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Introduction

IN THE WINTER of 1933, two Palestinian educators wrote to each other across Iraq. Addressing their letters to "my national brother," Akram Zuʾaytir and Darwish al-Miqdadi spoke of Arab unity. They discussed Iraq's demand for teachers, which had brought them, alongside a plethora of educators "from outside," to work in Iraq's education system. Then principal of the secondary school for boys in Mosul, al-Miqdadi asserted that Iraq required "frank" young Arab men who "believed in the Arab cause." Seeking to convince Zuʾaytir, working at the Teachers College in Baghdad, to remain in Iraq rather than return to Palestine, al-Miqdadi added that these ideal young men would also be idealistic, "not greedy for the world, its funds, its government positions, and its leadership."[1]

Despite al-Miqdadi's appeal to the idealism of his "national brother," the interwar era's transnational world of government positions, leadership, and politics was one to which both he and Zuʾaytir were intimately connected. The polities educators crossed were subject to European hegemony, generally in the form of mandates. The League of Nations granted France and Britain authority over areas carved from the defeated Ottoman Empire, allegedly to ease the transition from Ottoman subjects to citizens of modern nation-states. In reality, the mandates also facilitated European colonial norms and influence. By the mid-1930s, Iraq possessed, on paper, a semi-independent status, while Transjordan and Palestine were still under British Mandatory regimes, and Lebanon and Syria were under that of the French. Nevertheless, all were subject to European control.

On his way to Iraq, Zuʾaytir passed through Palestine, Transjordan, and Syria. He met not only with "national brothers" but also with higher officials

1. Zuʾaytir, *Min Mudhakkirat Akram Zuʿaytir* [From the memoirs of Akram Zuʿaytir], 595.

in order to drum up support for Arab nationalism and against Zionism and imperialism.[2] According to Zuʾaytir, whenever he submitted his resignations, the most powerful administrators and ministers in Iraq's education system wrote imploring letters and set up in-person meetings to prevent his defection. When Zuʾaytir returned from Palestine to Iraq to teach in 1935, he and al-Miqdadi joined officials, politicians, various professionals, and other teachers in founding Nadi al-Muthanna. This pan-Arab political club sought "sovereignty for the Arabs, their independence, unity and awakening" while battling "imperialism and the Zionists especially."[3] Its different committees aimed to strengthen the links between Arabs across urban and rural areas, to foster a love of arts and poetry, to improve the bodily health of the Arab youth through exercise, and of course to develop education.[4]

Al-Miqdadi's and Zuʾaytir's entanglement in government service, intersecting Palestinian and pan-Arab politics, and travel continued after the mandates' end. Forced from Palestine due to the creation of the state of Israel and Palestinians' *Nakba* (catastrophe) in 1948, they moved through Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere. In later years, al-Miqdadi and Zuʾaytir would work as government ministers in Kuwait and Jordan, respectively.

Darwish al-Miqdadi and Akram Zuʾaytir are two of the most well-known examples of roving teacher-politicians. The correspondence between himself and al-Miqdadi that Zuʾaytir reproduced in his memoirs demonstrates three key, interrelated aspects of educators in the interwar era: a regional demand for teachers that led them to travel, links between teaching and governance, and a fluid notion of Arab unity, which educators both embodied and promoted. Al-Miqdadi's and Zuʾaytir's transnational stories encapsulate the experiences of roughly two generations of educators, the last of the Ottomans and the first of the mandates, who possessed an intimate and ambivalent relationship with multiple governments. Becoming a teacher in a government school meant joining the region's largest and lowest-ranking group of civil servants, the first step of a government career. Those careers presupposed movement, both in and out of various types of government work, and for various governments. As they traveled, educators goaded the interwar Middle East

2. Zuʾaytir, 581.

3. Zuʾaytir, 693.

4. "Wajib al-shabab: Thawra ʿala al-ghinaʾ al-marid juhud nadi al-Muthanna Ibn Haritha" [Youth's duty: The revolution of the worthy patient, the efforts of the Muthanna Ibn Haritha Club], *Al-Difa*, September 12, 1935, 6, NLIJ.

toward regional and national affiliations. Zuʾaytir and al-Miqdadi, extraordinary in the volume of materials left behind and fame as Palestinian, pan-Arab rabble rousers, were typical in their mobility and rise to power. Altogether, approximately one-third of the prime ministers who served in Iraq from the 1950s through the 1960s and in Jordan from the end of the British mandate through the early 1970s were former teachers in the public schools of Iraq, Transjordan/Jordan, and Palestine. Essentially all had studied or worked abroad.[5]

This book argues that the transnationalism of public school teachers was both crucial to state- and nation-building in the modern Middle East and disruptive of links between state and nation. Drawing from a collective biography of thousands of government teachers, principals, inspectors, and education officials who worked in Britain's Middle Eastern mandates, the book demonstrates the importance of transnationalism to public education, to anti-imperial movements, to nationalism, and to the nation-state. The growth of nationally bounded infrastructures, even those as integral to the construction of the nation-state as public education, was dependent on actors whose bodies and writings transcended these borders. I use the term *transnational* to describe educators and their politics, rather than regional, imperial, or international. This emphasizes the importance of educators' physical and textual movement through states, but also how that movement contributed to states' formation. Paradoxically, educators' travels helped create affiliations beyond the mandates while simultaneously crystallizing the mandate government bureaucracies as national units.

