Revisiting the Past

Israeli identity, thick recognition and conflict transformation

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2010

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Layout: Lisa Strömbom
Cover layout: Jonas Palm
Printed by Media-Tryck, Lund University, Lund, Sweden 2010

ISBN: 91-88306-79-8
ISBN: 978-91-88306-79-1
ISSN: 0460-0037
Lund Political Studies 160

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List of Acronyms

ACPR	The Ariel Center for Policy Reserach
DOP	The Declaration of Principles
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
INF	Israel National Fund
IZL	The Institute for Zionist Strategies
MK	Member of Knesset
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PSI	Professors for a Strong Israel
TAU	Tel Aviv University
UN	The United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner For Human Rights
US	United States of America

Acknowledgements

The labor that comes with the writing of a PhD dissertation is far longer than that which comes with childbirth, and demands a lot of patience from the person engaged in its writing. The rearing of my two strong-willed and energetic children has really helped me in developing that well-needed patience. My children, Axel and Klara, have also provided me with highly appreciated quality time at home in between the sometimes long and demanding days of writing this book.

Many people around me contributed to making the writing of this book mainly a pleasant task. Bo Petersson has served as an inspiring teacher and continuously dedicated supervisor ever since the spring of 2002, when I first wrote my Master's thesis under his supervision. Bosse introduced me to the fascinating worlds of nationalism and identity, for which I will always be grateful. Karin Aggestam has served as my co-supervisor, and as such she facilitated my research process in a number of ways. She has also in many respects served as my inoffical mentor, always genereously providing me with good advice, academic rigor, insightful empirical insights, and sometimes pointed criticism, at all times with warmth, enthusiasm and genuine interest.

Many other colleagues played important roles in the writing of this book. Helena Lindholm-Schulz, Professor at the Department of Global Studies at Gothenburg University, together with Anna Sundell, my fellow PhD Student, provided me with invaluable comments on the final draft of this manuscript. My gratitude also goes out to Anette Ahrnens, Björn Badersten, Jens Bartelsson, Tove Dannestam, Jakob Gustafsson, Martin Hall, Maria Hedlund, Anders Hellström, Sara Kalm, Catarina Kinnvall, Åsa Knaggård, Lennart Lundquist, Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren, Sarah Scuzzarello, Maria Småberg, and Ylva Stubbergaard. They all at various times agreed to read my texts and provided me with good advice as well as constructive criticism.

On the topic of facilitating circumstances, the Department of Political Science has a fantastic administrative staff who at all times patiently take time to help out with various tasks. My warmest gratitude therefore to Stefan Alenius, Daniel Alfons, Margareth Andersson, Kristina Carlsson, Tobias Carlsson, Helen Fogelin, Kristina Friheden, Linda Grandsjö, Kristina Gröndahl-Nilsson, Carina Olsson, Marie Persson, Gunnel Sjöholm, Lars Wester, and Hanna Voog.

Some people at the department have become much more than just colleagues over the years. In that regard, I especially want to mention Anette, Dalia, Maria, Sara and Åsa. Since we took the methods course together in 2002, we have shared much fun, laughter, academic discussions, and at certain times also agony and problems. I am so happy to now count you among my friends. Working at the Political Science Department without you would have made the last eight years much less enjoyable. Another colleague-turned-friend is Stina. Your enthusiasm, friendship and support are seemingly endless. Thank you for being you!

Financial support for the writing of this dissertation was generously granted by the Crafoord Foundation, the Department of Political Science at Lund University, the Lars Hiertas Minne Foundation, the Landshövding Per Westlings Minnesfond Foundation, and the Siamon Foundation. Their economic support provided me with opportunities to go abroad and conduct interviews in the field, as well as partake in academic conferences and seminars in Sweden as well as elsewhere. I am also very grateful to a number of Israeli academics: Daniel Bar-Tal, Ruth Firer, Eyal Naveh, Rafi Nets-Zehngut and Avraham Sela. During 2009, they generously shared some of their time with me in order to discuss the topic of this book. Sharing their insights and experiences made this dissertation much richer, and I was provided with the opportunity to "reality-check" many of the ideas that are developed here.

On a more personal note, I turn to some individuals who have been crucial for the work on this book and maybe most importantly for my general sense of well-being. My mother, Christina, as well as my father, Tommy, have provided invaluable emotional support throughout my life. In addition they have given me a genuine sense

that I can succeed in doing anything that I really put my heart and mind into.

Finally — yet of utmost importance - Nils-Erik: almost every day for the last 11 years I have been fortunate enough to wake up beside you. You mean more to me than words can ever express, both because we share such a special emotional connection and because you have given me the most valuable gift one could ever hope for — our children Axel and Klara. I am so happy to share them with you, and to know that I will continue to do so to the end of our days.

Part I - Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introducing the study

Memories of 1948

The Israeli debates over interpretations of the 1948 war, often called the debates over New History[1], are the main object of analysis in this study. These debates regarded how to interpret the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, or as the Palestinians call it, "al-Naqba" (meaning "the catastrophe"). They touched on fundamentals of Israeli identity as well as the genesis of the State of Israel. They were immensely important, as understandings of conflict and feelings of identity in the present are largely shaped by interpretations of events in the past.

The introduction of New History in the Israeli public sphere led to widespread controversy. After vigorous debates, in academia as well as in the public domain, new textbooks inspired by New History were introduced in Israeli schools. Following the broadcast of a widely viewed television documentary dealing with Israeli history during and after the war of 1948, the tone of the debates became more ferocious. In the late 1990s, influential politicians in the Knesset, together with other vocal actors, hence partook in the promotion of ideas that contributed to political decisions inhibiting further institutionalization of the ideas of New History. The initial success of the ideas was thus reversed as the political establishment as well as a large part of the Israeli public opposed the public dissemination of the ideas inherent in the material.

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[1] Benny Morris wrote an article in the Jewish bimonthly publication *Tikkun*, where he described his and his colleagues' work and characterized their writings as "new historiography" (1988). That description prevailed and has since become the most common way to collectively describe these historians (New Historians) and their works (New History).

The debates regarding the war of 1948 touched on fundamentals regarding Israeli national identity, which is at the heart of the stakes involved in conflict. Those debates, which initially concerned history, later on came to the forefront as media and politicians became involved in intense arguments with acute political content:

> "The angry reaction by many Israeli intellectuals and the rejection of the new historians´ narrative by wide sections of the Israeli public, especially among veterans of the 1948 war, indicated that these revisions had touched a raw nerve in the Israeli consciousness. In fact, the ongoing heated debate was not just an academic controversy. It was a cultural struggle over identities and self-perceptions, with deep political overtones. One keen observer noted that "the sharp opposition and deep concerns these researchers have aroused [...] resulted from a perception that they endanger the boundaries of the current [Israeli] identity and are seen as a threat to Israelis' self-image." (Bar-On 2006:155)

As New History first experienced success and showed signs of taking root in official institutions, and later on waned and was removed from institutions, it serves as an interesting case where circumstances that inhibit as well as facilitate the introduction of changed understandings of history in conflict settings can be explored. This study emphasizes the transformative potential inherent in the debates over Israeli New History, and argues that they were closely related to identities and relationships in conflict. The pivotal role of debates over different and shifting interpretations of history in societies involved in deep-seated conflicts is thus highlighted.

Main objectives and research questions

This dissertation focuses on the potential for conflict transformation through reformulations of history. It is crucial to analyze historical understandings in relation to conflict, as they might play a role in the transformation of conflictual relationships (Cairns and Roe 2003:4). Identities in *intractable conflicts* (Azar 1991) are the main focus.[2] One

[2] This type of conflict has also been called "deep-rooted" (Burton 1987), "enduring rivalry" (Goertz and Diehl 1993), or "intractable social conflict" (Kriesberg 1993).

common denominator for these conflicts is that they tend to be protracted and violent, with deep-rooted animosity and prejudice between involved groups. They are also known for being highly resistant to traditional negotiation and mediation efforts (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998:761-762).

The over-arching aim of this study is to understand how different and shifting accounts of history inform the relationship between parties involved in intractable conflicts. The main research questions emerge from this aim:

1. How are understandings of history related to processes of identity construction in societies involved in intractable conflicts?

2. How can intrasocietal debates over history be understood in terms of conflict transformation?

In order to provide answers to these questions, a theoretical framework is developed. From a narrative perspective, it inquires into the transformative potential of changed understandings of national history when it comes to identities and relationships in societies involved in intractable conflicts. The study moreover addresses issues of power related to societal structures as well as agents involved in debating history. A conceptualization of agency is hence advanced within the realm of narrative theory, in which understandings of agency are frequently addressed albeit often underdeveloped. A dynamic view is advanced, where *inside actors* rather than third parties are seen as important agents on the way toward more peaceful relations in conflict.

Guided by the questions above, the study develops the concept of *thick recognition*, which pinpoints the transformative potential of historical accounts in conflictual relations. I inquire into a case of seemingly static conflict, and propose that the deadlock might be broken, could notions of thick recognition become introduced. The main argument is that recognition of crucial identity elements — such as widely shared understandings of history - might increase the potential for relationship transformation in intractable conflicts.

The theoretical framework is constructed through a merging of three research areas; the first area addressed is *conflict transformation,* which is also the area where this study makes the most significant contribution. In order to further theoretical insights in the field of conflict transformation, I turn to theories that view *narratives* as fundamental in the mediation between identity and politics. I also employ *identity theory*, which also is central when one wants to further understandings of processes of relationship change in intractable conflicts.[3]

This study argues that historical accounts point to understandings of boundaries in the present, implying that if historical accounts come to describe boundaries between groups in a different way, contemporary relations might change as a result.[4] The three theoretical traditions share a concern with *boundary construction,* and see it as a central component in narratives of history, in identity construction and in relationships between opponents in intractable conflicts.

In order to increase theoretical understandings of historiographical change and its relationship to processes of conflict transformation, the empirical realm can contribute with further insights. The Israeli case highlights the central element of understandings of history in intractable conflicts. It can also provide deeper knowledge regarding intrasocietal processes involved when novel understandings of history are introduced in conflict-ridden societies. The third and fourth research questions address the empirical case, based on the previous theoretical inquiry:

[3] The three theoretical fields are thoroughly introduced in Chapter Two, and further developed in Chapters Three and Four.

[4] This argument is developed throughout Part II, and it is concluded in *On the transformative potential of narratives* in Chapter Five.

3. How can the Israeli debates over New History be understood in terms of conflict transformation?

4. What were facilitating and inhibiting circumstances for the introduction of new understandings of history in the debates on Israeli New History?

The first empirical question addresses the potential of the debates over New History to bring about conflict transformation, whereas the second aims at gaining further insights into certain parts of the process that are understood as having possible implications on the trajectory of conflict. The conceptual framework is thus applied to the empirical case. Contrasting understandings of Israeli history, as well as the debates over New History, are rigorously analyzed in order to further theoretical understandings. I aim to identify key *agents of change and continuity* in the Israeli debates over history, as well as the most important *institutions*, which taken together offer either *facilitating* or *inhibiting circumstances*[5] at a certain time, leading to *recognition openings* or *recognition closures*, which has implications for identities and relationships in intractable conflicts. In the final discussion, the empirical analysis feeds back into theory as it contributes general insights regarding history debates and their transformative potential in societies involved in intractable conflicts.

On ontology

The issue of methodology broadly reflects thoughts on how to acquire specific knowledge on a subject. Methodological concerns touch on issues regarding how to approach the material in terms of epistemology, together with metatheoretical assumptions regarding the nature of reality (Esmark et al. 2005:5). This provides answers to questions concerning what kind of knowledge can be attained about reality, as well as thoughts regarding its composition. Below, I start

[5] The way the terms of facilitating and inhibiting circumstances are used here resembles George´s use of the terms favorable and unfavorable circumstances (1993:13), as well as Giddens' notions of enabling and restraining conditions for action (1984:169,177).

out by addressing the ontological assumptions that guide the study. The following section underlines the merits of a relational approach in the study of social as well as conflictual change.

A process-oriented approach

One common approach that guides this study is a focus on process, whether it comes to theories regarding conflicts, narratives, or identities. A "process" here means "a causally or functionally linked set of occurrences or events which produces 'a change in the complexion of reality'. Furthermore, to say that a set of events constitute a particular process means that these events occur in an identifiable time-series" (Jackson and Nexon 1999:302). The theorists who have developed a processual perspective on the study of society share the view that Western philosophy has always had a bias in favor of things and substances (Albert et al. 2001:3, Elias 1978:111-112, Emirbayer 1997-288, Jackson and Nexon 1999:301-302, Rescher 1996:29, Stripple 2005:17). Following the conviction of this collective of writers, this study suggests an ontology of process, implying that:

> "[…] enduring things are never more than patterns of stability in a sea of process. Like a wave pattern in water they are simply pending configurations in a realm of change." (Rescher 2008)

Processes are thus understood as having priority over product, as processes are seen as the source from which "things" are derived (Stripple 2005:17). As my aspiration is to construct an analysis that accommodates the study of both structural factors as well as those concerning agency, the processual ontology is well-suited as "relational scholars reject the notion that one can posit discrete, pre-given units such as the individual or society as the ultimate starting points of sociological analysis" (Emirbayer 1997:287). The processual understanding of reality is crucial for this study, as it enables a view of conflicts, identities, and narratives as undergoing constant change, allowing for the visualization of transformation in social settings, which, like intractable conflicts, on the surface might appear as static. This study sides with the view that holds that agency and structure are inseparable in practice. Hence, they are understood as

ontologically intertwined and interdependent. In order to explore interaction patterns in complex societal processes, it might however be analytically useful to differentiate between structural and agent-centered factors. At the same time it is imperative to point out that neither agency nor structure has an existence in isolation from the other, as their relationship is genuinely relational. In this "analytical dualism" (Hay 2001:7), one can "freeze" moments in ongoing processes and discuss momentary stabilizations. Thus meaningful analyses can be conducted that analytically can penetrate into relevant processes, while still stressing a processual rather than substantial view on the composition of reality. In the following, I move on to discuss theories regarding actor-structure relations, which guide the study.

Agency and structure in theories of conflict and identity

When applying a structuralist perspective on power, a non-instrumental view is suggested. In Arendt's words: "… [power] derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then they may follow" (1994:68). Power must thus be understood as serving to maintain the praxis from which it springs (1994:77). This leads to a significant feature of structures: they work according to a "principle of inertia" (Sztompka 1993:214). Structural theories of identity construction as well as conflict transformation harbor an interesting theoretical potential because they pinpoint the power inherent in ideas and the way ideational structures help mould people's lives. In structuralist understandings of conflict (C.f. Galtung 1996), changes in conflict are often seen as results of changes in the deep-structures of the societies involved in conflict. Here is thus an inherent weakness, as structures are more or less understood as determinant of human behavior (Aggestam 1999:22-23, Jabri 1996:59, Nicholson 1992:22). Structural theories regarding identification and relations between in-groups and out-groups (C.f. Billig 1995, Campbell 1992, Weldes et al. 1999a) in turn often view ideas regarding one's own collective and others as discourses with the power to influence the way people think, act and live their everyday lives. If not used with moderation, structure-oriented theories might

foster a view of humans in the hands of structures seemingly living a life of their own. I argue that a pure structuralist focus is misleading when trying to grasp complex processes of identification taking place in societal development every day. It also fails to grapple with the question of change, as it is hard to account for what actually breeds change when all interactions are understood as taking place endogenously within structures.

In actor-centered theories of social change in societies involved in conflict, change is viewed as a product of the summation of individual actors, who are understood as more or less rational (Jabri 1996:55-58 passim). The tradition of conflict resolution can be understood as actor-centered as it mainly addresses how successful problem-solving can change attitudes in the conflictual environment (Rupesinghe 1995:73,75). This view is often criticized for its ahistorical and linear approach, which is seen as having little correspondence with social reality (Väyrynen 1991:23). When it comes to actor-oriented theories of identification, the instrumentalist approach within nationalism is the one that first comes to mind. Some of the more prominent writers within the actor-centered tradition are Paul Brass (1979, 1985) and John Breuilly (1985, 1993 [1982]). Here lies a strong focus on the goals of groups as being the most a powerful rationale behind their actions (Joireman F. 2003:23). Elites are said to be able to steer developments as long as they are able to identify "the correct" goals of a group, and can thus instrumentally concert that group's actions toward aspired goals. This approach is obviously actor-centered, paying little attention to specific factors in society either favoring or putting up obstacles to the instrumentalist workings of elites (Özkirimli 2010:128).

Actors are indeed inhibited by some structural arrangements, while some others might function as facilitating. They have the power to change structural realities depending on who they are and the context in which they are active. In order to make sense of a debate over different historical interpretations and its relationship to transformation of intractable conflict, it is thus imperative to analyze the subjects who are involved in the process and discuss different circumstances that might facilitate the introduction of certain historical understandings, while others apparently win less ground.

Narratives, because they can influence identifications and hence behavior, carry notions of power. Therefore, the next step is to develop the thoughts on power guiding this study. I am guided by the conviction that both actors and structures must be taken into consideration when looking for theories that can grasp societal and conflictual transformation over time. I now turn to writers who have tried to link the two domains in their conceptualizations of power and change.

Power beyond the agency-structure divide?

The Israeli debates over competing historical narratives can be understood as a struggle over the right to define identity and difference in that society. At the heart of that process lies a struggle in which different subjects strive to create the authority needed in order to formulate or reformulate narratives of identity. The power of formulating identity hence takes centre stage. Thus, I partly follow Dyrberg (1997) who has elaborated on Foucault's power analysis. "[T]he most effective way to understand power," he argues, "is to approach it in terms of processes of identification." (1997:13). Dyrberg does not refrain from conceptualizing power in a more traditional manner, and addresses questions such as "who has the power" and "in what manner that power is manifested". However, he states, those questions are on a lower-order level, in relation to his main concern, which is the higher-order level of power.

The power that lies in the becoming of identity, or writing things into existence through narratives, would be what Dyrberg calls a higher order of power.[6] That perspective sees power as productive and concerns the power that rests in language, stories and other texts informing us about the world around us. Power is thus intrinsic to society and the agents that work in it. Power should be conceived of

[6] Dyrberg offers an insightful analysis and discussion on the form of power that lies in the becoming of identity. However, throughout his book he sometimes suggests a more structuralistic perspective, where identities are *achieved* (1997:88,95). I distance myself from this view, as I believe that the construction of identities is not a process of achieving, but of *becoming*, which involves subconscious as well as conscious considerations by the subjects at hand.

as a matter of relationships, rather than as absolute or isolated (Clegg 1989:207, Simmel 1994:203-206). Power must thus be thought of not as static, but always circulating. It is never localized here or there, or in a specific someone's hands: it is truly processual (Foucault 1980:98).

The notion that an important form of power lies in the construction of identities points to the necessity of the study of different sites that can be understood as contestations over identity, holding the potential to affect identifications depending on the power constellations within those sites of struggle. In order to understand power constellations within societies, related to societies' temporal and spatial context, attention should hence be on struggles over narratives. In that way, the psychological motivations of actors as well as the nature of structural arrangements can be discussed, which taken together is the location from which societal change emanates.

The lower order form of power is also important, albeit having completely different properties. In this dissertation, the lower orders of power involve the memory agents in the Israeli debates over history, who draw on narratives such as those on nationalism, or on development, or on different ideals when it comes to boundaries between groups. Their actions bring about the visualization of new power constellations, hence making room for the becoming of new identities. The ability to influence societal understandings (through narrative descriptions of reality) is thus viewed as a key component of power as well as a crucial ingredient in political change (Hay 2002:167). Through the subsequent discussions on memory agents and their potential to influence official memory institutions[7], the lower order of power is linked to the higher order. The empirical analysis hence assesses the relationship between the contenders in the debates and develops a conceptualization of their interaction in terms of power, as their interplay is understood as having repercussions on the broader narrative constellations[8] of societies.

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[7] The specific properties that characterize memory agents and official memory institutions are thoroughly discussed in Chapter Four.

[8] The concept of narrative constellation is further discussed in Chapter Two.

On epistemology

A processual ontology does not sit well with an epistemological foundation in objectivism, with its basic commitment to an observable permanent reality. In the past sections I discussed the importance of societal context and narratives in conceptions of reality as well as of knowledge. This indicates an epistemological perspective with roots in social constructivism (C.f. Berger and Luckman 1966). This view asserts that understandings of the surrounding environment are dependent on the perspective and social experiences of the observer. This dissertation is hence based on the notion that knowledge of the social world is ever dependent on personal experiences, and that researchers can never be totally liberated from the context by which they are surrounded. How and what people come to know is thus inescapably context-dependent. A constructivist framework implies that interpretative approaches are designed that pay attention to social processes, rather than searching for general laws about reality (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994).

We all, researchers and practitioners alike, evaluate problems from a particular perspective (Asplund 1970). Thus, the view forwarded here underlines the fact that knowledge is situated (Haraway 1996). The concept of situated knowledge was elaborated by researchers trying to find a middle ground between the opposing positions of foundationalism and relativism. It enables us not to make claims of finding Truth, but rather to search for reasonable positions through dialogue, conversation, critical thinking and practical reason through which knowledge claims, theories, concepts and empirical results can be critically examined, always keeping in mind that the knowledge generated is based on a specific position or location (Bäckstrand 2001:45). Knowledge is thus more a question of conversation and social practice, rather than an attempt to accurately mirror social conditions (Rorty 1979:171). However, if the researcher thoroughly presents the material that is the basis for interpretation, and conducts a transparent study in terms of research process, then readers and reviewers might evaluate the results and decide for themselves whether or not to agree with the results put forth. Research should thus always be conducted through the principle of

intersubjectivity, meaning that the reader, in principle, should be able to reconstruct the research process (Lundquist 1993:52). Researchers can never hope to prove the absolute accuracy of their conclusions. However, the principle of intersubjectivity demands the presentation of conclusions in a manner that enables readers to make their own judgments regarding their plausibility (Ahrnens 2007:23-24).

In this study I follow the tradition of *understanding* (Hollis and Smith 1991:71). Understanding has to do with making possible sense, rather than identifying exact measurable causes (Hollis and Smith 1991:80). It embarks from the notion that the social world is different from the world of the natural sciences. It must be understood from within, rather than explained from without (Hollis 1994:16-17). Hence the meaning of action is sought, rather than exact causes of behavior (Hollis 1994:143). I have thus refrained from using neo-positivist perspectives to try to *explain* certain general laws or regularities; nor do I try to establish objective facts or linear causal chains. In this study the ambition to understand allows for thorough investigation of the process through which histories and memories are discussed, and of how they interplay with wider societal and conflictual contexts (Lebow 2006:4,7). This is evident in the formulation of my research problems, in which I mainly try to present questions in terms of "how", rather than "why". Asking questions of "how" enables me to research the material in order to reach a deeper understanding of social processes. Hence processes and dimensions by which debates over memories can be understood are introduced. I thus further understandings of how memories emerge, become contested, and take root. In this study those processes are discussed alongside the development of memories and identities in conflict, allowing for a richer understanding of processes of relationship change in intractable conflicts.

This chapter has presented the reader with some important points of departure for the further construction of a coherent theoretical framework that can be applied to the empirical case. Another important part in the research process is method, where practical matters regarding research design and the analytical use of concepts are addressed. In this introductory chapter, basic methodological guidelines are presented. More concrete strategies for

analysis are presented in Chapter Five, based on the theoretical elaborations in Chapters Two through Four.

On method

A critical case study

Analytical depth rather than breadth has been the ambition for the framework of this study. Thus, I have chosen to design this thesis as a single case study, where I have had the possibility to apply relevant theoretical perspectives to a case in order to get a richer understanding of the stipulated research questions. Single case studies are especially valuable when phenomena are explored within the frame of their specific context, and when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are unclear (Yin 1984:13,24). One advantage of the case study method is that it is sensitive to contextual complexity, because it draws from particular historical and cultural milieus instead of assuming that political events can be severed from their surroundings (Peters 1998:141).

Through the analysis of my case, I aim to contribute to the literature on the possibility of contributing to conflict transformation through debating history in societies caught up in intractable conflict. The fact that a single case method is used does not imply that generalizations cannot be drawn from that case (Flyvbjerg 1991:145). This study develops a way in which debates over history can be understood in terms of thick recognition. In this respect, *the Israeli debates over history can be seen as a critical case of thick recognition*. It is interpreted in that way because in many respects it offered recognition of deeply felt identity elements of the Palestinian collective. As such it harbored more potential to contribute to conflict transformation than many of the occasionally hollow peace initiatives, road maps and proximity talks that today have become standard components in the intractable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

A critical case offers insights into general problems. As the Israeli-Palestinian case is (unfortunately) somewhat of an archetypal

case of intractable conflict, insights regarding thick recognition and its transformative potential in that specific setting may offer lessons that can be generalized and hence can travel to other cases of intractable conflict. As the Israeli history debates are understood as a critical case, conclusions valid for it might hence also apply to other cases of the same type (Flyvbjerg 2001:79). It can hence be fruitful to analyze other prolonged conflicts with strong identity components, which have proved difficult to resolve, from the findings generated from the Israeli case. However, some characteristics are unique for Israeli society, giving that if the conclusions are applied to other cases, they must be sensitized to their society-specific context.

Previous research on Israeli identities in conflict

When it comes to the understanding of Israeli society, many writers have contributed important insights into the complexities of that society (C.f. Bar-Tal 2000b, Dowty 1998, Kimmerling 1983, Kimmerling 2001, Rouhana 1997, Shafir and Peled 1998). Light has been shed on processes of identity construction, and various understandings of the complex web of ideas constituting the different strands of Zionism[9] permeating that society have been forwarded. In the past decade, important contributions have been made when it comes to describing the development of nationalism within Israeli society (C.f. Kimmerling 1985, Nimni 2003b, Ram 1998, Ram 2003, Segev 2001, Silberstein 1999, Weissbrod 1997). Research on Israeli nationalism has also linked to the complex conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Several researchers have pointed to the connection between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and identity construction, emphasizing the fact that reconstituted identities in the long run

[9] Theodor Herzl, who wrote his manifesto *Der Judenstaat* ("The Jewish State") in1896, is often seen as the inventor of Zionism. His program aimed at creating "a state like other states", and can be interpreted as a reaction against the former particularism of Jewish life. Herzl's early works have however been heavily criticized from some directions, condemning his non-religious background and mission. The spiritual thinker Ahad Ha'am was one of the major critics of Herzl's works (c.f. Dowty 1998:5).

might have an effect on relationships in conflict (Aggestam 1999, Albin 2005, Bar-Tal 1988, Bar-Tal 2000b, Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007, Blomeley 2005, Feldt 2005, Kelman 2001, Levy 1999, Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998).

Research on Israeli collective memory is thriving. There has been scholarly research on rites connected to the establishment of the nation (C.f. Zerubavel 1995), the changing memory of the Holocaust (C.f. Feldman 2008, Tossavainen 2006), and commemorations of soldiers fallen in Israel's wars (C.f. Ben-Amos 2002, Lomsky-Feder 2004). Recently researchers have also focused on collective forgetting, or amnesia, in the Israeli context (C.f. Ram 2009), following the work of the late anthropologist Mary Douglas (2007). Several works (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007, Feldt 2005, Ghazi-Bouillon 2009, Levy 1999, C.f. Nimni 2003b, Rotberg 2006, Shapira and Penslar 2003, Silberstein 1991, Silberstein 1999) have contributed to the understanding of the debate focused on in this study. The most recent and comprehensive study on the topic was written by Ghazi-Goullion (2009); it introduces the Israeli debates over history and connects them to an understanding of the development of the Middle East peace process. There, conclusions regarding the impact of the debates on the peace process are mainly based on the opinions of its interlocutors (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:11). The study does not address the political character of the debates as they are linked neither to conflict theory nor to theoretical conceptions of social change.

My study draws partly on empirical insights generated by the studies above, whereas the theoretical framework is mainly drawn from elsewhere. The case at hand is approached from a synthesis of theoretical strands regarding identities, narratives and conflicts. Mergers of those theoretical traditions are rare when it comes to the Israeli case; therefore this study makes an original contribution. It uses the Israeli debates over history in order to generate theory regarding the transformation of intractable conflicts. Throughout the study, historical understandings are linked to identities and relationships in intractable conflicts and circumstances under which transformation of relationships in the latter are more likely. It mainly highlights the role of *inside actors* in endogenous processes, something quite rare in theories of conflict resolution and conflict management,

which often have a strong emphasis on the actions of third parties. This study hence does not focus on dialogue between groups in conflict, but rather on dialogue within one of the groups in conflict. On the other hand, an open dialogue within the collectives involved in conflict might be a first step in order to improve the impaired dialogue between the groups involved in conflict.

In this study, the Israeli debates over New History are in focus, together with an emphasis on commemorative narratives (Zerubavel 1995). Initially, the narratives are analyzed and their inherent ideas regarding boundary drawing are contrasted. The analysis of Israeli commemorative narratives is based on both primary sources, such as official speeches, educational texts and texts used during commemorative rituals. The analysis is also based on a rich secondary literature that has scrutinized Israeli commemorative narratives in general and debates over the interpretation of the war of 1948 in particular. The debates over history as such will also be scrutinized in order to identify how different narratives have been played out. The content of the debates is in turn related to other related narratives, as the aspiration is to link the social interactions regarding the debates to the broader narrative constellation of Israeli society.

