

# Discourse, Culture, and Education in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



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# Introduction

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There can be no doubt that there are reciprocal relations between the discourse, culture, and education within Israeli and Palestinian societies and the state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The nature of these essential features in the socialization of both societies impacts and is impacted by the public awareness of the conflict. Despite the fact that the nature of a potential endgame to the conflict has become clearer to each society over the last decade, it would appear that each society has become more skeptical with respect to the possibility of achieving this peaceful resolution. The question of how the above mentioned socialization features contribute to this perception requires extensive study. Thus, the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue at Netanya Academic College came to the conclusion that there is a need to assemble an expert working group to analyze these trends in the relevant fields.

Early in 2013, we approached the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Israel office, with this concept, who showed great enthusiasm towards the initiative, providing essential cooperation, facilitation, and support for this project. Thus, we assembled a Palestinian-Israeli working group, comprised of eight researchers, who over the last number of months met for two seminars and produced the unique articles that comprise this edited volume.

The first topic examined was the nature of the political and media discourse in each society. Dr. Motti Neiger examines the way in which the Israeli media presents a collective vision of the future, coming to the conclusion that this vision is primarily characterized by fear. Mr. Ashraf Ajrami offers a survey of Palestinian political discourse over the last number of decades, presenting a unique perception of the interaction of the leadership-imposed discourse and "street" discourse. Mr. Elie Friedman analyzes the nature of recognition of the Palestinian Other within Israeli political discourse, and how this recognition or lack thereof impacts constitution of the Self.

The next topic that was tackled by the working group was that of peace education in the respective societies. Dr. Nedal Jayousi offers an examination of the state of the Palestinian education system, while presenting how questions of education for pluralistic and tolerant values are approached within the education system. Ms. Soli Vered presents a survey of the evolution and changing approaches of peace education in the Israeli education systems, offering a unique rationale for promoting peace education during periods characterized by conflict. Dr. Dalia Fadila's contribution to this publication analyzes the lack of identity-based content in the Arab education system in Israel, while offering an alternative approach towards identity education among the Arab pupils in Israel.

The final topic covered in this publication is that of the relationship between culture in each society and the conflict. Dr. John Ashley and Dr. Nedal Jayousi offer a joint article which analyzes how various central Palestinian cultural figures and intellectuals contribute to the Palestinian public awareness of the conflict. Finally, Dr. Yuval Benziman's contribution offers a unique examination of the way in which the narrative presented in fictional texts - films and novels - differs from that presented in official political narratives.

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It is our hope that the varied and original contributions that comprise this volume will offer new insights to policy makers, media professionals, educators, cultural figures, and the general publics in both societies. I would like to personally thank our dedicated research team for their efforts towards offering new insights on these important issues during our challenging and uncertain times.

Finally, I would like to thank the new team at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Israel office – Dr. Werner Puschra, Director, and Ms. Judith Stelmach, Project Manager, for their essential cooperation, input, and support throughout this project.

**Dr. Reuven Pedatzur**

Director

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# Fear or Hope? - The Israeli Media and the Future of Political Conflicts

Motti Neiger

The role of the media in political conflicts has been scrutinized in dozens of books and articles: portraying the parties in conflict, imposing the frames on the interpretation of events and drawing the boundaries of the "in group" and "out-group".

This paper attempts to go beyond previous research and to suggest that the media has an important function in shaping our perceptions regarding the future of political conflicts, the intentions of the groups in conflict, and thus on our understanding of the chances to solve a conflict. In other words, we see no partner when we perceive the other side as capable of harming us in the most dangerous manner (while encountering with worst-case scenarios). We see no solution when we interpret the enemy actions and intentions according to the fundamental attribution error, overestimating the effect of the other side disposition or personality (their "lethal nature") and underestimate the effect of the situation in explaining their social behaviour. Thus the role of the media as a major agent in the process of social construction of reality is crucial. The consequences is that the media focuses on the most violent actions and belligerent statements, i.e., promoting fear, while concealing peaceful trends and manifestation of the other side leaders, actions that might have promote hope.

Thus, I will claim that we should explore the role of the media in portraying the options of resolving the conflict, in order to understand the major function of journalists in political conflict. This paper is not oriented to probe the effect of the media on public opinion, but rather to lay the conceptual foundations for the study of the role of the media on our perception of future trends, in general, and regarding the solvability of political conflicts, in particular. Although simplistic I would like to say that, if the media can't supply a vision of progress toward resolution, then it is harder for both people to imagine it and to strive for it.

The main contribution of this paper is offering a new theoretical concept for the understanding the role of media and journalists: I claim that the well-established concept of "collective memory" has a parallel concept that concerns the ways by which society looks at and into the future, prospecting events and conditions that will or are likely to occur at a later time. The paper aims to offer a larger theoretical context to this phenomenon as it elaborates on the mechanisms of the mediated "Collective Vision" and illustrates it in order to reveal the hegemonic role of the media in the construction of shared future, especially our

perceptions regarding the future and solvability of political conflicts.

## The media and the future

What will happen tomorrow? In one week? In a month? A year? A decade? One might answer that "the future's not ours to see" as the famous song suggests. However, researchers (e.g., Jaworski et al., 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Neiger, 2007) point to an important phenomenon: a significant amount of news items refer to future planned events or anticipated occurrences. Among the varied mediated manifestations of the "discourse of the future" we can find the reporting on planned meetings ("the president to meet the secretary of state"), results of votes before they take place ("the cabinet to approve..."), authorities' reaction to occurrences ("the government will send more forces..."), economic forecasts ("AOL-Yahoo deal could happen this month") or even presenting "worst case scenarios" regarding terror and war ("Intelligence officials say al-Qaeda will try to attack U.S."), technological or epidemical catastrophes ("Swine flu will return in the winter and thousands of people could become infected").

In my previous study (Neiger, 2007) that observed an eighteen-year period (1985-2003), I found that approximately 70% of the main headlines deal not only with past events but with future ones as well. Thus, contrary to the conventional perception of journalism, this type of journalism does not report what has already happened, but speculates on future events, whether directly or by quoting military or political figure. The study also showed that there was no change in the amount of manifestations of the "discourse of the future" over the years. This finding led to a qualitative analysis of this discourse. The study argued that the component differentiating between the various manifestations of the future is the degree of speculation and uncertainty. Writing about the future is an inherently speculative act. Even if all the actors in the political scene are sure that a certain event is going to happen (a strike, a vote, a military action), things can always change at the last moment. Yet, some future events can be predicted with a relatively low level of speculation, while others are set on a higher speculative level. Those levels of speculation are derived from/connected to modality in general and to the epistemic modality in particular, i.e., a modality (speaker's degree of commitment) that connotes how much certainty or evidence the speakers have for the proposition expressed by the utterance.



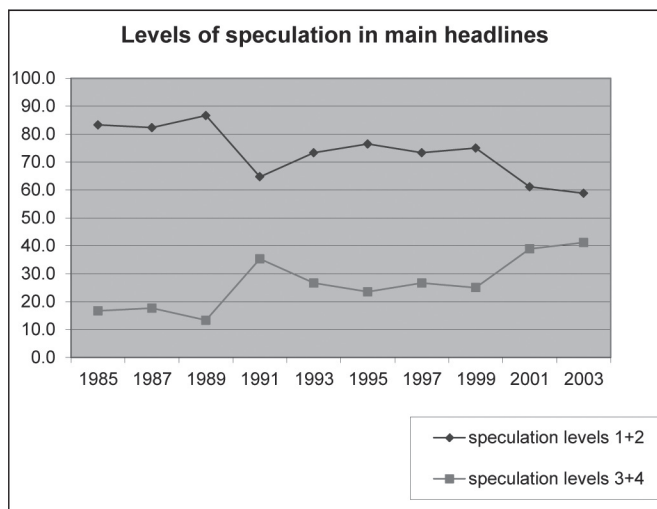
The epistemic modality or the level of speculation is a function of two components:

1. The scope of time involved (short, medium or long term, or an undetermined future).
2. The sources upon which journalists base their stories – official announcements about scheduled events, the journalists' own assessments and interpretations based on similar past cases, and of the sources themselves – parties at interest such as media advisors, politicians, and the military (as quoted in the text).

Combining these two components, I concluded that the discourse of the future can be classified into four types, according to levels of speculation:

1. Predictable Future (short term or/and soiled sources such as measurements and time-schedules such as meeting).
2. Informed Assessment (short/medium term or/and reliable sources).
3. Speculative Assessment (medium/long term or/and sources of interest, journalist own interpretations, unreliable sources) i.e., "The government might raise taxes after the elections").
4. Conjectured Future (uncertain future and sources of interest/ **"worst case scenarios"**).

As mentioned, and compatible with the shift from event-centered journalism, no significant change can be seen in the use of the "discourse of the future" type in the Israeli press over a period of eighteen years. Still, the categorization into types reveals interesting trends. An analysis of the discourse of the future in these categorized headlines lets us discern a slow decrease of the lower levels of speculation throughout the years. In the Hebrew language press in Israel during 1985, these levels represented 83.3 percent of the overall discourse of the future in the headlines, while in 2003 these were only 58.8 percent. Respectively, a 16.7 percent increase can be observed on the higher levels of speculation (levels 3 + 4), to 41.2 percent.



This graph shows that the rise of speculation levels over the years was gradual, except in 1991, when a sharp incline

can be observed (from 13.3 percent to 35.5 percent). This change can be explained by the Gulf War, which gave rise to highly speculative headlines. After 1991, there is a slight decrease, but not to pre-war levels. This research argues that the advent of the commercial TV and radio era in Israel, in 1993, contributed to that fact. Violent conflict situations also contribute to higher levels of speculation, and, indeed, this is what happened in the years of the Second *Intifada* (2001 and 2003). In conclusion, the political-security context of violent war entails high levels of speculation.

## The Collective Vision as the outcome of "the discourse of the future"

Continuing this line of study, this paper aims to offer a larger theoretical context to this phenomenon, as it presumes the "the discourse of the future". These manifestations of the future carry cultural and political significance that might serve to magnify threats and thus to justify "preventive" actions by those in power (Ferrari, 2007) to manipulate the financial market and increase citizen psychological dependency on governments, since those in power, allegedly, have more information regarding the future and the ways in which societies should confront it.

As stressed, I wish to claim that the well-established theoretical concept of "collective memory" has a parallel, mirror image concept of public time that concerns the ways by which society looks at and into the future prospecting events and conditions that will or are likely to occur at a later time. The "Collective Vision" – addressing societal fantasies, fears, aspirations, dreams and expectations – is a multi-directional process of concretizing a narrative about the future into a functional, socio-political construct, as an outcome of shared ideology.

Between utopia and dystopia, the "Collective Vision" is evident in public discourses of many social issues: on the future of conflicts and their possible resolution (here nation and nationalism are important in framing conflicts meaning and how we should understand them), ecological questions and natural disasters (e.g., global warming, floods), medical advances and dangers (e.g., world with no pain, catastrophic epidemics), technological innovation and threats (e.g., "the smart house", "Year 2000 bug") and the economic horizon (both on macro and micro levels, providing speculation for the "ordinary person" and for experts, investors, and officials as well, regarding indexes, growth, etc.). Thus, "Collective Vision" serves as an umbrella concept that bonds together the various manifestations of the "discourse of the future". The study draws the contours around the concept of "Collective Vision" and endeavors to reveal the mechanisms that constitute it and its mediated discourse, in order to understand the political ends it serves. Specifically, this study offers an initial outlook at the ways by which institutional agents as cultural interpreters, shape the Collective Vision through the media, using their social dominance, although, as in the case of collective memory

and counter-memory, less privileged groups and individual can present a counter-vision.

The concept of “vision” carries, of course, cultural baggage that might be perceived as a burden or distraction; notwithstanding, I choose to see it as enriching and charged with layered meanings that assist it in serving as a condensed and concise cultural concept.

As in the case of “collective memory” and remembering, the term, or, rather, the metaphor, “vision” refers to a physical human action: sight. The term “vision” invokes pre-modern meanings of apocalypses (visions of Biblical prophets, adding to the concept a “catastrophic”, intimidating layer, but also the positive, eschatological ideal that ensues; Modern philosophical foundations added a positive connotation of “development” and “progress” (in the philosophy of thinkers such as Hegel, Nietzsche and Benjamin dealing with the winds that irresistibly propel the angel of history from the past onto the future), and post-structuralist-constructionist understanding of the concept (which might treat it as an invented tradition).

In our times, and especially since the turn of the millennium, the concept of “vision” has gained additional commercial meanings when consultants suggest that every company -large or small-, and even every person, as a designed self (Strenger, 2004), ought to have “a vision”: a statement that combines narratives regarding their roles in the world, their missions and the ways in which they might be accomplished. All these meanings and connotations – negative apocalypses, positive progress, constructivist theory and commercial branding – are all valid in approaching the concept of “Collective Vision”.

## Collective Vision and Collective Memory

The term ‘Collective Memory’ was first coined by Hugo von Hofmannsthal in 1902 (Olick & Robbins, 1998: 106), but French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is generally acknowledged as the founder of Collective Memory research. As a devoted follower of the Durkheimian school, Halbwachs identified individual memories and collective memories as tools through which social groups establish their centrality in the lives of individuals. Since the publication of Halbwachs’ seminal work ‘On Collective Memory’ (1992[1925], 1980[1950]), this field has been researched by scholars in diverse academic disciplines, who at times have disagreed with many of his initial observations (Meyers, Zandberg & Neiger, 2009; Neiger, 2008). Yet his basic argument still serves as a guideline for collective memory studies: social groups construct their own images of the world by constantly shaping and re-shaping versions of the past. The basic assumption of this study is that the same processes and social outcomes are valid in the case of “Collective Vision”, so the different communities (and, of course, different individuals) are developing their own collective visions. This process defines groups and enables them to create boundaries that separate them from other groups that share different visions, in the same way

they share different memories of the past (Neiger, Meyers & Zandberg, 2011).

One might argue that an ontological difference exists between “collective memory” relating to the past (which already occurred) and “collective vision” relating to the future (yet to happen) that reflects on the level of modality in general and on the epistemic modality (speaker’s degree of commitment) in particular, which connotes how much certainty or evidence the speakers have for the proposition expressed by the utterance. In the case of the past, there are different versions of the same occurrences (e.g., diverse narratives of the French Revolution; Whith, 1974) but, usually, there is accord that the event did take place and that “Kennedy was shot on November 22, 1963” (unless we embrace a radical postmodern stance like Baudrillard, 1995), while regarding the future there are many versions and speculation, but no actual occurrence.

Nevertheless, on the philosophical-constructionist (epistemological) level, the gap is not wide, or even does not exist, because both can be seen as a discursive construct: both the shared past (memory) and shared future (vision) are narratives that the collective is telling and retelling to its members in order to fortify the “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) and the selection of “facts” (documented events or predictions) and their arrangement in the form of a narrative is a mutual mechanism for both. I will now focus on the different characteristics of the “Collective Vision” as socio-political construct, its functionality, its concretization and narrative form.

### 1. *Collective Vision is a socio-political construct*

Different social and political groups develop their own collective vision regarding the future and the path that should be taken to fulfill it. These visions are based on varied perspectives regarding the lessons of the past and the dangers that lie in the future. Regarding the past there has been (or, for some, there still is) a debate as to whether historiography can or should reflect the “facts” or whether it is a mere narrative of the past that gives meaning to events by explaining the connections between them (White, 1974; Novick, 1989).

The mainstream scholarly discourse agrees that writing on the past is a social construct that emanates from ideology. The ontological difference between the past (that already occurred) and the future (yet to happen), makes it even clearer that “the discourse of the future” is a social construct, as the “facts” are mostly assumptions regarding what is going to happen. Some of these assumptions are relatively solid, (i.e., scientific), as in the case of “global warming”, but many are mere predictions of intentions and actions of political actors (“Al-Qaeda will...”).

An example for this role played by the media can be found on the main newscast of the week (Friday night, the eve of the Jewish Shabbat) on April 3, 2009, only two days after the inauguration of the new government. Commenting on a report about a 13-year-old boy from the Bat-Ayin settlement

who had been stabbed to death by a Palestinian, the military analyst announced:

The recent events strengthen the assumption that maybe there is a new way of action, a systematic method that is much harder to prevent in the future. The level of intimidation is growing and the security forces are having difficulties in providing answers to stop anticipated attacks.

These forecasts – besides magnifying terror (terrorists with new methods will try to increase damage, security forces with no answers to the new threats) – turned out to be exaggerated and delusive: since then and until the end of the year (2009) only two Israelis were killed in terror attacks, a significant decrease in casualties by any standard. Nevertheless, the analyst promote the “violent profile” (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) of the world, leaving the audience with a feeling of vulnerability and anxiety. Both roles of the media – as a stage and as active messengers of visions – are political roles, pointing at the constructionist character.

## **2. Collective vision is functional**

Referring again to Collective Memory, it can be said that social groups utilize memory and commemoration for different purposes, in order to define the community and draw its boundaries. In the same manner, the Collective Vision sets values and norms system that endorses the community's self-image and excludes the “Other”.

Individuals can relate to various Collective Visions that define different aspects of their own identity, managing it in varied circumstances: As human beings, they may fear natural catastrophes but trust (or not) humanity and science to overcome these. As part of a nation, they may (or may not) worry that the state loses its “identity”. They may (or may not) hope to improve their social status as a woman, a senior citizen, an employee, a religious person, a “hawk” or a “dove”, conservative/liberal, heterosexual/homosexual, etc.). To be more concrete, and using the Israeli context, we might say that as a citizen, he may fear that his country is losing its Jewish character, on the one hand, but opposes a transfer to the Arab citizens of Israel (as one of the political parties in Israel proposes), and supports the partition of Jerusalem between Israel and Palestine in a future political settlement, on the other hand.

Other aspect of the functionality of Collective Vision, beside its connection to identity and circumstances, is vague or generalized discursive articulation: in order to serve as an umbrella for as many potential voters as possible. The catch phrase of Israel politics is “Peace with Security”. Everyone wants peace, but of what nature? Everyone yearns for security, but what measures should the government take to achieve it? Thus, “Peace” and “Security” are socio-cultural umbrella terms that encompass a vast range of political attitudes. One of the symbolic (and actual) failures is the illusion that such a vision encourages, the illusion that the nation is struggling to achieve enduring peace while in

practice those are shallow labels that – in many cases – do not translate into acts of reconciliation.

## **3. Collective Vision is concrete**

Collective Vision is an abstract concept that reflects norms and ideals. To be functional, it ought to be formulated in concrete manifestations. Thus, many collective memory studies focus on the way in which the memory is (re)presented in landmarks and monuments (Young, 1983), museums (Katriel, 1993, 1997), television broadcasts (Shandler, 1999; Neiger, 2009, etc.), and music playlists (Neiger, Zandberg, & Meyers, 2011)

Usually, it is hard to find museums and monuments dedicated to the future, although I can mention one extraordinary example: the “Temple Museum” in Jerusalem, which keeps a collection of special tools that, supposedly, would serve the High Priest and his assistants when the Temple of Jerusalem is eventually rebuilt and functions as a fulfillment of the “vision of the end of times”.

Nevertheless, the most common artifacts relating to the future consist of formulations by the media, which is the main source for such a discursive product, which concretize the “Visions”, including science-fiction movies (usually but not always) dealing with an apocalyptic future such as uncontrolled epidemics or crashing asteroids, or the “reality” after a nuclear war. The more important formulation of collective visions, as associated with the “truth value” and “objectivity” (although both are disputable, see more in Schudson, 2001), is in media discourse in general, and the news discourse in particular. In this arena, on the one hand, the visions are in keeping with the discursive formulations of news (quotations from authorities turning into “sound-bites”, collecting response from other players) and thus gain credibility. On the other hand, the journalistic use of future visions enables detachment from the “facts” and to present dramatic stories that would be appealing to the audience.

Alongside the verbal presentation of possible future visions by authorities and journalists, is the concretization of such vision in the visual materials that accompany the declarations. It is quite easy to think of the visual aspects of a science-fiction movie, but this becomes much more complex when we deal with the news, which supposedly should cover “reality”, occurrences of relevance/interest (broad, ambiguous and subjective as this definition may be) to its audience. What is the correct footage that may correspond with the proclaimed future apocalypses?

One of the main mechanisms of Collective Vision to make it more “realistic” is the use of archive materials in order to concretize it. For example, on the May 30, 2009 newscast, while covering a military exercise intended to test the readiness of the home front, the reporter emphasized the threat of nonconventional warfare, which the editors of the newscast “illustrate” airing archive footage from Hezbollah attacks with conventional missiles during the 2006 war in Lebanon.



#### 4. Collective Vision is narrational

Memory must be structured within a familiar cultural pattern. In most cases, it takes the well-known narrative form, including a storyline featuring a beginning, a chain of developing events and an ending, as well as protagonists who struggle to overcome obstacles set by the antagonists. Moreover, the adoption of a narrative structure enables creators of accounts that address the past, to charge them with lessons and morals that guide and instruct mnemonic communities in the present (Zandberg, Meyers & Neiger, 2012). The story of the past is based on documents that reflect facts (such as the year that event occurred, the number of casualties) but in the process of selection (what facts to stress and which to omit) and construction (the order of occurrences into a intelligible structure), transform the account of “occurrences” into a narrative that holds not only a temporal connection between “facts” and events, but also a causal relationship that turns the account of occurrences into a meaningful story (Schudson, 1986).

The same principles apply for the Collective Vision, which uses actual data regarding present events and processes (such as the inauguration of a nuclear reactor or the finding that some viruses are developing tolerance to antibiotics), yet the interpretation of the data, its contextualizing and framing, transform it into a certain model of a story between utopia and dystopia, in various optional genres (e.g., comedy, tragedy, melodrama). In the case of Collective Vision the narrational-temporal order is different from an event that has already “ended” (this rises another question: when does an event conclude? Has 9/11 ended?), and it usually emphasizes the “end” of a story over other occurrences mentioned that are part of the narrative. Here the construction/selection processes are important and they vary between communities by principles of functionality and the political forces that frame the narrative, re-emphasizing the narratological nature of the vision.

### Conclusion: Accumulated collective vision of fear

I would like to stress the critical meaning of the different manifestations of collective visions as they take shape

and become concretized in the media. The concept and emotion that may best connect the majority of collective visions, especially those in the Israeli media as presented above, is “fear”, which is aroused by the perceived threat of catastrophic visions (more on citizenship and emotions, see the work of Wahl-Jorgensen, 2008).

In their seminal work, Gerbner & Gross (1976) wrote: “... fear is a universal emotion and easy to exploit. Symbolic violence may be the cheapest way to cultivate it effectively... ritualized displays of any violence (such as in crime and disaster news, as well as in mass-produced drama) may cultivate exaggerated assumptions about the extent of threat and danger in the world and lead to demands for protection” (p. 193).

Although this current study is not reception oriented, I would like to use the above quote to support my conclusions: the media day-to-day treatment regarding the future and solvability of conflict provokes fear, which intensifies the public call for “preventive actions” and protection. It also might increase the dependency of the audience in authorities, politicians and generals, who purportedly know how to confront the future, and in the media as the major source of information on future threats. This is true of many of the visions promoted in the media (wars and conflicts, diseases, natural catastrophes, hunger, etc.), which can be conceptualized as an “accumulated collective vision of fear”, as the meta-narrative of the media discourse in general, and the one regarding the future, in particular, that articulate a constant state of emergency.

Gerbner & Gross (1976) deal with the actual symbolic violence and danger on screen, while this study is focused on a vaguer concept that involves potential for violence and danger in the future; nevertheless, the discursive – both verbal and visual – mechanisms of the media as presented in this study make these visions concrete, and thus function as “objective” social truths for the public. These can be perceived as a journalistic device together with their role of creating drama (which “sells” the news) and the positioning of the journalists as “media oracles”. This function should be addressed as hegemonic (rhetorical) tools that serve those in power to govern, and therefore should be critically observed, especially the role of the media in solidifying societies under the threats of an intimidating future.

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# The Palestinian Political Discourse: The Impact of Different Social Components

Ashraf Ajrami

## Introduction

Political discourse reflected in the media, in public awareness and attitudes, is the result of the interaction of many elements in society. This discourse varies from one phase to another, and at every phase, discourse impacts various political elements, and its content varies depending on the circumstances. In the context of the evolution of the Palestinian national movement in the recent period, especially after the PLO's adoption of the ten point program in 1974, which accepted the principle of establishing a national authority on part of liberated Palestine, it has passed through several stages, as the discourse and vocabulary of the leadership impacted the public, and people adopted and dealt with this discourse as a position that represented them. Furthermore, large segments of the public thought that and the leadership's discourse was indisputable, partly due to the confidence accorded by the public to a leadership attempting to restore hope to the citizens of the possibility of achieving victory over the occupiers and the completion of the stated goals of the revolution. There were stages in which the public discourse, particularly of activists in the field, became more dominant, and the leadership was forced to be consistent with this discourse, and in some cases adopted this discourse in order to represent public awareness and attitudes.

This study seeks to monitor changes in the Palestinian political and media discourse at specific critical and articulated stages and the impact of various components in its composition and formulation. For this purpose, the study is divided into five stages, each with its specific characteristics, and tracks the most prominent features of the discourse and the influences that contributed to its shaping, attempting to understand the changes that reflected of the collective consciousness of the people.

The study is divided into the following time periods:

The stage of adopting the phased program for the first time from 1974 until the First Intifada in 1987.

1. The stage of declaration of the independent state from 1988 until 1992.
2. The stage of the "Oslo accords" from 1993 until 2000.

3. The stage of the Second Intifada until the general elections and the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007.
4. Finally, from 2007 until now.

## Previous studies

Most of the previous studies, which addressed the issue of political discourse and the media, focused on the Palestinian vocabulary used in this discourse, generally criticizing this discourse as flawed, divisive, and confused, while viewing the Israeli discourse as clear, coherent and intelligent. Among the studies that could serve as a model, is the study of Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Al Reify entitled "The Problematic of the Ambiguity Vocabulary of Palestinian Media and Political Discourse", focusing on how the mysterious vocabulary of the Palestinian discourse "comes in the context of political bickering resulting from the political conflict and partisan polarization which the Palestinian arena witnesses, and leaves for citizens' awareness to analyze these items and deal with it according to *partisan considerations that hinder building positive and influential Palestinian public opinion*" (Al Reify, 2009).

Another study by Mohamed Bassam Juday, entitled "Palestinian media discourse and the core issues of Jerusalem ... refugees ... prisoners ... separation wall" criticizes the media discourse that since the Second Intifada "did not arrive at its peak the degree of awareness and perception of the changes experienced by the Palestinian community, nor did it create a state of harmony between all factions and frameworks who actively participate in the Intifada" (Juday, 2004). These flaws exist due to the existence of different discourses of the factions that represent different streams.

The third study, entitled "The Dilemma of Palestinian Media Discourse Lies in the Space Between Strategy and Tactic" by Nasser Damge considers that the problem of Palestinian media discourse is the confusion between strategy and tactics, blaming the focus on tactics rather than strategy, as (he claims) there are no alterations in strategy, which reflects the abilities and skills of the leadership, which also failed in its strategic political performance during the past two decades (Damge, 2013).

## Methodology

The study uses a content analysis approach in dealing with the vocabulary of Palestinian political discourse which the media circulated in order to point out various changes in this discourse, and the impact of elites, public opinion designers, and the public in shaping it. This is a technique that deals with the media materials, which applies to the case study in question.

## The stage of the authority and the independent state program (1974-1987)

Before we show the most significant development in the Palestinian political discourse in the era of the Palestinian contemporary revolution, we must engage in a quick review of the most important Palestinian media discourse vocabulary before the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) adopted the ten-point program. During the 1960s, especially after the 1967 war, when frustration dominated the Arab world and Palestine after the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel, the Palestinians regained hope after the emergence of the Palestinian resistance factions, led by the Fatah movement, which adopted the armed struggle against Israel. These factions were able to dominate the Palestinian and Arab discourse to a certain extent, especially after the battle of Al Karamah which occurred in 1968 between the Israeli Army and the Palestinian resistance movements, particularly Fatah in Jordan, which the Palestinian resistance movements were able to withstand.

The most important vocabulary of the discourse released by the Palestinian National Council, which was the most important legislative institution in the PLO, especially during the years 1968 and 1969, at the fourth session of the National Council held in Cairo (10-17/7/1968) specifies the Palestinian goal of:

1. Freeing the entire occupied Palestinian territory and establishing the Palestinian Arab sovereignty on this area.
2. The right of the Palestinian Arab people to assess for itself the society that it accepts in the homeland, and to decide its natural location in the Arab unity.
3. Emphasizing *the Palestinian and Arab identity, standing in the face of any attempt of dissolve it.*

It also spoke about the people's choice in favor of an armed struggle as the "struggle approach to restore its territory and usurped rights."

The National Council classified three enemy forces: Israel, the World Zionist Organization, and the global colonialism led by the United States of America.

The National Council of Security Council rejected UNSC resolution 242, (November 22, 1967), because it spoke of ending the status of war between the Arab states and Israel and included the establishment of secure and agreed upon borders, which entails recognizing the existence of Israel, the establishment of peace with it, and overriding the Palestinian Arab people's absolute rights to the entire homeland.

Notes from the content of decisions emphasize the idea of rejection of Israel's existence, refusal of peace with it and continuing the state of war, with the aim of establishing the State of Palestine on the entire territory of historic Palestine. It also emphasizes the revolutionary discourse which corresponds with the discourse of the revolutionary forces in other places, such as the Vietnamese revolution and various revolutions in Latin America, and Africa. Practically, this discourse served as the mouthpiece of the Palestinian people, which views itself as part of the Arab nation, but standing on the forefront in the struggle for the elimination of Israel.

