The "Silenced" Narrative of 1948 War Events Among Young Palestinians in Israel

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Introduction

To Palestinians, the 1948 War events were a tragedy whose consequences are felt up to the present day and whose victims are not only external and internal refugees, but also the entire Palestinian population living in Israel. For this minority, the disaster continues to constitute an open wound (Jarrar, 2010). In order to meet the challenges of their present marginalized status as second-class citizens who are collectively excluded and discriminated against in an ethnic state that denies its non-Jewish citizens a national identity, power, property, goals, and definitions (Abu-Saad, 2006; Rouhana & Sabbagh-Khoury, 2014; Sultany, 2012; Yiftachel, 2012), Palestinians in Israel have had to develop their own collective cognitive-affective repertoire. Such a repertoire has developed to include as its basic components societal beliefs of collective memory and an ethos of conflict, collective fear orientation, collective hatred orientation, and collective anger orientation (Bar-Tal, 2000; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

The 1948 War events have evolved as the pivotal core of Palestinian collective memory. These occurrences connect Palestinians to a specific point in time that has become for them an eternal present (Masalha, 2008). Israel's victory in the 1948 War had a direct impact on the capacity of Palestinians to write their own narrative. Since 1948 their attempts to create a coherent narrative of their collective past have often been challenged and silenced (Khalili, 2007). The 1948 War included not only the destruction of 80–85 % of the Palestinian villages that fell under Israeli control and the expulsion of approximately 60 % of the Palestinian people; it was also directed at silencing the memory and eradicating the landscape of the dispossessed population.

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The war led to the disappearance of most of the Palestinian printed word. Israelis destroyed and confiscated all public libraries, printing presses, and publishing houses, as well as land registries, municipal council archives, schools, and cultural centers (Abd al-Jawad, 2007). In addition, depopulated houses were blown up or razed to the ground, perpetuating the Zionist narrative that Palestine was virtually empty territory before the Jews arrived (Masalha, 1997).

In fact, random life stories told by individuals who have undergone these war experiences cannot create a national narrative and a collective memory with which a whole community can identify. National narratives and collective memory should be expressed through major societal communication channels and take the form of cultural products such as books, plays, and films. Palestinians in Israel do not have their own national agencies or archives through which young generations could be made aware of their collective memory. In addition, they face deliberate silencing of their narrative by Israeli authorities. Actually, this was the reason to conduct this study which aimed mainly to investigate the nature of the Palestinian popular collective memory[1] regarding 1948 War events among young Palestinians who did not experience the events nor studied about them via official authorities.

The Current Study

The sample consisted of 20 Palestinian young men (ages 21–35, average age 29.19) who reside in the Galilee, Israel. The mode of inquiry used in this study was qualitative and interpretive in nature and comprised in-depth phenomenological interviews which included open-ended questions. A designated interview schedule examined the collective memory of 1948 War events, participation in commemorative events and activities related to the events, feelings about what happened, who are the major agents transmitting that memory, and, finally, the influence of the 1948 War events on the interviewees' values and present lives.[2] Based on the qualitative form of inquiry, the method of analysis used was derived from thematic field analysis as outlined by Rosenthal (1993), which involved reconstructing and categorizing the interviewees' narrative, and classification of their life experiences and values into thematic fields. Tutty, Rothery, and Grinnell's (1996) guidelines were used to analyze the interviews, according to which units of meaning were categorically classified and relevant themes identified.

Before commencing the analysis, the interviews were transcribed (i.e., the interview scripts, observational notes, and memos were converted into word processing

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[1] A popular memory is one that is held by a group of people who do not necessarily possess power, and it refers to the societal beliefs of collective memory held by them as part of their repertoire. Popular memory is that which is accepted by the public as valid and reflected in oral accounts of the society members, in their customs, traditions, and social practices (Alonso, 1988).