The debate material is mostly easily accessible as it has appeared both in books, many of which were written in English, and in English editions of Israeli broadsheets such as Ha'aretz and Yediot Aharonot. The debate also partly took part in academic journals such as *History and Memory* and *Israel Studies*. Even if some of the material is harder to access, by now there exists quite an extensive secondary literature regarding the debates, to which I can turn in order to find translated extracts from sources that have not been translated into English from Hebrew. This might of course be problematic, as I have had to rely on translated material and sometimes on interpretations thereof. This was one of the main reasons for conducting informant interviews, which I discuss further below.

When it comes to broader societal developments, I have relied primarily on the rich secondary literature concerning the ideational climate in Israel during the time studied, regarding international influences as well as the impact of the peace process on the Israeli nation. Here there exists an extensive secondary literature dealing

with Israeli developments specifically as well as contributions regarding the international spread of narratives related to peace processes in particular and collective identities in general.

In addition to the material already mentioned, I have conducted a number of semi-structured interviews (Patton 1980:36, Stenelo 1984:29) with persons who have substantial knowledge of the Israeli New History debates and their surrounding context. The interviewees have been seen as informants, meaning that I have used our discussions to gain further knowledge and more facets of my research subject, rather than analyzing the specific points of view of each person that I talked to. I also discussed my understanding of the wider course of the debates, in order to get validation of my interpretations, especially when it comes to translated material. In this way, the researcher can be viewed as a traveler, and the interviews are seen as a journey towards a more complex story to be told toward the end (Kvale 1999:59). The traveler metaphor further emphasizes the view put forward here, underlining the constructed nature of knowledge. Insights can then be modified during the course of travel, as the goal is to highlight complex phenomena that, through the different perspectives of the informants, allow for multi-dimensionality. In this way, my knowledge has been enriched, facilitating a multi-faceted understanding of the case at hand.

Some might wonder why a person chooses to conduct a study of only one out of two parties to an intractable conflict. The cliché that it takes two to tango is of course valid also for the Israeli-Palestinian case. To achieve successful conflict transformation, both the Palestinian public and the Israeli have to change views about the opponent as well as of themselves. In order to develop theory, there is, however, value in studying the actions taken that might instigate conflict transformation within one of the groups involved in intractable conflict, as that might be a way to instigate a transformation process. However, in the future development of events, it is of course crucial that the other party to a conflict also partakes in the transformation process and offers thick recognition to its counter-part in the conflict.

For now, I put aside methodological concerns. I return to practical matters in Chapter Five, which has a sole focus on

developing analytical tools based on the concepts introduced in Part II. Before moving on to theory, an outline of the study is presented.

Outline of the study

This first chapter constitutes Part I of the study, in which introductory information regarding the case, over-arching aims and research questions as well as methodological issues have been discussed. The study is structured according to the objectives and research questions presented above.

In Part II, which consists of Chapters Two through Five, I elaborate on the theoretical framework and discuss how to practically go about the analysis based on the concepts developed. Chapter Two introduces the main theoretical areas of narrative, identity and conflicts. The theoretical domains are fleshed out so that the reader can see their points of intersection. Here the concept of *core constructs* is introduced, which assists the understanding of specifics of identity construction in intractable conflicts. This chapter serves as groundwork for the synthesizing efforts in Chapters Three and Four, in which the theoretical framework is developed. The third chapter advances ideas regarding identity change in intractable conflicts. It develops the concept of *thick recognition*, which connects understandings of history to the process of conflict transformation. As those conflicts are so concerned with identity, literature regarding conflict transformation is linked to ideas about identity construction. Here the micro-level of identification is mainly addressed, which is crucial in a deepened analysis of conflict transformation. The fourth chapter is also theoretical in character and discusses circumstances that make relationship change more likely in societies involved in intractable conflict. Here societal dynamics are explored, and the view forwarded suggests that in order for *counter narratives* to become successful in a society they must resonate with other themes in its narrative constellation. Here the interplay between different narratives is discussed, as it is argued that counter- as well as *master narratives* must be related to other important narratives in society, when their potential for success is assessed. A way through which

different narratives can be connected on the basis of boundaries throughout the past, present, and future is suggested. Narratives of the past can hence be linked to the preferred boundaries of contemporary society. This chapter also discusses the interplay between *memory agents* and *official memory institutions*. Here the macro-level of societal change is addressed, as it is pivotal to assess societal processes when the aim is to develop understandings of conflict transformation. In Chapter Five, I sum up the analytical framework and suggest ways through which the theoretical insights can be molded into useful analytical devices. From that more operative chapter, it will be time to move over to the empirical analysis.

Part III consists of the empirical analyses in Chapters Six through Eight. The sixth chapter is the first to address the empirical case. It introduces the Israeli commemorative narratives at the centre of the debates over New History. Here the master- and counter commemorative narratives are analyzed according to the elements inherent in core constructs and thick recognition. Their respective views on *identity, difference* and *boundaries* are thus scrutinized. The master- as well as counter narratives of Zionism and conflict are also introduced. Chapters Seven and Eight analyze the debates over New History. There I look at the interplay between *gatekeepers* and *challengers* in their struggle to influence Israeli collective memory. It will be made evident that a vital part of the interplay between different memory agents concerned official memory institutions, and who had the right to influence those. Chapter Seven covers the first debate cycle, in which New History was introduced and started to take root, while Chapter Eight is concerned with the second debate cycle, in which New History experienced decline. The respective analyses address circumstances facilitating as well as inhibiting the introduction of narratives of New History into Israeli society in terms of *recognition openings* and *recognition closures*. Under the heading of recognition openings, I discuss the circumstances during the time when the counter commemorative narratives were most successful. Under the heading of recognition closures, I assess circumstances that can be understood as inhibiting when it came to the introduction of new understandings of history in the Israeli context. The contextual circumstances of the Israeli debates over New History are related to

dynamics of both agency and structure on micro as well as macro levels.

In Part IV, which is Chapter Nine, I present the conclusions that can be drawn from the study. I first revisit the objectives and research questions stipulated in this chapter. The major findings of the empirical analysis are identified and related back to theory. Finally, thoughts on further research inspired by this study are introduced.

Part II – Theory

CHAPTER TWO

Intractable conflict, narrative and identity

This study constructs a theoretical framework through which debates over history and their relation to transformation of intractable conflicts can be analyzed. Hence, there is an initial need to introduce its main theoretical areas, in order to locate an ontological common ground on which the rest of the study's inquiry can be built. This chapter addresses underlying assumptions regarding theories of conflict, identity, and narrative, and identifies common denominators between those areas.

On conflict theory

Conflicts as socially constructed

The approach to conflict in this study has been inspired by conflict analysts who have partaken in the development of an emerging literature on how social categories such as friends and enemies are created within conflicts since the 1990s (C.f. Buckley-Zistel 2008, Campbell 1992, Campbell 1998, Jabri 1996, Ramsbotham 2010, Shapiro 1997, Slocum-Bradley 2008, Suganami 1996).

The most important insights emerging from conflict analyses focusing on the socially constructed understandings within conflict are that understandings of parties in conflict are not "misperceptions", but part of the narratives that contribute to the constitution of collective identities (Buckley-Zistel 2008:4). In this view, identities are understood as constituted alongside of difference, and the boundary separating self and other is understood as a potential source of conflict (Jabri 1996). However, some of the studies that underline the constructed nature of conflicts tend to have a solely descriptive focus. It is important to develop that understanding

and connect it to relevant theories of conflictual change so that processes of transformation within social conflicts can be grasped.

In order to bring change into the locus of the study, the literature on conflict transformation is employed. In contrast, the theoretical tradition called conflict *management* mainly seeks to contain conflict, without necessarily addressing its underlying causes (Miall et al. 1999:29). The conflict *resolution* approach instead seeks ends to conflicts through the act of attending to basic needs of the conflicting parties, such as security and identity (Aggestam 1999:22-25, Miall et al. 1999:29). Contrary to those two approaches, conflict *transformation* embraces the notion that holds that conflicts are nonlinear, cyclical processes. Conflicts are hence understood as part and parcel of the social construction of societies (Lederach 1996:8-9). Therefore they cannot once and for all be ended, but their *transformation* can be encouraged. Conflict transformation is emphasized by researchers seeking to encourage broader social change through the transformation[10] of antagonistic relationships between the conflicting parties. Conflicts are then situated in social relations between the collective identities of the parties to conflict (Buckley-Zistel 2008:22). Conflicts are hence seen as undergoing constant change, and, in their development over time, periods of both peaceful and violent transformation can be observed. (Kriesberg 2007:294-295).

Conflict transformation – a processual approach

Within the conflict transformation paradigm, it is not so much the specific war or battle that is of interest, but rather the more general experience of conflict altogether (Wallensteen 1991:129). Conflict in this perspective is conceived of as a holistic phenomenon, and the goal is not so much to solve problems (Väyrynen 1991:1-2) as it is to describe and increase the understanding of the inherently dialectic nature of conflict (Lederach 1996:17). The conflict transformation paradigm can be described as being mainly concerned with relational

[10] The processual view of transformation presented here should not be mistaken for the view of transformation as introduced by Holsti (2004:16), where transformation is understood as functional change of institutions over time.

aspects of conflict, and the main goal for practitioners and researchers is thus to identify and/or respond to opportunities for empowerment and recognition.

Within this tradition, many writers emphasize the importance of change in attitudes toward both the adversary and one's own group as a necessary step in the process leading toward transformation of conflict (C.f. Buckley-Zistel 2008, Diamond 1997, 1996, Kriesberg 1993, Lederach 1996, Miall et al. 1999, Mitchell 2002, Northrup 1989, Sahadevan 1997, Saunders 2003). The conflict transformation approach ascribes importance to all levels of society (Lederach 1996:17), from elites to grassroots, as well as third parties to conflicts, arguing that agents representing all those arenas need to be involved in order to achieve the goal of reducing conflict. This approach seeks to encourage wide-range social change through transforming antagonistic relationships between parties in conflict (Buckley-Zistel 2008:21).

One might argue that conflict transformation attends more to the sources of complex conflicts than to their material symptoms (Jamal 2000:37). As conflicts are viewed as socially constructed phenomena, we are presented with opportunities for transformation in directions that can reshape understandings and social relationships and lead to mutually beneficial outcomes for involved parties (Lederach 1996:19). In this case, the antagonists in conflict are able to change their impaired relationship into one that allows for mutual acceptance (Buckley-Zistel 2008:22).

Within the conflict transformation paradigm, the fact that conflicts are seldom completely eradicated is highlighted. The focus is instead on how conflict might transform into more or less violent realities. (Galtung 1995:53, Kriesberg 2001:375, Väyrynen 1991:4). Mitchell (2002) discusses whether to analytically emphasize conflict transformation as an inherent processual value, or to view the outcome of the transformation process as the main goal. As conflicts are understood as undergoing constant change, a focus on process rather than outcome is hence most suitable here. The approach suggested is hence to further the understanding of parts of the process of transformation, leading to more or less destructive

relations. Then direct attention is paid to the process of building more peaceful relationships.

The conflict transformation approach has been used in the search for an adequate language to describe efforts to create peace, and was originally developed by researchers such as Adam Curle (1991), Louis Kriesberg (1989), Raimo Väyrynen (1991) and Kumar Rupesinghe (1994, 1995). Those researchers and others all underline the processual character of conflicts, and contribute to the understanding of conflicts as undergoing constant transformation even though they at times might appear as static. Researchers such as Johan Galtung tend to place strong emphasis on structures in processes of conflict transformation, whereas other writers within the tradition such as Kriesberg (1989, 2003), Lederach (1996), Mitchell (2002), Buckley-Zistel (2008) and others put a stronger emphasis on process, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between actors and structures in conflictual change. When conflicts are conceived of in this way, new opportunities for transformation emerge, as conflicts then can be un-, re-, or de-constructed, implying that they can become transformed. Throughout such processes, it can be envisioned that parties to conflict are able to change their relationship into one which allows for mutual acceptance (Buckley-Zistel 2008:22). This study is located within that area, as I develop the concept of *thick recognition*[11], which is regarded as one way to change relationships in conflict, which is seen as part of the process of conflict transformation.

I hence seek to investigate collective identities involved in conflict, and how those contribute to sustaining conflicts. In order to locate constituencies for change, theoretical perspectives allowing for reformulation of identities, which in turn might bring about relationship change within conflict, must be incorporated. Guided by researchers within the conflict transformation paradigm, as well as those focusing specifically on the area of recognition (Allan and Keller 2006, Banerjee 1997, Bush and Folger 2005, Jamal 2000, Möller 2007, Wendt 2003), this study in turn develops the concept of

[11] This concept is thoroughly developed in Chapter Three.

thick recognition[12]. In carving out that concept, this dissertation seeks to deepen our understanding of *facilitating and inhibiting circumstances* when it comes to introducing changed understandings of history in societies tormented by intractable conflicts. Those facilitating circumstances are here understood as leading to *recognition openings*, and inhibiting circumstances in turn lead to *recognition closures*. Recognition openings as well as recognition closures are in turn seen as feeding into different processes of conflict transformation (Kriesberg 2007:156, 187).

I have now covered important dimensions of theories regarding conflict. As narrative is a crucial theoretical starting point for this study, I now turn to the field of narrative theory, which offers insights on how narratives are intertwined with processes of identification.

On narrative theory

Narrated identities

The overarching approach to understanding identity construction and societal and conflictual development in this dissertation deals with narratives. The narrative take provides a tool through which the interrelationship between ideas, experiences and action can be grasped, and offers an understanding of how identities become created and recreated over time (Robertson 2003:90). As this study is interested in debates over history and their relation to relationships in contemporary societies, there has been a need to find theoretical entry points that can connect the realms of history, temporality, and identity. When it comes to conceptualizing the ways in which narratives of the present are connected to narratives of the past, the insights of Paul Ricoeur are useful. One of the most central aspects of narrative, he argues, is that it allows us to construct narrative

[12] Their different takes on recognition were in turn originally inspired by political theorists Taylor (1994 (1992)) and Honneth (1995), who have done extensive work on recognition within the area of construction of political community and social conflicts respectively.

identities, both at the level of collective history and at the level of individual life (Ricœur 1984:241). Identities, individual as well as collective, are hence created through narratives (Ricœur 1984:247). In this way, narratives can be understood as guardians, or keepers, of time (Wood 1991:9). Different experiences that might be shattered and contradictory are placed into narratives with beginnings, midpoints and endings. Hence, heterogeneous experiences and conflicting views are ordered in the telling of one seemingly coherent narrative. Narrative thus functions as a connective device between the realms of temporality, identity and history.

Based on the reasoning above, this dissertation employs a narrative perspective when approaching the subject of identity (C.f. Andrews 2007, Czarniawska 2004, Dienstag 1997, Patterson and Monroe 1998, Polkinghorne 1988, Ricœur 1984, Scuzzarello 2010, Somers and Gibson 1994, White 1973, Whitebrook 2001). The concept of narrative refers to story or stories, pointing to the ways in which humans construct disparate facts that they encounter in their everyday lives and cognitively weave them together in order to make sense of reality. Narrative is hence viewed as having influence on the way in which reality is perceived and how people relate to the world around them (Patterson and Monroe 1998:315, Somers and Gibson 1994:61). Identities are always in transition as they come into being through combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong (Andrews 2007:9, Yuval-Davis 2006:201). The concept of narrative is hence central for understanding the process of identity construction in this dissertation project.

Narrative and the construction of society

All the narratives of a society can be understood as its *narrative constellation*, following Somers' approach (1994). The narrative constellation is an ever-changing processual whole composed of relational parts, and contains a myriad of different concepts organized around narrative themes, which are all interrelated. That constellation, even though containing many possible ways to make sense of reality, always relates to power because it contributes to the upholding of definitions of concepts. Within a narrative constellation, different

stories are told, stories about history and memory, stories about conflict, and stories about relations to others. The narrative constellation can in a way be understood as a broad repertoire that offers possible identities to the national collective, whose members in turn choose which identities to adopt and/or reject depending on individual properties as well as societal context. The dominant narratives in a narrative constellation are understood as its *master narratives*. On the margins of narrative constellations reside narratives that challenge their conventional wisdom. Those are called *counter-narratives*, which "[…] disturb those ideological maneuvers through which "imagined communities" are given essentialist identities." (Bhabha 1990:300) The resulting conflict between competing narratives, on the other hand, increases the porosity of community boundaries and intensifies the ambivalence of collectives as cultural and political forms (Bhabha 1990, Rattansi 1994, Özkirimli 2000:197). Counter-narratives hence challenge the conventional wisdom of societies (Andrews 2004, Zerubavel 1995).

A society's power relations are partly mirrored in its narrative constellation. Its master narratives tend to be forceful when it comes to identification, implying that changed power relations between former counter- and master narratives can affect processes of identification in societies. Narratives of history are communicated to the public through channels such as speeches, newspaper articles and rituals celebrating the national. Master narratives tend to become inscribed into official institutions, such as schoolbooks and other educational material. In this study, these are called *official memory institutions*, and are understood to be powerful as they continuously communicate views of identity to the public, which in turn reacts to them in different ways. However, the official memory institutions are not autonomous, but dependent on actions in order to be created in the first place and then continuously re-created. When inquiring into the case - the Israeli debates over New History - the interplay between agency, societal structures and narratives is studied. People who have the power to affect official memory institutions as well as the narrative constellations of societies are conceived of as *memory agents*. They communicate different views of memory through *commemorative narratives*, which are narratives that express conceptions

of the past (C.f. Zerubavel 1995:5-7). Memory agents are here conceived of as either *gatekeepers* or *challengers*, depending on their view of social change. They are understood as having the potential power to influence identifications in conflict through the telling of *counter commemorative narratives* or retelling of *master commemorative narratives*. Much of their effort is devoted to influencing official memory institutions, which are understood as crucial in communicating collective memory to the public[13].

Narrative, history and collective memory

The first comprehensive efforts to delve into the concept of collective memory took place during the time period between the 1880s and 1920s. This coincided with much work on memory and nationalism, where the pivotal role of memory in the construction of national community was elaborated. Well-known writers on the topic during that period was Halbwachs (1925) and Renan (1896). Halbwachs argued that memory was created through communication with other members of society and thus was partly a reflection of dominant narratives of society (Lebow 2006:8). The connection between memory and the present was hence pointed out already during that time. The second wave of memory studies continued on the path introduced by Halbwachs and others, but saw new forms of memory representations, such as the birth of the witness as well as ethical aspects of collective memory, born out of the discussions over the meaning of the Holocaust (Winter 2006:61). From the 1970s and onwards, political uses of memory, discussions on memory and its relations to political power as well as ethical aspects of memory have been continuously explored (C.f. Bell 2006, Blustein 2008, Cairns and Roe 2003, Cohen 1999, Connerton 1989, Gillis 1994c, Karlsson 1999, Langenbacher and Shain 2010, Lebow et al. 2006, Maier 1988, Margalit 2003, Müller 2002b, Nora 1989, Papadakis 2003, Papadakis 2008a, Zerubavel 1995). It has become commonplace to emphasize the constructed character of a nation and of memory. However, it is

[13] The concepts of *official memory institutions*, *memory agents, gatekeepers* and *innovators* will be further developed in Chapter Four.

still quite unclear how constructions of memory and history come to have real political consequences (Müller 2002a:2). In order to study political uses of memory and their consequences, attention must be paid to the carriers of memory, so that studies do not end up describing free-floating representations of the past that might or might not have relevance for politics (Müller 2002a:3). In this study those carriers are embodied in memory agents and official memory institutions. Memory agents are the actors who through commemorative narratives have the potential to affect identifications. Their narratives can in turn be inscribed into institutions, which continue to communicate certain views of the past or contribute to their alteration.

Understandings of the past help people interpret the present. They also tell them who they are (Lebow 2006:3). Shared memories thus provide communities with more or less well-defined identities. Also individual memories are shaped though intersubjective processes and tend to reflect and often reinforce dominant narratives in society (Lebow 2006:4). Memories hence provide a linkage between understandings of past and present. Collective memory is understood as being created through communication in a society, and hence heavily reflects dominant narratives in that society. Collective memory helps individuals find meanings in their everyday lives and struggles. As such, collective memory in its institutionalized and ritualized forms helps constitute the core of communities (Lebow 2006:8).

The master commemorative narratives of a collective are understood as its broader view of history, which is socially constructed and provides group members with a general notion of their shared past. The counter commemorative narratives, in turn, are narratives regarding the nation's history which reside on the margins of the collective memory. They are seldom related publicly and are often rejected by both the larger public and/or official institutions (Zerubavel 1995:6-7).

As a group's memory cannot be collectively "remembered", it must be narrated (Anderson 1983:204). The master commemorative narratives often revolve around the origins of a group, and focus on events that mark the group's emergence as an independent social

entity (Nora 1989:16-17, Zerubavel 1995:7). In order to form a coherent sense of the collective's identity in the past, memories that do not fit into master commemorative narratives are modified in order to fit, or become subject for collective amnesia, (Anderson 1983:205, Douglas 2007, Greenberg 2005:95, Ram 2009, Zerubavel 1995:8). Commemorative narratives thus have dynamics of both remembering and forgetting (Edkins 2003:15). By focusing on certain aspects of the past, others that are understood as either irrelevant or disruptive to the narrative or its ideological message tend to be ignored.

When thinking about historical understandings and their linkage to present political ideas, Hayden White's (1987, 1973) works on the meaning and consequences of historiography are helpful. Key to an understanding of his argument is that historiographers must reaffirm their society's cultural symbols and traditional modes of representation in order to get their story across to their audience (Jenkins 1995:160). Thus, historians must be culturally resonant in order to be successful in their story telling.

As this study aims to gain an understanding of processes of identity and relationship change in conflict-ridden societies, it is necessary to further discuss processes of identity construction and, later on, how those are affected in intractable conflicts.

On identity theory

Fluid identities

If it is believed that collective identities are constructed, and not something that comes with birth, it is necessary to come to terms with *how* they are constructed and then spread amongst a collective of people. This dissertation obviously rests on the ontological assumption that holds that narrative and identity are intimately connected (Andrews 2007, Czarniawska 2004, Dienstag 1997, Patterson and Monroe 1998, Ricœur 1984, Ringmar 1996, Somers 1994, Whitebrook 2001). People make sense of who they are as both individuals and parts of collectives through narratives.

> [...] what an individual or a community choose to tell about themselves is intricately tied to how they construct their political identities (Andrews 2007:11)

Narratives hence provide a rich basis through which identities can be explored.

Collective identities are not phenomena that can be studied objectively. Rather, they are of an elusive character, and they depend on a complex series of social processes (Jenkins 1996:19-21, Preston 1997:49). As identities are fluid constructs, they harbor inherent potential for change. National identity is just one of many differing identities to which people of the modern era claim to belong (Featherstone 1995, Scholte 1996). One thing that is certain regarding the importance of different identities to different people is that many individuals living in violent environments, characterized by repeated threats, tend to identify strongly with the group that experiences that same threat and violence (Bar-Tal 2000b, Volkan 1997). What needs to be emphasized, as already mentioned above, is that collective identities are never static. Circumstances may sometimes make identities appear to be unchanging, but by nature, they are not. Collective identities are always created alongside a historical context of varying relationships, events and power relations. The fact that each individual perceives that he/she owns many different identities also demonstrates the volatile nature of collective identity over time.

Relational identities

Literature on deep-seated conflict contains many references to psychological theory. Before embarking on any further discussion of features of the relationship between identity and conflict, some elaboration on psychological theory related to identity is needed. In order to delve into psychological aspects related to conflict settings, the impact of the specific context of the people involved in conflict must be considered, as well as individual psychological processes (Ross 2000:1016).

Researchers involved with social psychology have often developed theories regarding identity. The very concept of group in social psychology was originally defined in relation to the nation

(Reicher and Hopkins 2001:5). Many conflict scholars inclined to study psychological aspects of conflicts borrow thoughts from Social Identity Theory when accounting for identity construction and possibilities for identity change in intractable conflicts (C.f. Bar-Tal 2000b, Northrup 1989, Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998, Sahadevan 1997). Several researchers recently engaged in theorizing national identity and dynamics of in- and out-groups (C.f. Bar-Tal 2000b, Billig 1995, Kinnvall 2004, Kinnvall 2006, Reicher and Hopkins 2001) also use perspectives inspired by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1974, Tajfel 1981). This theory is appealing partly because it tries to grasp the dynamics of large-scale collectives. Focus is on the fact that individuals often ascribe positive characteristics to their own group in comparison to other groups. This is explained by the fact that the in-group provides individuals with self-esteem, which motivates them to raise the status of the own group in relation to other groups (Billig and Tajfel 1973, Hogg and Abrams 1988). This theory was later expanded into Self Categorization Theory (Turner 1991, Turner 1999, Turner et al. 1987), which highlights the cognitive process of self-categorization through which people define themselves in terms of a shared social category, for example Christians, Swedes, or political scientists.

However, this perspective contains pitfalls, as pointed out by several researchers (C.f. Billig 1995, Kinnvall 2004, Kinnvall 2006). One central point of criticism is directed toward the universalism of Social Identity Theory as well as Social Categorization Theory. This might lead to neglecting the facts that different contexts might bring with them different categorizations and identifications (Billig 1995:66, Kinnvall 2004:750, Kinnvall 2006:48-49), and that different individuals behave differently in relation to their own collectives as well as their surrounding societal context. One way of addressing this critique is to embrace the notion that all individuals come to perceive their sense of identity in a similar fashion. The *process* of identity construction is thus understood as quite universal in character, whereas the *products* thereof might come in many different guises due to individual and contextual differences (Kinnvall 2006:39, Penrose 1995:391-417). Identities are thus perceived as continuously dynamic and processual.

One might also point to the fact that the focus on individual categorization neglects the ways in which categories such as national identity become inhabited (Billig 1995:67). National identity is in this view not just a marker of identity, but has also over time grown to become a strong master narrative. It is powerful in the ordering of both international and national relations, and in that way works as a compelling story of identification, having an influence on individual identification since it affects the way people perceive their reality. As this study aims to relate psychological aspects of identity and intractable conflict to past and contemporary narratives of conflict, the individual is related to society at large.

A number of researchers addressing the problems inherent in Social Identity and Social Categorization Theory are those dealing with psychoanalytically informed identity theory. Here, identity is treated as both individual and social, linking individuals to large social groupings as well as emphasizing that conflict is experienced at deep emotional levels. These perspectives highlight the specifics of the individual and her relations to actors around her, with a special focus on groups involved in protracted conflicts (Volkan 1997) as well as on the importance of images of the self in relation to others (Kristeva 1991). The understanding of processes of identification guiding this study is in line with that research, inspired by critical scholars who in a social constructivist vein point to the constructed nature of identity. Many of those, such as Connolly (1991), Campbell (1992), and Weldes and Laffey (1999b), underscore the boundedness of processes of identification and the interrelationship between identity and difference. They thus share important characteristics with the psychoanalytical theory of Erikson (1970 [1950]), the object relations theory as developed by G.H. Mead (1934) and Social Identity Theory, especially emphasized by authors such as Jenkins (1996 [1988]), in that they all rely heavily on the assumption that identity is inherently relational. Conflict scholars such as Jabri (1996, 2006), Buckley-Zistel (2008), Slocum-Bradley (2008), and Ramsbotham (2010) also adhere to that tradition and hence emphasize the relational character of identities. Their writings have largely influenced the view of identity and conflict advanced here.

Erikson stated that social identity only becomes meaningful in relation to others, and therefore his focus has been on the social part of identification (1968:41). In some respects the individual and collective are hence understood as having shared characteristics, because identification works in relation to both planes simultaneously (Bloom 1990:36, Sibley 1995:45-46). Each is entangled with the other, and both processes are intrinsically social (Jenkins 1996:19). If there is a change in society that the collective perceives as threatening , each individual who claims membership in that group is threatened (Bloom 1990:39). Individually this might result in anxiety and feelings of insecurity, whereas the group can respond to the threat either by resynthesizing a new identity or by bolstering the old one (Bloom 1990:39-40).

This section has explored the insights into psychoanalytical and social psychological perspectives necessary to understand identity transformation within the setting of intractable conflict. I take with me theories regarding the creation of in-groups and out-groups as well as the nature of the relationships between them. These insights are pivotal for the study at hand, and we have to further consider how contextual factors affect individuals and groups to avoid falling into the trap of context-free universalism, which is quite unsuitable for a study discussing prerequisites for change. In the following I move over to understandings of the nation, and some specifics regarding identity construction in national collectives.

National identities

Often, when studying intractable conflicts, the category of *nationality* tends to harbor feelings of togetherness and might act as an umbrella under which people perceive that they can shelter and gain strength in order to face groups of people that are perceived as threatening. As this study sets out to discuss images of the collective self in societies involved in intractable conflict, national identity, its dynamic and components, is an important starting point.

This study takes off from the assumption that national identities are social constructions (C.f. Anderson 1983, Gellner 1994,

Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Hylland-Eriksen 1993, Nairn 1975). This means that:

> "[…] only if people believe that they have national identities, will such homelands, and the worlds of national homelands, be reproduced" (Billig 1995:8).

Images of the national self are multi-dimensional. If researchers engaged in the discussion of national identity and its components are consulted, many different aspects of the phenomenon are found, all worthy of consideration. Some aspects unite many researchers of national identity. That is a focus on a spatial as well as a temporal axis, together with a relational dimension, connecting the views of the collective self with images of other parties important for the make-up of national identity (For examples on this view on national identities see e.g. Hedetoft 1995, Petersson 2001, Preston 1997). The relational dimension is elaborated below, in the discussion on the relationship between identity, difference and boundaries. The temporal axis anchors the present sense of identity in the past as well as in the future, providing the collective with a memory, as well as with a meaningful future (Petersson 2001:21). The axis relating to space connects the collective to a certain territory in which a status of nationality has been inscribed (Featherstone 1995:180, Petersson 2001:28, Scholte 1996). Those dimensions — the spatial, temporal, and relational — harbor strong symbolism and are often inscribed into official institutions.

