Local Identity in Palestine in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries—Challenging Dominant Methodologies

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By using top-down methods, periodizing exclusively along the Arab-Zionist conflict and basing on either Hebrew or Arab primary sources, leading scholars tend to ignore the existence of popular local identity shared by Jews and Arabs in center Palestine during late 19th-early 20th century. To explore this identity this paper suggests using history from below methods i.e. history of average citizens that looks into many individual's multi-dimensional life-experiences, particularly in Palestine mix areas, and based it on both Hebrew and Arabic sources. Through history from below this paper shows that joint Jewish-Arab local identity prevailed prior to the establishment of Jewish or Palestinian national movement and afterwards existed along with them till it was defeated by the escalating national conflict.

Keywords: Palestine nationalism, local identity, Palestine Jews, history from below, history methods, late 19th and early 20th century Palestine

Introduction: Dominant Methods in Studying Nationalism in Palestine

Leading students of Israel-Palestine national movements use one or more of the following methods: First, they divide their study exclusively along Jewish-Arab conflicts chronology, moving from one violent clash to the next; Second, they give high priority to top-down history i.e. history of collective institutions such as governments, political parties, national identities or worker unions; and third, they base their research primarily on either Hebrew or Arabic sources (Caplan, 2009; Milton-Edwards, 2009; Morris, 2001; Pappe, 2006; Tessler, 2009; Rogan & Shalim, 2007; Shapira, 2012). Popular and scholarly approaches see Palestine history as long chain of wars and struggles. According to this approach, since early 20th century violence constructed Jewish-Arab relations and shaped the land's history as sequent rounds of national struggle, each ending with temporary pause. Scholars using this method divide modern Palestine history to periods of national clashes between Jews and Arabs: starting with 1920-1921 and 1929 anti-Zionist and anti-British riots and 1936-1939 Palestinian revolt, through 1948 and 1967 wars to the Intifadas of 1987 and 2000 (Gelvin, 2007; Morris, 2009). Indeed, Kimmerling and Migdal (2003) started their narrative in 1834, almost 50 years earlier to the foundation of first Zionist settlements. However, they construct a narrative of three local revolts against external occupations: 1834 revolt against Egypt forces, 1936-1939 Palestinian revolt against the British Mandatory regime and the Zionists leading to the 1948 and 1967 Israeli-Arab wars, and the Palestinian 1987 uprising against Israeli occupation. Choosing wars or riots as exclusive criteria for periodization, however, ignores times and places where extensive coexistence and cooperation prevailed, in particular in mixed cities prior to 1948

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war. In other words, there were times and places where the conflict did not rule exclusively over people's mind. Without underestimating the role of violent clashes in shaping Zionists-Palestinian relations, it's worth reevaluating those times and place not just as pauses between rounds of identity formation violence. Rather, this paper suggests, they opened alternative identity option based on Jews and Palestinians living in common. Moreover, dividing modern Palestine/Israel exclusively along Jewish-Arab ethnic clash leads to seek for point zero: the earliest clash that determined Zionist-Palestinian relations in the years to come (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003; Cohen, 2013). To assume that all clashes following point zero actually reproduced it in very different historical contexts is methodologically problematic.

This paper suggests seeing Zionist-Palestinian conflict prior to 1948 war as one component among few in determining ethnic relations. Similar to other Middle East areas, the conflict over Palestine was not always the major factor in determining ethnic identity (Behar & Benite, 2013; Shenhav, 2006; Shabi, 2009; Baskin, 2012; Levi, 2012). First and for most, Palestinian local identity emerged organically through modernization process rather than by Jewish-Arab or colonial power native people conflict. Both Palestine Jews and Arabs, the author argues, shared this local identity. Before presenting the main argument, the author wishes to raise another introductory note.