Under colonial rule, public education, a national institution, necessarily promoted regional and transnational notions of affiliation, shaping how individuals situated themselves in relation to separate spheres of nation and state. Educators were petty elites, carrying politics with them from one portion of the region to another. As states became larger, more powerful, and more independent, they became better at and more interested in aligning national ideologies with national borders, and in expanding national education systems in order to do so. The stronger a state, and the more control it had over

5. Suleiman al-Nabulsi, Fawzi al-Mulqi, Wasfi al-Tall, ʿAbd al-Munim al-Rifai, Ahmad Touqan, and Ahmad Lowzi were all teachers in the government schools in Jordan. In Iraq, Mustafa Mahmud al-ʿUmari, Fadhil al-Jamali, Ahmad Mukhtar Baban, Tahir Yahya, and Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr all worked as government school teachers before their turns as prime minister.

government schooling and politics, the less that schooling functioned as a means of becoming part of each government. Educators lost their privileged access to the upper echelons of governance. The easy slippage between regional and national affiliations would collapse into the hardened borders and alliances of nation-states.

In the particular case of Britain's Middle Eastern mandates, British colonial policies purposefully exacerbated a regionwide scarcity of educational institutions and of educators. The lack of even literate individuals forced the growing governments of Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine to hire teachers where they could. These states drew from Ottoman-era educational hubs, which had become international rather than provincial centers. The circulation of educators, for schooling or for employment during the interwar era, encouraged transnational ideologies that comfortably overlapped with national ones. Public education under British colonial control therefore did not easily link each state solely to a nation encapsulated within each mandate's jurisdiction, even as British control created those jurisdictions in the first place. Moreover, the lack of adequate replacements, and the elite status secondary or even several years of elementary schooling imparted, allowed educators possessing these credentials to criticize the policies and colonial nature of the states that employed them, in print and in demonstrations, without fear of permanent dismissal. Public education not only incorporated a small but increasing segment of the Middle East's population into government service, it also became a key arena of antigovernment activities.

This book follows the arc of educators' changing status across the transition from colonial and elite to national and mass education. As teaching became a profession, educational practices developed increasing consistency within national borders while educators' sociopolitical, and regional role changed. The teachers who simultaneously protested and expanded the mandate governments were a diverse group. Teaching generally represented a means of advancement rather than a career in and of itself. Some teachers came from affluent families, with educations to match that status, attending the region's top public or private institutions. They and their relatives understood teaching to be a temporary and acceptable, if not ideal, stop on the road to work in the administration. Others used public schooling as a means of improving their social and economic status. Managing to obtain a secondary education allowed a select few to break into governance, alongside their more upper-class schoolfellows, as well as the landowning, legally or militarily trained career politicians and military officers who dominated Iraq's and Jordan's parliaments.

Teachers were a promotion or two away from the upper echelons of the civil service and, from there, governance. Zuʾaytir's and al-Miqdadi's hobnobbing (and constant correspondence) with Iraq's political elite becomes more understandable if we view public school teachers as part of each mandate state's apparatus. Government educators frequently moved in and out of the civil service at various levels, calling into question the point at which these sometime employees were part of their government or not. Their mobility between states rendered their stories, their ideologies, and necessarily this book transnational.

Educators' integration into their states affected the ways and extent to which they participated in the region's political spheres. Whether or not the Ottoman, mandate, or, in the case of Iraq, postmandate governments were representative, educators benefited from the status quo. Their willingness to draw a government paycheck bolstered those governments' authority. Segments of the population other than public school teachers took up arms and sought their states' overthrow. While educators criticized their governments in writing and in speeches, they tended to avoid joining armed uprisings against those states, in which their students often participated. Educators' textually and verbally audacious yet physically circumspect rebellions point to the ways in which public education, as a state institution, can at once support and undermine the authority of the government.