The nation's unity is often seen as a unique entity in terms of time and space, imagined as a community stretching throughout time, with its own past tied together with a future destiny, embracing the inhabitants of a particular territory (Anderson 1983). When focusing on the temporal axis of national identity, the importance of chosen traumas and glories in groups involved in violent conflicts is often highlighted, emphasizing the highly affective element of history in the construction of community (Volkan 1997). The concepts of chosen traumas and/or glories do not imply that the collective memory is inauthentic. However, specific traumatic or glorious events from a collective's commemorative narratives are picked out as important formative events, to which present identifications are continuously

related. In this case it will be clear that the persecution in exile, ending up in the horrific experience of the Holocaust, has been the major trauma around which narratives of Israeli national identity have been constructed, and the resurrection of that traumatized collective at the creation of the State of Israel has been the main chosen glory. The building of the Israeli nation and the legitimacy of the state has largely been justified as a means to avoid another exile (Tossavainen 2006). Thus the temporal element has been constantly emphasized and history has come to be present in all political decisions.

National histories

An important aspect of identity is a conception of sameness over time and space, which tends to be sustained by remembering (Gillis 1994b:3). As mentioned above, collective memory is often viewed as a crucial aspect of the make-up of national identities (Maier 1988:149). History can thus be viewed as a centerpiece of national identity (Cohen 1999:28). In this study, history is understood as "an interpretation of events in terms of a larger narrative, not simply events that happen" (Cohen 1999:28). History can be thought of as a glue, uniting groups around a story that is made meaningful. This implies that historiography might be an important site of contestation when struggling over national identity (Levy 1999:51). Whoever controls the "proper" interpretation of the past has the power to shape the present, and possibly also aspirations for the future. Historical narratives are in this view understood as formal re-presentations of historical events. History is thus seen as open rather than closed (Munslow 1997:25-26). This means further that language "constitutes and represents rather than transparently corresponds to reality, that there is no ultimate knowable historical truth, that knowledge of the past is social and perspectival, and that written history exists within culturally determined power structures" (Munslow 1997:25). Often national groups strive to construct a version of history that is consistent, with a yesterday, today and tomorrow involving the same "we", resulting in the perception of a "stable" group identity over time (Reicher and Hopkins 2001:139). This insight might be helpful when trying to understand the

sometimes quite violent reactions when national history is questioned.

History is of central importance for the understanding of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. Some even go so far as using the metaphor "History's Double Helix" when describing the conflict (Rotberg 2006:2). The two narratives of Israeli and Palestinian histories fuel the conflict, as similar events throughout the history of conflict are interpreted through these two prisms. Both narratives revolve around the struggle for national identity, where acceptance of the legitimacy of the other's narrative negates its own (Rotberg 2006:3). As historical narratives can be employed when fighting ideological struggles in the present, they are an important site of study when one wishes to account for driving forces in societal change and the different workings of power inherent in those processes. The most important aspect here is not to examine the writings by the New Historians in terms of historical accuracy. Rather the debates between them and their antagonists regarding understandings of history are discussed, in order to pinpoint the transformative potential of historical representations (C.f. Blomeley 2005:126). The crucial importance of memory agents formulating narratives of thick recognition in societies involved in intractable conflicts is hence assessed.

When antagonists in conflicts tell diametrically different stories of the actions of the groups involved throughout history, it can probably be agreed that both sides might be correct in some of their assertions, and that the unfolding of events most likely lies somewhere in between the different narratives. I do not intend to be a judge when it comes to that delicate question. I do, however, promote the normative stance where the most vital part is the importance of dialogue over central turning points in history within and between societies involved in intractable conflicts[14]. As long as

[14] Edward Said promoted this view, and suggested that Israeli and Palestinian historians should get together and try to find "a modicum of truth about this conflict" through a series of meetings. Said also stated that the most demoralizing aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "is the almost total opposition between mainstream Israeli and Palestinian points of view […] There is simply no common

there continues to be contestation over memories, forgetting and repression of certain commemorative narratives is less likely (Müller 2002a:33).

Identity construction and intractable conflict

Core constructs

When discussing identity in relation to the development of intractable conflict it is useful to employ the concept of *core construct* (Northrup 1989:64, Sahadevan 1997:64). This concept was developed by Kelly (1955), who in his theory of personality elaborated on identity construction. The theory is based on the assumption that present interpretations of reality are subject to revision through a process called construing. This process involves all aspects of human experience, including emotions, values, and behaviors. Kelly's writings contain ideas which later appeared under the broad umbrella of social constructivism (Shotter 2007:68). In this view identity is seen as fluid and processual:

> "Concepts have long been known as units of logic and are treated as if they existed independently of any particular person's psychological processes. But when we use the notion of construct we have nothing of this sort in mind; we are talking about a psychological process in a living person. Such a construct has, for us, no existence independent of the person whose thinking it characterizes." (Kelly quoted in Shotter 2007)

A person's conception of identity is thus, according to Kelly, composed of units of meaning called personal constructs. Core constructs are superordinate to most other constructs. As such they are central to the whole system of constructs of the person. Core constructs are defined as those that govern people's maintenance processes - that is, those by which they maintain their sense of identity and existence (1955:482). The way personal and core constructs make individuals cope with a conflictual environment

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ground, no common narrative, no positive area for genuine reconciliation" (Said 2000).

shows similarities with the concept of shared beliefs (Bar-Tal 1988, Bar-Tal 2000b, Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998). The difference is that Bar-Tal and Rouhana's perspective stipulates a series of shared beliefs that is pertinent to all societies in conflict settings. When a core construct is invalidated, the individual tends to feel insecure. In the application of Kelly's concept of core constructs to the theory of intractable conflict, Northrup lends thoughts from Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, which poignantly stresses that personal and social identities may be differentially salient under particular circumstances (1989:66). Moreover, social identity may in some contexts function almost as an exclusion of personal identity (Bruner and Perlmutter 1957, Dion 1975, Dion and Earn 1975, Sherif 1966). This is particularly the case when it comes to intergroup conflicts and discrimination (Northrup 1989:66). Thus, if a person perceives that his or her collective is under constant threat, that person tends to be highly aware of that group membership at all times.

Northrup's use of Kelly´s theory of constructs indicates a problem with aggregation, which is common to many studies that focus on the construction of collective identity. This regards the fact that individual identity construction would function in the same way on the collective level. Individual identification is dependent on relations to an outer world, and group identifications are meaningless without individual identifications. Even though not fully similar processes, both levels are hence always entangled with each other, due to the fact that all identifications are irrevocably social and relational (Jenkins 1996:19-21). Collective identities are expressed in narratives of that collective and are lived in the experiences of the group members. However - as collective identities are experienced by individuals as parts of larger collectives that in turn can feel attached to different identifications – the processes of identity construction, also on group level, is dependent on processes of identification on an individual level. The problem of aggregation notwithstanding, the relationality of individual as well as collective identification is a quite similar process, and both can be expressed in narratives of identity on both collective and individual levels. Collectives such as national groups and state actors can hence be analyzed "as if" they were human agents. Hence, even if they can reflect context-bound identity,

they should never be reduced to such (Kinnvall 2006:42). In this study, group identity labels such as Israelis and Palestinians are always used based on an awareness that they are complex and heterogeneous categories who share certain reference points due to what is perceived as common historical and contemporary experiences (Kinnvall 2006:43).

If a specific social identity has great salience for an individual's sense of self and order in the world, it is thus likely to be a core construct. When core constructs are invalidated by incoming information, the individual experiences threat. Hence the theory of core constructs shares many features with the theory of ontological security, introduced by Anthony Giddens (1991) and during recent years often used by political scientists to discuss actors' reactions when presented with new "facts" regarding their realities (C.f. Delehanty and Steele 2009, Kinnvall 2004, McSweeney 1999, Mitzen 2006, Steele 2005). Ontological security is understood as the individual need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time, as being rather than constantly changing, in order to experience a sense of agency (following Giddens 1991, Mitzen 2006). The theory of ontological security is sometimes criticized for being essentialist, due to Giddens' emphasis on the individual need to feel as one coherent agent in space and time (Featherstone 1995:101, Kinnvall 2004:746). In my view, the concept of core constructs is more flexible, as it is more sensitive to the fact that individuals of differing identifications tend to have varying core constructs. Thus, this theory better relates to the fact that identities are malleable, and it also enables the understanding of changed identities, even in cases where the introduction of "new" identities seems less than likely. Threats to any part of a social identity that is a core construct tend to result in a protective response. If a social identity is understood as a core construct for a group of individuals, the process of protection and mobilization can occur as a group phenomenon. As humans experience different attachments to different social identities, core constructs vary between individuals. Identity is thus viewed as continuously dynamic because the sense of self, whether personal or group, is not static (Northrup 1989:67). Identities, even though

appearing rather stable within settings of intractable conflict, are thus always, due to their processual nature, prone to change.

A radical change in the understandings of the history of a national collective, portraying its past actions as compromising, might thus be understood as a situation in which the core constructs of those who identify strongly with the national collective are perceived as threatened. The identity of the collective is then challenged by a new story, including traits of the other, for example the commitment of illegitimate acts such as war crimes, into one's own collective. This certainly challenges the often positive image of the in-group, and might result in the fact that the individuals involved perceive threat. This is thought provoking in the way that changing the history of the national collective, which always is constituted alongside difference, in the Israeli debate was only occasionally directly related to the present conflict with the Palestinians. However, as historical narratives are so intimately connected to the collective's present sense of national identity, I argue that they are directly linked to the ongoing conflict, even though the debate concentrated very much on the past. [15]

Core constructs and intractable conflict

Thus, core constructs in intractable conflicts tend to be difficult to alter. As this study is concerned with prerequisites for change in core constructs, the following sections introduce some of their important elements. As core constructs are relational, they harbor dimensions of the self, as well as contain references to groups to whom the self relates. In intractable conflicts, the most important other is often the antagonist in conflict, which during conflict is the out-group of most concern to the in-group. Thus, core constructs contain images of the self and the other, as well as references to the relationship between the two.

[15] The connection between past and contemporary narratives is further developed in Chapter Four.

Core constructs vary between individuals and contexts. In a conflict concerning religion or ethnicity, aspects regarding religion and ethnicity might be those seen as core constructs of many of those involved in the conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is mainly a conflict between two groups claiming the same national territory, it is reasonable to argue that national identity is a core construct to many of the individuals living with the conflict.

National identity contains many elements, the most important ones being spatiality, temporality and relationality. When elements of core constructs concerning the self are discussed, the bounded relationship between the self and the other is central. However, as this dissertation focuses on how historical debates might affect relationships in intractable conflict, the temporal dimension as well as that concerning relationships are emphasized, as identity is firmly connected to understandings of history in this specific study.

The following section covers the dynamics of core constructs in intractable conflicts that are especially acute; they address factors of self-images and their preoccupation with insecurity, images of the other and relations to difference, and finally how the relationship between self and other is constituted through the construction of boundaries between the entities.

Intractable conflicts and the insecure self

When discussing identities in relation to intractable conflicts, a central aspect is views of the self. Many researchers emphasize that self-images contribute to the dynamics of conflicts[16], and if self-images change, conflicts might change accordingly (Kaplowitz 1990:48). Thus, the way groups involved in conflict see themselves influences conflict interaction both directly and indirectly.

The process of identification has often been understood as revolving around security, or even understood as being an identity-securing system (Bloom 1990:47, Erikson 1959:122-157, Habermas

[16] Classical works in psychology, such as those of Eriksson (1970 [1950]), pointed out that self-images have a strong linkage to conflict behavior. Erikson also early on pointed to the close linkage between identity and security.

1975:3-4). Societies involved in intractable conflicts are preoccupied with security concerns. Thus, specific inquiry into the relationship between identity and security in situations of intractable conflicts is needed. When certain aspects of identity are seen as a core construct to a person, it is important for his/her sense of security (Northrup 1989:68). Some of the researchers who stress the constructedness of understandings of security also emphasize the theoretical links between identity and security (Cf. Albert et al. 2001, Campbell 1992, Huysmans 1998, Kinnvall 2004, Krause and Williams 1997, McSweeney 1999, Weldes et al. 1999a), which is crucial for the understanding of this study.

When I turn to security, I thus bring with me the notion that understandings of security are socially constructed. To say that security is socially constructed is not at all the same as saying that security threats do not exist. Of course I acknowledge that nuclear weapons exist, and that if used they might injure and kill vast numbers of people. However, when nuclear weapons are taken into the interaction between states, and thus pulled into the socially constructed relations between actors all over the globe, their meaning might differ enormously according to their location within the system and how they are interpreted in terms of threat. Thus, nuclear weapons of Third World states are often perceived as threatening by analysts in the West, whereas Western nuclear weapons are not. This is not a fact of life, but something interpreted in accordance with the perceived character of the international system (Weldes et al. 1999b:10).

Societies involved in intractable conflict have a strong focus on security matters. All communities tend to focus on different aspects of security, but for societies involved in intractable conflict, where the situation is characterized by continuous and prolonged threats to life, the state and the well being of community members, the security orientation is particularly salient. (Bar-Tal 2000b:87, Klare and Thomas 1991, 1974, Smoke 1984). When discussing shared beliefs in societies in conflict, a whole repertoire of beliefs regarding the self is often suggested (Bar-Tal 2000b, Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005, Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998). Those beliefs concern perceptions of being under siege, patriotic beliefs, beliefs about unity, victimization,

and most importantly, beliefs about security, or maybe more accurately, beliefs regarding *the insecure self*. The theory of shared beliefs offers important insights into psychological features of conflict-ridden societies. Bar-Tal et al. suggest a variety of beliefs as pertinent to societies in intractable conflicts. In my view, their common denominator is the insecure state of the in-group and how its struggle for nationality is motivated by security concerns in a variety of ways. The theme of security is hence latent in the beliefs of patriotism, unity, siege and victimization.

Insecurity and feelings of danger are important elements in all identity-establishing processes (C.f. Campbell 1992, Neumann 1999, Stern 2001, Weldes et al. 1999b). However, as mentioned above, they tend to be more obvious and explicit in societies involved in long-term, deep-seated conflicts. This is due to the fact that those societies have long been involved in violent situations through which different security practices have been inscribed in the narratives of the groups involved. Insecurity is hence inherently linked to the self. The approach suggested here is moreover that it is insufficient only to discuss the self when aiming to understand processes of identity construction. To fully comprehend that process, thoughts regarding the relationality of the self must be included; that is, how it relates to other entities and implications of that process.

Intractable conflicts and difference

A starting point in the discussion regarding identity is its constant relationship to other identities. Any identity of either individuals, local communities, nations, or states is always "established in relation to a series of *differences* that have become socially recognized" (Connolly 1991:64). The stories of the collective center on its uniting features, its history and future goals, the territory and symbols of the nation, and around difference, meaning what the collective is *not* (Preston 1997:73). This entails that it is important to study identities on the premise that they always are created in relation to others (Campbell 1992:9, Tilly 2002:61, Weldes et al. 1999b:11). The relationship between identity and difference is based on the notion that people to some extent always carry difference, or the stranger, inside them

(Kristeva 1991:19-20). Identity and difference are always entangled, and their relationship can be understood as being at the very locus of conflict (Buckley-Zistel 2008:31, Jabri 1996:131). The discussion of identity and its relations to difference contributes valuable insight on the emergence and ending of conflicts, and therefore merits close attention (Buckley-Zistel 2008:32). It has been argued that the clearest link between identity and conflict is the act of locating "the evil" in the actions of the other, who is then understood as inferior and villainous, especially in relation to the "good" character of the self. This process entails identifying one's own group as a victim and identifying the other with stable traits having negative connotations, such as hypocrisy, intolerance, negligence, arrogance, greediness, extremism and so forth (Moghaddam 2006, Slocum-Bradley 2008:12).

In order to further the discussion on identity and difference, thoughts on how the concepts relate to insecurity must be brought in. Weldes et al. (1999b:12) emphasize the notion that difference per se is not to be understood as a prerequisite for insecurity. Still, through various cultural processes, difference can be transformed into otherness and when that occurs, a source of insecurity becomes established. Otherness is then understood as standing in a double relationship to notions of identity; it both threatens and constitutes it (Weldes et al. 1999b:11). Difference should never be understood as external to identity construction; it is rather to be thought of as part and parcel of the very process of establishing identity[17].

One often sees a relationship between how political elites speak of their national missions and goals and devalue pictures of the opponent's legitimacy (Kaplowitz 1990:57). What is interesting here is that even though political actors speak of self-images, the notion of the other is always present, as the process of constructing a self-image always includes the process of distinguishing the self from the other (Vertzberger 1993:125). This process is continuous through the exclusionary procedures of separating in-groups from out-groups, and enforcing simplified beliefs about the opponent in conflict. The next section introduces the concept of boundaries between self and

[17] For an elaboration on specific discussion, see Campbell (1992:82).

other, which is a necessary component when aiming to understand possibilities of transforming the relationship between self and other in intractable conflict.

Intractable conflicts and the stabilization of boundaries

The relational aspect of identity production entails that when studying collective identities we find *boundaries* demarcating groups from one another. One of the most typical characteristics of identity construction in general, and of the construction of national identity in particular, is thus that it is inherently boundary-producing (Calhoun 1995:197, Neumann 1999:4). Identity is put at a distance from difference in the process of erecting boundaries that distinctly separate the in-group from the out-group. National identities are created through the sharing of narratives concerning we–they boundaries – narratives about how those boundaries arose and what they separate (Tilly 2002:61). National identities are thus always relational and collective, which tells us that:

> "the constitution of identity is achieved though the inscription of boundaries that serve to demarcate 'an inside' from 'an outside', a 'self' from an 'other', a 'domestic' from a 'foreign'" (Campbell 1992:9).

The boundary work is evident in concrete, physical boundaries such as border controls, fences etc., as well as in psychological bordering, demarcating us from them in both time and space. People maintain relations with each other on each side of the boundary, whereas relations across the boundary are also maintained. On both sides of the boundary, narratives are created and upheld — narratives about the relations within the collectives as well as between the groups on each side of the boundary (Tilly 2005:7). This implies that the collective is defined through its relationship to other groups. It becomes visible through its boundaries, and the boundary itself is a social construction, continuously changing through time (Barth 1969). The processes of boundary production are especially visible in societies involved in intractable conflicts. Here the encounters with difference are manifest, and one does not need to be very familiar

with psychological thinking in order to see the boundary work taking place among the groups involved:

> "Under stressful conditions […] physical borders serve a double duty: they provide practical, physical protection, and they are "psychologized" to represent a symbolic thick skin that protects large groups from the feeling of being contaminated." (Volkan 1997:105)

Those boundaries often appear stable to observers, because in societies involved in intractable conflicts, understandings of identities often become static, appearing to be not prone to change at all. However, the constructed nature of identity, difference and boundary separating them, implies that identities are never static, but are understood as negotiable and context-dependent (Hylland-Eriksen 1993:42).

One way of describing the psychological processes resulting in seemingly stable boundaries is to use the term *stabilization*[18]. This is a process of crystallizing or hardening the construction of the self and the other, putting "secure" distance between the self and the threatening other in conflict (Northrup 1989:70). New information that could contribute to the view of the other as "like-self" is thus understood as a threat. Therefore information where the other is constructed in terms of the self is often aggressively distorted or maybe not even perceived, as it falls out of the range of constructs that the individual holds about her world (Northrup 1989:70). Unwanted thoughts about the self are projected onto the other party, and constructed as "not-self". Those feelings are kept at a distance by placing them on the other side of the seemingly stable boundary — as traits of the other. Stabilization involves increasing efforts at securing the boundaries of the self. In that process, psychological defenses are built, and self and other tend to become mutually exclusive categories over time (Northrup 1989:71).

Some researchers have argued that it is important not to overemphasize boundaries when relationships between groups are studied (C.f. Hylland-Eriksen 1992:31, Lindholm-Schulz 1999:13).

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[18] Northrup uses the term *rigidification* to characterize this phenomenon.

Focusing on boundaries might function as a self-fulfilling prophecy and might then contribute to enforcing boundaries instead of overcoming them. On the other hand, when the nature of boundaries is in focus, emphasizing that permeable boundaries between groups might be a viable way to transform intractable conflicts, I find the critique redundant. Boundaries always exist; they are in fact intrinsic to identity construction. Here those boundaries are studied in an attempt to suggest how they could be reconstructed in order to allow for coexistence or even new constructions of identities crossing previous boundaries. I argue that that activity can hardly be understood as boundary enforcing.

These past sections described how core constructs relate to identity, difference and boundaries in the context of intractable conflict. As core constructs tend to be stabilized in the social interactions brought about by intractable conflicts, it is clear that it might be difficult to alter relationships between the adversaries in conflict. In the following two theoretical chapters, I explore possibilities for transformation of relationships in intractable conflict, which might be difficult, yet possible, to achieve given the above discussions.

Summing up

In this chapter, the reader has been familiarized with theories of conflict, identity, and narrative. The processual understanding of reality already introduced in the first chapter permeated the understandings of the theoretical areas presented above. The theoretical work also rests upon the understanding that social relations, as well as conflicts and identities, are socially constructed. Indeed, all the main theoretical venues explored here in one way or another relate to the construction of boundaries. Conflictual relations are understood as dependent on the bounded relationship of identity and difference in the construction of core constructs of the groups involved. Moreover, narratives are understood as carrying notions of those boundaries in their descriptions of reality. This chapter served as an important theoretical foundation for the following chapters. In

the next two chapters, I provide answers to the study's theoretical research questions. Chapter Three further synthesizes theories of identity and conflict, in order to provide an understanding of how changed understandings of history can be related to transformation of relationships in the context of intractable conflict.

CHAPTER THREE

Introducing thick recognition

> "the significance of recognition of the 'other' necessarily includes transformation of the 'I.'" (Jamal 2000:38).

On recognition

Introduction

In this chapter, theoretical understandings of the process of trying to introduce new understandings of national history in societies involved in intractable conflict are developed. I argue that the introduction of new narratives of history is a process which, given the right circumstances, can lead to transformation of relationships in intractable conflicts.[19] This chapter specifically focuses on micro-processes of identification, as those are seen as central if violent and hostile conflictual relations are to be turned into more peaceful ones. In line with this argument, the chapter develops the concept of *thick recognition*, which captures the transformative potential of changed understandings of history in settings of intractable conflict.

In the elaboration of the concept of thick recognition, I move toward a more profound level of conflict analysis, thoroughly addressing its identity aspects. This approach underlines the importance of endogenous processes and inside actors within conflict-ridden societies, in its ambition to locate possible intrasocietal bases

[19] This study does not suggest that intractable conflicts can be reduced to the component of identity. However, as relations in conflicts are socially constructed, changed identity constructions have the potential to influence relations between conflict parties and may hence influence the whole conflict dynamic in more peaceful or violent directions.

for conflictual change. In order to expand understandings of the transformative potential of changed commemorative narratives in societies involved in intractable conflict, I now turn to the concept of recognition.

Introducing recognition

When aspiring to achieve more positive relations in settings of intractable conflict, approaches devoted to profound identity aspects and how they relate to other themes in a society's narrative constellation are necessary. One such approach underlines the concept of *recognition*. According to that approach, the concept of recognition is key to the establishment of long-term peaceful relations, both in societies involved in overt conflict, as well as in multicultural societies in general (Honeth 1995, Taylor, 1995). Honeth and Taylor have developed their takes on recognition quite independently from each other. However, their views have shared characteristics as they both base their argument on the writings of the early Hegel (Honneth 1995:92, Taylor 1994 (1992):36). Their shared emphasis on recognition as essential for humans is based on the notion that identities are shaped and become meaningful only in relation with others (Taylor 1994 (1992):32). Honeth uses Mead's writings on social psychology to clarify and make this argument more concrete.

G. H. Mead (1934) suggested that people cannot see themselves without relating to how others see them. Hence the emergence of identity involves not only views of self, but also how others see that self. Thus the constitution of identity is an interactive, social process (Jenkins 1996:19-20). Honneth argues that:

> "The reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee." (1995:92)

Struggles for recognition in Honneth's view can be understood as a friction between the "me" (the internalized view of how others see the self) and the "I" (every person's untapped potential for identity-

formation)[20] (Markell 2007:110). As this is a potential source of conflict, it is thus imperative to try to accommodate one's own view of the self and the way others see the self, in order to build more peaceful relations.

Some have criticized scholars developing the concept of recognition on the ground that it should bring about justice through the distribution of equal justice between previously unequal subjects (C.f. Markell 2003, Markell 2007). The view of recognition in this study avoids that critique, as demands for recognition here are *not* understood as means to obtain justice. Rather, struggles for recognition are understood as intersubjective human negotiations and struggles over identity that need to be addressed if processes of creating as well as transforming societal relations in general and intractable conflict in particular must be fully understood. In this study, the ideal of distributing equal justice to parties is less relevant because recognition concerns social psychological processes and feelings of being respected in one's difference , which can contribute to conflict transformation. Taylor's emphasis on "equal worth" is therefore left behind. Many authors, such as Billig (1995), Reicher and Hopkins (Reicher and Hopkins 2001), Volkan (1994), and Bar-Tal (2000a) among others, emphasize that narrative change must be accompanied by wider structural changes in order to have wide-ranging repercussions on the organization of conflicted societies. As much as I agree with them on this point, this study departs from the point of narrative change and discusses circumstances under which that might be possible. Therefore wide-ranging structural change must be considered in a comprehensive conflict analysis, whereas it falls out of the confines of this particular study as it has the issue of recognition as its main focal point.

Another common critique regarding the literature on recognition is that it should presuppose that boundaries are sources of conflicts (C.f. Abizadeh 2005, Markell 2003, Markell 2007). This is not the view suggested here. Identities are always relational and bounded. However, difference does not presuppose antagonistic

[20] The distinction between "me" and "I" used by Honneth is borrowed from Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism (1934).

relationships, nor must it presuppose other communities in the present. Difference might hence be a positive source of identification; it can also for example be other time periods or phenomena that are non-human, for example those emanating from an eco-system (Abizadeh 2005:45). Thus, boundaries between groups *can* be a source of conflict, and then it is fruitful to look into different kinds of recognition. When boundaries are not a source of conflict, recognition as a perspective has less to offer.

Honneth addresses social conflicts, and the imperative to encourage recognition in and between groups, in order to lessen the degree of conflict. The concept of recognition is relevant when it comes to the discussion of transformation of intractable conflicts (C.f. Jamal 2000:38). The concept, when applied to the environment of intractable conflict, is indispensable in an analysis of factors that might contribute to more tranquil relationships in conflict. Mainly inspired by Honneth's work on recognition, as well as recent scholars' application of it (Allan and Keller 2006, Barker 2001, Bush and Folger 2005, Jamal 2000, Lebow 2008, Möller 2007, Ringmar 1996, Wallensteen 2002, Wendt 2003), I develop the concept and bring it into the discussion of transforming identities within intractable conflicts.

Thick versus thin recognition

Honneth distinguishes between three types of recognition: love, rights and self-esteem (1995:93). With love, he refers to the recognition that comes from intimate family relations such as mothers and fathers interacting and affirming self-esteem with their children during early childhood (1995:98). It thus refers to acts of recognition within a close collective. When it comes to the distinction of rights, recognition is thought of as an intersubjective matter of achieving legal recognition, implying that a person is guaranteed legal status and recognized as a juridical subject with guaranteed liberty as well as political and social rights (1995:115). The third and last dimension is self-esteem, and refers to social esteem granted by others (1995:121). Self-esteem is directed at particular qualities that characterize persons in their difference. Here a more profound type

of recognition is suggested. It goes beyond the superficiality of legal rights and points to recognition and thus acceptance of individual differences (1995:122). These three dimensions of recognition are, in Honneth's view, necessary for the feeling of self to be undistorted (Möller 2007:57). In the later development of thin and thick recognition, this study is concerned with the dimensions of rights and self-esteem.

When it comes to identities in intractable conflict, a number of researchers suggest that the process of recognition should be considered as a necessary element when it comes to moving the conflict out of the state of intractability (C.f. Jamal 2000). Absence of recognition, in the sense that it gives rise to feelings of misrecognition, can be a source of social conflict (Möller 2007:59). This is due to a dissonance between one's view of self and others'. Thus lack of recognition might lead to different forms of conflict due to the fact that such a situation can be understood as a threat to the destiny set out in the national narrative. Deprivation of recognition of one's identity is painful and creates humiliation, and in order to attain a conclusive establishment of a certain identity it must be recognized (Ringmar 1996:81). Legal elements, such as ensuring legal rights to groups in conflict; as well as identity recognizing maneuvers, recognizing identities in national narratives, are both necessary in order to transform conflicts (Banerjee 1997:37, Möller 2007:74). Some writers stress legal, procedural values, whereas others underline the importance of recognizing identity elements, and some furthermore emphasize both aspects. I follow Allan and Keller (2006), Wendt (2003) and Möller (2007), who suggest a division of the concept into two parts, thin versus thick recognition.[21]

[21] Allan and Keller, who offer the most elaborate account of the dichotomy, attribute it to Walzer (1994) and his context of "thick" and "thin" morality (Allan and Keller 2006:197). Walzer himself in turn borrowed the concept from Clifford Geertz (1973), who elaborated on the idea of "thickness". Geertz's concept of thickness and his use of the term "thick description" was in turn adapted from Gilbert Ryle´s writings (1971). Ryle tried to understand the deeper meaning of behaviors by trying to identify the context in which they occurred. Huysmans also elaborated on "thickness" in his development of the thick signifier approach (1998), where he discussed the concept of thickness and alluded to Geertz' discussions on the

Thin recognition corresponds quite well with Honneth's conception of rights. It regards being acknowledged as an independent subject within a community of law (Möller 2007:60, Wendt 2003:511). When recognized in this way, one attains the juridical status of an independent, sovereign entity, and thus one is the legitimate locus of needs, rights and agency – one is a subject rather than an object. Thin recognition rests on the procedure of accepting the other as a human being. This definition of recognition is indeed thin, as the "thickness" of the agent is not recognized as such; it is rather left in the background, unacknowledged (Allan and Keller 2006:197). The conception of the subject in acts of thin recognition is universal in the way that the subject's particularity is only acknowledged as a unit of difference; thus everyone with this status is the same, "a universal person" (Wendt 2003:211). Wallensteen's (2003) use of the recognition concept in the area of conflict studies comes quite close to the notion of thin recognition, as he focuses exclusively on *de jure* recognition, where parties in conflict previously have not recognized each other as legitimate negotiation partners (2003:51,67,167). Wallensteen's perspective echoes the general view of conflict research, where mutual recognition on legal grounds is often understood as a starting point when initiating peace processes. This is indeed an important element in all situations assessing conflict dynamics in efforts to move conflict into a more peaceful direction.

