Making or Breaking Peace
Understanding Diaspora Attitudes Towards Homeland Conflicts

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To the people of Palestine, who are still fighting for a home,
70 years after the Nakba.
I Come From There by Mahmoud Darwish

I come from there and I have memories
Born as mortals are, I have a mother
And a house with many windows,
I have brothers, friends,
And a prison cell with a cold window.
Mine is the wave, snatched by sea-gulls,
I have my own view,
And an extra blade of grass.
Mine is the moon at the far edge of the words,
And the bounty of birds,
And the immortal olive tree.
I walked this land before the swords
Turned its living body into a laden table.
I come from there. I render the sky unto her mother
When the sky weeps for her mother.
And I weep to make myself known
To a returning cloud.
I learnt all the words worthy of the court of blood
So that I could break the rule.
I learnt all the words and broke them up
To make a single word: Homeland.

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1 Source: [https://20thcenturyprotestspoetry.wordpress.com/2013/11/11/mahmouddarwishicomefromthere/](https://20thcenturyprotestspoetry.wordpress.com/2013/11/11/mahmouddarwishicomefromthere/)
Abstract
Conflicts today aren’t just between two opposing parties but are delocalized for many reasons. One of those reasons is the migration of groups affected by conflict to other countries. These groups are known as Conflict-generated diaspora and even though they move across the border, they never really cease to be involved in the conflict back home. Because of this continued attachment, diasporas can play the role of a peace-maker or a peace-breaker in the homeland conflict. The literature on diasporas is still trying to understand the factors that lead to this behavior. In this context, this study attempts to answer the question - *How does migration affect attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts?* I conduct a Structured Focused Comparison of Palestinian communities in Palestine and Sweden to test the diasporas as peace-breakers framework, which links conflict-generated migration to negative attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts. The empirical findings do not find support for the hypothesis tested; since the Palestinian diaspora in Sweden showed a more positive attitude towards the Two-state solution as compared to the local Palestinian community. This is an important finding because it makes a strong case for not labeling all conflict-generated diasporas as peace-breakers.

**Keywords:** diaspora, conflict-generated migration, homeland conflict, Palestine
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1. Introduction

“They chose to come to Palestine after the holocaust because they knew that the Jews could live freely here. But after coming here they started to steal the land. I want to ask them - Why are you repeating the holocaust on us?”

– Participant 7/21y/Female/Local

The increasing political weight of diaspora communities has warranted a deeper look into their roles in homeland conflicts. In the current international relations context, diasporas have become significant influencers because they have begun influencing the homeland’s foreign policy (Shain and Barth 2003). Diasporas’ role in homeland conflicts has also been growing because there has been a rise in the number of war refugees (Demmers 2002) leading to a conflict-generated diaspora that stays connected to the homeland. The literature on diasporas so far has shown that conflict-generated diasporas tend to be especially attached to their homelands and their involvement in those conflicts can have significant repercussions for the homeland and the host country (Baser and Swain 2008; Shain and Barth 2003).

Research so far has identified that diasporas can act as makers or breakers of peace (Democratic Progress Institute 2014), either by perpetuating or contributing towards ending homeland conflicts. Previous research has explored both these roles of diasporas because they have emerged as a distinct third party in homeland conflicts, with a stake in the outcomes of those conflicts (Baser and Swain 2008; Shain 2002). However, each diaspora community acts differently from the other, calling for more academic research to understand – How does migration affect attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts? I attempt to answer this question through theory-testing the framework of diasporas as peace-breakers.

To begin with, I construct a theoretical framework, which theorizes the consequences of conflict-generated migration into three broad categories – symbolic attachment to the homeland, experiencing the conflict from a distance and framing the conflict in intangibles. Since the population in the home country does not migrate despite experiencing the conflict, I argue that they do not deal with these consequences of
conflict-generated migration. And it is these consequences that are key to the attitude formation of diasporas because “different priorities, functions, and meanings assigned to the homeland territory by the diaspora versus the homeland citizenry can lead to tremendous tensions over peace policies” (Shain 2002, 135). Therefore, this leads us to the hypothesis of the study - Diaspora communities are less likely than local communities to support peace deals for homeland conflicts.

To conduct a Structured Focused Comparison, I selected the Palestinian community as my case-study. Since the study aims to understand the attitudes of the diaspora group towards peace deals for homeland conflicts, the cases were selected on the basis of a variation of the independent variable, i.e. conflict-generated migration. Therefore, the two communities selected were the Palestinian community, still living in Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora in Sweden. This case-study was apt for my research because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has led to a significantly large conflict generated population, most of whom are living as refugees in nearby countries in the Middle East (UNRWA n.d.). Additionally, the Palestinian diaspora in Europe is a new phenomenon and has so far not been studied much (Shiblak 2005), creating a perfect empirical gap for this study to fill along with theoretical contribution through theory-testing.

I conducted twenty in-depth interviews of the members of the communities (ten in each community with equal number of male and female participants) under study to be able to compare them in a structured and focused manner. In-depth interviews help bring out nuances that cannot be observed in large-N studies, which in turn can add new dimensions to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables under study. The theoretical framework was operationalized into measurable indicators, which then informed the questions that were asked of the participants. The questions were open-ended to give enough space for the participants to express their views and for the study to capture the nuances of those responses, to analyze them further.

The research showed that both the communities (local and diaspora) displayed the indicators for ‘symbolic attachment towards the homeland’, ‘experiencing the conflict from a distance’ and ‘framing the conflict in intangibles’. This meant that based on
the hypothesis, both the communities were less likely to support the two-state solution. However, the findings showed a significant variation on the dependent variable, i.e. 90% of the local community members and 30% of the diaspora community members had a negative attitude towards the peace deal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which was operationalized as the two-state solution. Therefore, the empirical findings from my research did not lend support to the hypothesis of the study. This is an important finding because it shows that conflict-generated diaspora communities don’t necessarily have a negative attitude towards peace deals despite experiencing the consequences of forced migration due to the conflict.

This thesis is structured in the following way. In the next chapter, I present a review of the existing literature on diasporas and their involvement in homeland conflicts. In the third chapter thereafter, I develop a theoretical framework to test the role of diasporas as peace-breakers. The fourth chapter describes the research design and the fifth chapter presents the empirical findings from the research and a structured focused comparative study to understand the implications of the findings on the theory. This chapter also contains additional observations made during the study that were beyond the scope, alternative explanations for the findings and limitations of the study. The paper concludes with a chapter on overall conclusions from the study.

2. Literature Review
Diaspora communities have become a group of interest fairly recently. This is because “the political weight of diaspora communities has increased importantly throughout the late twentieth century”, and “they often play a crucial role in contemporary conflicts” (Demmers 2002, 86). Previous literature on diaspora communities has tried to define the term and understand the relationship between the homeland and the diasporas. I will try to briefly summarize the findings from this literature and identify the research gap this thesis attempts to fill.

2.1 Defining Diaspora
The term ‘diaspora’ originated for a specific phenomenon, that is “the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands, signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion” (Safran 1991, 83). However, there is a debate within academia about the definition of
the term. The concept “diaspora” is difficult to study because there is “no commonly accepted definition of what is a diaspora” (Baser and Swain 2008). Some scholars prefer that the term be used to only refer to “Jews or similar groups that have experienced a traumatic dispersal, such as Armenians” (Adamson 2012, 28).

Other scholars prefer to generalize the term to apply to any “transnational ethnic group that results from boundary-crossing processes” (Adamson 2012, 28). The new definition refers to the group “as a people with a common origin who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland whether that homeland is real or symbolic, independent or under foreign control” (Shain and Barth 2003, 452). With this definition, the term has come to include several categories of people such as expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities (Safran 1991).

Diaspora communities have become significant influencers in the current international relations context as they strive towards influencing the homeland’s foreign policy (Shain and Barth 2003). According to Demmers, this growing political importance of diaspora communities can be attributed to four reasons. Firstly, there has been a change in the pattern of conflict from inter-state conflict to conflicts over issues such as foreign policy, security, economic resources, group identity etc. Secondly, with the rise of intra-state civil conflicts, there has been a rise in the number of war refugees (Demmers 2002). Thirdly, with greater communication it has become easier for people to stay involved in conflicts being fought in their homelands and “live their politics long-distance” (Anderson 1992, 12). Lastly, it is becoming difficult for migrants to integrate in host countries, which is why the “new diaspora do not want to stake everything on an increasingly risky future in a single nation”, therefore “they maintain close relationships with their ancestral homelands” (Demmers 2002, 88).

2.2 Diaspora involvement in homeland conflicts
Diasporas are relevant to the discipline of Peace and Conflict studies because the general trend observed within these groups is one of “attachment towards their homeland” (Baser and Swain 2008, 8). This attachment towards the home country manifests itself in different situations such as foreign policy development, elections, conflicts, infrastructure development etc. Previous literature has shown that the
diasporas that emerge due to a civil conflict in the homeland tend to be especially attached to their homelands and their involvement in those conflicts can have significant repercussions for the homeland and the host country (Baser and Swain 2008; Shain and Barth 2003). The continued involvement in homeland conflicts leads to “deterritorialisation” of conflicts (Demmers 2002), which brings us to the role of diasporas in these conflicts.

Research has identified that diasporas can act as makers or breakers of peace (Democratic Progress Institute 2014), either by perpetuating or contributing towards ending homeland conflicts. Diasporas can play different roles in homeland conflicts, “in some cases diasporic connections seem to feed and prolong the conflict. In other cases diasporic voices and initiatives can plead for reconciliation and demobilization” (Demmers 2002, 86). Previous research has explored both these roles of diasporas because they have emerged as a distinct third party in homeland conflicts, with a stake in the outcomes of those conflicts (Baser and Swain 2008; Shain 2002). As a matter of fact, “the diaspora’s role in homeland conflict perpetuation and conflict resolution can be so powerful that homeland leaders ignore diaspora preferences at their own peril” (Shain 2002, 116).

**Diaspora as Peace-breakers** - The literature that discusses the role of diasporas as breakers of peace have two broad explanations – economic and political. These can be termed as the ‘greed’ argument which talks about the financial contributions of diasporas to the rebels in homeland conflicts and the ‘new wars’ argument which identifies the political support and ideological influence as an important mechanism leading to new conflicts in the homeland (Hall and Swain 2007). The ‘greed’ argument states that a larger diaspora population of a country signals that they would delay the ‘healing process’ from a conflict and contribute financially to rebel groups in support of their extreme political views (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). The reason for this support put forward by the theory is that diasporas continue to harbor the hatred based on their experiences of the conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Being far away, diasporas romanticize the conflict and build their identities around grievances, “living

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2 The terms ‘Peace-makers’ and ‘Peace-breakers’ have been adopted from the report by Democratic Progress Institute (2014), for further details see the bibliography. Different researchers have used these terms and many variations of them.
abroad, diasporas avoid the costs of war and thus evade the moderating experience of it” (Hall and Swain 2007, 112). Examples of such diasporas are the Irish diaspora in the US financially supporting the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in the early years (Democratic Progress Institute 2014, 24) and the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora which was “widely recognized as the economic backbone of the militant campaign” of the LTTE (Fair 2007, 181).

This explanation however, is based on the assumption that diasporas are settled in countries where they have ample economic opportunities to prosper and therefore this would not apply to war refugees and other diasporas living in dire circumstances, after having fled conflicts in their homelands. The second line of argument talks about the changing nature of conflicts since the end of the Cold War. The ‘new wars’ today revolve around ‘exclusive identities’ (ethnic, religious or tribal) and these wars are characterized by increasing military technology, new forms of communication and the changing nature of the state (Kaldor 2013). Diasporas are observed to experience ‘long-distance nationalism’ whereby their idea of the homeland conflict is greatly influenced by their own experiences at the time of migration, but this view doesn’t evolve, rather it is hardened over the years (Anderson 1992). Since the diasporas are far away from the actual conflict they tend to promote ‘exclusive identities’ (Kaldor 2013) through the international media and act as lobbyists, propagandists, spokesmen and grassroots organizers to “lend their political support to insurgencies in the homeland” (Hall and Swain 2007, 113). One of the most prominent examples of this is the Jewish diaspora in the US, the conservatives amongst the diasporas have actively supported the occupation and exerted influence over the US foreign policy towards Israel (Shain 2002).

**Diaspora as Peace-makers** – There is growing literature on the potential of diasporas to play a positive role in homeland conflicts. Research talks about the importance of tapping the potential of diasporas in peace-building and mediation. This line of argument emerges from the understanding that diasporas are a growing influence in global politics and therefore they should be taken into account, especially during homeland conflict situations (Shain 2002). Since diasporas originate from the country of conflict, they have a better understanding of the conflict than any other third party, therefore some scholars state that “diasporas, due to their close ties with the
conflicting parties, could be more serious about conflict resolution than the third party mediators” (Baser and Swain 2008, 20). Scholars argue that even though diasporas are far away from the actual conflict, they aren’t completely free from repercussions of a homeland conflict and their self-image in the host land can be contingent on their role in those conflicts (Shain 2002; Roth 2015). There are many ways diasporas can contribute positively to homeland conflicts – by acting as communicators or facilitators, by threatening to withdraw financial support and/or by supporting pro-peace political parties (Baser and Swain 2008). They can also act as lobby groups or establish formal or informal channels, thereby contributing towards framing the conflict and facilitate discussions for conflict resolution in their homelands (Roth 2015). An example of diasporas as peace-makers are the Somali and Afghan diasporas, the former played a significant role in the peace talks of 2003 in Nairobi and the latter were involved in peace talks and post-conflict building of the Afghan society (Democratic Progress Institute 2014).