As Britain's influence receded, postmandate states gained greater capacity to control schooling and educators. These governments also had more of a desire to do so. Freed from restrictive British colonial policies, an often new group of leaders in Iraq, Israel, and Jordan worked to make mass education a reality while improving education standards and professionalizing teaching. Increasing the number of schools and teachers represented a way of extending government authority, improving economies and global standing, while heightening domestic approval.[6]

Expanding schooling in the postcolonial era played a key role in state- and nation-building efforts. I argue that, in the process, mass education severed educators from their governments. The more power governments had over public schooling, the less it functioned as a means of entering the civil service, politics, and the state itself. Increasing access to education gradually rendered educators' formerly rare and valuable qualifications common. By eroding their

6. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) also shunted funds and interest toward Palestinian education.

elite status, mass education pushed educators toward collective action: unionization, mass protests and other revolutionary activities. Public school teachers no longer possessed their formerly tangled role, which had combined being a respected civil servant, a member of a growing, transnational middle class, a nationalist rebel, and a potential politician. As they became professionalized and limited to advancement as teachers, their social and economic standing worsened. Simultaneously, educators' mobility over borders changed character, becoming more dependent on the educators' nationality and citizenship (or, in the case of Arab Palestinians, the lack thereof).[7]

The Transnational Civil Servant: State Building and State Boundaries

Governments are meant to possess authority over people within a particular area, or jurisdiction, which is, in the ideal case, separate from the territory belonging to other governments. State building involves consolidating institutions, including government education, that define the territory belonging to the state. Educators in Britain's Middle Eastern mandates were crucial to building state infrastructure as well as bureaucracy. As civil servants, they represented the mandate governments, connecting those states to their subjects, particularly young ones. Yet the movement of educators among various territories while working for multiple governments fashioned new, overlapping relationships between states, on the one hand, and education as a state- and nation-building institution, on the other.

I take modern state building as the processes of creating, re-creating, and strengthening governments. In this definition of state building, diverse processes associated with governments project an image of state coherence, even though the workings of the state may not agree with or may even be at cross purposes with one another. This image includes a state that is separate from nonstate actors, society, and other states. As Timothy Mitchell and Joel Migdal have described, states appear coherent and unified but are in fact created through a myriad of practices and "mundane processes" that can overlap with the activities

7. Palestinians would often have a Palestinian nationality but therefore no citizenship. For a discussion of the differences between citizenship and nationality in the Palestinian case, see Banko, *The Invention of Palestinian Citizenship*.

of groups "inside and outside the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with "official Law.'"[8]

Analyzing public school teachers across Britain's mandates unearths the difficulty in pinning down states' limits, in terms of where the state ends and society begins, but also where one state becomes separate from another. During the interwar era, though teachers were part of various governments, they acted, and were often viewed by the mandate populations, as separate and frequently antagonistic to their states and employers. Because states are formed of disaggregate institutions that project an image of coherence, the mandate populations could view government schooling less as a means of top-down, colonial control and more as an opportunity for social mobility through state service.

Concurrently, both mandate states and their teachers had to modulate their actions to accommodate each other. Educators rebelled against their governments' imperial goals. Yet states, societies, and educators themselves had little desire for the few literate individuals in the region to be forbidden from teaching. Therefore educators' rebellions not only were relatively nonviolent but also resulted in the teachers remaining in or only temporarily out of state employment. As educators could be fired and rehired within days, they crossed the limits of their states' porous boundaries. When they moved from one government to another, they disrupted correspondence between states, the territory those states purported to govern, and their citizens. The ability of these transnational civil servants both to represent state authority and to leave that state's jurisdiction when they chose to tended to hamper the consolidation of the state's territorial control, even as public education expanded within that territory.

Those states and territories, however, were also in flux. As Cyrus Schayegh argues in the case of Greater Syria, after World War I the mandate states were a particularly fraught set of spatial divisions: their boundaries as well as "British and French imperial infrastructures and policies were superimposed on, cut across, and hence transnationalized Bilad al-Sham, its interurban ties, and its cities' hinterlands."[9] Likewise, the borders of Iraq resulted in transnationalization, cutting links between Baghdad and Istanbul, to say nothing of those between Mosul and Syria or Turkey. Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan were part

8. Mitchell, "Society, Economy and the State Effect," 185; Migdal, *State in Society*, 22.
9. Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World*, 137.

of a newly British colonial space, but they had their own governments and infrastructures—most importantly, in our case, that of government education.

The mandate states' infrastructures could not exist without transnational personnel, who moved initially along Ottoman-era pathways between mandates but increasingly took different trajectories within the new map of the region: from Jerusalem to Beirut to Baghdad, rather than to Istanbul and then to other Ottoman provincial cities. Educators therefore extended their states' authority while both working against those states' programs and disrupting their territoriality, creating an uneasy relationship between governments and mobile populations.