At the fifth session of the National Council (Cairo 1-4/2/1969), in which the Palestinian factions were represented, the National Council and the Executive Committee practically took over the organization set up by the Arab countries to contain Palestinian national action, emphasis was placed on the rejection of all "agreements, decisions and projects incompatible with the full rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland, including the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council that were issued on 11.22.1967, the Soviet project and similar projects".

In this sense, dealing with the Rogers Plan, UNSC 242 resolution or any project talking about reconciliation with Israel was viewed as national betrayal. The PLO leadership was able, before "Fatah" and other faction entered the PLO, to determine the content of the media and political discourse, a very militant discourse that leans towards slogans rather than searching for realistic solutions. In practice, this was an external discourse without any role of the masses.

## Historic transformation

In the wake of the October War of 1973, there was a substantial shift in the Palestinian media and political discourse, when the Palestinians presented a political program entitled the Ten-Point Program, a development which was accompanied by an internal split in the Arab position. The background of this shift related to how this war and its consequences were viewed. While this program entailed a change in "Fatah" and other factions, the most important leaders of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine conceived of the notion of the change following the war. They considered the October war as a war of liberation, resulting in a change in the balance of power, allowing Palestinians to take advantage of it to push their case forward and put it on the international agenda.

Though the introduction of the Ten-Point program adopted by the Palestine National Council at its twelfth session, held in Cairo (1-6/9/1974), the Council stated that it was "due to the results of the October war that the Middle East issue was brought to the international level, after having been in a state termed recession to call a status of no war and no peace." The UN Security Council released resolution 338 on 11/22/1973, which confirms resolution 242 and calls for the convening of the Geneva Conference under the auspices of the two super powers: the Soviet Union and the United States to implement resolution 242. Thus, there had been serious discussions regarding this new situation. It was



stressed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and it is not permissible for any Arab or Arab ruler to negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people.

## The Ten-Point Program included and emphasized the following:

1. To confirm the former position of the PLO that Resolution 242 blurs the national rights of our people and refuses to deal with the refugee issue.
2. The Palestinian Liberation Organization is devoted to a struggle by any means, including an armed struggle to liberate every part of the Palestinian land.
3. The PLO fought against any Palestinian entity that would recognize Israel, make peace with it, and accept the concept of "secure borders".

While the message of this plan can be confusing, it marked a significant change in discourse and an acceptance that the conflict could be resolved through an international conference. This plan accepted that any international solution would be based on the principle of recognition of the rights of the Israeli and Palestinian sides, which countered the dominant Palestinian discourse. This points to the need for discourse to be changed gradually until it is absorbed by the general public. The focus was on the territories occupied in 1967, without stating so explicitly.

It also notes a certain change in discourse, where the "armed struggle" was no longer the only means of struggle, and other means became acceptable. This entailed the emergence of recognition of the importance of political and public struggles. Intentionally flexible language was used in order to allow for pragmatism. There was a front that rejected the Ten-Point Program, led by Iraq and Libya; however, the rejectionist front returned to the ranks of the PLO in 1979.

The clearest prominent change in the Palestinian media and political discourse came after the 1982 war and the launching of the Saudi initiative by Prince Fahd, which later transformed into the resolutions of the Arab summit in Fez in September of 1982, which stipulates the need for "the Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied by the year of 1967, including Arab Jerusalem, and the removal of the settlements established by Israel in the Arab lands after 1967." These resolutions also focused on Palestinian self-determination, the return of refugees, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestinian National Council adopted at the sixteenth session the Fez summit decisions "Arab Project for Peace". It considered the "minimum for political movement of the Arab countries that must be integrated with the military action with all its requirements in order to modify the balance of power in favor of the struggle and the Palestinian and Arab rights." The Council assured that its understanding of these decisions do not contradict the political commitment to the program and decisions of the National Council.

Thus, the Palestinian political discourse, drafted by the PLO factions and the document based on the changes in the

region and the balance of power, became more realistic and acceptable at all levels, but did not have a significant impact on the "street" or public opinion, as the shaping of speech was limited to the political elite in the PLO and to the Pan-Arab leadership.

## The stage of the First Intifada and the declaration of the state (1987-1992)

At this stage, the on the ground reality and the impact of public opinion influenced the media and political discourse. This was the first time in the history of the PLO and the contemporary Palestinian national movement where voices from the street and the power of the masses made a serious impact. The Intifada that erupted in December 1987 expressed the will of the people to end the occupation, concentrating mainly on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It strongly affected the elite leadership of the PLO and its various factions, producing a street leadership that the street followed. This movement imposed its presence and its impact on the Palestinian media and political discourse. For the first time, the weight of the political decision-making was shifted from the leadership abroad to the voices of the West Bank and Gaza. The Intifada, which arrived after 20 years of occupation and embodied the first popular reaction to comprehensive practices and procedures, succeeded in dictating slogans and rhetoric to the leadership, forcing it to respond to the desire of the pulse of the street (Amira, 2007).

The Intifada gave a model for its positive traits as, "The broadest uprising of the Palestinian people since it began resisting the Zionist project, the longest in duration, the most organized, the most mature in thought, and the deepest understanding of the spirit of the times and the system of values and laws (Al-Hourani, 2007). The Intifada has succeeded in opening a new political path for the leadership and introduced substantial amendments to the program of the PLO. Perhaps the theoretical announcement of establishing the State of Palestine on November 15, 1988 indicated a final consecration for the idea of a realistic settlement adopted by the PLO in response to the desires of the Palestinian street. Practically, the Palestinian Liberation Organization shifted from being dedicated to the liberation of the entire land to pushing for a program for the two-state solution. The Madrid Peace Conference which was held in 1991 was the culmination of the great change that took place in the Palestinian position and discourse.

The Intifada deeply affected not only the relationship with the occupation and the relationship between the external and internal Palestinian leadership, but also affected the contents of the national struggle, Palestinian national unity, political choices, the relationship between the prominent national and Islamic forces, and the strength of the concept of popular resistance as a new mode of thinking, as opposed to the armed struggle.



## The emergence of the Islamist discourse

The First Intifada marked the onset of Hamas as a serious player as a resistance movement to the occupation. The Islamist movement was a rival to the PLO in universities and institutions in the Occupied Territories. During the uprising, Hamas transformed into a resistance organization, mainly based on an extensive network of grassroots organizations that were scattered in mosques, and could establish the military wing which conducted numerous operations, especially in the early nineties. This role enabled it to emerge as a counterweight to the PLO factions, competing with them not only on the ground, but also in political discourse. However, Hamas' discourse was completely contrary to the realistic discourse.

This discourse rejected the idea of compromise and acceptance of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. The Hamas vision of the conflict and nationalism in Palestine stems from the fact that Palestine is "the land of Islamic WAQF for generations of Muslims until the Day of Resurrection", and that the link between the land and religion as in the incident of (Isra and Miraj, the trip of Mohammed from Jerusalem to the heaven), calls for a return to religion and implementation of Sharia (Islamic law) with respect to all aspects of life of community as a method for the achievement of national goals (Ajrami, 2005).

The perception of Hamas and its concept of the conflict is based on its interpretation of Quran scripture which includes the notions of the Land of Palestine as blessed and holy, God's anger towards the Jews, Jerusalem as the Center of the conflict, Zionism as a movement which will demise, and the concept of a Zionist-Crusader alliance based on confrontation with Islam (Abu Shanab, 2005).

The Islamic Jihad does not stray far from this position and proceeds from a similar ideology. The movement confirms that it is "committed to the Islamic doctrine, law and moral codes, as a tool to analyze and understand the nature of the conflict, waged by the Islamic nation against its enemies. Their approach is based on the notion that Palestine, from the river to the sea, is religiously an Islamic and Arab land, that wavering an inch on this concept is forbidden, and that the Zionist entity cannot be recognized (Ajrami, 2005).

In spite of the continued existence of this parallel discourse, there was a change in the mainstream discourse following the Madrid Conference, although it did not succeed to reach any real breakthrough. Even with the lack of success of the Madrid Conference, the discourse did not revert back to a previous period, but remained committed to the achievement of freedom and independence and the establishment of the state on the 1967 borders, and to make every effort possible at all levels to achieve this goal.

## The stage of "Oslo" until the Second Intifada (1993-2000)

The announcement of reaching an interim agreement known as the "Oslo Accords" was a big surprise for the public, the local, regional and international leaders, because it came without warning or prior knowledge of the secret channel established between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. While everyone was focused on the Madrid negotiations that were stalled, secret bilateral negotiations succeeded in reaching an interim settlement. The surprise was significant and the news received a mixed reaction. Most of the PLO factions rejected the Oslo Accords and considered them to be a severe blow to the Palestinian National struggle. There was a view that the Oslo Accords entailed a submission to the dictates of Israel. The main objection to the Oslo Accords was as follows:

The accords accept the separation of the Jerusalem issue from the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories allowing Israeli hands to accelerate in judaizing them, the accords made no commitment to implement the UN resolutions (242, 338, 194, and 237). Therefore, final status negotiations will be completely encumbered by the outcome Israeli decisions to annex Jerusalem, leave settlements intact, refuse to return to the 1967 borders, and resettle Palestinian refugees outside the land of Palestine (Political Bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1998).

Not only was there opposition to the Oslo agreement from the majority of the PLO factions and Islamic factions (Hamas and Islamic Jihad), but also there were some members of the central committee of Fatah, which represented the central movement in the Palestinian Liberation Organization led by Yasser Arafat, who opposed the agreement. Hani al-Hassan, a member of Central Committee, wrote about his opposition to an agreement that grants to the Israelis recognition, arguing that the Palestinians recognized the Jewish state in exchange for Israeli verbal concessions which could be retracted at any moment. He argued that the agreement has missed the opportunity to put the Palestinians on an equal footing with the Israelis, claiming that the Palestinians were lured into an approach of first resolving the simple issues and postponing the difficult ones, without putting controls and restrictions on the freedom of movement of Israelis in the territories, the issue of settlements, Jerusalem and the land in general, and without any mention of the ultimate goal of the negotiations and methods for solving those issues (Hani Al-Hassan, 1997).

According to Nayef Hawatmeh, "Oslo 1 and Oslo 2 left Jerusalem... land...refugees... borders...security...water... and the border lines with Egypt and Jordan, in the hands of the occupation, and placed the Palestinian economy in the Israeli annexation economy box and under the domination throughout the stage of self-government for five years" (Hawatmeh, 1999).

These were the general opinions voiced by the leftist and Islamist oppositions, who thought the Oslo agreements left

much to be desired from the Palestinian perspective. Others saw it as a way to stop the uprising and the struggle against the occupation without extracting an acceptable price, as several Palestinian consensus issues were compromised.

The position of the Hamas movement is important as a representative of the Islamic opposition. The movement thought that the agreements did not meet the aspirations of the Palestinian people. They believe that the agreements were unfair, unjust, rewarded the aggressor, and accepted a situation in which rights were trampled. According to Hamas, it is an attempt to dictate and impose conditions of the victorious and expect the oppressed to waive his rights.

According to the Hamas discourse, the principle of political settlement, whatever its source or terms, contains a submission to the Zionist right to exist in most of the land of Palestine, and the consequent deprivation of millions of Palestinian people the right of return, self-determination, and the possibility of building an independent state on the entire Palestinian land. Accordingly, Hamas rejected the Shultz and Baker drafts, Mubarak's ten points, Shamir's plan, and the Madrid process.

In spite of the opposition which emerged from various factions, the leadership of the organization headed by Yasser Arafat succeeded in marketing the agreements to the public. The Palestinian opposition believed that the signatories of the Oslo Accords made frantic efforts to mislead the Palestinian people, at home in particular, spreading illusions in its ranks about the the content of the agreement.

Oslo became a reality after the formation of the Palestinian Authority and its various institutions, and became a presence in the lives of the people, dominating the public discourse, despite the attempt of Hamas and Islamic Jihad to undermine Oslo through military operations and suicide bombings, especially in the wake of the crime committed by Baruch Goldstein at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron in February 1994. Due to the fact that a permanent settlement has not been reached, there have been increasing calls from the opposition to stop the negotiations. For example, the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine stated that "after nearly seven years of the signing of the Oslo accords, and after rounds of negotiations, numerous and long-lasting ones in the region and outside, it became clear that the Oslo agreements constitute a loosely created framework manipulated by the Israelis in line with Israeli plans and targets. The continuation of negotiations on the basis of the umbrella of disinformation to our people and the world, results in everyone passively waiting (Majdalawi, 2000). The frustration that prevailed in the wake of the failure of this process had the greatest impact on the shift in Palestinian public opinion and paved the way for the for the Second Intifada.

## The stage of the Second Intifada until the elections and the Hamas takeover of Gaza: 2000-2007

The Second Intifada began in response to the visit of Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon on 27 September, 2000 at

the Al-Aqsa Mosque, considered by the Palestinians to be a provocation. But the reaction of the Israeli police forces in Jerusalem and the fall of the seven martyrs and about 250 injured among Palestinian residents in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa exacerbated things. September 28 was considered to be the beginning of the second Intifada which, in practice, ended in 2005. Many believe that the failure of the Oslo Accords in reaching a final agreement, the continuation of Israeli policy, which included settlement building, arrests, and other measures, and the frustration that had been generated after the failure of the Camp David summit were of the reasons that led to the Second Intifada, which needed to only a spark to ignite.

What distinguishes the Second Intifada is the change of the Palestinian political discourse, where the street discourse impacted the leadership, similar to a large extent to the impact of the street on the leadership during the First Intifada, with a fundamental difference in the nature of the discourse. In the First Intifada the street contributed to moderation and a realistic Palestinian media and political discourse, while in the Second Intifada, general confusion was the master of the situation. The Palestinian leadership sought to utilize the uprising to improve their negotiating positions and to reach a acceptable political settlement. However, this goal was not echoed by the street discourse.

At a seminar organized in 2002 by the Journal of Palestine Studies, the editorial board of the magazine claimed that there was a lack of clarity in the strategy of the uprising, particularly with respect to the role of violence. They claimed that it appeared that there was no coordination between the political leadership and the factions involved in the uprising. (Al-Aqsa Intifada seminar: between the vision of the authority and the aspirations of the opposition, 2002).

Islah Jad explained the reason of lack of a unified political discourse, arguing that the occupation policy and lack of release of prisoners continued despite the Oslo Accords. In addition, the disappointment and dissatisfaction increased in the Palestinian street because of the performance of the Palestinian Authority in general. On the political level, the PA did not bring the peace agreement that would end the Israeli occupation as expected, economic performance and institutional and development was generally poor and very weak. In this situation, it was difficult to promote a uniform discourse (Al-Aqsa Intifada seminar: between the vision of the authority and the aspirations of the opposition, 2002).

However, there are those who believe that the goals of the uprising were clear: stopping Israeli aggression, returning to the negotiating table in order to achieve a political settlement for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 1967, resolving the issue of refugees, and all other final status issues on the basis of international legitimacy. This was the view of the Fatah movement, as expressed by Nabil Amr in the same previous seminar.

However, one must note that the discourse of resistance adopted by the opposition factions and the armed wing of Fatah, which saw the uprising as an opportunity to strengthen their positions, was a discourse calling for confrontation

and escalation. At the same time there were real fears of the results of the militarization of the intifada.

The Arab Peace Initiative was adopted at the Arab summit in Beirut in March 2002 during the period that Sharon government decided to invade the Palestinian areas in Operation Defensive Shield, which brought "the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation to a new stage and moved to the level of open all-out war, which aims to end the uprising, the eradication of the resistance, the restoration of Israel direct responsibility for security in all Palestinian areas....and the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority structures (Political Bureau of the Democratic Front, 2003).

The Arab Peace Initiative is a realistic initiative which offers significant political flexibility, as it talks for the first time about peace and comprehensive normalization of relations with the Arab world, after reaching an agreement on the basis of an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and a just and agreed solution to the refugee issue. The Arab Peace Initiative became a central aspect of the Palestinian political discourse, although Israel never offered an official response.

In the end, the clashes continued and the voice of war was louder than the voice of reason on both sides, and the armed resistance produced confusion in the political discourse, overshadowed by Islamist oppositional discourse. The power and influence of Hamas increased, as it exploited its military strength and popularity to take over areas ruled by the Palestinian Authority. Hamas entered the parliamentary elections despite its opposition to the Oslo Accords, and upon winning a majority in the parliament (PLC), it sought control of all civil and military institutions of authority. When Hamas could not change the reality in the security services, in part, due to the global boycott of Hamas, it staged a military coup against the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and took control by force.

## From 2007 onward

After the Hamas coup and its control of Gaza, President Mahmoud Abbas formed a government in the West Bank headed by Salam Fayyad as the legitimate government of the Palestinian Authority, while the Hamas government was dismissed as illegitimate. Fayyad's government began reconstruction of the Palestinian Authority by improving security capabilities, increasing security coordination with Israel, and eliminating armed groups. There was a significant change in the political discourse towards a focus on political action and development of Palestinian society. The government succeeded in rebuilding the institutions of security and civil authority that Israel had destroyed during the years of the Intifada, especially after the invasion of Palestinian cities and the bombing of these institutions. After the improvement in the economy in the wake of the return

of stability to the West Bank, political realism returned to the discourse.

Negotiations with the government of Ehud Olmert had begun and political issues returned to the forefront. However, the war in Gaza disrupted negotiations and brought back a discourse of confrontation and violence.

During the last period of the mandate of the Fayyad government, especially since 2011, the economic situation worsened in the West Bank, while an economic and social protest movement against the government began. Palestinians were affected by the Arab Spring revolutions and popular protests of 2012 and 2013, especially those affected by rising prices and deteriorating economic circumstances. Palestinian groups on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks were created, but did not reach the level of breadth and organization as in other Arab countries, due to the division of Palestinian youth on the basis of political allegiances. Despite the existence of an active movement on social media, this did not lead to youth taking to the streets in mass numbers in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip.

The political discourse is not uniform regarding the diplomatic process. The President's decision to negotiate with the Netanyahu government resulted in a split not only with the Islamist opposition, but also within the PLO and Fatah itself. There was resistance to return to the negotiating table without a clear Israeli obligation to halt settlement building.

There is no doubt that the Palestinian political discourse has been influenced by developments in the surrounding Arab countries. For example, the Palestinian position is divided on the overthrow of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, as well as regarding the current crisis in Syria.

## Conclusion

In Palestinian society, there has always been interaction between the different components of the society in producing the prevalent political discourse; however, the role of the political leadership has been more active in designing this discourse. The public had a tendency, over the last number of decades to believe in their leadership – thus, they adopted the terminology that the leaders used and the attitude that they expressed. This appears to be the clear trend, although there were cases in which the public dictated positions and political alternatives, especially when the public took to the streets to struggle for its rights.

Furthermore, we cannot neglect the balance of power in shaping the political discourse. The very early change of the Palestinian discourse in the 1960s and 1970s occurred after the October War of 1973 between Egypt and Syria and Israel. The change in discourse following this war intended to reap the benefits of the result of this war. Today, political discourse is rapidly changing due to the spread of social media.

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# Recognition of the Other and Self-Constitution: Recognition Gaps of a Palestinian People and/or State in Israeli Political Discourse

Elie Friedman

## Introduction and Literature Review

### Recognition in the International System

The concept of recognition is essential to international politics as it represents the process through which entities come to exist as legitimate actors within the international system and take on a particular identity within that system. Recognition became a central political concept in the latter half of the 20th century, as it facilitated an "emancipatory promise" for oppressed ethnic groups who sought political self-determination (Fraser, 2000). Indeed, the "politics of recognition" enabled former peripheral, marginalized, and silenced groups to become subjects and demand recognition as national entities in the international arena (Taylor, 1994). Furthermore, recognition has ethical importance as it fulfills a fundamental human need to be accepted, and is particularly relevant for the resolution of identity conflicts which erupt when at least one side feels that the other has negated its identity and denied its right as a legitimate player in the international arena (Greenhill, 2008; Auerbach, 2009). Thus, recognition of the other as an authentic nation is a key component of conflict resolution and reconciliation (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004). According to Kampf, within the context of ethnic conflict, the act of recognition of the other is comprised of three distinct phases on a continuum from a) complete denial of the existence of the other as an authentic entity, to b) acknowledging the suffering of the other (without taking responsibility), to c) acknowledging responsibility for the suffering of the other (Kampf, 2012).

### The Self, the Other, and Recognition

Recognition literature grapples with the central question of whether recognition of other is essential for the constitution of self (Wendt, 2003) or whether it can result in the destruction of the identity of self, imposing restrictions on the actor's independence (Markell, 2003). Understanding the ways in which acts of recognition can either unite conflicting selves

under the banner of a collective identity or instead lead to a process of destruction of identity is of crucial importance to developing a theory of recognition in international politics (Greenhill, 2008).

Recognition theory is, to a large extent, an extension of Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, which is sketched by Fukuyama as follows: Two actors in a hypothetical 'state of nature' each attempt to secure the recognition of the other by entering into a life-threatening battle with one another. Their confrontation ends with one actor surrendering to the will of the other, thereby creating a relationship of domination characterized as a master-slave relationship. However, the master remains dissatisfied with the fact that he has only secured recognition from an actor that he himself is unable to recognize as an equal, and at the same time the slave develops a growing sense of his possibility for gaining agency as a self, due to the master's dependence on the work that he performs. Eventually the slave fights to free himself from the control of the master and sets the stage for the emergence of a society built upon the principles of liberal democracy that will allow for all individuals to be granted lasting recognition through the exercise of their basic rights (Fukuyama, 1992).

Thus, according to this reading of Hegel, the act of recognizing and being recognized by others is considered essential to constituting the self in the first place. Wendt develops this concept by arguing that one can only form a sense of one's self through one's social interactions with others, explaining, "One cannot be a teacher without recognition by students, a husband without recognition by a wife, a citizen without recognition by other citizens" (Wendt, 2003: 559). He argues that through recognition a shared sense of identity emerges as "two actors cannot recognize each other as different without recognizing that, at some level, they are also the same" (Wendt, 2003: 560).

Despite this positive association between recognition of the other and constitution of the self, there can be no doubt that recognizing the rights of other individuals automatically imposes various constraints on the self and his independence (Honneth, 1995; Markell, 2003). Recognition of the other requires the self to revise its identity in order to accommodate the identity of the other, thus removing the negation of the other from its own identity (Benvenisti, 1990; Barnett, 1999; Kelman, 2004; Hammack, 2006). Thus, the process



of recognition of the other may undermine national beliefs and identities (Kiss, 1998), evoking heated domestic public struggles over the need to review accepted national narratives (Lakoff, 2000; Kampf, 2012).

Within the context of the debate about the impact of recognition of the other on the self, Greenhill concludes that recognition entails that the other has a right to exist in a way that does not threaten the identity that the self desires for itself. However, if the self perceives that the other's existence threatens the self's self-definition, then the self will have a problem recognizing the other (Greenhill, 2008).

## The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Case Study of the Recognition Problem

In the case study presented, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israeli recognition of a Palestinian other has far-reaching ramifications for the Israeli definition of self. Within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, recognition of the other has been traditionally viewed as a non-negotiable, zero-sum game (Benvenisti, 1990), as negation of the other is a central element of each party's identity (Kelman, 2004). According to Barnett, Israel faces competing definitions of identity which alter depending to a large extent on recognition of the Palestinian other. Recognition of a Palestinian other frames Zionism within an identity associated with liberalism, democracy, and peace, while the lack of recognition of the Palestinian other constitutes an Israeli identity based on ethnocentrism and religious nationalism (Barnett, 1999). Within the context of the above discussion, an Israeli identity based on negating the other (the initial position of Hegel's master) is a precarious, unstable identity, which, according to Hegel's dialectic necessitates movement towards mutual recognition. However, while, according to Hegel's dialectic, identity of the Israeli self based on recognition of the other implies constitution of a different self, according to Honneth (1995) and Markell (2003), recognition of the other can constrain, threaten and undermine the identity of the self. Indeed, according to Greenhill's conclusion, if Israel perceives that other's existence threatens its own self-definition, then the self will have a problem recognizing the other (Greenhill, 2008).

This study focuses on how the self views the lack of other-subjectivity (i.e. whether the status quo is tenable) as well as how the self views other-recognition of self – that is, whether recognition of the other entails a problematic other-definition of self, due to the other's lack of acceptance of the self's self definition.

## Recognition of Nations and States and the Recognition Gap

In the international system, despite the centrality of the concept of recognition of national rights to self-determination, the body of international law that has developed around the Charter of the United Nations over the past 50 years has offered little guidance in instances of competing claims to self-

determination. No real consensus has emerged around what 'self-determination' really means and what actually constitutes a people (Steiner and Alston, 2000). Most self-declared nations want to attain the status of independent statehood, and given the pervasiveness of the idea of the nation-state in international politics, this is hardly surprising. Moreover, the UN Charter itself reinforces the ideal of matching states to nations through its commitment to the principle of "equal rights and self-determination of peoples" (Charter of the United Nations, 1945: Chapter 1, Article 1.2; Greenhill, 2008). However, the hesitancy to automatically grant nations statehood and self-determination is illustrated by the fact that when discussing the Kosovo crisis of 1998–99, the UN Security Council was careful to avoid making any mention of 'self-determination' for the Kosovars and instead used the term 'self-administration' in all five of its resolutions passed (Greenhill, 2008). Kelman argues that in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, recognition of the legitimacy of national existence entails an end of negation of the other's authenticity as a nation, its links to the land, and its right to national self-determination, rather than mere self-administration (Kelman, 2004). When studying the Israeli-Palestinian case, the question of whether recognition of the other as a nation translates into a call for self-determination and statehood or self-administration or autonomy is an essential issue.

Israeli leaders over different time periods utilize variant discursive strategies in their approach towards the recognition of an authentic Palestinian national existence, which entails the acceptance of the other as a legitimate nation, including acceptance of the authenticity of the other's links to the land, its right to national self-determination (Kelman, 2004). While certain leaders recognize the concept of authentic Palestinian national existence and others reject this concept, a leader's positive approach towards the Palestinian peoplehood does not necessarily entail the acceptance of Palestinian statehood, nor does rejection of peoplehood necessarily entail a negation of statehood. A central purpose of this study is to examine the determining factors of a "recognition gap" in political discourse between recognition of statehood and recognition of authentic national existence.

This study attempts to scrutinize how two "middle factors", which relate to the above discussion regarding the relationship between other-recognition and self-constitution, serve as determining factors with respect to the discursive approach towards recognition of Palestinian peoplehood and acceptance of a Palestinian state:

- Assessment of the status quo: Within the above discussion of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, assessment of the status quo as tenable is tantamount the moment in which the master assumes subjectivity upon his victory of the life-or-death battle over the other, subjecting him to slavery to affirm his subjectivity. The assessment of the status quo of occupation as untenable is akin, in terms of the master-slave dialectic, to the moment when the master perceives his mastery over the slave as unsatisfactory, as it is based upon domination over an actor who has not yet gained subjectivity. In other words, his mastery

depends on mastery over an other who is unrecognized (Hegel, 1977; Fukuyama, 1992).

- Assessment of other's recognition of self: Within the context of the above discussion, this assessment corresponds to Greenhill's discussion of recognition of the other which entails a problematic other-definition of self, due to the other's lack of acceptance of the self's self definition. The perception that the other accepts the self's self definition is an important fact in recognition of other (Greenhill, 2008).

The study gauges the impact that each of these factors has on two possible modes of recognition – statehood and peoplehood.

## Methodology

### Research Questions

Following the literature review presented, this study asks the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the recognition of an other's peoplehood and its right to statehood (i.e. self-determination)?
2. How do determining factors (listed above) lead to a "recognition gap" in political discourse between two types of recognition?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between recognition of the other and constitution of the self?

### Discourse Analysis

The methodology of this study utilizes a Discourse Analysis of messages delivered by Israeli political leaders with respect to recognition of the Palestinian other. As issues related to recognition of the other (or lack thereof) in ethnic conflicts concerns the discursive definition of "us" and "them" groups (or in-groups versus out-groups), this study utilizes a discourse analysis framework known as "us and them", in which the speaker attempts to divide people into "in" and "out" oppositional groups, and attribute various characteristics to "us" versus "them" in order to justify action (Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1993; Van Dijk, 2001; Van Dijk, 2002). This discursive strategy attempts to "tap into" a specific values system, which constructs national identity through attribution of positive attributes to the self, while engaging in negative attribution or denial of the other (Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, 1999). In political discourse, such discursive strategies are used to attribute to "us" a primordial national identity, while to deny such an identity from the other.

As discussed above, recognition of the other or lack thereof can have a far-reaching impact on national identity. Thus, the following discursive strategies, presented by Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, will be used to analyze political messages:

- Constructive strategies serve to build a national identity through an appeal to the 'we', that which unifies and creates solidarity.
- Perpetuation and justification strategies attempt to maintain, support, and reproduce national identities often through the justification of a problematic status quo.
- Transformation strategies include the attempt to discursively attempt to transform the meaning of a well-established aspect of national identity.
- Dismantling strategies include the attempt to discursively demolish national identities or aspects of them (Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, 1999).

These four discursive strategies towards national identity serve as a guide towards the way in which leaders approach the national identity of self and other and the discussion above regarding the tension between recognition of the other and constitution of self.