2.3 Identifying the research gap
As is evident from previous literature, the study of diaspora communities calls for more academic research. The concept of diaspora in itself “has so much to offer for analysis and research in various dimensions” (Baser and Swain 2008). Their importance in international politics is ever growing in today’s age of globalization and diasporas have become “endemic to the international system, having a capacity for independent and assertive political action” (Shain 2002, 116). Hazel Smith states that “the non-glamorous, pedestrian but, it is hoped, rewarding task of more and better empirical work is still necessary to start building the foundations for more sophisticated inductive and deductive theories of diaspora in conflict” (Smith 2007, 14), firmly establishing a research gap in diaspora studies.

First and foremost, this study aims to contribute to the literature on diasporas through theory-testing and analyzing the role of diasporas as potential peace-breakers or peace-makers. It will contribute towards building the foundation for more theories within the literature on diaspora communities and their role in homeland conflicts. Secondly, an important area where there is a gap within this field of studies is qualitative comparative case studies, which have not been done so far. This study aims to find out if the process of forced migration, impacts the attitudes of diaspora
communities towards peace deals for homeland conflicts. It is integral to understand the attitudes of diaspora communities towards homeland conflicts as with increasing globalization, communication and growing political voices, they can have an impact on conflict resolution and play the role of either peace-breakers or peace-makers.

Thirdly, to the best of my knowledge there have been no studies where qualitative in-depth interviews of community members have been conducted to test the theory and also to highlight new findings within the literature on diasporas. This study will be filling an important gap by adopting this method of research, which will bring forth nuances that have so far been missing in understanding conflict-generated diaspora attitudes towards homeland conflicts. This thesis is therefore strongly positioned to contribute theoretically and empirically to the study of diaspora communities.

3. Theory
The following section lays out the theoretical framework that is used for this study, where the independent and dependent variables of the study are identified and conceptualized. That will lead us to the causal pathway and the hypothesis derived from the theoretical framework, which will be used to answer the research question, ‘How does migration affect attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts?’

3.1 Theoretical Framework
Since the research question is about homeland conflicts, my research will focus on ‘Conflict-generated diasporas’ within the larger ambit of diaspora communities. Conflict-generated diasporas refer to “networks of those forced across borders by conflict or repression” (Terrence Lyons 2007, 530) and I will use this definition for the purpose of the empirical study.

To answer the research question, I will adopt the diasporas as peace-breakers framework to test whether it holds or not for the case-study in question. As mentioned above, previous research states that diasporas can contribute towards conflict perpetuation and some explanations have been put forward for this behaviour. It is important to look at those explanations to build the causal mechanism for this theoretical framework. I will categorize the consequences of having to move away from one’s home country due to a conflict as follows:
Symbolic attachment to the homeland - Research has shown that people who are forced to migrate due to a conflict, “commonly have a specific set of traumatic memories and hence retain highly salient symbolic ties to the homeland” (Lyons 2007, 530). The idea of a ‘Homeland’ becomes important to these groups because it is “often understood in specific territorial terms where a space from which a group has been forcefully detached assumes a high symbolic value” (Terrence Lyons 2006, 111). The forced removal from one’s country is likely to make a group of people have a stronger attachment to their homeland as opposed to someone who moves away voluntarily. One can also assume that the idea of the homeland being under attack or threatened due to a conflict would make the diaspora community hold onto it more strongly.

The traumatic memories, which are also passed down to future generations contribute to building an identity narrative around “traumatic myths and war memories that invoke sectarian, categorical, and uncompromising views” (Lyons 2006, 119). Conflict-generated diasporas continue their attachment to the homeland and hold onto the desire to return to this homeland someday. They pass on this desire to return and longing for the homeland to future generations as well, through sharing their traumatic memories and experiences. The “idea of potential return to the homeland is always there and that affords them a legitimate stake in the way they interfere with homeland policies. The notion of a “secure homeland”, a place to return in time plays a very important role in diaspora behavior” (Baser and Swain 2008, 14). The term ‘legitimate stake’ is important to note, as it offers a possible explanation for why diasporas get involved with homeland conflicts or believe they have a say in it.

For the theoretical framework I will adopt these findings and would like to argue that when an individual or a group is forced to leave their home country due to a conflict, the desire to return to a romanticized and ideal homeland is even stronger. This “symbolic conception of the homeland” can contribute towards diasporas perpetuating their homeland conflicts (Roth 2015). To expand on that further, I would argue that the diasporas don’t necessarily
intend to worsen the conflict, rather in their intended goal of preserving their idealized homeland, their ‘uncompromising views’ (Terrence Lyons 2006) become a hindrance to peace processes by rejecting the peaceful solutions on the table because they may appear to be a compromise on key issues of concern for the diaspora.

- **Experiencing the conflict from a distance** – Being physically removed from the conflict, diasporas experience the conflict from a distance, which in turn makes the conflict “delocalized” (Demmers 2002). This means three things, firstly, the diaspora group defines the conflict as it was when they experienced it, and this definition remains static over time therefore losing touch with the reality on the ground (Anderson 1992). Secondly, the diasporas no longer witness the direct suffering of those in their home country, it makes them “emotionally and psychologically much more involved” in the conflict (Roth 2015). This distance from their home country can make diasporas less accountable for the outcome of the conflict (Anderson 1992) and give them the space to put their “own “spin” on the national narrative and live out their shared identity in its own way“ (Shain 2002, 118).

Lastly, with growing technology and fast means of communication, people can regularly update themselves about and get involved in events taking place in different parts of the world. This plays a role with the diaspora community as well because rather than being actively involved in the conflict on the ground, they now become involved in a “virtual conflict” through long-distance (Demmers 2002). What this means is that diasporas “live their conflict through the internet, email, television, and telephone without direct (physical) suffering, risks, or accountability. Therefore, they are engaged in processes of conflict dynamics that differ importantly from their identity group members in their homelands” (Demmers 2002, 94).

Two things to note here are that firstly, the diaspora experiences the conflict differently and mostly virtually. They are physically removed from the conflict and therefore do not experience the sobering effect a conflict situation can have on an individual or a group. This would be especially applicable for
the subsequent generations of conflict-generated diasporas. But the diaspora communities become emotionally and psychologically involved in the conflict by keeping up with it digitally and through media. Secondly, this experiential difference translates into a difference in the attitudes and opinions of the locals and the diaspora, about peace deals for homeland conflicts. For the theoretical framework I will adopt this idea of distance leading to a difference in the experience of the conflict for the diaspora. I argue that it is this difference of experiencing the conflict, which is a contributing factor to making the diasporas less likely to favor peaceful solutions to the homeland conflict. While the diasporas may be fighting for the same greater cause as their counterparts at home, the physical distance from the conflict makes the “discourses of nationality and struggle” inherently divergent (Roth 2015), which results in their different responses to peace deals.

- **Framing the conflict in intangibles** – With the difference in the experience of the homeland conflict, diasporas “become involved in confrontations that involve intangible issues such as identity, beliefs, and cultural norms, rather than more concrete issues such as resource sharing or territory” (Roth 2015, 293). Conflict-generated diasporas no longer have to grapple with everyday consequences of the conflict and being at a distance grants them the space to focus on intangible issues. With contemporary conflicts revolving around ‘exclusive identities’ (ethnic, religious or tribal) (Kaldor 2013), diasporas indulge in ‘long-distance nationalism’ (Anderson 1992) and work towards promoting these ‘exclusive identities’ (Kaldor 2013). Diasporas form their identity around ‘grievances’ (Collier and Hoeffler 2004) and this “conception of identity can cause it to break with the interests of the homeland, and potentially worsen the conflict that already exists there” (Roth 2015, 295).

Taking forward the discussion about distance from the conflict, many theories state that this distance over the years solidifies the diaspora groups’ sense of identity and beliefs about the homeland over the years, which are also passed on to the newer generations. These ‘intangibles’ remain unchanged since the time of their forced removal from their home country and they become central to the diaspora community’s narrative. Diaspora groups can feel that their
identity is under threat, especially if that identity (ethnic, religious or tribal) was the reason for their forced removal from the homeland. This can lead them to forming or joining organizations related to their homeland and aligning themselves with political parties in the homeland. Diasporas can also worsen homeland conflicts through building networks based on identity and other such intangible issues, “to keep nationalist hopes alive from abroad” (Baser and Swain 2008, 14). They can give financial support to rebels or parties that support their extreme political views (Collier and Hoeffler 2004) and mobilize external support for their views through lobbying and the use of media (Demmers 2002). For the theoretical framework I argue that by framing the conflict in abstract terms, diasporas tend to take an impractical approach to resolving the homeland conflict by holding onto issues of identity, as opposed to the local population in the home country.

It can be further argued that successive generations deal with similar consequences of being part of the conflict-generated diaspora, especially if the conflict is ongoing. “Without having had contact with the everyday experience of conflict, it becomes easier for subsequent generations to think of these situations not in the nuanced shades of gray, but rather in starker black and white terms. Enemy images (“us” vs. “them”) become hardened and complex, shared histories get reconstituted as exclusivist narratives” (Lyons and Mandaville 2012, 20). Older generations pass on their memories and traumatic experiences to newer generations. Since these experiences and memories are passed onto the newer generations “in the early years of the childhood via social institutions and channels of communications, it is possible to assume that almost all the young generation absorbs the contents of the conflict supporting beliefs (i.e. collective memory and ethos of conflict) (Bar-Tal and Halperin 2011, 226).

Therefore, I argue that firstly, these memories of conflict, which are passed down to generations ensure that a sense of attachment with one’s homeland and culture in the newer generations continues. Secondly, it is hoped by the generation that is wronged that if there’s a possibility of a resolution in the subsequent generation’s lifetime, they can voice their opinions and stand by similar issues of identity and beliefs during the resolution, that were integral for their ancestors. Therefore, the newer generations also
have a symbolic conception of the homeland, which someday they want to return to and they experience the homeland conflict ‘from a distance through social media. Additionally, homeland conflicts can serve as “analysis frames” and provide a cause and purpose for successive generations (Feron 2017).

3.2 The Causal Pathway

To tie the theoretical framework together, I argue that in understanding the attitudes of diasporas towards peace deals for homeland conflicts, it becomes important to consider the consequences of forced migration due to conflict. The consequences are: a) a symbolic attachment to the homeland, b) experiencing the conflict from a distance, and c) framing the conflict in intangibles. These consequences are key to the attitude formation of diasporas because “different priorities, functions, and meanings assigned to the homeland territory by the diaspora versus the homeland citizenry can lead to tremendous tensions over peace policies” (Shain 2002, 135).

Based on the diasporas as peace-breakers framework, the above-mentioned consequences would lead to the diaspora communities being less likely to support peace deals for homeland conflicts. To clarify, this does not mean that diaspora communities are inherently against any efforts towards resolving the homeland conflict. What it means is that the consequences of forced migration, lead them to take a stronger position (as compared to the local population) regarding certain issues related to the homeland, which may then lead to achieving an agreement regarding a peace deal more difficult.

This theoretical framework leads to the following causal mechanism:
3.3 The Hypothesis
Diaspora communities experience the homeland conflict differently from the local population that stays on in the country, despite the conflict. While the local population undergoes the everyday consequences of conflict, diaspora communities are likely to continue framing the conflict based on their experiences at the time of their forced removal from the homeland. They build a narrative about the conflict around their grievances and issues of identity. Subsequent generations of diaspora communities are even more removed and quite often do not have any firsthand experiences with the conflict. They receive these narratives from the older generations, which then become the lenses through which they view the homeland conflict. Therefore, this leads us to hypothesize that:

\[ H - \text{Diaspora communities are less likely than local communities to support peace deals for homeland conflicts} \]

4. Research Design
This section discusses the research design and the methodology used to answer the Research Question – *How does migration affect attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts?* It will elaborate on case-selection and the method of Structured Focused Comparison that was adopted for this study in combination with conducting qualitative in-depth interviews. Lastly, this section will conclude with a discussion on the time frame of the study and the materials and sources used.

4.1 Case-selection
It is important to avoid selection bias while choosing a case study for qualitative research. To that end, a criteria is set to guide case-selection. The first step in case-selection is to think about the universe of cases relevant for the study, which in this case are ‘diaspora communities’. To narrow it down further, the study is about conflict-generated diasporas. After considering the different conflict-generated diaspora communities, I considered the first rule of case selection, i.e. finding cases that provide variation on key variables (Powner 2015).

The case selected for this research was chosen on the basis of variation on the independent variable, i.e. conflict-generated migration, with the variation being yes or
no. Therefore, I identified a community that was affected by a homeland conflict and where some of the population was forced out of the homeland, while other members of the same community stayed in the homeland despite the conflict. It was important to ensure that the cases were similar on all aspects except for migration (across the border). This is known as the Most Similar Cases Design where cases are selected based on a variation of the independent variable (Gerring 2007). This case-selection strategy helps eliminate other variables that can affect the outcome of interest.