Studies on nationalism in Palestine heavily lean on top-down political or social history i.e. history of national or social structures and their influence on individuals or communities. Political history, national institutions building and territorial struggle heavily overshadows the history of everyday life. In contrast, bottom-up methods prefer researching grass-roots and the average citizens' perspective over examining only educated elite writings, administration structures or bureaucracy correspondence. Few bottom-up historical studies have been published recently on Palestine; most of them on the Jewish city of Tel Aviv or the mixed city of Haifa, in addition to sociological theory oriented ones (Ayalon, 2004; Helman, 2010; Azaryahu & Troen, 1992; Monterecu & Rabinowitz, 2007; Sharfman, 2007; Yazbak & Weise, 2011; Cohen, 2008). Yet, much is left out in particular Jewish-Arab everyday interactions in other major cities such as Jaffa and Jerusalem or in Palestine peripheral cities—Acre, Safed, Tiberias. Methodological goal, suggests Lital Levy, should move to explore local identities as experienced in everyday life rather than those formulated in discursive structures (Levy, 2008). Not only research target group should vary through using history from below, this paper argues, also its sources. Instead of basing solely on official texts and statistical data, Palestine history from below can benefit from using family archives and photographs, interviews with ordinary people, watching documentary films, look how people dress, and studies buildings architectural style. In addition, history from below uses sources that history of ideas or political history often neglect: ethnography publications, popular literature and popular culture. Indeed, Salim Tamari published primary sources and studies along this direction (Levy, 2008; Tamari, 2009; Tamari, 2013; Tamri & Katz, 2010), but his studies are limited to few Arab authors. He does not use the rich collection of Hebrew memoires and ethnographic publications. Moreover, the division between scholars using Hebrew sources and those using Arabic ones is institutionalized in many universities. Arabic, Persian or Turkish languages base Middle East and Islam studies, whereas Israel's history, sociology, politics, literature or economy base on Hebrew sources and taught in other departments than Middle East and Islam studies. The foundation of Israel Studies programs in many Western universities[1] takes this division even further. Indeed, this division has the advantage of writing in-depth studies based on mastering one local

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[1] A list of Israel Studies institutes and professors. Retrieved from http://www.aisisraelstudies.org/centers.ehtml

language. However, on the cost column of the account one finds the lack of comprehensive explanation. Very few scholars overcome the languages barrier to offer an integrative-inclusive understanding of a region and subject shared by both Hebrew and Arabic speakers (Cohen, 2008). Abigail Jacobson is one of those few but her scope is limited to few years around World War One (Jacobson, 2011a).

Hereafter the author challenges these dominant methodologies by discussing three issues: First, which and how many identities existed in Palestine before World War I; second, who carried them; and third, the major role anti-Zionism played in creating Palestinian patriotism.

Which and How Many Identities Existed Before the End of World War I?

Studies on Palestine (i.e. the area that since 1922 is called Palestine) in late 19th century-early 20th century conclude that either local patriotism did not exist or was the weakest identity compared with Arab nationalism or Ottoman loyalty. Campos looks top down on people residing in Palestine. Her perspectives are those of central and local Ottoman administrations. She argues that the Empire provided its Palestinian subjects Ottoman imperial citizenship that brought together Jews, Christians and Muslims under what she calls civic Ottomanism (Campos, 2011). Porath also argued that no Palestinian identity existed before 1922. However he based his conclusion on different foundation: on the ground that till the collapse of the Empire no regional-administrative unit called Palestine existed. Only when British Mandate united different Ottoman regions under its Palestine administration, Porath argued, Palestinian identity emerged. Between the final collapse of the Ottoman regime in Palestine and Syria (1917-1918) and the foundation of British Mandate (1922) Palestinians favored Arabism. Several young Palestinians from Jerusalem notable families occupied key positions in Prince Feisal regime that embodied Arab nationalism in Damascus between the years 1918-1920. When Britain ceased supporting Faisal's claim for Greater Syria, France was able in 1920 to abolish Feisal's regime. Consequently Palestinians moved from identifying their country with Greater Syria (south-Syria as they called it) to establish their own national movement. Even at this stage, as well as during the whole British Mandate period, Porath (1974) argued, no exclusive patriotic Palestinian identity existed. The young movement combined Palestinian and Arab nationalisms.