Thick recognition resembles Honneth's notion of self-esteem and mainly concerns being appreciated and respected by significant actors. It involves respect for the features that make a subject unique (Möller 2007:60, Wendt 2003:511). This conception of difference is particular rather than universal, as the subjectivity of the other is

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importance of the wider cultural context in which narratives or discourses are embedded in order to fully understand them (1998:250). The distinction between thick and thin is also visible in the citizenship literature, and elaborated by authors such as Tilly (1996) and Soysal (1994). In Tilly's understanding, "thin citizenship" is mainly connected to state activities, whereas "thick citizenship" is seen as efforts to community through joint actions by the state and civil society (1996:8). Soysal discusses the issue of postnational citizenship and argues that thin conceptions of community are now being replaced by more inclusive ideas of human rights, which can be extended beyond former national communities (1994:196).

underscored (Wendt 2003:512). Bush and Folger define recognition as "the evocation in individuals of acknowledgement, understanding, or empathy for the situation and the views of the other" (Bush and Folger 2005:23). Thick recognition thus includes the understanding of the other´s fundamental features of identity.[22] If understanding of those fundamental traits of the other is reached, empathy toward the feelings and experience of the other group might be achieved. The key here is the emphasis on empathy. The goal is not to reach consensus on one identity or one grand story, but rather an acceptance of the other's identity and history, and through that process one's own identity becomes accommodated (Allan and Keller 2006:199). Thus thick recognition can be seen as an indispensable element in the process of building long-term peaceful relations (Allan and Keller 2006:195). Through the process of thick recognition, parties might be adjusted to work better alongside each other, in the process of transforming previously antagonistic identities:

> "The discovery that accommodation of the other's identity need not destroy the core of the group's own identity makes these changes possible, and this kind of learning usually takes place during the negotiation process. To find a common ground between identities, it is essential to genially understand the core identity of the other. Thick recognition implies full acceptance of the humanity of the other – including the contradictory elements of human experience and their societal dimensions." (Allan and Keller 2006:200)

In addition, it is important to note that thin and thick recognition share one vital feature: renouncement[23]. As both thin and thick recognition involve alterations in the images of self and other, they require a renouncement of elements that have been almost sacred in the core construct. Thus some symbols, positions and advantages

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[22] Tamir's discussion (1995) on "thick multiculturalism" partly resembles the discussion on thick recognition here, as they both emphasize constant dialogue and negotations over differences that do not indicate à priori solutions and tend to result in untidy compromises (Tamir 1995:172).

[23] Allan and Keller (2006:201) talk about renouncement as a separate category alongside thick and thin recognition. I argue, however, that renouncement is part and parcel of the process of both forms of recognition, and will thus incorporate it as a necessary element in the recognition process.

must be sacrificed, consciously or unconsciously, in order to grant recognition to the other. When it comes to thin recognition, the fact that one has long relied on the belief that "there is no partner for negotiation", it might be painful to go through the alteration of views implied in the process of recognizing the other as a legitimate negotiation partner. With regard to thick recognition, the process of renouncement is even more psychologically demanding. Fundamental identity aspects are then discarded and important symbols of the self might have to be sacrificed along the way. Both parties must be willing to pay the cost necessary in order to recognize the other. Thus, both thin and thick recognition imply concessions. This insight further contributes to understandings of why it is so difficult to change profound identity elements in intractable conflicts. Each side must give up important symbols, elements of prestige, positions and principles that have been a vital part of the ongoing conflict (Allan and Keller 2006:203). Even though the two forms of recognition both involve the process of renouncement, they differ significantly when it comes to the aspects of the other that are to be recognized.

The issues mentioned above constitute an area of interest that is also central within the literature on reconciliation, which has been increasingly elaborated as a concept within the field of conflict theory during recent years. It mainly focuses on peace-building strategies aiming for more peaceful relations in conflictual settings. The literature on reconciliation shares this study's concern with understandings of history as crucial on the way to building more peaceful relationships (Rosoux 2009:543). Many of the efforts at truth and reconciliation trying to find one version of history over which all parties can agree, as in South Africa for example, have experienced difficulties when it comes to obtaining justice due to the fact that it has been difficult to once and for all objectively identify perpetrators and victims of conflicts (Rosoux 2009:549). This shows the difficulties in creating strategies for peace building, as some parties always tend to feel neglected. This study hence shares the effort to address the past in its concern with understandings of history with the literature on reconciliation. However, this study is more process-oriented and has a more analytical approach, as its main goal is to advance theory rather than to create peace-building strategies. This

study also attends to attempts from inside actors within one party to conflict, and does not focus on direct interaction between the conflicting parties, which is often aimed for in the literature on reconciliation.

Likewise, this study's focus on thick recognition and relationship transformation intersects with the concept of peace education, which is a comprehensive term encompassing many research traditions that produce material functioning as policy advice for practitioners (Feldt 2008:201, Salomon 2002). In many ways it builds on the idealistic peace tradition of Johan Galtung, combined with strands of progressive education, democratization, multi-culturalism and NGO projects concerning peaceful coexistence and acknowledging the story of the other (Feldt 2008:202). As mentioned above, this study is not prescriptive and therefore does not offer clear-cut policy recommendations, nor does it propose what kind of history ought to be taught in order to foster peace. The contribution that it might add to the field of peace education is the multi-narrative approach. The suggestion is that the allowance and advocacy of a multiplicity of historical narratives can serve as a fertile ground for seeds of peace to be sown; however, that must coincide with other facilitating circumstances in order to be successful.

The above sections have introduced the concept of thick recognition, which will be further developed below. When I move to the empirical analysis, the process of thick recognition will be related to elements of thin recognition inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and the dynamic interplay between thick and thin recognition often observed during peace processes will be further probed. The next section deepens the understanding of thick recognition and relates it to the relationality of core constructs as well as the interplay between identity, difference and boundaries.

Thick recognition and conflict transformation

Changing identities in intractable conflicts?

Introducing narratives of thick recognition among collectives involved in intractable conflicts is difficult, and calls for a discussion on particularities regarding identification. Whereas the meta-theoretical point of departure for this dissertation is that identities are manifold and prone to change, a clarification has to be made regarding identities in intractable conflicts; they tend to be somewhat more resistant to change. This section presents the underpinnings of that argument, investigating further into the specific psychological features of identities in conflict-laden social systems.

Individuals and collectives involved in intractable conflicts tend to develop patterns of identity and behavior in order to be able to cope with conflict (Bar-Tal 2000b, Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998). This indicates that a social system is built around the conflict, which both reflects and perpetuates the dynamics and effects of relationships in conflict (Diamond 1997:353). Those patterns run deep and tend to operate like powerful default settings, pulling people back to familiar territory when experiencing something new. If and when exposed to new identities, attitudes and "facts" regarding the conflict, parties might, given facilitating circumstances, re-examine basic beliefs and assumptions regarding the dynamics of conflict. However, due to the fact that intractable conflicts tend to produce quite rigid identities within those conflict-habituated systems, this kind of development tends to be slow and filled with hardships.

People sharing identities in groups tend to share targets of externalization, often understood as common enemies. This reinforces a shared view of a world split into either perceived enemies or allies (Northrup 1989, Ross 2000:1013, Volkan 1994:78). Groups within conflicts tend to develop their own relatively internally consistent identity logics, which make it possible to cope with events during the evolution of conflict. Problems of communication often present themselves when groups of differing logics try to solve conflicts. Identity is an important dynamic in intractable conflicts and plays a major role in the conduct of conflictual relationships. Identity

is thus a central component in intractable conflicts as it is associated with a mutual vulnerability that leads each side to fear that by recognizing the other's national identity, it is denying its own (Kelman 1991:153-159).[24]

Developing thick recognition

Jamal connects recognition with the conflict transformation paradigm and argues for the centrality of the recognition concept when discussing possibilities of conflict transformation. Jamal's (2000) discussion highlights the importance of narrative in conflict settings, as identities and narratives regarding identity are crucial in a society's understanding of its own relation to conflict. He discusses crucial aspects of the concept in order to define it. In this study, two of his dimensions are particularly useful. (1) *Self-transformation* is seen as vital because recognition of the other that does not carry with it some modification in one's self-identity may be meaningless in reality (Jamal 2000:38). (2) T*aking responsibility* is another such crucial aspect, which means taking juridical, ethical, and moral responsibility for the negative effects inflicted on the other party in the past. A process of recognition that shies away from sharing responsibility for past injustices is indeed an impaired process. (Jamal: 38)

As the dimension of taking responsibility is closely connected to aspects of the self, it will be discussed under the heading of self-transformation. As previously mentioned, renouncement is understood as a vital part in the recognition process and will thus be incorporated as an element of self-transformation. Jamal's discussion is interesting in many respects. However, for the issue of conflict transformation and the revision of history, I complement the two mentioned aspects so that the relational emphasis of this study is carried through. The process of self-transformation is supplemented with the process of other-transformation. That is thus a second aspect that must be added to fully understand the identity aspects of conflict transformation related to recognition. If relationships are to

[24] Here, Kelman's thoughts on psychological aspects of conflicts are quite consistent with contemporary psychoanalytic theory (Ross 2000:1016).

be altered, views of both the self and the other must be transformed in order for relations to be transformed. Therefore the process of *self-transformation*, including the processes of renouncement and taking responsibility, together with the process of *other-transformation*, will be the main focus for analysis when examining the process of debating Israeli commemorative narratives. In addition, transformations of self and other are understood as closely knit to the boundary production between the two. Thus, processes of self- and other-transformation are understood as bringing about changes in the perceived stability of boundaries inherent in core constructs in settings of intractable conflicts. Therefore a concluding section will follow the sections on self- and other transformation on the *boundary transformation* that can be the outcome of the process. The three elements of thick recognition correspond well with the central dimensions of identity, difference and boundaries, and in the following the close linkage between core constructs and thick recognition is emphasized.

Self-transformation

As mentioned above, the process of thick recognition is dependent on transformations in views of the self. In the process of self-transformation, past assumptions and decisions as well as routines taken for granted are questioned. A self-critical process is hence involved when past views of reality are evaluated (Buckley-Zistel 2008:44). This is often a complicated process, where the image of the self inherent both in the core constructs of a national collective and in the master commemorative narratives of society is described anew. If the new narratives contain dramatically different characteristics of the self compared to those described in the master narrative, it might be difficult for them to resonate with the public, as the core construct is challenged, which might lead to a feeling of threat. Apparently, the agents who promote the counter commemorative narratives do not perceive them as threatening, as in some way or another they ascribe weight to other components of the core construct. The challenge for them is thus to inform their audience that this self-transformation need not be dangerous, but rather that it holds potential for a more peaceful and secure future.

The process of self-transformation contributes to the illumination of the in-group in a more "objective" light, especially concerning acts related to the conflict, and needs to be self-critical. Such change can also reduce the monopolization of feelings of victimhood, meaning that the suffering of all groups in conflict can be recognized (Bar-Tal 2000a:358). In the process of taking responsibility inherent in self-transformation, the element of renouncement is vital because certain positive conceptions of the self must be abandoned when one recognizes the sufferings and victim-hood of the other.

Other-transformation

Self-transformation must be linked to the parallel process of other-transformation, central to the understanding of thick recognition. When it comes to transforming images of the other through thick recognition, the key aspect of the process is recognizing what the other perceives as key elements of identity. If the other has a feeling of being victimized by the doings of the counterpart in conflict, that feeling of victimization must be recognized, so that the other's feeling of not being recognized can be reversed. When the victimizers show awareness of their victims' grief, the grief becomes validated, which might lead to the growth of more positive relations between former rival groups (Volkan 1994:172). Here it is again important to emphasize that the aim is to accept and recognize difference, rather than to achieve forced unification and joint narratives. The incorporation of the others' narrative, together with accommodation of one's own, might result in narratives that can coexist, even though built on differing experiences and points of view. Thus the process toward more peaceful relations incorporates difference, rather than reifying the practice of exclusion of the other (Buckley-Zistel 2008:39, Jabri 1996:151).

The memory agents promoting other-transformation apparently have a more complex view of the opponent than those promoting the master commemorative narratives. Their self-assigned task is thus to promote the complex view of the other that significantly breaks with common views. These memory agents do

not sense that a more complex view of the other disturbs their world-view, or else they would not have promoted the counter narratives in the first place. Their task is to persuade their audience that this is the case, showing them that the present as well as the past other owns human qualities such as committing errors as well as doing things right.

Implications of thick recognition – boundary transformation

Thick recognition through the reconstruction of commemorative narratives means to remember the past differently. Hence new narratives are let in and the old ones are adjusted in order to allow for their coexistence, and thus society can be allowed to "re-member" the members of community and participants in conflict. If the counter narratives that imply shifted boundaries between groups are successful in society, transformation of relations in conflict can hence be the outcome. Social life might be reorganized as a consequence, as the members of the community and the participants in conflict may be assembled in a different way (Buckley-Zistel 2008:50). This reconstruction of identity through changes in narratives "bears the potential to assemble not only our thoughts and perceptions in a different way, but also war-torn communities per se" (Buckley-Zistel 2008:50). New potentials arise, and formerly stable boundaries between identity and difference can become more permeable, opening up possibilities for more peaceful relations in the future.

The perception of self undergoes transformation; it moves from an unambiguous understanding of the self as flawless to a more complex conception of self as capable of doing both good and bad. In times when one's own collective committed bad deeds, there is thus room for taking responsibility, and where the others' claims for justice are recognized, renouncement of parts of one's own narrative is a justified sacrifice. Difference is then not necessarily understood as a threat, but rather as a pluralistic other with flaws as well as good qualities. Here former perpetrators are understood as victims and vice versa, which can be a very demanding psychological process (Bar-Tal 2000a:358). This is indeed a difficult process, as it challenges beliefs

in the core constructs of individuals in conflict, which are hard to alter as people often tend to act protectively when that occurs.

However, if the memory agents are successful in their story telling, and succeed in communicating their counter narratives to the relevant audience, the identity of the other becomes subject to thick recognition. If this nuanced view of the other gains acceptance in society, its members could revisualize the dividing lines in their community, and thus the former stable boundaries between the communities in conflict could become more permeable, opening up a potential for other divisions and accordingly for reconstructed relationships between groups. In this manner, thick recognition might be a source that brings about changes in the makeup of the core constructs in collectives involved in conflict. This fundamentally affects relations in the conflict setting, which might turn former violent relations into more peaceful ones.

After having introduced the concept of thick recognition and its main components, I now move on to relate it to theories of conflict transformation.

Transforming relations in intractable conflicts

Narrowing the scope – inside actors and conflict transformation

The study is now moving towards an understanding of historical debates as carrying with them a potential for conflict transformation. In the following, the literature on change within conflict transformation is addressed, so that an understanding of the potential of historical debates to bring about change in conflict settings can be located within the theoretical framework of the study.

The body of work on conflict transformation is rich in its descriptions of processual change as well as in its emphasis on all layers of society, from grassroots to elites, when it comes to necessary agents involved in the endeavor of changing conflict. Some lacunae are discernible however. Even though numerous works within the tradition point to the importance of grassroots levels in the conflict transformation process, endogenous processes taking place at the

local level, such as dialogues over critical issues within the parties to conflict, are seldom addressed (Saunders 2003:92). It is an undisputed fact that one of the most difficult tasks when dealing with intractable conflicts is to achieve change in the conflicting parties' understandings of their own identity as well as the identities of other parties to the conflict (Azar 1991). This might be understood as a part of actor transformation (Miall et al. 1999:157, Väyrynen 1991:4) or changes in the conflict component of identity (Jamal 2000:37, Kriesberg 2003:317). This can involve intra-societal disputes, and might result in changed views on collective identity. This activity often occurs in societal debates, and might not even be overtly conflict-related, as it often takes place out of view (Miall et al. 1999:157). Some researchers underline the need for such processes, but the issue is often ignored with reference to the fact that "intractable conflicts involving threatened identities are not likely to be readily changed from within" (Northrup 1989:76).

Instead of focusing on endogenous processes at the intra-societal level, researchers tend to focus on third party facilitation, such as mediation (Bush and Folger 1994, Bush and Folger 2005, Kriesberg 2001), action-learning (Garcia 2006), training (Diamond 1997), sustained dialogue (Saunders 2003, Schwartz 1989), or problem-solving workshops (Kelman 1979, Kelman 1991), in order to create empathy and understanding between groups. Those are all commendable efforts. However, relatively little has been written on the role of *inside actors* (Francis 2002:27), in contrast to the multitude of studies mainly scrutinizing elite and third party behavior.

In order for change to occur when it comes to intractable conflicts, it is crucial that conflicting parties revise their identities in the direction of more sympathetic, or even empathetic, feelings toward the other party (Kriesberg 2007:190-191, Slocum-Bradley 2008:20). Achieving change in identities of the parties in conflict would indicate the possibility of profound social change and addresses underlying factors of violent conflict preventing its recurrence and intensification, and that process tends to take place over a long time span (Garcia 2006:46). When it comes to transformation of relations within intractable conflicts, there is no substitute for the presence of inside actors as it is indeed difficult to

proceed with the transformation as long as the individuals involved hold hostile feelings toward each other (Spies 2006:51). This implies that the key to success is having conflicting parties involved in the transformation process through participation in negotiations and renegotiations over identity.

In settings of intractable conflict, change is highly dependent on structural factors. However, the possibility of achieving change is also highly dependent on how actors involved understand the conflict and its parties[25]. Many factors thus contribute to the constitution and transformation of intractable conflicts. Those conflicts often harbor violence between social groups defined according to the characteristics of ethnicity, nation, religion, race or other terms, always containing notions of one's own collective as well as of other parties to conflict (Slocum-Bradley 2008:1). In order to understand prerequisites for change in conflict, deepened understandings of processes of identity construction in relation to conflict are thus needed. If changes in identity bring about more positive views of the other within intractable conflicts, the potential of non-violent relations might increase, especially if the change concerns core constructs of collectives involved, which as mentioned above have strong links to the relationships within conflict (Northrup 1989:78). Identity changes within conflicts "have the potential and responsibility to influence relationships, sub-systems, systems, policies, institutions and transformative processes" (Spies 2006:51). This might work in both positive and negative ways; thus the degree of destructiveness might be heightened if core constructs come to include more hostile feelings toward the antagonist in conflict, whereas more peaceful relations might be experienced if understandings of the other and key features of those identities are increased. This type of change may lead to more positive relations in

[25] Kriesberg lists four major components that contribute to the development of relations within conflict. Those are identity, grievances, goals and methods (Kriesberg 2007:156). Given our focus on identities and relationships here, identities and grievances are in focus, whereas goals and methods are more peripheral. However, goals and methods might also be affected if relations between adversaries become less violent.

conflict, rather than only suggesting peripheral, short-term settlements (Kriesberg 2007:187-188, Northrup 1989:78). Since identities are multifaceted and prone to change, there are opportunities for change – especially when placed in a situation where alternative understandings of reality are presented (Mitchell 2006:28).

Transformation of what?

The conflict transformation approach focuses on the need to improve the general environment of conflict (Jamal 2000:37), which is quite an ambitious task. The most influential writers within the conflict transformation field all emphasize slightly different taxonomies when it comes to the major loci of change within the process of conflict transformation (C.f. Kriesberg 1989, Lederach 1996, Miall et al. 1999, Väyrynen 1991). However, a few main threads connect the approaches. In his overview of the field, Mitchell (2002) suggests that they all are more or less concerned with the transformation of *structures*, *persons* and *relationships*. In another comprehensive overview of the conflict transformation field, Albin mainly discusses two principle categories undergoing change, *structures and relationships* (2005:342). As this study is mostly focused on results of narrative change and identities are seen as inherently relational, change in identities as well as relationship change are understood as dependent on a relational process. The focus hence falls mainly on relationships. Identity is always constructed in relation to difference, meaning that relationships are constantly renegotiated in the process of identity construction. In fact, every identity implies and at the same time masks a particular relationship. This indeed makes an argument for the close analytical linkage between personal and relationship change. This view is also supported by Lederach, who discusses the two phenomena under the same heading (1996:14). In accordance with the main topic of concern in this specific study, I suggest that identity change in intractable conflict should be mainly related to relationships. However, this does not entail that self-images and relationships between parties can be considered unproblematic.

Persons within conflict settings always hold a set of understandings about themselves and other parties to the conflict,

which are related to and affect relationships in the conflict (Mitchell 2005:8). Those conceptions are central in shaping the core constructs of the collectives involved in conflict. They are also difficult to alter, and some critics even consider the thought of achieving this kind of change "wildly optimistic" (Mitchell 2002:9). However, even though difficult to assess, if achieved, changes in the identities of the conflict's parties have great potential when it comes to paving the way for transformation of relationships in conflict. The main argument here is thus that if counter narratives of history can be introduced that harbor ideas of thick recognition, views of the self, the other, and their bounded relationship might change. This points to recognition of central features of the others' identity, and might result in the conflict relationships becoming transformed into more peaceful ones. If the context of conflict alters so that more antagonistic narratives are introduced, relationships in conflict might in contrast transform into more destructive ones.

Assessing change - transforming core constructs in intractable conflicts

Our focus here is thus a relational take on conflict transformation. When transformation is assessed in this manner, it is assumed to be brought about partly by a change or refinement in the consciousness and character of the identifications of collectives involved in conflict. That can in turn spur transformation in relationships between the conflicting parties, which under favorable circumstances can possibly influence conflict behavior as well as the social system in which it is embedded. The transformation of conflict is then seen as a result of transformation of identities, rather than stemming from direct agreements devised as solutions for social problems (Bush and Folger 1994:24 , Mitchell 2002:11). When discussing the possibility of the introduction of new narratives of conflict, it is immensely important to relate the analysis to what Miall et al. call called context of conflict (1999). Since conflict narratives are always influenced by other narratives touching on societal values like democracy, human rights, conflict management etcetera, it is pivotal to consider the contextual setting, because it has a fundamental potential to affect actors within conflict. Interactions within conflict hence cannot be properly

understood unless considered in relation to contemporary narratives that affect understandings of conflict.

An intractable conflict is by definition extremely resistant to attempts to resolution. One viable path when yearning for relationship transformation in intractable conflicts is scrutinizing if or when alternative understandings of history are presented and subsequently accepted in society. In order for the narratives to become dominant in society, they have to be accepted by the public. Identity transformation spurred by thick recognition is understood as a transformation of core constructs, which may result in major repercussions for the conflict as a whole (Northrup 1989:78).

Changes in identities are understood as having possible influence on relationships between parties in conflict, paving the way toward tractability. The general assumption here thus regards changed understandings of history as containing ideas of thick recognition and circumstances under which they might lead to changed relationships between groups through *change of core constructs*. Thus it is assumed that transformation of core constructs in the Israeli case eventually might bring relationship transformation. Relevant contemporary narratives in this case, such as the ongoing peace process and economic as well as ideological liberalization, must also be considered as they are viewed as the context of conflict, meaning that they are meaningful narratives in the local and regional environment that surrounds and has a potential to influence the course of conflict. Those narratives can be disparate, but are always interrelated as they are part of the same narrative constellation.

Moving forward

This chapter has established some core theoretical dimensions. I have deepened the understanding of the process of relationship change through the use of the concept of thick recognition, which is seen as an indispensable part of the process of conflict transformation. Thick recognition, through its boundary-destabilizing character, challenges the stabilized boundaries in core constructs in intractable conflicts. As thick recognition and its main components have been related to

the elements in core constructs, the potential of narratives of thick recognition to influence identities has become clear. It has thus been shown how attempts to change the understandings of history of a national collective involved in intractable conflict might result in a change in the core constructs of that national collective.

The next chapter further discusses prerequisites for change of core constructs within settings of intractable conflict, mainly addressing the societal macro-level. Boundaries between groups are continuously emphasized also in that chapter, as boundary drawings in narratives of the past are understood as carrying on into contemporary relationships.

CHAPTER FOUR

Challenging master narratives

Nationalism, historiography and boundaries

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the topics of thick recognition, and conflict transformation were introduced and linked together. In this chapter, attention is instead turned to the societal context allowing for conflict transformation. In contrast to the micro-level of identification scrutinized in the previous chapter, this chapter ventures into the macro-dynamics of societal and conflictual change. As one aim of this study is to highlight the linkage between conflict transformation, identity, and understandings of history, the relationship between temporality and nationality is initially scrutinized, and the notion of core constructs is discussed related to the act of writing histories of nations. In order to account for the dynamics of master and counter commemorative narratives, the general development of historiography in relation to nationality is also introduced. Here it is noted that the development of counter commemorative narratives in Israel is not a solitary phenomenon. Rather it mirrors an international development that emphasizes universal values and permeable boundaries between groups.

The narrative constellation in a society is understood as playing a vital role when counter narratives are introduced, partly because its master narratives tend to become inscribed into official memory institutions, which is further elaborated in this chapter. However, this chapter argues that it is insufficient to only discuss structural properties when considering societal transformation. In order to provide a full understanding of the process of conflict transformation, it is vital to consider the role of agents in the process. Thus this chapter also introduces a section devoted to agency, with a specific focus on memory agents. Taken together, the theoretical

elaborations in this chapter help to understand social implications of different memory agents on the contents in official memory institutions that took place in Israeli society during the nineties.

The evolution of nationalism and historiography

Narratives of human rights and post-nationalism are often said to be spreading swiftly throughout the world. It is claimed that rapid internationalization has entailed:

> "[...] a reordering of the place of the nation-state in the world order, a challenge to the dominance of state over society, and the generation of multiple popular identities at the expense of an official national identity." (Rumford 2002)

This ideological development is often claimed to carry with it both universalistic ideals and identities, together with particularistic traits, such as a strengthening of nationalism and local identities as a reaction to the openness and threats generated by the increased globalization processes. Thus, through the rapid increase in interaction capacity and the intensification of interactions all over the globe, an escalated tension between nationalistic ideals has been experienced, ranging from inclusive cosmopolitan versions of nationalism to particularistic and boundary-reinforcing versions of national identities. Some commentators argue that the "loss of territoriality" instigated by globalization coincided with the memory boom that started in the 1970s and 1980s (Winter 2006:64-65). This development of the of nationalism serves as an important backdrop when considering the evolution of both nationalism and historiography in Israeli society.

A discussion on the political character of historiography has emerged, and the importance of memory, uses of trauma, war memorials and the like for the formation of political community has been emphasized (Alexander 2004, Bartelson 2006, Cairns and Roe 2003, Edkins 2003, Edkins 2006, Eyerman 2001, Gillis 1994a, Karlsson 1999, Langenbacher and Shain 2010, Lebow et al. 2006, McBride 2001, Müller 2002b, C.f. Wiedmer 1999). With this serving as a backdrop, it is not surprising that a whole range of societies have experienced a surge of historical revisionism that has questioned the

foundational myths of their respective nations (Karlsson 1999:20, Levy 1999:63). Examples of societies that have gone through this experience are French society, where the nature of the Vichy regime has been debated; the United States, whose historiographers have debated and re-evaluated the frontier thesis; and German society, where the uniqueness and legacy of the Holocaust has been the subject of a well-known "Historikerstreit" (C.f. Levy 1999, Maier 1988, Nora 1989). Historical revisions introducing "novel" narratives of colonial pasts have also taken place, for example in India (C.f. Chatterjee 1993, Guha and Spivak 1988) as well as in many African states (C.f. Cooper 1994, Feierman 1995).

In some societies this upsurge of historical revisionism has resulted in more aggressive reactions than in others. In societies involved in intractable conflicts, the ordering of mainstream historiography is often closely knit to the society's narratives of conflict and to the stabilized boundaries between opponents in conflict. These exclusionary narratives help uphold the stability of boundaries between identity/difference and serve to justify violent politics of exclusion. Thus those who promote narratives of thick recognition have to confront the master narratives that uphold stable boundaries between identity and difference. This might be done through the introduction of counter narratives that challenge and hence have the potential to change the boundaries between identity and difference within conflict. As narratives of conflict are partly upheld by the description of the other as a threat, it might be discerned why attempts to destabilize boundaries between identity and difference provoke such stark reactions. Aside from Israeli society, there are also examples of other societies involved in intractable conflicts, where changes in narratives of historiography and identity provoked intense debates. Those cases include for example Ireland, Cyprus, India and Sri Lanka (c.f. Banerjee 1997, Boyce and O'Day 1996, McBride 2001, Papadakis 2003, Papadakis 2008a, Ryan 1996, Strathern 2004).