Analyses of the relationships between governments and transnational populations nearly always presume that those groups are not only separate from but fundamentally opposed to state control. Nomads have been the transnational subject of choice for scholars of the Middle East, who describe a primordial antagonism between mobile populations and the modern or modernizing state.[10] Newer works have underscored the fallacy of this division: for example, Nora Barakat has shown late-Ottoman Jordan's Bedouin population to be busily involved in the consolidation of governmental authority.[11] This book pushes the discussion forward in time, focusing on actors who are explicitly and inescapably part of states and yet traverse national, rather than provincial, borders. In their banal interactions with children, inspectors, principals, and government officials, public school teachers in Britain's Middle Eastern mandates helped to consolidate new state boundaries while crossing them.

In addition to analyses of transnational individuals, a wave of scholarship since the 1990s has recovered the stories of international organizations, concepts, and networks, as well as their movement between polities. These have focused on the United States or Britain and the world, cross-border movements, the League of Nations, as well as individual mandate governments' interventions due to the problems migrations raised, particularly in terms of disease and taxation.[12] During an era of globalization, with its questions as to the continuing viability and relevance of the nation-state, scholars looked for

10. Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery"; Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*; Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*; Massad, *Colonial Effects*; Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire*.

11. Barakat, "Marginal Actors?"

12. Kozma, *Global Women, Colonial Ports*.

international or global subjects to study, which did not fit an analytic lens limited to one country or another.

In researching the breakdown of nation-states, however, we must also consider how they were set up in the first place, particularly in light of today's resurgent populist nationalism. Most scholarly narratives presume the nation-state developed after World War I, when links between sovereignty, territorial control, and the nation-state formed and consolidated.[13] This was also the period when scholars began to develop nationalism as a theoretical concept and analytical framework.[14]

During the interwar era, the League of Nations defined an international politics predicated on the idea that nation-states were to be the main actors and that national-self-determination would align the category of nation with its territory. The mandates purported to make new nation-states, but British policy makers (like their French counterparts) hoped to suppress nationalism, which they viewed as naturally subversive to British rule.[15] Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan, all three conglomerations of smaller Ottoman territorial divisions, were class A mandates, requiring a finite but undefined period of foreign "advice and assistance." This form of governance would prevent other powers from gaining a foothold in the region, satisfy American wishes, and, it was hoped, mollify the local population.

The outcomes of the mandates differed due to a variety of factors, not least of which was the way British officials chose to control each mandate. Palestine remained under direct British control through the end of the mandate in 1948. Unlike Iraq and Jordan, no Arab state of Palestine would succeed to fill its mandate-era borders. The Balfour Declaration, first published on November 2, 1917, and incorporated into the charter of the mandate for Palestine, required the British to "favor the development of a Jewish national home in Palestine," without any actions that would "prejudice" the civil or religious rights of its other inhabitants.[16] The wars at the end of the mandate resulted in the Jewish State of Israel and, for Palestinians, expulsion and exile.

13. Mazower, *Governing the World*, 187–88.

14. Breuilly, "Introduction," in Gellner and Breuilly, *Nations and Nationalism*, xvii.

15. In the case of schooling, British officials attempted to make public education apolitical. See Schneider, *Mandatory Separation*.

16. Council of the League of Nations, *Mandate for Palestine*, July 24, 1922, C. 529. M. 314. 1922. VI.

In Iraq, the British moved to indirect control, including the management of schools and education.[17] While certain British officials had hoped to annex parts of Iraq, by the waning days of 1917 it became clear that the United States and Wilson's principles of self-determination and antipathy toward annexation as peace conditions would restrict British aims in the region, preventing them from turning Iraq into a crown colony.[18] The extremely costly revolts of 1920 led British policy makers to conclude that Iraq was too expensive to govern directly. They made plans to leave Iraq as a constitutional Hashemite monarchy, but one amenable to British interests. By 1932 Iraq was nominally independent, although still subject to British influence, reinforced in 1941 after Iraq's defeat in the brief Anglo-Iraqi War. The Hashemite monarchy's end, and with it Britain's hegemony, came in 1958, in a series of coups and dictatorships.

During the Ottoman period, the area that would become Transjordan was variously part of Palestine, the Northern Hijaz, and Southern Syria.[19] The Hashemite leader Faysal Ibn Hussein Ibn Ali al-Hashimi held brief sway, from March through July 1920, as king in an Arab kingdom centered in Damascus that loosely included Transjordan. British officials planned to rule Transjordan in a more indirect form than either Iraq or Palestine, relying on a very limited British presence (in order to curb French influence) while setting up local institutions of governance.[20] This strategy failed, as certain tribes refused to recognize government authority, forcing the British to increase their military force and leading the French to threaten an invasion to maintain stability.[21] The British granted Amir Abdullah, older brother to Faysal, a trial period as ruler, with a cabinet of elected officials, as the region not only had proved difficult to govern directly but also offered little incentive to do so. Despite various threats, Jordan's Hashemite monarchy endured past the end of the Mandate in 1946 through the present day.