Muslih and Khalidi disagree with these two views. According to them local Palestinian identity actually did exist before World War I. But it was the weakest among three overlapping yet not necessarily contradicting identities: Ottomanism, Arabism and local patriotism. Muslih puts loyalty to the Islamic Ottoman order first as the most powerful identity, Arab nationalism second and Palestinian identity third in gaining popular support and building sequent political institutions. In the late 19th century, Khalidi wrote, Jerusalem became a political and religious identity center for Palestinians. The city notable families were potential identity builders through their socio-political familial networks and the religious institutions they supervised. But, argued Khalidi, they achieved it only under the British Mandate. Before, local identity remained a-political, limited to separate extended elite families or the within their city of resident. Local identity lacked modern political institutions or leadership that mobilizes mass support throughout the country (Muslih, 1989, pp. 155-174, pp. 200-224; Khalidi, 1997, pp. 19, p. 21, pp. 28-44, pp. 63-88).

Thus the establishment of Palestinian national movement in the 1920's was more a default choice imposed by external circumstances, the alimentation of the Ottoman and Arab-Damascus based identities, rather than organic emergence of a local identity. Moreover, according to these approaches external Arab and Ottoman identities centered far from Jerusalem were more attractive than local identity. But if local patriotism was as

weak as Khalidi and Muslih put it, how comes that immediately when these two over-all identities abolished a Palestinian national identity step forcefully on the political stage? It seems that more weight should be given to local patriotism, in particular due to what Khalidi calls "little short of revolutionary" development (Khalidi, 1997, p. 40): Ottoman administrative reforms in the second half of the 19th century gave great degree of autonomy and political representation to its provinces; Jerusalem administrative status was upgraded and it ruled overall center Palestine; Europeans showed growing interest in the Holy Land in general and in visiting Jerusalem and Beth Lehem in particular. Khalidi (1997) noted that more than 20,000 tourists and pilgrimage per-year arrived to Jerusalem in early 20th century (p. 47). In the last years of the Ottoman Empire Jerusalem and Jaffa residents endorsed European ideas and lifestyle norms. Modern schools and shops opened, local press established (Kushnir, 2009; Khalidi, 1997, pp. 53-56) and new roads constructed beside Jaffa-Jerusalem railway (1892). Following their improved physical connection Palestinians began imagining their community in modern way. It was reflected in local press names (al-Quds-Jerusalem, Filastin-Palestine) and articles arguing that Palestine is "our country" (*biladuna*) (Khalidi, 1997, p. 58). Yet, according to Kahlidi and Muslih local patriotism was less attractive than Arab and Ottoman identities. It remained limited to Jerusalem and Jaffa elite family circles. According to Muslih and Khalidi, the three identities overlapped and competed yet not contradicted each other. Arabism was the notable's homeland, Palestine the city or the region where they and their family members lived, and Ottomanism centered their political and religious loyalties (Khalidi, 1997, p. 19, pp. 28-29, pp. 63-88).

Giving more weight to local identity means, first, that it was not base just on kinship, or clan political and economic interests. As shown below that local identity, i.e. Palestinian patriotism, was shared by indigenous Jews and Arabs. It also means that the establishment of the Palestinian national movement after World War I was not made by default. Regional circumstances: The collapse of Faisal's Arab nationalist regime in Damascus and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, pushed forward building Palestinian political institutions on the ground of living patriotism. Zionism, however, was created in Europe by Center and East European Jews, of which few immigrated to Palestine. Zionists immigrant claim nativity and authentic attachment to the land on the account of indigenous Arab Palestinian patriots. Many of them saw Palestine an empty deserted land or inhabited by pre-modern residents. Cultivating the land provided them moral legitimacy for ethno-national possession as well as a tool to root themselves in it symbolically and claim superiority over its indigenous people. As the national conflict in Palestine escalated after World War I both Jews and Arab Palestinians preferred to disregard their joint local identity and favored two conflicting ethnicities, each claimed the land exclusively.

