83] Ibid, 47.
[84] Ibid, 61.
[85] Ibid, 75.

Shukairi placed even greater emphasis on the Arab identity of Palestinian refugees. This is unsurprising given the context of the time. In the 1950s and 1960s Arab nationalism or pan-Arabism was a popular and influential current of thought, Shukairi deployed this Arab nationalist discourse for two main audiences: Palestinians and Arabs. In many of his speeches to Palestinians, Shukairi was keen to emphasize the will and desire of the Arab people at large to liberate Palestine. For example, he relayed these sentiments by communicating to Palestinians that – whilst on his tour of Arab capitals - he had heard the Arab masses, chanting for the liberation of Palestine.[86] Shukairi sought to mobilise Palestinians by assuring them that all the Arab masses stood by their side in their struggle. In his speech in the first Palestinian conference in Jerusalem, Shukairi said: "In my tour in the Arab nation from the ocean to the Gulf I witnessed the desire of the Arab people to fight for the Liberation of Palestine".[87]

This pan-Arabist discourse was important when addressing Palestinians, because it showed the support of millions of Arabs for the Palestinian cause and stressed the principle of collective struggle for liberation and return. Similarly, when addressing Arabs, Shukairi sought to emphasize their collective responsibility towards the Palestinian cause. In his speeches, Shukairi put forward the idea that Palestine is an Arab country, and that Palestinians are part of the Arab ummah (nation). Therefore, the liberation of the land and the return of refugees needed to be achieved through Arab unity and collective actions. Shukairi thus emphasized: "Liberation can be achieved within the frame of Arab unity, which frames our cause as an Arab National cause whose path and aims are inspired by the common struggle, and hence our common destiny".[88] In the context of regional divisions and competition, Shukairi's placement of the Palestinian cause at the heart of the struggle for freedom in the Arab world was a means of garnering further support from regional governments and peoples.

Shukairi also believed that Palestinians were struggling against a colonialist entity that had gained the backing of colonial powers around the world. The anti-colonial frame added a layer of universality to the Palestinian cause and made it possible for people around the world to perceive, connect with, and support the Palestinian struggle. Within this framework, Shukairi sought to gain the support of anti-colonial movements and post-colonial countries around the world, whilst

[86] Ibid, 37.
[87] Ibid, 37.
[88] Ibid, 35.

nevertheless stressing that the Palestinian struggle had a unique element with regards to the return of the refugees.

A more important aim of anti-colonial discourse was popular mobilisation. The global framing of the Palestinian cause related it to other struggles from which Palestinians could draw inspiration. It assured Palestinians that they were not alone, but rather part of a global struggle that had already won many battles. Shukairi frequently referred to these global struggles as examples of national mobilisation and revolutionary struggle: "If we look at the liberation movements in the world we will see that in Algerians, Indonesians, and South Africans are the ones who led their revolutions and sacrificed for their nations".[89]

Shukairi also adopted careful language when it came to describing the Palestinian people. For example, it was decided that Palestinians who had been forced to flee their country would be referred to as 'returnees' as opposed to refugees, so as to enhance the centrality of the idea of return amongst Palestinians.[90] It is significant here to mention that return was embedded in many concepts employed by Palestinians. For example, liberation also connoted return, as did armed struggle, since all acts and practices of resistance in this period aimed at paving the road for the ultimate of return for the majority of Palestinians who were expelled from their lands. Furthermore, the terms 'liberation' and 'armed struggle' intrinsically expressed a refusal of the presence of a colonial power on Palestinian land, and a belief that the existence of an occupying power constitutes the root of the problem.[91]

The PLO under Revolutionary Leadership

Whilst a variety of formal and diplomatic means were utilised to achieve national representation for Palestinians under Skukairi's auspices, a number of revolutionary organisations known as *fedayeen* or freedom fighters had been organising. Of these, the largest two were Al Fateh and the Movement of Arab Nationalists, the latter of which would later become the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Organising from the mid-1950s onwards, these movements advocated for popular mobilisation and armed struggle in order to liberate Palestine. After many years of secretive work and armed incursions into Israel, the Palestinian revolutionary movements gained the support of Arab governments and, more importantly, the support of the Palestinian and Arab masses.[92] In 1968,

[89] Ibid, 19.
[90] Ibid, 64.
[91] Ibid, 75.
[92] Leila Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement* (Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, Beirut, Lebanon, 1969), .26

these movements confronted Israel in a pitched battle for the first time, having previously used only hit and run, guerrilla warfare tactics. In what was largely perceived to be a victory, Palestinian revolutionaries, with the support of the Jordanian military, were able to hold their ground against the odds in the Jordanian town of Al Karameh. The revolutionary forces' success in this battle, and the dissemination of the news of their victory, lead to an influx of thousands of volunteers into their ranks. This enabled these movements to mobilise inside the Palestinian refugee camps, especially in Jordan. It is worth highlighting that these popular movements had a fluctuating relation with Arab regimes, which affected them on various occasions; however, the aim of this section is to examine their mobilisation discourse and, subsequently, how this came to be reflected in the layout of Palestinian institutions.