The case selected for this study is, the Palestinian community affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This case was selected for three reasons; firstly, it is a typical example of a conflict, which led to conflict-generated migration. Today, “more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem” (UNRWA n.d.). Secondly, while a lot of studies have been done on the refugees in the Middle East, the Palestinian diaspora population in Western nations largely remains understudied (Shiblak 2005) creating a perfect gap to undertake this study. Thirdly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ongoing conflict for which the internationally supported solution or peace deal, i.e. the two-state solution has been the basis of peace talks between the two opposing parties – Israel and Palestine (Seck 2016) for years. So far, this peace deal has not found acceptance amongst the people affected by the conflict (Abdel-Nour 2015; O’Malley 2017) due to which the viability of this solution is being questioned by many scholars, “the time has come to consider other options; none is palatable, but serious attention to all may break the stranglehold of thinking only in terms of a two-state solution” (O’Malley 2017). The debate on the two-state solution, positions this study to contribute significantly by understanding the Palestinian diaspora’s attitudes towards the peace deal which has been proposed for their homeland conflict.

Based on the selection criteria of the variation in the independent variable, the Palestinian community living in Palestine\(^3\) was selected along with the Palestinian diaspora in Sweden, who are a conflict-generated diaspora. The presence of a large Palestinian diaspora in Europe is a new phenomenon and their population is on the

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\(^3\) When talking about present day Palestine, this paper refers to a country comprising of the West Bank and Gaza strip.
rise, in predominantly Germany, Scandinavian countries, Britain and Spain (Shiblak 2005). In Sweden, the migration of Palestinians was from different parts of the world. Firstly, from Lebanon, where the Palestinian refugees fled during the civil war from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, then from Kuwait due to the Iraqi invasion, and lastly, those from West Bank and Gaza (AbdulGhani 2005). Therefore, the Palestinian diaspora community in Sweden is a typical example of a conflict-generated diaspora.

### 4.2 Method

The method of **Structured, Focused Comparison** is used to test the hypothesis on the attitudes of conflict-generated diasporas towards peace deals for homeland conflicts. The structured aspect of the method refers to treating each case similarly, to standardize the data that will be collected. This method uses a “preestablished set of questions to interrogate each case in search of evidence, and it applies this same set of questions to multiple cases” (Powner 2015, 105). For this purpose, general questions were drafted to address the research question and test the hypothesis, with the aim of measuring the values of the variables for both the cases under study (George and Bennett 2005). The focused aspect of the method refers to specifying the areas of focus within the cases selected. This guides the questions drafted for the interview as the intended goal is to develop questions addressing only the specific areas (George and Bennett 2005). The focus of this study will be on the observable implications of becoming a conflict-generated diaspora and the attitudes towards peace deals for those homeland conflicts that cause the forced migration to take place.

A **qualitative** comparison of the cases selected is undertaken by conducting **in-depth interviews** of the members of the communities under study. This method is suitable because in-depth interviews are a useful tool to “learn of individual perspectives of one or a few narrowly defined themes” (Broneus 2011, 130). In-depth interviews help bring out nuances that cannot be observed in large-N studies, which in turn can add new dimensions to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables under study. Talking to people at the core of conflicts helps bring out the realities and challenges at stake (Broneus 2011). Secondly, this choice of method was guided by the aim of the study, which is to contribute to the literature on diaspora through theory-testing and analyzing the role of diasporas as potential peace-breakers or
makers. Qualitative methods are “more conducive to exploratory analysis and inducive theorizing” (Powner 2015, 99) and this will help address the research gap identified above. Lastly, one of the key issues raised about literature on diaspora so far has been that the behaviour of diaspora communities is case-specific. “Not all diasporas have the same capacities, opportunities or motivation to intervene in conflict and diasporas rarely are monolithic entities in terms of interests and objectives” (Smith 2007, 9). This further strengthens the call for case-specific in-depth qualitative studies, before broader generalizations can be drawn about diaspora communities.

Sample selection – For the purpose of the study, two sampling techniques were adopted in combination - snowball and purposive sampling. For purposive sampling, the criteria for selecting participants were decided to ensure the quality of data that could be analyzed to draw conclusions about the community under study. Carefully selecting participants for an in-depth interview is essential to increase the credibility of the research (Broneus 2011). The first and foremost criterion was that both the parents of the participants should be Palestinian. This was to isolate for cultural influencers on social identity formation, especially during the formative years.

Secondly, a set of criteria for selecting participants was established to isolate for alternative explanations. They are as follows:

i. Gender – an equal number of male and female participants were selected in both the communities to isolate for gender of the participants as an alternative explanation.

ii. Age – participants were selected between the age group of 20 to 45 years. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is ongoing, talking about it can be traumatic for an individual. It was ensured that participants were not too young and were capable of voluntarily deciding to participate in the research. Secondly, one of the key components of the theoretical framework is the ‘virtual experience’ of the conflict by the diaspora community. Individuals within this age-group are more likely to access the internet and social media.
iii. **Education** – only those participants were selected who had attended university. This criterion was set to ensure that the participants could effectively communicate their views and that they were likely to be well informed about the topics in the interview. It helped to control for variation in the responses from respondents who would be highly educated as opposed to those who wouldn’t be, since this was likely to have an impact on the data collected. All the participants interviewed had attended university.

Thirdly, for the diaspora community in Sweden, participants were selected on the basis that either they were born in Sweden, i.e. they were second generation migrants or that they moved to Sweden at a young age, as dependents with their parents, i.e. dependent migrants. This criterion was to ensure that the participants spent their formative years in Sweden and had a considerable amount of distance (in time and space) from the conflict, which forms an imperative part of the theoretical framework.

**Snowball sampling** was also employed, whereby participants that were interviewed recommended other possible participants for the study. The benefit of this technique is that in war-affected societies, people can be suspicious of outsiders (Hoglund 2011). In such situations, referrals can act as a form of trust earned of the community members. Many participants, while referring me to other potential participants had to explicitly mention that they had been interviewed by me and that they trusted me, only after that did the person in question agree to speak to me. However, there is a risk of bias with snowball sampling as it can lead to participants largely within the same social groups. To manage that risk, multiple gatekeepers were used to find participants for the study. While this cannot eliminate the risk of bias with absolute certainty, within the scope of this study it was the most feasible option to conduct qualitative research in the field.

**Ethical considerations** – “Peace research raises important ethical dilemmas through its very focus” (Hoglund and Oberg 2011). Therefore, it is important to carefully consider the ethical implications while conducting research on war-affected communities and “the ethical golden rule is to do no harm” (Broneus 2011, 141). To ensure the principle of ‘do no harm’ a number of decisions were taken before, during and after conducting the research.
Firstly, efforts were made to ensure the emotional welfare of the participants to minimize any re-traumatization. This was done by asking participants only the most important questions required for understanding the research question and by including mostly open-ended questions so that the participants could decide how much they wanted to speak (Broneus 2011). The participant’s rights were stated at the beginning of each interview as per the protocol for informed consent and they were given absolute control over what and how they wanted to answer the questions. They had the right to refuse to answer any question or to ask me to not include any of their responses in my research even after the end of an interview. This ensured that the participants who had voluntarily agreed to be interviewed always felt in control.

Secondly, maintaining anonymity ensured safety and security of the participants. During the actual interviews, which were recorded with the permission of the interviewee, I did not mention their name. No identifying information of the participants is mentioned in the research and numbers are given to them in the order that their interview was conducted to attribute their quotes to them. Lastly, all interviews were conducted in English to minimize miscommunication and to avoid the presence of a translator. This helped to make the participant comfortable and willing to talk more openly about sensitive topics.

*Interview structure* – The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions and the same questionnaire was administered in both the communities in keeping with the Structured Focused Comparison method adopted for this study. The structure of the interview was guided by the literature on developing in-depth interviews according to Karen Broneus (2011). The interview was divided into four main sections – in the first section I introduced my study, its aim and intended use. Then I introduced the protocol for consent and took permission to record the conversation for note-taking purposes. The second part of the interview consisted of questions about the background of the participants. Next part of the interview consisted of questions on the independent variable, each part of the causal mechanism and the dependent variable. This was the most intense part of the interview where I asked questions about the participants’ thoughts about the Palestinian identity, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, political parties and possible solutions to the conflict. Last part of the
interview gave the interviewee the space to add anything that they wanted to and to ask me any questions that they may have had. After which I thanked them for their time. Appendix 1 contains the interview questions.

4.3 Operationalization of the Theoretical Framework

This section will operationalize the theoretical framework into measurable indicators. Operationalization of abstract concepts is important to ensure further scientific replication of the research and therefore improve the validity of the study. Measurable and viable indicators are especially important when a qualitative study is being undertaken because the methodology is based on understanding the nuances and a wide-range of answers that the participants give to open-ended questions. The indicators will be used to analyze the responses and reach scientific conclusions. “If the variables that we observe in the real world do not do a good job of mirroring the abstract concepts, then that affects our ability to evaluate conclusively a theory’s empirical support” (Kellstedt and Whitten 2013, 109). The indicators informed questions that made up the interview questionnaire for the participants.

Operationalization of the Independent Variable

The independent variable, i.e. Conflict-generated migration is defined as forced migration across the border due to a conflict. It is translated into a measurable indicator, as being present or absent i.e. a case where migration across the border due to a conflict took place versus a case where migration across the border did not take place despite the same conflict. Therefore, the variation observed for the independent variable is yes or no.

While it is logically assumed that forced migration due to the conflict was present with the diaspora community and it was absent with the local community, the individual participants were asked two questions to measure the variable. The questions posed to the participants are as follows:

Q. Has your family always lived in Palestine/Sweden or did they have to move there at some point?
Q. If there was migration, when and why did it happen?
Operationalization of the Causal Mechanism

The causal mechanism, which consists of the theorized consequences of forced removal from one’s home country due to a conflict, has three parts, each of which have been operationalized and measurable indicators were developed to scientifically measure the concepts.

The first part of the causal mechanism is Symbolic Attachment to the Homeland. It consists of two integral components – ‘symbolic attachment’ and ‘homeland’. Based on the theoretical framework, both these aspects are contingent on the presence of traumatic memories of the conflict experienced by the first generation that is forced to migrate from their homeland. According to the theory, these memories are passed down to subsequent generations in the diaspora communities, which then contribute to developing an idealized conception of the homeland. Therefore, the operational definition of ‘Symbolic attachment to the homeland’ for the purpose of this study has been developed as–

The presence of traumatic memories of conflict from one’s homeland, contributing to the conception of an idealized homeland that one wants to preserve and return to someday.

The indicators for this concept are - an identity connected to the homeland, usage of emotional terms to define the homeland, attachment towards the homeland and knowledge of traumatic memories from the homeland conflict passed down within one’s family and community. The measurable indicators for the first part of the causal mechanism and the corresponding questions in the interview questionnaire are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you identify yourself as a Palestinian? What informs that identity for you?</td>
<td>An affirmative answer will indicate the presence of an identity associated with the homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does Palestine represent to you?</td>
<td>The response can show indicators of the presence of an idealized homeland in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you made any efforts to understand the history of the conflict?

An affirmative response will indicate efforts towards building an attachment towards the homeland and the conflict

Are there memories of the conflict that were shared within your family and community?

An affirmative answer will indicate the presence of secondary traumatic memories of the conflict

The second part of the causal mechanism is *Experiencing the conflict from a distance*. Based on the theoretical framework, diasporas are physically removed from the conflict, which leads to them being psychologically and emotionally involved in the conflict while experiencing it from a distance. The generation that is forcefully removed from the homeland due to a conflict is likely to have firsthand experience with the real-time consequences of the conflict, but the subsequent generations, do not have such experiences. Therefore, the operational definition of ‘Experiencing the conflict from a distance’ for the purpose of this study has been developed as –

*Being physically far away from the homeland conflict and experiencing it second-hand. The second-hand experience comes from the memories of their older family members and through digital media. This manifests in the individual or the community being psychologically invested in issues related to the conflict and the homeland.*

The indicators of this concept are – involvement in issues of the homeland from a distance, using digital media to stay updated with the developments in the homeland, psychological investment in issues of the homeland and the conflict. The questions developed for this concept cover issues that are deemed central to the Palestinian community. Firstly, the participants were asked their thoughts on the ‘Right of Return’ for Palestinian refugees. This right is integral to the Palestinians that were forced to leave their country in the ‘Nakba’\(^4\) or mass exodus in 1948 and in the subsequent years. It is covered by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution

\(^4\) The Palestinian “Nakba” (“catastrophe” in Arabic) refers to the mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from British Mandate Palestine during Israel’s creation (1947-49).

which states, “refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with
their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that
compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for
loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity,
should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible” (United Nations
1948). A response to this question can indicate psychological involvement in the
issues related to the homeland, i.e. Palestine. Additionally, it can also indicate a desire
to return to the homeland, which is important for the first part of the causal
mechanism.