[2] It should be indicated that all of the interviewees preferred to be interviewed in their homes, and the names used are pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

documents). These transcripts were then analyzed using Atlas.ti., a qualitative research software which analyzes text-based data through line-by-line coding of themes and units of meaning. The following section will present the result of many hours of reading through the transcripts and analyzing the contents in order to get the main themes raised by the interviewees.

Young Palestinians' Narrative of 1948 War Events

Almost all of the interviewees initiated their narrative regarding the 1948 War events with one common assertion of a "…nation that had been invaded and occupied by another foreign nation, and a substitution of residents." They perceive Historic Palestine before 1948 as empty of Jews. For example, *Najati* asserted that "The Jews entered this country, occupied the Arab cities and villages and displaced the Palestinians from their homes and country." It was blatant that all the interviewees began their narratives with the verb "entered" (*dakhal*), which revealed their perception that "the Jews were not here." Then they resume their narratives with two verbs that definitely describe destructive actions, namely, "occupied" and "expelled" (*eĥtal and tarad*).

The interviewees' narrative regarding the collective memory of the 1948 War events contains three major well-defined themes: (1) The Zionists had a predetermined plan to empty Palestine of its Arab people, (2) the Jews committed atrocities, and (3) the Palestinians fled out of fear.

Almost all of the interviewees emphasized that there was a master plan to expel Palestinians from the new Israeli state, and they even initiated their narratives with this specific claim. *Rateb*, for example, emphatically claimed that "…it was the Zionist leadership's strategy to expel the Palestinians out of the country. If we look at the villages that were destroyed, we will find that there was a political strategy to empty these villages of their residents. These villages either resisted the Jewish invasion or were located in strategic positions, such as major junctions or the state's border regions."

Young Palestinians referred to the strategies used by the Zionist forces as "deceitful" and used very negative terms to describe such strategies. For example, when *Ma'adi* was asked what he knew about what happened in 1948 War, his answer was loaded with very negative expressions that delegitimized the Jews. He claimed: "It was a series of killings, slaughter and expulsion, very inhuman and harsh."

In addition to highlighting the theme of the predetermined plan to expel the Arabs, the majority of the interviewees also noted that Palestinians fled their homes and villages out of fear. *Rateb*, for example, said that "…there was a big fuss, and the Jews were perceived as ghosts. The people were shouting in terror: 'The Jews are coming, the Jews are coming'. So when the people heard that the Jews were approaching the village, they just ran away." *Sleem* also explained how "… Palestinians left their houses wide open and had no time to take any of their personal belongings because they were frightened by the growl of the tanks that were approaching their village."

The claims regarding the Palestinians' frightened reaction were juxtaposed to the claim that Jews committed atrocities and killed Palestinians. For example, *Noor* tried to explain that Palestinian villagers were forced to flee after being attacked by the invading Jewish *Haganah* (Jewish forces) "People were harshly attacked and assassinated by the Jews; a lot of people were killed and the rest had to run away in fear."

In fact, the *Deir Yassin* massacre was repeatedly cited by the majority of the interviewees as the most significant stimulus that triggered the Palestinians' flight reaction. For example, *Najati* claimed that "…news about Deir Yassin and other atrocities terrified the people and made them seek secure places."

However, the majority of the interviewees asserted that fear was an inevitable reaction to the expulsion strategies used against the Arab villagers. For example, *Najlawi* said: "There was a process of deliberate uprooting of Palestinians. They aimed to frighten the people in order to force them to flee. The Jews committed lots of massacres to frighten Palestinians and in addition they also loaded men onto trucks and threw them out of Israel's borders." *Najlawi's* claim echoes the major claims that were accentuated again and again by every interviewee.

Briefly, the three pivotal themes reflect a "black-and-white" approach, in which a definite cause brought about a clear-cut result without involving too many factors or participants on the "scene." The sole "actors" were the Jewish forces that invaded their country and occupied it, pushing the majority of the Palestinian nation out of the country.