In different attempts to criticize traditional works of history, it has been argued that historians has been the "teachers and preachers" of the nation, that "science" has been used to organize and verify metaphors of collective life, constructing images and mythologies of

dramatic, continuous and glorious pasts (Ram 1998:530). However, as the national ethos has become challenged, in line with historiographical debates and revisions "a turn of the historiographical tide" has been witnessed (Ram 1998:531). This historiography bears evidence of a fragmentation of collective identities and the contested idea of the nation. Thus, contemporary historical revisionism can be interpreted against the backdrop of the turbulence of national identity often ascribed to recent trends in the global development of ideas (Gillis 1994a:4-5). The past has become contested terrain, in which social categories hitherto existing as counter narratives on the margins of national commemorative narratives have become more visible as they have gained voice and historical legitimacy (Ram 1998:532).

The following section addresses how different narratives of the national stress differing boundary-drawing principles. This is key to the study, as those boundary-drawing principles are also inherent in societies' core constructs as well as their commemorative narratives.

National narratives and boundaries

Narratives of the national concern not only the construction of collective identity. They additionally reflect different ways of coping with boundary-drawing procedures in society. In the following discussion I deepen the insights of ideas inherent in narratives of nationalism. Here the division principles intrinsic in nationalism are specifically emphasized. Nationalistic narratives carry quite contradictory ideas when it comes to boundary-drawing principles, which in turn can be linked to different commemorative narratives.

Nationalism is an ideology maintaining that a national group and a national territory should be congruent (Gellner 1994). Different nationalisms promote quite diverse principles when it comes to the most significant markers of national groups. Everything from writers emphasizing ethnic bonds and historical ties is observed (c.f. Connor 1994, Smith 2003a), to more civic views in which institutions such as the state and its citizenship are seen as the most desirable markers of national identity (c.f. Brown 2000, C.f. Tamir 1993). In this way, the symbols of the nation vary, whereas nationalism's inherently

including/excluding function is intact, as it works as a decisive division mechanism, including and excluding human beings on the basis of group membership. This has sometimes been described as the Janus face of nationalism (following Barthes and Duisit 1975, Nairn 2003), as the two presuppose each other.

Nationalism is characterized by an inherent tension (Gewirth 1988, Yadgar 2002:56), as the ideals of universalism and particularism are impossible to combine in practice.[26] As the ideals of universalism and particularism both have implications for boundary-drawing procedures, I believe that when discussing the exclusionary practices within different forms of nationalism, it is preferable to do that with an emphasis on its implications on boundaries, rather than arguing for the preference of one of the ideals and not the other. The normative stance taken here is that societies divided by conflict in particular, as well as societies in general, are favored by policies implying permeable boundaries between groups. Division within or between societies can never be avoided, but less exclusionary policies can be promoted that incorporate difference through various political procedures. Thus, this study rejects the notion of strong nation-building projects on universalist as well as particular grounds. Accordingly, ways must be found through which differences within divided societies can be incorporated, which in my view might be conducted through the incorporation of counter-narratives challenging taken-for-granted boundaries within and between

[26] This collision of universalistic and particularistic ideals in the idea of the nation-state has been intensely debated during recent years, with a heavy emphasis on the ethical foundations of nation-states, underlining the distinction between the universalistic and particularistic standpoints (Rumford 2002:262). A contradiction inherent in the idea of the liberal nationalism encompassed or aspired to in many states today, is that it is universalistic in the sense just mentioned, at the same time being particularistic in practice, as those people incorporated in a nation-state, not belonging to the particular national community of that state, are by definition excluded in that same society (see e.g. Cole 2000:195-196, Kymlicka 1997:1-6 passim, Requejo 2001:161). Thus, universalism and particularism cannot be viewed in simple dichotomous terms. The two concepts are often described as polar opposites that must be counterposed. In different societies we hence see diverse division principles, all exclusionary in one way or another, but always in different ways.

societies (Özkirimli 2000:197). This is particularly relevant in societies deeply divided by intractable conflict. In order to envision peaceful relations between involved groups in the future it is indeed crucial to subject master narratives to counter narratives containing alternative voices and experiences. In this way the boundaries between groups become more permeable and community can be rebuilt, aiming at more peaceful relations in the future (Buckley-Zistel 2008:50-51).

Depending on which ideal one sets when it comes to the definitions of national community, boundaries are drawn differently. When it comes to the empirical analysis, it thus becomes important to link the commemorative narratives to views of preferred boundaries in the present, examining the linkage between narratives of the past and ideals in the present. Through this endeavor the underlying principles guiding representations of history may be exposed (Papadakis 2008b:130). Here the concept of thick recognition is crucial. It highlights the important role of recognition in relationships and thus helps us grasp the transformative potential if and when counter narratives are introduced, entailing thick recognition of the other. If counter narratives are adopted that allow for thick recognition of the other party in a conflict, the start of a process of rebuilding relationships might be visualized, implying permeable boundaries between groups in conflict, and the beginning of more peaceful relations.

National pasts in intractable conflicts

Nationality and temporality

One of the most central characteristics of nationalism is that it firmly anchors the national collective in time. The national collective seldom knows of the past though personal experience. Rather, the conception of the past is transmitted to individuals through narrative (Anderson 1983:204). The national group is thus always connected to a past as well as a future — or destiny. Even though only certain events in the past are commemorated, they are not understood as isolated events, but integrated into a narrative whole, describing the

national group as a continuous community throughout time. If commemoration and identity are seen as central features of nationalism, narratives might be understood as binding the two together by placing the perceived homogeneity of the nation in both past, present and future (Papadakis 2003:253, Ricœur 1984:241, Zerubavel 1995, chapter one). Knowledge about the past is hence a crucial ingredient in the construction of national identity. Conceptions of history are therefore crucial in the process of shaping ideas and emotions underlying actions of individuals in national groups (Wertsch 1997:6). The official histories of nation-states provide citizens with a sense of group identity and legitimate a people in their own eyes (Tulviste and Wertsch 1995). Thus narratives about the past influence identities of both individuals and collectives. In this way, history plays a crucial role in providing "texts of identity" (Shotter and Gergen 1989).

As all national groups tend to have a strong temporal emphasis in their construction of collective identity, with a specific focus on past actions, I now move over to a discussion on how views of the insecure self, conceptions of difference and the boundaries in between are inscribed in the master commemorative narratives of national groups involved in intractable conflicts.

Inscribing the insecure self in history

National groups involved in intractable conflicts tend to view their identities in exclusivist terms, as "components of their identity such as land, history, language, or cultural products, are perceived as theirs and theirs alone" (Kelman 1997:336). Many of today's conflicts revolve around stories of the past, where the traditions and territorial claims of forebears are relived, and in whose name present and future wars are legitimated (Jabri 1996:134). This implies that the images of the self, which as mentioned above are per se history-laden, of communities in conflict become even more preoccupied with their past. Myths of common ancestry are often enhanced (Jabri 1996:135) in national groups entangled in intractable conflict, as well as stories of trauma (Volkan 1997:36-50) and redemption (Bar-Tal 2000b).

When studying commemorative narratives of groups involved in intractable conflicts, they too tend to be security-oriented, as they revolve around the group's historical traumas and glories, trying to find ways through which future traumas can be avoided. One way out of the historical predicament of weakness and insecurity is to create a perception of a strong collective self in the present, a group that would be better fit to cope with aggression and domination if exposed to it. Members of national collectives often feel shame about the fact that they did not manage to defend themselves and their interests in the past, which in turn generates a feeling of necessity to prove to others as well as the self that one's people is not weak or inferior by nature (Kaplowitz 1990:51-52). Thus a perception of history containing trauma and humiliation directed toward one's own group might create a strong, defensive security orientation, through which it is felt that honor, dignity and respect can be regained (Erikson 1970 [1950]:359-402, Kaplowitz 1990:47). Thus, aggressive, strong and security-oriented behavior might spring from collective memories of trauma in the past and reflect a group's unconscious definition of its shared identity by the transgenerational transmission of an injured self, infused with the memory of the trauma of the group's ancestors (Volkan 1997:48). In this way, the commemorative narratives describing the insecurity of the self in the past also play a legitimating role. In the face of historical injustices and humiliation, one's own aggressions in the present might be justified in order to avoid humiliation and victimization in the near future.

Given the relationality of identity and difference, the insecure self in the past is always related to difference in past as well as present. As mentioned earlier, difference is often described as threatening in settings of intractable conflict. In the next section I further the thoughts on difference in intractable conflict and how it is inscribed into commemorative narratives.

Inscribing threatening difference in history

Master commemorative narratives in intractable conflicts often tell us a tale of difference as enemy, threatening the self (Buckley-Zistel 2008:33). As difference tends to be understood as a threat in

intractable conflict, narratives enhancing "lessons" from the past where the other is described as aggressive and threatening are often told. This lesson is then applied to the current conflict situation, and contributes to the dynamic of the ongoing conflict (Kaplowitz 1990:57). In this way, historical analogies regarding the enemy are drawn from the collective memory of the self and are used to interpret ongoing events (Jönsson 1990:47).

Just as the insecure self is inscribed in the commemorative narratives of collectives involved in intractable conflicts, so is thus the image of difference as threat. When historical images of the self as employing aggressive strategies to defend its state of insecurity are introduced, narratives of the other as strong and sometimes dehumanized are often present, having as its only goal to destroy the insecure collective self. People tend to favor dispositional characteristics when it comes to descriptions of the antagonist in conflict. Perceived aggressive or unwanted acts are often explained in terms of negative characteristics, such as ruthlessness, whereas the acts committed by the collective self in the past are often explained in terms of situational characteristics (Heradstveit 1979:73-76). Thus, if aggressive acts were conducted, it had to do with circumstances of necessity, in spite of the "good" character of the self.

Thus, difference - here embodied in the character of the other as a threat to the insecure self - is inscribed into the commemorative narratives of collectives involved in intractable conflict. In order to prevent traumas from reoccurring and the insecure self from being exposed to threat, the other is held at distance, perceived as continuously threatening and aggressive throughout time.

The dynamics introduced in this and the previous section indicate that commemorative narratives in intractable conflicts tend to describe the parties as having quite incompatible characteristics. This in turn brings us to the boundaries between the opponents in conflict and to how they are inscribed in the nation's commemorative narratives.

Inscribing stable boundaries in history

The relations between communities caught up in intractable conflicts can be understood as a clash of narratives that highlight the totality and comprehensiveness of their conflicted interaction. Often the stories in intractable conflicts are mutually exclusive when it comes to the explanations of the roots of conflict, the meaning of historical developments, and the role played by in- and out-groups during the different stages of conflict (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998:763). One effective way of putting distance between the in-group and out-group is to render the other's narrative illegitimate. In this way the others' narratives, feelings, understandings and anticipations for the future are kept at arms' length. This is clear in the Israeli story of ha-Atsmaut and the Palestinian story of al-Naqba. Both portray the events of the war of 1948, leading to the creation of the state of Israel, in mutually exclusive terms. Thus, accepting one of the stories in principle implies the total negation of the other. The narratives can hence be described as standing in a zero-sum relationship to each other. They can only exist independently. If coexistence is suggested, they have to be thoroughly reconstructed, a process often extremely challenging for groups involved in intractable conflicts. Both national stories can be understood as a fundamental negation of the other´s as they

> "emphasize different aspects of the conflict, provide divergent interpretations of the same events, and produce a coherent story that supports its own claims and is fully supported by the public" (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998:763).

If stories are reformulated, rendering some legitimacy to the actions of the other, at the same time as the one's own past behavior is re-formulated in less positive terms, the imagined boundary between the collectives becomes more permeable. This is indeed a positive development considering the goal of transforming conflict into less violent terms. Now, the former enemy and perpetrator might be understood as a victim, whereas the collective self who traditionally has been ascribed historical victimhood all of a sudden is understood as a perpetrator. This implies a fundamental shift in the view of self and other that is extremely challenging. This challenge might be

understood as threatening because the content of the new narratives is understood as a threat to the core construct of national identity. In this case, identity-securing maneuvers might be used to uphold the distance between narratives and in turn between the opponents in conflict (Bloom 1990:51-52).

Transforming commemorative narratives of the self and the other through the act of thick recognition is thus understood as possibly *eroding the apparent stability of borders* – paving the way for relationship transformation within the setting of intractable conflict. The dynamics of this process and its hardships are discussed at length in the empirical chapters.

This section has showed that commemorative narratives in intractable conflicts reflect core constructs of the groups involved, and relates to the formerly introduced dimensions of the insecure self, difference as threat and stable boundaries, bringing the relationship between a group and its perceived other in conflict to the fore. If traditional views of the self, the other and their bounded relationship are challenged by counter commemorative narratives introducing thick recognition, the boundaries between groups can be understood as destabilized, which might cause acute feelings of insecurity on many levels. It might bring about fear of the other as well as fear of the consequences if it is claimed that one's own collective has committed morally doubtful acts, together with feelings of threat, due to the fact that a core construct of one's group is challenged, resulting in acute feelings of insecurity.

Recognition openings and closures

When considering the Israeli debates over commemorative narratives, it is as pointed out above vital to connect them to a wider societal context. They must be discussed alongside the over-arching narrative constellation in society in order to further the understanding of the processes in which counter commemorative narratives are introduced. This calls for a thorough elaboration of how societies' histories are connected to their broader narrative constellations.

Moments when audiences arepres ented with counter-narratives might evoke strong reactions among the inhabitants of a

society. Some might meet "new" identities with suspicion and antipathy, whereas others welcome the possibilities brought about by the new formulations of identity. The reactions to novel narratives are sometimes unified, but more often differing factions in society react in different ways depending on their own identifications, hopes and fears. Master narratives are not held in subjective and isolated minds; they become dominant only because they are shared and intersubjective (C.f. Buzan et al. 1998:31). The process of establishing identities and narratives in society is an intersubjective process resting among its subjects (Arendt 1958). Thus one view of history cannot be dominant if it is held by elites alone. In order for counter narratives to become master narratives, the public hence must accept them.

Reconstruction of identity is an ongoing process. However, when new narratives arise, overtly challenging societies' master narratives, possibilities for transformation unfold. Those moments often occur during peace processes when the ongoing conflict is momentarily on hold and new narratives of peace come to the fore (Buckley-Zistel 2008:58). This might be described as "the odd time in-between" (Arendt 1968:14), where dominant traditions are broken and a gap appears in which action and change might occur. This notion corresponds quite well with what Ringmar names formative moments. He argues that formative moments are times

> "[…] when old identities break down and new identities are created in their place; times when new stories are told, submitted to audiences, and new demands for recognition presented." (1996:83)

During those times, the birth of new narratives as individuals and groups tell new stories about themselves are often witnessed.

As the general conception of identities is that they are malleable and thus might be altered, the introduction of new identities through counter narratives might under certain circumstances lead to recognition openings in society. The memory agents might identify strongly with the peace movement, the international community of intellectuals, or other identities that do not rely on a strong identification aligned with the master narratives of national identity. The crucial question is if and how the memory agents promoting counter commemorative narratives could succeed in

communicating those narratives to the public, so that they would not be understood as threatening. A formative moment has arisen and the question is whether the narratives can resonate with the audience. If that was to happen, it is thought of as bringing *recognition openings*. This partly results from circumstances facilitating the introduction of counter narratives and could hence contribute to synthesizing a new identification (Bloom 1990:40).

Here the element of renouncement is central because the transformation of the image of the collective self involves painful concessions. One might have to give up dreams (Allan and Keller 2006:203) as well as presenting oneself as morally inferior to the other at times. Thus the image of the self gains traits usually ascribed to the other, which might be a very painful process. This corresponds with Northrup's notion regarding when the other in a conflict becomes "like-self" (Northrup 1989). One hence has to take responsibility for the fact that the other at times was victimized. This implies a confrontation with the locus of master narratives, touching on traumas as well as amnesias. Thus "new" images of the self, breaking with the insecure self-images of the master narratives, are presented and one has to confront the other's picture of the self, inasmuch as the other's narrative is given recognition. As mentioned earlier, this opens up for the possibility of viewing both the self and the other in more pluralistic terms, making a transformation of core constructs possible:

> "The way we have seen ourselves, thought of ourselves, and represented ourselves is challenged through excavating our past in the light of the 'enemy'. […] Once conscious we might consider our prejudices and prejudgments as inappropriate and unsuitable and discard some of our assumptions or positions, habits or routines. In doing so, in discarding features that were intrinsic to our identity, we change." (Buckley-Zistel 2008:44) [27]

[27] Buckley-Zistel has an illuminating discussion on conflict transformation and social change – along the same lines as the discussion on self- and other-transformation suggested here. She employs a hermeneutic perspective, which might be difficult to match with a discussion on narrative. However, she suggests the questioning and reevaluation of past horizons, and thus discards the ambition of a fusing of horizons in line with Gadamer's (1975) conceptualization. In her view difference is accepted

The reactions of the audience to the counter narratives depend greatly on broader developments in society. Even though counter narratives might diametrically oppose the master narratives, they might correspond with other ideals in society and thus resonate with narratives familiar to the audience. This is context-dependent and will be discussed at length in the empirical analysis.

Other circumstances can inhibit the introduction of narratives of thick recognition, which in turn might lead to *recognition closures*. The counter narratives thus evoke strong feelings of insecurity and threat toward the core construct, leading to their being discarded altogether (Bloom 1990:40)[28]. The counter narratives hence provoke individuals who might act in concert with fellow members of the collective in order to "secure" the master narratives. This maneuver fortifies the master narratives so that the core construct of the collective remains intact. The fact that core constructs in intractable conflicts are difficult to alter assists the understanding of the strong reactions that might be evoked when self-images in core constructs are challenged by narratives breaking with the general knowledge of the self and the other promoted in the master narratives. Here the act of renouncement is considered too painful or outright illegitimate, and the "new" identification is discarded altogether.

Reactions to counter narratives of thick recognition might hence differ. They can produce boundary transformation as a result of recognition openings, or the upholding of the status quo due to recognition closures. The dynamic of identification thus makes us understand conditions for action in a collective sharing the same core construct (Bloom 1990:53). In order to achieve an understanding of history in relation to society and how new narratives of commemoration might affect societies, the reader is now introduced to an important structural concept, namely official memory institutions.

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and she does not suggest unification, but rather coexistence and acceptance of horizons (Buckley-Zistel 2008:45). Thus, I believe that her argument runs along the same lines as this study.

[28] In his discussion on the malleability of identities and the acceptance or rejection of new identities proposed, Bloom relies heavily on Erikson's work (1968, 1970 [1950]), which emphasizes feelings of security as essential for the identification process.

The power of official memory institutions

National identities and official memory institutions

The people experiencing feelings of togetherness in regard to a national collective always relate to the national narratives as they are formulated by elites, media and other public forums. Narratives of history are forwarded in official memory institutions[29], and, as mentioned, they are always dependent on the public who gives them legitimacy by accepting them and passing them on to the future or rejecting them, which reveals that they are found illegitimate. [30]

The commemorative narratives of a nation are transmitted to the public in different ways. Children and students are taught the national history in school books, which communicate a sense of belonging and relevant categories of self and other at an early stage in life (Bar-Tal 1988, Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005:157). Another important form of commemoration takes place during national holidays commemorating past actions of the collective. Here past glories and victories are celebrated, and humiliations and traumas are remembered. School education together with state supported national holidays serve an important function when it comes to communicating commemorative narratives to the individuals of national collectives. Together they point out events to remember and events to forget, shaping an image of the nation as historically homogenous and continuous. They continuously communicate the official view of history to the public, with inherent power to affect collective identifications (Papadakis 2003:254).

In the literature on collective memory and its relations to identity formation, states are often mentioned as fostering societal cohesion by communicating official views of history to the public. The use of history curricula to foster national sentiment, for example,

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[29] The way memory instutions are used here differs from the usage in other literature, where it often alludes to official holders of memory such as museums, archives, libraries and the like (C.f. Bowker 2005, Hjerppe 1994).

[30] Through the education system the national imagination is often banalized, and becomes part of everyday rituals and symbols that appear neutral and hence remain unquestioned (C.f. Billig 1995).

is a well-known practice in all modern countries (Al-Haj 2005, Nash et al. 1998), and might be especially salient in societies involved in deep-seated conflicts (Bar-Tal 1988). In many societies, especially those suffering from long-standing conflict, official history emphasizes the suffering of the nation and also helps to legitimize its future goals (Papadakis 2008b:128). Hence, certain views of history, preferred by the political elite, are mediated to the public through different channels. Differing terminologies are used when describing this official memory communication to the public. Mehlinger and Apple talk about school books used in history education as a modern version of village storytellers, since they convey to children and adolescents what adults believe they should know about their own society and others (Apple 1993, Mehlinger 1985). Podeh (2000), and Al-Haj (2005), in turn call channels communicating history to the public memory agents. I find the latter terminology misleading as those channels have no will of their own, but are dependent on decisions taken by political actors. In this study, channels communicating official memory, or state memory (Tulviste and Wertsch 1995:312), are instead understood as *official memory institutions*. They are dependent on political elites and their political decisions, according to which they communicate certain views of history to the public. Thelen contributes insightful thoughts regarding the power of institutions and their interplay with actors during the course of societal development:

> […] Institutions continue to be the object of ongoing political contestation, and changes in the political coalitions on which they rest hold the key to understanding significant shifts over time in the form the institutions take and the functions they perform in politics and society" (2004:290).

Not only school books are understood as official memory institutions, but also history curriculums, commemorative rituals sponsored by the state, and education about conflict and conflict history undertaken in the military. This study limits itself to the study of memory institutions visible in the debate material, which mainly

concerned education.[31] In the empirical discussions the institutionalization of counter narratives is discussed, indicating a change in official memory institutions. As official institutions have long been permeated by master narratives, changes in institutions is not accomplished overnight. Change is often gradual, and might be reversed through interaction between memory agents.[32]

In Chapter Seven, I address the particular official memory institutions that were influenced by the Israeli debates on New History.

Narratives and counter narratives

One important issue in this study is how understandings of group history in societies involved in intractable conflicts relate to the phenomenon of identity transformation. As sentiments connected to collective identifications of a group are often woven into the historical consciousness of that group, the official historiography of that society is understood as commemorative narratives with power to influence identifications in that society (partly following Dyrberg 1997). When that history concerns the specific narratives of conflict, then it is even more obviously linked to collective identifications as well as society's understandings of conflict. Even though narratives are multifaceted and always in flux, as they are composed by many competing ideas, some narratives dominate over others during periods of time. Those are the master commemorative narratives. As those become inscribed into official memory institutions communicating history and memory to the national collective, they also tend to become dominant in the core constructs, and especially those related to the past and to the relations with the opponent in conflict.

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[31] For a comprehensive study of Israeli memory institutions, from education and the social system to the military, see Nets-Zehngut (forthcoming).

[32] Melander offers a rich discussion on institutional change, from "habitalization" to "sedimentation", underlining the idea that initial institutionalizion needs to be bolstered by both actors and structures in order to become fully formalized in all official institutions (2008).

When discussing the construction of commemorative narratives as a process depending on contextual factors, questions regarding the construction of master commemorative narratives are posed, but also regarding those that exist in their shadow — the silences and counter narratives in society — as there are always stories not being told because for different reasons they are incoherent with regards to the master narratives and thus marginalized. Counter narratives always exist in relation to master narratives, but the two are not dichotomously related (Andrews 2004:2). They can often be read under the surface of master narratives, and are always in tension with dominant stories, neither fully in opposition nor untouched. Counter narratives expose the power of master narratives; their inherent power is also evident as they point to the construction of the dominant story by suggesting other ways in which it could be told (Andrews 2004:3).

As previously mentioned, neither master commemorative narratives nor counter commemorative narratives exist in a vacuum. Both are always born out of a society specific context and must resonate with general experience and knowledge in a society in order to be heard. However, change is not brought about by changed narratives alone – the counter narratives have to be accepted by a relevant audience in order to have influence on politics and further action - which contributes to the importance of studying responses to the introduction of counter narratives. Narrative change is hence a result of an essentially communicative act (Kearney 2002:5), as the way meanings are interpreted in a society at large is an intersubjective process between narrators and their audience (C.f. Buzan et al. 1998:31). Thus the memory agents promoting the counter narratives make different moves in which they attempt to forward their stories. The result of their interaction is dependent on the public, who by different means choose to accept some narratives and discard others. Thus, the narrators alone do not have the power to decide which narrative is to become dominant in society. The inhabitants of that society are a constant part of the process because they have to accept

the narratives in order for them to become master narratives of that society (C.f. Buzan et al. 1998:28-31)[33].

A necessary step in the process toward more positive relations in conflict is that the public eventually accepts the counter narratives of thick recognition, so that they can permeate ideas as well as institutions in society. This is made possible through a transformation of core constructs, which eventually enables a far-reaching change in relationships between the conflict's parties.

Who is commemorated and how that is enacted definitely has repercussions on the view of preferred division in societies. This can be described in a drastic and yet very illustrative way:

> "Death consequently emerges as the salient factor in the construction of identity and "otherness": who kills whom and who is killed by whom. I suggest that the boundaries of the "imagined community" of the living are delineated by the communities of morally relevant dead constructed through ritual commemorations." (Papadakis 2003:254)

Even though this statement specifically concerns commemorative rituals[34], it points to the way in which the delineation of important heroes and victims of the past is brought into the present through the use of commemorative narratives[35]. If heroic and/or victimizing stories of the in-group are told, as well as demonizing stories of the out-group, those categories irrevocably carry on into the present, resulting in stable borders between relevant and irrelevant stories, as well as relevant and irrelevant collectives. Those categories, both of identification and of commemoration, can be dissolved through acts

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[33] This discussion is inspired by the Copenhagen school of security and its view on successful securitization as a process dependent on the acceptance by the audience.

[34] Papadakis joins an influential strand of research preoccupied with the specific impact of commemorative rituals in the construction of collective memory and identity. For further thoughts on this topic see Connerton (1989), who wrote a ground-breaking study on the topic of commemorative rituals and monuments. Many researchers have continued to delve into this topic; see for example Weiss (1997), Kapferer (1999), Gillis (1994), Zerubavel (1995), Koselleck (2003), Geisler (2005), and Bartelson (2006).

[35] Other writers such as Kosselleck (2003) also point to the connection between history and politics through the use of memorials over the dead.

of recognition where the narratives of self and other are retold, legitimating the other's commemorative narratives while renouncing parts of one's own.

The innate power in narratives has been stressed in this section. Commemorative narratives, in master as well as counter forms, are understood as power carriers since they have the possibility to influence the identification of those who are presented with them. This facilitates an understanding of the debates between different memory agents as indirect struggles for power over identification. The narrative elaboration that is the outcome of their social interaction might have implications for relationships in conflict. This might be particularly true if they are successful in communicating their views to official memory institutions. In the end those have the power to affect identification and thus bordering activities in society. This section, however, mostly touched on the institutional dynamics of the process of narrative elaboration, leaving the dynamics of agency rather unexplored. The meaning of agency and how it is related to power is further scrutinized in the next section.

The power of memory agents

Introducing memory agents

The agent is understood as central in the construction and forwarding of narratives and counter narratives. The persons promoting counter narratives as well as master narratives are understood as memory agents, and as such they propagate different versions of reality and hence contribute to understandings of conflict. This study sees actors as crucial when it comes to transforming relationships in intractable conflicts over time. Here action is understood in terms of narration, and narrators of history are in this context understood as *memory agents*, who have similarities with what Mitchell in conflict settings calls "change agents" (2006:29). They are the ones who can affect identifications as they have the possibility to present the public with different identifications, and hence own the potential of influencing the course of conflict. However, they do not have the power to

themselves affect collective understandings of history and identity. It is key that they succeed in communicating their narratives into official memory institutions, which in turn are very influential in communicating memories to the public. The debates over history can thus be understood as a struggle for the right to formulate the history of the nation, and inscribe that into official memory institutions, which in turn might have vast implications for the identifications of the present and thus for the understandings of conflict.

How then are memory agents identified? Possibly all individuals or groups telling stories about memories are memory agents. However, in order to confine the study and delimit it to relevant processes, the memory agents of concern here are those who in the official debate and/or the realm of media, politics or law have left some kind of imprint on the process. One might have partaken in a public debate regarding the War of 1948, or published an academic or journalistic piece on the topic, or been part of a political or legal forum, where decisions regarding education policy have been taken. I focus on actors' observable presence and the possible imprint that they left in the debates over New History. In order to identify the relevant agents, I have looked at different measures taken (Friedrich 1963:57) in the course of the debates. The act of taking that measure is understood as an act of the memory agent. In this way actions have implications on institutions, as they actively in one way or another accept or disagree with their content (Lundquist 2007:129).

A debate over history, such as the one in Israel, hence takes place between different memory agents, some promulgating counter narratives and others promoting master narratives. Investigating the Israeli debates over history might give us vital information about how actors work to influence identities in conflict societies. Important knowledge can also be gained about the interplay between memory agents in their efforts to affect official memory institutions. The New Historians challenged the Israeli master commemorative narratives with counter commemorative narratives that described the conflicting groups in different terms than before. In the empirical analysis, in which the interaction between *memory agents* over the content in *official memory institutions* is studied, the understanding of the complex

interplay between the lower and higher orders of power is developed. The fate of commemorative narratives depends on the capacity of its "social bearers", here considered memory agents, to communicate and sustain them (Ram 2009:367). The social interaction among agents has repercussions for the narrative constellation, which in turn contributes to broader identifications in society. This enables an understanding of how the lower order of power over time might influence the higher order of power.