### Corpus and Data Collection

The corpus is comprised of political messages presented by official representatives (primarily, but not exclusively, Prime Ministers) in various public forums such as the Knesset, the United Nations, academic conferences, and in media interviews. Only messages which deal with the issue of recognition of the other were included in the corpus. The corpus has been limited to governmental officials, as messages delivered by officials are powerful stimuli for political activity, and are given significant attention by both elite and mass audiences, as leaders have the capability to implement their proposals (Gans, 1979; Danielian and Page, 1994; Graber, 2004; Tresch, 2009). The total corpus includes 518 speeches and media quotations delivered by Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers within various public forums over these time periods. Sources of data include the State Archives, the minutes from Knesset Debates, the Yearbook of Official Documents (published annually by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and the web sites of Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The corpus of data collected ranges from 1967 until 2012, as following the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, several of the basic parameters or "core issues" for a resolution to the conflict were set out in UN Security Council Resolution 242, due to Israel's territorial "bargaining chips" which would constitute the basis for the "land for peace" framework (Reich, 2008). Furthermore, the Palestinian national movement received new impetus from the Arab countries' defeat of 1967, while the Israeli military occupation of the newly conquered territories ignited a new Palestinian national consciousness (Caplan, 2010). Thus, the post-1967 reality offered new circumstances for re-evaluation of the lack of recognition of a Palestinian other.

Specifically, the following specific periods in time are studied, each of which represents a pivotal juncture in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a specific political and ideological framework:

- The Meir government (1969-1973): A euphoric period of Israel as regional superpower, during which the nature of the conflict was redefined by the "land for peace" premise, through UN Security Council Resolution 242 (Reich, 2008).<sup>1</sup>
- The second Rabin government (1993-1995): The Oslo Accords and their aftermath, which included a revision of Israeli national identity within the context of possible acceptance in the region. This period was also accompanied by a deeply divided society, the rise of terrorism, culminating in the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin (Barnett, 1999).
- The second Netanyahu government (2009-2012): A period of little official Israeli-Palestinian dialogue: a period of a lack of trust and little negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, coupled with the rise of nationalist, ethno-centric concepts within Israel. In addition, in 2009, Israel's foreign ministry adopted a new concept abandoning the mode of apologetic, in favor of a direct approach towards diplomacy (Ravid, 2011).

## Results

The results provide an analysis of each of the time periods presented in the Methodology, utilizing exemplary texts to address the research questions. Through an analysis of three distinct periods, this study scrutinizes the relationship between recognition of a Palestinian state and recognition of a Palestinian people through the filter of the following two "middle factors" described above:

- Assessment of the status quo.
- Assessment of other's recognition of self.

### Meir Government (1969-1973)

Prime Minister Meir adopts a discursive strategy in which she rejects both recognition of a Palestinian people and a Palestinian state, approaches which are presented through the lens of a positive approach to the status quo of military occupation in the territories conquered in 1967 framed within the context of an assessment of the other's rejection of Israel's existence.

The following famous quotation is exemplary of Prime Minister Meir's approach towards recognition of the other:

I'm not saying that there are no Palestinians, but there is no such thing that can be entitled Palestinian people (Meir, 1970a).

Meir utilizes an "us and them" strategy, by arguing that the Palestinians, as opposed to the Israelis, cannot be considered a people, denying "that 'the Palestinians' is a valid category of national identity" (Kampf, 2012: 437). As

<sup>1</sup> The corpus of the Meir government will not include the period during and following the Yom Kippur War, as this period is characterized by a different national mood.

Kampf argues with reference to Meir's statement, denying the existence of a political entity renders any statement of recognition redundant, as there is no actual person in a state of suffering (Kampf, 2012).

In the following statement, Meir uses a different strategy to de-legitimize the term "Palestinian people":

The Khartoum doctrine is unchanged: no peace, no recognition, no negotiation. Israel must withdraw to the borders of 4 June 1967 and thereafter surrender its sovereignty to the "Palestinian people" (Meir, 1970b).

Meir presents the term "Palestinian people" in quotations, used to call into question the validity of the existence of a Palestinian people, a text attributed to the rejectionist "Khartoum doctrine", the statement made at the Arab League summit which rejected rapprochement with Israel (Arab League Summit, 1967). Meir utilizes the discursive strategy of intertextuality to undermine the legitimacy of opposing texts, positing the "Palestinian people" text within the context of a text that calls for Israel's destruction. Thus, the line of argumentation is that "they" are not a people, and the term Palestinian people is merely a way to force Israel to surrender its sovereignty. Furthermore, the Prime Minister relates the rejection of the existence of a Palestinian people with the perceived rejection of the State of Israel – her lack of recognition of the other is underpinned by her perception that the other does not itself recognize the self.

In order to understand her negation of Palestinian peoplehood, it is essential to examine how this approach coincides with her concept of the relatively new status quo in the "administered areas":

Our policy is to maintain our rule in the administered areas with a minimum of interference in affairs of the local authorities and the regular existence of the population. We consider ourselves responsible for the maintenance of services, employment and economic and agricultural development. Twenty-two thousand Arabs from Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, thousands of refugees among them, are employed in Israel, and several thousand Arabs of the Gaza Strip in Judea and Samaria. Consequently, there is no unemployment in Judea and Samaria, and few are jobless in the Gaza Strip. Laborers from the areas working in Israel receive the Israel wage, which is 250 per cent higher, on average, than what they earned under Jordanian rule. (Meir, 1970b)

Meir uses the discursive strategy of opposition – she posits "the Arabs from Judea, Samaria, and Gaza" in opposition to the "Palestinian People", in order to differentiate between the two oppositional normative categories. She speaks of "Arabs" and "laborers" – a highly intentional lexical choice, utilized in order to negate the possibility that they have a collective political identity. In addition to opposition, Meir utilizes the discursive strategy of pronoun choice. Her choice of pronouns places the power on "our" side, as "we consider ourselves responsible" for their "services, employment and economic and agricultural development." "We" are the active ones, they, the passive individuals who require "our" employment. A narrative is developed in which the forces who invented

the "Palestinian People" are interfering with the well-being of simple individuals who passively benefit from "us", and have no interest in developing a national awareness.

In summary, Meir presents "Palestinian people" which does not "exist"; it is an idea that has been invented or imported from external sources, solely to destroy the State of Israel. Palestinian nationalism, according to Meir's discursive strategy, is not an organic aspect of the daily lives of the local inhabitants, whose lives have been improved by the arrival of the Zionists, but only interferes with their existence. Thus, Meir's strategy of denying Palestinian peoplehood is complementary with her view of the situation vis-à-vis the "Arabs" in the "administered territories", while also impacted by her perception of the rejection of the existence of the State of Israel.

Furthermore, the question of Palestinian statehood is not even on the agenda – in part, because potential negotiating partners for the return of territory were thought of as President Nasser and King Hussein, rather than for the creation of a Palestinian state, but also, as a result of her perception of a lack of a Palestinian people.

When examining this discourse from the perspective of the master-slave dialectic and the above recognition literature, it is clear that the master is firmly entrenched in the moment in which he first assumes subjectivity upon his victory in the life-or-death battle over the other (i.e. the 1967 war), subjecting him to slavery to affirm his subjectivity. The other is only perceived through a framework in which the master has benevolently granted him good working conditions. The status quo is perceived as fully tenable, and the very idea that the defeated slave could want to assume an invented national identity is conceived as a potential life-threatening situation for the master, as the previous life-or-death battle is only a recent memory. Indeed, the very notion that the other is a people is only perceived within the context of negation of the self's identity and a threat to its existence as self-definition, as discussed in the above literature (Honneth, 1995; Markell, 2003; Greenhill, 2008).

## Rabin Government (1993-1995)

The second Rabin government, which was dominated by the birth of the Oslo accords, illustrates a different discursive strategy than the Meir government – recognition of Palestinian peoplehood, complemented by a rejection of Palestinian statehood. This different approach is informed by both a negative assessment of Israel's occupation of the territories and an assessment that the Palestinian side recognizes the authentic national existence of Israel.

The following statement, delivered in the Knesset, re-contextualizes, the Palestinian people text within a framework of authenticity and legitimacy, as follows:

Regarding the reasons (that a lack of peace will have a cost in blood), I want to say with all honesty, and I know that it is painful, but it is preferable to tell the truth – one of the reasons is that there is a Palestinian people. We can state that we do not recognize them. But saying

that we don't recognize them will not cause the nation to disappear, the demand for recognition of the people will not disappear. And again, I praise the Camp David Accords, in which there was a recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, just and legitimate. If a people has legitimate and just rights, what do you expect it to do? (Peres, 1994b).

Even though Peres attributes the granting Palestinian peoplehood to the Camp David accords, and thus avoids ultimate responsibility, he posits that the Palestinians are a people with legitimate rights.

His positive approach towards Palestinian peoplehood is directly connected to Peres' assessment of the situation in the territories. While Meir posited Palestinian peoplehood and the actual situation of the "Arab residents" as oppositional entities (claiming that Palestinian nationalism was only a bother to the daily lives of the people), Peres frames this situation quite differently, stating that the situation on the ground is untenable due to the need to satisfy Palestinian nationalist aspirations:

We cannot comprehend the idea of holding under a single sovereignty two nationalist populations, one with full civic rights, including the right to vote for the Knesset, and the other subjected constant prejudice, due to convenience. Israel cannot be, and will not be, a land of apartheid.... The moral issue is unequivocal: we do not want to rule by the fist over another nation....the personal dignity of the Palestinians will be returned to them, to a great extent, when we will no longer be their rulers (Peres, 1995).

Peres rejects the proposition that under the current situation, there can be positive relations between Jews and Arabs, or that Palestinians can have a dignified existence. Thus, he discards the possibility of distinguishing between a situation on the ground and Palestinians' national rights. His framing of the situation on the ground within the terms of civil rights, dignity, and even apartheid, illustrates this point.

When viewed within the context of the relevant master-slave dialectic discussion, these messages illustrate the fact that the self has reached a moment in which the position of mastery over the slave is perceived to be problematic in terms of self-perception. The subject realizes that his subjectivity cannot be predicated upon domination of the other. Thus, he feels that he must recognize the subjectivity of the other, in part, to constitute his own subjectivity.

In addition to a re-assessment of the nature of the occupation, recognition of a Palestinian people is directly related to the government's perception that the Palestinian Liberation Organization recognizes the authentic national existence of the Jewish state, as stated in the following statement by Prime Minister Rabin:

We took a decision for mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, Mr. Arafat giving in writing a full commitment, denouncing and rejecting violence, and terror, expressing a readiness to discipline his people who continue with terror and violence and recognizing the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish independent state (Rabin, 1993).



Rabin interprets Arafat's decision to recognize the State of Israel as not only a recognition of the existence of the state, but as "recognizing the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish independent state", meaning that he frames recognition within the framework of an acceptance of the right to authentic Jewish national independence. When referencing the above recognition literature (Greenhill, 2008), this statement illustrates that the subject perceives that recognition of the other does not pose a threat or limit to the self, as he perceives that the other accepts the self's self-definition and identity – the right to exist as a Jewish independent state.

Recognition of authentic Palestinian national existence is impacted by the speaker's assessment of the situation in the territories as well as his assessment of Palestinian recognition of the authentic national existence of the Jewish state – both factors which are the polar opposite of Meir's assessment. However, acceptance of Palestinian national existence, does not translate, for the Rabin government, into an acceptance of a Palestinian state, as Peres states:

I can promise that we negate a Palestinian state and require full autonomy as we promised. Through the establishment of autonomy, we prevented a Palestinian state, because the alternative to autonomy is a Palestinian state (Peres, 1994b).

Despite accepting Palestinian nationalist claims and the need for Palestinian self-determination, Peres advances a discursive strategy that negates the need to translate this into statehood. Autonomy and statehood are posited as two oppositional terms, in which granting the former negates the need to grant the latter. Thus, the Oslo period is characterized by a recognition gap – the assessment of a problematic status quo coupled with the assessment of Palestinian recognition of authentic Jewish national existence translates into recognition of Palestinian peoplehood while rejecting recognition of a Palestinian state.

When understood within the context of recognition literature, this recognition gap is akin to the above mentioned example in which the United Nations recognizes the Kosovo people but stops short of calling for self-determination, instead calling for self-administration (Greenhill, 2008). Within the context of a master-slave dialectic, the master, at this stage, recognizes the problem of denying the other's subjectivity, both for the sake of the other, and for the constitution of self; however, it is still wary of allowing the other to adopt an equal footing to the self, for fear that the other's complete self-determination would pose a threat to the self. According to the dialectic, this would be an untenable intermediary position that must progress to the next moment of complete recognition of the Other.

## The Netanyahu Government (2009-2012)

The second Netanyahu government (2009-2012) is characterized by a different discourse strategy regarding recognition of Palestinian peoplehood and statehood than either of the above examples. In contrast to both of the examples presented above, Netanyahu adopts a discursive

strategy in which he accepts Palestinian statehood in his famous "Bar-Ilan speech", albeit conditionally:

If we receive this guarantee regarding demilitarization and Israel's security needs, and if the Palestinians recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people, then we will be ready in a future peace agreement to reach a solution where a demilitarized Palestinian state exists alongside the Jewish state (Netanyahu, 2009a).

Within the same speech, through a very specific lexical choice, the Prime Minister illustrates his negation of authentic Palestinian peoplehood, as follows:

But our right to build our sovereign state here, in the land of Israel, arises from one simple fact: this is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where our identity was forged....

But we must also tell the truth in its entirety: Within this homeland lives a large Palestinian community. We do not want to rule over them, we do not want to govern their lives, we do not want to impose our flag and our culture on them....

These two realities – our connection to the Land of Israel and the Palestinian population living within it – have created deep divisions in Israeli society (Netanyahu, 2009a).

Netanyahu's "us and them" discursive strategy presents "we" as a people whose identity was forged in this homeland. Conversely, "they" are a "community" or "population" "living within it" (our homeland), an unfortunate turn of events which has caused serious internal divisions within Israel between left and right. The lexical choice is integral to Netanyahu's "us" versus "them" discursive strategy, as the Prime Minister explicitly contrasts Jewish national rights and "connection to the land" with a population, at best, a community, that lives within our land. Thus, although this speech marked the first time that Netanyahu showed a readiness to accept a Palestinian state, he concurrently adopts a strategy which rejects Palestinian peoplehood.

This recognition gap, the exact opposite of the gap in the Rabin government's discursive strategy, again, can be understood within the context of Netanyahu's assessment of the status quo in the territories and his assessment of Palestinian recognition of Jewish national existence. His assessment of the status quo is characterized by a type of return to the discursive strategy utilized by Golda Meir. In his analysis of the status quo, Netanyahu attempts to deflate the entire civil rights and apartheid discourse, by arguing that the autonomy of the Palestinian areas means that the Palestinians are not occupied:

One hundred percent of Palestinians in the Gaza district and 98 percent of the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, known as the West Bank, are now living under Palestinian rule. They enjoy the attributes of self-government: a flag, their own executive, judiciary, and legislative bodies, and their own police force. It can no longer be claimed that the Palestinians are occupied by Israel. We do not govern their lives (Netanyahu, 2009b).



These statements, when viewed within the context of the above recognition literature, and specifically within the context of the master-slave dialectic, it is clear that the speaker is stuck in a type of self-contradictory moment within the master's realization that his self-constitution cannot be based on rule over another. The prime minister states, "We do not want to rule over them, we do not want to govern their lives, we do not want to impose our flag and our culture on them", yet at the same time argues that the other is no longer living under occupation as they enjoy the attributes of self-government. His denial of authentic Palestinian peoplehood enables him to claim that the Palestinians are not being occupied by Israel. Thus, while the master recognizes that rule over the slave is undesirable, his inability to completely recognize the slave as a self, results in denial that the lack of complete independence or self-determination of the other is problematic. Readiness to accept a Palestinian state is not based on the need to change a problematic status quo and the right of the other to self-determination, but on an unfortunate set of circumstances.

Furthermore, Netanyahu's rejection of Palestinian peoplehood is informed by his assessment that the Palestinians have not recognized the State of Israel as a Jewish state, even if the Palestinian Liberation Organization recognized the existence of the State of Israel in 1988 (Lohr, 1988). In countless speeches, Netanyahu identifies the lack of Palestinian recognition of the Jewish character of Israel as the primary reason for the ongoing conflict, as illustrated in the following statement delivered to the U.S. Congress:

Because so far, the Palestinians have been unwilling to accept a Palestinian state if it meant accepting a Jewish state alongside it. You see, our conflict has never been about the establishment of a Palestinian state. It has always been about the existence of the Jewish state. This is what this conflict is about....

My friends, this must come to an end. President Abbas must do what I have done. I stood before my people, and I said: "I will accept a Palestinian state." It is time for President Abbas to stand before his people and say: "I will accept a Jewish state" (Netanyahu, 2011).

Again, Netanyahu utilizes the discursive strategy of opposition to posit "us" versus "them", claiming that "we" have recognized a Palestinian state, while "they" have yet to accept a Jewish state. Thus, "they" are posited as rejectionists, while "we" as being open to compromise.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's assessment of the Palestinian lack of recognition of an authentic Jewish nation-state is intimately related to his negation of Palestinian peoplehood, which corresponds to Greenhill's claim that the self has trouble recognizing the other if he perceives the other's lack of acceptance of the self's self-definition (Greenhill, 2008). Netanyahu's perception that the Palestinians do not accept Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state entails his lack of recognition of the other. Indeed, Netanyahu's acceptance of a Palestinian state is comparable to his assessment of the Palestinian recognition of Israel – the acceptance of an unfortunate set of circumstances due to a balance of power

which cannot be denied, rather than the acceptance of an authentic national existence.

In summary, Prime Minister Netanyahu's discourse presents a complex type of recognition gap, on one hand accepting a Palestinian state, while on the other, negating the existence of a Palestinian people. This recognition gap is based on both an assessment that the status quo in the territories is not problematic and an assessment that the Palestinians do not accept Israel's self-definition as a Jewish state.

## Summary Table

The following table presents a summary of the above results, illustrating both the recognition gap and the contributing factors to this gap for each of the governments examined:

| Government           | Recognition of Palestinian people | Recognition of Palestinian state | Assessment of status quo as problematic | Assessment of Other as recognizing self |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Meir government      | X                                 | X                                | X                                       | X                                       |
| Rabin government     | ✓                                 | X                                | ✓                                       | ✓                                       |
| Netanyahu government | X                                 | ✓                                | X                                       | X                                       |

## Discussion

Within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it would be expected that a discourse of recognition of the other as a legitimate people would entail recognition of rights to statehood. Conversely, it is reasonable to expect that a political discourse that accepts the establishment of a Palestinian state would entail acceptance of Palestinians as an authentic people. However, this study illustrates that the recognition of Palestinian national existence does not necessarily entail the acceptance of Palestinian statehood, nor does acceptance of a Palestinian state necessarily signify recognition of peoplehood, resulting in a recognition gap between statehood and peoplehood.

As illustrated, the issue of recognition is intimately connected with the leader's assessment of the status quo in the territories as well as his or her perception of the other's recognition of the self. Within the context of the relevant recognition literature, the former is an expression of how the self perceives his self-constitution as a master ruling over an other (Hegel, 1977; Fukayama, 1992), while the latter is an expression of whether the self perceives recognition of the other as a threat to the self's own self-definition.

For Prime Minister Meir, both a Palestinian people and a Palestinian state were non-starters, as the status quo was perfectly tenable and it was clear to her that the other only sought Israel's extermination. Her lack of recognition of the other is framed through the construction and justification of

a positive national identity which attribute to "us" a primordial national identity, while denying such an identity from the other, a common tool in political discourse, as noted in several studies (Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1993; Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, 1999). As discussed, within the context of recognition literature, the master is firmly entrenched in the moment in which he first assumes subjectivity, perceiving the possibility of the other assuming an authentic identity as a potential life-threatening which negates of the self's identity.

For the Rabin government in the 1990s, the official discourse included the recognition of a Palestinian people through the recognition of a problematic status quo based on civil rights and moral framing as well as the assessment that the Palestinian leadership had accepted the authenticity and rights of a Jewish state. The re-assessment of Israel's hold over the territories and its re-contextualization within a civil rights and apartheid discourse is based on a self-perception which is framed within the context of liberal values. The self has reached a moment in which the position of mastery over the slave is perceived to be problematic in terms of self-perception. The subject realizes that his subjectivity cannot be predicated upon domination of the other. Thus, he feels that he must recognize the subjectivity of the other, in part, to constitute his own subjectivity (Hegel, 1977; Fukayama, 1992).

Thus, recognition of Palestinian peoplehood involves a transformation of well-established aspects of national identity, due to policy which does not conform with self-perception. (Barnett, 1999; Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak, 1999). An acceptance of an authentic other through a civil rights discourse requires a revision of self, and a need to prevent Israel's national identity from being associated with apartheid. In contrast to Meir's perception of how recognition of a Palestinian people threatens the self, the self-perception of Israel as a liberal state is not contradicted by recognition of a Palestinian other, as the legitimacy of the state rests on its resonance with liberal principles, rather than upon the exclusivity of its narrative (Barnett, 1999). In fact, Israel's self-perception as a liberal state requires recognition of the other as an authentic nation in order to alleviate its role as occupier, a threat to the state's self-perception as liberal. The subject perceives that recognition of the other does not pose a threat or limit to the self, as he perceives that the other accepts the self's self-definition and identity – the right to exist as a Jewish independent state (Greenhill, 2008).

However, this period, which is characterized by a transformed Israeli discourse with respect to Palestinian nationalism, is accompanied by the denial of Palestinian statehood. This recognition gap stops short of calling for self-determination, instead calling for self-administration (Greenhill, 2008). The master has recognized the problem of denying the other's subjectivity, however, it is still wary of allowing the other complete self-determination, for fear that such a status would pose a threat to the self. According to the master-slave dialectic, this would be an untenable intermediary position that must progress to the next moment. Within the context of this study, we can only postulate as to the reasons behind this recognition gap. Perhaps, during these early stages of the Oslo process, the Israeli leadership felt that its society

was not yet ready to digest the concept of a Palestinian state, sensing that advocating merely for Palestinian autonomy was an easier way for leaders to deflect criticism from the Israeli opposition. The fact that Peres, whose discourse at the time advocated for the authenticity of a Palestinian people while negating a Palestinian state, later accepted a Palestinian state illustrates that such a position is, in fact, untenable.

Regarding Prime Minister Netanyahu's position, the opposite question must be asked – is it possible to recognize a state while denying the authentic national existence of the Palestinians? Netanyahu attempts to deflate the application of a civil rights discourse to the territories, rejecting Palestinian peoplehood, while advocating for Palestinian statehood. While the recognition of Palestinian peoplehood by the Rabin government was a function of Israel's self-perception as a liberal state, the Netanyahu government's denial of Palestinian peoplehood is a function of Israel's self-perception as a Jewish state, which implies exclusivity of an authentic national connection to the land, in which another authentic national existence cannot be accepted. Thus, while according to this perception of self-identity, a Palestinian state can be acknowledged as an unavoidable circumstance that must be accepted, accepting the authenticity of a Palestinian national self would require a far more difficult revision of the exclusivist Zionist narrative and the recognition of a competing narrative.

Indeed, within the context of recognition literature, Prime Minister Netanyahu's position is perhaps the most nuanced, unstable and even self-contradictory. He combines a position in which rule over the other is deemed undesirable; acceptance of Palestinian statehood is not based on recognition of the other's right to self-determination based on acceptance of the other as an authentic national self, but is instead accepted as an unavoidable circumstance. Furthermore, the lack of acceptance of the other's national identity is linked to the assessment that the other does not recognize the self's self-definition.

This study shows how various aspects of recognition theory are implemented through a discourse analysis. The study illustrates the complexity of recognition of the other, pointing out recognition gaps and the contributing factors to these gaps, which are predicated upon a) how the self views domination of the other with respect to its own self identity (assessment of the status quo), and b) whether the self views recognition of the other as a threat to the self's self-definition (assessment of other's recognition of self). Recognition of the other is shown to be an essential aspect of self-constitution within the context of a transformation of self-identity towards an identity that frees itself of mastery over the other and removes negation of the other from its own identity (Hegel, 1977; Benvenisti, 1990; Fukayama, 1992; Wendt, 2003; Kelman, 2004; Hammack, 2006). However, within the context of the master-slave dialectic, this moment can only be achieved if the self can accept that recognition of the other does not pose a threat to the self's self-definition (Honneth, 1995; Markell, 2003; Greenhill, 2008). In the end, the way in which the self views the other is predicated on how the self views the self.

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# The Other in the Palestinian Education System

Nedal Jayousi

## I. Background

This article aims at overviewing the nature of the Palestinian discourse in the Palestinian education system; along with the level of knowledge about the other (Jewish Israelis) in the Palestinian curricula. Therefore, there is a need to provide background on the education system in Palestine, with respect to the conflict.

The development of education in Palestine has been affected by numerous events throughout its history and by the context within which it has been operating. As a result of the 1948 war (known as Al-Nakba or the Disaster), thousands of refugees fled from Palestine to neighbouring Arab countries, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, and accordingly school children were enrolled in the school systems of their host countries and their cultures. The city of Jerusalem was divided into two parts, West Jerusalem became part of the State of Israel and East Jerusalem, where Palestinian Arabs lived, became part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As a result, Palestinian children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were enrolled in schools within the Jordanian educational system (Hudson, 1989).

The Palestinian Ministry of Education, officially called the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), was created on August 28, 1994 in accordance with the Gaza-Jericho Agreement and the Transfer Agreement. The MEHE consequently had responsibility for the entire education sector in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, excluding East Jerusalem, which had been annexed by Israel in 1967. The Ministry was responsible for all levels of education, from kindergarten to higher education, as well as all streams – general (academic), vocational and technical. In June 1996, a separate Ministry of Higher Education was established, and took over the responsibility for all kinds of post-secondary education in the West Bank and Gaza. The Ministry of Education (MOE) remained in charge of basic and secondary education (Mahshi, 1998).

When Palestinian MOE took control of the education system after Israeli Civil Administration left, the infrastructure of schools was breaking down, as was the case of other schools in the West Bank. This was apparent particularly in public, private and Islamic Awqaf schools,<sup>1</sup> where

<sup>1</sup> Awqaf schools are Islamic schools that are funded by the Jordanian government. Most of Waqf schools are located in Jerusalem.

school buildings were not renovated and new schools were not built. Furthermore, materials necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning were lacking or non-existent. In-service training for teachers was very limited, and pre-training was, in most cases, inappropriate. The school environment lacked the necessary incentives for an adequate level of teaching and learning. Activities within the school focused on the teaching of the core curriculum with no extra-curricular activities or out-of-class learning. Students were adversely affected by the interruptions in their studies due to the closures of schools and educational institutions by Israeli military order during the Intifada of 1987 which lasted until 1994. In addition, inadequate attention was given to vocational education and training for young people (Mahshi, 1998).

Palestinian education has been controlled by different political authorities associated with its history which did not reflect the aspirations and needs of the Palestinian people. The absence of a national authority responsible for the entire education system in Palestine has led to a very uncoordinated development of the various schools. The situation was further aggravated by the present unsettled status of the Palestinians living in Jerusalem and the future of the city of Jerusalem itself. This state of uncertainty, thus, is reflected in the lack of a co-ordinated sense of direction, at the school level.

## II. Overview education system in Palestine including Jerusalem

### Basic and Secondary Education: Key Information

**A. Basic Education: Facts and Figures:** Palestine's Ministry of Education was established in 1994, following the Oslo I Accord; the first Palestinian national curriculum – replacing the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula in use since 1967 – was introduced in Sept. 2000 (1st-6th grades). The Compulsory basic education covers 10 years (Grades 1-10), divided into the preparation stage (Grades 1-4) and the empowerment stage (Grades 5-10). Optional Secondary Education covers Grades 11 and 12, with the option of general secondary education, and a few vocational secondary schools offering courses in religion, commerce, agriculture, industry and hotels/ catering. General Secondary Education is separated into a literary or science stream,



ending with the (non-standardized) Tawjihi examination<sup>2</sup> at the end of the 12th grade.

### B. Key statistics: Enrolment and drop-outs

As of 2012, 3.5% of males and 1.7% of females aged 15-29 years have not completed any educational stage, while 8.6% of males 11.1% of females aged 15-29 years hold a university degree (PCBS, On the Eve of International Youth Day, 12 August 2012). According to the Ministry of Education, 10% of boys and 5% of girls aged 6-15 years and 33% of the 16 and 17 years old are out of school (41% boys, 24% girls). Main reasons are early marriage, poor scholastic achievement, and/or joining the labor force. In 2011, net enrolment for basic education was 92% (girls 95%, boys 90%) and for secondary education 85.5% (girls 93.1%, boys 86%). (Ministry of Education Annual Report 2011). In 2012, 87,611 registered students took the Tawjihi exams, 52% of them females. In total, 62.2% passed the exams. About 74.1% of all schools in the Palestinian Territory are under government control. (PCBS, Palestine in Figures 2011, March 2013). In Gaza, 85% of schools (93% of UNRWA schools) work on double shifts. To overcome shortage and accommodate the growing student population, Gaza needs an estimate 250 new schools immediately, and an additional 257 by 2020. (UNICEF, my rights to Education, September 2013).

**C. Post secondary education** is offered in universities and technical colleges' (mainly two-year diploma courses in technical and commercial fields). The enrolment rate in tertiary education is above 40% for the 18-24 age group – which is high when compared with other middle-income countries (World Bank. West Bank and Gaza Public Expenditure Review. Vol. 1, February 2007). In 2011-12, 217,502 students were enrolled in institutions of higher education, incl. 125,320 women (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2012). In 2010, OCHA (the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) documented 24 incidents resulted in the disruption of schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including demolitions and orders issued against schools, military raids, and damage to educational infrastructure, in 2011, 47 attacks and in 2012 (as of August), 29 (Save the Children UK, Child Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2012). The Palestinian Monitoring Group of the Negotiations Affairs Dept. reported nine incidents of schools disruptions caused by Israeli forces between January–end of September, 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2011, 2012; PCBS, Education Statistics, 2012; UNESCO Institute for Statistics in EdStats, 2012).