Secondly, the participants were asked their thoughts on the United Nations Relief and
Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This UN agency
was created through the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 in 1949
“to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. The Agency
began operations on 1 May 1950. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee
problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA’s mandate, most
recently extending it until 30 June 2020” (UNRWA n.d.). Every Palestinian refugee
(including the diaspora population) and the subsequent generations, register with
UNRWA. The agency has a complicated role within the Palestinian community, its
been criticized because by some it is “seen as an attempt to make Palestinian
resistance quiescent by providing economic support” (Schulz 2003). But for many
others it has become a source of identity and a validation of their loss of homeland
because “to be defined as a refugee was the only way in which the loss was made
explicit” (Schulz 2003). A response to this question can help understand whether the
participant is psychologically invested in the issues affecting the Palestinian
community.

Thirdly, a question about the participants’ views about United States’ decision to
recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was also included. This political
development in December 2017 incited a lot of attention globally. The United Nations
and many countries around the world criticized this decision for endangering the two-
state solution, which is the internationally supported solution to the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict and has been the basis of peace talks between the two countries (Gladstone
and Landler 2017). Jerusalem is a symbolically important city to the Muslims, Jews
and Christians around the world. Even in the two-state solution plan laid out in the Oslo Accords, Jerusalem was proposed to be a shared capital between Palestine and Israel (Israel and Palestine 1993). Recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, can certainly put the two-state solution in danger and it is in violation of the international law. Since this decision had reverberations in the form of protests in Palestine (Al-Mughrabi and Lubell 2017) and the Arab community around the world (Homsi and Barnard 2017), a response to a question about this issue can indicate psychological investment in political developments in the homeland.

Measurable indicators for this part of the causal mechanism and the corresponding questions in the interview questionnaire are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you stay updated with political developments in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship?</td>
<td>An affirmative response will indicate involvement in issues related to the homeland and experiencing the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you get your information?</td>
<td>The response can show indicators of experiencing the conflict from a distance, especially through digital media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts about the ‘Right of return’ for Palestinians?</td>
<td>An opinion on this issue can indicate a psychological involvement in issues related to the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on the recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by US?</td>
<td>An opinion on this issue can indicate psychological involvement in issues related to the homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on UNRWA’s role for the Palestinian community?</td>
<td>An opinion on this issue can indicate a psychological involvement in issues related to the homeland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last part of the causal mechanism is *Framing the conflict in intangibles*. Based on the theoretical framework, diasporas build a narrative of the homeland conflict around intangible issues such as identity, beliefs and culture. Conflict-generated diaspora groups that were targeted for their identity (ethnic, religious or tribal) might still feel
that their identity is under threat and they may take actions to preserve it politically and/or culturally. This threat perception can lead the group to view the opposing party in the conflict with greater suspicion and these views are carried forward in the subsequent generations. Therefore, the operational definition of ‘Framing the conflict in intangibles’ for the purpose of this study has been developed as –

*Building a group identity around grievances, being invested in issues of identity and viewing the other party with suspicion, leading to undertaking steps for identity preservation such as building networks and political involvement in homeland politics.*

The indicators for this concept are – viewing the other party (in this case Israel and its citizens) with suspicion, high threat perception on the national identity, being emotionally invested in the group identity and homeland politics, and creating/participating in organizations for the preservation of the Palestinian identity.

One of the questions in this section asks the respondent for their views on the fact that there are ‘multiple political factions’ in Palestine. This is relevant because the political landscape in Palestine is very divided. Not only are there different political factions but they have differing stands on the internationally supported peace deal for the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, i.e. the Two-state solution. The three main political factions in Palestine are Fatah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Fatah is the majority party that represents Palestine internationally and supports the Two-state solution to resolve the conflict, while the other two political factions do not support this solution; rather they favor the establishment of an Islamic state in all of Palestine which includes Israel (Jaeger and Paserman 2006, 45). The question only asks for the opinion of the participant on the fact of the presence of multiple political factions and not on their political ideologies, which is a sensitive topic in the Palestinian community. A response to this question can indicate the participant’s psychological investment in the politics of the homeland.

The measurable indicators for the third part of the causal mechanism and the corresponding questions in the interview questionnaire are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you think about Israel and its people? Have you ever interacted</td>
<td>An answer in the negative, especially without any interaction with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Israeli citizens?</td>
<td>people from Israel can indicate the presence of a threat perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the Palestinian identity is under threat?</td>
<td>An affirmative response will indicate the presence of a threat perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you engaged in debates or discussions about the conflict? If yes,</td>
<td>An affirmative response can indicate a psychological investment in group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>could you share some details about the instance(s)?</td>
<td>identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you part of any organization (social, cultural or political) that</td>
<td>An affirmative response will indicate working towards identity preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>works for Palestinian issues? If yes, what is your contribution as a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>member of said organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on the fact there are multiple political factions</td>
<td>An opinion on this issue will indicate a psychological investment in group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representing Palestinian interests?</td>
<td>identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel politically represented by any political faction/party in</td>
<td>An affirmative response can indicate ideological involvement in homeland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine?</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you make or have in the past made financial contributions to any</td>
<td>An affirmative response will indicate involvement in homeland politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian political party?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Operationalization of the Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in the causal mechanism is ‘Attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts’. The operational definition of a peace deal will simply be –

*An internationally accepted solution to the conflict.*
The attitude will be measured as either positive if the respondent is in favor of the peace deal and negative if the respondent is not in favor of the peace deal, i.e. the variation of the dependent variable will be either positive or negative. For this case-study, peace deal will be operationalized as the ‘Two-state solution’, which is regarded by the international community as the only acceptable solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and is supported by the United Nations (Mohammed 2017). The two-state solution as defined by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People refers to “achieving the full independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and reaching a just and agreed solution to the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194” (Seck 2016). The participants were asked if they thought the two-state solution was a feasible option to resolve the conflict and whether they supported it. A positive response to this question would signify a positive attitude towards the peace deal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a negative response would indicate the opposite.

There is also a question about the Oslo Accords in this section as the accords were the first time a peaceful settlement through international mediation was reached in this conflict. It was historic because both the parties (Israel and Palestine) came to the table and agreed to terms and conditions of the Two State solution in 1993 (Israel and Palestine 1993). While the agreement failed to achieve its objective, an attempt to bring an end to the conflict, is worthy of being included in this study. The participant’s views about the accords can reflect their views about possible solutions to the conflict and can also inform their attitudes towards the Two-state solution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on the Oslo Accords?</td>
<td>A response to this can reflect the participants views about possible solutions to the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your thoughts on a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?</td>
<td>A response to this can reflect the participants views about possible solutions to the conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think the two-state solution is a</td>
<td>A response to this question will indicate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
feasible option to resolve the conflict? Do you support it? the participants attitudes towards the peace deal for the homeland conflict

Validity and Reliability – According to Powner, the “most fundamental issue in measurement is one of validity” (2015), which refers to the ability of the measurements and indicators to actually capture what they intended to capture. One of the ways to ensure high validity is to use standard measures, so that the findings can then be comparable to other similar research. However, this isn’t always possible in qualitative studies where the concepts being studied are abstract. An attempt was made to ensure that variables were operationalized such that the indicators have high validity and capture what they intend to, however, any shortcomings can be attributed to the qualitative nature of the study.

Reliability of the operationalized measurement tool refers to a measure that “returns the same value for a given case even when multiple individuals evaluate the case according to our rules for converting information into data” (Powner 2015). In terms of reliability, qualitative studies can face an issue especially when the data is collected through qualitative in-depth interviews. In this method of data collection, the respondents have the space to interpret questions and answer them subjectively. While it is good for capturing the nuances of the concepts under study, it is low in reliability due to the subjectivity of the responses and their analysis by the researcher.

4.4 Time frame
Setting a time frame of a study is important to set the boundaries and to scientifically compare two cases. The time frame of this study will start from September 1993 when the first Oslo Accords were signed between Israel and Palestine and an official agreement was signed on the Two-state solution. And the time frame of the study will end in December 2017, when the decision on Jerusalem by the United States took place and was considered by the international community as a hindrance to the Two State solution.

The time frame informs the operationalization of the causal mechanism, the questionnaire administered to the participants and consequently the analysis of the
findings from the research. Therefore, the time frame refers to the main events and issues that took place within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and had an impact on the Palestinian community between 1993 and 2017. The data collection (i.e. interviewing participants) and the writing of the thesis took place in 2018.

4.5 Materials and Sources
The main source of data for this research were the in-depth interviews conducted with twenty individuals in all. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with twenty participants (ten in each community). In Palestine, eight interviews were conducted via video calling on Skype and two interviewees responded via email. Out of the ten interviews in Sweden, seven were conducted by video calling on Skype, two were conducted on the phone and one interview was conducted in-person. All interviews were conducted in English and no translators were present. The interviews were recorded for note-taking purposes but the recordings were not shared with anyone or submitted to the university. Appendix 2 contains a list of the interviews.

While efforts were made to ensure that there was no misrepresentation of information and the views of the participants were represented truthfully. But if there was any error in understanding and expressing the views of the participants, it is solely the responsibility of the author. The questions were mostly open-ended and were informed by the indicators developed in the operationalization of the causal mechanism. However, it is important to note that with open-ended questions, the respondent is free to answer howsoever they choose and that leads to qualitatively different answers. While it is excellent for capturing the different nuances of the concepts under study, it can also be daunting to quantify the results.

Secondary sources such as reports, news articles and academic articles were used but sparsely to lend support to the findings of the research. However, since the case study in question relates to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is a sensitive and complicated conflict, secondary sources for it were treated with caution and largely used only for factual information to avoid any bias.
5. Analysis

The first section gives a brief background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After that we look at the findings of the research, for each community (locals and diaspora). For this section I follow the causal mechanism and showcase the findings for the communities under each part of the causal mechanism - the Independent Variable, the main Causal Mechanism (which has three parts) and the Dependent Variable. This structure is followed in the next section as well where the findings are compared in a comparative analysis to explore and understand the variations, if any, observed between the two cases on significant indicators. After comparatively analyzing the cases and addressing the implications of the findings for the theory, I present additional observations that were beyond the scope of this study, noted during the course of conducting research. Thereafter, some alternative explanations are explored to look at possible reasons for the findings of the study and lastly, limitations of the study are addressed critically.

5.1 Conflict background

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been described as “one of the world's most polarizing confrontations” (Shafir 2017). It’s a complicated conflict, which has lasted for decades with the primary issue revolving around territory and statehood. The origin of the conflict lies in a struggle over land (Beinin and Hajjar 2014). What is known as the State of Israel today is largely what was historic Palestine (Dumper 2007). “The three regions on the map (Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank) were once known as Palestine. Ownership of the land is disputed primarily between two different groups: Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs (who are chiefly Muslim, but also include Christians and Druze)” (New York Times 2009).

According to UCDP, “the Israel-Palestine conflict in essence revolves around the issue of what state should exist in the territories that today are either in the state of Israel, or are occupied by the same. In this conflict over territory the state of Israel is opposed by various armed Palestinian movements” (UCDP, n.d.). While the seeds of this conflict were sowed much before 1948 (Dumper 2007; El-Hasan 2010), the year is significant in the history of the conflict because in that year, the ‘al-Nakba’ or the catastrophe took place in which more than 70,000 Palestinians were displaced as a
result of a war between Arab countries and Israel (UNRWA n.d.), in which Israel emerged victorious.

UCDP states, that “the 1948 war set the tone and context for the Israeli-Arab conflict, which has since run parallel to the Israeli-Palestinian issue, intertwining inter-state and intra-state conflicts. It also contributed to two of the thorniest issues in present-day deliberations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides; the Palestinian refugee problem and the delimitation of borders” (UCDP, n.d.). In a second war in 1967, Israel again won in what is known as the ‘Six Day War’ against Syria and Egypt (UCDP, n.d.) and “established control over East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza” (Cammack, Brown, and Muasher 2017), leading to further escalating the issue of Palestinian refugees who sought refuge in neighboring countries – Jordan, Lebanon and Syria (UCDP, n.d.; UNRWA n.d.).

The conflict continues till this day with no solution in sight. The two-state solution, which is regarded as the only acceptable solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is supported by the international community and the United Nations (Mohammed 2017) and has been the basis of peace talks between Israel and Palestine for many years. Today, “more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem” (UNRWA n.d.) waiting to some day return home.

5.2 Case-study Analyses
In this section I will present the main findings from my research for each of the two communities. The responses of the participants will be analyzed in relation to the causal mechanism that informs this study to answer the research question – How does migration affection affect attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts?

Independent Variable - Conflict generated migration
The independent variable for this study informed case-selection and therefore, it doesn’t form a core part of the analysis. The participants were asked if they had always lived in Palestine/Sweden to understand where they spent their formative years. And they were asked whether they or their families had migrated to the respective countries of residence at any point. This highlighted an important aspect
about the Palestinian community, i.e. the dichotomy between locals and the diaspora is not straightforward. In case of the Palestinian community, the issue of internal displacement complicates matters. UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as “persons 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” (UNRWA n.d.).

Based on this definition, many Palestinians living in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem are registered as refugees with UNRWA. This led to an interesting observation during the study. Out of the ten local Palestinians, five identified themselves as refugees due to internal displacement; therefore 50% of the local participants were refugees in this study. However, based on the operationalization of the independent variable, only those who are living across the border are considered as a member of the diaspora community, therefore, all the participants from Palestine will be considered as locals.