Who Carried Local Identity?

As elsewhere, national identity developed first in main Palestine cities: Jaffa and Jerusalem. Since the late 19th century Jerusalem and Jaffa became centers of politics and identity for the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Jaffa lies on the coast, Jerusalem on the mountain ridge that runs down the center of the country. Jaffa was a secular port, while Jerusalem was conservative holy city. During the 20th century, Jaffa, merged with the new city of Tel Aviv, became center of a global-oriented metropolis; Jerusalem became a capital city at the same time that it became centers of national identity for both nations and points of conflict between them (Kimmerling & Migdal, 2003, pp. 38-101). During the 20th century, the two urban entities underwent dramatic

demographic changes, and their inhabitants were ruled by several regimes: Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Israeli, and that of the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, these cities experienced large-scale physical, architectural and environmental transformations. Their boundaries changed, old neighborhoods were destroyed and new ones constructed, inhabitants fled or emigrated, while newcomers settled in or around the cities.

Both Muslih and Khalidi argue that Arab elite members from Jerusalem and Jaffa developed local patriotism. Their attitude is both ethnic and class oriented rather than territorially inclusive, i.e. identity that includes all residents on a giving territory. According to Muslih and Khalidi educated Arab elite writing and publishing expressed local patriotism.

Based on history from below the author wishes to suggest that in addition to elites' coherent ideological expressions, non-elite members, Jews and Arabs alike, claimed local identity through imagining a community of indigoes people living in common on shared territory. They imagined and practiced their togetherness in everyday life: in their joint neighborhoods and residential compounds, the market place, modern schools and coffee shops, as well as in their dress, the language they spoke and joint religious festivals. The premise of this article allows me to bring just few examples[2].

> Jews and Muslims shared residential courtyards. We resembled a single family and socialized together. Our mothers unburdened themselves of their troubles to Muslim women, who in turn confided in our mothers. The Muslim women taught themselves to speak Ladino. They frequently used the proverbs and sayings of this tongue. (Yehoshua, 1979, p. 213)

Remembers Ya'akov Yehoshua on his childhood at the first decade of the 20th century Old City Jerusalem. "No mansions separated us from the Muslims" he continued.

> The Muslim women descended upon us from the roofs to while away the evenings chatting to our mothers. Our children played with theirs, and when the neighborhood kids attacked us our Muslim friends who lived on our courtyard would come to defend us. We were their allies. (Yehoshua, 1979, p. 213)

Yehoshua many books and articles are invaluable historical and ethnographic sources. According to him Jerusalem's Jews felt a special bond with Nebi Mussa celebrants from Hebron. "It appeared to us", wrote Ya'akov Yehoshua, "that the residents of Hebron and its villages, who are, according to legend, the descendants of Jews who remained in the land following the destruction of the Second Temple, were making a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem". By contrast to the Jews' reluctance to pass by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher during Passover lest they be physically assaulted, the Nebi Mussa celebrations "induced in us a feeling of bonhomie and joy. We knew that they were honoring the memory of a prophet, a man of God, who is accepted by us" (Yehoshua, 1979, pp. 66-71).

At the end of the Ottoman period none of the city's quarters were homogeneous. Yehoshua Yellin's family moved into a house in the Bab al-Hutah section of the Muslim Quarter in the mid-19th century. In the 1860s and 1870s Jews lived all along al-Wad Street in the Muslim Quarter, up to its northeastern end. The Valero family owned homes in the Muslim and Christian Quarters. At the end of the 19th century Ashkenazi Jews rented a house from them in the Muslim Quarter, near Herod's Gate. In 1908 Haim Aharon Valero leased land nearby to the Muslim Ruzat al-Ma'araf school, and donated the rent money to the school (Yellin, 1991, p. 7; Press, 1964, p. 18; Kark & Glas, 2005, p. 130, pp. 213-14).