Al-Fateh was introduced as a revolutionary framework seeking to attain Palestinian rights through popular armed resistance. Its founding document, "*Bayan Harakatona"*, clearly states that it follows no predefined ideology other than the liberation of Palestine.[93] Rather, Fateh believed itself to be a revolutionary architecture, which could include within it a number of ideological perspectives working towards the same national goals. The set of aims detailed in Fateh's founding document sums up the movement's principle approach to mobilisation approach. Besides the primary goal of liberating Palestine, the document articulates the following aims: establishing a democratic sovereign state that preserves the rights of its citizens equally; building a progressive society based on the human rights and freedoms of all citizens; participating effectively in liberating the Arab land and building a united, progressive Arab society; and supporting all oppressed peoples in their struggle towards liberation and self-determination.[94] This set of five aims forms the basis of Fatah's mobilisation discourse. This discourse also draws a new horizon, setting the goal of building a democratic state after liberation, and addresses the Arab masses by stressing that Palestine is an Arab land, and that it is the responsibility of Arab people to liberate it from occupation. Palestinians are part of the Arab people, and hence it is their duty to participate in attaining Arab unity and fighting for the freedom of all Arabs. Moreover, Fatah was keen to address all anticolonial and national liberation movements struggling for freedom around the world. The movement's founding document expresses this solidarity by articulating the aim of supporting all oppressed peoples.

[93] Fatah, The Founding Document of Fatah. *"Bayan Harakatuna"* (Statement of Our Movement), 1965. http://www.fat7.8m.net/8.htm
[94] Ibid.

This set of aims suggests significant continuity between Fatah's discourse and that of Shukairi, described above. However, the difference between the two is the means by which they seek to attain the rights. In other words, the difference is in the vision of liberation, and hence in the shape of the revolution.

While Shukairi's strategy largely aimed at gaining support from Arab state leaders, popular movements depended mainly on their popular structures within the camps to mobilise Palestinians. Their published documents, communiqués, and revolutionary songs are the main archival documents available to us today. The founding documents are of particular significance for discerning the choice of strategy and framing for these movements. In this sense, the founding document "Bayan Harakatona" together with another document also published by Fatah titled "Haykal al-Bina' al-Thawry" or The Revolutionary Structure lay the groundwork for the subsequent mobilisation discourse.

The introduction to Fatah's Revolutionary Structure document addresses the Palestinian individual as, "My brother, my comrade in the struggle, for Palestine, for the revolution that will liberate our homeland, our movement was formed".[95] The way the movement addressed Palestinians was key to its mobilisation discourse, especially given that Shukairi had formerly approached them in a different way. The introduction frames the Palestinian individual as a main contributor to the process of building the revolution and bringing about its victory. It further conveys the significance of engaging in the revolution by joining the movement:

> "*The strength of the movement depends on your engagement and on the extent you value the historical responsibility which the revolutionary forefront holds*[96].

Fatah thereby opens up to the masses, inviting them to participate in the building of the movement and the revolution. It addresses them as active members and values their abilities, offering them the opportunity to change their status from refugees to revolutionaries.

The defeat of the Arab armies in June 1967 lead to a period of soul-searching amongst Arab regarding the reasons for their defeat.[97] The defeat was overwhelming: the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai,

[95] Fatah. The Revolutionary Structure of Fatah. "Haykal al-Bina' al-Thawri" (The Structure of Building Revolution), 1958. http://www.fat7.8m.net/9.htm
[96] Ibid.

and the Golan Heights were all annexed by Israel. Arab armies and governments were defeated in six days; hence proven to be unreliable in the struggle to attain the peoples' demand for liberation and freedom.

> *This defeat proved that dependence on the Arab governments and armies for the liberation of Palestine would lead to no-where. It proved that the idea of Arab unity, which was considered to be the road to Palestine, was far-fetched under existing conditions.*[98]

Against this backdrop, the victory at Al Karameh provided something of an answer, suggesting that Palestinian liberation would come about through practical, popular action rather than through the efforts of the Arab states. As a result, Palestinian factions gained significant legitimacy in the eyes of Palestinians and Arabs at large.

The revolutionary groups held a number of conferences in the Syrian capital Damascus to discuss the new reality and formulas of sustaining and expanding the struggle.[99] Within that year, many politico-military organisations emerged. Some also merged together, for example the three organisations *Jabhat Tahrir Filistin* (the Front for the Liberation of Palestine), *Munazamat Shabab al-Thar,* and *Shabab Al-'Audah* (The Returnees Youth Organization) held a meeting on the 7th of October 1967 and agreed to merge into the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).[100] Meanwhile eight military groups merged to form Al-Fatah military wing al-'Asifah.

The revolutionary factions quickly turned their attention to formalising their structures. They began to demand the popularisation of the PLO and sought to use their newly attained legitimacy to gain control of it, and use it as a unifying national structure. Through a series of diplomatic manoeuvres they were able, by July 1968, to force Shukairi to resign and appoint acting president Yehya Hammouda in his place. Hammouda was given responsibility for contacting all commando groups and holding a fifth meeting of the Palestinian National Congress within six months. The fifth Palestinian National Congress, held in February 1969, resulted in the formation a new Executive Committee representing the popular movements of the Palestinian people, and the election of Yasser Arafat as Chairman.