**The Causal Mechanism**

**Part I - Symbolic attachment to the homeland**

Under this part of the causal mechanism the participants were asked questions about their Palestinian identity, whether they had made any efforts to understand the conflict on their own or not and lastly, whether there were any memories of the conflict that were shared within their families and the larger community. Below I present an analysis of the findings for each of the two communities I interviewed, i.e. the Local Palestinians and the Palestinian diaspora community in Sweden.

**Diaspora Community**

“*Palestine is me, my struggle, my homeland. Since I was 4 years old I started understanding that something was wrong in Palestine.*”

- Participant 2/36y/F/Diaspora

When the participants were asked whether they identified as a Palestinian or not, all of them said that they did quite assertively. On asking what informed their Palestinian
identity for them 60% of the participants stated it was the Palestinian struggle, and some of the other responses covered aspects such as the Palestinian heritage, culture, values and the cuisine. One of the participants, who was born in a refugee camp in Syria and moved to Sweden at the age of 8, spoke about his former refugee status as having impacted his Palestinian identity significantly:

“Having grown up in a refugee camp everything felt temporary to me because we were all waiting to return to our homeland one day. I grew up in a family where the Palestinian cause was very strong and then growing up in a refugee camp really affects you. Then it comes naturally to have such a strong identity.” – Participant 3/37y/Male/Diaspora

When asked what Palestine represented to them the participants 40% said ‘home’ or the ‘homeland’, 40% said ‘the struggle’ and the rest responded with ‘strength’ and ‘shattered families.’ One of the respondents talked about the paradoxical symbolism of the Palestinian struggle for her:

“The Palestinian struggle is pretty intense. It’s both a blessing and a burden. I can relate to others such as the Kurds who are fighting for their rights. But it’s a burden because it’s very sad.” – Participant 6/32y/Female/Diaspora

On whether they made efforts on their own to understand the history of the conflict in the homeland, 90% of the participants said that they did. A participant attributed her interest in reading about the history of the conflict to the lack of awareness of others around her in Sweden. One participant said that he did not make any efforts to read more on the history of the conflict because the Palestinian struggle was always present in his home while he was growing since his father was a political activist. Lastly, when asked whether memories of conflict were shared within their family and the Palestinian community in Sweden, 100% of the participants answered in the affirmative:
“I remember as a child, my mother was always collecting coins to go to a public phone and call her family in Palestine and I was with her, speaking to my relatives. The war was always present with us.” - Participant 2/36y/Female/Diaspora

Therefore, based on the causal mechanism the diaspora community showed a high level of symbolic attachment to the homeland by identifying as Palestinian despite having lived in Sweden for most of their lives. They grew up hearing of the memories of conflict from their families and the Palestinian community in Sweden and that has clearly shaped their consciousness leading to an idealized conception of the homeland.

**Local Community**

“I have huge respect for the thousands of people who have sacrificed their lives or are spending their lives in prison for this land. It makes me proud. All of us still alive and living here owe them a lot.”

– Participant 2/42y/Female/Local

The first question for this part of the interview was about the Palestinian identity. All the participants stated assertively that they identified as Palestinian. As for what informed their Palestinian identity, the respondents mentioned the cultural diversity, the heritage, and a love for the homeland as being key to informing their Palestinian identity. 80% of the participants mentioned the Palestinian struggle as being an important part of their identity.

“One thing that informs my identity is our struggle with the occupation, it has affected all parts of our life including our personalities. If you’re struggling more than usual, then you’re a Palestinian.” – Participant 10/ 23y/Female/Local

When asked what Palestine represented to them the most often used word was ‘home’ or ‘homeland’ with 90% of the participants using them to describe Palestine. One participant spoke of the Palestinian struggle as being representative of Palestine to them. On whether they made any efforts on their own to understand the history of the conflict, all the participants stated they did. One of the participants stated that his
motivation to educate himself more about the conflict emerged from its direct impact on his life:

“There weren’t many libraries or the internet while I was growing up. But after I started my university I wanted to do more, especially after experiencing the last two wars. I wanted to learn more so I could tell others about what is going on here.” – Participant 5/25y/Male/Local

Lastly, when the participants were asked if there were memories of the conflict that were shared within their family and the Palestinian community at large, all of them answered in the affirmative. One of the participants shared a story often told by his grandfather:

“One day when my grandfather was working in Haifa, he saw a very old home and found out that the old home was actually his friend’s home who had become a refugee and was living in Gaza. Everyday when he returned from work, he told his friend what he saw. His friend would ask him about the olive tree growing on that land and the swing that was inside the home. So my grandfather became a link between his friend and his friend’s land.” – Participant 5/25y/Male/Local

An interesting observation regarding this question was that many participants mentioned initiatives in Palestine where the first generation, which experienced the ‘Nakba’ in 1948 and were internally displaced, was recording their oral histories to educate the future generations about the conflict. And this was a source for many of the participants to learn about the personal histories of Palestinians first forced out of their homes by Israeli forces. One of the participants in this study was actually working towards creating an archive of the oral history of the ‘Nakba’.

Therefore, overall the participants from the local community displayed a high level of symbolic attachment to the homeland despite living there. They showed an idealized conception of the homeland, worked hard towards understanding the history of the conflict and grew up listening about the traumatic memories of the conflict, that their predecessors experienced.
Part II - Experiencing the conflict from a distance

Under this part of the causal mechanism the participants were asked questions about whether they stayed updated with the developments in the region or not. They were also asked to share their views about the ‘Right of return’, the recent decision by United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the role of UNRWA for the Palestinian community. Below I present an analysis of the findings for each of the two communities I interviewed.

Diaspora Community

“It was the stupidest thing I ever heard. Jerusalem should be shared. I would say that they can have Tel Aviv as their capital and we can have Jerusalem, but they’re never going to let go of Jerusalem, so I think we can share it.”

– Participant 9/42y/Female/Diaspora

When asked whether they stayed regularly updated with the political developments in the region, 80% of the participants said that they did. One participant said that she did not have the time to stay regularly updated with the news in that region anymore, but that she used to do so when she was younger. Another participant said that he did not like to read much news from there anymore because it makes him angry.

As for the source of the information and news about the region, the same 80% stated that they used digital media frequently to stay up to date about what was happening in the Israeli-Palestinian region. When asked to share their views about the ‘Right of return’ for Palestinians, all the participants stated that it was the most important right for the Palestinians. 40% of the participants stated that the ‘Right of return’ is integral to any solution to the conflict.

“Palestinians should be allowed to return if they wanted to. It’s their home. I don’t think that someone who left Palestine would want to return to it in the state that it is today. So it is important for things to change and for Palestinians to have the option to go back to their original villages/towns.”

– Participant 4/20/Female/Diaspora
Interestingly though 20% of the participants displayed a practical approach to the ‘Right to return’ by being open to the possibility of it not becoming a reality. While agreeing that it is an important right for the Palestinians they also showed skepticism towards it realistically being achieved. One of the participants said that she didn’t see Israel ever agreeing to this because then there will be more Muslims than Jews in Israel. And the other participant called for Palestinians living outside the borders to consider giving up that demand:

“I think that it’s important but I also know that it is impossible. In order to bring peace we have to stand back from that demand because I don’t see how it will be possible.. there isn’t enough space.” - Participant 9/42y/Female/Diaspora

On the recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by United States, not surprisingly all the participants were critical of the decision and the US. But what is important to note is that only one participant, i.e. 10% of the participants stated that this decision threatened the peace process. Some participants viewed the decision as a threat to the Palestinian identity:

“This is just another way to give everything to Israel and just delete the Palestinians. Not all the Jews but the orthodox Jews speak about the land as if there was nobody else there. They don’t even try to see that there were people living there even before the state of Israel was created and I think the US is just helping them.” – Participant 6/32y/Female/Diaspora

When asked about their views about UNRWA’s role for the Palestinian community 50% of the participants showed a positive attitude and appreciated the efforts of UNRWA and their help to the Palestinian community. One of the participants felt that UNRWA was intrinsically tied to the ‘Right of return’ for the Palestinians:

“It is very important for us Palestinians. If UNRWA disappears then our right to return would no longer exist. Its not about the aid, its about our right to return. They have the complete database of the Palestinian refugees, If it is dismantled, then there is no record of us.” – Participant 10/45y/Male/Diaspora
20% of the participants didn’t know about UNRWA and the other 30% showed skepticism towards the organization. One of the participants called UNRWA ‘weak’ and another participant stated that it was a way to not take the issue of resolving the conflict forward. One participant who was born in a refugee camp set up by UNRWA expressed his doubts about their role for the community:

“They do help but they don’t change anything politically. I grew up on their aid and I appreciate what they do but this can’t be the solution.” – Participant 3/37y/Male/Diaspora

An interesting observation to make is that none of the participants showed a lack of interest in the conflict in general and all of them had strong opinions about it. Lack of virtually experiencing the conflict by some of the participants did not prevent them from being emotionally invested in the issues affecting the homeland. Additionally, the response to the question about the ‘Right of return’ elicited some intriguing responses. Overall, the results show that the diaspora community does experience the conflict from a distance by staying regularly updated about the political developments in the homeland and being emotionally and psychologically invested in issues related to the conflict and the homeland that they one day hope to be able to have the option to return to.

Local Community

“It is a grave violation of International Law and a denial of our rights. This ridiculous decision by the Trump administration is a great example of the alliance between an ultra right-wing Israeli government and the most racist and right-wing American administration in decades.”

– Participant 3/26y/Male/Local

On the question of whether the participants stayed updated about the political developments in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, 100% of the participants answered in the affirmative. But what is noteworthy is that because it is an ongoing conflict that impacts people everyday in big or small ways, a lot of the participants mentioned that they didn’t have any other option in this regard.
“It’s not a relationship. We are the oppressed, we don’t have any other option but to stay updated since it impacts us so much.” – Participant 1/28y/Female/Local

When asked about the source of information used, 100% of the participants stated that digital media was a big part of their source of information. Though two participants questioned the reliability of the information they receive regarding the conflict and emphasized the need to triangulate information before sharing it with others:

“Most of the newspapers in Palestine are affiliated with some group or another and no one will give you the entire truth. That’s why I read all of them to understand the reality.” – Participant 4/23y/Male/Local

When asked about the ‘Right of return’ everyone agreed that it was an important right for the Palestinians. 40% of the participants stated that no solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine could ever happen without the Palestinians being guaranteed the right to return to their original villages and towns:

“If you offer a Palestinian a million dollars to give up their right to return they will refuse. Many people still have their keys of their original homes. This has been passed down to the younger generations. Even if you talk to children on the streets here, they will know so much about it and they will say that they will never give up their right to return.” – Participant 2/42/Female/Local

30% of the participants while stating that it is an important right also mentioned that it might not happen in reality. One of the participants, stated that even though it is an important right, she may accept if it wasn’t part of a peaceful solution to the conflict:

“If it’s a decision of the Palestinians that they agree it is alright to not have the right of return in a just solution to the conflict, then I would have no problem with it. Things change, generations go and generations come. If the Palestinians are involved and they agree then its alright, but imposing it on them and taking away their right to return, that’s not fair.” – Participant 8/39y/Female/Local
On the recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by United States, again all the participants disagreed with it and were critical of the US. But interestingly 40% of the participants viewed it as a threat to the peace process and questioned the credibility of the US as a good mediator for peace between the Israel and Palestine after this decision:

“It will be the worst mistake in history to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This could completely end any peace initiatives and even ignite another intifada. Trump is not only breaking longstanding international treaties by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. He is also proving that many years of negotiations between Abbas and Netanyahu (brokered by the United States) were a complete sham.” – Participant 10/23y/Female/Local

When asked about their views about UNRWA the participants were equally divided with 50% of them viewing the organization positively and the rest 50% viewing it with skepticism or simply negatively. The participants, who viewed it positively, spoke of the aid they had provided to the Palestinian refugees and the records they were maintaining of them so that they could one day return to their homeland, thereby signaling an intrinsic link between the organization and the ‘Right of return’ of the Palestinian refugees. UNRWA was viewed as a ‘trusted witness’ to the sufferings of the Palestinian people. However, some participants mentioned that there were doubts creeping in the Palestinian society towards the UNRWA in recent times. With this creeping doubt growing larger, many participants questioned the motives of the organization. One of the participants lay the blame of the miserable situation of Palestinians on UNRWA:

“UNRWA is the one who labeled us as refugees in the first place. I think what it does is maintain the status quo, and it is in the advantage of Israel. It gives us refugees some rice and beans and keeps us fed, just to keep us silent.”
– Participant 7/21y/Female/Local

It is important to note that amongst the local participants 50% of them are internally displaced refugees and that informs their views about issues such as the ‘Right of
return’ and the UNRWA. One local participant spoke of her desire to go back to her original village someday that she had heard so much about from her family:

“My grandfather used to tell me “maybe I’m old now and I might not see my village but you will see it”. And I think that I’m going to tell that to my kids too. It’s part of our consciousness that we have the right to return and sooner or later we’re going back.” – Participant 1/28y/Female/Local

Overall, the participants showed a high level of involvement and psychological investment in the issues related to their homeland despite physically experiencing its everyday consequences. Additionally, they unanimously used digital media to stay updated with and understand the developments taking place in the region within the context of the conflict.