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[2] The author discusses those sources in length in his forthcoming book *Lives in Common—Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem*, *Jaffa and Hebron*, forthcoming by C. Hurst London and Oxford University Press New York, 2014.

The neighborhood residents shared times of joy and occasions of mourning and exhibited consideration toward one another's religious sensitivities.

> The Muslim women respected Jewish religious customs. Their Jewish neighbors would ask them to refrain from drawing water from the communal well in the courtyard on the Sabbath so as not to dirty the courtyard that they had worked so hard to clean on the Friday. The Muslim neighbors acquiesced to their Jewish neighbors' request and drew the water they required for use in the home before the entrance of the Sabbath. (Ela'zar, 1980, p. 227)

Muslims exhibited more than mere friendliness when reciting Jewish prayers.

> Muslims eventually learned to speak Ladino. Particularly the women. And whoever developed ties to their Jewish neighbors also learned a few sentences of Hebrew, mainly from the prayers, and they would frequently show off their knowledge by reciting *Shehakol* or *Borei Minei Mezonot* [the appropriate blessings] upon drinking a glass of water or partaking of some cake. They were entirely familiar with Jewish holidays and shared their neighbors' joy. (Ela'zar, 1980, p. 129)

Ya'akov Ela'zar (1980) wrote in his memoirs, adding somewhat censoriously: "There was likewise the motive to be close to Jewish girls and women" (p. 129).

Ashkenazi Jews too were in daily contact with Arabs. Amin, the vendor of charcoal with which the Lunz family heated the stoves in their home in the 1870s, talked to them in a colorful fluent Yiddish with a Lithuanian-Ashkenazi accent. Ashkenazi Jews who lived in spacious apartments in the compounds of *Batei Mahaseh* (the Ashkenazi Jews' owned compound, as opposed to the Arab-owned courtyards and the mixed compounds) spoke Arabic. From their Sephardic Jewish neighbors Ashkenazi women learned not only how to speak Ladino but also to prepare Arab dishes (Ela'zar, 1980; Lunz-Boltin, 1968; Jacobson, 2011a).[3] Thus no wonder that Palestinians depict the Arab Jews as natives of the land (*abna al-balad*), and as Arab Jews (*yahud awlaad arb*).

No mental boundary separated the Muslim and the Jewish areas. The barriers of language and culture posed few impediments, and whoever ventured into the physical sphere of the "other" felt quite at home there. Yaakov Yehoshua's grandmother taught Ladino to the girls of the Ja'uni family (Yehoshua, 1979, pp. 93-97). Muslims from other neighborhoods sat in the cafes of David Elbaz and Ben Tsiyon Dabash in the Street of the Jews. Young Jews were attracted to the Arab Al-Bashura and Al-Muna cafes in al-Wad Street since these were more refined than their Jewish counterparts. They played music from gramophones and on the nights of Ramadan a puppet theater would present the popular play Karagoz Wa-Hajawat, which is shown throughout the Arab world on these nights. The cafes in the vicinity of Jaffa Gate were likewise popular among young Jews who frequented them to attend performances of Egyptian musical ensembles. In an attempt to compete with the popularity of Arab cafes, the Jewish coffee houses began to play gramophone music and offer domino boards to their clientele.

Arab-Jewish identity in Jaffa had additional dimension absent in Jerusalem's Old City. Jaffa was a national, political, and media center. For the educated elite active in these areas, the Arab Jew was a textual fact as well. For example, over the decade from 1899 to 1909, Shimon Moial translated the rabbinic classic *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) into Arabic, adding his own commentary. His purpose was to put the moral aspect of Judaism on display to readers of Arabic. In his edition, he presented the text, which is in fact a conflation of

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[3] Jerusalem City Archive, Oral Documentation, container 397, Tsilla Moshin file; On cooperation and mutual assistance during the hardships endured in World War I.