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[97] Sadik Al-Azm, *Self-Criticism After the Defeat*, 1968 (London: Saqi Books, 2011) ???.
[98] Leila Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1969), 2.
[99] Ibid, 24.
[100] Ibid, 24.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was formed as an ideological political party. The different groups decided to merge under a Marxist umbrella forming a unified front that became later the second largest popular organisation forming the Palestine Liberation Organization. The ideology of the organisation was reflected greatly in its organisational structure and mobilisation discourse. The PFLP's founding document, published in December 1967, contains a historical brief about the Palestinian cause, outlines the necessity of popular struggle, and calls upon the masses to join the struggle. The movement also published another document outlining its approach to organisation in terms of goals and rights. This document is titled "*Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine – The Aims and Significance of the Palestinian War of Liberation"*. These two historical documents form the main basis for the analysis to follow.

The PFLP was founded, after the defeat of Arab armies in 1967, at a time of decimated morale and perceived defeat. Hence, it was necessary to redefine the history of the struggle and reframe the defeat as a lost battle in the liberation war. In fact, the PFLP's founding document frames the 1967 defeat as the beginning of a new phase in which Palestinians would take the responsibility for liberation and attaining their rights through popular revolution:

> *"The military defeat suffered by the Arab armies served as the beginning of a new phase of work in which the revolutionary masses must take their responsible leadership role in confronting the forces and weapons of imperialism and Zionism, which history has proved is the most effective weapon to crush all forms of colonial aggression and to give the initiative to the popular masses to formulate the future according to their will and interests.*[101]*."*

Furthermore, the Front states that the suffering endured by Palestinians was the result of their displacement and dispersion upon the invasion of their homeland. Accordingly, the document portrays the revolution as determining the fate of Palestinians, who should fight for their dignity and rights:

> *"The displacement and dispersion of the last twenty years have created a circumstance in which we must confront the Zionist invaders; the fate of our people and our cause and every*

[101] *PFLP. The founding document of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine* http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/13/founding-document-of-the-popular-front-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-december-1967/

human being in Palestine relies upon our Palestinian determination to fight the invaders in order to preserve our dignity, and our lands and our rights.[102]*"*

The mobilisation discourse of the PFLP breaks with the hierarchical model that existed in the days of Shukairi, by locating authority within the masses and assuring them that the revolution would be guided by their ambitions and will. Moreover, the document describes the masses as leaders of the revolution: "The masses are the authority, the guide, and the resistance leadership from which victory will be achieved in the end.[103]"

In response to the general feeling of defeat that followed the huge, unfulfilled promises of victory made by Arab leaders, including Shukairi, the PFLP promises to speak truth to the masses, the simple truth of the revolutionary struggle, whether it faces successes or drawbacks. The movement assures the masses that it is their right to be aware of accurate updates on the revolution, since they are the vanguards of the struggle:

"The truth must be the property of the masses because there is no other force more committed to their own interests. The masses must be fully aware of the achievements and problems of the armed struggle without exaggeration or hype because they are the custodians of the objectives of this struggle and their aspirations, which will be given to this struggle, include every possession, up to their blood".[104]

The 1967 defeat was harsh not only for the Palestinians, but for the people of all the other Arab countries involved. The Popular Front addresses the Arab Masses in Arab nationalist terms, as "*People of the Arab nation* [105]*..."*, in a clear attempt to highlight the movement's Pan-Arabist roots, and hence connect with the Arab masses. However, when the PFLP addressed the Arab people, it was keen to define their role as providers of support at all levels,

This battle is long and harsh, and the armed resistance today is the vanguard of fighting along the steadfast Arab front. Every Arab demands today to provide full support for the march of the armed combat corps at all levels[106]*.*

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

When addressing the world, and especially anti-colonial and national liberation movements around the globe, the Front defines the aims of the Palestinian liberation movement as the establishment of a democratic state for both Arab Palestinians and Jews. The document describes this state as a democratic entity based on citizenship and equal rights, part of the Arab nation and living in peace with progressive states around the world:

> *The aim of the Palestinian liberation movement is to establish a democratic national state in Palestine in which both Arabs and Jews will live as citizens with equal rights and obligations and which will constitute an integral part of the progressive democratic Arab national presence living peacefully with all forces of progress in the world.*[107]

The PFLP was also the first Palestinian revolutionary movement to explicitly portraying the enemy as the Zionist movement as opposed to Jewish society. Furthermore, the Front addressed Jewish society in its document titled "Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine", calling upon them to disengage from the Zionist movement, which is described as exploiting their hardships.

> *Israel has insisted on portraying our war against it as a racial war aiming at eliminating every Jewish citizen and throwing him into the sea. The purpose behind this is to mobilize all Jews for a life-or-death struggle. Consequently, a basic strategic line in our war with Israel must aim at unveiling this misrepresentation, addressing the exploited and misled Jewish masses and revealing the conflict between these masses' interest in living peacefully and the interests of the Zionist movement and the forces controlling the state of Israel.*[108]

[107] PFLP: Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine "*The Aims and Significance of the Palestinian War of Liberation"* http://pflp.ps/english/2012/12/13/strategy-for-the-liberation-of-palestine-february-1969-historical-document-now-available-electronically/
[108] Ibid.