Family Settings as a "Mnemonic Community" and Grandfathers as Narrative Transmitting Agents

All interviewees had asserted that they were never taught about what happened in schools. All the information had been acquired via informal socializing agents such as family members and friends. Their grandfathers, the so-called Nakba generation, were the main source of knowledge. They used to recall their memories of what happened in 1948 again and again during their family gatherings, expressing their yearning for the simplicity and serenity of life before 1948. For those elders, the year of 1948 represents a significant turning point. Before that year they enjoyed simple life as peasants and farmers, but after 1948 they all were forced to work hard to make a living and secure themselves and their families a quiet life, due to the fact that most of them had lost their land which was their main source of living.

For example, *Sleem* recalled these occasions, stating: "We used to listen to my grandfather's memories every time he gathered with the elders in the diwan[3] or in the yard of the house. My grandfather used to talk about his personal memories of the 1948 War and we used to listen very quietly because we were young and not

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[3] *Diwan* (divan)—a word that is basically used to refer to a Muslim council chamber or law court or a room where a committee meets (such as the board of directors of a company), and it is used also to describe a room in which notables are accustomed to meeting.

supposed to respond." During these adult gatherings, *Sleem* learned the detailed story of *Abu Ahmad* who was displaced from *Amqa*[4] together with more than 1500 people. *Sleem* asserted that the same story with the same details was constantly repeated, so that he became familiar with it as though it was his personal memory.

In contrast to those inadvertent discussions, a few interviewees asserted that their grandfathers initiated frequent deliberate conversations, in which they shared their personal memories of the 1948 War as well as their collective memory of the 1948 War with family members, who played the part of active listeners, asking and commenting on the shared stories. In these few cases, the interviewees claimed that their grandparents spontaneously shared their personal and collective memories with family members. For example, *Dimani* claimed: "The fact that my grandfather experienced the 1948 Nakba and took an active part in the Palestinian resistance forces has powerfully influenced his life and has caused him to share his detailed stories with us again and again. In fact it was not only he who initiated the telling; we were actually always thirsty to listen to his vivid, interesting stories." *Dimani* wondered how he managed to listen to the same stories with identical details on a daily basis. However, he claimed that the way his grandfather presented the past was very attractive. *Dimani* explained "My grandfather's vivid stories were so sincere; his memories were clear and included a lot of minor details, so I used to listen very carefully." Cappelletto (2003) explains that when the representations of the past are a mixture of autobiographical and historical memory, the story with all its descriptive details is recounted by those who were not witnesses as if its events had been personally experienced by them. In point of fact, the transmitted stories have become a means of communication within the families of those who experienced the 1948 War, especially among those who were not only witnesses, but who took an active part in it.

In Zerubavel's (1996) conception, the *Nakba* generation represents a "mnemonic community," made up of those who witnessed the war, experienced the expulsion, and are still engaged in remembering it. This mnemonic community incorporates new members by familiarizing them with the community's past, which they did not have to experience personally in order to remember it (Zerubavel, 2003). According to the interviewees' claims, their grandfathers spontaneously shared their personal and collective memories with family members when they met together. For them these familial narrative sessions serve as both a socializing process and an exercise in memory. Their narratives combine autobiographical and historical memory, so that the story with all its descriptive details will also be recounted by their family members, who were not in fact witnesses, as if the events had been experienced by them personally. Actually, the transmitted stories become a means of communication within the family and between the family and outsiders. Consequently, all members of this mnemonic community, the first generation as well as their descendants, feel as if they serve as bearers and transmitters of an unforgettable memory, which is relevant to their present and reflects on their future as well.

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[4] A Palestinian village that was destroyed in 1948 and on its ruins the Jewish Moshav of Amka was built.