Susan Pedersen argues that Britain and the other colonial powers who were part of the League of Nations had hoped the mandates would demonstrate the value of imperial rule and therefore prolong it. Instead, the league's

17. For example, one official asserted that "the people of Erbil are suddenly showing great enthusiasm for education, but there is no bread with which to feed the multitude." Captain W. H. Hay, assistant political officer, Erbil, "Mesopotamia Administration Report, Erbil Division 1919, August, 1919," IOR L/PS/10/612, India Office Records 3, BL.

18. Renton, "Changing Languages of Empire and the Orient," 650.

19. Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 27.

20. Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land in Jordan*, 65.

21. Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, 35.

involvement, and the "internationalization inherent in League oversight" had the opposite effect, contributing to the emergence of a new world order, of states rather than empires.[22] The process of linking nations with states not only was nonlinear, it was also necessarily incomplete. Modern states required institutions of various types, regardless of whether those institutions and infrastructure aligned precisely with the nation the state was meant to support. In Britain's mandates, governments began to enact laws and to create bureaucracies that were meant to buttress state and British authority over specific mandate territories. The mandate governments relied on existing Ottoman institutions and infrastructure, which preceded these national borders. The suddenly transnational milieu of educators meant that schooling, where state and nation building ought to have combined, in fact tended to separate the two.

The National and the Transnational: Narratives and Infrastructures of Government Education

The great role scholarly works ascribe to public education is as a conduit of nationalism: public schools constitute the main site where modernizing and often expanding states indoctrinate their target populations. From Ernest Gellner's seminal analysis through works inspired by Benedict Anderson, state school systems and mass education function as necessary conditions for the spread of nationalism, from elites to the rest of the population.[23] Government schools in these accounts are organized conveyors of official nationalism, from each government to its budding citizenry. For example, Anderson's later monograph *The Spectre of Comparisons* states that official nationalism (juxtaposed against popular, spontaneous nationalism first seen through print capitalism) "manifests itself, not merely in official ceremonies of commemoration, but in a systematic programme, directed primarily, if not exclusively, through the state's school system, to create and disseminate an official nationalist history, an official nationalist pantheon of heroes, and an official nationalist culture, through the ranks of its younger, incipient citizens—naturally in the state's own interest."[24] For Anderson, as for many other scholars, official nationalism requires public education to spread. This means studies of public schooling

22. Pedersen, *The Guardians*, 13.

23. Gellner and Breuilly, *Nations and Nationalism*; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*.

24. Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons*, 253.

are naturally circumscribed by a national, imperial-to-national, or at best comparative lens.

It is perhaps unsurprising that schools are not the efficient factories of nationalism that Anderson describes, particularly during the transitional period of expanding state-sponsored education. Certainly, across the interwar Middle East, educators and students had other concerns, and other ideologies than nationalism. Nationalism was seldom exclusively connected to the mandate territories. Moreover, colonial governments sought explicitly to suppress nationalism because of its potential for expensive, destabilizing rebellions. Educators in Britain's Middle Eastern mandates also raise certain questions for Anderson's more general argument that nationalism sprang organically from disgruntled creole elites in the colonies of North and South America, traveling a colonial, bureaucratically delineated territory, who then used mass education to connect their newly discovered countrymen to their national project. For Anderson, nationalism originates and develops outside the state, until its ideologues control rather than staff the state apparatus.

Educators across Britain's Middle Eastern mandates show how, at a local and regional level, it is difficult to make this distinction between state functionaries and society and to separate state employees from the state. Educators moved in and out of governments, from the lowest to the highest ranks of the civil service, shaping each state at its edges. They traveled between bureaucratically delineated territories, within newly British as well as French imperial spaces, but nevertheless worked for those territories' governments. Educators contributed to what they explicitly defined as nationalism, but regionally, across different territorial configurations. Anderson's assertion that official nationalism must be disseminated through the school system ignores teachers as actors and would be hard pressed to encompass their agency, transnationalism, and propagation of ideologies that failed to correspond to their states' borders.

Nationalism, as both a lens and an object of study, has defined scholarship on schooling in the Middle East. From the mid-twentieth century, nationalism has been the overwhelming concern of scholars analyzing education in the region. For example, Albert Hourani's groundbreaking *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* linked European-based schooling to the growth of nationalism, specifically of a secular Arab type.[25] Nearly all works on education in Britain's mandates in the Middle East judge nationalism to be the most significant and

25. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 284–85.

interesting outcome of the growth of public schooling. They search for the origins of particular political ideologies: most frequently territorial nationalisms, namely, Palestinian, Iraqi, and Jordanian nationalisms, but also communism and pan-Arabism.[26]

As Keith Watenpaugh notes, this focus on nationalism as the locus and "culmination" of change tends to hide political and social organizations and beliefs that poorly matched a nationalist framework.[27] The Muslim Brotherhood, the irredentism of Kurdistan, which straddles parts of Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran, as well as more militant organizations like al-Qaeda and al-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-ʿIraq wa al-Sham (ISIS) constitute prominent examples of movements occluded by a nationalist focus. Even the British Empire can be minimized by concentrating on education within the states that emerged in its wake.