The illiteracy rate has dropped from 13.9% in 1997 to 4.7% in 2011. Some 51.7% of illiterate persons are 65 years and older. In 2011, illiteracy rates in urban localities were 4.5%,

in rural localities 5.7%, and in refugee camps 4.9% (PCBS, Quarterly National Accounts, 2nd Quarter 2012).

### At a Glance<sup>3</sup>

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Number of schools (West Bank 2012-13)    | WB: 2,058                         |
| Pupils enrolled (West Bank 2012-13)      | WB: 676,772                       |
| Classes (West Bank 2012/13)              | WB: 24,608                        |
| Illiteracy rate (15 years +)             | 4.7% (males: 2.1%, females: 7.4%) |
| Gross enrolment ratio – pre – primary    | 39.5%                             |
| Net enrolment rate – primary *           | 86.3%                             |
| Net enrolment rate – secondary *         | 83.5%                             |
| Gross enrolment ratio- Tertiary *        | 50.2%                             |
| Repetition rate <sup>4</sup> primary*    | 0.5%                              |
| Repetition rate secondary education *    | 2.0%                              |
| Drop-out primary *                       | 1.5%                              |
| Drop-out rate secondary *                | 3.3%                              |
| Primary completion rate*                 | 95%                               |
| Pupil-teacher ratio (primary/secondary)* | 27.8/22.5                         |

### Education in Jerusalem

The education system in East Jerusalem is divided into the “government schools” maintained by the WJM (Waqf and Municipality of Jerusalem), which teach a separate “Arab Educational System,” and non-municipal schools, which are owned by either churches, the Waqf in coordination with the PA, UNRWA or private bodies, and serve roughly the same number of students.

Since the Oslo Accords were signed, schools in East Jerusalem used the curriculum set by the Palestinian Authority (instead of the Jordanian which had been used since 1967). However, in March 2011, the WJM sent a letter to the heads of private schools – schools that are allocated funds from Israeli authorities – in East Jerusalem, stating that at the start of the 2011-12 academic year, they would be obliged to purchase and only use textbooks prepared by Jerusalem Education Administration (JEA), a joint body of the WJM and the Israeli Ministry of Education. The move, by the head of the Knesset education committee, is an attempt to impose Jewish identity on the Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

In September 2011, Palestinian public schools were ordered to purchase their textbooks only from the WJM. The logo of the PA Education Ministry was removed and contents were censored so as to erase any reference to Palestinian

2 A Tawjihi exam is similar to the “Bagrut” exam in Israel. It is a standardized matriculation exam that is administered by the ministry of education in Palestine to all twelfth grade pupils in both the West Bank and Gaza. Based on the results of this exam, the pupil can apply for university studies.

3 Source: Ministry of Education, Statistics about Palestinian General Education, 2011, 2012.

PCBS, Education Statistics; PCBS, Press Release on International Literacy Day, 2012.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics in EdStats, 2012 (data for 2010).

4 Repetition rate refers to pupils who are forced to repeat a grade due to a failing mark.

identity, culture, and heritage, and suppress the Palestinian historical and contemporary narratives. However, the Parents' committees of East Jerusalem schools as well as teachers and other activists rejected the move and called for protests and strikes against the distortion of the Palestinian curriculum, though some schools eventually adhered to the instruction for fear of losing funding. The issue surfaced again when on 28 February 2012 the Director of Arab Education at the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem, Lara Mbariki, sent a letter to the Palestinian schools in Jerusalem demanding they order the required 2012 textbooks from no other source than the Municipality.

A similar attempt to impose Israeli identity on the Palestinians in East Jerusalem was the announcement by the Knesset Education Committee, headed by MK Alex Miller, to have even the Israeli curriculum applied to East Jerusalem. Along the same line the Israeli Ministry of Education requested all private and municipal schools in Jerusalem in April 2011 to disseminate and post the Israeli 'Declaration of Independence' in locations within the schools where all students and teachers can read it. These measures completely disregard the fact that East Jerusalem is internationally recognized to be part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

As "permanent residents," Palestinians in East Jerusalem are granted the same social entitlements as Israeli citizens, incl. the right to public education. The Israeli compulsory Education Law requires that all children aged 5-16 be registered for school and their attendance assured. The law also stipulates that all children over the age of five who have been residing in Israel for over two months are eligible for free education regardless of the legal status of their parents. However, only about half of the Palestinian children in Jerusalem currently attend public schools, while the others must pay for private or unofficial education, attend Waqf schools, or do not attend school at all.

In August 2001, the Israeli High Court ruled that the Jerusalem Education Authority had to register all school-aged children, even if no classrooms were available to serve them. Also in 2001, the court obliged the Ministry of Education and the WJM to allocate funds and build 245 additional classrooms within four years. According to the municipality, as of summer 2012, the public education system in East Jerusalem was short of 1100 classrooms, with the need for additional classrooms further growing. A master plan for East Jerusalem, prepared by the JIIS (Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies) in 2002 at the request of WJM, predicted a shortage of over 1,800 classrooms in 2010. However, between 2001 and mid-2012, only 314 new classrooms were built in East Jerusalem. Despite a High Court ruling ordering that the ongoing shortage must be bridged by 2016, only 33 new classrooms were built in the 2011-12 school year, while 91 are under construction and 257 in different planning stages. With all of these completed, only 348 classrooms will have been added to the official educational system in East Jerusalem, still leaving a shortage of over 750 classrooms (<http://www.acri.org.il/en/2012/08/28/ej-education-report2012/>).

As a result, classrooms are severely crowded: on average, there are 31.7 students per high school class in East Jerusalem, as opposed to 23.8 in West Jerusalem (Ibid.). In addition, over half of the classrooms in municipality schools (647 of 1,398) are below standards and fall short of basic safety and hygiene standards (UNICEF, My Right to Education, September 2012). The Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI) puts the number of sub-standard classrooms as of summer 2012 at 720.

### III. Higher Education in Palestine: Synopsis<sup>5</sup>

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>No. of Accredited Higher Education Institutions</b> | 49                        |
| <b>Total Registered Students</b> (2011/12)             | 217,502 (female: 125,320) |
| - studying towards an MA degree                        | 6724 (female:3,194)       |
| <b>Total graduates</b> (2009/10)                       | 32,961 (female: 19,705)   |
| - graduating with an MA degree                         | 1,283 (female 632)        |
| <b>Community colleges</b> (up to diploma)              | 21 (WB: 16, GS:5)         |
| - Students enrolled                                    | 14,036 (female: 5,797)    |
| - Graduates  | 3,016 (female: 1,636)     |
| <b>University Colleges</b> (up to BA)                  | 14 (WB:10; GS:5)          |
| - Students enrolled                                    | 15,271 (female: 7,773)    |
| - graduates  | 3,161 (female: 1,757)     |
| <b>Universities</b> (up to MA)                         | 13 (WB.:8;GS:5)           |
| - Students enrolled                                    | 122,259 (female:70,471)   |
| - Graduates  | 20,245 (female: 11,937)   |
| <b>Open University</b> (up to BA)                      | 1 (22 branches)           |
| - Students enrolled                                    | 65,936 (female:41,279)    |
| - Graduates  | 6,539 (female: 4,375)     |

- Most students study Education, followed by Social Sciences, Business and Law, Humanities and Arts, Science, Engineering/ Manufacturing & Construction, and Health & Welfare.

### IV. Education, Economic Development and Employability

"Education is the basis for building human capital. Improvements in human capital will lead the development process and build the economy in an independent Palestinian state." This is a striking sentence in the Ministry of Planning and Development's 2010-2012 Strategy; it emphasizes the importance of education and highlights the contributive role it plays in improving the economic status of the nation and

5 Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2012 Statistics.

in realizing the Palestinian national aspiration of freedom and independence. The relevance of education is always paired with the availability in the job market, as both aspects are two sides of the same coin. Both aspects should be responsive to the rapid changes that are taking place in our world. According to the Ministry of Planning and Development's 2010-2012 Strategy, Palestine has made a noticeable progress in the quantitative side of education; there is a growing level of gender equality when it comes to access to education (basic university education), and the percentage of school attendees is one of the highest in the region (albeit the compulsory primary education level). However, these indicators do not mean that the quality of education is improved and that the higher percentage of female and male university graduates can find jobs once they have completed their higher education.

Concentration on improving the quality of education is of vital importance due to the challenging nature of change that is taking place. The Ministry of Higher Education recognizes this in its Strategy (2008-2012): The Educational Development Strategic Plan (Hereinafter EDSP) 2008-12 states the main objective very clearly: 'Towards Quality Education for Development'. This emphasizes the shift from a focus primarily on access (where the PA has reached almost the main Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Education for All goals (EFA) to a focus on quality." This quote summarizes the need for the future clearly. Despite the tremendous amount of problems and challenges in this regard, the quality of education has to be improved. However, a more important stage is missing: the study of the job market and its demands. The job-market is changing and so the demand-and-supply-cycle of jobs should be investigated anew. Hypothetically, what is the benefit gained from graduating 5000 social workers, if the job market only demands 2000? What are the remaining 3000 graduates going to do? Are they going to keep searching for a job for more than a year (provided that another competitive 5000 students are going to join their masses)? Or, are they going to search for jobs in similar lines of duties? Or they will work in different fields? Or are they going to end up as unemployed? These are many questions to a simple statement, to which the answers vary. According to the Ministry of Labor, the number of unemployed graduates is a rising figure, while according to the Ministry of Higher Education the number of the university attendees to the Open University is rising. This indicates, among others, that the unemployed and underemployed graduates are seeking to change their profession. This, if not calculated properly, will have a negative impact on the job market in the coming years.

Another major problem is the education spectrum of learning about the other. Though the curricula is calling for justice and following the human rights but the reality is so challenging and makes the internalization of these themes cumbersome. Even school teachers find it difficult to instil these themes.

This article strives to explore effective and coherent strategies as well as mechanisms that can contribute to shifting the understanding of education about the other from "access

to education in order to know about the other" to "access to proper education in order to answer the real factual demands".

## V. Influence of the discourse on the conflict

The article will tackle the issue of incitement in Palestinian textbooks. According to the Israeli Haaretz newspaper, on 19 November 2004 (Haaretz Daily newspaper, 2004, November 19), Prime Minister Sharon insisted that "Palestinian education and propaganda are more dangerous to Israel than Palestinian weapons." Haaretz also reported that the Israeli Prime Minister "called on the Palestinian leaders to put an 'immediate' end to incitement in media outlets and in the education system - including changing some of the textbooks now in use. Sharon said the changes must be made 'before the first phase of the road map is fully implemented.'"

On 20 November 2004, the same newspaper also reported that Sharon demanded replacing [Palestinian] textbooks and forbade against classes, performances or summer camps that incite against Israel "ending the constant, poisonous incitement and propaganda on Palestinian television and media, and changing the direction of the Palestinian educational system" (Haaretz Daily newspaper, 2004, November 20).

Factual analysis will be followed up by a compilation of reports on these issues.

## VI. The Effect of Occupation on Palestinian Education

Some aspects of the Israeli occupation illustrate its nature more clearly than others. The systematic denial of the right to education is a case in point, this is why IWPS (International Women's Peace Service ) wants to target this issue specifically through the video linked to the ISM (International Solidarity Movement) Education Campaign (Spring 2003).

The Israeli military occupation seeks to disrupt the functioning of the Palestinian educational system by a variety of measures. Curfews, checkpoints and roadblocks prevent students along with teachers from reaching schools and universities. Birzeit University, acknowledged by the international community as Palestine's most respected place of learning is consistently disrupted. Closures, incursions by the IDF and the severity of the checkpoints approaching the university all contribute to ongoing pressure. The policy regarding closure and the destruction of schools and universities is pursued throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

However, students and teachers, at great personal risk, contravene the curfew regularly. Commuting between distances in which under ordinary circumstances might take thirty to forty five minutes, due to the military occupation, can take up to four or five hours. The alternative routes they are often required to take literally put their lives at risk. They are obliged to cover several kilometers on foot occasionally over muddy and slippery mountain footpaths. The military



have been known to shoot the civilians identifying them for official purposes as "terrorists".

Students at the Najah University of Nablus are regarded by the soldiers at the checkpoints as particularly threatening. International Women's Peace Service members have provided medical reports on a number of occasions that highlight a policy that suggests the most promising students at the university are targeted for arrest and torture (Harris, et al., 2012, December). (It is no coincidence that students arrested at these checkpoints and subjected to brutal interrogation are amongst the most successful academically).

The settlers pose a further threat. They harass school children on their way to school and have been known to attack the schools themselves (Stop the Wall, 2013).

Schoolchildren, students and teachers strive to maintain some sort of continuity. Since education is the only resource and weapon they possess, Palestinians give the highest priority to education. Palestine has one of the highest percentages of university graduates in the world.

Yet, in Israeli education and in Western world, Palestinians are portrayed as ignorant and fanatic. Presenting them in this manner enables the West to continue to pursue policies that ignore the political aspirations of these people and facilitate the myth of the "terrorist" people (Haaretz Daily newspaper, 2004, November 20).

## VII. The Other in the Palestinian Textbooks

In the late 1990s, the Palestinian Curriculum Development Center (PCDC) was established and it began studying and overhauling the educational system and started to phase in a new set of books beginning with the academic year 2000-2001. Much, if not all of the criticism leveled at the "Palestinian Textbooks" for incitement, anti-Semitism or marginalizing Jewish history has in fact been directed at the Egyptian and Jordanian textbooks over which the Palestinians had no control. In fact, it was the Palestinians who toiled for years after Oslo to give birth to reasoned and thoughtful solutions to the unique issues that face a people under occupation and how they should educate their children. No serious scholarly substantiated criticism has so far been directed against the new textbooks, although strident, emotionally-charged and factually-challenged statements continue to be made. Akiva Eldar, the renowned Haaretz columnist wrote in January 2, 2001, "The Palestinians are punished twice. First, they are criticized for books produced by the education ministries of others. Secondly, their children study from books that ignore their own nation's narratives" (Haaretz Daily newspaper, 2001, January 2).

The European Union, in a statement issued in Brussels on May 15, 2002 concluded that "Quotations attributed by earlier Center for Monitoring the Impact on Peace, CMIP, are not found in the new Palestinian Authority schoolbooks". "New Textbooks, although not perfect, are free of inciting content and improve the previous textbooks, constituting a valuable contribution to the education of young Palestinians." It

concluded, "Therefore, allegations against the new textbooks funded by EU members have proven unfounded". The eminent scholar Nathan Brown, Professor of political science and international affairs at the George Washington University issued a 26-page report in November 2001 prepared for the Adam Institute entitled "Democracy, History, and the Contest over the Palestinian Curriculum" which made a most significant contribution to this subject. He concluded by stating, "Harsh external critics of the PNA curriculum and textbooks have had to rely on misleading and tendentious reports to support their claim of incitement" (Brown, 2001).

No full understanding of this issue can be claimed without reading the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI) Report that was submitted to the Public Affairs Office, US Consulate General in Jerusalem on March 2003. This scholarly, textured report grounded in a context, cannot be reduced to a concluding statement but it sheds light on complicated issues that ought not to be subjected to strident and simplistic generalizations.

The daily life of these children, with occupation, closures, violence, demolitions, checkpoints, bravado, fear, suicide bombing, air raids, humiliation, economic hardship, vengeance, religious extremism as well as breakdown of traditional values are realities that cannot be dissociated from the classroom. It is those realities that we need to resolve by bringing about peace and security for all. Textbooks that Israeli students read can also be reviewed to bridge the gap between their realities and their classrooms as we improve on those realities too.

In conclusion, I would like to say that history has been unkind to the Jews, the Israelis and the Palestinians. Their narratives of pogroms, ghettos, Holocaust, survival and achievement on the one hand, and dispossession, occupation, demolition; and humiliation as well as resistance and persistence on the other are but just sad tales of two people caught in a complex web of history. Let us, at least those of us with hope for humanity, try with our thoughts focused on the future of our children rather than the past of our forefathers, work for peace and dignity for these two courageous people. Let us not allow the demagogues of

all sides, the violent elements, and the ones with the least sense of fundamental human values, dictate the agenda and undermine peace.

## VIII. The Degree of Understanding the Narrative of the Other

What Palestine do we teach? Is it the historic Palestine with its complete geography, or the Palestine that is likely to emerge on the basis of possible agreements with Israel? How do we view Israel? Is it merely an ordinary neighbor, or is it a state that has arisen on the ruins of most of Palestine?

Although more than one supervising authority operates in education, the direction of education is in general influenced by the Palestinian Ministry of Education because all schools in East Jerusalem implement the Palestinian curriculum. Although each of the Private (local and foreign/religious)



and UNRWA schools have their own school systems and have their own particular educational orientation, all schools take into consideration the overall vision and goals set by the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MOE) upon whose basis the curricula are being developed. In spite of that, the Palestinian Ministry of Education does not have an official direct influence over East Jerusalem schools. The MOE, however, influences most the *Awkaf* schools, labeled *Awkaf*/Government schools. Municipality schools follow the goals of the Israeli government set for East Jerusalem municipal schools.

With respect to the Palestinian Ministry of Education, it worked hard towards developing vision and plans while managing an educational system on the verge of collapse on one hand, and to putting in place a modern system responsive to the social, cultural and economic needs of the Palestinians on the other. To this end, the Ministry of Education developed a comprehensive Five Year Education Development Plan for the years 2008-2012 (Ministry of Education, Palestine) whose vision for education is as follows:

- Education is a Basic Human Right
- Education for Citizenship
- Education as an Instrument for Social and Economic Development
- Education as an Instrument for Democracy and the Teaching of Values
- Education as a Continuous and Lifelong Process

The educational vision adopted by MOE is intended to address and resolve issues of access to education, quality of education, relevance of education to national needs and aspirations, as well as institutional development and capacity building across the education sector. In particular the main objectives of the plan are:

1. Provide access to education for all children
2. Improve quality of education
3. Develop formal and non-formal education
4. Develop education sector planning and management capacity
5. Develop human resources across the education system

Within the above mentioned vision, education was made compulsory through the basic education cycle, that is through the end of grade 10 (covering ages 6 to 15). In addition, special attention was given in the plan to facilitate access to education of girls in general and of children living in remote areas as well as of children with special needs.

With respect to UNRWA, and part of its 5 year development plan, the Department of Education stated its mission for education as follows:

- To equip Palestine refugee children and youth with the required knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and values in accordance with their educational needs, identity and cultural heritage so that they can improve the quality of their lives and that of their societies as

citizens of Palestine, Arab and world communities who are value-oriented, competent in communication and problem-solving skills, skilful in creative and critical thinking and knowledgeable of science, technology and the humanities.

- To foster their awareness of the need for interdependence and tolerance toward differences among individuals and groups that make up the multicultural and global society.
- To promote their sense of aesthetic values, their willingness to contribute to the conservation of nature and their preservation of the delicate balance between the human being and the environment in its broadest meaning.
- To prepare them to encounter and adjust efficiently with the multi-faceted challenges and uncertainties of the rapidly changing world, and to compete successfully in higher levels of education and in the job market.
- To enable them, as democratic citizens, to maintain a high sense of responsibility to balance their rights and needs with those of the family, community, multi-cultural and global society so that they can participate effectively in the improvement of the quality of life.

## IX. Tolerance and Peace Education in Civic Education Textbooks

*Picture 1: Church of the Sepulcher and the Dome of the Rock*

Whenever the civic education textbooks mention religion, they stress the equality between Christianity and Islam. In the lesson “*Our beautiful country*” not only is the Dome of the Rock portrayed, which is the usual symbol of Jerusalem in most publications, but also the Church of the Sepulcher - as the same size and on the same page, despite the fact that it is not at all a picturesque eye-catcher. This is evidence that the civic education textbooks are trying to express the equality of Christianity and Islam, although Christianity is a small minority in the Palestinian society.

*Picture 2: The global community of all the people in the World*

The second picture shows representatives of the global community of all the people in the world. In the subtext, there is an explanation that the peoples of the world differ in color, in origin, in traditions, costumes and habits. Then there follows a sentence which states:

*“But we have to respect all religions of the people, their costumes and habits and when they differ in color.”*

This is a remarkable sentence, as it expresses a general religious tolerance which is different from the traditional Islamic tolerance. Islam has always conceded tolerance only to the “People of the Holy Scriptures”, not to all religions. In most of the constitutions of the states of the Middle East, there are still lists of the recognized religious communities. Polytheistic religions, new religions and atheism are generally excluded. So this general respect of all religions is an expression aimed at fostering an education for the respect of the general human rights, as stated in the human rights declaration of 1948.

Picture 3: Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

This picture conveys again the trial, to show the equality of the religions. It shows the Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the same size. In the text the children are informed about a story from the Islamic tradition:

When Omar Ibn al-Khattab conquered Jerusalem, he visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The guiding monk (according to some traditions it was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Sefhronios himself) invited the conqueror to pray in the church, when the time for the Muslim prayer came. But Omar Ibn al-Khattab refused this invitation, stating that this could be dangerous for the Christians. It was probable that the Muslims would establish mosques at the places where he prayed, after him. So the church could be converted into a Mosque. To avoid this, he preferred to pray at a place nearby, and there indeed the Muslims founded a mosque, which still exists.

With categorical questions, the children are asked to analyze, from this text, what religious tolerance means. The intended answers should point out that religious tolerance means:

- mutual tolerance to practice one's religion
- to avoid exploiting the weakness of a religious minority
- to be careful, polite and to feel empathy in the mutual relations with religions
- that mosques and churches, Christians and Muslims can exist together in history and in today's world (The co-existence of the Omar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is the best evidence of that)

Picture 4: Religious tolerance practice today

In the next lesson this inter-religious aspect is transported to the daily life of the children. There is a picture showing a Muslim and a Christian reading the Holy Scriptures of Koran and the Bible and standing before a mosque and a church. The caption states: "We do the same in different ways", and the children are asked to describe the pictures.

This is very noticeable, because in the previously used Egyptian textbooks, there was a similar lesson and picture. But there the mosque was bigger than the church and the Muslim boy embraces the Christian boy with one arm. The Palestinian textbooks, however, express the equality of the religions despite the fact that there are only about 50,000 Christians in Palestinian society, while the Egyptian textbooks express an unbalanced relationship, in which the more powerful Muslims protect the weaker and smaller Christians, although the Coptic Christians are still the biggest Christian community in the Middle East with about 4-6 Million believers.

In the picture below, there is a formula for expressing season's greetings. The children are asked to use it for the next time when their friends celebrate a Muslim or Christian feast. Before, they were instructed on which words are usual for congratulations on the different feasts. So there is not only a theoretical attempt at educating for tolerance of other religions, but also an attempt to practicing it in daily life. This

has to be praised indeed. It will be difficult to find such a practical inter-religious approach in many Western textbooks!

The only point of criticism that must be mentioned, is that Jews are nowhere explicitly included in this religious tolerance, neither in the texts nor in the pictures. Probably this situation is not possible in the actual Palestinian society. It is easier to express tolerance to an American Native or to a representative of a religion in Asia, than to express tolerance to the Jews, who are their adversaries in a political struggle over the lands of Palestine/Israel. But this omission does not necessarily mean exclusion. All texts are formulated as expressions for *general tolerance to all religions*. The Christian-Muslim relationship is only an example of inter-religious tolerance. Once there is peace, the pictures of Jews and Jewish religious sites could be easily added without any changes in the texts and clarify that Jews are explicitly included in the general religious tolerance. Both Jewish and Palestinian education ignore presenting the positive sides of the others. Tolerance is rarely mentioned in either curricula.

## X. Education for Peace and Democracy

Education for peace and democracy is one of the main topics of the civic education textbooks from the first grade, up to the last grades in elementary school. The main intention is to show that democracy is not a political issue for governments only, but a principle that must start with individuals and families, and in the small communities of neighborhood, quarters, villages and schools. The children are taught that there are different possibilities to solve disagreements in society. Using examples of the daily life of the children at school, on the playgrounds and with their families, the textbooks present the possibilities of votes, in which the minorities have to respect the decisions of the majority. They introduce how to negotiate and convince others with good arguments. They portray the compromise as a way of satisfying the different opinions. Sometimes this has also a inter-religious perception:

Picture 6: Soccer or basketball?

In this lesson, there is the problem that some of the boys want to play soccer, the others want to play basketball. The name of one of the children is a typical Christian name (Hannâ = John), the others have typical Muslim names. As the votes are tied, they finally agree to compromise, playing first basketball and then soccer. Because of the characteristic Christian and Muslim names this simple story conveys also an inter-religious message: The children get acquainted with the fact that Christians and Muslims are friends and play together. And the example of "John" and his Muslim friends also shows that Christians and Muslims can find compromises (Palestinian State, Ministry Of Education, 2002).

## XI. Education for Human Rights

Apart from democracy, the education for tolerance and fostering individual human rights are one of the main issues in the Civics Education textbooks. Several times the first article of the general human rights declaration of 1948 is quoted. It

is considered as a “right which is not open for discussions or interpretations”. Human rights are not considered as rights which were founded by Muhammad, as some of these ideas already existed in the Greek philosophy. In the lessons there is always the trial to show how different Palestinian declarations and the draft of the Palestinian constitution agree with the

human rights declarations. Several lessons focus on special human rights: the right to have and express one’s opinion, the right of free information and communication, the rights of the women, the rights of the children (even the violence in the family, which is also a very sensitive in Western countries, is topic in one lesson).

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# The Discourse and Practice of Peace Education Policy in Israel

Soli Vered

Israeli society has been involved in conflict with the Arab states and with the Palestinians for more than a century. During the long lasting years of conflict, peace has always been presented and perceived as a desirable goal – the "ultimate desideratum" of the Jewish people (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Pinson, Levy, Gross & Soker, 2010). The State of Israel has always and repeatedly stated its desire to achieve peace with its neighbors and declared its willingness to promote peace process in the Middle East, as reflected first and foremost in its Declaration of Independence, as well as in all of its governments' fundamental guidelines over the years, and in the political rhetoric of all its leaders. On the practical level, Israel has conducted various political contacts and negotiations aimed at finding a resolution to the conflict; some have matured into agreements and understandings (such were the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, the Madrid Conference and the Oslo accords in the 1990's, and the peace treaty with Jordan in 1994), while many other official peace plans and unofficial initiatives failed to come to realization (Sasson, 2004) (among them, some are still on the agenda, such as the Clinton Parameters, the Roadmap for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, Geneva Initiative, and Ayalon-Nusseibeh agreement).

However, in order to build stable and lasting peaceful relations between parties that have been engaged in prolonged violent conflict, formal diplomatic peace-making efforts are not enough. Since conflicts revolve not only around tangible interests and goals (such as self-determination, territories, natural resources, sacred sites and the like), but involve also deeply embedded beliefs, narratives and emotions, the peaceful end to the conflict requires, beyond political and structural arrangements, major wide-scale social and cultural changes (Bar-Tal, 2013; Christie, 2006; Cohrs & Boehnke, 2008; Lederach, 1995). These changes mean creating a new socio-psychological repertoire to replace those shared beliefs, motivations, attitudes and emotions which nurtured the conflict that were built and reinforced for decades. They are about replacing the basic assumptions which underlay the society members' worldview regarding the conflict with an ethos of peace: new approaches regarding its nature and the nature of peace, new perceptions which legitimize and personalize the opposing party, new goals concerning the establishment of peaceful relations with the opponent, new ideas for how to resolve the conflict peacefully, a more critical and objective outlook onto the in-group behavior, and finally recognition of the need to reconcile and to construct

a new climate that will promote all the above new ideas (Bar-Tal, 2013).

In these processes, education has long been perceived as one of the most influential elements. Responsible not only for providing knowledge but also for instilling values, symbols, norms, collective memories, attitudes, perceptions, and social as well as national goals, the educational system serves as a central socialization agent (Dreeben, 1968; Himmelweit & Swift, 1969) by which societies construct, reinforce and transmit their social ethos to their younger generations. Many researchers, therefore, are of the opinion that the values and attitudes reflected in the educational system, as well as the messages and narratives transmitted both explicitly and implicitly (through curricula, learning materials, school textbooks, teaching in the classroom and extracurricular educational activities) have an impact on wide-ranging political, social and cultural processes concerning war and peace (Bar-Tal, 2013; Firer & Adwan, 2004; Mathias & Niederland, 1994; Pingel, 2010; Slater, 1995). In this respect, education in the context of protracted ethno-national conflict can play one of two roles (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000): on the one hand, the beliefs, approaches and images reflected in the educational system may reinforce society's conflict-supportive collective narrative, thus contribute to the conflict's perpetuation (Bar-Tal, 2013; Davies, 2004; Halperin, 2008; Smith & Vaux, 2003); on the other hand, the education system can lay the foundation for nurturing perceptions and attitudes essential for promoting peace and reconciliation, increasing tolerance and trust between the parties and educating young people to become agents for positive social change (Ardizzone, 2001; Clarken, 1986; Kriesberg, 2007; Smith, 2010).

Indeed, in recent decades peace education gained momentum and became accepted and common throughout the world as an educational element necessary for the modern-democratic societies, which aims in general to reject violence and conflict and promote a culture of peace against the culture of war (Iram, 2006; United Nations, 1998) by fostering tolerance toward the other, eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, encouraging justice and equality, imparting skills and dispositions of conflict resolution and developing of understanding and reconciliation between rival groups (Bar-Tal, 2002; Bjerstedt, 1993; Danesh, 2006; Salomon & Nevo, 2002).

Peace Education has many faces, depending on the society's needs, its characteristics, its goals and the socio-political context (Bar-Tal, 2002; Harris, 1999; Salomon, 2002). In



societies experiencing prolonged intractable conflict<sup>1</sup>, peace education is designed to advance the process of peace-building and prepare the people to live in an era of reconciliation and peace through the instilling of a new world view to the younger generation: a new conception to replace the current thinking patterns and provide social ethos, goals, attitudes and values that support making peace with the enemy and are consistent with the principles of reconciliation and a culture of peace (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2002; Bar-Tal, Rosen & Nets-Zehngut, 2010; Iram, 2006; Salomon, 2002). In this form, peace education involves a process of social change, since it should overcome a rooted socio-psychological infrastructure of certain beliefs, ideas, collective narratives and emotions that support the conflict and contradict fundamentals of peace-building (see: Bar-Tal, 2013; Firer, 2002; Salomon, 2004a, 2011; Salomon & Cairns, 2010).