Triggers for Sharing the Narrative of the 1948 War Events

Discussions about the 1948 War events are frequently held within family settings. The continuous clashes between the Israeli Defense Forces and Palestinians and the numerous wars that have occurred between Israel and the neighboring Arab states stimulate a need among elderly Palestinians to initiate a discussion about the collective memory of that period with their family members. For example, *Sleem* mentioned that "…in the last Gaza war as we saw the Palestinians fleeing their houses, my father and grandfather never stopped linking the scenes of the fleeing people with my grandfather's experience in 1948." As a matter of fact, Israel is a violent war zone where different generations are exposed to chronic political violence[5] (Canetti, Chap. 10, Nasie, Chap. 3; Sagi-Schwartz, van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2008). It can thus be assumed that 1948 War analogy is intensified among all Palestinians whenever they are exposed to more recent political violence.

In addition, the core of young Palestinians' existence as unequal citizens in the state of Israel is also a constant reminder of the fact that their nation was defeated in 1948 and became a minority in Israel. *Rateb*, for instance, indicated that "…being exposed to prolonged bias and discrimination by the so-called democratic Jewish state is enough to initiate a discussion in which 1948 is referred to repeatedly." Oka (2009) claims that Palestinians in Israel have been suffering from the violent consequences of the *Nakba* for over 60 years. Therefore, it seems that their collective memory is still connected to their present and future situation.

Additionally, having relatives living in the Diasporas, who are unable to visit, is also a topic that stimulates frequent discussions of the 1948 War events. These relatives are especially remembered on holidays, when all the family members gather together to celebrate and remember those who are absent. It must be mentioned that most of the Palestinians who live in Israel have family members, such as brothers, sister, uncles, and aunts, who have been living in exile for many years. Ties to family and friends living in the Diaspora are maintained mainly through sentiments stemming from memories. The connection with them is more powerfully imagined and remembered than acted upon. For example, *Mureed* became choked up when remembering his uncle, whom he had never met. He complained: "I grew up knowing that I have an uncle who lives in the Diaspora; his memory is endlessly raised and it is always loaded with feelings of Ḥasra (sorrow). It is really painful to watch your parents and grandparents crying just at the mention of his name."

Farsoun (2004) highlights the significance of kin and family (*'a'ilah*) ties in Palestinians' daily life. He claims that both traditionally and in a contemporary context, Palestinians formulate their experiences and conceptualize their lives not as independent individuals but as members of an extended family. The family provides

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[5] Major wars in the Arab-Israeli conflict between 1948 and 2011: the 1948 War, the 1956 Sinai War, the 1967 War, the 1973 October War, the 1982 First Lebanon War, the 1987–1993 Intifada, the 2000–2005 Al Aqsa Intifada, the 2006 second Lebanon War, and the 2008 and 2014 Gaza Wars.

the individual with psychological, social, and economic functions. Family ties are permanent, reckoned through the male line, and characterized by mutual support, material assistance, trust, and sacrifice of the individual's interest for the greater welfare of the family. So, missing any family member is perceived as very tragic, especially when his or her absence is forced and not voluntary.

In addition to relatives who live in the Diasporas, most of the interviewees claimed that the "topography" of the country is a constant reminder of the "previous" life of Palestinians on this land (before 1948), including such features as cactus fences, fig trees, street names, old Arabic buildings, and other remnants of the past. For example, *Sabeel* claimed that as he joins his family on trips in the area surrounding *Kufor Kanna*, they pass by several remnants of *Loubieh* and *Sajara* (former destroyed Palestinian villages). He assures "When I see the trees and the remnants of the destroyed houses of Sajara, I always wonder what happened there and what happened to the people who were displaced." The pre-1948 physical locations of the destroyed villages have become conceptual and memorial spaces maintained and shared through many forms and forums (Davis, 2011).

In brief, it can be assumed that despite the long period of a silenced memory, remnants of destroyed Palestinian villages act as mnemonic arenas that recreate, represent, and preserve the collective narrative of the 1948 War among young Palestinians. On a basic level, these venues served as the forum where the *Nakba* generation individuals could articulate their own memories, which is the first stage in transforming personal memories into collective ones.

The Influence of the 1948 War Events on the Lives of Young Palestinians

Nearly 67 years have elapsed since the 1948 War, but it seems that its consequences continue to preoccupy young Palestinian generations. The majority of the interviewees discussed the major influences that the *Nakba* has had on their lives, whereas none of them stated that it was not relevant for them.