Transnational ideologies had a competitive but also a constitutive relationship to nationalism as the intersections between pan-Arab (*qawmi*), territorial nationalist (*watani*), Islamism, and even communism and existentialism demonstrate.[28] In this book, by studying public education, a clearly national institution, transnationally, we gain new insight into which ideological platforms permeated the region, and how these intellectual and political stances spread. Educators lived in an age where national and supranational configurations could exist side by side. Their travels for schooling and work with the civil service rendered these combinations inescapable. For example, at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in the early 1920s, Ahmed Sousa, an Iraqi Jew from Hilla, would urge his "brothers" at the Iraqi student club to bring their fatherland to the level of advanced nations. Juggling religious, national, and transnational considerations, the other members of the group, who by and

26. Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism*; Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*; Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*; Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*; Eppel, "The Elite"; Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its "New" Women 1920–1948*; Kahati, "The Role of Some Leading Arab Educators"; Lukitz, *Iraq*; Massad, *Colonial Effects*; Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*; Wien, *Iraqi Arab Nationalism.*

27. Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 7; Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*.

28. Yoav Di-Capua, in *No Exit,* brings to light the fluctuating relations between pan-Arabism and existentialism across the Arab world in the wake of decolonization.

large became educators, incorporated Iraqi and Arab identities alongside one another.[29]

As Sherene Seikaly articulates, "Moving beyond nationalism as both the means and ends of politics is long overdue. Certainly, nationalism was one aspect of subjectivity formation, but it was not the only way to make politics."[30] In this case, moving beyond nationalism as the means and ends of public education allows for a ground-level view of the intersection between elite and vernacular political engagement. Maha Nassar's work shows how Palestinians, even within Israeli territory, remained within a pan-Arab transnational intellectual and political framework. Following her example, I place not only Palestinians but also Iraqis, Jordanians, and the myriad other shifting nationalities of mandate-era teachers back into the transnational milieu, which circumscribed their careers and politics in many ways more than any specific nation-state.[31] Instead of asking whether educators were nationalists, I ask: What did nationalism actually signify to its proponents? How and in what modes did politics manifest through education? What did the restricted political arena mean for the types of political engagement educators could attempt? And finally, what is the legacy of educators' involvement in politics, as both key articulators and practitioners of political stances?

For educators, nationalism meant not merely attachment to one specific territory or even to a people. Regionalism, nationalism, religious affiliation, and class necessarily overlapped with one another. Claiming the status of nationalist formed part of the habitus achieved through mandate-era schooling.[32] It demonstrated erudition, maturity, cultural capital, and a privileged status that cut across genders: the ability to engage with the ideologies of the modern world.[33] Educators did not perform this nationalism merely by transmitting an official curriculum, which in any case was frequently designed to denationalize pupils and educators.[34] Instead, they manifested nationalism in their dress, the books they chose to read, their friends and colleagues, their extracurricular activities, and indeed their off-script remarks within the

29. Sousa, *Hayati fi Nisf Qarn* [My life in half a century], 130–31.

30. Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 13.

31. Nassar, *Brothers Apart*.

32. Harker, "On Reproduction, Habitus and Education," 118.

33. I seek to use gender in this work as Liat Kozma advocates, not as the "main category of analysis" but to add greater "insight" into the frameworks educators navigated, and their self-perception. Kozma, "Going Transnational," 574.

34. Schneider, *Mandatory Separation*.

classroom. This method of political engagement, which tended to span political borders, took place in conversations, journal articles, secret or semisecret societies, as well as negotiations with governments. It was also circumscribed by the narrow character of official politics. Educators could write and even lead protests against their governments while remaining in the civil service. They could become high-ranking government officials and ministers, often because they were from elite families. Yet their ability to affect sweeping political change was limited. With the advent of mass education, educators' tactics changed, from individual negotiations with their governments from within to collective bargaining. The transformation of teachers' social and economic status, from elite to everyday, altered their political tactics and relationship with their states as well.

Era Crossing: Teachers and Governments

The generations of teachers discussed in this book passed through temporal as well as territorial boundaries. They lived during transitions between multiple regimes, from Ottoman to mandate to postmandate states. Their biographies force a different periodization from one circumscribed by any of the three eras they experienced. Focusing on military education, Michael Provence underscores how schooling, war, and politics trained a regional, if not empire-wide, generation of leaders. They brought Ottoman-honed networks and understandings of government to bear on the mandates that divided the region.[35] As Ilana Feldman has demonstrated with her work on Gaza, the role of civil servants, and how their societies (and they themselves) perceived that role, persisted despite radical changes in governments.[36] The individuals discussed in this book, educators and civil servants both, were entwined in the stories and construction of multiple regimes and states. The travels, worldview, and impact of mandate educators passed through administrations, as well as the disparate governments that educators staffed and fought.