Memory agents propagating narratives of commemoration, do so in different forums. One important channel where images of nationality are communicated to the public is of course mass media. When mass media express views on history and identity on editorial pages where specific views held by the newspaper publisher are printed, it is understood as broadcasting views held by certain memory agents. Moreover, mass media have another important function: an arena where different views meet and are presented to the public. When understood in this way, mass media are not a channel for the state or for a certain publisher, but rather assume the role of a public marketplace (Nygren 2001, Petersson 2006:43, Weibull 2000) where different memory agents can communicate their views. In the realm of mass media, different narratives of the nation's history are displayed, and thus it might be possible to discern which narratives are more dominant at a given moment in time. Memory agents can thus tell their stories of commemoration, and communicate them directly to the public in different arenas such as mass media, or try to affect decision-makers so that their views of history are included in official memory institutions. Memory agents hence have two major ways to communicate. One is in different public marketplaces such as the media, through which they might possibly influence the public. The other channel has to do with influencing institutions, which indirectly might influence the public long-term. In the empirical analysis of the debates, the memory agents are scrutinized and the conception of them will be more complex, as the concepts of *challengers* and *gatekeepers* [36] are introduced.

[36] These concepts are further developed in Chapter Five.

By now, a conception of the political character of history revision and thus a more comprehensive understanding of its potential when it comes to conflict transformation has been developed. Even though official memory institutions are understood as power carriers, they do not get that power by their own right; rather they are influenced by agents who are eager to spread their narratives to the public. In the following section I expand the discussion regarding the relationship between narrative and action.

Narrative and action

Commemorative narratives require and always reflect the memory agent's perspective; it is never voiceless. In this way it points to how the memory agent makes sense of the commonplace. Through narrative it can be discerned how narrators view themselves, both in relation to others and in specific situations (Patterson and Monroe 1998:316). The memory agents refer to actions in the past in order to make the present and the future intelligible, which is also the case on the macro level, where as mentioned before collectives describe common pasts as well as destinies, suggesting that they have a collective identity that should be recognized by others (Patterson and Monroe 1998:316). This is poignantly described by Kosellek, who states that experience (conceptions of the past) and expectation (conceptions of the future) are always closely knit, as they legitimate and make sense of a collective's being in the present. The categories of experience and expectation also, when filled with content, affect actual actors in the evolution of societies (2004 [1979]:170).

I started out with the understanding that narrative is an important dimension of being. It must also be added that narratives are important for the constitution of action. Life — like action — is "a process of telling ourselves stories, listening to those stories, and acting them out and living them through"(Carr 1986:61). In the words of Alasdair McIntyre, man is "in his actions and practice as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal" (1985:216). Actors do what they do because of their conception of who they are, which in turn is constituted by individual responses to the societal context containing a multiplicity of stories to which being is

constantly related. In this way humans act through the telling of stories, and hope that those stories will be appealing to their audience, so that they accept the stories and make them their own. Even though story telling can be an act of an individual, the creation of narratives concerning collective or national identities is never an act that can be carried out in isolation. Actions as set out in narratives of collective identity hence have to appeal to an audience in order to have any real consequences. Thus what a collective can do in concert, and can become, is determined by the reactions of the audiences to which the stories are addressed (Ringmar 1996:79). Thus one can desire something for him- or herself or for a collective to which he or she has a sense of belonging. However, as stated earlier, that desire does not have much implications unless it is communicated to and accepted by a relevant audience.

Even though a theoretical linkage between boundaries between groups in narratives describing the past carry on into boundary-drawing procedures in the present and aspirations for the future has been made, some clarifications are needed at this point. The picture must be modified somewhat when discussing actors forwarding commemorative narratives. Most of the partakers in the historical debates were and are not politicians. It is also obvious that some of them, like Benny Morris, at times claimed to have as their only concern to promote what they saw as "the correct" version of history (Whitehead 2007:155). Others, like Ilan Pappé, indeed connected their historical visions and revisions to a political mission: to change relations between the groups involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As historical narratives have the power to influence the way collectives construct their collective identities, historical interpretations and reinterpretations hold a transformative potential, if they gain public support. According to this line of reasoning, the intentions of the partakers in the debates are indeed superfluous, as the narratives themselves might have the potential of spreading to the public, no matter the original intention of the memory agents. Hence, given the understanding of historians' interpretations of past events, their understandings of history achieve a political character when carried into debates regarding the present even if that was not originally intended. What is examined here is thus not the actors'

original intentions when analyzing and producing material about the past, but rather the political character of that material when carried into present political situations.

Historiography, narration and social change

As described, all collectives tend to relate their shared identifications to the temporal dimension, through links to a common past as well as to a shared destiny. In this section I further elaborate on the role of commemorative narratives in society and how those relate to different nationalisms. One starting point for this study is that the act of writing history is inherently political (Andrews 2007:11, Bartelson 2006:2, Edkins 2003:229, Jenkins 1995, Kosellek in Sebastián and Fuentes 2006:113, Stråth 2000:45, C.f. White 1973, White 1987). When trying to establish a link between history and contemporary politics, the crucial point concerns understanding historians as constructing their narratives in one way or another as a process depending on the particular societal context in which they are active (Middleton and Edwards 1991:3). The fact that narratives influence images of political realities, thus influencing actions when responding to political events, means that narrative has a very strong connection to political behavior (Patterson and Monroe 1998:315-316). The study of commemorative narratives can hence provide information about the political circumstances in society, as the struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the social circumstances of the present (Middleton and Edwards 1991:3).

Historians build into their narratives "patterns of meaning similar to those more explicitly provided by the literary art of the cultures to which they belong" (Jenkins 1995:161). According to White, historians gain this explanatory power in different ways, the first being the way they plot history (1973:7), secondly the ways they argue it (1973:11) and thirdly the ways in which it reflects their ideas (1973:22). The mode of reflecting ideas is especially related to the topic of this study. Here, the act of writing history meets ideology, and we can perceive why battles over different commemorative narratives become affect-laden sites with acute political importance. Thus, historiography and its relationship to the ideas of both the

historian and his/her audience is an important key to understanding the linkage between history and contemporary politics. As different commemorative narratives have links to differing sets of ideas, it is also reasonable to argue that different conceptions of history, in the shape of master commemorative narratives and counter narratives, can be related to different strands of ideas or themes prevalent in a society's narrative constellation.

White discusses different modes regarding the ideas reflected in commemorative narratives. (1973:23-26). When it comes to this study, where different commemorative narratives are thought to bring with them different implications for the transformation of conflict, the most important element in White's classification is the one regarding social change. The central dividing line in White's discussion is the one separating historians who want to maintain the status quo and those who desire more comprehensive social change. When the Israeli case is considered, the dividing line in the debate between "new" and "old" historians also very much involved differing aspirations for the present and future. From this section it can be concluded that all commemorative narratives are connected to ideas in various ways, as they draw on dimensions in the larger societal narrative constellation, as well as relate to the desirability of societal change. From this discussion, a distinction between agents inclined to social change and those trying to maintain continuity in the social system is evident. This will be actualized in the discussion on memory agents as either challengers or gatekeepers in the following chapter.

In his *Tropics of Discourse* (1987), White elaborates on the ethical dimension of commemorative narratives (1987:11). The story that emerges from a society's commemorative narratives serves as moral guidance in the present, as narratives are related to moral aspects of reality (Papadakis 2003:254). As the relevant social system helps produce and relates to commemorative narratives, it is also a source of morality for its members (White 1987:14). The nation often serves as the moral centre around which a nationalistic ideology is formed; thus moral judgments are also formed from the standpoint of the national entity. If a story is described as sad or happy is hence related to whether justice was granted to the national group in the past.

Therefore stories of national commemoration often revolve around narratives of justice and injustice (Papadakis 2003:254). Commemorative narratives express ethical judgments in three ways; they point toward what would be a "just" future on the basis of past injustices; they tend to be self-justifying as they shift blame for past injustices on other actors than the self; they take part in the process of delineating boundaries of the moral community, and are thus partly responsible for the definition of the imagined community of the nation (Papadakis 2003:267). Commemorative narratives can be understood as ethically constitutive stories. When those are challenged, people who identify with them are prone to feel insecure (Smith 2003b:121). When contrasting contents of commemorative narratives as well as their relation to boundary-drawing principles in narratives of the present, it is thus relevant to conduct that comparison along the dimensions suggested by Papadakis.

Moving on

This chapter has contributed insights into the linkage between commemorative narratives and contemporary divisions in society. Important knowledge has also been gained regarding the interplay between memory agents and official memory institutions in terms of the relationship between the lower and higher orders of power. It is now understood that commemorative narratives paint trajectories from the past, having repercussions on views of present and future. It is also clear that the way in which boundaries are drawn in commemorative narratives carries on into practices of delineation in the present as well as in views of the future. Counter narratives, which portray the past in more diverse ways, where the identities, sufferings and experiences of the other are included, are thus important when trying to visualize more peaceful relations.

As the main theoretical concepts have now been developed, I move on to a chapter that makes the concepts more applicable, in order to enable a theoretically informed analysis of the empirical material.

CHAPTER FIVE

From theory to analysis

Introduction

Before entering the empirical realm, there is an initial need to develop analytical tools through which it can be filtered. This chapter draws from theoretical insights developed in the previous chapters, and introduces analytical concepts and frameworks that are used in the following empirical chapters. I start out with a discussion on the merits of narrative analysis when it comes to the specific topic of this study.

Why narrative analysis?

There are at least three good reasons for a concentration on narrative within the framework of this study: First, the study focuses on constructions of identity and their relations to apprehensions of reality, which is oft elaborated in narrative theories regarding identity and action (Patterson and Monroe 1998, Ringmar 1996, Somers and Gibson 1994). Secondly, here is also a strong focus on understandings of history and how they relate to processes of identification in present societies. There have been elaborate accounts in which narratives are seen as mediators between understandings of history and politics in the present. Narrative is hence a suitable approach since it provides a historicized view of the present, as stories in which people situate themselves always present beginnings and ending-points (C.f. Jenkins 1995, Papadakis 2003, Papadakis 2008a, Ricœur 1984, White 1973, Zerubavel 1995). Thirdly, an over-arching ambition of this study is how actions can be conceptualized when different historical understandings are presented within a conflictual environment. Here, narrative theory also offer crucial

insights, as many within the tradition have paid attention to the role of narrators, here conceived of as memory agents, and their crucial function when it comes to advancing different stories about reality (C.f. Patterson and Monroe 1998, Ringmar 1996, Somers 1994, Whitebrook 2001).[37]

When designing the analysis, I have therefore continued to dig deeper into the field of narrative theory. In the introduction, it was mentioned that the complex topic of this study is quite unsuitable as a base for stipulating crude causal relations. However, the basic claim that narratives to a certain extent have influence on identification and societal development nevertheless shows evidence of a notion of causality. In order to make the nature of those claims clear, the transformative potential of narratives when it comes to conflictual relations is therefore fleshed out.

On the transformative potential of narratives

The most central theme of this study regards identity change in conflict settings, and its potential to turn hostile relations into more sympathetic ones. In this way identity shifts, instigated by the process of thick recognition, are understood as helping to move the conflict into a more peaceful path (Kriesberg 2007:62). Arguments over commemorative narratives are a site where the relationship between collective memory and national identity is constantly re-negotiated. In those discussions, current methodological issues are often discussed as questions of legitimate pasts in terms of the political present. When historical revisions come to resonate with the public, the result might be paradigmatic shifts in the understanding and the judgment of a historical phenomenon (Levy 1999:52). As those are intimately

[37] Another influential approach within the same strand of research is instead mainly concerned with how identities are constituted through *discourse* (C.f. Fairclough 1992, Fairclough 1995, Laclau and Mouffe 2001). For comprehensive accounts of the field of discourse theory and analysis, see for example Esmark et al. (2005), Howarth (2000), Torfing (1999), Winter-Jörgensen and Phillips (2000). As narrative theory tends to be more attentive to history and agency, I belive that it has more to offer when it comes to the topic of this specific study.

connected to present political realities, the paradigmatic shift might of course also spill over into contemporary political processes.

In this study, the social interaction between memory agents over the power to influence the public directly or through the inscription of "their" narratives into official memory institutions later communicated to the public, is interpreted in terms of power struggles over identification. Thus their interaction is understood as an ongoing process that holds a potential to instigate identity change, depending on the change accomplished within society's narrative constellation as a result of their social interaction. The power struggle over identification in Israeli society, in the case of the debates over New History, is in turn understood as having potential implications on the course of conflict. The power of influencing identity is crucial in any society and has different qualities than what Lincoln calls "force" (1989:3), which is the exercise of threats of physical violence. The power of influencing identity can be exercised by actors in a very instrumentalist manner (Lincoln 1989:7) and is also continuously taking place, through the innate power within narratives of identity (Ricœur 1984:247). The transformative process addressed here resembles what Ricoeur calls triple mimesis (1984:99-100, 1991:25-28): from different experiences narratives are drawn, which in turn are told to an audience, which has implications on the social world on the return from narrative text to action (Kearney 2002:133). Ricoeur hence captures the transformative potential of narratives. The third mimetic stage brings about transformations that can be understood as invitations to act in a different way. New actions in turn lead to novel narratives, which brings a conceptualization of a cyclical movement of change, brought about by narratives (Verhesschen 2003:454).

When studying the complex reality of societies involved in intractable conflicts, it is too simplistic to try to establish direct causal links between changed narratives, changed relationships and conflictual change. I embark from an ontological stance holding that the ways in which stories about reality are told affects the way in which reality is constituted. The fact that stories about selves and (former) antagonists change might also directly or indirectly influence relationships that in turn implies changed behavior in conflictual interactions. Even though Ricoeur's work offers important insights

into narrative change and subsequent changes in action, the reasons for different types of change are still quite unclear. In order to bring clarity to that discussion, this study presents thoughts on circumstances that might function as *facilitating* on the way toward peacrful conflict transformation, as well as their counterpart, i.e. circumstances which might be *inhibiting* when it comes to introducing new understandings of the identities of collectives in conflict (C.f. George 1993:xxv, 13, Giddens 1984:169,177).

I proceed from the position that collective identities, even though seemingly difficult to alter, carry an inherent potential for change in their processual and multi-faceted nature. The literature on conflict transformation also has the matter of transformation, or change, as its main interest. Thus, in the merging together of the scholarly traditions of identity construction and conflict transformation, constituencies for change can be conceptualized, as well as how that change might occur. I argue that narrative change, such as going from one master narrative of conflict to another, carrying different views of the identity of the involved parties, is a change that can spur refinements in the relationship between the conflict's parties. That type of change is understood as preparing the way for relationship transformation within conflicts.

In this study, the role of narratives in societal development is the entrance point when addressing circumstances that might facilitate relationship change within intractable conflicts. In this case, memory agents enabled by their social structures present narratives, and society and agents are what they are partly because of the stories told about them. The view put forward here is thus a "modified form of structurationalism" (Suganami 1999:379), where narrative is seen as a crucial mediating factor in the complex relationship web between agents and structures. The most important elements for analysis in this case are memory agents and official memory institutions, and their mediation over commemorative narratives.

Challenges to shared understandings of a society's identity are common as societies reassess their positions on critical issues. Narratives, when challenged by counter narratives, thus might become sites of cultural conflict (Patterson and Monroe 1998:321). The social interaction over narratives and counter narratives hence

harbors the potential to prompt societal transformation, as hegemonic narratives (old or new) have the power to influence the way in which reality is understood. Through the reasoning in the previous paragraphs, it is now clear that narratives may hold a transformative potential under certain circumstances. For the upcoming analysis, there is a need to discuss how narratives might be analyzed to assess if and how they contain notions of thick recognition. The following section ventures into that area, and further sketches out how to conduct an analysis of narratives that is sensitive to thick recognition, identity and notions of social change.

Gatekeepers and challengers

When creating an analytical framework through which narratives can be analyzed in the search for notions of thick recognition and social change, I turned to Heradstveit's notions of traditionalists versus innovators (1979:131). When making a distinction between historians who promote continuity with regards to master narratives, and others who favor commemorative narratives that indicate a desire for social change, Heradstveit's study is a useful starting point. His inquiry concerns the psychology of actors involved in peace negotiations, and suggests two psychological approaches to conflict based on the findings of his research[38]. In his view, traditionalists have a negative opinion of change, a cohesive image of the opponent, as well as an unequivocal view of one's self-image, whereas innovators often have positive and optimistic views of change, and complex images of the traits of the self and the other. In my view, Heradstveit's categories are too value-laden in this context, as challengers of master narratives do not necessarily promote innovative ideas, nor is it obvious that promoters of master narratives in all cases hold traditionalist views. I will instead use the notions of *challengers* when discussing promoters of counter narratives, as they per se always challenge ruling understandings in society; defenders of master narratives will

[38] Heradstveit's distinction derives from his categorization of different actors involved in peace processes, and reflects two ideal types and their preferences when it comes to readiness to change perceptions in order to promulgate a peace process.

henceforth be called *gatekeepers*, as, whatever the content of their ideas, they always strive to keep master narratives intact, and hence constantly protect them from intrusion by other narratives.

Gatekeepers hence advocate master commemorative narratives of society. They tend to be negative toward social change, as they want to preserve the master commemorative narratives of the nation and the conflict, and are reluctant to change their habitual views of self and other. Challengers promote counter narratives that break with traditional views because they are optimistic about social change, and promote complex views of both the self and the other, forming a decisive break from the former stable boundaries between the unambiguous self and other (Heradstveit 1979:130-132).

In order to be applicable in the processual understanding of the importance of understandings of the past for action in the present and future, Heradstveit's model needs a stronger emphasis on temporality, through which a community's views of history can be seen as having repercussions for present views of desired boundaries between groups, as well as aspirations for a "just" future. Heradstveit's categorization must hence be linked to a temporal element in order to inject a processual understanding into the analysis.

Memory agents	**Gatekeepers**	**Challengers**
Who is blamed for and subjected to past injustices?	Opponent in conflict is blamed and the collective self is understood as morally superior (unambiguous view)	Dependent on historical context (complex view)
Boundaries of present moral community?	Stable boundaries, nation vs. nation Unwanted elements of self are categorized as part of "other" (unambiguous view)	Permeable boundaries (complex view)
"Just" future	Self-sufficiency	Co-existence of some kind; boundary shifts

Figure 1. Heradstveit's static model has been adjusted according to Papadakis' understandings of the moral guidelines of the present as well as aspirations for the future depending on views of self and opponent in the past.

Here Papadakis' three dimensions regarding morality (2003:267), coupled with views of past, present and future, serve as a useful starting point for enhancing Heradstveit's categories. The result is a basis for the categorization of different Israeli narratives and memory agents, while Papadakis' processual understanding of the importance of descriptions of the past for comprehending the present and visions for the future deepens the analysis. The figure above might suggest mutually exclusive categories. However, I propose sensitized categories that point toward endpoints in a continuum. In their "purest" form, gatekeepers may reason along the lines suggested in the model, just as adamant challengers often tell stories about the past and present along the lines suggested below. However, the empirical analysis will make clear that various memory agents in the case study and their respective narratives are not as clear-cut as the model suggests. Nevertheless, the scheme is intended to be a helpful tool in the empirical analysis of narratives, and therefore it serves an important function in the study. Still, it has to be kept in mind that the categories are fluid, which I have indicated by breaking the line separating the two. The model visualizes how understandings of history might be linked to the practice of drawing boundaries between or within national groups, as boundary drawings in the past have the potential to carry on into the present and future when appearing in narratives of the present.

The gatekeepers are understood as aiming to preserve continuity in understandings of history as well as of societal boundaries, whereas challengers try to promote social change as they aspire to incorporate contending versions of the self as well as the other in history — implying boundary shifts in the present. This is due to the fact that both the self and the other are described as pluralistic in history. There is thus less need for stable boundaries between the two in the present, as it is more difficult to separate pluralistic groups that share vital identity traits. The acts of challenging and gatekeeping with regards to narratives are hence conceived of as acts of power, as they both have the ability to influence the narrative constellation under certain circumstances.

The dimensions presented in this section are utilized in the analysis conducted in the following chapter. There the boundary-

related dimensions regarding past, present and future will be analyzed, together with views of self and other and the boundaries between them. The following aspects of master and counter commemorative narratives are hence addressed. 1: Who is to blame for past injustices? Here the focus lies on those blamed for sufferings in the past, and whether there is any sharing of moral responsibility for past injustices. 2: This in turn points to the desired moral community of the present. Here it is suggested that a commemorative narrative placing blame on the "other" in conflict tends to prefer a self-sufficient approach when it comes to the future, with little or no contact with the other party to conflict in the present. Where blame is placed on actors other than the antagonist in a conflict, and/or the blame for past injustices is shared between one's own group and the counterpart in a conflict, the moral community of the present does not necessarily have to be delineated along national lines. Here is thus a potential for co-existence in the future, as stable boundaries between national groups encourage isolation and unilateralism in relations, whereas permeable boundaries may point to future co-existence and more peaceful relations.

I therefore suggest an analysis of commemorative narratives related to boundary drawing in the present and future, which has stark implications for relations between groups. Exclusive, unambiguous commemorative narratives that put the blame for past injustices solely on the other party to conflict thus point to rigid boundaries between groups in the present, leading to exclusion and/or separation in the future, whereas pluralistic commemorative narratives ascribe the blame for past injustices both to the self and the other, sometimes including parties outside the conflict dynamic, which implies redrawn boundaries between the moral communities of the present. The boundaries between groups thus become less rigid, and future co-existence and peaceful relations can thus be visualized. The moral communities of the past can hence carry on into the present and future, making visible the transformative potential of counter commemorative narratives. The analytical framework above also reflects the three related dimensions in core constructs and thick recognition, as it addresses views of the self, views of the other and the boundary that separates the entities. As this is connected to views

of history, it provides a sense of how different commemorative narratives reflect notions of thick recognition. The empirical analysis in Chapter Six mainly focuses on the narrative dynamics in Figure 1 above.

In the following, I turn to the analytical underpinnings of the empirical analysis of the Israeli debates over New History.

Analyzing debates about recognition

In order to study the interaction regarding narratives, and capture transformations following it, a framework must be developed that can grasp the mimetic stages suggested by Ricoeur. When searching for an appropriate operative scheme, I was inspired by Archer's morphogenesis approach, as it was developed in *Culture and Agency* (1996 [1988]). Her model is based on a processual understanding of reality, and proposes an analytical distinction between structure and agency.

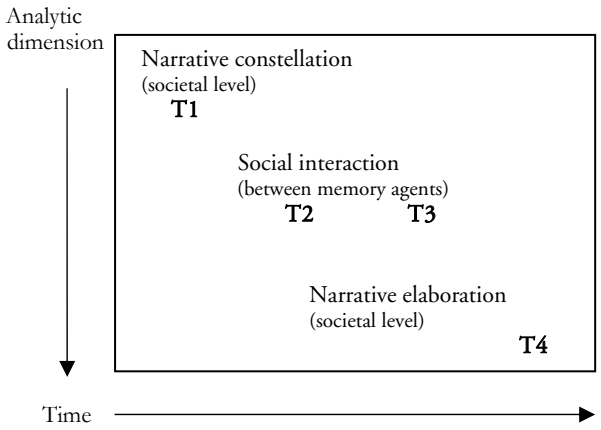

Figure 2. A model of narrative transformation over time, inspired by Archer's model of morphogenetic cycles (Archer 1996 [1988]:304) and adapted to the purposes of my discussion.

The model has been adapted to incorporate a conceptualization of narrative[39]. The initial narrative constellation (T1) involves starting conditions, which can be understood as aggregated outcomes of past actions. This is in turn followed by social interaction between agents (T2 and T3). This social interaction is partly conditioned by the narrative constellation, but never determined by it. The social interaction between actors in turn leads to narrative elaboration (T4). This is the analytical end state of a morphogenetic cycle, and constitutes the beginning of another cycle of continuous change (Archer 1995:90-91). This means that the interplay between actors and structures can be studied sequentially by means of alternating phases of agents' creativity and structural determination (Sztompka 1993-201). Archer's model distinctly envisions and

> "[…] encapsulates the ontological notion of a continuous cycle of action-structure relations, a […] process which not only serves to provide both continuity and change to social systems, but also can be penetrated analytically as a consequence of its essentially sequential thrust in societal transformation." (Carlsnaes 1992:260)

I argue that change in the images of self and other within parties entangled in intractable conflict should be viewed as an ongoing process, rather than focusing on end states in the analysis. This processual understanding of conflict rhymes well with Archer's suggestion that change should be conceived of as endless cycles of interaction (1996 [1988]). In this way the model allows for an analysis of the interplay of narratives, deepening the understanding of narrative elaboration over time. The analyses of the Israeli debates on history in Chapters Seven and Eight can hence be conducted in accordance with Figure 1 above.

[39] For other models resembling this one, see for example McAnulla (1998). His model incorporates more stages than the one above, and pays attention to discourses instead of narratives.

Recognition openings and closures[40]

There is also a need to address how discussions about narratives relate to the wider process of conflict transformation. The narrative elaboration in T4 is assumed to coincide with contextual circumstances, facilitating or inhibiting when it comes to transforming relationships in conflict. I thus inquire into the Israeli case in order to develop an insight into linkages between changed understandings of history and circumstances under which those might change the trajectory of conflict. Through this cyclical analysis of the societal interaction throughout the debate over Israeli New History, understandings of how it was possible to propose those ideas in the first place, and also how the same ideas lost centre stage at a later moment in time, are acquired.

If narrative elaboration results in vast changes in a society's memory institutions, such as New History texts, together with altered media descriptions of the relationship between self and other in history, and new public understandings of its own as well as the adversaries' role in the history of conflict, it is understood as a recognition opening. Then relationships may be transformed into more peaceful ones, implying that a shift in the view of the self and other is understood as bringing possibilities for relationship transformation. The official memory institutions are crucial in communicating the collective memory of the society and conflict, indicating that, if changed, they might facilitate change in core constructs of collectives involved in conflicts, which is a crucial starting point when discussing the achievement of their transformation into a more peaceful trajectory. However, as the understanding is that identities and conflicts are processual and non-linear, more positive and peaceful relations can never (unfortunately) be seen as end states, but processes that can take more positive or negative directions. A period of recognition openings can, through inhibiting circumstances, hence be followed by recognition closures.

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[40] I understand societal development as undergoing constant transformation. The plural form of closure is therefore deliberatley used, in order to indicate that processes of openings and closures often occur simultaneously and vary over time.

Relationships in conflicts hence might take a different trajectory at any given time, depending on the circumstances, and then feed back into a new narrative constellation. Those circumstances and their facilitating or inhibiting potential when it comes to the transformation of relationships in conflict are assessed in the final analyses in Chapters Seven and Eight. The discussion is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Through the concluding analyses, a deeper understanding of the process of debating history in societies tormented by intractable conflicts will be gained. Further knowledge of relevant actors and structures in that process will also emerge. The ambition is hence to attain further knowledge regarding the components in Figure 3 above.

Changing master narratives of national identity is indeed a complicated process. This is because understandings of history are an essential part of the construction of identities, both collective and individual. The narrative development interplays with the wider societal context. T1 hence introduces contextual circumstances that either facilitate or inhibit actors and their potential to be successful in telling their stories. As mentioned, the narrative constellation at T1 hence does not determine the social interaction, but sets up facilitating or inhibiting circumstances when it comes to the potential of actors to be successful in their actions.

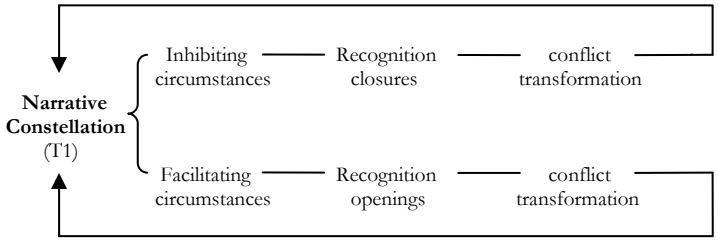

Figure 3. Facilitating and inhibiting circumstances and their trajectories into conflictual relations.

Moving to the empirical analysis

After this elaboration on analytical strategies and development of conceptual frameworks, I now move on to the first empirical chapter. There an analysis of Israeli narratives of commemoration is conducted, related to the parallel development of Israeli narratives of conflict and Zionism.

Part III – New History

CHAPTER SIX

Boundaries and recognition in Israeli narratives

The New Historians questioned the legitimacy of the master commemorative narratives that had been told and retold by the Israeli state through different official memory institutions communicating the shared memory of the Jewish collective to its citizens. The master commemorative narratives had been inscribed into Israeli official memory institutions such as school curricula, history books used in education, state supported holidays commemorating past glories and sorrows, and also communicated through speeches by officials to the members of the Israeli community.

When previously closed state archives were opened to the public in the early eighties, historians of a new generation used the "new" data to formulate a different historical account of the Jewish collective of Israel, voicing a substantial critique against the message inherent in the master commemorative narratives. The later works regarding history and the subsequent debates touched on different eras in Israeli history, both pre- and post- state building. The largest controversy concerned the creation of the state around 1948, and that controversy is the one focused on in this study. In this chapter, I introduce the Israeli master commemorative narratives as well as the counter commemorative narratives regarding the war surrounding the creation of the Israeli state. The analysis focuses on how views of the self and the other were described in the narratives, as well as how they draw boundaries around relevant and irrelevant collectives respectively.