two different works from different periods, as characteristic of the Talmud. Moial named his son Abdallah Nadim, after a Muslim intellectual he met in Jaffa in 1890. His wife, the writer Esther Moial, called herself an Arab Hebrew. They were part of a circle of Arab Jews in Jaffa that included their close associate, Nisim Malul, and members of Jaffa's Sephardi elite—Avraham Elmaliah, Yosef Amzaleg, Yosef Eliyahu, Ya'akov Shlush, David Moial, Moshe Matalon, and Yehoshua Elkayam. In their writings, Malul and David Moial sought, in the face of the escalating national confrontation, to bridge the gap between Jews and Arabs by helping each side understand the other better. They believed that Arab hostility to Zionism was simply a matter of misunderstanding. If so, it could be corrected by explanation and persuasion. They were invested in the effort to do so because it touched on their personal and collective identity. In a eulogy for Moial, Elmaliah referred to that identity as Palestinian-Jewish, but it could just as easily be called Arab-Zionist (Moyal, 1909; Jacobson, 2003; Jacobson, 2011b).

Challenging the Binary Approach

Although Zionism did not create Palestinian nationalism, Zionist-Palestinian conflict was a major factor in constructing Palestinian identity argues Muslih and Khalidi. Palestinian Arabs aimed to prevent Zionism implementing its colonial project, fearing that at its end they become alienated in their own country. Before World War I Palestinians manifested their identity in petitions sent to Ottoman authorities and in newspaper articles against Zionist immigration and land purchase. Resisting Zionism, conclude Khalidi and Muslih, focused their identity on the land of Palestine (Muslih, 1989, pp. 69-88, pp. 215-217; Khalidi, 1997, pp. 32-33, pp. 58-59).

Muslih and Khalidi give special attention to Jerusalem elite protest against Zionist immigration and land purchase as local identity expressions. Whereas the Zionist were the "Other", non-Zionist Jews, writes Kahlidi (1997),

> Were very largely isolated from most of the Palestinian society as result of language and religious barriers, and in some cases by choice. They thus had a relatively limited impact on the intellectual and cultural life of most of the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem. (p. 60)

However, close reading of many Hebrew-Jewish primary sources (Eliyahu, 1981; Avraham, 1984; Hannah, 1968; Yehoshua, 1924; Yeshayahu, 1964; Yitshak, 1943; Ezra, 1988; Menashe, 1963) show that Jews and Arabs shared patterns of life, spoken language, popular culture, local saints and religious festivals that generated a common identity underpinning a sense of belonging to a land beyond their place of residency. Few recently published Palestinian Arab memoirs express this as well, in particular Wasif Jawhariyyeh diaries (Tamari, 2013).

In addition, one cannot ignore demography. Although Palestinian Jews were less than 10% in Palestine population at the eve of World War I, Jerusalem Jews was the biggest ethno-religious community in the city since the late 19th century. Jerusalem's population in 1880 was 30,000, of whom 18,000 were Jews; by 1914 the population had grown to 70,000, including 45,000 Jews. In 1922 the population had dropped to 62,500, with 33,971 Jews. By 1880 Jaffa had 10,000 residents, a tenth of them Jews. On the eve of World War I Jaffa's population increased to 40,000 inhabitants. In 1948, its population was 70,000 of which 10,000 were Jews (Ben-Arieh, 1977-1979). If Jerusalem was identity center, as Khalidi suggests, he should have take the city demography into consideration and include its Jews among local patriots. But Khalidis' perspective is limited

to notable Arab elite written products. He ignores Hebrew memoires of those Jews who lived in common with Arabs. Moreover, in 1909 Jews established Tel Aviv as a pure Jewish town next to Jaffa, the main Palestinian city beside Jerusalem. Long into the 20th century Jaffa and Tel Aviv resident maintained mutual dependency and close relations. In other words, it's wrong methodologically to let the binary perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overshadow earlier period when Zionism in Palestine was weak and indigenous Jews and Arabs had much in common. History should give voice and space to Palestine Jews and include them among local patriots.