To trace the arc of educators' professionalization and concurrent changes in their relationships to their governments, this book begins with the final years of the Ottoman Empire and ends with the 1960s. The first chapter demonstrates how connections between government schooling and government service, and the need to travel for both, incorporated educators into the

35. Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation*.

36. Feldman, *Governing Gaza*.

Ottoman state through wide-ranging geographic networks that persisted into the mandate era. Chapters 2 and 3 concentrate on the interwar years, particularly how educators capitalized on their rarity to push the limits of what the profession of teaching entailed, while shaping the authority of their governments overall. The mobility of government educators across the mandates' political borders caused states to both accept and at times support transnational civil servants; transnationalism formed an important yet contradictory part of state building. As government educators extended government bureaucracies, they necessarily traveled beyond those governments' purview, bringing back ideas that failed to correspond to the borders that education systems might seem to circumscribe.

In these chapters, I deploy Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* in two ways. The first is as "a system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditionings" here, a summation of repeated, common practices and experiences that shaped the outlook of elite, well-traveled educators.[37] The combination of higher education and movement within or between countries socialized educators into a habitus that stretched across the mandates. A graduate of the American University of Beirut or the Arab College of Jerusalem would recognize (and often seek to hire) a fellow alumnus or alumna hundreds or even thousands of miles from each alma mater. They would share language and a set of learned practices relating to education, politics, and governance. Travel, particularly that of cultured, well-dressed educators for schooling and for work, created networks of belonging and conscious understandings of individual and group habitus.[38] The social space educators came to occupy was conditioned by a particularly expansive physical space, a "distributional arrangement of agents and properties" in which economic and cultural capital was linked to movement rather than to a particular location.[39]

The second way I use habitus is to underscore the irregularity of mandate-era educational rules and the practical strategies educators used to navigate these patchwork regulations. As Jacques Bouveresse argues, habitus is important for explaining "regularities which have as part of their essence a certain amount of variability, plasticity, indetermination, and imply all sorts of adaptations, innovations and exceptions of many different varieties, the sort of regularity in short which characterizes the domain of the practical, of practical

37. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 58–59.

38. Shusterman, "Introduction: Bourdieu as Philosopher," in *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, 5.

39. Bourdieu, "Physical Space, Social Space and Habitus," 10.

reason and the logic of practice."[40] The clash between the "regularities" prescribed by mandate governments in syllabi, gendered ideals, and education policies and the practical, idiosyncratic ways educators capitalized on the gaps between policies and practice was productive, both creating uneven education systems and offering educators themselves individual opportunities. Rather than viewing mandate-era schooling as a failure of standardization, I use Bouveresse's understanding of habitus to bring to light the fruitful and dynamic space created by rules' haphazard implementation, on the one hand, and educators' agency and power, on the other. By strategically manipulating overlapping and contradictory rules, educators solidified their place as anti-imperial, petty elite civil servants, fleshing out the empty corners of unenforced syllabuses with multiple ideologies.

This book does not focus on the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine). The Yishuv's teachers were not part of the same circulation of educators or, with rare exceptions, such as Palestine's Law Classes or the American University of Beirut, of the same education systems.[41] As Yoni Furas argues, rising Arab/Jewish conflict and segregation, textual encounters, and the growing absence of the other shaped history teaching and education in Palestine.[42] Yet the transnational worlds that Arab and Jewish Palestinian educators inhabited seldom overlapped, even when their journeys took place in parallel with one another.

With the end of British hegemony came radical shifts in educators' socioeconomic status and methods of political engagement, as well as in the relationships among state, nation, and public schooling. Chapter 4 concentrates on educators' politics between the interwar era and the first decades of independence. Educators participated in the rebellions of the 1930s, but generally from within rather than outside of government service, tempering the nature of their protests. Educators' privileged position shaped a particular type of politics: fluid, anti-imperial ideologies encompassing pan-Arabism, territorial nationalisms, fascism, and communism, without requiring teachers to stop working for their governments. As governments gained independence in the 1940s and 1950s, new, more codified ideologies and new political actors eclipsed the teachers, politicians, and beliefs of the interwar era. Palestinian

40. Bouveresse, "Rules, Dispositions and the *Habitus*," 62.

41. Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine*; Kahlenberg, "The Star of David in a Cedar Tree."