The first part of the chapter pays attention to Israeli *master commemorative narratives*. In order to relate further discussions on New History to the over-arching narrative constellation of Israeli society, the same type of analysis is carried out (however in less detail) with

regard to the development of Israeli *master narratives of Zionism and conflict*. The second part of the chapter carries out a similar analysis, although paying attention to the *counter narratives of commemoration, Zionism and conflict*. Throughout the discussion I am able to discern to what extent the different narratives incorporate notions of recognition, and also how they describe boundaries between the collectives involved in conflict. The analysis in this chapter serves as an important backdrop to the debate analyses in Chapters Seven and Eight. Here, the most obvious dividing lines between master and counter narratives when it comes to recognition and boundaries are identified, which is the location of most importance when it comes to the contents of the debates over New History.

The master commemorative narratives

Introduction

The master commemorative narratives of Zionism often divide Jewish history into three periods: antiquity, exile and return (Weingrod 1997:235, Zerubavel 1995:15-16). Antiquity is understood as the period of a heroic past in the land of Israel, ending up in Exodus when the Jews were scattered into exile throughout the world. The last period, return, concerns the "ingathering of exiles" in mandated Palestine and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In much of Zionist commemoration, the focus has been on heroism during the antique era, trying to form identities that break with the picture of the "weak" Jew of exile, subjected to pogroms ending up with the humanitarian disaster of the Holocaust (Weingrod 1997:237, Zerubavel 1995:75-76). Previously little used symbols from the antique era such as the sacrifice and devotion of the Masada myth[41] have been used to create a picture of the rising

[41] The Masada myth revolves around the Jews who had fled to the Roman fort of Masada in the Judean desert in 73 A.D. In order to deny the Romans of sucess, the Jewish men killed all the women and children, fianlly committing colletive suicide by leaping off the Masada cliff. The myth of Masada has come to symbolize Jewish strength and wllingness to sacrifice during the antique era.

Sabra[42] Jew of the new State, overcoming historical persecution in exile through difficult sacrifices. Thus, past glories from antiquity as well as traumas from persecution in exile in general and from the Holocaust in particular have shaped the Israeli commemorative narratives (Tossavainen 2006:2008). The three eras of antiquity, exile and return have thus become connected in the master commemorative narratives and provide a sense of continuity from the biblical past, through persecution in the Diaspora (Ackerman 1997:4, Tossavainen 2006:243) in the fortified, militarized identity of the present when the Jewish collective has been resurrected in the biblical land of Israel (Weiss 1997:98). Several researchers argue that one of the main challenges when Zionism was created was to connect the present struggles over land and nationality with the remote Jewish history in the land of Israel (Aronoff 1993:48, Weiss 1997). Thus the master commemorative narratives can be understood as a story linking Jewish existence in the biblical lands to the present so as to create a continuity between the ancient past and the legitimacy of a nation-state for the Jewish people in the present state of Israel (Weiss 1997:98).

The master commemorative narratives have had a strong focus on the history of the Jewish collective, portraying that collective in often very positive terms[43]. Stories emphasizing its unique situation of constant insecurity and siege have come to dominate over the stories describing it as a people like all others. This has become especially visible in the treatment of the historical experience of the Holocaust within Israeli master commemorative narratives:

[42] The Sabra is the cactus fruit also known as prickly pear; extremely rough and thorny on the outside, but sweet and delicate on the inside. Jews born in Israel are often referred to as Sabras. The Sabra is also often used to desribe Israeli national character (C.f. Almog 2000).

[43] Strong nation-building projects and their usage of instrumental, state-sponsored historiography in times of creation of new states, is by no means unique for Israel (C.f. Kimmerling 2008, Sela 2005:205).

> "The Holocaust was presented as the ultimate expression of the truth of the world's hatred towards the Jews. Hence, it likewise stressed the isolationist theme. The interpretation of the Holocaust clearly dominated the narrative, even during periods when universalism gained momentum." (Yadgar 2002:65)

The unique experience of the Holocaust and accordingly the unique victimhood of the Jewish people have been an important pole around which other themes of the national narratives are centered. The victimhood created by the Holocaust calls for sacrifices in order to create a safe space free from persecution. The Israeli soldiers personifying that sacrifice have thus become important symbols for the resurrected Jewish people in the present and negation of further exile in the future. The heroism of young Israeli soldiers is described in an oft-cited poem:

> "In work garb and heavy shod
> They climb
> In stillness
> Wearing yet the dress of battle, the grime
> Of arching day and Fire-filled night
>
> Unwashed, weary unto death, not knowing
> Rest
> But wearing youth like drops in their hair
> Silently the two approach
> And stand
> Are they of the quick or of the dead?
>
> Through wondering tears, the people stare
> "who are you, the silent two?"
> And they reply: "we are the silver platter
> Upon which the Jewish state was served to You".
> (Alterman:1947)

This poem is read during official ceremonies on Remembrance Day, when the heroism of Israeli soldiers is commemorated. It symbolizes the sacrifices of Israeli soldiers and their families, whose lives were

the "silver platter" on which the state was built (Feldt 2005:190-191, Weiss 1997:94).

The trauma of the Holocaust has thus been inscribed in the master commemorative narratives of Israel, and sacrifices for the state are legitimated through the main goal of avoiding another exile. The nation-building project has thus revolved around a massive focus on the trauma of the Holocaust, and also on antique myths of resurrection following historic persecution, such as the "Masada myth" (Bar-Tal 2000b:57, Zerubavel 1995).

When reviewing the literature on dominant themes in the Israeli narratives regarding the foundation of the state in 1948, three themes seem especially dominant. (1) The idea of "the few against the many" of the Israeli David defeating an Arab Goliath, breeding a picture of the Jewish collective as invincible as well as innocent (C.f. Almog 2000:233, Sela 2005:211). This connects to the idea that the Jewish people in Palestine faced the same conditions in Israel around 1948 as they did in Europe on the eve of the Holocaust. (Friling 2003:26) This has enhanced the picture of Israel as vulnerable and in constant need of strong defensive measures. (2) The notion of "a voluntary flight of the Palestinians from Palestine", placing the blame for the Palestinian "refugee problem" solely on the Palestinian elite and public (C.f. Aggestam 2004:134-135, Bar-On 2006, Silberstein 1999:156-157). (3) Arab unwillingness to negotiate for peace after the war of 1948. The understanding has been that Israel approached the Arab governments to reach a peace agreement. However, the Arabs turned down the proposal, and sought revenge in order to wipe out the shame of their defeat. (C.f. Sela 2005:212, Silberstein 1999:97, Tessler 2006:178-180).

Those three themes taken together present a picture of the foundation of the State of Israel as a righteous struggle by a defensive and weak Jewish collective against a strong enemy, on lands that were largely unpopulated due to voluntary exile. The continuation of the conflict has accordingly been explained as a result of Arab reluctance to negotiate for peace. The continuous militancy of the Jewish state was formulated according to the principle of "no alternative" ("ein breira"), meaning that in order to survive in the face of Arab aggression and unwillingness to reach a peace agreement, Israel had

no alternative than to become highly militarized so as to avoid the tragedy of another exile. Another important principle was "purity of arms" ("tahar haneshak"), which was the official doctrine of the Israeli Defense Forces, meaning that violence was only to be used when, and to the extent necessary, for self-defense (Lustick 1995:523, Lustick 1996:211, Sela 2005:212, Shapira and Abel 2008:95, Shlaim 1999:173). Thus, the historical weakness of the Jewish collective and moral legitimacy of the Jewish cause in the face of Arab aggression, together with the view of "the whole world is against us", served as a strong legitimating argument in the master commemorative narratives. With this constant emphasis on historical insecurity as a theme leaving marks on the state of the present, Israeli society has become highly militarized (Kimmerling 2001:214). With this follows the belief that Israel's only option is military, as social-political options are not sufficient to assure national security (Idalovichi 2004:624). The solution to Israel's historically motivated security predicament has thus been to construct a highly militarized Jewish state (Aggestam 1999:57).

The Zionist master commemorative narratives have become inscribed into various official memory institutions. Israel's education policy since the establishment of State Education Law in 1953 has been true to the traditional Zionist commemorative narratives. This law established that Israeli curricula should teach "the values of Jewish culture", "love for the homeland" and "loyalty to the Jewish state". This law was immensely important to the Israeli system, so important that David Ben-Gurion referred to it as one of the country's two "supreme laws", the other being the right of return (Hazony 2000b:1). Except from educational policy, the commemorative narratives were also institutionalized through various state supported holidays, during which Israeli citizens have a day off from work to celebrate important historical events. Israeli society has become immersed in collective rites of commemoration that have been made part of the national calendar (Weiss 1997:92). In this way the master commemorative narratives are upheld not only by the stories told amongst the members of the collective, but also by the communication of the master commemorative narratives through important official channels, starting off already in kindergarten (Bar-

Tal and Teichman 2005, Firer 2009). In order to discuss how the master narratives incorporate notions of boundaries and thick recognition, I now turn to the dimensions of self and how the self is described in the master commemorative narratives.

Views of self – unambiguous moral righteousness

Israeli history has in its traditional form pointed to the specifics of the Jewish collective, emphasizing stories of common traumas and glories. The perception of threats against the Israeli state since its inception as well as toward the Jewish community in the Diaspora has traveled hand in hand with historiography as an academic discipline and the transmission of the official historiography to the Israeli public.

The theme of historical insecurity stems partly from the intractable conflict with the Arab states and the Palestinian people. Added to this, one of the most prominent features of the Jewish collective memory is continuous threat, with the Holocaust being a crucial experience, leaving its marks on all considerations of security (Bar-Tal 2000b:98). The threat from the Arab collective, whether from Arab states or from the Palestinian entity, is often described as a continuation of the devastating anti-Semitism that ruined the Jewish community in Europe. Thus the current conflict is understood through the lens of a persecuted past, undeniably enhancing the perception of insecurity.

The institutionalized commemorative narratives enhancing persecution have led to the understanding that the national collective has to be militarily protected in order to survive. This collective is mainly not the one comprising all the inhabitants of the state, with its Christian and Muslim minorities, but rather the Jewish collective, as it is one that have been subjected to anti-Semitism and later on to Arab aggression. This shows that it is mainly the interests and history of the Jewish collective that have been emphasized in Zionist historiography, whereas other inhabitants of the state, mainly Christian and Muslim Arabs, have been left out of the history as well as indirectly outside of the security concerns. It hence stands clear that the master commemorative narratives of Israel are ethnocentric

and concern the collective of Jews, and do not incorporate the Muslim or Christian minorities of the state.

The perception of being subjected to various threats has indeed been highlighted in the Israeli master commemorative narratives. The national holidays in Israel are both the Jewish religious holidays emphasizing the history of the Jews during biblical times, containing large portions of commemorating the persecution of Jews in biblical times, and "new holidays", created after the inception of the state. The perception of threat has also been transmitted from leaders to the public through various speeches over the years, and similar views have been expressed in newspaper editorials. In a Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in 1987, then Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin proclaimed:

> "In every generation they rise up to destroy us, and we must remember that this could happen to us in the future. We must therefore, as a state, be prepared" (Ha'aretz (Hebrew) 1987, quoted in Bar-Tal 2001:5)

Shalom Rosenfeld, then editor of the daily newspaper Ma'ariv, wrote in 1980:

> "The hatred of Israel has always been the all powerful cement which connected the different nations and states, which in other areas not only did not share similar interests but were often contradictory and at odds with each other… Let the historical philosophers and anthropologists search for the explanation of this remarkable phenomenon which has swept away the masses, coming from different traditions and cultures to a common ritual of hatred towards a nation and state whose name they can hardly pronounce… what preoccupies us primarily is the spiritual, political and security expressions which this international brotherly hatred has toward the existence of the State of Israel and the security of the masses of Jews in the Diaspora." (Quoted in Bar-Tal 2000b:111)

Various studies (C.f. Adar and Adler 1965, Bar-Tal 1988, Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005, Firer 1980, Firer 2004, Podeh 2000) show that the theme of victimization of the Jewish people throughout history has been prominent in education. It has been especially dominant in history textbooks. Often the hatred of Jews is described as

permanent, although its expressions shift from nation to nation, and from one time to other.

The Israeli wars with the Arab states as well as their Palestinian counterpart have been described as legitimate defensive struggles in order to grant a well-deserved land to the victimized Jewish people. Struggles against various counterparts have thus been described against the backdrop of persecution in the past, which has contributed to put the Israeli struggle for land and safety in a morally justified light.

When it comes to views of self within the master commemorative narratives, victimhood is hence the main theme (Blomeley 2005:127). The historical victimhood of exile and the Holocaust is to be avoided by all means[44] (C.f Fierke 2006:127, Tossavainen 2006:217). In the master commemorative narratives, the collective self is described as quite homogenous in that its victimization and moral propriety are highlighted in a variety of ways. The victimhood inflicted on the Jewish people through exile, climaxing with the Holocaust, has thus been cemented into historical consciousness. Violent events conducted by the collective self have hence been interpreted in that light, often rendering legitimacy to acts committed by the collective, at the same time delegitimizing the opponent, as the actions of that group have often been understood as a continuation of persecution and anti-Semitism in the Diaspora.

When considering the views of self as described in the master commemorative narratives, it is clear that the most vital theme with regard to the self is *insecurity*. The insecurity of Jews in exile has been extended to embrace the Jews of the state of Israel (Tossavainen 2006:211). In order to achieve security for the Jewish nation, all measures have been taken, including military ones, in order to avoid another exile. The collective *self* is thus described as unambiguously morally righteous when described in the master commemorative narratives.

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[44] The idea of rejecting the notion of exile and preventing it from happening again, is often referred to as "negation of exile", or "shlilot ha-golah" (C.f. Zerubavel 1995:17).

Views of the other – invisible, backward and aggressive

When it comes to descriptions of the other in the master commemorative narratives of Israeli society, the picture is more disparate. It is obvious that the populations of the Arab states as well as the Palestinian collective have served as crucial others in the construction of commemorative narratives. When reviewing the literature on views of Arabs and/or Palestinians in Israeli historical accounts, two major trends seem to be discernible.

The first trend concerns descriptions of Arab populations before the creation of the state. These accounts often paint a picture of backward, underdeveloped and culturally inferior individuals compared to the Jewish collective. This view is complemented with the theme regarding Arab unwillingness to negotiate for peace. The Arab population has thus also been understood as aggressors with little to no interest in reaching a peace agreement.

The other trend is the invisibility of Arabs and Palestinians in Jewish Israeli history, especially in accounts regarding the times before 1948.

> "More than the Arab was described as negative or positive – he was pushed into a forlorn corner, and sometimes was practically pushed out of consciousness." (Ben-Porat 2006:56)

The Palestinian experience can thus be partly described as subject to collective amnesia. While the Jewish sufferings, struggles and heroism have continuously been described, mourned and celebrated, the experience of the Palestinian Arab population has played a marginal role in the eyes of the public, especially before 1948.

> "[They were] not hated, not loved, not taken into consideration – part of the landscape." (Shapira: Visions in Conflict 68-70, in Ben-Porat, 56).

After 1948, the description of Arabs as being primitive has persisted alongside the theme as blood-thirsty killers, rioters and gangs forming an aggressive continuation of the anti-Semitism carried out during the Holocaust (Bar-Tal 2000b:146, Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005:165-

166)[45]. The Palestinians also became more visible in the Israeli Jewish narratives, as they were described as active counterparts in the 1948 war and in the hostile relationships that followed that war, which has continued into the present. When discussing the description of the other in Israeli historical narratives, most researchers agree that negative stereotyping has diminished somewhat with time, albeit still remaining in many instances. For example, a history school book from 1990 that was in use during the 1990s describes differences between Arab and Jewish workers in these terms:

> The Arab workers are more obedient, humble, licking the [Jewish] farmer's boots and ready to serve him in the field and at home, while the Jewish workers see themselves as free people, equal to the farmer, who have to fulfill their work duties but refuse to listen to scolding or curses. (Shahar 1990, quoted in Firer 2004:75)

Here, Arabs are indeed described as inferior and underdeveloped, compared to sophisticated Jews with European values. When describing battles between Jewish and Palestinian guerilla groups before the inception of the state, the Israeli groups are often described as "organizations" and "special squads", whereas their Palestinian counterparts are described in terms such as "terror-groups" and "gangs" (Firer 2004:76-77), which is quite revealing for the understanding of the two collectives as being at different stages of development. In this regard, some researchers such as Baruch Kimmerling (1983) and Gershon Shafir (1989) have connected the Israeli state building project as well as its attitudes towards the Palestinian minority to an Orientalist view (Said 1979) which was often seen as an important ingredient in colonialism (Bareli 2003, Penslar 2003).

The citizens of the Arab countries have been described as an ongoing threat since the times before the inception of the Israeli state and throughout the state's history. With regard to the Palestinian collective, which might be the most important other today, the

[45] Bar-Tal, and Bar-Tal and Teichman build their arguments on results of comprehensive studies where textbook material have been analyzed, such as Firer's (2004, 1980), Podeh's (2000), and others'.

picture is different. When it comes to the years leading up to the 1948 war, the national resistance of Palestinian Arabs to Zionist aspirations for national territory was largely ignored. This goes hand in hand with the fact that the Palestinian collective was understood as leaving their land before the realization of the UN partition plan. Thus the Palestinians were understood as abandoning their land following orders from the Palestinian elite, and when Jews came to inhabit the land, villages and houses were already deserted. This created an understanding of the Jewish people establishing their state according to the idea of "a land without people for a people without land" (Whitelam:58)[46], which also ties into the colonialist theme previously mentioned. One factor connected to this was that Palestinian guerilla warfare following the war of 1948 was not perceived as having any connection to the fact that the Palestinian community had lost land, villages and houses during the war, on whose wreckage Israeli kibbutzim were established later on (Sela 2005:207). Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin commented on the situation of the Palestinians and their claims to the land in 1969, on the specific topic of Palestinian claims to the lands of kibbutz Ein Hahoresh:

> "My friend, take care. When you recognize the concept of "Palestine," you demolish your right to live in Ein Hahoresh. If this is Palestine and not the land of Israel, then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who lived here before you came." (Yediot Aharonot, October 17, 1969)

The view of the other has hence been either invisible or marginal, and in the cases where the other has been visible, the descriptions have often included negative images of either backward primitiveness or aggressiveness and hostility (Campos 2007:53).

The Palestinian collective has thus in many ways functioned as the *threatening difference* toward which the victimized Israeli national

[46] This well-known Zionist slogan is often attributed to British Jewish author and Zionist activist Israel Zangwill (Blomeley 2005:133). In 1901, Zangwill wrote "Palestine is a country without a people; the Jews are a people without a country" in *New Liberal Review*. The message in this quotation indeed captures the spirit of the Zionist slogan above, even though it is formulated somewhat differently.

identity has been contrasted. The other is hence described in *unambiguously negative terms*. Before the creation of the state, the Palestinian collective was mostly described as invisible, and in the cases when they were visible they were mostly understood as backward and primitive. After the creation of the state of Israel, it was continuously described as aggressive, threatening and completely unwilling to reach any form of peace agreement. The other has thus been kept at distance, constituting a major security threat to the Israeli national community. The fact that the other has been described along those lines has created a strong moral argument for the legitimization of violent politics of exclusion.

Stabilized boundaries

The master commemorative narratives obviously draw stark distinctions between self and other. The Israeli Jewish self is described as utterly insecure, contrasted to the threatening aggressiveness of the Palestinian collective. Thus, boundaries between groups are described as stable, with mostly positive traits on one side and negative on the other. Ethnic boundaries are seldom crossed in the master commemorative narratives of the Israeli war of 1948.

The Jewish collective is described as morally superior, whereas the Palestinian counterpart is inferior culturally and morally. The Jews are also understood as victims of historical consequences, whereas the other, when visible, is mostly described as an aggressor. Thus, the two entities are kept apart, and the Jewish collective is seen as needing to engage in hard work in order to secure the collective from the doings of its counterpart. In this description, the *boundaries between groups involved in conflict are understood as stable.* The constituent themes regarding descriptions of the collective self and its counterpart in the War of 1948 have been inscribed in official memory institutions and have hence continued to leave imprints on understandings of the conflict ever since. Narratives of the past as described in the media, television documentaries, educational textbooks as well as official rhetoric and state-sponsored commemorative rituals and ceremonies have thus come to dominate most understandings of conflict, which has contributed to make the conflict an intractable one.

I now move on to discuss the Israeli narratives of Zionism and conflict, in which the commemorative master narratives have been carried on through time.

Traditional views on Zionism and conflict

As previously stated, commemorative narratives and their societal impact must be related to the over-arching narrative constellation in order to make further sense in a societal context. Throughout time they are carried on into various narratives that relate to identity construction. Thus it is key to discuss how narratives important for identity construction carry on notions of boundaries from the past into the present. In Israel, the narrative themes that most closely relate to the commemorative narratives of 1948, and have carried them on throughout time, are narratives of Zionism and conflict. They have been intimately related to the construction of Israeli national identities and elaborate on relations between the Israeli and Palestinian collectives. In the later debate analyses, it will also become evident that they were temporally as well as thematically related to the debates over New History. However, as they have elaborated somewhat differently on the notion of recognition it is more appropriate to discuss them alongside each other.

Narratives of Zionism

The goal of Israeli nationalism – the ideology known as Zionism — is to create and support a safe haven in the shape of a nation-state for the Jewish people of the world in the state of Israel (see e.g. Ehrlich 2003:70). Zionism originated in Eastern Europe in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Jewish state, known as the state of Israel, was declared in May 1948. That state was built according to the guiding principles of Zionism. Theodor Herzl's[47] project was secular

[47] Theodor Herzl, who wrote his manifesto *Der Judenstaat* ("The Jewish State") in1896, is often seen as the inventor of Zionism. His program aimed at creating "a state like other states", and can be interpreted as a reaction against the former particularism of Jewish life. Herzl's early work has, however, been heavily criticized from some directions, condemning his non-religious background and mission. The

in character, borrowing ideas and inspiration from the modern nationalisms of Europe.

Scholars of Zionism (C.f. Avineri 1981) often argue that Zionism in its early versions, before 1948, was more about the creation of "a state like other states", than with the religious content of Judaism (Dowty 1998:5). As the state was taking shape, further considerations had to be taken into account regarding what was to become its other governing principles and institutions. As societies for various reasons prioritize some ideas over others, different historical and contextual factors result in the rendering of superiority to one ideal regarding boundary drawing over others, which has grave implications for identification.

When the project of building the Israeli state began, the nineteenth century vision of the modern nation-state was used as its formative model (Avineri 1981:13, Gellner 1994, Ram 1998:213). The central component of Zionism thus strongly accentuates the boundaries of the Israeli Jewish national collective, in its focus both on religion (Judaism) and on secular nationalism. It also has vital elements of classic liberalism (Kimmerling 1985:262).[48] The liberal influences led to the introduction of ideas built on universalistic dimensions in the Zionist ideology, as well as the determination of the international orientation and cultural model adopted by Israeli society (Kimmerling 1985:265). The liberal components play an important role as counterweights to the heavily particularistic character of the elements emphasizing nationalistic characteristics and religious affiliation. Zionist politics tried to strengthen universalistic tendencies, mainly through the state-centered politics introduced by David Ben-Gurion, aiming to create a civic culture or "mamlachtiut" in Israeli politics (Shafir and Peled 1998:257). This was meant to work as a unifying force for the people of immensely varying backgrounds immigrating to Israel, and in this way all collectives

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spiritual thinker Ahad Ha'am has been one of the major critics of Herzl's works (c.f. Dowty, 1998:5).

[48] Kimmerling also emphasizes socialism as a core component of Zionism. As much as I agree with him on this point, this factor will be less emphasized here, as it plays a less important role in relation to the subject of this study.

within the state were to be included, as the state engaged in a boundary drawing practice that was not based on ethnic affiliation. These good intentions notwithstanding, many scholars agree on the meager results of "mamlachtiut" politics, in the sense of bringing about more equality when it comes to the socially as well as ethnically stratified Israeli citizens. The actual outcome may have served as unifying for the Jews of Israel since they came from different parts of the world, whereas an important minority, the Israeli Arabs, in reality were left out of the "mamlachtiut" efforts (Dowty 1998:84, Shafir and Peled 1998:257). The boundaries around the whole "Israeli" collective were hence understood as quite artificial in the minds of the Israeli public (Shafir and Peled 1998:258), as the most dominant forms of Zionism have emphasized ethnic bonds and separation between ethnic collectives.

After the 1967 war, when the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Israel, Neo-Zionism emerged. The people who belong to the neo-Zionist movement are mainly settlers and their nationalist supporters throughout the country (Ram 2003:27). Neo-Zionism has clear messianic components that were less accentuated when Zionist ideology was created but have grown more articulate through time (Aggestam 2004:130-131, Weissbrod 1997:49). This movement is especially in favor of populating the occupied territories for religious reasons. The Gush Emunim ("The Bloc of the Faithful"), pleading for a "Greater Israel" in both the current Israeli lands and the West Bank and Gaza, in their aggressive struggles for new settlements and refusal to give in to peace proposals returning any lands very much contribute to politics built on ethnic considerations. The peace process during the nineties was alarming to the Neo-Zionists as many of their ideological goals would be impossible if the peace process was carried through.

I thus conclude that master narratives of Zionism, as well as their more extreme forms, Neo-Zionism, uphold and fortify the understanding of the boundaries between identity and difference as stable.

During the first decades following the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the narratives regarding Israel's ongoing conflict with the Arab states converged with the master commemorative narratives describing the war of 1948 (Tessler 2006:177). Israel was defined as a defensive nation, struggling against expansionist Arab neighbors in a morally just conflict. Until 1967, that picture dominated in Israeli society. After the 1967 war, when Israel won what was seen as a miraculous victory over the surrounding Arab world, the picture slowly started to change. As Israel then conquered the West Bank of Jordan, the Gaza strip, and the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, a consciousness of the existence of a Palestinian population within the occupied territories started to emerge. As the occupation continued, master narratives regarding the conflict became challenged from many directions. Despite the criticism, they lived on and were communicated in official memory institutions such as educational material, war ceremonies and the military. In the Israeli master narratives of conflict, which were dominant up until the eighties, and then slowly started to be replaced during the peace process, the Palestinian counterpart were either invisible or described in negative terms. Hence, neither thin nor thick recognition of the Palestinian collective was present.

Absence of recognition and stable boundaries

The Israeli master commemorative narratives draw clear boundaries between Israelis and Palestinians in their descriptions of the history of both nations. It is evident that the opponent in conflict is blamed for past injustices, portraying the Israeli Jewish collective as a righteous victim throughout history. Moral legitimacy in the past is thus ascribed to Israeli national collective. The picture of the other in conflict is constantly immoral and illegitimate in a number of ways. The other is understood as aggressive and offensive, in light of the fact that the Israeli nation was weak and defenseless. The opponent's alleged suffering is delegitimized on the grounds that the Israeli nation was weak and inferior in numbers at the time, and the

Palestinian refugees fled as a response to orders from their own elite. The moral justness of the Israeli collective is described categorically, and this historical description justifies defensive measures on the part of the Israeli Jews representing past victims in the present.

When it comes to the master narratives of Zionism and conflict, the stable boundaries inherent in the master commemorative narratives have carried on into the present. Hence, they also underline the ethnic character of the Israeli national collective, rather than its civic or civil forms. Thus, the Jewish collective of Israel has been the ethos around which master national narratives and narratives of conflict have mainly revolved. Other collectives, such as Palestinians in the occupied territories, and Palestinian Arabs living in Israel, both Muslims and Christians, have been marginalized. The tendency to marginalize minorities was clear in the master narratives of Zionism, and was further enhanced in the exclusionary forms of Neo-Zionism, which grew stronger from the 1980s and onwards. It is thus clear that the moral boundaries inherent in the master commemorative narratives, portraying the Israeli Jewish collective as just in the past, clearly relate to the boundaries of the present moral community as presented by the Neo-Zionists, as well as other promoters of the master narratives of Zionism.

The boundaries between self and other are hence understood as stable, which is seen as necessary to secure the existence of the state of Israel. It has also been clear that parts of the collective that identify with or sympathize with the other in conflict are verbally moved to the other side of the stable boundary. The collective thus remains unambiguous and morally just, as unwanted elements of the self are identified with the other. This paints a picture of the future in which one's own collective is self-sufficient, and in which critics from both the inside and outside are disqualified because they are part of a morally unjust collective aligned with the enemy. When connected like this it is clear that the master narratives draw a trajectory from the past to the present and into the future, where the stability of boundaries between self and other understood as permanent and necessary. If this view is dominant, it clearly facilitates an understanding of why peace efforts, changes in the national ideology, as well as new formulations of history describing the opponent in

conflict as a victim and the collective self as a perpetrator, might be understood as threatening. In order to survive in the face of Arab aggression, boundary destabilizing maneuvers thus have to be averted through all means possible. There is hence no room for recognition of Palestinians in any of the master narratives discussed above. However, that changed somewhat during the 1980s and 1990s, as will be shown below.

After those concluding thoughts regarding boundaries and recognition within different Israeli master narratives, I move on to analyze the counter narratives according to the same conceptual framework.

The counter commemorative narratives

Introduction

In the early 1980s, previously classified documents concerning the Arab-Israeli war of 1948 were opened to the public. Throughout the following years, historians started to work with that material, resulting in some radical changes in the conceptualizations of the Jewish nation's War of Independence. Subsequently a number of previously unknown documents were published, such as volumes of official documents concerning the war, personal diaries, among which David Ben-Gurion's war diary might be the most notable, as well as the papers of the ruling party. The new material boosted interest in academic study of the war, and those studies started to be published in late 1980s and early 1990s.