For most of them, the prominent theme centered on family dispersion and detachment. They talked about the fact that they had relatives living in exile whom they had never met. For example, *Mureed* mentioned that his grandfather's brother and uncle were expelled to Lebanon and never returned. He asserted that the story of that uncle is repeatedly mentioned by his family members as a theme loaded with emotional difficulties regarding the events of 1948. Another effect that was mentioned was land shortage resulting from land confiscation. During the twentieth century, Palestinians were dispossessed of a majority of land they had previously owned and possessed individually and collectively. Thus, as years went by, young Palestinians in Israel have become more and more distressed by the problem of land shortage and housing difficulties. Between 1948 and 1990, the Palestinians in Israel lost close to a million acres of land (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992). *Galeel*, for example, lamented the hundreds of *dunams* expropriated by the Israel Land Administration (which is responsible for

land under the control of the Development Authority and the Jewish National Fund, as well as the state) for the sake of building the Carmiel industrial area. He said "Each time I pass by the industrial area of Carmiel, I recognize the extent of our loss. My grandfather owned hundreds of dunams there and now I have nothing but half a dunam for building my own house." In this vein, Rekhess (2002) states that the massive expropriation of Arab lands constitutes a "…living symbol of a wound that has not healed (p. 24)." Generally for Palestinians, the term "land" brings to mind painful reflections of exploitation, uprooting, and dispossession.

The Influence of the 1948 War Events on the Values of Young Palestinians

Apparently, despite the fact that the interviewees did not personally experience the events of 1948, their perception of these events and their personal experience of their effects have acutely influenced their life values. First, the great majority of interviewees highly value land ownership. Indeed, regardless of the fact that land is no longer the source of their livelihood as it was for their grandfathers, their relation to the land is still pivotal. Land seems to be the basis of their sense of belonging, economic and psychological security, and social and cultural continuity. Lacking land ownership brings none of these, so *Abed* claimed: "Losing our properties is an open scar which hasn't stopped bleeding. Land is a matter of belonging; I don't mean land in terms of material possessions, but in terms of the psychological significance of the sense of belonging to the land." Similarly to *Abed's* claim, there were numerous voices which cherished land ownership and also affirmed their refusal to sell even a tiny piece of land. For example, *Rateb* affirmed: "I should buy as many dunams as I can but I should never sell a single meter." Similarly, *Najlawi* stated that "…the drive to land ownership is like a legacy." He declared that his forefathers' claims about their close attachment to the land have turned him into a strong adherent of land ownership as well.

Second, it is interesting to note that the interviewees also emphatically asserted their readiness to sacrifice for the sake of their lands and homes. According to *Dobeiss*, "…the experience of the Palestinian refugees and internally-displaced ones assure me that there is no way that I'll abandon or give up my land, no way, as simple as that!!!." Equally, *Shiha* asserted: "Due to the fact that I know about the millions of refugees, belonging to the land has become very crucial for me. A person who knows the effect of a poison should never taste it: I learned not to surrender and not to abandon my house, no matter what."

Kruglanski, Chen, Dechesne, Fishman, and Orehek (2009) explain how the biological need for physical survival is intimately linked to the quest for personal meaning and significance. Thus, when an individual undergoes a threat undermining his security or experiences feelings of relative deprivation or frustrated expectations in situations of political, social, or economic inequality, significance is envisioned as something that is lost and must be regained. In this respect, the readiness to sac-

rifice oneself for the group in the hour of need stands as a supreme good, where individuals regain significance by contributing to some communally defined collective goal (see also Bélanger, Caouette, Sharvit, & Dugas, 2014). In view of this, the threat of losing home or land, which is perceived as very significant for Palestinians, justifies their readiness to die. As Crenshaw (2007) summarized it, "Sacrifice for the cause is both personally redemptive and a mark of honor, a way of becoming a hero and part of an exalted elite" (p. 153).