Chapter Five: The PLO – from State in Exile to National Liberation Movement

Having examined key passages that shed light on the strategies adopted by Shukairi and the revolutionary forces, this section will now seek to understand the practical implications of their ideas and how they were translated into the organisation structure of the PLO. As has been noted, a significant shift took place between the leadership of Shukairi and the revolutionary factions in the greater emphasis to popular organising and Palestinian self-sufficiency. This chapter will explain how the revolutionary factions translated these political convictions into an organisational structure that was better able to meet the needs of the Palestinian people.

Elite Representation in the Founding Structure of the PLO

During a series of meetings in Beirut in March 1964, Shukairi established a blueprint for the architecture of the PLO. In these meetings, he announced that the PLO would function through four main agencies: the military agency, responsible for training Palestinians and preparing them for the war of liberating Palestine; the organisational agency, responsible for building unions for the Palestinians; the political agency, which would be responsible for the PLO's Arab and international relations; and the financial agency, which would be responsible for creating the Palestine National Fund and developing the PLO's financial capacities.[109]

In November 1964, in a speech to Palestinians on the date of the Balfour declaration, Shukairi made clear the architecture of PLO.[110] He declared that the PLO would work towards creating a liberation army consisting of four units: Gaza, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. He also announced that Palestinians would have to serve in this army. This army would take on a traditional form, and Shukairi envisioned that it would remain under the direction of the United Arab Command, rather than acting as an independent Palestinian force. In effect, this meant that each army unit would come under the command of the Arab state in which it was based. The initial institutional design of the PLO therefore approximated the idea of a 'government in exile', complete with all the trappings of a state including a national parliament, presidency and a traditional army.[111]

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[109] Ahmad Al-Shukairi, in *Ahmad al-Shukairi, al-A'maal al-Kamila, Kalimat wa Khotab, Vol.5*. (*Ahmad Al-Shukairi: The Complete Works, Words and Speeches, Vol 5.*), ed. Khairieh Qasimiyeh (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-Arabia, 2006), 7.
[110] Ibid, 57.
[111] Ibid, 16.

In terms of representation, Shukairi's primary step towards achieving broad, popular representation was the preparatory work he undertook to lay the groundwork for the first Palestinian National Council (PNC). Shukairi took it upon himself to select committees and subcommittees whose main task was to nominate and prepare the final list of PNC members.[112] As a result, the first PNC was a fairly balanced representation of the Palestinian population, with the size of each community roughly proportionate to the number of seats they were allotted in the PNC. As a first attempt to create a representative body, Shukairi's efforts were successful in terms of the geographical spread of attendees. This is reflected in the numbers presented in Table One below.

Table One:[113]

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS REPRESENTED IN THE FIRST NATIONAL COUNCIL

Country	*Palestinian Population*	*Number of Members*	*% of Congress Members*
Jordan (including West Bank)	1,570,000	212	50.2
Gaza Strip	364,000	46	10.9
Lebanon	240,000	29	6.8
Syria	155,000	20	4.7
Kuwait	140,000	20	4.7
Egypt	33,000	6	1.4
Saudi Arabia	20,000	None	0
Arab Gulf	15,000	8	1.8
Iraq	24,000	3	0.7
Libya	5,000	10	2.3
Algeria	Unknown	17	4.2
Emigrants	Unknown	3	0.7

The process of institution-building reflected the positions Shukairi expressed in his speeches. Although Palestinians were scattered over several countries, he nevertheless succeeded in creating representative institutions that reflected geographic, sectional, and class balance. Members of this

[112] Rashid Hamid, "What is the PLO? *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 4 (Summer, 1975), 95.

[113] Ibid, 95.

council were either elected by local bodies or selected on the basis of their status as notables. The professional sector consisted of representatives of pharmacists, professors, lawyers, doctors, engineers, businessmen, bankers and industrialists. Farmers, labour leaders and representatives from the refugee camps and the women's and students' organisations were also included.