In this respect, the educational system may serve as a central device by societies genuinely wishing to promote peace-building to convey contents and messages that support ending the conflict and promote reconciliation between the parties. Indeed, there are societies and nations who have started implementing peace education programs as a mechanism for social change even while being involved in violent protracted conflict, indicating their desire to promote peace-building. Such process occurred, for example, in Northern Ireland (Duffy, 2000; Smith, 1995, 1999) and is now happening in Cyprus (Papadakis, 2008; Zembylas, 2011). Moreover, peace education is perceived to be not only advisable but as a necessary crucial element in promoting peace process and establishing the conditions required for reconciliation between the nations (Aall, Helsing & Tidwell, 2007; Abu-Nimer, 2004; Kriesberg, 1998). Many societies which underwent severe conflicts hence implement peace education programs, projects and reforms designed to promote mutual understanding between the parties and the creation of a culture of peace (see for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Clarke-Habibi, 2005; Danesh, 2006, 2008; in El-Salvador: Guzmán, 2005; in Sri-Lanka: Lopes-Cardozo, 2008; Perera, 2000; and in Rwanda: Mukarubuga, 2002).

These widely accepted conceptions are reflected also in Israel's State education goals one of which is "*educating toward the desire for peace and tolerance in relations among people and nations*" (State Education Law 1953, Amendment Act 2000). Since, according to its official policy, Israel wants peace and is acting to promote peace process, and given that it is projected as a general goal of Israel's education system, peace education would have been expected to take major part in Israel's educational policy in general and most particularly in response to some crucial dialogue and peace moves occurred during the Arab-Israeli conflict since the 1970s. This study, therefore, reviews the educational

policy applied in practice in Israel's state education, in light of the prolonged conflict and the changes therein over the years. As will be demonstrated hereinafter, it appears that in the past decades some significant changes took place in Israel's educational policy, reflecting the evolution of the conflict and transformations in its nature, and influenced by its socio-psychological infrastructure (for a comprehensive socio-psychological analysis of the Israeli society with regard to the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflict, see: Bar-Tal, 2007b).

At the height of the Israeli-Arab conflict, from the late 1940s up until the 1970s, the societal beliefs of collective memory and the ethos of conflict have prevailed in Israeli society exclusively, and the hegemonic culture of conflict have "ruled the roost". During this period, the educational system was perceived as an institution which role was to hand down to the young generation the hegemonic Zionist narrative and its values in order to unite the nation and to form a clear collective identity in face of the external Arab threat (Firer, 1985; Kizel, 2008; Yogev, 2010). Accordingly, learning materials and textbooks focused on inculcating Zionist values and national myths, while presenting a simplistic and one-sided picture of the Israeli-Arab conflict and of central historical events. Thus, they presented the most negative stereotypical reference of Arabs, excluded the Palestinian narrative and rejected the Palestinian national movement and refused to recognize a Palestinian entity. At the same time, the books emphasized the cultural, moral and social supremacy of the Jewish people their exclusive right over the Land of Israel (Podeh, 2002; and also: Bar-Gal, 1993; Bezalel, 1989; David, 2012; Zohar, 1972).

Podeh (2002) points out that in fact, the educational system at this stage did not at all develop a clear position, not to mention an educational policy, concerning the "Arab question" (later referred to as the Israeli-Arab conflict), and that the elimination of three separated educational streams in favor of the State education system in 1953 produced no significant change in attitude towards this matter. He explains the ignoring of the Arab issue by two main reasons: firstly, Arabs, and Palestinians in particular, were generally absent from the collective memory of the new nation at all, since mentioning them would have negated or to the least harmed the legitimacy of the Zionist project. In addition, military and political events during 1948-1967 intensified the feelings of isolation and blockade and exacerbated the fear that further conflict with the Arabs would lead to the destruction of Israel. In this respect, even if there wasn't any structured hate within the educational system towards Arabs, its approach reinforced the ideological and cultural consensus among large sections of Israeli society with regard to the Israeli-Arab conflict and the image of the Arab, and in the long run contributed to the creation and perpetuation of hostility between the parties (Podeh, 2002).

However, over the years several significant events and developments have occurred in the course of the conflict, which moderated some of its intractable characteristics and affected the relations between Jews and Arabs in the region. At the same time, changes have taken place also

<sup>1</sup> Intractable conflicts are characterized as lasting at least 25 years, violent, and perceived as unsolvable, over goals considered existential, and of zero-sum nature. Also, these conflicts greatly preoccupy society members, and the parties involved invest much in their continuation (Bar-Tal, 1998a, 2007a, 2013; Kriesberg, 1993, 2005).

in the repertoire of the socio-psychological infrastructure of Jewish society in Israel, as certain elements began to change their beliefs, attitudes and feelings regarding the conflict and its goals, the image of the Arab, the sense of victimhood and positive self-image, and regarding the chances of peace-making.

The first milestone emerged following the 1967 war, the results of which led to political and social developments that increased awareness of the Ministry of Education towards the Arab issue, arousing a debate over the desirability of teaching the Israeli-Arab conflict in the educational system (Podeh, 2002). Thus, in a discussion that took place at a conference organized by the Teachers Union on 1969, first explicit reference was made in regard to the educational system's responsibility "to give our students a valid and accurate account of the enemy and to encourage a balanced attitude toward the minorities within our country as well as toward people living around us, with clear understanding that we want the enemy to soon become a neighbor with whom we'll have neighborly relations" (The Teachers Union, 1970, in: Podeh, 2000). Later on, in the mid 1970s, the Ministry introduced a new history and civics curricula which reflected political, cultural and societal changes that have taken place in Israeli society at the time, among them, processes of democratization and openness, the growing awareness of the Arab problem and the legitimization for the existence of a Palestinian entity. The educational reform brought about an emphasis on didactic instructional objectives, while decreasing its targeting of national goals. Respectively, textbooks written from this period introduced the Arabs and history of the Israeli-Arab conflict in a more balanced manner. The historical narrative presented in the books was less biased, with a marked decrease in straightforward ideological direction, and reduction of Jewish mythologization and heroification. There were signs in the textbooks of recognition of the existence of Palestinian nationalism, and the use of negative and derogatory terms to describe the violent opposition of the Arabs to the Jewish settlement decreased. Nonetheless, the nationalist approach and the Zionist prism through which the conflict was viewed remained dominant (see: Bar-Tal, 1998b; Benyamin, 1987; Firer, 1985; Brosh, 1997; Podeh, 2002).

Less than a decade later, following the Yom-Kippur War, a most dramatic turnaround has taken place in the relationship between of Israel and Egypt. The two states signed the interim agreement (1975) in which each side vowed to end the use of force and threat against the other, and stated that the Israeli-Arab conflict shall be resolved by peaceful means. In November 1977 Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his historic visit to Jerusalem, which led the signing of the peace treaty two years later, officially ending over thirty years of hostility between the two parties. These were seminal events in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict, followed also by changes of the socio-psychological repertoire of Jewish society in Israel with a large portion of the public shifting from delegitimization to official recognition of the existence of the other and their national rights, as well as to the willingness to settle the conflict peacefully (Bar-Tal,

2007b). However, literature indicates that at the time these political and social dramatic changes didn't bring about any change in the educational discourse and practice with regard to peace. The educational system, firmly fixed to the main themes of the hegemonic Zionist narrative, continued to construct feelings of threat and fear while reinforcing Zionist-Jewish identity and strengthening the spirit of the Israeli society against the enemy and its resilience to cope with the conflict (Firer & Adwan, 2004; Pinson et al., 2010; Podeh, 2002). In other words, the Ministry of Education did not use the potential change in direction in order to liberate the young generation from the hegemony of the ethos of conflict, but rather continued its routine educational policy regarding the Arab issue, appropriate for a state of conflict.

A more significant change in attitude of the educational system toward the issue of Jewish-Arab relations emerged only in the mid-1980s. During this period, the Ministry of Education adopted a more genuine and open approach which brought up some changes in teaching the historical narrative of the conflict and in the representation of the Arabs, which was later also reflected in the curriculum and textbooks (Podeh, 2002, Kizel, 2008). The first signs of peace education appeared in guidelines laid down by the Ministry of Education, headed by Zebulun Hammer, to a Jewish-Arab coexistence program which dealt with several aspects of the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflict using concepts of multiculturalism, respect, tolerance and equality. The curriculum published in 1984 stated that there is an existential need for the education system to deal with relations between Jews and Arabs within Israel and in the region, and instructed the teaching of history of the Arab peoples, their culture, their art, language and religion, as well as the integration of studying Israeli-Arab relations throughout the educational process from kindergarten to the 12th grade (Ministry of Education, 1984). The Ministry planned to prepare within three years appropriate curricula, educational action plans and teacher training to support the Jewish-Arab coexistence program, but even before implementing the initiative, new Minister of Education, Yitzhak Navon, decided to focus on education for democracy as the main educational subject for the following school year. In 1986, a new Unit for Education for Democracy and Coexistence was established in the Ministry in order to promote issues such as active citizenship and improving relations between groups in the Israeli society (Ministry of Education, 1985). Podeh (2002) notes in this regard that, although peace education eventually turned away from issue of relations with the Arab states and the Palestinians, the Ministry's engagement in democracy has contributed to deepen the discussion of questions of tolerance, identity and relationships within the education system.

During the 1990s there were additional turning points in the peace process, which included the Madrid Conference in 1991, the agreements reached between Israel and the Palestinians in 1993-1995 ("the Oslo Accords"), and the peace treaty with Jordan in 1994. The educational system, though, was not prepared at the time for this surprising peace process, which stood in stark contrast to the ethos

of conflict and its manner for dealing with the reality at the time (Pinson et al., 2010). Later, the Ministry responded to the changing political and social situation, and under Minister Amnon Rubinstein for the first time ever began implementing direct peace education (Bar-Tal, Rosen & Nets-Zehngut, 2010). Ministerial committees were appointed to review the image of Arabs in existing textbook and to repair national curriculum in the spirit of the coming peace (Firer, 1995), followed by the publication of a most comprehensive educational program which included new topics such as the concept of peace, the history of the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Arab world, the Middle East peace process, and more (Ministry of Education, 1994). The program stated that education and teaching should provide students with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to achieve educational goals set forth in the spirit of peace, and was executed on various levels such as teacher training courses, working plans of Ministry's departments, districts and the schools, as well as an extensive range activity of non-governmental organizations in educational institutions. One of the most prominent aspects of this enterprise was the publication of hundreds of new educational materials for preschool teachers, school teachers and students, dealing with the essence of peace education, acquaintance with the Arabs, the history of the conflict and the meaning of peace.

In these ways, the state educational system took upon itself to establish a psychological process among students for dealing with preceding values, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, emotions, images and stereotypes – through the creation of a new framework grounded in ethos of peace that would allow a different perception of the past, along with establishing new future expectations, in order to support the peace process. The educational policy taken by the ministry demonstrates the perceived role of the educational system – as a leading social institution that has a decisive impact on the chances to achieve stable and constant peace. However, these peace education efforts faced many social, political and educational difficulties (Firer, 1995), and did not manage to reach a stage of development to become fully established. The appointment of Hammer as new Education Minister following the 1996 elections (held after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin) brought to an end to the mobilization for peace education and the advancing of different educational agenda.

In the first decade of the 2000s there was a substantial withdrawal from the peace process, which led to a renewed strengthening of some of the intractable characteristics of the conflict and some of the societal beliefs in the ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal & Sharvit, 2008). Respectively, peace education, as a process aimed at changing hearts and minds and instilling a new worldview to promote the end of the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, has vanished from the educational system and remained part of the militaristic discourse of the ethos of conflict, as a utopian idea (Pinson et al., 2010; Tamir, 2011). Some studies also indicate that although the educational system has undergone significant change in its approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict over the years, textbooks written during this period still contain some

content that match the socio-psychological infrastructure of the conflict and narrative which conveys Zionist ideology, replete with ethnocentrism and the negative reference of the Palestinians being accused of the outbreak of the conflict and its continuation (see: David, 2012; Elhanan-Peled, 2011; Firer & Adwan, 2004; Kizel, 2008).

Nonetheless, noteworthy is a policy report of "Education for Shared Life between Jews and Arabs in Israel" (Salomon & Issawi, 2009), which summarized the proposals of a public committee appointed by the Minister of Education at the time Yuli Tamir. The report recommended a series of large-scale measures aimed at integrating education for coexistence between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in state education, while addressing also the Palestinian national identity and collective narrative and the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This initiative marked another attempt to hold a comprehensive reform in this issue in the educational system; but soon after its submission the minister was replaced, following national elections and the change of government, and its recommendations were shelved as well.

In recent years, parallel to re-escalation of the conflict, it seemed that the educational policy has taken a more narrow-nationalistic orientation. A series of initiatives launched by the ministry, headed by Gideon Sa'ar, focused on strengthening the Jewish and Zionist identity of the students and marked a significant reinforcement of militaristic values in schools and among young people. This includes, among other aspects, a new compulsory subject in the state schools' curriculum of "Israeli Heritage and Culture"; opening the week in Jewish kindergartens with the raising of the Israeli flag and the singing of the national anthem "Hatikva"; "Israel Journey" educational program for 11th graders, during which students go through a very powerful experience concerning their Jewish-Zionist identity; a tour program called "Ascending to Hebron" as part of a drive led by the ministry that includes heritage tours at Jewish archaeological sites; a program launched in cooperation with the IDF called "Derekh Erech" ("Path of Values") designed to enhance the motivation among high school students to join the army; an initiative called "101"<sup>2</sup> in collaboration with "Aharai", a social educational organization, aimed at preparing school students for a significant military service in the IDF; and a new model presented recently of paying differential bonuses to schools and teachers, according to a number of criteria including matriculation results, drop-out rates and absorption of special-education students, as well as the rate of service to the State, based on the percentage of a school's students who perform military or civilian national service (Ministry of Education official website).

At the same time, the policy taken by the Ministry of Education's seems to distance state education from themes relating to coexistence, education for democracy, political consciousness, humanist values, tolerance and freedom of expression (see: Aloni, Yogev, Michaeli & Nave, 2011). These

2 Unit 101 was an Israeli special operations unit founded and led by Ariel Sharon on the orders of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in August 1953. It was created to retaliate against Palestinian violence against Israeli civilians.



trends were reflected, for example, according to the Ministry's order to cease using a history textbook that offers both Israeli and Palestinian narratives of the conflict, which was taught as part of enrichment history class in the Sha'ar HaNegev high school in the Sderot area (Kashti, 2010a); removal of Ministry's logo from the website 'Common Denominator', a web 2.0 learning environment developed by the Center for Educational Technology and the Abraham Fund Initiatives to promote Jewish-Arab coexistence (Kashti, 2010b); removal of the concept of "Nakba" from the official curriculum of the Arab sector (Talmor & Yahav, 2009); reprimanding the Arab Arara high school for taking students to participate in a human rights march in Tel Aviv sponsored by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (Nesher, 2011); prevention of the distribution of children's book containing an illustrative presentation of the articles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights to compulsory nursery schools in Ariel, for including "problematic content" (Zemer, 2010); excluding of the subject of the "political-ideological split" from civics curriculum (Kashti, 2011); and banning of civics textbook previously approved and used in schools for some factual errors and, specifically for its treatment of the Goldstone report on Operation Cast Lead, right-wing violence in Israel, and its depiction of immigration from the former Soviet Union (Nesher, 2012).

It appears, therefore, that the current educational policy prefers reinforcing Jewish and Zionist values at the expense of democratic issues or Israeli-Arab co-existence, marking a prominent imbalance between universal and particular values (Bar-Tal, 2010). Influencing the worldview of Israel's future citizens, this educational line might, presumably, also negatively affect in the long term the chances of peace making and reconciliation. It has to be noted, though, that new Minister Rabbi Shai Piron, who took on the post in March, 2013, did not yet announce strategic guidelines for the current ministry's educational policy, hence the direction of State educational line may change in the near future.

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This article examines the policy taken over the years by the Israeli Education Ministry with regards to peace education, assuming that if peace is indeed a desirable goal of the State of Israel, the educational system should prepare people to enable its realization. However, the historical review of its educational policy demonstrates that despite statements about its desire to promote the peace process, and even though peace education is defined by law as an educational goal, Israel has failed to develop a consistent framework for continuous implementation of peace education as a process aimed at changing students consciousness and instilling a new worldview to advance the end of the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

The examination of peace education policy in a society undergoing protracted conflict may be perceived as a strange and even illogical task. The Israeli-Arab conflict has been characterized for decades with all the features of an intractable conflict, and still today, although some of its intractable characteristics were moderated, it remains violent and continues to preoccupy Israeli society to a great extent,

and many still consider it to be existential and unsolvable. However, since the 1970s, some crucial events and peace processes have taken place that changed its course and affected the lives of the parties involved, but it appears that even the peace agreements signed with Egypt, the Palestinians and Jordan barely influenced peace education policy in Israel in the long-term, and perhaps this may be seen as even stranger and illogical as well. Indeed, as Pinson et al. (2010) note, the Ministry of Education encouraged over the years the value of peace as a noble value and the ultimate desideratum of the Israeli society, but was engaged most of this time primarily imparting the ethos of conflict and preparation for conflict among students.

How, then, can this gap between state official discourse, which places peace education as an educational goal, and its actual implementation in practice be explained?

Israel's Educational policy is inextricably linked to the ruling political ideology and the change of governments, as well as to political and security events and the dominant ethos in society. The state educational system was established in the newly founded State, and had to shape and provide the youth a national identity convinced of its righteousness and strength, create social cohesion and educate for constant mobilization for a state surrounded by enemies seeking its destruction. In the early years, therefore, the state took a clear national educational line emphasizing one-sided Zionist narrative. However, since the 1967 war, fissures erupted the national consensus and the public discourse changed: the weak victim became a stronger occupier, liberal trends in Israeli society were intensified against nationalistic ones, and multicultural democracy began making its first steps. The previous nationalist education was no longer unanimously agreed upon or perceived as obvious, but rather was criticized from different directions for various matters (such as oriental Jews, academia, the issue of Holocaust education, and more). Thus, although the subordination of the educational system to politics still prevailed, the ideological contradictions and the debate over the educational values and teaching methods used have sharpened.

Since each government attempts to appropriate education to transmit its ideology and values, and given the political instability that characterizes Israeli democracy, the educational system sways over the years, influenced by the frequently changing ministers leading ever-changing national and educational agenda. This instability is evident at many levels and in many aspects of education including the fluctuations that occurred over time in peace education and the absence of a constant educational approach in this matter. A remarkable example is the extreme changes in peace education policy within a few years during the 1990s, when the achievements made in 1994-1995 were wiped out after the change of power and change of the leading ideological line in light of the derailment of the peace process. In this respect, the future of peace education looks somewhat bleak as the political dominant forces in Israel seems to be taking a more nationalistic turn over the last years.



Furthermore, although in theory peace education is essentially about humanistic education dealing with human rights and the moral necessity to grant justice and equality to any individual, group or nation, in Israel it is perceived as political, and touches upon ideological difference of opinion tearing the Israeli society apart. Indeed, some of the major problems of peace education involve the question of the boundaries between moral education and ideological education, which has political implications (Firer, 1995; Hicks, 1988). The attitude towards peace education in Israel is influenced by the ongoing state of conflict which since 2000 appears to be escalating rather than reaching its resolution, making it very difficult for the education system to focus on values such as peace and reconciliation that seem far out of reach (Pasternak & Zedekiahu, 1994). Thus, except for a couple of years in the 1990s, in which political and social conditions enabled an extraordinary educational attempt to deal with the challenging cultural and psychological changes required for peace and reconciliation processes, there was not any significant peace education in the history of Israeli education. The main question at hand is, therefore, whether in a state of ongoing conflict (and even more so at times of crisis, war

and terrorism), education can prepare students for peace, and reduce the fear and alienation they feel towards the rival. In this regard, models proposed by Bar-Tal, Rosen & Nets-Zehngut (2010) or Davies (2005) offer the possibility to cope with these challenges by implementing indirect peace education, even in state of conflict, by educating for general values and fundamentals of democracy, humanism and peace-making such as tolerance, acceptance of the other, resistance to violence, critical and reflective thinking. Moreover, history teaches that the educational system must not wait for the "appropriate" socio-political conditions to engage in peace education. On the contrary, it is precisely during these times, when peace seems far away, and public confidence in it has decreased, that peace education is necessary, since it carries hope of building a better society and the chance for future resolution of the conflict and reconciliation between the peoples (Bar-Tal, Rosen & Nets-Zehngut, 2010; Tamir, 2011). Otherwise, we are condemned to perpetual conflict and bloodshed for generations, since any progress towards peace would encounter huge socio-psychological difficulties among the Israeli public, educated for decades according to consciousness of existential threat and one-dimensional national ethos.

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# A [No] Story of their Own: The Crisis of Identity Narrative in the Arab Education System in Israel and a Proposition for Alternative Modeling

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## Introduction

Education is the key to the formation of an identity and of a sense of the larger collective. A community's ethos, history, culture and expectations are passed over generations, thus shaping the way its members perceive themselves and others and the way in which they understand the past, frame the present, and pave a road towards the future. Naturally, there are segments of difference within any system of education—be they religious, secular, private, public, etc. That said, the essential means by which education regulates identity remains a prototype character. Education is then understood to be a "double-edged sword". It may construct an individual's identity as part of a cohesive whole, or it may provide sub-groups with the power necessary to challenge the social order (Russell, 2001). This may be the ideal or the norm regarding the means by which education develops and operates in communities around the world. Yet this is not found to be the case when the Arab Palestinian system of education in Israel is discerned.

Both the Arab Palestinian and Jewish systems of education are controlled by the Israeli Ministry of Education. However, in contrast to the Jewish system of education in Israel, characterized by a distinct Jewish character manifested in the values, objectives, material, and programming that guide and construct it (Abu-Saad, 2006), the Arab Palestinian system of education excludes any reference to identity and distances itself from any narrative of what it means to be a member of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel. The textbooks and programs either present an irrelevant or regressive character of an individual, or adhere to Jewish history and culture as an educational source.

The Arab Palestinian system of education in Israel generates a vacuum—a lack of awareness of a collective or cultural identity narrative or, in the best case scenario, a source of confusion. According to Abu-Saad, "the Arab curricula is designed to 'de-educate', or dispossess, indigenous Palestinian pupils of the knowledge of their own people and history" (2008). I would even emphasize that it perpetuates a deficit as the identity controlled by the substitute state of indigenous Arab Palestinians in Israel.

This article examines the premises of the theory of deficit and confusion that is characteristic of the Arab system of education, and how this reflects and perpetuates the status quo of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel. Yet it also explores an alternative schooling system in which, by means of the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, a platform is created for Arab Palestinian students in Israel, wherein one can construct an individual and collective approach to positive identity. Q School, an institution working to develop the human resources of the Arab Palestinian community in Israel through the teaching and learning of English, was founded to meet the cognitive and cultural needs of youth and children of the community. Utilizing English as a space for identity construction may appear to be irrelevant to Arab Palestinians in Israel, yet it provides a neutral realm wherein the mechanism of identity formation may be created and practiced. Away from the resonance of loss and the education of lack and inferiority, English may provide a prestigious location in which Arab Palestinian students are able to 'return' to a sense of confident selfhood, individually and collectively.

Q School—an alternative schooling model—programs education in a way which enhances a narrative of positive, leading, and active selfhood among Arab Palestinian students in Israel, enabling them to develop authentic agency and participation within local, national and international contexts. The content and structure of the textbooks developed by Q School as well as methods of instruction will be described throughout the article, revealing a possible approach to defeating lack and confusion by staging personal and collective development.

## Context

### The Arab Palestinian Minority in Israel

Arab Palestinian citizens comprise approximately 20% of the population in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The Arab Palestinian minority is part of the indigenous Palestinian



people that remained in its homeland after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The geographical and political boundaries of the State of Israel separate this population from the rest of the Palestinian and Arab people in the region.

Due to such circumstances, the identity of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel is complex; the minority is largely disconnected from other Arab countries with minimal acceptance, communication and freedom of movement. As citizens of the State of Israel, their acceptance as Arabs by Arabs in Arab countries is limited. Yet such citizenship does not guarantee their integration and equal participation in Israeli society. They are discriminated against socially, educationally, economically and politically (Dwairy, 2004; Abu-Saad, 2006).

The complexity of democratic institutions functioning within an institutionalized ethnic dominance in Israel, according to Smootha (1990), problematizes the status of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel. The minority has become segmented, co-opted, segregated, marginalized and made dependent as a result of this system (Lustick, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Seliktar, 1984). As Smootha further elaborates, "As long as Israel remains Jewish and Zionist, full Israelization of the Arabs is impossible because complete equality cannot be granted to the Arabs" (1999). In other words, according to Nasser & Nasser "Palestinian Israelis have a strained identity; they cannot become full Israelis and cannot fully live their Palestinian affiliation. Their identity is subject to multiple forces that make it dynamic and unstable because of the competing forces acting upon it" (2008).

In addition to the above, it is important to note that the majority of Palestinian Arabs in Israel live separately from Jews, a fact that further complicates identity definition; only 24% of the Arab Palestinian population lives in mixed cities of both Arab and Jewish populations (Prime Minister Office report, 2009). They are geographically, socially and administratively separate from Jews. There have not been assimilation policies directed towards Arab Palestinians in Israel. This may have given them the freedom to practice religion and culture independently to an extent, yet it also left them on the margins of the state of Israel as the "outsiders" at times, or a threat from within, "excluded them from the national identity of the state" and at the same time not allowed to "develop a national identity of their own, nor are they allowed collective or treaty rights" (Abu-Saad, 2006).

An additional component of Arab Palestinian identity in Israel is that it is marked by internal divisions. Based on religion, Arab Palestinians are divided into Druze, Muslims and Christians. The Israeli government attempted to further split this minority into smaller groups enhanced by geographical distinctions—the Northern Galilee, the Muslim Triangle and the Bedouin Negev (Lustick, 1980; McDowall, 1989; Seliktar, 1984; Zidani, 1997). This intentional separation has challenged the formation of a collective identity of the community. Arab Palestinian identity is thus rendered ambivalent or fragmented, a space in which incomplete and contradictory variables of ethnicity, religion, politics, and history clash.

## The Arab Palestinian schooling system in Israel

In the State of Israel, a great diversity of schools are managed and directed by the Ministry of Education. Their teachers are trained and vetted, their textbooks are written and translated—every aspect of a young person's education is controlled by the members of this institution.

Throughout their schooling, from elementary to high school, Arab and Jewish students in Israel primarily attend separate schools. The education system in Israel is a centralized system administered through the Ministry of Education. Among the main responsibilities of the Ministry of Education are the development of curricula, the supervision of teachers and the construction of school facilities.

Arab Palestinian and Jewish students are rarely schooled together, even in the country's mixed cities. The school system, which is the foundation of connections made later in life, is separate even in Israeli towns (such as Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramle, and Jaffa) that are known for their mixed Jewish/Arab Palestinian populations. This is understood to be simply a matter of the language of instruction: Jews attend schools which emphasize Hebrew instruction, and Arab Palestinians attend schools which emphasize Arabic instruction. Although principally speaking, Arab Palestinian students can study in Jewish schools, they rarely do. The Arab and Jewish systems of education remain largely segregated.

The separation of school systems in the state of Israel, regardless of motivation, has far-reaching and devastating results. Arab Palestinian and Jewish students are taught sometimes differing material and through different methods of instruction, while both school systems are managed and directed by the Israeli Ministry of Education. Teaching material has to be approved by the predominantly Jewish Ministry yet the quality of education is rarely supervised; the results of such a hierarchy are felt throughout the country.

According to Abu-Saad, the Arab education system has been and continues to be "directed by members of the Jewish majority and governed by the same set of political criteria that aim to control and marginalize Palestinian Arabs and suppress the processes of identity formation" (Abu Saad, 2004). Arab identity is ignored, overshadowed by lessons in Jewish history, or misrepresented. These textbooks and curricula can have lasting effects on the country's Arab Palestinian sector, beginning with the students themselves.

The majority of these Ministry-approved teaching materials do not emphasize Arab identity in any way. Senior lecturer Andre Elias Mazawi, head of the Sociology of Education Program at Tel Aviv University, states that Arab identity must be taken into consideration throughout the curriculum: "There are questions of culture in all subjects," he says. "All subjects need to take into account the background of the students. Most curricula are just translated into Arabic and not specially adapted. Even in less value-laden subjects, there is bias" (Human Rights Watch, 2001). The incident of bias is unsurprising in a divided school system. With students

separate and unable to make connections, prejudice runs rampant.

According to Adwan and Bar Tal (2013), it is the Jewish majority that comprises the dominant culture, and thus it is the Jewish culture, history, and language that all students—regardless of background—must learn in the Israeli system of education. Arab Palestinian students in Israel spend more class hours studying Jewish history and the Hebrew language than they do learning Arabic literature and history. According to Abu-Saad, they are required to develop identification with Jewish values and “further Zionist aspirations at the expense of the development of their own national awareness and sense of belonging to their own people” (Abu-Saad, 1991).