Third, the interviewees outlined their appreciation of coexistence with Jewish Israelis. In fact, they talked about a "conditional" coexistence, in which Palestinians should receive their rights as an indigenous minority in Israel; only then would they be ready to coexist with Jewish citizens. For instance, *Damoor* claimed: "Israel is a given fact that we should accept, but I believe in a conditional coexistence. I will demand to receive all my rights, which are totally equal to those of the Jews. I don't feel like a beggar; I want to assure that we are the owners of the place, so nobody is doing us a favor." Similarly, *Arari* declared that "…if the Israelis want to coexist peacefully with us, they should give us our full rights in order to make us feel like Israeli citizens…I'm a man whose country was occupied and I've learned to accept and coexist with my occupier, but the other should give me my rights. Today, a new Russian immigrant has more rights than I have… So I believe that only if we receive all our rights, will we be able to coexist and get closer to one another." It is noteworthy that experiences of discrimination and subordination for these young people were intimately linked to stymieing their readiness for coexistence. For example, *Hamdi*, who works in *Carmiel*, a Jewish city adjacent to his village, tried to explain his anger regarding the Jews' attitudes toward him by saying: "I believe that I'm ready to live with the Jews and work with them. However, if I attempt to live in Carmiel, not every house owner will agree to rent me his house; it is just sad and irritating." The experience of the interviewees in the context of living in a Jewish settlement or studying in a Jewish school serves to remind them of their subordinate status relative to the Jewish majority. Indeed, the intention to coexist with Jewish Israelis is described by *Najati* as "…knocking on the door of a deaf man who could actually hear with the use of a hearing aid, but chooses to remain deaf."

Rabinowitz and Abu Baker (2005) claim that the struggle of young Palestinians for civil equality "…displays a new assertive voice, abrasive style and unequivocal substantive clarity" (p. 2). Similarly, Hammack (2010) found that Israel's young Palestinian citizens are increasingly shifting the weight of their hyphenated identities toward the Palestinian rather than the Israeli, rejecting the state's attempts to subordinate and delegitimize them. Palestinian citizens of Israel have become increasingly mobilized and vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction with their subordinate status within Israel (Peleg & Waxman, 2011). The younger generation of Palestinians demands collective recognition as a right and not as a favor. In this vein, *Damoor* stated that "…Arabs in Israel are the original inhabitants of the region; we are not immigrants, we were here all along." Actually, this perception, which anchors the legitimacy of the demand for collective recognition, has become especially popular in the political-national discourse of Palestinian Israelis in recent years (Jamal, 2011).

Participation in Commemorative Activities

The vast majority of the interviewees stated that they are increasingly taking steps to commemorate their *Nakba* by participating in activities such as organized visits to the sites of abandoned villages (on 2 days: Israel Independence Day and *al-Nakba* Day[6]) and the preservation of remaining sites and ruins, especially mosques, churches, and cemeteries. *Ma'adi*, for example, stated: "For me, going to Hittin once or twice a year is mandatory and not optional." Similarly, *Dimani* declared that his participation in such activities is "…a moral duty and a way of showing solidarity with the Palestinian nation." As a matter of fact, the grandsons referred to various meanings attributed to these commemorative activities. For example, *Shiha* explained that "…public marches to the villages have become a transmission tool to commemorate displacement and to instill national awareness in young Palestinians, who are expected to continue the struggle." In this vein, *Mureed* explained that in order to continue this struggle, a strong link with the *Nakba* generation is required: "It is important to remind the world that there are still millions of people residing in refugee camps. So, due to our responsibility to transmit the memory, we should ask those who 'know' in order to be capable of transmitting the collective memory comprehensibly." *Sabeel* summarized this point, declaring that "…we know that by commemorating the Nakba, we are helping young generations to remain attached to their history and culture. Doing so actually strengthens our national identity and keeps us united."