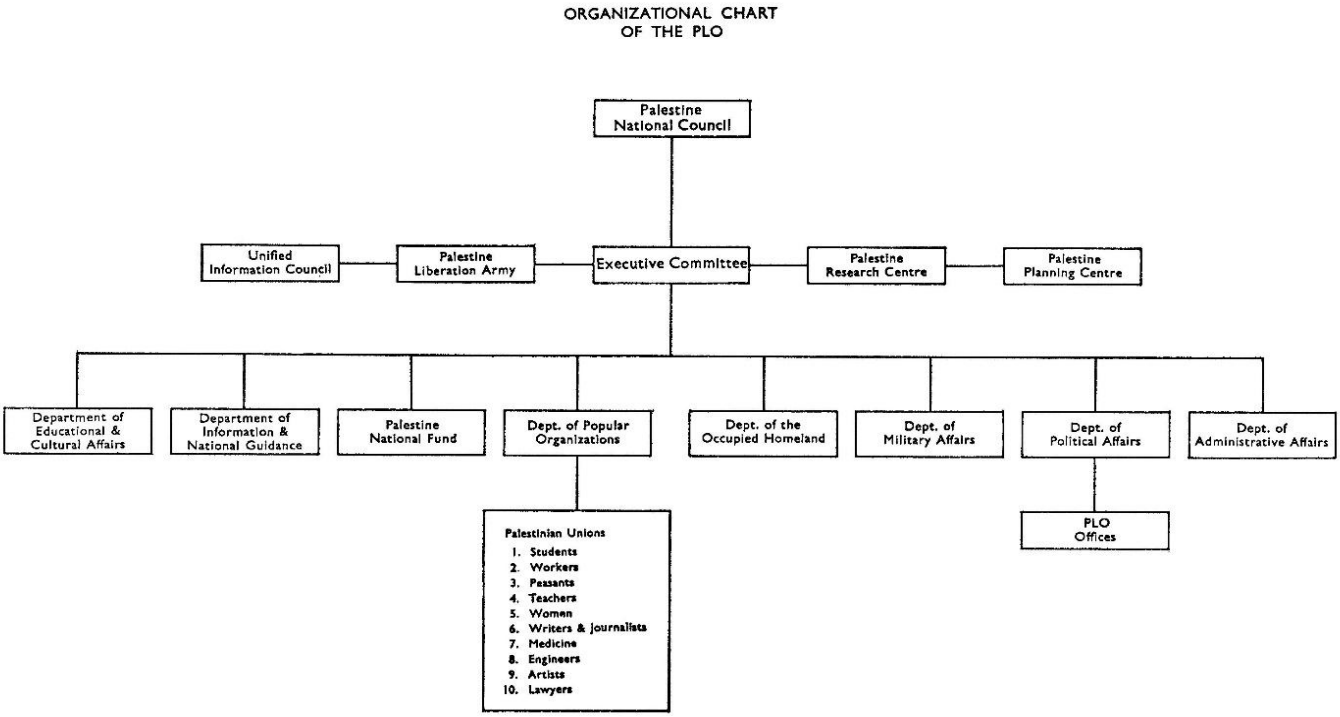
The PNC was of great importance, since it was the council responsible for creating and monitoring the PLO structures and institutions as well as its supreme legislative body. According to its constitution, the Palestinian National Council is the supreme authority responsible for formulating the PLO's policies and programmes.[114] PNC representatives' terms of office were two years in length, or less if requested by one quarter of its members. Upon the first PNC meeting, the structure of PLO was announced and the major institutions of the organisations were mapped out. These will be described in some detail below.

The Executive Committee was designed to serve as a government in exile. The PNC selected an Executive Committee or 'cabinet' from amongst its own members. The Executive Committee in turn selected a chairperson. The Executive Committee was the authority responsible for executing the PLO policies, plans, and programmes drawn by the PNC. Each member of the Committee had a defined portfolio, similar to those of a government minister (e.g. foreign affairs, information, education, defence, occupied territories, etc.). Meanwhile the Executive Committee represented the Palestinian people officially; supervised the bodies of the PLO; issued directives, drew up programmes, and took decisions regarding the organisation of the PLO; executed its financial policy and prepared its budget. All of these functions were undertaken in accordance with the Palestinian National Charter.[115]

[114] International Documents on Palestine 1968 "Constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization" Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1971
[115] Ibid.

Figure One:

Figure One *shows the institutional design of the PLO. Importantly there is no explanation of the power relations between its different components as the chain of command was essentially hierarchal with command flowing downwards from the Executive Committee.* [116]



The National Fund was also created by a resolution adopted during the first session of the PNC.[117] The PNC elects the Chairperson of the fund, who automatically becomes a member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee then selects the National Fund's board of directors (with a minimum of 11 members), and the selected directors elect a deputy chairperson and a secretary who hold three-year terms of office. The sources of revenues were taxes collected from Palestinians by the Arab host countries, contributions from Arab governments and peoples, and donations and loans from supportive nations within the Arab world and beyond. Any other sources of funding had to be approved by the PNC. The main function of the National Fund was to receive all revenues and finance the PLO according the annual budget; develop the PLO's financial resources; and supervise the expenditure of the its various organs.[118] Another body that was created at the first session of the PNC was the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). The PLO Executive Committee was responsible for

[116] Rashid Hamid, "What is the PLO?*" Journal of Palestine Studies* 4, no. 4 (Summer, 1975), 102.
[117] Ibid, 104.
[118] Ibid, 105.

enrolling Palestinians in Arab military colleges and institutions. The structure of the PLA is perhaps most illustrative of Shukairi's vision of the exile state.

During the five years of Shukairi's chairmanship, the PLO came to be heavily involved in the social and human concerns of the Palestinians living in exile. Various institutions were created to oversee unions, medical aid, culture, education and information. All unions formed before and after PLO were linked the organisation and represented by delegates in the Palestinian National Council. Hence unions maintained daily contact with the PLO. The PLO department for popular organisations, on the other hand, dealt with the daily concerns of workers and professionals. Furthermore, the PLO provided wide-ranging assistance for unions, supplying financial resources and intervening in negotiations with Arab governments (for example to ensure that Palestinian refugees had the right to work in Arab countries without a permit).[119]

The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was the major healthcare institution established to supply medical aid to Palestinians in exile. As for education, the PLO Planning Centre included an education section, which developed a philosophy of Palestinian education and designed pedagogical materials for Palestinian children. In addition, the Planning Centre organised summer programmes and courses for Palestinian teachers, and built exemplary kindergartens.[120] The PLO also established a Research Centre in Beirut in 1965. The Centre possessed a vast library, housed the PLO archives, and issued a monthly Arabic intellectual journal, *Shu'un Filastiniyyah* (Palestine Affairs). In addition, a number of information offices were established, together with a newspaper titled *Filistin al-Thawra* (Palestine Revolution) and a news agency called WAFA.[121]

This PLO architecture was challenged during the 1967 war between Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Israel. Three traditional armies (those of Jordan, Syria and Egypt) accompanied by troops from the Iraqi army and the Palestinian Liberation Army units lost the war against the army of the Occupation. In a letter addressed to the Palestinian and the Arab people in November 1967[122], Shukairi attributed the Arab defeat to a lack of preparedness on the part of Arabs, the support of colonialist powers for Israel, and lack of unity between Arab countries.