One Arab student expressed frustration with the study of Jewish values in an Arab school:

Everything we study is about the Jews. Everything is Jewish culture. We study Bialik [Jewish nationalist poet] and [the biblical] Rachel. Why do I have to study them? Why don't they teach me Mahmud Darwish [Palestinian nationalist poet]? Why don't they teach me Nizar Qabbani [Arab nationalist poet]? Why don't they teach me Edward Said? Why don't they teach me about Arab philosophers and Palestinian poets? . . . Schools, not individually, but the educational system as a whole has a very negative impact on our identity. . . . They don't want us, Palestinian Arabs, to develop an awareness of our national identity (Abu-Saad 1992, as quoted in Makkawi, 2002, p. 50).

Though the language of instruction is Arabic and the student demographics overwhelmingly Arab, one thing is clear, “Children in Arab schools receive a Jewish education, using curricula and teaching materials first developed by Jewish educators for use in Jewish schools and later translated into Arabic” (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

With so much time allocated to Jewish studies and the Ministry of Education consisting of primarily Jewish educators and officials, members of the Arab Palestinian minority appear to be largely absent from the state curriculum. Nasser & Nasser (2008) compared textbooks used in the Arab Palestinian school system (grades 5-12) during the 1960s to more current ones. These textbooks present Jewish figures as “agents of modernity and advanced Western Culture, leaving out the Palestinians and Arab history and their contribution to human civilization” (Nasser & Nasser, 2008).

Should an Arab Palestinian student not find hurtful (or at the very least, odd) the insinuation that of the majority of the people in his or her world (Arab family members, friends, teachers), not one contributed to the advancement of “civilized” life?

In 1953, a law of state education and state-sponsored curricula strongly emphasized the development of Jewish identity and values. However, no parallel aims were ever set forth for the education of Palestinian Arabs in Israel (Abu-Saad, 1991). Instead, studies have found Israeli Jewish textbooks and children's literature to sometimes portray Arabs as the “murderers, rioters, suspicious, generally backward, and unproductive” (Abu-Saad, 1989). Another

study found Arabs portrayed as “terrorists, refugees, and primitive farmers” (Peled-Elhanan, 2012).

In 2004, Firer and Adwan studied the representation of the conflict in Israeli history and civics textbook. They found that in the early years of the state's establishment, the textbooks included Zionist messages and ideologies as well as negative images of Arabs. However in the years that followed these textbooks “softened” their depiction of Arabs and instead focused on anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, the Zionist narrative, and the structure of the state. A similar bias towards the “other” was found in Palestinian textbooks used in the Palestinian Authority (Firer & Adwan, 2004). Arab Palestinian books in Israel, however, do emphasize the Jewish narrative.

Separate school systems beget separate students and children who grow up without a basic understanding of each other. Nabila Espanioly, director of the Al-Tufula Pedagogical Center in Nazareth, points to a kindergarten textbook's photo selection under the heading of “traditional work”: a Jewish scribe writing, an Arab cutting stone, an Arab making ceramics and Arab cleaning shoes (Human Rights Watch, 2001). This reflects a bias that still remains. It is not enough that studies have shown there to be no outright demonization in recent years (Firer and Adwan, 2004). When textbooks only present Arabs as traditional artisans or “working in the fields” (Human Rights Watch, 2001), it is a limiting stereotype and it creates harm.

This is a significant obstacle to self-confidence that children often associate with knowing whom they are and where they belong. When they cannot recognize themselves in the curriculum or feel that they matter, there is a significant impact. Textbooks such as these are supportive of self-othering, and in turn “promote the ideas of rootlessness, worthlessness, and non-belonging to a place, history, or another collective” (Nasser & Nasser, 2008). One would hope that Arab students have a strong family and community behind them, that they know the importance of their national narrative, allowing them to take in information that is at odds with their beliefs, memorize it, perform well on exams, and then move on. One might hope that textbook photos of Arab shoe cleaners or an exam's exclusion of Arab history are not internalized. But that is not the case. Research suggests that the identities of youth in minority-groups are influenced by even the negative messages they encounter (Nasser & Nasser, 2008).

For as long as this system is maintained, the State of Israel will have an exclusive relationship with the Jewish people. Children begin learning at an early age, and for another generation to be taught in such a way puts at risk the confidence and self-awareness of another generation of Arab children. When schoolchildren and high school students find the history of Arabs in Israel to be misrepresented, simplified, or excluded, it sends a message: Arabs in Israel are a “people of nowhere and belonging to nothingness” (Nasser & Nasser, 2008).

In the eyes of the majority, Arab Palestinians are forever considered as “outsiders, foreigners, and an illegitimate

and unwanted presence within 'the Jewish state' (Abu-Saad, 1987). Arab students may learn to see themselves in such a light, and that simply cannot be tolerated.

The typology of identity represented in Arabic language teaching course books used currently in primary Arab Palestinian schools is no less confusing. As Abu-Saad maintains, "the government maintains complete control of the content and delivery of Arabic programming in the schools" (2006). Authors of the text books, according to Nasser and Nasser (2008), "have little freedom to deviate from the strict instructions that they have from the ministry." Does this account for the regressive character of some Arabic language textbooks approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education, as demonstrated *infra*?

"Al Takween" (meaning in Arabic 'creation') is the series of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and used by many Arab schools in the teaching of Arabic to students ages 7 to 12. Examining several texts featured in the books, I discovered that the Arab Palestinian identity narrative embedded within them is regressive, very traditional and irrelevant to the modern concerns of the Arab Palestinian minority in Israel. It is sufficient to read some titles of the texts in the books, to understand the extent to which the context is regressive.

One text is entitled "The Wedding of Areen." This is a text about Areen, an Arab girl who "gets married with a handsome bridegroom whose name is Naseem; Areen is happy and holds a flower" (translation of the text). This is the content of the text for second grade Arab Palestinian students in Israel. Areen, in the illustration featured beside the text, is a girl dressed in a white gown and standing beside a groom. The message is appalling. Is early marriage encouraged? Is beauty the only standard for choosing a bride or groom?

Most of the texts in "Al Takween" portray a distinctly traditional village lifestyle. A text called "Amer's wife" is about a wife who helps her husband, Amer, harvest the olives. The feminine message is irrelevant to education in the twenty-first century. The olive farm is portrayed as solely that of the husband while the wife only helps him. It is not a family property.

The problem is not that the texts portray traditional life of the Arab Palestinian village; the problem is rather the fact that this traditional life is the only type of life that is portrayed in the text books, neglecting the fact that part of the Arab Palestinian community in Israel is leading a modern or semi-modern life or lives in large Arab cities or mixed cities. I do not actually expect an Arabic language textbook to manifest or relate to the complexity of Arab Palestinian cultural and political identity in Israel, yet I do expect such a book to show the diversity of models—both traditional and modern—that exist among Arab Palestinians in Israel, particularly because the author of the book and the committee of pedagogic and language advisors are all Arab Palestinians.

Yet when I see that the only Arab Palestinian portrayed in the English language textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education in Israel is "Salim, the kind Bedouin," showing no diversity of models regarding how an Arab Palestinian is or lives, I again see the stereotype vividly. Arab Palestinians

in Israel are seen as the Bedouin living in the tent in the desert. The variety of models is not portrayed at all. This is how mainstream Israeli society perceives Arab Palestinians and wants them to perceive themselves.

## The Narrative Modeling of Q School: English Language and Human Resource Development

Facing the sense of crisis and at times even the vacuum of identity offered by textbooks in Arab Palestinian schools, I decided to intervene by creating alternate curricula within an alternate school to offer a structured mechanism for shaping a positive narrative of identity.

### The vision and mission of Q School

Q School utilizes language learning as an integral component of the process of human resource development and positive identity formation. Constituted on the values of empowerment, acquiring and producing knowledge and the rights of development for all people, Q School aims to fulfill students' potential for being leaders and life-long learners, proud of their culture and active partners in the world. Through its personal and educational development programs, Q School advances the Arab Palestinian society in Israel by introducing a high quality of education that stems from the needs of the society yet takes it ahead, knowing that the Arab schooling system and its students are in a disadvantaged position when compared to their Jewish counterparts in Israel.

Q School aims to establish a humane and educational culture, one that is guided by the standards of quality and excellence, the principle of shouldering the responsibility for advancing society, and strengthening their active participation in the global civil society. Q School utilizes English language learning as a space for developing a positive identity and sense of hope and leadership about how students may develop.

### English as an alternate realm for identity formation

Many will claim that identity is contextualized within the framework of the mother tongue. This is correct. What is the rationale then for appropriating the teaching of English as an alternative context for creating an identity narrative? Would not such context be removed from the immediacy and locality of a possible narrative of identity for Arab Palestinian students in Israel?

This is an intricate question in particular because English language learning has long been perceived as an instrument for academic achievement and participation in the international work force, as well as a tool for travelling and communication.



English has also been perceived to promote an international essence—a cosmopolitan identity, citizenship of the world, and an adaption of universal values.

The Q Schools' model is neither of the above; perhaps it may be motivated by the essence of its approach to the English language learning; yet it is not the cosmopolitan essence that is usually alluded to as it is not detached or distanced from the local personal self of Arab Palestinian students in Israel, but rather the contrary. It is the instrument with which one can reorganize or re-create a very personal and local identity—what it means to be an Arab Palestinian in Israel—an obvious complexity but at the same time, as I claim, a dynamic of possibilities.

Rather than Arabic or Hebrew or the emerging spoken Arabic that is integrating or abbreviating many Hebrew words into the Arabic language, English is the alternative space, neutral in regards to Arab-Jewish complexities, and the minority crisis and the feeling of victimhood that has accompanied the existing historical personal and collective narrative of Arab Palestinians since 1948. The English language is viewed as prestigious, and achieving a high level of English is a status symbol. This becomes a disguise for the painful intervention for the re-organization of an identity narrative, which may be resisted by the community; Q School declares that it cultivates personal and intellectual development through English. This is a specific mission statement, yet vague and broad enough to minimize the threatening effect of dealing with the very sensitive issue of identity formation and cultural narration.

## Q School's textbooks

Each of the textbooks developed by Q School presents a level of personal development wherein the development of the definition of the self is integrated within a development of English language and cognitive skills. On the obvious level, the students are engaged in a process of learning English and gaining proficiency as learners of the language. Within it, students are engaged in a process of self-definition that progresses from a stage of asserting individuality and the student's self-concept as learner and thinker into an individual relating to the context of family, neighborhood, or town in which aspects of the local culture and community life are presented. The following stage is that of belonging to larger contexts wherein the student relates to the national and international dimensions of his or her existence.

These stages of self-definition challenge the traditionalist cultural setting of such definition in the Arab Palestinian community in Israel. Traditionally, the start and end point of identity and belonging is the family and the larger community. The individual's private aspirations and perspective on life are framed by the family and the community; what is expected from individuals is conformity within the norms of behavior and definition. And as the collective sense of definition as community is vague or ambivalent, the individual is further so.

Q School proposes an alternative—perhaps more modernist—approach to identity formation, a narrative wherein individuality

is the starting point and then the expansion of contexts with an achievement of balance between the local, national and international; active participation coexists with a critique of these contexts.

In contrast to the state of crisis and ambivalence or at times irreconcilable duality characteristic of the identity of Arab Palestinians in Israel, Q School's approach proposes a clear line of progress and assertion of inevitability—or rather the necessity—of belonging to different contexts at the same time because this is the only way for a member of the Arab Palestinian in Israel to develop positively regardless of a history of loss and a reality of limitation and marginalization.

The process may seem linear, simplistic, and detached of the complexities of what it means to be an Arab Palestinian in Israel. This is exactly the point. I find it hard to re-write the immense history of Arab Palestinians in Israel, a history that has been complicated since 1948 by the repressive reality of the minority in a Jewish state and the traditional conformist nature of the community. I decided to create an alternative narrative that acknowledges the multiplicity of variables and contexts that form the identity, yet grants them positive meanings and implications. This is not the creation of an illusion; but rather it highlights the added advantage of decentralizing any variable of component of identity and of belonging to several contexts at once. These contexts may of course be contradictive, yet they also may help in the creation of diverse opportunities of expression, production and creativity. While acknowledging the past, Q School's approach also acknowledges the need to move forward and to create a positive present and future.

When "Amal", the protagonist of the "Start" textbook for 4 to 6-year-old Arab Palestinian students at Q School, is featured on the first page of the book sitting in her bed in a room of her own with a picture of herself hanging on the wall, the message that is stated in such an introduction is a statement of individuality and independence. This is a statement of children's rights and also, as portrayed through "Amal", a woman's right to claim status, individuality and empowerment.

"Amal" is the new Arab Palestinian girl in Israel, ready to tell her story. She has a room of her own. Hanging on the wall in "Amal"'s room is a clock. Through simulations and role playing, "Amal" teaches students how to read the clock and how to organize their time. She is a modernist and a futurist and she knows what she wants. Is this a narrative of identity? Maybe this is not a representation of Arab Palestinian history after 1948, but it is a re-writing of the reality. Leaving behind victimization and marginalization, one claims authority of one's self and context, this is the start of a new authentic narrative.

Abu Ali, a farmer wearing the traditional Palestinian head-covering for men, is featured in the book for 9-year-old students. Yet as the book progresses, the student is asked to imagine within a simulation framework that he or she travels to several different cities around the world to learn more about their lives. One of the characters is a girl from Jerusalem, her identity to be decided by the students themselves as either Arab or Jewish. Abu Ali is a source of





information on cultural heritage, yet the students are also taught to be flexible and accepting of other cultures.

The series of three books for ages 12-14, titled "I am Thinking, I am Planning and I am Creating", poses another stage of personal development for Arab Palestinian students. The books aim to develop a sense of higher-order thinking skills among students as well as the sense of a balanced identity. Students are encouraged to think differently by being exposed to the life stories of great inventors from both western and Arab cultures. The Wright brothers' invention of the airplane is juxtaposed to the story of Abbas Ben Fernas, an Arab scientist who tried to fly by creating artificial wings and utilizing other techniques of aviation. The books negate the notions of the stereotypical inferiority of Arab culture to western culture and present both as equal contexts for learning, inspiration and development. These are two additional layers of the identity narrative of Arab Palestinians in Israel.

The book for 16-year-old students, titled "I Am, I Manage and I Dream", takes the students some steps further in self-definition. The course book is structured as a practical workshop that stages the process for youth from self-definition to managing one's thoughts and emotions and finally writing a vision statement of his or her own. The first unit starts with an academic text about the philosophical, social, psychological, national, gender and religious approaches to identity definitions. Then, through tasks that should be accomplished individually, in pairs or in groups, students try to apply each definition. The exercises after the text mentioned above may begin as follows:

**Task:**

**A:** According to the text above, define identity in terms of the following aspects:

- Psychology:.....
- Cognitive Theory:.....
- Religion:.....
- Society:.....
- Ethnicity:.....
- Gender:.....

**B:** Who are you according to the following aspects of identity?

- Psychologically: .....
- Ethnically: .....
- Gender: .....
- Socially: .....
- Religiously: .....
- Cognitively: .....

**C:** As part of a more detailed self-identification, fill in the following:

- (Health) I am .....
- (Nationality) I am .....
- (Profession) I am .....
- (Ability) I am .....
- (Attitude towards life) I am .....
- (Financially) I am .....
- (Status) I am .....
- (Education) I am .....
- (Relationships) I am .....
- (Ambition) I am .....
- (Sensitivity) I am .....

The approach manifested through the task is open as it does not dictate one terminology of definition; however, it is structured as it systematically stages the path towards self-definition and an awareness of the necessity of such definition. The learning process takes the students on a journey from the text into the inner self, helping them organize the various variables composing their identity.



## Conclusion

Q School's approach is structured, yet it is open. It does not replace the narrative of Palestinian history but it does replace the narrative of deficit and crisis which has characterized Arab Palestinian educational curricula since 1948. Q School as a private model challenges the Arab system of education in Israel and the policy of passive action that characterizes it. It is a call for positive action and a proposition for taking

responsibility by facing the confusion with the presentation of possibilities inherent in the current contexts.

Although the model described in this study is specific to Arab Palestinians in Israel, it has its implications for the larger context of Palestinian Israeli relations as well. When the identity narrative of Arab Palestinians in Israel is clarified and viewed positively, they will be able to function as a bridge between the Palestinian people and Israel. This can be a bridge for cultural and economic interactions that contribute to the prosperity and peace of both sides and the region.

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# The Connection between Palestinian Culture and the Conflict

John Ashley and Nedal Jayousi

## 1. What is culture?

The original meaning of 'culture' was cultivation of the soil' (derived from the Latin *cultura*, 'growing or cultivation'), and from this arose 'cultivation of the mind, faculties, or manners' in the early 19th century CE. Today, 'culture' refers to the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively - the ideas, customs and social behavior of a particular people or society.

## 2. What is Palestinian culture?

'I didn't grasp the true meaning of the word *Nakba* until I worked in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. In the alleys and passages of the Shatila camp, I discovered the truth of the catastrophe. Villagers expelled from the Galilee had suddenly found themselves living in huts set up hastily to provide temporary shelter. But the temporary became permanent, and the people were forced to construct a nation for themselves out of words and memories. They gave the various sections of their camps the names of the villages they had fled, and they lived, as they said, "waiting" in a suspended time. Even when the waiting went on too long and became "exile," they still refused to believe that no one would recognise and authenticate their tragedy' (Khoury, 2008) <sup>1</sup>.

The agricultural origin of the term 'culture' in the Palestinian context is apposite, as evidenced by the trauma caused by soldiers uprooting olive orchards, planted generations ago. Yet, 'culture' travels with a people to wherever they are displaced, forever. Our land, land of the ancestors, is an indivisible absolute which cannot be erased or forgotten, ever. Indeed, *the land* of historical Palestine is the bedrock of Palestinian culture, despite the post-1948 dispossession and related diaspora (the *Naqba* - the catastrophe), and the subsequent fragmentation and cantonisation of West Bank under Occupation. And on that land, unbroken traditions have held sway over thousands of years, of ancestor reverence and storytelling, manners and customs, architecture, music and dance, handicraft, cuisine and costume (Kanaana, 1994; Staughton et al, 1994; Harris, 2013; Qliebo, 1992; Amiry and Tamari, 1989; Nouri, 1996; Shihab, 1993; Weir, 1989; el-Haddad and Schmitt, 2013; Sabbagh, 1998).

<sup>1</sup> Elias Khoury is a Lebanese novelist, author of the epic of the Palestinian people *Bab al-Shams, Gate of the Sun* (1998) (2006, in English translation by H.Davies)

The legacy of land is the over-riding essence of Palestinian culture, in every genre, as revealed below, and that culture provides the voice of defiance and resilience for each of the more than 11 million Palestinians, wherever they may be.

There is no better account of the *Naqba* than that by renowned Israeli historian Professor Ilan Pappé in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Pappé, 2006). As shown below, through the film 'The Land speaks Arabic', Mahmoud Darwish's poem 'Identity Card', Rashid Khalidi's book on Palestinian Identity and so much more, Palestinian culture is rooted in the land, forging a bond across clan, place of birth and religion. Attempts by Israel and its sympathisers to stifle Palestinian culture serve only to strengthen it, making Palestinians ever more resolute.

## 3. The extent to which intellectual figures impact the public discourse on the conflict

**3.1. Edward Saïd** (1935-2003), a Palestinian born in Jerusalem, was a major literary critic, exerting an influence far beyond the world of academia. As a brilliant and compelling advocate for political and human rights of Palestinians, Saïd has been described by the distinguished Arab-affairs political commentator Robert Fisk as 'their most powerful voice' (Fisk, 2008). Saïd's books on the Israeli-Palestine conflict include *The End of the Peace Process* (2000).

Saïd became politically active in 1967, to counter misrepresentations with which much of the U.S news media characterized the Arab-Israeli conflict. He published "The Arab Portrayed" in 1968, thereafter pressing for the establishment of a Palestinian State, equal political and human rights for Palestinians in Israel, including the 'right of return', and for increased U.S. political pressure upon Israel to endorse those rights. Saïd also criticized the internal politics of regional Arab régimes which acted against the interests of their own peoples (Bernstein, 2003). In his autobiographic *Out of Place* (1999), Saïd spoke of how he tried to improve Western understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, whilst acknowledging that his independent membership (1977-91) of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), made him a controversial public figure (Rubin, 2004).

While Israel and its supporters in the USA argued that the crux of the Palestine-Israeli conflict was the Arabs' unwillingness to accept the existence of Israel and the Arabic threat to

Israeli security, Saïd viewed the conflict in terms of Zionist attrition and Palestinian victimhood. In *"The Question of Palestine"* (1979) he said "in sheer numerical terms, in brute numbers of bodies and property destroyed, there is absolutely nothing to compare between what Zionism has done to Palestinians and what, in retaliation, Palestinians have done to Zionists".

Whilst accepting the origins of the Zionist idea in the persecution of European Jews, and the overwhelming impact of that idea on the European conscience, "The question to be asked," he wrote in *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994), "is how long can the history of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust be used as a fence to exempt Israel from arguments and sanctions against it for its behaviour towards the Palestinians, arguments and sanctions that were used against other repressive governments, such as South Africa? How long are we going to deny that the cries of the people of Gaza... are directly connected to the policies of the Israeli government and not to the cries of the victims of Nazism?".

Saïd was an early advocate of the two-state solution, implicitly recognizing Israel's right to exist. As early as 1977, when few Palestinians were prepared to concede that Jews had historic claims to Palestine, he said: "I don't deny their claims, but their claims always entail Palestinian dispossession" (Ruthven, 2003). In his essay *"Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims"* (1979), Saïd argued in favor of the political legitimacy and philosophic authenticity of the Zionist claims and right to a Jewish homeland, yet also for the inherent right of national self-determination of the Palestinian people (Saïd, 2000). He believed that the task of Israel's critics was not to reproduce for Palestine a mirror-image of the Zionist ideology of diaspora and return, but rather to elaborate a secular vision of democracy applicable to both Arabs and Jews (Barsamian, 2001).

As the peace process gained momentum, however, Saïd resigned from the PNC, in 1991. The Oslo declaration, he argued, was weighted unfairly in Israel's favor. He said "... let us call the agreement by its real name: an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles" (Saïd, 1993). Especially troublesome for Saïd was his belief that Yasir Arafat had betrayed the 'right of return' - for Palestinian refugees to return to their houses and properties in the Green Line territories of pre-1967 Israel, and that Arafat ignored the growing political threat of Israeli Settlements in the Occupied territories, established since 1967. By 1995, in response to Saïd's political criticism, the Palestinian Authority banned the sale of his books (the ban later rescinded).

Towards the end of his life he made a moving appeal to Palestinians everywhere through the columns of *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Saïd, 2001). "... the weapons the weak and the stateless cannot ever give up are its principles and its people. To occupy and unendingly defend the high moral ground; to keep telling the truth and reminding the world of the full historical picture; to hold on to the lawful right of resistance and restitution; to mobilise people everywhere rather than to appear with the likes of Chirac and Blair; to depend neither on the media nor the Israelis but on oneself

to tell the truth. These are what Palestinian leaders forgot first at Oslo and then again at Camp David. When will we as a people assume responsibility for what after all is ours, and stop relying on leaders who no longer have any idea what they are doing?".

**3.2. Rashid Ismail Khalidi** is the Edward Saïd Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University. In his most influential and most widely-cited book *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997), he dates the emergence of Palestinian nationalism to the early 20th century confronting the contrary Zionist position that Palestinians had no collective claim to the land prior to 1948. Khalidi demonstrates that a Palestinian national consciousness had its origins at the start of the twentieth century. He describes the Arab population of British Mandatory Palestine as having "overlapping identities", with some or many expressing loyalties to a projected nation of Palestine, as an alternative to inclusion in 'Greater Syria'. The forging of Palestinian national identity he attributed to individual and family experiences of being expelled from their homes by Zionist immigrant pressure, with such identity being more substantial than merely anti-Zionist reaction.

In his book *Brokers of Deceit*, Khalidi examines how Israel has become a domestic issue in American politics. He notes that the establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank comprises "daunting obstacles to the prospects of a two state solution, obstacles that, in the view of most objective observers, are now well-nigh insuperable..... establishment of the settlements was intended by Israeli planners to produce precisely this result" (Khalidi, 2001; Dana, 2013).

**3.3. Sari Nusseibeh** is President of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. Until December 2002 he was the PNA's representative in that city. Just as for Edward Saïd and Rashid Khalidi, Nusseibeh is widely viewed as a Palestinian moderate. During the First *Intifada* (1987-93) he authored the Palestinian Declaration of Principles. During the Oslo Peace Process, Nusseibeh suggested that Palestinians give up their 'right of return' in exchange for a Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a position denounced by a number of Palestinian organizations. In 2002, Nusseibeh and former Shin Bet director, Ami Ayalon published *The People's Voice*, an Israeli-Palestinian civil initiative that aimed to advance the process of achieving peace between Israel and the Palestinians. It was a draft peace agreement calling for a Palestinian State based on Israel's 1967 borders, and a compromise on the Palestinian 'right of return'. The initiative sought to affect the political process by petition, seeking the signatures of enough residents of the area on all sides of the conflict to drive their leaders to conclude a peace agreement.

**3.4. Hanan Ashrawi** is a Palestinian legislator, activist, and scholar. She was a protégé, and later close friend, of Edward Saïd. She has been elected numerous times to the Palestinian Legislative Council and is a member of Palestinian former Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's Third Way party. She was the first woman elected to the Palestinian National Council. In



addition to her being a passionate advocate of human rights, she has also been an important Palestinian voice on gender issues. In both an official and personal capacity, she has been an articulate advocate of both the Palestinian position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the need for a peaceful resolution of it. A few quoted paragraphs from an interview she gave to David Barsamian will suffice to demonstrate her position on several key issues (Barsamian, 2003):

*BARSAMIAN: In the many decades of the Palestinian struggle, at least in the United States, it has been difficult for the Palestinians to advance their point of view. Why is that?*

*ASHRAWI: For a variety of reasons. First, we were dismissed as if we didn't exist. Then our existence was recognized only through the terms of reference of the Israelis—the enemy, so to speak. There were other issues. We are the foreign, the alien, the other. We were labeled as the people who speak a strange language, have this different religion. So we were excluded from the Judeo-Christian tradition, even though Christianity and Judaism started in Palestine. Palestine has always been pluralistic. We've never been only Christian or only Muslim or only Jewish. Also, the horror of the Holocaust is still part of Western consciousness and culture and, in many cases, people feel the need to assuage their guilt for anti-Semitism—which is a Western phenomenon, by the way, not an Eastern or Arab one—that Israel's sins have to be forgiven entirely. That Israel has to be supported blindly and the Palestinians can be conveniently dismissed in order to cope with this painful legacy.*

*BARSAMIAN: One of the typical arguments that some Israelis make is that there is one homeland for the Jewish people, who have historically suffered persecution and tremendous tragedy, and there are 22 Arab states where Palestinians can go to practice their customs, speak Arabic, eat their food. You're chuckling. How do you respond?*

*ASHRAWI: That's like telling a French person, "Why do you want France? You have all these countries in Europe and they're united, so why not give up France and give it to some other people?" We have our identity, our history, and our culture as Palestinians. We can trace our history back at least 5,000 years in Palestine. I belong to the oldest, continuous Christian tradition in the world. So you cannot tell me that we are just a phenomenon on the surface of the earth that can be removed. The horror of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jews needed to be dealt with, but not at the expense of the Palestinians, by dismissing us, by saying, "You can conveniently disappear or we can carry out ethnic cleansing or you can live as refugees." We have now five million refugees who are at the mercy of host countries that don't want them. The rest of the Palestinians are living under military occupation. Do you tell the Palestinians that for the convenience of the West and the sake of solving the Jewish question, you have to pay the price?*

*BARSAMIAN: Is there a sense of competing victimization between the two communities?*

*ASHRAWI: I've seen this in different places in the world: who suffers more? The exclusivity of suffering, a monopoly on pain. I've been saying to everybody: just because you have suffered does not give you license to inflict the same suffering on others. The mentality of the victim is not healthy or constructive. It has been exploited repeatedly to carry out actions that are inherently cruel and immoral because somehow you feel holier-than-thou. Your suffering should not make you feel holy, it should make you humbled because you understand the meaning of pain, the meaning of humanity, and you should make sure it does not happen to others.*

*BARSAMIAN: What is the basis for a final settlement ?*

*ASHRAWI: It's very simple and we've said it repeatedly. Israel should withdraw from those territories it occupied in 1967—all of them. That's it—the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. We've agreed that Israel would keep the 78 percent of historical Palestine. We will build our state on 22 percent. The two-state solution is the only solution. We're not going to disappear. They're not going to be able to carry out genocide or ethnic cleansing or expulsion. The Israelis are not going to disappear. So let's work on establishing good neighborly relations by accepting the 1967 lines and by having a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. That is a major human demographic problem and it destabilizes the whole region. Once you solve the two components—the land that is the 1967 boundaries, the people, which would include the refugees, and the UN resolutions, you would have it. It doesn't take a genius to understand that, but it does take a lot of warped minds to try to find ways to prevent such a solution from taking place!*

**3.5. Nur Masalha**, born in 1957 in Galilee is a Palestinian writer and Director of the Centre for Religion and History at the University of Surrey, England. He has written many books on Palestine and Israel, including *The Palestine Nakba: Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory* (2012), *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Palestine-Israel* (2007), and *A Land without a People* (1997). Masalha is also the historian commentator in the award-winning, documentary film "La Terre Parle Arabe" (the Land Speaks Arabic)(2007), directed by Maryse Gargour (born in Jaffa), which relates the background to the expulsion and flight of Palestinian Arabs in 1948 from the newly-created State of Israel. In this documentary, the late 19th century birth of Zionism and its repercussions for Palestinians is detailed with original source documents, Zionist leaders' quotations, rare archival footage, testimonies of witnesses and interviews with historians. These indicate that the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population from Palestine was far from an accidental result of the 1948 war, but rather an ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Zionist movement.