Giving historical voice only to one side is not an exclusive Palestinian method. Israeli-Jewish-Zionist historians use it as well. The most respected Israeli-Jewish-Zionist historian of Jerusalem in the late 19th century and under British Mandate, Professor Yehushua Ben Arieh from the Hebrew University who introduced geographical history to Israeli universities, excludes Jerusalem Arabs from his narratives. Yehoshua Ben Arieh narratives connects Jerusalem modernization projects only with Jewish or Zionist enterprise, as if the city Arabs did not modernized nor contributed to Jerusalem development. Outside the Old City walls, he argued, a new, modern Jewish-Zionist city established (Ben-Arieh, 1986a; Ben-Arieh, 1986b). Ben Arieh ignored the Palestinian role in developing Jerusalem up to 1948 War, as well as the city being a mixed city with a cosmopolitan flavor. He reproduces the Israeli-Palestinian ethnic division and unintentionally and implicitly supports the argument that Zionism was a typical colonial modernization project. Similarly, Israeli historians of Tel Aviv prior to 1948 war tend to ignore the Zionist city residents close relations with Jaffa and Tel Aviv's long dependence on Jaffa. By that they implicitly approve Tel Aviv founder's argument of establishing a pure Jewish-Hebrew self-contained city. Close examination of Tel Aviv-Jafa social, economic and cultural history disprove this far reaching argument (Shavit & Biger, 2001-2002; Maoz, 2005).

Finely, the author's argument on joint Jewish-Arab local patriotism in Palestine borders with studies on Arab-Jews in the Middle East in general and in Palestine in particular. Jewish-Arab interaction in Palestine before 1948 was a unique phenomenon as the author explains elsewhere.[4] In recent years scholars published new studies on Arab-Jews in Iraq, Egypt and North Africa (Shohat, 2006; Shenhav, 2006; Stillman, 1998; Shabi, 2009; Jacobson, 2011b; Levi, 2012). They show that Jews integrated into their Arab countries culture and national movements. These school on Arab Jews opposes including Arab Jews, Palestinian Arab Jews included, in the Zionist paradigm as, for instance, Gribetz, Albuher and Bezalel do. They see Arab-Jews before and after World War I as Sephardic (Oriental Jews)-Zionist (Jonathan, 2010; Jacobson, 2003; Albuher, 2002; Bezalel, 2007). Whereas the term Arab-Jews signifies joint culture, customs and identity of Jews and Arabs sharing their native land, the term Sephardic-Zionist divides Palestine Jews and Arabs along their ethnic and religious origins.

Conclusion

By using only top-down methods, periodizing exclusively along the Arab-Zionist conflict and basing on either Hebrew or Arab primary sources, prominent scholars tend to ignore the existence of popular local identity shared by Jews and Arabs in center Palestine during late 19th-early 20th century. Without underestimating the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in determining the lives of the two people, this paper suggests reconsidering using history from below methods i.e. history of average citizens that focuses on

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[4] Arab Jew in Palestine, *Israel Studies*, forthcoming; my forthcoming book *Lives in Common—Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Hebron*, forthcoming by C. Hurst London and Oxford University Press New York, 2014.

many individual's multi-dimensional life experiences, particularly in Palestine mix areas, and base both on Hebrew and Arabic sources. The above discussion shows that joint Jewish-Arab local identity prevailed prior to the formal establishment of Jewish or Palestinian national movement (Basel 1897, Jerusalem 1919 respectively) and existed along with them. In other words, Jews and Arab in mixed cities imagined themselves along horizontal territorial concept as native Palestinians based on a set of everyday life customs. Their intensive interaction created an imagined community of belonging. In contrast, vertical-hierarchical relations define the relation between a subject and his or her administrative establishment or national institutions. When the national struggle escalated each movement gradually constructed its exclusive ethno-national narrative of belonging to the land and deleted coexistence period from its official collective memory.

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