**Part III - Framing the conflict in intangibles**

Under this part of the causal mechanism, participants were asked questions about the opposing party in the conflict, i.e. Israel and whether they had interacted with Israeli individuals or not. Then they were asked whether they thought the Palestinian identity was under threat or not and if they were part of any Palestinian organization. Lastly, they were asked about the political issues of the homeland to understand their level of investment in the politics of the homeland. Below I present an analysis of the findings for each of the two communities I interviewed.

**Diaspora Community**

“They stole the falafel. That’s a very strategic ethnic cleansing. They never say Palestinians.. the say Arabs. Media the world over picks up on that language and then people start calling us Arabs instead of Palestinians.”

– Participant 10/45y/Male/Diaspora

On being asked about their views about Israel and its people only 10% of the participants had a negative view about Israeli people despite interacting with them due to the history of the conflict between the two groups. 90% of the participants recognized the difference between the Israeli government and the citizens of Israel
while expressing their views. They recognized that the Israeli state’s actions aren’t always congruent with the views of the people of Israel:

“I think they also have the right to live in their country. It’s not the people of Israel that I object to, it’s the state terrorism that they conduct against our people. There are many Israeli’s who want peace and don’t like what’s going on”
– Participant 9/42y/Female/Diaspora

Regarding the people of Israel the participants wanted Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace together, having equal rights. Some of the participants recognized that there are activists in Israel who recognize the illegal actions of their government. Many of the participants had Jewish friends who supported the Palestinian cause and some others stated that they avoided talking only to those Israelis that were racists and Zionists.

“You have to make a big difference between the settlers and those who have always been living in Israel. The Jewish families who have always been living in Israel are for me Palestinians, now they just have a new government. The settlers are Zionists, it’s a complex structure. The settlers come from different parts of the world, they’re actually expatriates.” - Participant 10/45y/Male/Diaspora

Another participant recognized that many people in the diaspora community might have strong opinions about not interacting with Israelis but that was only harmful and she wanted to talk to more Israelis to understand their viewpoints. When asked whether they felt that the Palestinian identity was under threat, 70% of the participants felt that yes it was and the predominant reasons for this threat perception were the occupation of the Palestinian territories and cultural appropriation by Israel.

“Israel is trying to erase Palestine and it’s people by making us believe that the Palestinians don’t have a culture. For instance at the airport in Israel they sell the Palestinian Thobe as if they’re Israeli.” – Participant 6/32y/Female/Diaspora

The rest of the participants who felt that the Palestinian identity wasn’t under threat stated the reason to be the people of Palestine who were always working towards
keeping that identity alive, but they were worried about the identity surviving over time:

“The Palestinian refugees in Middle Eastern countries don’t have any other alternative. They’re keeping the identity alive. The 2nd generation continues to carry on the memories and the identity. But in 100 or 200 years that will have been undermined like with other people that have experienced the same thing as us.”
– Participant 3/37y/Male/Diaspora

According to the causal mechanism a high threat perception to the identity would result in a high level of engagement in debates about issues related to the homeland, participation in or building networks and being invested in the homeland politics. On whether they had engaged in debates with others about the conflict 90% of the participants stated they had, especially because many people around them did not know the reality of what was happening in Israel-Palestine and they felt it was their responsibility to create awareness whenever they came across such a person. Interestingly, one participant who did not want to engage in debates with others about the conflict cited the lack of awareness of the ground reality in Palestine as the reason:

“I don’t like talking about it because they never see what happens on the ground, the media coverage is not reflective of it either. I have been to Palestine, the people there live each day as if it is the last day of their lives.”
– Participant 7/35y/Male/Diaspora

On whether they were part of a Palestinian organization (cultural, social, political or otherwise) only 20% of the participants said that they were. One participant had recently joined a political party support group and another participant was the founder of a business network for Palestinians around the world. From the remaining 80% some were members of cultural and social organizations in the past but not anymore due to lack of time. When asked about the current political factionalism in Palestine 40% of the participants felt that it was natural to have different political views but it was harming the greater Palestinian cause due to the absence of a united Palestinian political representation at the international level. 50% of the participants viewed the political factionalism negatively due to a lack of a united voice and the fact that political groups were corrupt and not really working in the interest of the Palestinians:
“I think its an outcome of the idea of dividing and conquering, while its natural to have differing political views in all countries and different ways of reaching your goal but what is sad is that sometimes we don’t have the goal in mind and that it tends to be more on a level that is not favorable to the cause. And that’s something that is Israel’s plan... to divide us, and sometimes they succeed. Its very sad.”
– Participant 2/ 36y/Female/Diaspora

Only 10% of the participants felt that there was nothing wrong about there being different political factions in Palestine. When asked whether they felt politically represented by any political party in Palestine 70% of the participants said that they did not and 30% said that they did. Lastly, 80% of the participants stated that they had never made a financial contribution to a political party in Palestine and only 20% said that they did. This is an indicator of a low level of involvement in homeland politics.

Overall, the diaspora community showed a relatively high level of threat perception to the Palestinian identity, which translated into 90% of the participants engaging in debates about the conflict with others. However, on all the other parameters such as viewing the opposing party (Israel and its people), building identity based networks and aligning with political parties and groups in the homeland, the participants showed a low level of involvement. In fact it was interesting to hear their nuanced responses about the Israelis. Most of them did not hold rigid views about the Israelis as a group and were open to interacting with them and talking to them about the ongoing conflict.

Local Community

“Our embroidered dress is shown in the media as an Israeli heritage and they adopt our traditional food as if it’s theirs. Our conflict is not only about borders but also about existence, Israel has a goal to vanish all Palestinians, otherwise it wouldn't be killing us every day.”

– Participant 10/23y/Female/Local
On being asked about their views about Israel and its people 10% of the participants refused to answer the question and another 10% had a negative view about Israeli people despite no interaction with them. A concern that was voiced by some of the participants who had not interacted with any Israelis was that the Israeli government had spies who pretended to be civilians and tried to get information from the Palestinian people. This was based on hearsay within the community. Other reasons that were mentioned were the blockade in Gaza, which made it difficult for them to talk to anyone outside that area and also the perceived prejudices of the people of Israel:

“I want to talk to them but there is no way to do so because in Gaza we are isolated. Actually they don’t talk to us because they believe that we will kill them and we are savages because we are Arabs.” – Participant 1/28y/Female/Local

Interaction with the people of Israel predominantly led to openness in the Palestinian participants towards having more conversations with them. 80% of the participants had either interacted with Israeli people or were open to interacting with them. They were of the opinion that there was a difference between the Israeli state and the people of Israel, whom they viewed mostly positively:

“I hate Israel but not its people. I think they’re guilty. They should not be in Palestine because it’s not their land. The newer generations were told lies so no one can blame them. But the older Israelis who first came here to Palestine were the ones who committed massacres against the Palestinians.” – Participant 4/ 23y/Male/Local

The participants recognized that there were Israelis who supported the Palestinian cause and many of the participants stated that they didn’t have any issues in living with the Jews because the conflict was not a religious one. On the question of whether they felt that the Palestinian identity was under threat, 80% of the participants felt that it was under threat due to the Israeli occupation and cultural appropriation and the remaining 20% felt that their identity was strong and growing, so it couldn’t be under threat:
“I believe that more groups across the world are in solidarity with the Palestinian cause (Black Lives Matter, Jewish Voice for Peace etc.). More people around the globe are being educated about Palestine and we see demonstrations across the world in solidarity with us. There is also a rise in literature which talks about the Palestinian cause and this is something I’m proud to be a part of.” – Participant 2/42y/Female/Local

According to the causal mechanism a high threat perception to the group identity would result in a high level of engagement in debates about issues related to the homeland, participation in or building networks and being invested in the homeland politics. 80% of the participants stated that they had engaged in debates about the conflict with others. Again 80% of the participants were part of a Palestinian organization whereas the remaining 20% were part of cultural organizations in the past. Regarding political factionalism, 20% of the participants felt that it was natural to have different political views especially in response to the Israeli occupation, which required multiple approaches to be tackled. 40% of the participants were of the opinion that this factionalism was harming the greater Palestinian cause, the different factions were corrupt and under the influence of foreign powers:

“Majority of Palestinians just don’t care about these politicians anymore. They are the ones who have the money and they are destroying everything while they’re fighting amongst themselves and those with less money can only watch on the sidelines.” – Participant 8/39y/Female/Local

A noteworthy aspect here is that many participants talked about the youth in Palestine not feeling represented by the current leadership. Many of the participants were supporters of the Boycott Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement as it came closest to representing their voices, even though the movement didn’t aim at providing a political solution to the conflict. This leads us to the next question about political representation and not surprisingly 80% of the participants did not feel represented by any political party in Palestine. The other 20% stated that while they don’t fully agree with any one political party but if they had to choose, they could side with a political party. However, not a single participant had ever made a financial
contribution to any of the political parties. With some stating that they would never do so.

Overall, the local community showed a high level of threat perception to the Palestinian identity, which translated into 80% of the participants engaging in debates about the conflict with others and being part of a Palestinian organization. Again the local community showed a high level of understanding towards the opposing party and was open to interacting with and coexisting with them. When it came to the politics of the homeland a lot of them expressed disappointment and the youth especially felt a lack of political representation, a gap that was being filled by the BDS movement for the moment.

**Dependent Variable – Attitudes towards peace deals**

The dependent variable in this research tries to understand whether the communities have a positive or a negative attitude towards the peace deal for the homeland conflict, which has been operationalized as the two-state solution. The participants were asked their views about the Oslo Accords, the two-state solution and possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Below I present an analysis of the findings for each of the two communities I interviewed.

**Diaspora Community**

“The two-state solution will not work in the long term as the issues will not get truly resolved. If you want to end the conflict then you have to sit at the table and eat dinner together.”

– Participant 10/45y/Male/Diaspora

When asked about their views about the Oslo Accords signed between Israel and Palestine, 60% of the participants viewed it unfavorably because in their opinion the Palestinian leadership was pushed into signing an unfair agreement, the situation only got worse for the Palestinians and they lost more land despite the signing of the first agreement in 1993:
“The Oslo Accords were devastating, because that gave Israel the green light to expand the settlements and take away the rights of the Palestinians. They created the PA as a right hand to the occupier, the right to return was compromised and I think it was in a time when they thought they did well but they took decisions both by force and not well thought through because the outcomes were devastating.”

– Participant 2/36y/Female/Diaspora

The remaining 40% stated that it was good that an attempt towards peace was made even though it failed:

“In the beginning I thought it was good that they even talked to each other. That they could sit at the table and talk about the issues but I mean that’s the past now. Israel is breaching the agreement all the time.”- Participant 9/ 42y/Female/Diaspora

On possible solutions to the conflict the participants predominantly talked about one Palestinian state where everyone has equal rights and people from different faiths co-exist peacefully:

“I want a solution where Palestinians can live and build their future with freedom in their Palestinian homeland. Its my dream and what I’m longing for.”

– Participant 1/35y/Male/Diaspora

Other sentiments echoed a need for creating hope for the Palestinian youth to prevent them from succumbing to extremism and a need for international mediation by the European Union; since United States had lost their credibility as an impartial mediator, in light of their decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in violation of international law and the terms of agreement of the two-state solution plan.

Lastly, when asked whether they thought the two-state solution was a feasible solution and whether they would vote in favor of it or not, the responses became complicated. To begin with 30% of the participants said that they didn’t find it to be a feasible solution anymore and would not vote in favor of it primarily due to the growing Israeli settlements that were encroaching on Palestinian land till date. A
participant also mentioned that she wasn’t in favor of the two-state solution because that would imply that the people in the region couldn’t co-exist peacefully:

“When we talk about the two-state solution we are saying that human beings can’t live together and make peace.” – Participant 2/36y/Female/Diaspora

Another 40% said that they would vote in favor of the two-state solution even though they preferred a one-state solution. The reasons for this were – if Palestinians who were forced out were allowed to return under the agreement then it could work, if the local Palestinians agreed to and wanted the two-state solution, and because it could be the first step towards a state where everyone could co-exist and live together eventually i.e. the first step towards one-state. The remaining 30% of the participants said that they would vote in favor of the two-state solution because they felt it was a good solution. The reason was that Israeli’s would never treat the Palestinians as equals and because with a two-state solution the Palestinians can maintain their identity, which they’re very proud of:

“We have a very strong national identity and we’re very proud to be Palestinians so I don’t think a one-state solution would work. I think there’s too much pride.” – Participant 4/20y/Female/Diaspora

Therefore, while we can conclude that 70% of the participants from the diaspora community have a positive attitude towards the two-state solution, we have to treat this finding with caution.

Local Community

“We can’t have full justice and I believe that we as a people who are fighting for our equality, freedom and justice should not support the crushing of another community even if they were part of the community which live above our house.”

- Participant 3/26y/Male/Local

When asked for their views about the Oslo Accords, 70% of the participants viewed it unfavorably. The reasons for this were that the accords only brought devastation and
bloodshed to the Palestinians, they terms of the accords were lopsided and gave more rights to Israel, they compromised on the right to return for Palestinians forced out of the region due to the conflict and lastly because Israel continued building settlements even after signing of the accords:

“It is the second Nakba in our history. The Palestinian leadership at that time, which happens to be the same until now, accepted the right of Israel to exist without implementing the rights of the Palestinian people. We can see how the Israeli settlements and illegal occupation has only strengthened since the accords. It didn’t even give us the UN stipulated rights. It followed the Israeli and American interests and ignored the Palestinian interests. It benefitted some of the political and economic elites in Palestine. So I don’t agree with the accords at all.”
– Participant 3/26y/Male/Local

When asked about possible solutions to the conflict the participants (similar to the diaspora community) predominantly talked about the one-state solution where Jews, Muslims and Christians would live together in historical Palestine with equal rights. Many of them emphasized the need for equal rights for Jews and Arabs; and an acceptance of each other. The right to return for the Palestinians was also a recurring theme in a possible solution to the conflict. Lastly, when asked about the two-state solution and it’s feasibility as a solution to the conflict, 90% of the participants refused to accept it as a solution.