Second, and most importantly, the interviewees use these memorial activities as a tool to show resentment and to protest against discrimination. For example, *Habaji* shared the experience of the people of *al-Ghabisiyya* (a destroyed village in the Western Galilee) when they were prevented from praying in the mosque on Fridays: "When people were prevented from entering the mosque, they just prayed outside the fences surrounding it and set up camp outside the mosque in a show of resentment against the Israeli authorities' practices." Apparently, the younger generation of Palestinians is central to having transformed *Nakba* Day into a general Palestinian national memorial day. The younger generation's visits to destroyed villages have taken the form of a protest against what is being done to them currently (Jamal, 2011).

To sum up, it can be concluded that the collective public expression of the memory of the 1948 War among the young generation hints at various characteristics of this generation: First, a new generation of Palestinians has grown up that have chosen to emphasize their national identity rather than hiding it. Second, their growing sense of marginality has been another factor contributing to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the *Nakba* memory and its narrative.

In short, the *Nakba* memory is still relevant to the present-day reality of Palestinian citizens of Israel. According to Rekhess (2002), "It is a living, breathing

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[6] 5 Iyar, the Hebrew date of Independence Day in Israel, and May 15, the date of the establishment of the state in the international calendar, is assigned by Palestinians as *Nakba* Day.

issue; it is not a historic event that is over and done with, but rather a tragedy whose consequences continue to this day and whose victims are not only refugees in camps, but also the Arab minority in Israel. For this minority, the calamity continues to exist as an open wound" (p. 30). Clearly, this memory has never been erased and is being transmitted to successive generations. The interviewees were mainly angry and resentful toward what had happened in the 1948 War. Anger, as a "socially-constructed emotion which is evoked in events where the individual perceives other individuals' or groups' actions as unjust or unfair" (Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2009, p. 97), involves appraisals of relative strength and high coping potential (Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). In many cases, it is linked to aggressive behavior (Berkowitz, 1993) or active attacking tendencies (Roseman, 2002). Thus, as a more educated generation imbued with negative feelings such as anger and a sense of being discriminated, these young Palestinians have evolved the most "radical" collective memory, which totally negates the hegemonic Israeli-Zionist narrative. This generation feels much more powerful and believes that the collective memory of the 1948 War events should be transmitted to successive generations, considering itself responsible for being the messengers.

Conclusion

Generally, it can be claimed that the analysis of the interviewees' narratives demonstrates that despite the silencing of the Palestinian narrative by the Israeli official authorities and institutions, the narrative related to 1948 War events (so-called Nakba) is still prevalent among young Palestinians who neither witnessed nor experienced those events.

Overall, this study has helped to illustrate a bottom-up mode of the articulation of the Palestinian collective narrative regarding the 1948 War events and to highlight the core factors that aided in the "preservation" of such a narrative across time. It should be noted that young Palestinians' narrative provides a black-and-white picture ("them, the Jews, against us, the Palestinians"). Similarly, on an affective level, young Palestinians express emotions such as anger and resentment regarding the events in addition to sorrow and grief that are strongly connected to catastrophes.

It is necessary to address the relationship between emotion and collective action. Given the negative emotional material that has emerged from this research, it can be suggested that the depth of collective anger evident among young Palestinians is an important means of preserving their memorial narrative. Although many different emotions play a role in intergroup conflict—including hope, fear, and hatred—anger is thought to be especially critical in the initiation and maintenance of such conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2007). Halperin (2008) examined the relationship between three group-based negative emotions—fear, anger, and hatred—and political intolerance in Israel, finding that anger contributes to political intolerance, while hatred mediates the relationship. Similarly, Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, and Petrovic (2010) found that fear and anger are predictors of motivation for intergroup aggression.

Accordingly, it is suggested here that the negative emotion of anger developing out of the negative experiences of younger Palestinians in Israel may in turn foster negative beliefs and actions. Feelings of anger can generate feelings of revenge, which can produce a cycle of violence and perpetuate feelings of victimhood on both sides of a conflict. In addition, sharing such negative feelings might generate both a strong feeling of "us" but also an "us against them" mentality. So it can be assumed that if the Israeli government continues denying and negating the Palestinian narrative, those who lack significant identification with Israel and wholeheartedly embrace Palestinian identity are much more likely to engage in system-challenging behaviors.