**3.6. Suad Amiry:** born in 1951 in Ramallah, she is an author and architect residing in Ramallah. She is Director of the Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation. Her book *Sharon and My Mother-in-Law: Ramallah Diaries* is a telling chronicle of life under occupation, taking twenty years to live and write. Her narrative, told through diary entries and e-mail correspondence, describes a life spent waiting .... for the Israeli occupation to end and, in microcosm, for the end of a military curfew in Ramallah whilst in her house with her mother-in-law. The book has been sold to publishers in eleven countries and has been translated into 19 languages.

### 3.7. Poets and Novelists

**3.7.1. Mahmoud Darwish** (1941-2008) is perhaps the best known contemporary poet in the Arab world, renowned for his passionate love for his lost country, and regarded as Palestine's national poet. He was born in Al-Birweh, east of Acre in historic coastal Palestine. During 1948 his village was destroyed and his family fled to Lebanon. They returned secretly the following year to their homeland, only to find that their village had been obliterated by two Israeli settlements, and they became internal refugees at Deir al-Asad in the Galilee.



Mahmoud Darwish, February 2008. Photograph: Jamal Nasrallah/EPA

Darwish published his first collection of poems, *Leaves of the Olive Tree*, in 1964, when he was 22. After that he published approximately thirty poetry and prose collections which have been translated into more than 22 languages. Of Darwish's work, the Palestinian-American poet Naomi Shihab Nye says "Mahmoud Darwish is the 'Essential Breath of the Palestinian people', the eloquent witness of exile and belonging, exquisitely tuned singer of images that invoke, link and shine a brilliant light into the world's whole heart. What he speaks has been embraced by readers around the world—his is an utterly necessary voice, unforgettable once discovered".

Darwish helped to forge a Palestinian national consciousness, especially after the six-day war of June 1967. His poems have been taught in schools throughout the Arab world, some of his lines becoming part of the fabric of modern Arabic culture, symbolizing Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. His earliest poetry followed classical forms, but from the mid-1960s, it became populist and direct. He used imagery through which he could engage Palestinian villagers, of olive groves and orchards, rocks and plants,

basil and thyme. In spite of an apparent simplicity, his short poems often have more than one level of meaning. There is a sense of outrage and injustice, notably in the celebrated poem *Identity Card*, expressed through the voice of an Arab required to give his identity number. The last two verses of the six, in an anglicized version, are shown below:

#### **Identity Card – Mahmoud Darwish (1964), verses 5 & 6**

..... Write it down!

I am an Arab.  
You have stolen the orchards of my ancestors  
and the land which I cultivated  
along with my children  
and you have left nothing for us  
except these rocks.  
So will the State take them  
As has been said?!

**Therefore!**

**Write down on the top of the first page:**

I do not hate people,  
nor do I encroach.  
But if I become hungry  
the usurper's flesh will be my food.  
Beware..  
Beware..  
of my hunger  
and my anger !

Yet his poetry also contained a universal humanity. He was able to see the Israeli soldier as a victim of circumstance, like himself. The land and history of Palestine was a summation of millennia of influences from Canaanites, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Ottoman Turks and British.

Raja Shehadeh, author of the acclaimed *Occupation Diaries*, who for 12 years was a neighbor to the shy immaculately-dressed Darwish in Ramallah, has noted the poet's explanation that his poem 'State of Siege' was "a poet's journal that deals with resisting the occupation through searching for beauty in poetics and beauty in nature. It was a way of resisting military violence through poetry. The victory of the permanent, the everlasting, the eternal, over the siege and the violence". Darwish was adamant that Palestinians "cannot be defined by our relationship, positive or negative, to Israel. We have our own identity" (Shehadeh, 2009)2.

In 2000, the Israeli Ministry of Education proposed to introduce his works into the school curriculum, but met strong opposition from rightwing protesters. The then-Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, said the country was not ready. In July 2007, Darwish visited Israel to give a reading of his poetry to 2,000 people in Haifa. He deplored the Hamas victory in Gaza. "We have triumphed" he observed with grim irony "Gaza has won its independence from the West Bank. One people now have two states, two prisons who don't greet each other.

2 Of the several Palestinian 'identities', one that is not well-covered in the literature is that of the Israeli Palestinian (though see al-Asmar, 1975; Qliebo, 1992).

We are dressed in executioners' clothes." Darwish died the following year.

As Shehadeh observed "the only commemoration of his death at the time came from his fellow Palestinians as they walked under the gaze of the Israeli police to his destroyed village of Al-Birweh. No one in the Israeli establishment marked the death of the most humane of poets, who had tried in his poetry to reach out to them, and humanize Israelis to his fellow Palestinians".

*The six individuals cited above are some of the high-profile intellectual figures, yet of course there are many others, in Universities, prisons and elsewhere (al-Asmar et al, 1973). For instance, issue number 45 (2012) of the English language magazine Banipal is almost exclusively devoted to Palestinian writers. Furthermore, in February 2012, a group of 97 male and female Palestinian intellectuals, mainly writers and poets, wrote a scathing open letter to the Syrian regime entitled "Not in our Name" (Jadaliyya, 2012).*

## 4. Statements which artists and other cultural figures make on the conflict

Many of the 'artists' presented below make 'statements' primarily in non-verbal ways. The fact that these are cogent statements of the Palestinian narrative on the conflict is well-attested by the countless occasions when Israeli government/Jewish interest groups sought to stifle such expression, some instances of which are recorded below.

### 4.1. Artists

In its widest sense, 'art of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict' comprises paintings, posters, sculptures, photography, videos, installation art and other visual media produced by 'artists' who have been enmeshed in the conflict, and who bring images of it into their work. Dominant themes of Palestinian art have shifted over the years. 1948 became a defining date, prior to which icon painting had been one of the country's earliest artistic traditions. Post-*Naqba* art included images of rootlessness and exile. The period 1955–65, spawned a genre emphasizing a secular Palestinian identity and nation-building.

Once the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) was established in 1964, scenes of refugees and exile were replaced by youthful fighters, based on militant poems of the time (Gannit, 2006). However, this trend was criticized by Edward Saïd, who in his 1986 book *After the Last Sky*, wrote of his concern that these images could be instrumental in transforming Palestinians into "terrorists" in the eyes of the West. Particularly since the First *Intifada* started in 1987, many artists have illustrated violence on civilians with images and symbols of Occupation, such as freedom fighters, the Separation Wall, Israeli checkpoints, weapons and tanks against stones and catapults, strip searches, weeping women holding children, prisons and tents in refugee camps. Personal experience and media images of destruction and despair have conditioned the modality of expression of a

generation of artists. The evolving themes are referenced chronologically below.

**4.1.1. Ismail Shammout (1930-2006)** was born in Lydda. On July 12, 1948, he and his family were expelled from their home in Lydda by Israeli forces, and they moved to the Gaza refugee camp of Khan Younis. Shammout's paintings display Palestinian culture and traditions, and displaced refugees.



*Ismail Shammout, Where to ? (1953)*

His *Where to ?* (1953), shown above, is an oil on canvas vignette of that *Naqba* exodus of 50–70,000 Palestinian Arabs from Lydda and Ramle. This painting has become sacrosanct in Palestinian culture - in the background is the skyline of an Arab

town with a minaret, while in the middle ground there is a withered tree, symbolizing the life and home which the man and his children are leaving behind.

**4.1.2. Ibrahim Ghannam (1930–1984)**, addressed the 'paradise lost' theme of pre-1948 Palestinian village life. He used a naïve style and bright colors. Ghannam's colorful narrative of life in Yajur, near Haifa, depicts golden wheat fields, thriving orange groves and contented villagers at work. Through his paintings, Ghannam preserved for a generation born in camps the legends of villages demolished during and after the *Naqba*. During the Invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Israeli army seized some of his paintings from an exhibition in Beirut. He was the focus of Adnan Mdanat's documentary film *Palestinian Visions* (1977). Ghannam said in an interview with journalist Jonathan Dimpleby, "I feel that my life stopped at the age of 17, because that is how old I was when I left, and I only live when I dream of those days" (Dimpleby, 1980).

**4.1.3. League of Palestinian Artists:** In 1984, an illustrated volume by artists **Isam Bader** and **Nabil Anani**, titled "Palestinian Art under Occupation" was published in Arabic in Ramallah. Bader and Anani, along with fellow artists **Rahab Nammari** and **Ibrahim Saba**, registered their group as the West Bank and Gaza branch of the "League of Palestinian Artists." Their book also includes a compilation of newspaper clippings documenting the closing of Gallery 79 in Ramallah by the Israeli military authorities in 1979. In 1980, Israel banned art exhibitions and paintings of "political significance", with the grouping of the four colours of the Palestinian flag in any one painting also forbidden. One of the League's distinguished members, Suleiman Mansur, gave an interesting interview to the Palestine-Israel Journal in 1998 on the *Naqba* origins of Palestinian contemporary art, the League's relationship with Israeli artists and the effect of the 1993 Oslo agreement on Palestinian art (Mansur, 1998).



**4.1.4. Palestinian art exhibits abroad:** In February 2005, a group exhibition by 16 contemporary artists was shown at the De Paul University Museum in Chicago entitled “*The Subject of Palestine*.” During the weeks leading up to the show, newspapers and blogs criticized the Museum for “cultivating far-leftist anti-Semites and haters of America”. Other exhibitions in the United States, such as *Made in Palestine*, when the travelling exhibition opened in San Francisco in 2005, were shut down early. That exhibition showcased the works of 23 Palestinian artists, chronicling the history of Palestine since 1948. The opening attracted up to 1,000 people, but alongside the plaudits it also riled some politicians. As a result of such negative comments, most museums were fearful that hosting any pro-Palestinian exhibition in the USA could cost them their funding. “We are living in a country where anything that is critical of Israel and is pro-Palestinian is not accepted and this is very problematic, especially when we are dealing with art,” Uda Walker, political education director of the Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), told an *Al Jazeera* correspondent (Haddad, 2005).

The Museum of Children’s Art in Oakland (MOCHA) cancelled its Palestinian children’s art exhibition due to open in California in September 2011, entitled “*A Child’s View from Gaza*,” due to pressure from local Jewish groups in the San Francisco Bay area (Oakland Museum, 2011). The show was to feature artwork depicting Israel’s Operation Cast Lead, the three-week military assault on Gaza of December 2008- January 2009. A drawing from this cancelled exhibition is shown below.



Barbara Lubin, Executive Director of The Middle East Children’s Alliance (MECA), which was partnering MOCHA to present the exhibition, expressed her dismay that the museum decided to cancel the show. “We understand all too well the enormous pressure that the museum came under. But who wins? ..... The only winners here are those who spend millions of dollars censoring any criticism of Israel and silencing the voices of children who live every day under military siege and occupation”. For example, in 2010 the Jewish Federation of North America and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs launched a \$6 million initiative to try to silence Palestinian voices, even in “cultural institutions”.

## 4.2. Sculptures and installations

**4.2.1. Abed Abdi** was born in 1942 in Haifa, becoming the first Palestinian to build monumental art on native soil. His

allegorical works in the Galilee, honoring human fortitude and resistance, include a bronze monument dedicated to six Palestinians who were shot on ‘Land Day’ in 1976, when a general strike took place in protest against the Israeli government’s announcement of a plan to expropriate thousands of dunams of land for ‘security and settlement’ purposes. Scholarship on ‘the conflict’ identifies Land Day as a pivotal event in the conflict over land, and in the relationship between Arab citizens and the Israeli State.

**4.2.2. Mustafa al-Hallaj** (1938-2002) was born in Salama near Jaffa. After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, al-Hallaj and his family fled to Damascus. His sculpture and graphic art was often devoted to his lost homeland. Al-Hallaj contributed much to defining the *fan al-muqawama* (“the art of resistance”) (Halaby, 2001). He lost 25,000 of his prints in Israeli attacks on Beirut during the 1982 Lebanon War, but managed to save the wood and masonry cuts he used to make them.

## 4.3. Cartoonist

**4.3.1. Naji Salim al-Ali** (1938-87) was born in the northern Palestinian village of Al-Shajara, in Galilee, one of 480 Arab villages destroyed in the *Naqba*. The site is now over-built by the Israeli settlement of Ilanya. Al-Ali was a Palestinian cartoonist, noted for critical commentaries on both Israel and Arab regimes. He drew over 40,000 cartoons, reflecting Palestinian and Arab public opinion. He is perhaps best known as creator of the refugee character Handala, a young witness of the policy or event being satirized, and who has since become an icon of Palestinian defiance. Handala is depicted as a ten-year old boy, barefoot and wearing threadbare clothes, symbolizing his allegiance to the poor.



Handala appeared for the first time in *al-Siyasa* in Kuwait, in 1969. The figure turned his back to the viewer from the year 1973, with hands clasped behind him, symbolising his rejection of “outside solutions”, in which the USA was involved.

As expressed in a political blog in March 2013 by Ahsan Sayed, on the occasion of President Obama’s meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu “Handala represents the profound sense of abandonment that Palestinians felt as the world moved past their plight; a collective sigh uttered by the image of a ragged, young barefoot boy forced out onto the open road” (Sayed, 2013). In later cartoons, Handala is more than mere observer, actively participating in the action depicted.

On 22nd August 1987, while outside the London office of *al-Qabas*, a Kuwaiti newspaper to which he contributed, Naji al-Ali was shot in the left eye and died five weeks later. In 1984 he was described by *The Guardian* as “the nearest thing there is to an Arab public opinion” (Khalafallah, 1984). Twenty years after his death Ian Black wrote a moving



retrospective of his work (Black, 2008). An indicator of al-Ali's success is that debate continues as to which 'side' was responsible for his assassination.

Handala has survived the death of his maker, a symbol of Palestinian identity and defiance, a distinctive image on the internet, keyrings and posters, as tattoos on the body, on the concrete slabs of the Separation Wall and as graffiti in Palestinian refugee camps throughout the region (Islam, 2012). The artist remarked that "This being that I have invented will certainly not cease to exist after me, and perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that I will live on with him after my death. Handala was born 10 years old, and he will always be 10 years old," he once explained. "At that age, I left my homeland, and when he returns, Handala will still be 10, and then he will start growing up. The laws of nature do not apply to him. He is unique. Things will become normal again when the homeland returns".

#### 4.4. Film, video, photography and performance art

**4.4.1 Nida Sinnokrot** in 2005 directed an award-winning documentary on the Palestinian resistance entitled "*Palestine Blues*," which examines the grassroots resistance movement that has sprung up against the Israeli Separation Wall and Settlement expansion in Palestinian farming communities. The film records the destruction wrought by the Israeli army whilst building the Wall in the village of Jayyous (Qalqilya Governorate).

**4.4.2. Mohammad Bakri**, born in the village of Bi'ina, Galilee in 1953. Amongst many other accomplishments, Bakri has produced and directed three documentary films dealing exclusively with the Palestinian political struggle - "1948" in 1998, "Jenin, Jenin" in 2002, and "Since You Left" in 2004. In each documentary, Bakri brings the camera and microphone to residents' and refugees' homes, posing questions about their experiences of the subject matter.

The award-winning "Jenin, Jenin" portrays what Bakri calls "the Palestinian truth" about the 'Battle of Jenin' in April 2002. During Operation Defensive Shield, the Israeli army invaded a Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin. The military refused to allow journalists and human rights organizations into the camp during the invasion, for "safety reasons", leading to rumors that a massacre had occurred. Jenin remained sealed for days after the invasion, and a subsequent UN fact-finding mission was forbidden to enter. Various casualty figures circulated, and some human rights organizations accused Israel of war crimes.

Bakri had participated in a non-violent demonstration at a checkpoint during the 2002 Jenin invasion, and was shocked when soldiers shot at the crowd, wounding a fellow actor standing next to him. This experience inspired him, soon after the invasion ended, to sneak into Jenin with a camera and sound engineer, and they filmed for five days and nights, asking the traumatized residents only "What happened?" (Adas, 2007). The result was the documentary "Jenin, Jenin", featuring testimonies which suggested that a massacre had indeed occurred.

**4.4.3. Emily Jacir** is Palestinian, born in 1970 in Bethlehem. She graduated with a Master's degree from Memphis College of Art. She divides her time between Rome and Ramallah. Jacir works in a variety of media including film, photography, installation and performance, video, writing and sound. She has exhibited extensively throughout the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East since 1994. Active in the building of Ramallah's art scene since 1999, Jacir has been involved in creating events such as Birzeit's Virtual Art Gallery and the first International Video Festival in Ramallah in 2002. She won the Hugo Boss Prize of the Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation in 2008. The jury noted that her "rigorous conceptual practice. .... bears witness to a culture torn by war and displacement. As a member of the Palestinian diaspora, she comments on issues of mobility (or the lack thereof), border crises, and historical amnesia through projects that unearth individual narratives and collective experiences". Jacir's major works include:

- "*Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages Destroyed, Depopulated and Occupied by Israel in 1948*" (2001). The Memorial comprises a refugee tent, like those distributed by UNRWA and the Red Cross. Onto its sides and roof, she had pencilled names of 418 of the Palestinian villages destroyed (based on Walid Khalidi's book *All That Remains: the Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*). A blank space was left around the door, a poignant reminder that there are many more names of villages, destroyed, depopulated and occupied since 1948 that could, and perhaps will, be added. At one point during the exhibition, the artist looked inside the tent to find a man huddled in the corner, sobbing. He was from one of the 418 villages remembered (Gelardin, 2001). A reviewer said that the Memorial "is mobile and vulnerable, resisting any false appeals to closure. It is not a didactic monument, but a sensitive, painful testament to a desperate tragedy that needs to be addressed and aches to be mourned" (Rosie's blog, 2007).
- *Where We Come From* (2001-2003): Jacir, holder of an American passport, asked more than 30 Palestinians living both abroad and within the occupied territories: "If I could do anything for you, anywhere in Palestine, what would it be?" She collected responses and carried out tasks in an extended performance of wish fulfillment by proxy. The documented exhibit was shown in New York to great critical acclaim (DEBS & CO, 2012).
- *Crossing Surda* (2003): is a record of going to and from work across an Israeli checkpoint. "'Crossing Surda' exists because an Israeli soldier threatened me and put an M-16 into my temple. If I had not had this direct threatening experience this piece would not exist". Jacir says she was filming her feet with a video camera at a checkpoint that day. For the following eight days she filmed with the video camera in her bag, with a hole cut in it to accommodate the lens.

**4.4.4 Mona Hatoum:** The work of many artists in the eighties was influenced by performance art. Hatoum was born in Beirut

in 1952. Her family left Haifa, along with 70,000 other Arab inhabitants on April 21 and 22, 1948 when Jewish forces began to bombard the city's Arab districts. Hatoum's art *Under Siege* was performed in London 1982. By placing her naked body within a small claustrophobic plastic cell, Hatoum attempted to relate to her identification with the Palestinian experience and to make a statement about Palestinians' struggle to survive in a continuous state of siege.

#### 4.5. Musicians

Pre-1948, the centers for Palestinian music were in the towns of Nazareth and Haifa, where performers composed in the classical styles of Cairo and Damascus. During and after 1948, however, a shared Palestinian identity was reflected in a new wave of performers who emerged with distinctively Palestinian themes. These reflected Palestinian experience, dreams of statehood and nationalist sentiment (Paredon Records, 1974; Cultures of Resistance, 2013).

After 1967, a genre of political songs was produced by Palestinian diaspora musicians, such as **al-Firqah al-Markaziyya** and **Abu 'Arab** in Lebanon, which conveyed collective loss and disaster. These revolutionary songs assumed Palestinian forms of improvised Arabic folk poetry (*mawwal*, *ataaba*, or *mijana*), to express anger and grief at the razing and appropriation of Palestinian villages and land.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Lebanese singer **Marcel Khalifeh** set to music the early works of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish in ways that evoked the everyday struggle for a Palestinian national identity. Because Israeli authorities correctly viewed music as a propaganda weapon of resistance, active Palestinian musicians worked under constant threat of arrest. Their work was marginalized through censorship of Palestinian nationalist lyrics within the Israeli broadcasting industry. Moreover, cassette tapes were frequently confiscated by Israeli security in border checks. Many artists, such as singer **Mustafa al-Kurd** (Anon, 2007) became more popular after their arrest or confiscation of their work.

Musical resistance during the first *Intifada* (1987-1993) was practiced through both abstinence from music, and new directions in Palestinian music. During this period, one of the most influential groups in Palestinian cultural history was founded in Ramallah. The musical group **Sabreen** represented the Palestinian struggle in avant-garde compositions that adapt Western and Arabic instruments to the themes of land and its fertility, romance and dreams - for example its 1980s album "*An As-Sumud*" and the more recent "*Ala-Fein*".

The al-Aqsa *Intifada* (2000-2005) is associated with the rise of Palestinian *hip-hop*, which began in 1998 with the **Nafar brothers** and is now one of the main modes of cultural resistance in Palestine and the Arab diaspora.

## 5. How intellectual and cultural figures give voice to the wider public discourse of the conflict

Cultural figures, and culture in general, have significantly contributed towards generating a collective awareness by

Palestinians of the size of their catastrophe and current predicament. This is particularly the case for the youth, many of whom have learnt of the *Naqba* through public expositions of Palestinian culture. Their better acquaintance with this has led to an appreciation of the reason for the ongoing conflict between their people and Israel. Palestinian culture has thereby connected youth with the rest of Palestinian society.

Cultural centers within Palestine have contributed in developing the cognitive potential of young people, and their attitudes. According to the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS, 2012), there are 611 cultural institutions in Palestine<sup>3</sup>. Cultural activities have brought the youth out of their family homes, enabling them to participate in external social activities. Such activities have contributed to changing their society and developing individual skills. These activities, based on celebrating the exploits of cultural figures of excellence have helped to coalesce the national perspective, and shaped its values on socio-political change.

There is total resonance between the 'statements' intellectual and cultural leaders have made since 1948, what is felt on the streets and in the camps, cafés and homes, and what is represented in the Palestinian blogosphere and hip-hop music. Of course, domestic and family life has to go on, with the focus on livelihoods, collecting food ration entitlements from international organisations or shopping in the market, tending the farm or livestock, getting the children safely to school and back, and so on. However, when there is an 'incident' at the local checkpoint, an incursion of troops, a stoning of farmers by settlers etc, the narrative switches into one that would readily find a place in the genres of expressions listed above. When the incident is over, the conversation returns to the more mundane 'survival' mode. Yet at all times, the anger which Mahmoud Darwish mentions in the last line of *Identity Card* simmers like molten lava never far from the surface, ready to spill over. And it often does when during weekends the youth reach for their catapults and stones, burn tires and spray graffiti on walls, in continuation of their David and Goliath struggle, that is and always will be present continuous, until there is a peace agreement .... whilst the older people meditate on the image of Naji al-Ali's Handala, and handle the keys of homes from which they were evicted. Resistance to Occupation has many facets, and they are convergent.

Amid rumours of current Israeli-Palestinian peace talks hitting an impasse, and two days after Hamas called for a new violent uprising against Israel, the *Times of Israel Daily* on October 21st 2013 reported that a former head of the Shin Bet security agency has warned of the likelihood of a "Palestinian Arab Spring." "All of the conditions exist in our situation for the Palestinian masses to rise up," Yuval Diskin told a conference at the Finance Ministry's Budget Division on October 21st. "In the West Bank, the intense tension and frustration is worsening among the Palestinians, who feel that their land is being stolen from them, that the state

<sup>3</sup> of which, 475 across West Bank and 136 across the Gaza Strip, including cultural centres, museums, theatres, publishing houses, local radio and TV stations.

they strive for is getting further away, and the economy is no longer something that they can take comfort in.”

The only *alternative discourse* on the *Palestinian* side is that the minority is prepared to pursue ‘normalisation’ on ‘equitable’ terms, through looking for partners for peace on the *Israeli* side with whom they may engage. Yet, perhaps there is light at the end of the tunnel, borne of the cultural interaction across generations. Perhaps this alternative discourse may take hold, towards the same goal, but in a smarter more constructive way.

Culture has endowed Palestinian youth with a powerful tool of self-expression that might become a new instrument for wider community participation, and a path for peaceful social change. The youth uprising that took place in 1987 during the first *Intifada* was significantly influenced by poetry, literature, drama and song. It has been echoed by events on the streets of Egypt in 2012, which started peacefully, inspired maybe by the passion for free speech of their Nobel literature laureate Naguib Mahfouz, confirming a yearning for change, from oppression into a new tomorrow.

Culture has provided a bridge between generations, the generation of Palestinians who are more than 65 years old now (only about 3% of the population), being the group which has the institutional memory of the *Naqba*, and their children and grandchildren who do not have (about 70% of Palestinians are under 30 years of age). Culture has provided a bridge too across religious and political perspectives, shepherding people into one cohesive and coherent perspective of their cultural identity, concerning the wrong inflicted upon them for which they were not responsible in any way, something beyond their control.

The well-known Israeli journalist Amira Hass has done more than most people to try to find a common narrative between Israel and Palestine, though she is usually construed on the Israeli side as being anti-Israel. Her iconic *Haaretz* article of August 30, 2006 “*Can you really not see?*” is a plea for rational thinking. A more recent *Haaretz* article by her of April 7th 2013 is entitled “*Inverse hasbara: how ‘5 Broken Cameras’ changed Palestinians’ attitude toward non-violence*”. It probes the link between generations and how the “alternative discourse” may still win the day, and win the peace.

Her article, in the cultural medium of print, is about the cultural media of film and television. It relates the story of Palestinians incarcerated in Hadarim Prison in Even Yehuda, who recently had the opportunity to watch the Oscar-nominated documentary “5 Broken Cameras,” about protests against the separation fence in the West Bank town of Bil’in. The film was co-directed by a Palestinian and an Israeli, and was screened both by a Palestinian television station and Israel’s Channel 2.

One of those prisoners was Walid Daqa, a 52-year-old Palestinian citizen of Israel from Baaqa al-Gharbiyeh, who observed how the film was received by his fellow inmates. “The prisoners are a masculine society or sub-culture that praises and glorifies the values of aggressiveness, and sees non-violence as feminine,” said Daqa. “If a man espouses

non-violence, he is thought of almost as gay, as someone whose place is not among the freedom fighters. The film has exposed the prisoners to something new. They suddenly discovered that the struggle of these ‘yuppies’, these ‘spineless’ people from Bil’in and Na’alin, isn’t simple at all, but demands faith and sacrifice, and bears with it not a little risk. And suddenly they discovered that standing exposed to the barrel of a rifle, without any means of defence, reflects courage and bravery that are far greater than the bravery required to stand behind a rifle. And I would add that in order to stand behind that rifle and be a good gunman, all you need is to be a coward, and a person who lacks ethics and values”.

An “elder” who has been imprisoned for almost three decades, Daqa noted “The movie changed the minds of many of the prisoners regarding the non-violent popular struggle. From my perspective, the movie could be Israeli or Czech; what’s important is that it shook up the prisoners’ macho culture and militaristic outlook. The question that remains unanswered, and that prevents people from adopting the concept of a non-violent struggle, is whether such a struggle can advance [their] objectives and reach [their] goals,” he says. “There is a ton of literature in the jails that explains and glorifies armed struggle, but there aren’t any books about Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, or the struggle of African-American citizens – Martin Luther King and others. If I were in the shoes of the Israeli culture minister, instead of condemning and attacking the movie and the directors, I would fund the purchase of books and studies about non-violent struggle, and flood the libraries of Israeli jails with that literature” Daqa continued. “This movie can help prevent killing and fresh graves [from being dug] in this land.”

## 6. How the Palestinian public discourse vis-à-vis the conflict affects the cultural life and mood of those living in the Occupied territories

There is a growing trend for Palestinians to spend less time feeling disadvantaged and being victims of Occupation, and more on being positive in order to change their condition. A greater appreciation of the richness of their culture is partly responsible for this. There is a building boom going on now in Palestine, nowhere more evident than in Gaza city and Ramallah - international quality residential and office buildings erected by Palestinian craftsmen, beautifully fitted-out and finished. Palestine has Statehood. Gaza won the Arab Idol competition this year .... with a song about peace, despite Operation Cast Lead and all the rest of its suffering. Palestinians know that their cause is celebrated in all parts of the world, except by the majority in Israel and much of the United States. They see that the United States, which bank-rolls the Israeli Occupation Project, is day by day losing its over-riding economic superiority, and therefore influence, in the world and operating on a vast and increasing budget deficit.



There will come a time when the USA cannot afford to underwrite Israel, and when other regional Arab States attain true democracy and support the Palestinian cause as seriously on the diplomatic front, as some already are now, through providing funds. There will come a time when Israeli lobbyists in the United States will realize that seeking to outlaw the

Palestinian narrative is doing Israel no favours at all, that the 10% of Israeli Jews who read *Haaretz* and have bumper stickers proclaiming 'Israel must get out of Palestine', that the many liberal Israeli groups who put their pensions on the line by monitoring military checkpoints and journalists like Amira Hass, are actually 'right', for Israel.

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# The Difference between a Fictional Narrative and the National Narrative

Yuval Ben-Zimman

## Abstract

The study of groups' behaviors in conflicts has shown that societies favor the in-group, delegitimize the out-group, provide explanations for members of society as to why the conflict was erupted and how to cope with it. It has been claimed that societies share a psychological in-group repertoire, an ethos of conflict and that they develop a culture of conflict. As part of societies' mechanisms, culture fictional products – specifically films and books – have an important role in shaping the way they perceive, think and act in conflicts. Yet fictional texts, by their mere characteristics, provide a discourse which is more ambiguous and more equivocal: They speak in different voices, have many layers, and present the fictional reality in complex and even self-contradicting ways. There is therefore a contradiction between the role cultural texts supposedly have in an ethos of conflict, and the complex discourse they present. Looking at novels produced in Israel in the 1980s and on Israeli films which deal with the Israeli-Lebanon conflict in the last three decades, the article shows that cultural products don't necessarily go in line with what one could expect from texts produced in a society in conflict. It therefore calls for a new way of study in the field of conflict research, which is closer to humanities than to social science, in which fictional texts tell as a great deal about societies' perceptions of conflicts even when they are complex and don't allow us to reach concrete "bottom lines".