“It will never happen according to me. I don’t support it. I want to have our land as it was before 1948 because it is our right. The Israelis are welcome to stay if they won’t cause any problems. We have Palestinian Jews as well; Jews, Christians and Muslims always lived together in Palestine historically. It was the mosaic land. But the Zionist regime has to collapse, they are war criminals.” – Participant 1/28y/Female/Local

The most predominant reason for this was that the two-state solution was viewed as a compromise on the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Other factors that informed this view was that the participants didn’t want to give up a part of their country, the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by United States had
rendered the two-state solution as dead and the separation of Gaza and West Bank had made it impossible to make a country out of the two regions:

“It’s not a feasible solution because there is no clarity on the borders. The West Bank is divided into multiple parts and it is separated from Gaza. We cannot have a country in parts. Especially after Trump’s decision, this solution is dead.”
– Participant 4/23y/Male/Local

Additionally, the one participant who stated that he would vote in favor of the two-state solution still felt that it wasn’t the best solution and he would prefer a one-state solution. Therefore, we can conclude that 90% of the participants in the local community did not support the two-state solution and treat this finding with caution.

5.3 Comparative Analysis

“I think for me because I’m a Swedish citizen now, I feel very privileged. First of all we need a Palestinian state, then the refugees living in the countries nearby need their right to return and then people like me should come in the third place because we are in a good situation.”

- Participant 6/32y/Female/Diaspora

This section presents a comparison of the local and diaspora communities within the Palestinian community. I will compare the findings presented above in relation to the causal mechanism, examining the variations, if any observed and thereafter the implications for the theory that is being tested through this research. First, the comparison will be on the theorized consequences of conflict-generated migration - ‘Symbolic attachment towards the homeland’, ‘Experiencing the conflict from a distance’ and ‘Framing the conflict in intangibles’ of both the communities towards an attempt to assess if there is a variation on these aspects as predicted by the theory. Then a comparison will be made on the attitudes towards the two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to understand whether a conflict-generated diaspora is less likely than the local community to support peace deals for homeland conflicts. Additional observations related to the argument and alternative explanations that can account for variation in the attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts will
also be presented. Lastly, I will critically discuss the findings of the research with respect to the research design.

**Causal Mechanism**

The causal mechanism refers to the theorized consequences of becoming a conflict-generated diaspora. Based on the theory, it is these consequences that affect the attitudes of diaspora communities towards peace deals for homeland conflicts. A high variation on significant indicators between the two communities can lead to conclusions regarding the role of conflict-generated migration in shaping the attitudes of the diaspora community.

*Symbolic attachment to the homeland* - According to the theory, conflict-generated migration leads to a high level of symbolic attachment to the homeland. Based on the findings of the research the diaspora community displayed a high level of attachment to the homeland – firstly, all of them identified as proud Palestinians. Secondly, the Palestinian struggle for right to self-determination was a predominant factor in informing their identities, which shows how conflict-generated migration has deeply affected the diaspora community. Comparatively, 80% of the participants from the local community mentioned the Palestinian struggle as informing their identity. On whether they made efforts on their own to understand the history of the conflict, 90% of the participants from the diaspora community said they did, as opposed to 100% in the local community. Lastly, on whether memories of the conflict were shared within their families and community or not, unanimously all the participants in both the communities answered in the affirmative.

Traumatic myths and war memories form an important part of the experience and identity-formation of a conflict-generated diaspora (Terrence Lyons 2006, 2007). In the case of the Palestinian community, their collective memories can “include the direct experience and retelling of memories of Palestine before the war, of flight, and of dispossession” (Bowker 2003, 87). The participants in both the communities talked about the war memories they grew up hearing from their parents and/or grandparents:
I think everybody shared the history of when they had to leave Palestine. My grandfather and his brothers went to Lebanon by foot thinking that they can return in a month, but it was the big lie of their life.” – Participant 6/32y/Female/Diaspora

Additionally, in the local community many participants talked about the efforts that were being made to record the oral histories of the first generation that experienced the ‘Nakba’ so that their stories can be passed down to the future generations. The local participants also talked about story telling sessions organized within their communities in Palestine where the first generation shared their war memories with the younger generations. Therefore, a concerted effort has been made in the Palestinian community to preserve traumatic myths and war memories. This finding lends support to the following statement by Schulz regarding the Palestinian community, “in exile, homeland takes on new and specific meanings in composing grounds for community, solidarity and in narrating identity” (Schulz 2003)

The objective of this comparison was to understand the role of conflict-generated migration in developing a ‘symbolic attachment towards the homeland’. The research showed that there wasn’t any significant variation between the two communities under this part of the causal mechanism and both the communities displayed a high level of symbolic attachment to the Palestinian homeland. Therefore, based on my research ‘symbolic attachment to the homeland’ may be attributed to conflict-generated migration but not exclusively.

*Experience the conflict from a distance* - According to the theory, diaspora communities should display a high level of psychological investment in the homeland conflict, especially since they’re physically removed from the actual conflict. They are no longer witnesses to the everyday consequences of an ongoing conflict and they experience the conflict only virtually (through the use of digital media) because of which, they develop differing views from the local community on issues related to the conflict.

What was observed was that despite the difference in experiencing the real conflict, both the groups were actively using digital media to stay updated about the conflict. As a matter of fact, the local population was more updated about events in the region.
because they experienced the direct consequences of those developments. To explain this further, I would say that the use of digital media is ubiquitous in today’s day and age. In that context, it depends whether a member of diaspora community chooses to stay updated with the development in the homeland conflict or not. In my research it was found that 20% of the participants in the diaspora no longer used digital media to stay updated about the developments in the homeland - due to lack of time and because it made them angry. But this cannot be the sole indicator of a community’s investment in the homeland.

When it came to the issues concerning the homeland and the conflict, the local population showed a slightly higher level of psychological investment. The first such issue discussed under this part of the causal mechanism was the ‘right of return’ of Palestinian refugees. The ‘right of return’ has been a key issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This right is integral to the Palestinians that were forced to leave their country in the ‘Nakba’ or mass exodus in 1948. “Some five million Palestinian refugees seek recognition of their right to return to homes, now in Israel, from which their families fled or were expelled between 1948 and 1950, and Palestinian negotiators have been unwilling to forswear that right.” (Dajani 2016, 366). This right has been guaranteed to the Palestinians by international law through the United Nations general Assembly Resolution 194 (United Nations 1948).

This issue gets complicated because the state of Israel was formed on these territories and a return of the Palestinian refugees would mean a return to their original towns and villages where Israeli citizens are currently settled. The Palestinians ‘right of return’ is therefore in opposition to the Israeli demand that “Palestinians recognize Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people” (Abdel-Nour 2015). Within this context it is important to understand the Palestinian community’s stand on this issue today. Based on my research, 40% of participants in both the communities (local and diaspora) mentioned that the ‘right of return’ was essential to any solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, 20% of the participants in the diaspora community and 30% of those in the local community showed a certain level of acceptance of the fact that this right may not be granted fully to the Palestinian community in case of a negotiated peaceful solution to the conflict. However, there
wasn’t a single participant in either of the communities who didn’t know about the ‘right of return’ or felt that it wasn’t important for them.

On the role of the UNRWA for the Palestinian community, the participants were divided. My research found support for the following statement - “UNRWA’s close proximity to Palestinian refugee society has lent itself to controversial and contradictory assessments” (Al Husseini 2010). Based on the research, within the local community 50% of the participants held a positive view and the rest 50% held a skeptical or a negative view of UNRWA. The positive view came from the fact that UNRWA had provided aid to a lot of the refugees, including some of the participants, without which they wouldn’t have survived. Additionally, UNRWA was viewed as a trusted witness and record-keeper of the suffering of the Palestinian refugees.

Interestingly, it was this view of UNRWA as a witness and record-keeper of the Palestinian refugee’s suffering that also informed the negative view about it. The participants viewed UNRWA as an extension of the UN and the fact that no international resolution had been reached regarding the conflict in general and more specifically about the refugees ‘right of return’ was blamed on UNRWA. So much so some of the participants felt that UNRWA was responsible for the current miserable situation of the Palestinian refugees. Within the diaspora community, 50% of the participants viewed it favorably for much the same reasons as the local community. 20% of the participants didn’t know about UNRWA and the other 30% showed skepticism towards the organization. Therefore, it shows that UNRWA has been struggling to “manage the evolving expectations of its various stakeholders while maintaining its status as a nonpolitical humanitarian institution” (Al Husseini 2010).

Moving on to the recent major development in the region – the decision by United Sates to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. From the local community 40% and from the diaspora community 10% of the participants felt that it would endanger the peace talks between Israel and Palestine. Two interesting observations that emerged from this question are – the credibility of US as a negotiator in the peace talks between Israel and Palestine was questioned by many participants in the local and diaspora community, because US was no longer viewed to be impartial. Secondly, this decision was viewed as the threat to the Palestinian identity by 20% of
the participants from the diaspora community, which can be viewed as a threat perception for their group identity.

To sum it up, for this part of the causal mechanism, broadly the main indicators were experiencing the conflict digitally and being psychologically involved in the issues of the homeland. Regarding the digital experience of the conflict, the local community was using digital media more than the diaspora community to stay updated with regular events regarding the homeland and the conflict because it was circumstantially necessitated. Secondly, participants from both the communities displayed a psychological investment in the homeland issues. A slight variation was observed regarding the question on UNRWA, where 20% of the participants in the diaspora community didn’t know much about UNRWA. The objective of this comparison was to understand the role of conflict-generated migration in leading to the diaspora community experiencing the conflict from a distance. My research showed that there wasn’t a high variation on significant indicators between the two communities under this part of the causal mechanism, therefore it can be concluded that ‘experiencing the conflict from a distance’ can be attributed to conflict-generated migration but not exclusively.

_Framing the conflict in intangibles_ – According to the theory, experiencing the conflict from a distance results in the diaspora community viewing the conflict based on issues of identity and grievances, at a higher level than the local community. A threat perception to the group identity can be found in diaspora groups which will lead them to take steps for identity preservation such as joining organizations revolving around their homeland identity and getting involved in homeland politics by aligning with political parties and supporting them financially.

The first question in this section asked the participants their views about the people of Israel, as it is the opposing party in the conflict. Only 10% of the participants in both the groups had a negative perception of the Israeli people. Majority of the participants were open to interacting with Israeli’s and having conversations with them with the purpose of being able to understand each other’s perspective. They consciously separated the Israeli state from its people and stated that they had issues with the state and the people who supported the illegal actions of their government. However, there
was recognition of the fact that there were Israeli citizens who supported the Palestinians and their right to self-determination but many of them could not speak up because of their government.

Therefore, a negative view of the opposing party that could contribute to a threat perception towards one’s identity was not present at a significant level in either of the communities. An interesting observation that I made was that interaction with the opposing party helps in diluting prejudices and stereotypes. Similar sentiments were echoed in a study conducted on inter-group interactions in post-conflict Kosovo by Mironova and Whitt who found that proximity can increase empathy towards former adversaries (Mironova and Whitt 2014). While the conflict is still ongoing in this case, this finding still holds true.

Next, on the question about the Palestinian identity being under threat, 80% of the local community and 80% of the diaspora community felt that the Palestinian identity was under threat. A threat perception of one’s group identity can lead to formation of networks and organizations revolving around that identity, in this case the Palestinian identity. While 80% of the participants from the local community and only 20% of the participants from the diaspora community were members of such organizations. This is a significant variation, and contradicts the relationship between threat perception of group identity and formation of groups and networks for the diaspora community. However, many of the participants in the diaspora community mentioned that they were members of such organizations earlier but no longer had the time to do so.

Regarding psychological investment and ideological involvement in homeland politics, I would like to mention two noteworthy findings. Firstly, many participants viewed the political factionalism present in Palestine unfavorably. The geographic and political separation of West Bank and Gaza has been detrimental to Palestine and has caused a crisis of legitimacy (Albasoos 2016). This was echoed in my research, where the current political factionalism was considered as harming the Palestinian struggle for self-determination by 40% of the local community and 50% of the diaspora community participants. Secondly, this translates into the youth of Palestine and the Palestinian community in general, not feeling represented by the political parties (Cammack, Brown, and Muasher 2017), with 80% of the participants in the
local community and 70% of the participants in the diaspora community stating that they do not feel politically represented by any political party in Palestine.

In this part of the causal mechanism, the indicators were a threat perception to the group identity, building networks and getting involved in homeland politics. There was a significant variation between the two communities only with regards to building networks. But this cannot be the only indicator to reach a conclusion. As a whole for ‘Framing the conflict in intangibles’ both the communities scored high on the indicators, thereby informing the conclusion that conflict-generated migration can lead to ‘framing the conflict in intangibles’ but its not the only factor to do so.