[119] Ibid, 106.
[120] Ibid, 107.
[121] Ibid, 107.
[122] Ahmad Al-Shukairi, in *Ahmad al-Shukairi, al-A'maal al-Kamila, Kalimat wa Khotab, Vol.5*. (*Ahmad Al-Shukairi: The Complete Works, Words and Speeches, Vol 5.*), ed. Khairieh Qasimiyeh (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wihda al-Arabia, 2006), 197.

As we have seen, Shukairi sought to create a Palestinian exile government. However, his strategy proved un-viable due to a number of factors. First, mobilisation originated in councils and offices, instead of proceeding from the grassroots by establishing a base in the refugee camps to create a leadership within these communities. Secondly, the dependency of PLO on Arab countries ultimately tied its hands and limited its ability to make independent decisions. Thirdly, Shukairi tied liberation to Arab unity, and insisted that return and liberation could only be fulfilled through a united Arab army. Fourthly, his strategy of creating a classical army, relying on support from Arab countries to fight against one of the most advanced armies of the time, was entirely unsuccessful. These shortcomings notwithstanding, Shukairi's pioneering attempt at organisation and mass mobilisation after the Nakba was a formative experience that laid the groundwork for developments to come.

The Democratisation of the PLO through the Popular Organisations

The PLO had been established by the Arab League in 1964 and worked, rather ambiguously, to simultaneously represent and contain Palestinian national aspirations, so as not to infringe on the interests of member states. Its parliamentary and highest decision-making body, the Palestine National Council (PNC), was largely comprised of Palestinian notables, whose patriotic sentiments could not be realised through popular action. Meanwhile, parties such as Fateh and the PFLP, buoyed by the popular and revolutionary legitimacy they carried after Al Karameh, negotiated an effective takeover of the PLO by gaining a majority of the seats in the PNC during its Fifth Session in 1969. The PLO gradually gained increasing regional and international recognition and would come to be recognised as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the United Nations and Arab states through recognition at the Arab League.[123]

What the control of the PNC by the Palestinian parties signified at this stage was the establishment of national body that expressed, both in word and deed, the will of a much broader base among the Palestinian people to struggle for their national cause. As one Palestinian writer at the time wrote:

[123] Although the parties had joined the PLO in PNC's Fourth Session, their control was formalised when they were allotted a majority of the PNC's seats in the in the Fifth Session in February 1969 see Rashid Hamid, Resolutions of the Palestine National Council 1964–1974, p.9 [in Arabic]. As well as the parties, seats in the PNC were allotted to other organisations which covered sectors of the people, represented through community leaders, independents, student unions, women's unions, professional syndicates and popular associations of various kinds.

"The institutional achievement is an ambition of all revolutions.... [In the Palestinian case] its first and foremost feature is that the general Palestinian institution is the organized expression of Palestinian national identity" [124]

Taking over the PLO, however, did not automatically entail gaining complete control of existing national institutions, and the popular movements could not claim to represent the millions of Palestinians outside their ranks. Comprehensive representation would only be achieved when the voices and contributions of all those who shared the experience of dispossession and oppression were equally included. Only in this way could the PLO be a sovereign, popular institution embodying the will of the Palestinian people as a whole.

Documents from the period indicate that all Palestinian parties laid great emphasis on devising mechanisms for locating and engaging Palestinians in their different circumstances around the world. Political participation was seen, firstly, as the right of the people to contribute to furthering their own cause, a right that extended to all the people. Secondly, popular participation was seen to be of instrumental value, as it was the only force of collective struggle that could pave the way to national liberation.[125]

The belief was that, no matter what sphere of life Palestinians lived in, "they will still be in a position to participate in supporting the revolution" through production and struggle. Whilst the leadership were expected to "transfer its determination and will to the armed forces and people"[126], this was not to be achieved by "putting forward definite solutions", but instead by applying "different means to enable our people to express their ability to invent new means".[127] To realise this end, the parties launched an extensive programme of establishing hospitals, schools, sports clubs, popular institutions and militias which would cement their base in the camps, and through which Palestinians could contribute to the national whole. The primary purpose of these services was to dismantle the economic, political and social barriers to popular mobilisation.

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[124] Mahjub 'Umar, "The Palestinian Ramadan War: Positions and Results," *Shu'un Filastiniyyah,* no. 119 (Beirut): 78-79, quoted in Sayigh, Y. "Palestinian Armed Struggle: Means and Ends", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 16, No 1, 1986, 95-112.
[125] *PFLP: A Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine,* Information Department, Amman, 1969. http://pflp.ps/english/strategy-for-the-liberation-of-palestine/. And *Fateh*, published in Leila Kadi, *Basic Political Documents of the Armed Palestinian Resistance Movement*, (Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center, 1969), 118.
[126] *Fateh*, published in Kadi, 1969, 117.
[127] Ibid, 122.