## Introduction

In his influential book *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson claims that unlike earlier times when communities were small enough for members of society to meet and know each other, modern communities try to find ways that will help them imagine their shared identities (Anderson, 1991) and cultural texts (e.g. films, newspapers, novels, theater, official ceremonies) have an enormous role in doing that. Continuing that school of thought, Bhabha (1990) argues that nations are in a constant process of creating themselves through narratives: there is a continuing dialectical interchange between the nation which creates a master-narrative for its cultural texts on the one hand, and the cultural texts that provide a narrative for the nation on the other hand. As Bruner

(1991) notes, when discussing the different features of narratives "There seems to be some sense in which narrative, rather than referring to 'reality', may in fact create or constitute it, as when 'fiction' creates a 'world' of its own" (Bruner, 1991: 13).

For these and other reasons, as Jameson (1981) claims, it is a mistake to try to differentiate between cultural texts which have social political aspects and those which supposedly do not. Everything that is poetic is also political, and "...there is nothing that is not social and historical – indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political" (Jameson, 1981: 20). Therefore, every cultural text should be looked at as a political text and analyses of such texts should reveal the underlying assumptions, the unconscious political worlds and the hidden ideologies that they are based on. As Dowling (1984) explains it, taking the Freudian interpretation of dreams as a reference, when a dream is dreamt the unconscious supposedly doesn't exist because the dreamer experiences it as a full independent story. Yet the unconscious actually dictates the dream. Likewise, cultural texts are supposedly autonomous, but they are actually constructed and based on ideologies, schools of thoughts, social perceptions and collective shared values. That is why genres change as times changes (Bruner, 1991) and different nations at different times produce different kinds of narratives in their cultural texts.

Fictional texts produced in societies in conflict have an important role in shaping the conflict and introducing it to the societies involved. It is even claimed that societies in intractable conflict actually share a culture of conflict in which "the socio-psychological infrastructure... is not only widely shared but also appears to be dominant in public discourse... (and) is expressed in cultural products such as literary books, TV programs, films, theatre..." (Bar-Tal, 2010: 191). Cultural products help the members of society cope with the stressful experience: they illuminate the conflict situation, justify problematic and violent acts toward the enemy, create a sense of differentiation and superiority, prepare society for difficult conditions, motivate solidarity and contribute to strengthening the social identity (Bar-Tal, 2010). It is "through these cultural products, [that] societal beliefs and emotions of the socio-psychological infrastructure are disseminated and can reach every sector of the public" (Bar-Tal, 2013: 260).

But although fictional cultural texts are part of the building of the national narrative and of the culture of conflict, they suggest a different discourse by their mere definition: they are more ambiguous and more equivocal than the way societies supposedly think and act during conflicts. Fictional texts are not obligated to tell a mimetic story about reality; they don't have to be true or false and don't necessarily have any conclusion. On the contrary, what makes them interesting and unique is the fact that they have many layers, talk in different voices (see for example: Bakhtin, 1981) and provide different perspectives than one can see in the non-fictional discourse. Therefore, there is a gap, a kind of contradiction, between the fictional texts' complex characteristics and the claim that they actually not only take part – but also have a significant role – in shaping societies' experiences and actions in conflicts.

Although there seems to be an understanding that cultural texts do not have a “bottom line”, that they are not manifests or political pamphlets, the discipline of conflict research commonly looks at them as such. For example, relying on scholarly studies – from both social science studies and humanistic studies – Bar-Tal concludes that society's narratives emerge through these cultural texts that “provide a ‘good story’ that is well understood and meaningful. The plot of the story is simple and clear, elaborated in black-and-white form with unambiguous villains, victims, and heroes” (Bar-Tal, 2013: 257).

Two test-cases of Israeli the national narrative and Israeli fiction and cinema after the 1980s

The story told by fiction is more complex than seen in other discourses because of the special traits of fictional texts which are not the same as other kinds of discourses. In what follows, I will provide two examples, one of Israeli novels of the 1980s which deal with the Israeli-Arab conflict, and second of Israeli films dealing specifically with the Israeli-Lebanon conflict in the last three decades. These two test cases show two different ways in which fictional texts present a story which is not the same as the national narrative and the ethos of conflict: Israeli novels of the 1980s don't go in line and actually contradict the changes that supposedly happened in the Israeli ethos of conflict at the 1980s; Israeli films of the last three decades about Lebanon are closer to the national narrative but at the same time do harshly criticize the national narrative, and frame the conflict in the same way although the supposed dramatic change in Israel's perception and ethos of conflict in the past quarter of century.

## Israel's national narrative and ethos of conflict

Before focusing on the fictional texts, a short description of the dramatic change that happened in the Israeli-Arab relations at the end of the 1970s and the 1980s is required, and in the way it influenced the Israeli national narrative and ethos of conflict. The changes can be seen in the relations between Israel and the Arab countries

surrounding it, in the relations between Jews and Arabs inside Israel, and in the relationships between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (Benziman, 2010). The Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement, signed in 1979, demonstrated for the Israeli public that the Israeli-Arab conflict was no longer a threat to Israel's existence and that the notion that Israel could be secure due to the fact that it has peace agreements and that the land-for-peace approach could be implemented, changed the way Israeli society perceived the conflict (Horowitz & Lissak, 1990). The Lebanon War made Israelis implicitly acknowledge that Israel was not only a peace-seeking country that fights just wars of no choice (Ben-Porat, 2008), but that it also initiates wars. The Palestinianization process of the Arab-Palestinian Israeli citizens after the 1967 War, the clashes between Israeli security forces and Arab-Palestinian Israeli citizens on “Land Day” (30.3.76) and the shift in Israeli leadership of 1977 – all intensified the conflict between the Israeli Jewish leadership and its Arab-Palestinian citizens (see Eisenstadt 1989; Kimmerling 1998; Smooha 1993; Rabinowitz & Abu Baker 2005). And the growing tensions between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza led to the first Intifada in December, 1987; yet, even more important than the Intifada itself was the growing realization by Israelis that the Palestinians could no longer be seen as isolated groups fighting for local rights. Rather, they must be perceived as a people or a nation struggling for an independent and autonomous state (Kimmerling & Migdal 1999, 2003).

As can be expected, the changes in the conflict at the time led to a dramatic change in the Israeli ethos of conflict, psychological inter-group repertoire and in the perception of the image of the Arab (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). Oren (2009) shows that during the late 1970s and through the 1980s, until the beginning of the 1990s, Israel's ethos of conflict changed. Public polls of that time show an influential drop in Israeli Jews' belief that Israel can successfully wage war against all the Arab states (Oren, 2009). Also, at this time, peace beliefs became more central in Israeli society and more concrete than the abstract idea that it was previously.

Oren separates the changes of the Israeli Ethos of conflict into five different periods. She claims that when comparing the Ethos of Conflict of the years 1977-1987 to the ethos during earlier years, there is a “general weakening of the ethos of conflict as a unifying element for Israeli society and its various divisions” (Oren, 2009: 15). This weakening mainly has to do with contradictions between the old elements of the ethos and the new reality in which Israel signed a peace agreement with Egypt. Israeli society realized that there was not one unified Arab population in conflict with it, but rather there are a few different conflicts between Israel and its Arabs neighbors. The third period, defined by Oren as the period between 1987 and 1993, although starting in the Intifada, also showed “a further decline in the strength of the ethos of conflict in Israeli society” (Oren, 2009: 16). This decline had to do with contradictions between valuing greater

Israel and keeping Israel as a Jewish democratic state, and a decrease in the perception of continuing the Status Quo as good for Israel (Goldberg, Barzilai & Inbar, 1991; Shamir & Shamir, 2000). It is at this period that Israelis showed more optimism about finding a way to end the conflict, and less fear of the Arabs wish to exterminate Israel (Oren, 2009).

These changes all led to the period between 1993 and 2000 when the ethos of conflict was the weakest with "a reduced tendency to consider the conflict as a zero-sum game" (Oren, 2009: 19). Yet after the year 2000, following the failure of the Camp David talks and the outbreak of the Second Intifada, the Ethos of Conflict strengthened due to the new perception of Israeli society in which Israelis perceived themselves as wanting peace but not believing it can be reached because of their adversaries (Oren, 2009). This can be seen, for example, in the platforms of both the leading right wing and left wing parties running in the Israeli election at the time which decreased the emphasis of Israel's wish to take part in regional integration, blamed the Palestinians for terror attacks, presented Israel as wishing for peace but not having a partner for it, referred to the Palestinian Authority as a patronage for violence, and more (Oren, 2010).

Although Oren separates her analyses to different time periods, in the time-frame discussed in this paper, it is important to note that the general picture is one in which a decrease in the ethos of conflict started from the late 1970s and through the 1980s, continued in the 1990s, and then went through a big change after the Second Intifada in 2000.

## The story told by Israeli fiction of the 1980s dealing with the Israeli-Arab Conflict

During the late 1970s and the 1980s more novels were written on the Israeli-Arab conflict than before (Benziman, 2010). These mainly include *The Lover* by A. B. Yehoshua (1977), *Refuge* by Sami Michael (1977), *A Locked Room* by Shimon Ballas (1980), *The Smile of the Lamb* by David Grossman (1983), *A Good Arab* by Yoram Kaniuk (1984), *The Road to Ein Harod* by Amos Kenan (1984), *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist* by Emile Habibi (1984), *Arabesques* by Anton Shammas (1986), *A Trumpet in the Wadi* by Sami Michael (1987), and *Ta'atu'on* by Yitzhak Ben-Ner (1989) and *Shahid* by Avi Valentin (1989).

The primary genre in which the conflict was represented changed as well, from short stories to novels (Morahg, 1987). As Bruner (1991) notes, a change in genres "may have quite as powerful an influence in shaping our modes of thought as they have in creating the realities that their plots depict (Bruner, 1991: 15). And so this change at this time should be related to a perception that more must be written in order to understand the conflict and it allows, at least theoretically, a more polyphonic (see Bakhtin, 1981) representation of the conflict, in which a

variety of voices from the Israeli-Jewish narrative can be heard and in which even the Arab voice could be audible.

The Arab characters in these texts became more rounded and complex (Levy, 1983; Morahg, 1986). They were no longer stereotypes (Ramras-Rauch, 1989), who only project onto the Jewish hero (Ben-Ezer, 1999). Instead, they stood for themselves, and exposed the reader to the Arab perspective of the conflict, and not only the Jewish-Israeli one (Perry, 1986). This new representation of Arabs and their more visible presence also resulted in ending the dichotomy and hierarchy between Jews and Arabs, and posited a more equal discourse (Gertz, 1993). Yet the focal point remained an Israeli-Jewish one; even when the Arab characters became more complex, they still told the story of how the Israeli-Jewish narrative looks at them. As Oppenheimer (2008) points out, these texts, like most of Israeli texts that represent Arab characters, are written with an *Orientalistic* approach.

Most of the studies done on this topic focused on the image of Arabs in Israeli cultural texts and did not study the conflict as a whole. Focusing on how the conflict is presented in these texts and not only the Arab characters, I elsewhere suggested (Benziman, 2011) that cultural texts of the 1980s dealing with the conflict (especially fiction novels and films) have other traits:

1. Although the conflict is their main topic, these texts are mostly concerned with the feeling that it is impossible to grasp and understand it. In a way, these texts are *oxymoronic* as they tell a story about the inability to tell the story of the conflict. For example, David Grossman's (1983) *The Smile of the Lamb*, (*Hiyuch hagdī*, 1983), is a novel in which the question of what is true and what is false is the light-motif and in which the characters "understand that they cannot understand" (Gertz, 1993: 96).
2. Many of the characters in these texts lose their minds, get hospitalized in institutions for the mentally ill, or otherwise disappear from society. Based on Foucault's *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1965), it seems that that these texts question the conflicted societies' sanity and not the protagonists who, understandably, cannot live in an ongoing conflicted reality.
3. Death is an important factor in all these texts, which symbolizes not only the horrors of the conflict, but also the inability to end it. In this sense, the texts tell a story in which the conflict is not only tragic but also offers no optimistic future ending.
4. Jewish and Arab characters in these texts cannot establish normal relationships or romantic relationships in Israel/Palestine. The characters can have such relationships outside the holy land, but not in it. Anyone who is seen as too close to someone from the out-group is immediately condemned. The only places in which Jewish and Arab protagonists do meet in these texts are, therefore, outside of Israel or in extra-territorial Heterotopian venues (Foucault, 1997) such as hospitals, isolated spots, or



mental institutions. For example, Yoram Kaniuk's (1984) *A Good Arab (Aravi Tov)*, presents a situation in which individuals from the opposing sides can be friends and lovers outside of Israel but not in it; and the protagonist of the novel, a result of inter-marriage between a Jew and an Arab, is bound to a life of confusion and of not having a clear identity for all his life.

5. The Israeli army has a crucial role in all these texts and is portrayed as the most important and influential component of Israeli society and as the almost sole Israeli entity that has direct contact with Arabs. The military in these texts, although possessing enormous power, seems to perceive itself as not having any ability to change reality (Benziman, 2010).
6. Conflicts inside the societies presented in these texts seem as intense and hard as the conflict between them. Both societies are not internally united, and so they need the outside enemy, the *other*, against whom they can unite. This also explains why any character that tries to relate to the other society is condemned. The societies displace their in-group conflicts onto the outside conflict and by doing so they try to dim the problems inside their own group. Yet in many ways the conflict between the two societies is one of the factors that perpetuate the harsh conflicts within them.

When comparing the Israeli cultural texts at the time and the Israeli psychological repertoire and ethos of conflict at the time – it is evident that they do not proceed in the same direction. Although all of these changed at approximately the same time – the great shift in the conflict, the publics' perception, and the fictional texts – undoubtedly influencing one another, they do not share the same characteristics of change.

The most revealing fact is that while Israeli public discourse showed a reduction in viewing the conflict as a zero-sum-game, the texts do not: they end in death, the protagonists lose their minds, and no chance for a positive future is presented. The dialogues are not between equals and – according to the cultural texts of the time – the only place where Jews and Arabs can meet and sustain a normal relationship is outside of Israel/Palestine.

The most important trait of these texts is that they tell a story of not being able to tell a story, and so the texts are confusing. They deal almost obsessively with the questions of truth and falsity and question what is reality and what is not. At the same time, though, the perceptions of Israelis about the conflict changed after the peace treaty with Egypt with the new belief that there is a rational way to understand the conflict and even to solve it. The concept of Land for Peace, proven to be a solution, was a way of understanding the conflict rationally and it proposed a way to end it (Ben Porat, 2008) which brought optimism to the public discourse (Oren, 2009), while the fictional texts told exactly the opposite story: no rationality, telling the story of the inability to understand it, showing no future hope and no possibility for positive Jewish-Arab relations in the conflicted land.

While Israeli public opinion towards Arabs transformed, and included less stereotypes and prejudices (Smootha, 1998; Stone, 1983), Israel's literature was Orientalistic in character, even when trying to present a more balanced perspective of the Arab (Oppenheimer, 2008). The texts continued to present the Israeli-national narrative, even when the overall picture is not presented as black and white.

The texts deal with almost all of the topics that comprise the inter-group psychological repertoire and the ethos of conflict – security, self-identification, group belongings and more – but show them in a different light than the public discourse of the time. Why is it, then, that while Israeli society's beliefs became more exceptive of other narratives and less pessimistic, the cultural texts became more confusing? Why is it that while the texts did tow the line of the public discourse, giving greater voice to the Arab other, they at the same time told a story in which there actually can-not be any coexistence between Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians?

## The story told by films about the Israeli-Lebanon conflict in the last three decades

In the late 1970s and through the 1980s a change occurred in how Israeli cinema dealing with the Israeli-Arab conflict portrayed it, similar to the change that occurred in Israeli literature described previously. It is at this time that films became more critical of the national narrative and changed the way they portray the Israeli-Arab conflict. After decades in which they almost fully embraced the Israeli-Jewish national narrative (Shohat, 1989), the perception of the conflict became more complex and less focused on the Israeli-Jewish perspective (Shohat, 2010). The Arab narrative received some expression, Arab actors started appearing in films and sometimes influenced their plot, and Jewish actors played Arabs while Arabs played Jews – all leading to a more equal representation of the conflict. It was also then that the Arab-Jewish conflict became a major topic in Israeli films, as many specifically focused on the conflict.

Scholars disagree as to whether the change that occurred truly brought a new narrative to Israeli cinema or only proposed a new way to tell the same Israeli-Jewish narrative (see: Shohat, 1991, Ne`eman, 1995, Loshitzky, 2001, Gertz, 2004). But all agree that a significant change did occur then in the representation of the conflict. Israeli films no longer served the traditional national narrative as they had done before; they supposedly became much more critical of it, questioned the righteousness of the Israeli consensus, and challenged the concept of Israel being solely good and fighting the “bad guys” (Shohat, 2010). Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, which deals with Israeli Hebrew novels and films, it should be noted that substantial changes also occurred in Palestinian cinema at that time (Gertz & Khliefi, 2008).

When specifically and closely looking at the Israeli fictional films which focus on the Israeli-Lebanon films of the last three decades, it can be concluded that, in a very sophisticated way, they were able to talk at the same time in two different

voices – criticizing the Israeli national narrative and enforcing it (Benziman, 2013a). The major films of the last three decades which focus on the Israeli-Lebanon conflict – *Two Fingers from Sidon* by Eli Cohen (1986), *Cup Final* by Eran Riklis (1991), *Time for Cherries* by Haim Buzaglo (1991), *Beaufort* by Yosef Cedar (2007), *Waltz with Bashir* by Ari Folman (2008), and *Lebanon* by Shmuel Maoz (2009) – actually uphold elements of Israel's national narrative and nurture its collective memory. They criticize some of Israel's behaviors but also justify the soldiers' acts, motivate solidarity, and maintain and strengthen the social identity. By the way they frame the *Lebanon situation*, isolating it from other aspects of the Israeli-Arab conflict, forming soldier unity, and dissociating the soldiers' acts and their knowledge of the events – the movies are able to both speak out against the national narrative and require its continuation at the same time (Benziman, 2013b).

The soldier-characters in these films criticize the Lebanon situation, as they think that their country has sent them to a mission that in many ways is inappropriate. They are not sure – and sometimes even completely oppose – the role that they play in the conflict. The death of soldiers is seen as unnecessary, and the way in which the films are shot show the complete dissociation between soldiers and the fight that they are fighting. They do not show signs of patriotism, justification of the in-groups' goals, or hate of the out-group – which are usually seen in conflicts (Benziman, 2013a).

Although these films were produced during the last quarter of a century, they tell similar stories. They are unique and different from one another, yet they frame the *Lebanon situation* in the same way. The narrative that they provide is one in which the *Lebanon situation* is highly criticized, yet the group is still united, works together, and obeys orders. It is these elements that enable six movies from three different decades to tell a story that actually never changes. The First Lebanon War, which began in 1982, and its aftermath and the period between the 1980s and the first decade of the new millennium fall into the same pattern.

The perception of the *Lebanon situation* changed in the Israeli public's eyes; it was viewed differently just after the First Lebanon War and at the beginning of the 1990s (when the first three films were produced) than during the first decade of the 21st century (when the other three films were produced). Yet all these films – regardless of the plot and time period – fall into the same pattern: one in which while truly criticizing the conduct of the war, they inadvertently preserve the basic elements of the national narrative. The conflict changed, society has changed, the perception of the conflict has changed, and Israeli films have changed – but the films still found the way to provide the components that a society in conflict so desperately needs: unity, justification of its acts, and continuation of its actions even when they are questioned.

As opposed to what I have claimed about Israeli fiction of the 1980s, the films are closer to the national narrative. But in no way are they identical to it. They harshly criticize Israel's conduct in Lebanon and it is presumed that the

filmmakers actually wanted to differ significantly from the official government narrative, even if eventually they framed their stories in a similar fashion (Benziman, 2013). In other words, these films differ from what one could expect from texts of a culture of conflict in two ways: they tell the same story for three decades and do not change with changes in the ethos of conflict; and they both criticize Israel's conduct in the conflict while at the same time upholding elements of its ethos of conflict.

## Conclusion

The two examples in this article show that while both cultural texts and political public discourse changed at the same time – they went in different directions. The novels of the 1980s were more pessimistic and confused than was the public discourse, they did not tow the line with changes in the public's perception, and had their own understanding of the conflict. The films about the Israeli-Lebanon conflict provided a similar picture throughout three decades, even when the conflict and its ethos supposedly changed; it seems as if for the films the story is the same story, even after a quarter of a century has passed, regardless of the changes in reality.

Different explanations can be given to this gap between the national narrative and the fictional one. I have proposed such explanations – for example the difference between the author's intention and the way it is perceived by society, or the assumption that the audience focuses on certain elements that are closer to their beliefs and disregards others – but a variety of others can be thought of (Benziman, forthcoming). Yet regardless of the reason, what is evident from the findings presented here is that the texts are not exactly what social-psychologist of conflicts would think they would be: they either clearly differ from the national narrative, or embrace only partial aspects of it. They have rules of their own, by which they can criticize the national narrative and still preserve it, by which they may present a much more complex picture which self-contradicts itself, or by which they suggest completely different perspectives of looking at the conflict

The conclusion from the findings above should not be that fictional texts cannot tell us about feelings, thought and perceptions of the society in which they are written. They do not contradict the belief that one can sometimes learn about a society from its fiction more than can be understood from other kinds of discourses. On the contrary: it is my belief that studying fiction of a society in conflict might tell us more about the society than any other kind of discourse (Benziman, 2011). My claim is that the way that political scientists and researchers of conflict view fictional texts is too generalizing: these texts do tell the story of the conflict, but in their own way. They are part of the national narrative and ethos of conflict, but that does not mean that they embrace all of its aspects and components. Because they are fictional, they do not necessarily uphold to all the elements of the official narrative. Interestingly, in the Israeli case, the novels of the 1980s are much closer to the ethos

of conflict of post-2000 than they are to the ethos of their own times (Benziman, forthcoming); and the films about Lebanon offer an interesting way to talk about the national narrative: supporting it while criticizing it (Benziman, 2013). These kinds of complex stories are hard to find in other discourses, but fiction allows them.

There are fictional texts which fall very well into the theory that in societies in conflict what is seen in fiction is a pure reflection of a “good” vs. “evil” story. An example of such can be brought from some of the Hollywood films in which the “bad guys” who used to be Soviets are currently Muslims, while their negative traits (vs. the idealization of the Americans) did not change significantly. In Israeli fiction, this is evident mostly in children books (Teff, 2012; Cohen, 1985) like the well known Israeli children-series Hasambah. This is also true for Israeli cinema which went hand-in-hand with the Zionist project till the late 1970s (Shohat, 2010) but also in some current films, TV shows and novels.

Yet what I have tried to show is that it is difficult to establish generalizations based on fictional texts. Some act in a completely different manner than expected. In the cases

presented above, almost all the texts acted differently from the expectations of conflict research. The study of fiction and culture in conflict should therefore be revised. This is probably not big news to scholars coming from humanities, but it is a call for social-scientists who either disregard the study of fiction or try to generalize and conclude bottom-lines from complex texts. Disregarding fiction is wrong because fiction has a very influential part in building the national narrative and because these fictional texts do provide insights about the conflict that no other discourse does. Generalizing from them and looking for bottom lines and a “good” vs. “bad” paradigm simply does not work with complex texts, and surely not with fiction. Therefore, a new approach is needed – one that involves a close-reading of the texts and tries to find the common elements in them, even if these elements do not fall into the paradigms of conflict research. This will enhance and enrich the study of conflicts, which should not be studied solely in laboratories and through quantitative methods. Conflict, we should remember, is a complex issue, and so complex texts about conflict, which do not allow us easy conclusions, are exactly what is needed.

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# Biographies of Researchers

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Mr. Ashraf Ajrami is the Director-General of the Damour Center for Media and Communication. He is an author and researcher who most recently published a book entitled *The Religious Media Rhetoric and Human Rights*. Following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Ajrami worked at the Information Ministry as Director of Israeli Affairs and later became Deputy Director of the external media and Minister of Prisoners Affairs. He played an active role in the Palestinian resistance and spent 12 years in Israeli prisons from 1984 to 1996. He holds a B.A. in English.

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John Ashley was born in England and attended London and Cambridge Universities, qualifying in psychology and physiology. He has worked in 20 countries across Asia and Africa, and is currently with a consulting company in Ramallah, as a rural development planner. He has lived for five years in Palestine and Jordan, sometimes working in peace activities with Nedal Jayousi, with whom he has authored the paper presented here. In 2004, President Arafat offered him Palestinian citizenship. Aside from his professional activities, John has an interest in poetry and has had his poems published in England and Ireland.

## Dr. Yuval Benziman

Dr. Yuval Benziman is a Post Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research interests are Israeli cinema and other culture channels, and the way they construct the Israeli narrative and frame the Israeli-Arab conflict. Yuval studies the complex relations between fictional texts and how they represent reality versus what reality supposedly is about. He studied Psychology and Hebrew Literature for his BA degree; Conflict Research and Hebrew Literature for his MA degree; and his PhD. dissertation – which looks at how Israeli literature of the 1980s represents the Israeli-Arab conflict – was conducted under the supervision of two instructors, one from Hebrew culture and one from International relations. In the last two years he was a post-doctoral visiting professor and visiting assistant professor at the University of Maryland.

## Dr. Dalia Fadila

Dr. Dalia Fadila is currently president of Al Qasemi College of Engineering and Science. She has served in the past 5 years as provost of Al-Qasemi Teacher Training College, an Arab college of education in Israel and as acting president of the college during 2006. Dr. Fadila is an expert on organizational development and a researcher of American literature, women's literature and ethnic studies. Of deep concern to her, are promoting quality education for the Arab students through establishing an alternative schooling system, and empowering Arab women as educators, entrepreneurs and leaders. She has established private schools for teaching English called *Q Schools - English Language and HR Development* that proposes a unique approach to learning/teaching English suited to Arab students and stemming from the need of these students to develop personally and professionally. Dr. Fadila is currently also faculty member of the International School for Leadership and Diplomacy at IDC-Inter Disciplinary Center in Hertzelya and member of the governmental civil-service higher committee and fellow the Taub Center for Social Policy Research in Israel and other national and international forms dealing with education and the Arab minority in Israel.

## Mr. Elie Friedman

Mr. Friedman serves as Project Manager at the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue, Netanya Academic College, where he has advanced and managed various Middle Eastern regional dialogue initiatives with regional and international partners. Mr. Friedman is a lecturer at Netanya Academic College's School of Communication, giving courses on discourse analysis and language use in media environments. He is also a doctoral research fellow at the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace and a PhD candidate at the Department of Communication and Journalism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His dissertation engages in a discourse analysis of Israeli political leaders' presentation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in various political, geo-strategic, and ideological contexts and in changing media environments. In addition, Mr. Friedman's research maps various typologies for the presentation of gaps between various types of messages with respect to the core issues of the conflict. Mr. Friedman has received numerous grants and scholarships, including the Rabin Scholarship for the Advancement of Peace and Tolerance.

## Dr. Nedal Jayousi

Dr. Nedal Jayousi, founder of the Palestinian House for Professional Solutions (HPS), has a proven track record of 23 years experience as a professor of education and as a manager of educational and developmental programs, along with managing educational institutions in public service, private sectors, and a number of local and international bodies. He has experience in managing different groups, along with direct expertise in UN agencies, the EC, the World Bank, Belgian, Austrian and USAID projects. He is a senior skilled educational expert to Governmental, NGO, and International bodies. He served as a curricula designer at the Curricula Center and took part in developing an educational kit on themes of peace education and conflict resolution, which were taught at 30 Palestinian schools. He served as an educational expert for World Bank in the Middle East and North Africa and as a senior adviser for the educational sector review in East Jerusalem. He has led 15 peace education programs and won the Mount Zion prize in 2009. He was the regional Director of a Program funded by IFAD/UN called Capacity Building for Results and Impact covering 13 countries. He serves as a representative of EU-funded program called TEMPUS.

## Dr. Motti Neiger

Motti Neiger is the Dean of the School of Communication, Netanya Academic College, Israel. His academic interests include media memory, popular culture, and journalism during conflicts. Among his recent publications (together with Oren Meyers and Eyal Zandberg) are the edited volume *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age* (2011, Palgrave-Macmillan) and the articles "Past Continuous: Newsworthiness and the Shaping of Collective Memory" (2012, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*); "Tuned to the Nation's Mood: Popular Music as a Mnemonic Cultural Object" (2011, *Media, Culture & Society*); "Structuring the Sacred: Media Professionalism and the Production of Mediated Holocaust Memory" (2011, *The Communication Review*); "Communicating Critique: Towards a Conceptualization of Journalistic Criticism" (2010, *Communication, Culture and Critique*) and "Prime Time Commemoration: An Analysis of Television Broadcasts on Israel's Memorial Day for the Holocaust and the Heroism" (2009, *Journal of Communication*). He served as the president of the Israel Communication Association (2006-2009) and as the founding editor of the Association's journal, *Media Frames: Israeli Journal of Communication*.

## Ms. Soli Vered

Soli Vered is currently a second year doctoral student in School of Counseling at the Tel Aviv University, studying under Professor Daniel Bar-Tal. She holds a master's degree with honors in Sociology from the University of Haifa, and has extensive experience in organizational development and training. Her PhD research focuses on the policy of the Ministry of Education in recent years in regard to peace education, and the challenges that peace educators face in the field. Her other research interest is in culture of conflict and educating for critical thinking.



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