**Dependent Variable – Attitudes towards peace deals**

Analyzing the causal mechanism leads us to the dependent variable where I attempt to understand and analyze the attitudes of the diaspora communities towards the two-state solution based on the theoretical framework. According to the theory, a community that experiences the consequences of conflict-generated migration is less likely to support peace deals for homeland conflicts. Looking at the above findings, both the communities (local and diaspora) displayed the indicators for ‘symbolic attachment towards the homeland’, ‘experiencing the conflict from a distance’ and ‘framing the conflict in intangibles’. This means that both the communities are less likely to support the two-state solution.

However, findings from my research show that 90% of the local community members and 30% of the diaspora community members have a negative attitude towards the two-state solution. To understand the nuances behind this finding, I will list out the major reasons for why the participants did not support the two-state solution. For the diaspora community, there were two predominant concerns that the participants voiced. First, the Israeli occupation and the growing Israeli settlements in the years following the Oslo Accords have made a realistic two-state solution difficult for them to visualize. Secondly, the participants talked about Palestine being geographically divided into two parts i.e. West Bank and Gaza, which makes creating a state practically impossible:
“Give them hope.. all these young suicide bombers in Palestine don’t have hope. They don’t see a solution. If you start building up the infrastructure in West Bank.. that’s impossible now because of all the settlements. If they would have got this piece of land free of settlers, free of Israeli involvement, free of checkpoints, free of this big wall that they have built.. then we might have had a chance. If we had the same infrastructure as Israel with jobs, schools, working roads.. then we could talk about peace.” – Participant 9/42y/Female/Diaspora

The local community also viewed the increasing Israeli settlements and the geographical separation of West Bank and Gaza as reasons for why they don’t support the two-state solution (Cammack, Brown, and Muasher 2017). One other reason was mentioned by most of the participants i.e. a two-state solution would compromise on the ‘right of return’ of Palestinian refugees.

Therefore, one can conclude that to make the two-state solution more viable for the diaspora community, the occupation must end, Gaza’s economy and infrastructure must be developed, the settlements must stop and the areas between West Bank and Gaza should be developed and connected. In addition to that, to make the solution viable for the local community would require reaching a consensus and an action plan on how make the ‘right of return’ feasible within the two-state solution framework.

Moving beyond the case-study, it is important to analyze the implications of these findings for the theory that I set out to test. The empirical findings from my research do not lend support to the hypothesis - Diaspora communities are less likely than local communities to support peace deals for homeland conflicts. Rather, based on my research, the opposite was found to be true, i.e. diaspora communities in this particular case are more likely than local communities to support the peace deal in question. For the theoretical framework on diasporas as peace-breakers, this means that conflict generated diaspora communities don’t necessarily have a negative attitude towards peace deals despite experiencing the consequences of forced migration due to the conflict.

In previous research, scholars have talked about how difficult positions on homeland conflicts by diaspora groups can result in ‘prolonging and protracting conflicts’
(Terrence Lyons 2006, 2007). However, my research lends support to the potential of diasporas to become peace-makers. The main argument of scholars supporting the potential of diasporas to become peace-makers is that a position open to dialogue and negotiations by the diaspora community can help in mobilizing support for reconciliation and peace initiatives (Demmers 2002; Baser and Swain 2008). My research shows an interesting area for further research, that is, what conditions make conflict-generated diasporas peace-makers and not peace-breakers. Based on the theoretical framework, the Palestinian community in Sweden displayed all the indicators for the theorized consequences of becoming a conflict-generated diaspora, but they still found to have a predominantly positive attitude towards the two-state solution. I will try to list some potential alternative explanations below to understand the reasons to problematize my findings and explore them further. First, I will talk about additional observations I made during the course of my research but were beyond the scope of this paper.

5.4 Additional observations
The empirical examination of the two communities revealed an additional finding that was beyond the scope of this paper. During the course of conducting the interviews a few participants stated that they do not recognize the situation between Israel and Palestine as a conflict, rather they would describe it as ‘settler colonialism’ and ‘apartheid occupation’. Further examination of academic literature related to this revealed that a comparison between Israel and South Africa (when it was an apartheid state) has been present for some time (Peteet 2016). “The application of the term apartheid, meaning state-sponsored ‘separateness’ of ‘races’, is consistent with the racial contract framework, and draws attention to the exclusionary and violent character of the Israeli Zionist project regarding the indigenous Palestinian population” (B. Bakan and Abu-Laban 2010, 332).

This ties in to the observation that many participants talked about a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using South Africa as an example of post-conflict reconciliation and co-existence. The idea of a one-state solution gained ground after the failure of the Oslo Accords (Farsakh 2011) and its support is grounded in the diminishing feasibility of the two-state solution in light of increasing illegal Israeli settlements (Ghanem and A. Bavly 2016). It is important to explore this further
because in my research, both the communities predominantly favored the one-state solution. 70% in the diaspora community and 100% of the participants in the local community stated that the one-state solution was their preferred solution to the conflict. Even though a one-state solution has not been the basis of the peace talks between Israel and Palestine, the fact that not much has progressed in favor of the two-state solution since the Oslo Accords in 1993, might create room for a new approach to achieve peace in the region.

5.5 Alternative Explanations
The findings of this study show that despite experiencing the theorized consequences of conflict-generated migration, diaspora community doesn’t necessarily have negative attitudes towards peace deals for homeland conflicts as opposed to the local community under study, which did not view the peace deal favorably. It is important to further challenge these findings by examining the alternative explanations that can account for this variation in the outcome.

i. Host society – The role of the host society can be significant in shaping the attitudes of diaspora communities towards their homeland. Integration becomes a key factor in this discussion. A diaspora group that feels integrated within their host society is likely to have a different attitude than a diaspora community that is struggling to integrate in their host country (Shain 2002). In my research, many participants from the diaspora community talked about how Palestinian refugees in the countries of the Middle East are struggling and it is important to address their needs before the Palestinian diasporas settled and integrated in developed Western nations. For example, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are in some of the worst conditions within the Palestinian diaspora, “they refer to themselves as the ‘the forgotten people’ because they live in an hostile environment” (Roberts 2010).

Palestinians living in Lebanon for generations have not been given equal rights as Lebanese citizens, they are barred from many professions, do not have access to a lot of public services and they are still treated as foreigners (Roberts 2010; Schulz 2003). It is quite likely that their views towards the two-state solution would differ as compared to the Palestinian diaspora in
Sweden. This can also lead us to conclude that conflict-generated diaspora groups who are well integrated in their host countries can play a positive role in ending homeland conflicts. Baser and Swain have explored the role of integration of diasporas in the host society in their work. They state, “hostland’s active encouragement and support to the moderate factions can possibly alter the diaspora community from one of conflict promoting to peacemaking” (Baser and Swain 2008). Therefore, the Palestinian diaspora in Sweden has the potential to become an important mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

ii. **Complicated local-diaspora dichotomy** – It is difficult to categorize the Palestinian community as locals and the diaspora. As mentioned earlier, the issue of internal displacement within Palestine complicates matters with the Palestinian community. Many Palestinians living in Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem are registered as refugees with UNRWA. Many studies indicate that the refugees living in Palestine are longing to go back to their original villages, which they refer to as home (Hamzeh 2001). My research corroborates this finding, as it was a matter of pride for many participants to talk about the villages their families were forcibly removed from during the ‘nakba’ and they longed to go back to the original villages someday.

In her study on the Palestinian community, Schulz notes that “locality, the specific village of one’s parents, is still how one defines oneself in terms of origin” (2003, 97). In my research, out of the ten local Palestinians that I interviewed, five identified themselves as refugees due to internal displacement; therefore 50% of the local participants were refugees in this study. Additionally, some of the participants were born outside of Palestine and moved back there some years later, as their families were forcibly removed due to the conflict. Therefore, the participants within the local community can be treated as conflict-generated diaspora in the sense that their families were forced to leave their homes due to a conflict. This explains why the local community showed a high level on almost all the significant indicators for the theorized consequences of conflict-generated migration.
Critical Reflections

In this section I will reflect on some of the limitations of my research. The most predominant limitation is the generalizability of the findings of this study. Qualitative methods are “more conducive to exploratory analysis and inductive theorizing” (Powner 2015, 99) but they can bring the generalizability of the findings into question. First, this study draws its conclusions from data on the Palestinian community that has been affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The case was selected as a typical example of a conflict that led to the creation of a conflict-generated diaspora. Therefore, the findings are primarily generalizable to conflict-generated diasporas. Secondly, the study covered a small sample of the communities studied, i.e. 20 people. This cannot be treated as a representative sample of the community without some caution. The generalizability of this study would improve infinitely by including more participants in the study. Thirdly, the local participants in this study were primarily from Gaza. Within the scope of this study and the limited time I could only reach out to participants living in Gaza. However, inclusion of participants in this study from the West Bank could improve the representation of the local Palestinian community significantly.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to contribute to the literature on diasporas by testing the diasporas as peace-breakers theoretical framework and to conduct a detailed case-study, to analyze the role of diasporas in homeland conflicts. In this, the study has been successful. A qualitative study of the Palestinian community through a structured and focused comparison revealed that conflict-generated diasporas are not necessarily peace-breakers. While the hypothesis posited in this study did not find empirical support, it highlighted other important findings. The Palestinian diaspora in Sweden indicated a higher level of positive attitude towards the two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as compared to the local Palestinians. This finding is important for two reasons. First, it makes a strong case for not labeling diasporas as peace-breakers, and to work towards harnessing their potential to become peace-makers in homeland conflicts. If a diaspora community is integrated in the host society, distance from the homeland conflict, can help them look at the events back home more objectively (Shain 2002) and play the role of mediators with the added
advantage of extensive knowledge of the homeland community (Baser and Swain 2008). Since not many studies have been done on the Palestinian diaspora in Western nations (Shiblak 2005) this study certainly opens up new avenues. This is significant, especially in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where the Palestinian diaspora integrated well in their host societies have the potential to play a positive role, facilitating the peace process.

Secondly, it is important to recognize that no peace process can be successful without including the people who are affected by the conflict. The importance of inclusive peace processes for durability of peace agreements (Nilsson 2012) has been discussed often within the field of Peace and Conflict studies. The empirical findings of my research show that the local community in Palestine is not happy with the option on the table, i.e. the two-state solution, primarily because of the inability of the agreement so far to effectively address the ‘right of return’ of the Palestinian refugees. This calls for either working with the people to make the two-state solution more viable to them by incorporating their concerns in the agreement or finding an alternative solution, which is more appealing to the people. A successful peace process “needs to give all groups in a society the opportunity to be heard and to have their concerns addressed” (Rausch and Luu 2017). Here the role of the Palestinian diaspora can be crucial because if a diaspora group takes “a position that supports the leaders and movements seeking peace, then an important factor that makes conflicts more difficult to resolve can be reduced” (Terrence Lyons 2006, 123). Diaspora groups can be an effective conduit between the local community and the international community to build consensus for a peace deal that is acceptable to the people in the homeland.

**Future research**

While the sample of my study was too small to draw a generalization about the community, it certainly creates space to further explore the Palestinian case study specifically and it contributes to the literature on diaspora by problematizing the diasporas as peace-breakers theoretical framework. By showing that conflict-generated diasporas don’t always take difficult positions towards peace deals for homeland conflicts, this study makes a strong case for future research to explore how and why diasporas become peace-makers.
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8. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

Participant Information
Name (initials) –
Gender -
Age –
Nationality –
Education –
Professional background and employment -

Section 3 – Mid-interview

Part 1
Q. Has your family always lived in Palestine/Sweden or did they have to move there at some point?
Q. If there was migration, when and why did it happen?

Part 2
Q. Would you identify yourself as a Palestinian? What informs that identity for you?
Q. What does Palestine represent to you?
Q. Have you made any efforts on your own to understand the history of the conflict?
Q. Are there memories of the conflict that were shared within your family and community?

Part 3
Q. Do you stay updated with the political developments in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship?
Q. How do you get your information?
Q. What are your thoughts about the ‘Right of Return’ for Palestinians?
Q. What are your thoughts on the recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by US?
Q. What are your thoughts on UNRWA’s role for the Palestinian community?
Part 4
Q. What do you think about Israel and its people? Have you ever interacted with Israelis?
Q. Do you think the Palestinian identity is under threat?
Q. Have you engaged in debates or discussions about the conflict? If yes, could you share some details about the instance(s)?
Q. Are you part of any organization (social, cultural or political) that works for Palestinian issues? What is your contribution as a member of said organization?
Q. What are your thoughts on the fact that there are multiple political factions representing Palestinian interests today?
Q. Do you feel politically represented by any political faction/party in Palestine?
Q. Do you make or have in the past made financial contributions to any Palestinian political party? (Answer only in yes or no)

Part 5
Q. What are your thoughts on the Oslo Accords?
Q. What are your thoughts on a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
Q. Do you think the two-state solution is a feasible option to resolve the conflict? Do you support it?

Section 4 – Closing the interview
Q. Would you like to add anything else?

Appendix 2 – List of Interviews

1. Diaspora Community – Sweden

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<th>Occupation</th>
<th>City</th>
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<td>Stockholm</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Occupation</td>
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2. Local Community – Palestine

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