42. Furas, *Educating Palestine*, 12–13.

educators disrupted Israel's Zionist project in Israel proper and represented the limits of pan-Arabism in the diaspora. As pan-Arabism itself changed from an anti-imperial, revolutionary movement to a state ideology, it became more inflexible, excluding its former proponents: the educators and politicians who had risen to power during the mandates.[43]

Chapter 5 explores the seismic changes in the teaching profession wrought by independence for Iraq, Jordan, and Israel and diaspora and occupation for Palestinians. From the 1940s through the 1960s, mass education came to function as a crucial institution of postcolonial states but ended the automatic links between government education and government employment that had previously benefited teachers. Educators' qualifications increased, but they lost their role as political elites, forced to band together in often-repressed unions to press their case. The epilogue traces the legacy of mandate-era education into the present day, as teachers' unions call for strikes across the region. The loss of educators' individual power and collective status caused by mass education endures.

Following the Teacher: Collective Biography in Comparative and Transnational Frameworks

Unearthing the stories of public school educators in the interwar Middle East leads to two methodological challenges: how to account for the importance of different states to transnational actors (and vice versa), and how to balance the vastly different amounts of information available on educators themselves. In answer to the first challenge, this book uses a two-level analytic, deploying a comparative and a transnational approach.[44] Clearly, looking at public school teachers within only one polity would create blind spots, erasing segments of teachers' life stories, regional ideologies, and the changing relationships between governments and government education. Studying the travels of government educators in the interwar era demands a transnational framework. As we have seen, trying to account for Akram Zuʾaytir's career and travels from within the bounds of Palestine or Jordan would be impossible. It is equally impossible, however, to ignore the states through which educators moved, and

43. Kevin Jones has shown this to be the case for Iraq's poets as well, in *The Dangers of Poetry*, 185.

44. A transnational lens has become increasingly popular as an approach to the history of education. See Fuchs and Roldán Vera, *The Transnational in the History of Education*.

the differences between those governments. Educators were a necessary part of government bureaucracies, which were nationally bounded by the mandates' legal and territorial borders. Their transnationalism was a basic component of the formation of nation-states in the region. In addition, comparing Britain's mandates underscores the importance of local individuals to the outcomes of colonial policies. The mandates themselves were run differently, although British policy makers sought to use the same educational methods throughout the areas under their control. Nevertheless, the scope for local initiative inherent in these policies varied. Ottoman legacies, British strategies of rule, and the power of educators themselves altered policies' results.

Differences regarding the amount of material available on educators are stark. Source levels range from the well-known Akram Zuʾaytir's speeches, newspapers articles, voluminous autobiographies, and textbooks to the brief statistical information on the less than two-year career of Jureis ʿAuweis in Jordan, whose record includes only his birthdate (1933), that he became a classified teacher at the lowest rank in 1951, and that he resigned from the teaching profession in 1953.[45] This book therefore combines microhistories of individual educators with a collective biography of educators as a social group. To the greatest extent possible, it zooms into the everyday and extraordinary experiences of teachers, as well as their agency in shaping their own careers, while altering the governments they served. Collective biography, also termed *prosopography*, is particularly useful when there are varying amounts of information on a large number of individual historical actors who share certain characteristics.[46] Combining scraps of data relating to ordinary individuals, including their biographical information, as well as the writings of more extraordinary ones enables investigations as to the political and social impact of these actors as a group, and how their incorporation and subsequent separation from their governments shaped state building in the region. The regional professionalization of teachers and its consequences for their political activity and place in society becomes clear only when we take a bird's-eye view of their role across multiple polities.

Telling teachers' stories also requires research across borders. I followed educators' life and career paths, traveling from Israel/Palestine to Lebanon, to Jordan, to the United Kingdom and the United States. This book also uses oral histories of twenty individuals, ranging from a satirical Iraqi author now living

45. "Jureis Isbitan ʿAuweis" employee number 0001355, HRD.

46. Stone, "Prosopography."

in London to one of Jordan's erstwhile ministers of antiquities. Through archives and interviews, this social and cultural history exposes regionwide trends in schooling as well as political and ideological currents, shaped by a growing class of educated men and women.

Their stories underscore how government schooling supported the expansion of states, on the one hand, while undermining those states' territorial authority and creating overlapping notions of affiliation, on the other. As education changed from a privilege to a right, teachers became more professional but more marginalized. Expanding public schooling, particularly in the Middle East, changed public school teachers from an elite, intellectual, and individually politically influential population to a nonelite, unionized, and collectively important professional group. Mass education functioned as a crucial institution of postcolonial states but ended educators' intimate connections with governance. Likewise the anti-imperial, idealistic form of Arab nationalism that characterized the interwar era was rapidly supplanted by a more codified, more restricted, and harsher variety in the 1950s. To understand this transition, the fraught relationship between transnational and national ideologies, and the necessity of framing state building and public education in a transnational milieu, we must recover the period before mass education in the region, when networks of state schooling and state service were first being formed, during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

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Italicized page numbers indicate illustrations.
For Arabic surnames, initial hyphenated articles (al-) are disregarded in alphabetization.