In conclusion, this research showed that the Palestinian collective memory of the 1948 War events has not faded away but rather has become more distant from the Zionist narrative, stating the opposite of the disseminated hegemonic narrative. In fact, this counter-narrative is very significant for Palestinians for a number of reasons: first, it outlines their common origin, forming a shared past and providing that sense of continuity which is crucial for the construction of their social identity. Additionally, it helps them construct a positive social identity, since it provides them with a sense of commonality, cohesiveness, belonging, uniqueness, and solidarity. In view of this, being members of an ethnic minority that is deeply engaged in an intractable conflict with the state within which they live has caused them to hold on to their collective memory. It can be seen to fulfill such essential functions without which their society would find it impossible to adapt to such confrontational conditions.

The significance of collective memory to society members in times of conflict could generate an accelerated tendency to become involved in all types of memorial practices, maybe even turning them into "memorial maniacs."[7] They aspire to maintain the dominance of their own main narrative among in-group members and also to persuade other groups of its validity. However, whenever the counter-narrative of one group in society strongly opposes or challenges the dominant hegemonic narrative of another group, those memories might be hotly contested. In some cases, such intense contesting of memory among different groups remains contained and does not develop into violent conflict. In other cases, however, collective memory and its various public representations may play a major role in intensifying ethnic warfare. If so, narratives of collective memory serve as smoldering embers which can burst into flame at any moment.

The findings of the present research suggest that the ground is very fertile for further possible interethnic conflict between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian minority in Israel. As discussed previously, the feelings of anger among young Palestinians, their sense of relative deprivation, and their expressed readiness to make personal sacrifices could mobilize these generations in a moment of crisis to rebel, protest, and commit violent actions against the Jewish majority. In other words, feelings of injustice may lead to vengeance; the seeds for future conflicts have been planted and might possibly spur those potentially capable of violence into

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[7]A term used by Doss (2008) to refer to "the contemporary obsession with issues of memory and history and an urgent, excessive desire to express, or claim those issues in visibly public contexts" (p. 7).

action. On this basis, reconciliation is needed in order to stabilize peaceful relations. Reconciliation is defined as groups' mutual acceptance of one other (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003; Staub & Pearlman, 2001). According to Bar-Tal (2009), the essence of reconciliation "involves socio-psychological processes consisting of changes of motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes and emotions by the majority of society members" (p. 365). Auerbach (2009) suggests a "reconciliation pyramid" (p. 302). She claims that identity conflicts erupt in two groups involved in identity conflict when at least one side feels that the other has negated its identity. Thus, they should initially become acquainted with the clashing narratives relating to the core issues of their conflict. However, familiarity with these narratives is not enough but can only pave the way for truly and fully acknowledging them, which means understanding and recognizing them as authentic and legitimate. This acknowledgment implies recognizing that there are at least two narratives (Salomon, 2004). Such recognition is crucial because as mentioned earlier, the collective memories of each party's own past support the continuation of the conflict and make peacemaking impossible (Bar-Tal, 2007).

The grievances of the opposing group must not only be known but must also be acknowledged. From the Palestinians' point of view, it is vital to acknowledge their differing national narrative, and it is certainly important to learn about this narrative from their perspective. An acknowledgment by the state is necessary in order to conclude this sorrowful chapter in the history of the Palestinian nation. The evolvement of a new Palestinian generation "standing tall" suggests that acknowledging their narrative and providing legitimacy to their demands for equal citizenship is the key to improving interethnic relations between the two nations residing in Israel. Such acknowledgment of the Palestinian narrative could open the door for a greater willingness on the part of the Palestinians to acknowledge the Israeli narrative, and potentially to the development of less biased and one-sided narratives among both parties. Such changes to the collective memory could be an important step toward reconciliation.

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