An example of this from 1969 is PLO negotiations with the Lebanese government to secure the right of Palestinians to administer their own affairs in the refugee camps, and bear arms in their defence. This liberated the camps from the iron grip of the Lebanese state, police, and the notorious intelligence section of the Lebanese army. Palestinians in Lebanon were thereby able to achieve what they had been denied in terms of work opportunities, travel papers and a wide array of basic economic and social services. One Palestinian in Bourj al-Barajneh camp recalled:

> *The Palestinian felt after the Revolution that he's living like a normal person again after a life of humiliation. The camps now are like fortresses, where in the past people had nothing to do but die under these zinco [corrugated iron] roofs…now we have new institutions that were forbidden before. Palestinian customs and arts have been revived. And there are many other changes.*[128]

The transformed atmosphere and circumstances of the camps ushered in comprehensive popular initiatives in all manner of activities, from the daily management of the camps to participation in the national cause as a whole. As a Palestinian sociologist familiar with camps in Lebanon explains:

> *The most important thing was that they [the Palestinians in the camps] felt liberated from the D.B [the Intelligence section of the Lebanese army]. They felt more able to defend themselves, and to participate more fully in the Revolution, and take part in the fighting…All that came to them from the Revolution was a matter of morale…The most important benefit of the Revolution was the freedom of political activity, freedom to organize and to work…*[129]

The responsibility of Palestinian national institutions was at this time understood as not to provide ideological direction to the people, but to facilitate their inclusion into the body politic on equal terms. The aspiration was to thereby realise national unity allowing for the collective expression of the people's will. This role is formally distinct from that of the parties who came under the PLO's umbrella, and acted within the political space it secured. In practice, these different roles overlapped, while the concept of national unity functioned to maintain the oneness of the people, despite numerous differences regarding the specifics of policy and strategy.

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[128] Quoted in Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. (Zed Books, London, 1988), 164.
[129] Sirhan Sirhan, quoted in Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. (Zed Books, London, 1988), 165.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Much of the historical discussion on the period examined here has involved port-mortem analyses of the national movement, fixed on uncovering the reasons for its defeat, while omitting any detailed examination of the principles and means according to which the Palestinian revolution was initiated and operated. The present thesis has attempted to address this gap in the literature, by contributing to an understanding of the significance of the strategies that were articulated to construct diverse alliances or mobilise Palestinians from the perspective of actors within the movements of the period, and against the background of the geopolitical and ideological circumstances of the period.

The Palestinian tradition traced here sought to overturn the neglect for Palestinian rights and representation which was perceived among Palestinians at the time and present an alternative vision. After addressing methodological considerations, the thesis outlined the events leading up to the creation of the PLO and the international situation at that time The subsequent chapters outlined the strategies and positions articulated in the early PLO under Shukairi, followed by the subsequent strategies expressed and implemented by Palestinian revolutionary factions, identifying continuities and divergences between these two phases, before elaborating on their respective organisational models. The thesis further traced how Shukairi articulated the principles of national, popular organising, and how these were put into practice by the revolutionary factions that took over the PLO in the late 1960s.

The most important finding is that, in the absence of a shared physical space and state institutions, and against the background of limited support from Arab states at the time, actors within the Palestinian liberation movement concluded that Palestinians must create and sustain their own political bodies. Of particular importance was the interdependent relationship between the national arena on the one hand, and its constituent sectors of the people in both political and civic arenas on the other. The core pillar of this approach involved prioritising the defence of political institutions through maintaining national unity. Upholding the key concerns of national unity and the representativeness of institutions created a practice of inclusion and collective decision-making, which functioned to keep national institutions firmly embedded in the people's will, grounded in popular legitimacy, and therefore capable of forcefully advancing their cause.

The strategies of the Palestinian liberation movement in the period 1964 to 1970 thus blur the distinction that is commonly made between state and non-state actors, on the one hand, and between representative and participatory democracy, on the other. Despite the lack of territorial basis and absence of recognition by several international actors as a government in exile or as legitimate representative of Palestinian national interests on arenas of inter-state international relationships, the liberation movement nevertheless succeeded in performing most of the functions expected from states. This was the case both with respect to providing services and protection to Palestinians, and with respect to engaging in international processes of negotiation or conflict.

The partial recognition of Palestinian representatives with respect to which arenas they were present in, the rights to expression or vote they had on these arenas, or the fact that certain states among the members of international bodies did not recognise Palestinian representation, can also be said to blur the categorisations implied by international law, affecting the binding nature of various resolutions, declarations or agreements. The question of legitimacy of Palestinian representatives on international arenas can be understood as pertaining not only to issues of international law, but to the tensions pointed to in the analysis between claims to actorhood (involving recognition by other international actors), the need to establish legitimacy vis-à-vis the concerns of the Palestinians in different contexts who were represented by Palestinian bodies and delegates, as well as the aspiration to bring about a real change in the balance of power in the status quo (above all concerning loss of territory and negation of fundamental rights of Palestinians in the post-Nakba period). There is thus a certain conflict between the question of formal recognition of Palestinian representatives (supposed to ensure respect of sovereignty and the ability to act on equal footing with other representatives of national interests in the UN or other international arenas), and the de facto balance of power involving both alliances and differences in the weight carried by viewpoints expressed on international arenas depending on the military or economic power of the various states. It would appear that it is such balances of power, rather than the formal mechanisms of international law, that has led to an acceptance within the international community of other states speaking on behalf of the Palestinians or situations where the interest of the Palestinian people has at times been reduced to limited clauses simply mentioning the need for a solution to the predicament of the Palestinian. It has also influenced the strategies of the Palestinian liberation movement in seeking alliances with Arab states (in the period of Shukairi), or among anti-colonial and post-colonial states and movements (in the period driven by the popular movements).

A key finding in this thesis pertains to the process of mass mobilisation within the Palestinian liberation movement. There is no consensus concerning what constitutes a democracy, but frequently mentioned aspects include the rule of law, implementing the will of the people, empowering the people, or ensuring political equity. Hague et al. distinguish between government as the ”arena for making and enforcing collective decisions”[130] and governance ” The process by which decisions, laws and policies are made, with or without the input of formal institutions”.[131] In this sense, the institutions established to enable popular mobilisation and widen the base of the Palestinian liberation movement could be understood as falling under the broad category of governance. While in many contexts the notion of democracy is largely limited to the functioning of institutions of executive power and election of representatives to express the opinions of the people (today sometimes contrasted to the expression of people's opinions through mechanisms of access to media or through 'civil society' organisations), the Palestinian national movement created a large number of locally based institutions, organisations and associations to provide platforms for popular participation. This strategy was motivated by the aspiration to mobilise the broadest possible base in the struggle for liberation, but also drew on the emancipatory ideologies of the anti-colonial and liberation movements in various parts of the world.

Post-scriptum

Since their initial expulsion from Palestine between 1947 and 1949, Palestinians have lived precarious existences in the countries neighbouring their homeland. Whenever conflicts arise, Palestinian refugees are often the first victims, the least protected and the most likely to be hindered by the complex web of legal and physical obstacles facing asylum seekers. This precariousness is reflected in the fact that almost every Palestinian refugee camp in has been destroyed in whole or in part at some stage over the past 71 years.

The Palestinian people today find themselves in a familiar position. As in the early years of their dispersal from their homeland in the late 1940s, Palestinians once again face an absence of representation. The PLO, which for many years was able to reflect the will of the Palestinian people in the struggle for their rights, has today become a shadow of its former self. Largely limited to the West Bank, the PLO is no longer able to represent the Palestinian people in their entirety. As a result,

[130] Rod Hague, Martin Harrop, and John McCormick, *Comparative Government and Politics. An Introduction*. (10th ed.) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3.
[131] Ibid, 5.

the ability of Palestinians to claim their rights has been weakened, leading to ever more disunity and fragmentation.

Karma Nabulsi argues that it is not simply this or that policy put forward by the Palestinian leadership that makes the peace process faulty, but rather the exclusion of the majority of Palestinians from the decision-making process. She suggests that a legitimate peace process would require a return to the first principles of democracy, to facilitate broad popular representation of the views of all Palestinians, especially the refugees, when determining the Palestinian position in negotiations, and the direction and strategies of the national movement more broadly.[132]

Since the mid-2000s Palestinians have been attempting to revive their national representative, the PLO, by demanding direct elections to the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the PLO's supreme legislative body. The statements, announcements and intentions of this campaign reflect the Palestinian preoccupation with achieving national unity as the means by which to mobilise for a collective struggle for their rights. As a statement published in 2014 and signed by over one hundred Palestinian organisations, coalitions, associations and networks put it:

> *From our beloved homeland and across our exiled communities and camps, let us raise our voices together with the slogans of national unity, asserting our unwavering demand for return and a salute to our people's heroic sacrifices and struggle everywhere*[133]

The liberation tradition embodied by these statements is one that reflects a longstanding practice among Palestinian refugees. This tradition employs popular, national organising as the language and organisational means by which the people can claim their rights. As this thesis has suggested, this approach emerged in direct opposition to the repeated attempts to subvert Palestinian rights by the international community, for whom rights appeared as secondary to the political imperatives of Israel and the dominant world powers that continue to support it.

Efforts to revitalise Palestinian national institutions today have much to learn from the previous generation of Palestinian revolutionary struggle. And just as the Palestinian liberation tradition

[132] Nabulsi, Karma. "The Peace Process and the Palestinians: A Road Map to Mars." *International Affairs* 80, no. 2 (2004): 221-31.
[133] https://returnunifiesus.com/call-النداء/

provided vital inspiration for democratic movements across the globe from its emergence through the 1960s, its thought and practice furnishes an example for displaced and disenfranchised peoples seeking to organise and reclaim their rights today.

Appendix A

A search in Lund University LUBSearch on 7 May 2019 using the term Palestine liberation movement yielded 44 peer-reviewed publications in English. Of these, 24 were eliminated (21 because they dealt with an earlier or later period, 1 concerned women in East Timor, one concerned film, and one was a duplicate).

A closer examination was made of the remaining 20 results, and a further 8 were eliminated because the focus of the studies had little relevance to the concerns of the thesis (listed at the end of this Appendix).

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