Around 1987, a series of critical historical accounts questioning the Israeli commemorative narratives were published. The first author to do so was Simcha Flapan, a left-wing veteran of the Mapam-party[49], who in his book *The Birth of Israel: Myth and Reality* (1987), questioned the very foundations of earlier interpretations of the war. Flapan's book, taken less seriously due to his radical views on Israeli politics, stirred some controversy but did not attract

[49] A left-wing marxist party, which ceased to exist in 1997.

widespread attention within Israeli society. Following the publication of Flapan's book, a number of other works were published, inspired by his worldviews and fuelled by material in the newly released archives, which came to receive extensive attention. One of the most controversial of those books was Benny Morris' *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (1987), which became widely debated. Morris' analysis shattered the understandings of the Jewish collective during the war as being inferior in numbers, as well as describing them as committing mass expulsions, even though not according to any major strategic plan, of Palestinian inhabitants of what was to become Israeli land. Two other scholars who followed this trend were Avi Shlaim and Ilan Pappé. Shlaim's book, *Collusion Across the Jordan* (1988), also shatters the idea of voluntary flight of the Palestinians, and describes a flight forced by Israeli expulsions, due to secret plans with the leadership of Jordan, so that the two states would be able to share the East and West Banks of the Jordan River. Pappé's first book on the topic also regarded the 1948 war and is called *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: 1947-1951* (1993). Pappé also set out to address the "myths" constructed within the master commemorative narratives, and he accordingly addressed the topic of forceful expulsions conducted by the Israeli Defense Forces on the former Palestinian inhabitants of the state, in line with Morris and Shlaim making the Israeli Jewish collective responsible for the creation of the situation of the Palestinian refugees. Those were the works serving as inspiration for further scholars, questioning what had become known as historical truths in Israeli society.

In the following, I investigate in what ways Israeli national identity is described in the counter commemorative narratives; is it viewed in the same way as before, or is the description altered so that it can more easily exist alongside other identities?

Views of self – morally complex

In the writings and arguments within the various works of Israeli New History, several aspects of the views of self as described in the master commemorative narratives are questioned. Considering the fact that the self-image of weakness and inferiority as well as the one

of innocence regarding the creation of the refugee status of the Palestinian people are challenged; the moral standards of the Israeli collective in fact come under question. Several researchers addressed the alleged "David vs. Goliath-myth", and undermined the view of the Jewish collective as a weak, defensive David, fighting a strong, vindictive and aggressive Arab world portrayed as Goliath (Silberstein 1999:99). The military strength of the Israeli army at the time is estimated by the New Historians to be much greater than claimed earlier. The army is also said to be better equipped with weapons, which previously had been denied (Morris 1990:33).

The role of the Israeli forces as being not only defensive combatants but also expelling large numbers of Palestinians as well as committing war crimes such as massacres (Pappé 2003:115), also formed a decisive break with the self-image described in the master commemorative narratives. This questioned the morality of the Jewish collective, who according to Morris and Shlaim were far more strategic in their takeover of land and the related expulsion of Palestinians. In Shlaim's case this addressed the secret Jewish negotiations with the leadership of Transjordan regarding control over the Palestinian lands (Shlaim 1988). In the version of the war presented by Morris, the Jewish collective expelled Palestinians who were militarily inferior as well as less than willing to give up their lands and villages (1987). Thus the leading New Historians, Morris, Shlaim and Pappé, all agreed that the Palestinian refugee problem mainly resulted from expulsions enforced by the Jewish forces. Morris claims that there was no master plan for the expulsions, whereas Shlaim and Pappé both affirm that there was a Plan D ("plan dalet") in which a strategy for expelling the Palestinians from the lands was worked out beforehand. Also other historians, later active in the making of counter narratives regarding the 1948 war, such as Tom Segev (1986) and Baruch Kimmerling (2001:39), submit evidence for the existence of a grand expulsion strategy within the framework of "Plan D" (Blomeley 2005:130). Pappé asserts: "Plan D was a master plan for the expulsion of as many Palestinians as possible" (1999:94), whereas Morris argues that the flight of the Palestinians was "essentially a product of the war" (2001:38).

Not only were the Palestinians expelled in the war of 1948, according to Morris. The Israeli leadership after the expulsions worked hard to prevent the expelled Palestinian Arabs from returning to their homes and villages (this is extensively discussed in the chapter "Blocking a return" in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* 1987:155-196). According to Morris, some destruction of Arab villages and houses was caused during abandonment as well as a result of warfare. However, most of the demolition was claimed to be a result of vandalism, looting and deliberate demolition by the IDF units and members of neighboring villages during days, weeks and months immediately following the expulsions. Morris claims that very soon after the expulsions, plans to make the Palestinian exile permanent were beginning to crystallize within the Israeli elite. A "transfer committee" was working on how to make the "miracle of Palestinian exodus" everlasting (Morris 1987:160). According to the transcripts from the Israeli government's first official discussion of the refugee issue, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Sharett, said this on the issue:

> "[the refugees] are not coming back, and this is our policy that they don't come back. Then this should affect on how we negotiate and how we present it to the outside world. We do not need to encourage people to return. They need to get used to the idea that this is a lost cause, and that this change is a change that does not reverse." (quoted in Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:243)

This was supposed to be done through the wreckage of villages and housing, as well as the destruction of crops and preventing crops from being harvested, so that the refugees literally would have nothing to return to. This was later followed by the policy of establishing new settlements on abandoned villages, which little by little became part of the establishment of the new state.

Here, sustaining themes in the master narratives are shattered and the status of the self as morally just is questioned. The myths of "David vs. Goliath" as well as the establishment of "A land without people for a people without land" are overthrown. The morality of one's own collective is scrutinized and the result is that one's own collective has been strong, offensive and quite ruthless in its actions

toward the adversary in conflict. The constant historical insecurity of the self as described in the master commemorative narratives is thus questioned. In contrast to the view of self as pure, innocent and morally just in the master commemorative narratives, the counter narratives present a picture in which the Israeli state was "born in sin" (Morris 1990:8). In the counter commemorative narratives, the collective self is understood as morally complex and not thoroughly righteous, in the sense that it is capable of both good and bad deeds. The self might still be understood as insecure and victimized during the period of exile, but in the case of the 1948 war, the counter narratives described the Israeli Jewish collective as much stronger and thus less insecure than previously indicated.

Views of the other – morally complex

In the counter commemoratives narratives, the Palestinian collective is described as being in a vulnerable position at the time of creation of the new State, lacking institutional as well as military strength, being outnumbered and later expelled by the Jewish collective. They were also deceived by the Jordanian elite who, according to Shlaim's account, negotiated with the Israelis to rid the East Bank of Jordan of Palestinians in order to get hold of its lands (1988). The most significant alteration in the New Historians' view of the other was the visibility of the Palestinian experience of 1948. Al-Naqba ("the catastrophe"), which was a fundamental experience for the Palestinian collective and for the creation of Palestinian nationalism, which previously had been neglected in the Israeli description of the war of 1948, was thus introduced into Israeli historical consciousness. One might argue that the Palestinian experience of Al-Naqba had become the subject for collective amnesia in the Israeli master commemorative narratives.

The basic assumption here is that the major shift within the counter narratives of New History is the making visible of a formative Palestinian historical experience. Several researchers partaking in the making of the counter narratives of New History (C.f. Kimmerling and Migdal 1993: 279) highlight the importance of the Palestinian experience in the creation of Israeli history and

experience. The counter narratives of New History hence describe the Palestinian other as a victim of Israeli aggression and expansionism. The view is thus changed from an aggressive or invisible role to victimization. Even though not all Palestinian accounts of al-Naqba are recognized, the counter narratives of New History come close as the victimization of the Palestinian experience is acknowledged, together with an emphasis on the sometimes immoral acts committed by the collective self.

Here the Palestinian collective is understood as vulnerable, victimized and defenseless, sharply differing from the source of insecurity that they are described as being in the master commemorative narratives. Thus, the other Arab states in these narratives might have threatened the Israeli Jewish collective, whereas the Palestinian entity was a victim of historical circumstances. This is of course also vital when it comes to further discussion on how the counter narratives relate to identification. The other is thus not described as exclusively threatening, but also as victimized, which makes the conception of other in the counter narratives more morally complex.

The experience of al Naqba is recognized by all the New Historians, but to different degrees. The majority of researchers within the paradigm of New History make a moral standpoint in that they point to the immorality of the Jewish collective when it comes to the expulsions. Benny Morris, perhaps the most outspoken and public of the New Historians, later announced, however, that he stood by his view of history, but claimed that the acts of "ethnic cleansing" committed by the Jewish collective were justified and that the deeds vis-à-vis the Palestinian people also were justified, given the historical context (Pappé 2003). In a much noticed interview with journalist Ari Shavit in Haaretz, Morris made it clear that his moral judgments of the material significantly differed:

> "There is no justification for acts of rape. There is no justification for acts of massacre. Those are war crimes. But in certain conditions, expulsion is not a war crime. I don't think that the expulsions of 1948 were war crimes. You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. You have to dirty your hands. […] A society that aims to kill you forces you to destroy it. When the choice is between destroying or being destroyed, it's better to destroy." (Morris in Shavit 2004)

New Historians hence do not always condemn the expulsions of Palestinians on moral grounds. Rather they can be used in many different ethical arguments. In Morris' case, the particularistic mission of a nation-state for the vulnerable Jewish people justifies acts like ethnic cleansing and expulsions.

Toward permeable boundaries

In the counter commemorative narratives, the opponents in conflict are described in different terms than before. There is no denial of the victimhood created by the Holocaust. Other qualities of the self are emphasized, however. Thus, the self, apart from being a victim, is described as a perpetrator in another historical context. In this way the self is described in a more complex manner in the narratives of New History. When it comes to views of the other, that collective is also described as more versatile. Not all Arabs are described in the same fashion, but are rather understood as pluralistic, as some are seen as immoral whereas some, like the Palestinians during the expulsions of the 1948 war, are described as vulnerable victims of Jewish expulsions and elite negotiators of Israel and Transjordan, negotiating behind their back. Views of the Palestinian collective are thus shifted, as the Palestinians no longer solely are understood as perpetrators. In this account, they are the victims of the war of 1948. As the narratives describe Israeli attempts to block the return of Palestinian refugees as well as war crimes committed by the Israeli party, the whole discussion regarding Arab reluctance to negotiate for peace appears in another light. The truthfulness of the fact that the Arab and/or Palestinian party has been unwilling to reach peace agreements is questioned, as well as becoming a more understandable position given the atrocities carried out by the Israeli party during and after the war.

Boundaries between groups are thus described as permeable as the contrasts between them are blurred. The self comes to resemble former images of the other as it is understood as a perpetrator, whereas the other starts to resemble the self, as its victimhood is made visible. The boundary between identity and difference thus becomes more permeable, as morality and victimhood are ascribed to both groups, even though under different historical circumstances. The counter commemorative narratives thus display a destabilization of the self/other split, affiliated with thick recognition and relationship transformation. If and when identity and difference in the past are described anew, identifications in the present might be affected. Changed understandings of boundaries in the past thus also suggest the possibility to change understandings of boundaries between groups in the present. If this is so, the transformation of self, other, and boundaries between them might be understood as influencing the core constructs of groups involved in intractable conflict. The alteration is made possible by the fact that the narratives of New History contain elements of thick recognition. *Views of self and other are hence transformed when compared to the master narratives*. The central identity element of al-Naqba is recognized, meaning that the Israeli collective assumes responsibility as actively participated in the expulsion and uprooting of Palestinians. This means that important elements in the master narratives are renounced as the victimization of the self during the 1948 war is questioned.

I now briefly leave the counter commemorative narratives, as I investigate how their notions of boundaries are mirrored in counter narratives of Zionism and conflict.

Post-Zionism and the peace movement

Post-Zionism

There are today many variants of Zionism, reaching from secularist socialist accounts to far-right messianic fractions, and the direction of the ideology is constantly debated, both in academic circles and in political forums (see e.g Nimni 2003a:9-12 passim, Silberstein

1999:15-45 passim). However, from the early nineties and onwards, the master narratives of Zionism were challenged by the ideas of post-Zionism,[50] which not seldom has been connected to ideas of New History. The post-Zionists argue that:

> "Historians, together with authors, poets, painters, sculptors, journalists, teachers, and other intellectuals, artists and persons of letters – at a later stage including also social scientists – took active and even leading parts in the composition and propagation of the [Israeli] national narrative. Far from being a remote academic arbiter, Israeli academia was part and parcel of the national endeavour." (Ram 2003:30).

The writings of the post-Zionists coincide with those of the New Historians on the point that both describe a reality in which boundaries between groups are understood as permeable rather than stable. In the narratives of both post-Zionism and the counter narratives of New History, it is not the history and perceived realities of one group that is described. Rather, emphasis is put on the multiple truths and interpretations of reality and a multiplicity of narratives instead of the grand narrative of one group, as has been the case with traditional Zionism (Silberstein 1999:96-97). As stated by Nimni:

> "The controversial claim at the heart of post-Zionist arguments is that Israel should develop a type of civic identity and an institutional framework oriented to the universal values of liberal democracy. No ethnicity must be ontologically or institutionally privileged over any other." (Nimni 2003a:2)

[50] Post-Zionism has different connotations. One has to do with a temporal dimension, where Zionism is seen to have evolved into a post-Zionist state of affairs, with less socialism and collectivism, developing into a "more normal" liberal democray. The other is more of an ethical stance, where Zionism is seen as ideologically flawed, and in need of critical revision in order to catch up with other societies governed by liberal democratic practices (Nimni 2003:3). The second type promotes civic rather than ethnic identity markers. The strand of post-Zionism that has been mostly connected to New History is the ethical kind.

Over the years, narratives of post-Zionism have grown stronger in Israeli society[51]. Thus, when it comes to nationalism, permeable boundary drawing practices have gained momentum. This opens up for the possibility of understandings of the self as well as of the other as more complex, rendering the understandings of boundaries between self and other in the past, as well as in the present, permeable. This might also indicate that the description of the core construct of Israeli national identity is altered; it might be able to coexist with other ethnic identities without experiencing feelings of threat.

Counter narratives of conflict

In the 1980s, several events lead to the emergence of a critical narrative with regards to conflict, where the traditional image of Israel as a historical victim sacrificing soldiers in a morally just conflict according to principles such as "no alternative" and "purity of arms" was questioned. The first such event was the war starting in Lebanon in 1982 (Bar-On 1996:141, Sela 2005:212). The elite rhetoric regarding the invasion of Lebanon was couched in terms of national defense, and the war was supposedly conducted with no expansionist agenda. However, as Israeli soldiers started to report from the battlefield, and claimed that their orders were to drive as far into Lebanon as the fuel in their vehicles could take them, doubts were raised within Israel regarding the credibility of the elite when it came to the motifs behind the invasion (Bar-On 1996:140). As the war in Lebanon continued, and especially at the time of and after the massacres in Sabra and Shatila in 1982[52], a public soul-searching started, questioning the master narratives of conflict. The role of the military was questioned, and the moral righteousness of military power in unnecessary conditions was challenged (Sela 2005:212). In 1987, the Palestinian popular uprising known as the Intifada began. It

[51] The evolution of post-Zionism is further presented in Chapters Seven and Eight.

[52] During this massacre, carried out by phalangists in the Palestinian refugees camps of Sabra and Satila in South Lebanon, the Israeli army were charged of knowing all about the plans, but allowing the massacre to continue and thus failing to take action to prevent the massacre from occuring.

was spurred by an incident in which Palestinian civilians were killed by an Israeli vehicle. The Israelis declared that the event was an accident, whereas the Palestinian side declared that it was a cold-blooded murder perpetrated by an Israeli as an act of intentional aggression (Aggestam 1999:106, Bar-On 1996:219). What started as a spontaneous reaction to an isolated event in Gaza soon spread to the West Bank, resulting in an increased visibility of the Palestinians on the occupied territories inside Israel. The spontaneous Israeli reaction was to suffocate the popular uprising by force, and discussions began in Israel regarding how to solve the problems with the occupied territories.

Already during the seventies, the first comprehensive Israeli peace movement "Shalom Achshav" ("Peace Now") was born. It grew stronger over the years, and by the time of the invasion of Lebanon and later on the Intifada, it had become a considerable force within Israeli society. Even though the state together with the Israeli Defense Forces still formulated the master narratives of conflict, to which the majority of the public subscribed (Bar-On 1996), the peace movement and the ideas formulated by its proponents expanded and grew into a significant counter narrative over the years. At the time immediately following the massacres in Sabra and Shatila, "Peace Now", together with the kibbutz movement, the Labor party and other leftist parties organized a peace demonstration in which more than 250 000 participants gathered to protest the moral righteousness of the actions of the Israeli army. During the Intifada the counter narratives of conflict grew stronger and the rhetoric of peace, questioning the truthfulness of the master narratives of conflict, grew increasingly stronger.

During the time of the Intifada, the counter narratives of peace started to include the notion of ending occupation ("Dai Lakibush"), which included the concept of "two states for two peoples" (Bar-On 1996:223). Beginning with the birth of "Peace Now", the counter narratives of conflict unfolded within a plethora of protest groups triggered by the consciousness initially brought about by the Intifada. Thus, many commentators agree that the Intifada had immense impact on the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. The notion of suppression of unarmed civilians did not resonate well with

notions within the traditional narratives of conflict (Bar-On 1996:269, Yudkin 1995:216), such as "no alternative" and "purity of arms". The Intifada thus fuelled polarization in Israeli society with regards to the nature of relations with the Palestinian community as well as the future of occupation. The counter narratives of conflict is represented in ideologies of movements such as "Yesh Gvul" (there is a limit/border), which is composed of individuals who refuse to do their military service on occupied lands, "Women in Black", a politically and ideologically diverse women's movement, who every week during the Intifada dressed in black and stood in silence at road crossings, with signs in their hands saying "end the occupation!" both in Hebrew and in English. Thus, the counter narratives sprung into the Israeli peace movement, whose slogan "End the Occupation" was also picked up by the Israeli left peace camp, which later on was to negotiate a peace agreement with the PLO in the early 1990s. The Oslo accords were based on the principle of land in exchange for peace and aimed at returning occupied land in return for security guarantees from the Palestinian counterpart. Thus it is fair to say that the balance between counter and master narratives of conflict was tilted during the 1990s, as the counter narratives became favored by the Rabin-led government who started negotiations with the Palestinians based on the principle of giving away occupied land in exchange for peace and recognition.

The counter narratives of conflict are hence mainly preoccupied with the consequences of 1967. Thus, the major aim is to reverse the occupation and return to the status quo before 1967. Hence the Palestinian experience of al-Naqba is completely invisible in the narratives. The counter narratives of conflict resemble the counter commemorative narratives of the 1948 war in the way that they make the Palestinian counterpart visible as well as question the morality of the Israeli collective. Thus, the existence of legitimate Palestinian claims to occupied lands was recognized in the counter narratives of conflict. However, profound identity aspects of the Palestinian collective, foremost the historical consciousness of Al-Naqba, were not recognized.

In such terms, the counter narratives of conflict might be understood as bringing *thin recognition* of the Palestinian national

collective into Israeli consciousness. Policies promoting two states for two peoples as well as principles such as land for peace have indeed enforced the counter narratives of conflict. Thick recognition, however, has largely been absent from the Israeli counter narratives of conflict. Thus the peace process, mostly promoted by politicians and civilians who share the understandings of the counter narratives of conflict, can be said to strengthen recognition within Israeli society, although mostly in a thin rather than thick fashion. The counter narratives of conflict are not univocal. On the one hand, the other is described as "good" enough to be a partner for peace, which indicates that difference is not solely understood as a threat to the existence of Israeli identity. The collective self is also understood as more versatile, as moral righteousness is questioned both when it comes to the occupation of territories in 1967 and the invasion and subsequent war in Lebanon beginning in 1982. This might indicate a shift in the understanding of Israeli national identity.

Recognition and permeable boundaries

According to the New Historians, the Palestinians were weak victims of the war of 1948. They were expelled, humiliated, and transferred into involuntary exile, which until this day is an unresolved problem. This challenges the notion of Jewish uniqueness as it indirectly showed similarities between Palestinian victimization and characteristics usually ascribed to Jews in the Diaspora who have often been described as weak, defenseless victims fighting to overcome exile. The discussion of Jewish history as either unique or comparable is a vital theme that differentiates the counter versus master commemorative narratives (Levy 1999:55). The recognition of the Palestinian tragedy revealed that they too were victims of historical circumstances beyond their influence (Blomeley 2005:137). This can be understood as a destabilization of the self/other split inherent in core constructs in intractable conflicts. Blomeley underlines this process by stating:

> "recognizing and bringing to light the tragedy of the Palestinian 'nakba' in 1948, the New Historians brought to the surface of Israeli understanding the many similarities between the Palestinian and Jewish tragedies." (2005:137)

The Israeli debates over history that took place mainly during the 1990s can hence be understood as

> " […] the struggle over the plurality of representations of history in Israel. In actuality, what is involved here is a *contest for recognition of a multiplicity of differing Jewish experiences*, replacing the hitherto homogenous narrative, binding for one and all." (Diner 1995:151 [my emphasis])

Even though different New Historians present differing accounts of the expulsion of Palestinians, as well as different views on whether the expulsions were parts of an Israeli master plan for expulsion of unwanted individuals or not, they all in different ways recognize al-Naqba. That involves renouncement of deeply held views of Israel's past as well as recognition of deeply held identity aspects of the Palestinian counterpart. Thus, the accounts presented by the New Historians can be understood as conveying a new counter narrative, which ideationally brought thick recognition of the Palestinian collective and historical experience onto the Israeli public arena[53]. In many ways, the counter commemorative narratives of New History hence brought thick recognition into the narrative constellation of Israeli society, hence forming a challenge to the core construct of Israeli national identity.

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[53] Palestinian scholars such as Nur Masalha (1991:91) and Rashid Khalidi (quoted in Mahler 1997:12) have criticized the New Historians on the grounds that they only pay attention to previous Israeli research. They claim that they ignore earlier works by non-Zionist scholars, giving the impression that these narratives are the outcome of isolated debates among Israelis, having little to do with Palestinian sources. However, the Palestinian historians mainly validated the empirical claims of Israeli New History, indicating that the counter narratives recognize the Palestinian experience of al-Naqba. The Israeli New Historians might not embrace all different interpretations of the exodus from Palestine; however, it seems as if their main stories are quite similar.

Post-Zionism presented Israeli society with different views of self and other than the ones presented within the master narratives of Zionism. Here, both self and other are understood as more versatile and capable of doing both morally good and bad deeds. This leads to the fact that boundaries between groups shift from stable - as understood in the master narratives - to permeable. Post-Zionism emphasizes universalistic ideals, enhancing similarities between groups, rather than ethnic differences. Universal values such as human rights are also highlighted. Thus, the group boundaries emphasized here are more civic boundaries, addressing all the inhabitants of Israeli lands. Thus the boundaries within the post-Zionist narratives are in line with the moral boundary principles inherent in the Israeli counter commemorative narratives. The construction of Israeli national identity is thus altered in post-Zionism, as it emphasizes a plurality of views and identities, downplaying the importance of national identification. As post-Zionism has focused attention on discrimination and inequality in Israeli society, the Palestinian situation has become visible. Even though the fundamental experience of al-Naqba has not been consistently addressed by post-Zionism, fundamental identity traits of the Palestinian party have been recognized. According to the analytical dimensions in the concept of thick recognition, it can thus be concluded that post-Zionism in many respects offers thick recognition to Palestinian identity and experience.

Post-Zionism is inherently forward-looking in nature as it sprung from a concern with Israeli nationalism and its future development. Rather than focusing on the past, it has thus aimed to create inclusionary visions for a just future. Thus post-Zionism and Israeli New History are understood as intimately related as they share moral boundaries. When it comes to the counter narratives of conflict, views of self and other are altered when related to the master narratives of conflict, as they are understood to be versatile groups, capable of morally just and unjust deeds. However, as the counter narratives of conflict have focused so much on the experience of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands following the war of 1967, the fundamental Palestinian identity aspect of al-Naqba is overlooked. The peace movement, mostly representing the counter narratives of

conflict, thus focuses very much on the consequences of 1967, resulting in historical unawareness of the consequences of the war of 1948. Thus, as the counter narratives of conflict recognize the Palestinians as legitimate negotiation partners, as well as opening up for the possibility of the creation of a Palestinian state, it is evident that it contains vital elements of *thin recognition*. When it comes to the future, the counter narratives of conflict have some trust in the Palestinian counterpart and offer it thin recognition; however, there is a clear vision of the future as containing relations between the parties, albeit after a separation in the form of two nation-states. Thus the ethnic boundaries of the master narratives carry on into the counter narratives of conflict, which envision a peaceful future while incorporating a separation between the two ethnic groups.

Moving ahead

This chapter has presented empirical understandings and theoretical dimensions that will be central in the upcoming analysis of debates over New History. The Israeli counter narratives of commemoration contain ideas of thick recognition. Views of recognition have also been expressed in counter narratives of Zionism and conflict. Together they hence came to formulate a clear challenge vis-à-vis the master narratives when it comes to boundary drawing. That challenge is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Challenge

Outlining the analysis

The debate analysis is carried out in a sequential manner, according to the model introduced in Chapter Five. Thus, the debate cycles are divided into initial *narrative constellations*, in which the original balance between narratives of Zionism and conflict is presented. That is followed by a period of *social interactions* during which the relevant narratives are discussed and might begin to penetrate into different segments of society. The last part of the cycle reflects *narrative elaborations*, in which it can be discerned how the narrative constellation was influenced by the social interaction – thus I can conclude if and how the balance between master and counter narratives regarding a certain theme has changed during the cycle. If the narrative constellation has developed from little to substantially more recognition during the course of time, a *recognition shift* has been witnessed, which could, given the right circumstances, lead to the transformation of core constructs and subsequently to the transformation of relations in intractable conflicts. The next cycle, addressed in the following chapter, thus starts out with a "new" narrative constellation – the result of the narrative elaboration presented here. Through the analysis in this chapter, an understanding of the temporal sequence in the debate cycle and of the interplay between actors and structures leading to the initial gains of New History is hence achieved.

Narrative constellation: the initiation of New History

Since the very inception of the Zionist movement, an anti-narrative of Zionism has existed (Segev 2001:46, Shapira 1999:23). In Israel, this movement mostly resided in the outer margins of the left. Earlier on, those ideas were marginal in Israeli politics and culture; however, the advent of the New Historians changed all that (Shapira 1999:26).

When it comes to narratives of conflict, those were being much debated at the time when New History was introduced, which might have contributed to the way in which it was received. Harsh criticism was voiced against the occupation, and as Palestinian violence increased, the Israeli countermeasures grew more repressive (Weissbrod 1997:50). In Israel as well as in the international community, demands in favor of withdrawal from the territories were heard. Thus, the Intifada made the Israeli public conscious of the negative sides of occupation. Linkages between withdrawal and universal human rights principles were often drawn in the rhetoric of anti-occupation (Weissbrod 1997:51-52), downplaying the apparently stable boundaries inherent in ethnic identification. Following Prime Minister Begin's speech regarding the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, in which he referred to the war as a "War of Choice" (which is quite the opposite of the before mentioned principle of "No Alternative"), the national consensus around the valued notion of "No Alternative" started to crumble, allowing for critical reexaminations of the country's history (Shlaim 1999:290). The current political polarization in Israeli society, together with the increased confidence created by the Madrid and Oslo processes subsequently, created an atmosphere allowing for self-evaluation and criticism (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:246).

The peace process, which started with secret negotiations during the late 1980s and culminated in the signing of the DOP in 1993, also contained notions of understanding and incorporation of previously neglected narratives, some of which were voiced in Israeli New History. This meant thin recognition of the existence of the Palestinians on the occupied territories, as well as a focus on the rights and identities of minorities within Israel, mainly the Israeli Arabs (Weissbrod 1997:59). The peace process in general made Israelis more positive toward reassessing their historical understandings than ever before (Shapira 1995:33). Here empirical linkages between narratives of thick and thin recognition can be discerned. At the same time, ideological discussion regarding Zionism and its socio-economic foundations was on the rise. Narratives of Zionism were hence also in flux at the time of introduction of New History, which can be related to its initial success. One trend around this time was

the liberalization of Israel in economic terms. Earlier on, Israeli politics mainly led by the Labor Party had been strongly influenced by socialism, and hence to a large extent society experienced public control over many societal functions. At this time, economic liberalization and privatization progressed remarkably, preparing ground for foreign investments and advancement of the free market (Ben-Porat 2006:152). With this "globalization" of the market, the Americanization of Israeli culture became remarkable[54] Some even argued that the globalization of the economy served as a rationale for peace, so that increased economic interdependence within the Middle East and globally would decrease the degree of violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Ben-Porat 2006:167). This tendency was clear in Shimon Peres's blueprint for the future called "The New Middle East" which was presented shortly before the Oslo agreements. The links between peace and a globalized economy are clear in Peres' formulations:

> "Peace between Israel, the Arab states, and the Palestinians will eliminate an important source of tension, if not the most dangerous. Instead of visions of blood and tears there will rise visions of happiness and beauty, life and peace. We are at a historic crossroads. Do we choose the path of the tongues of fire, billowing smoke, and rivers of blood, or of blooming deserts, restored wastelands, progress, growth, justice and freedom? The higher the standard of living rises, the lower the level of violence will fall." (quoted in Aronoff 1993:46)

Here the counter narratives of Zionism, in their more socio-economic aspects, were clearly related to narratives of conflict. Other important tendencies at this time were the pluralization of cultures and lifestyles (Ram 2000:235, Silberstein 1999:95). The collectivism of traditional Zionism came under question, as many belonging to the younger generation began to pursue the western "good life" (Silberstein 1999:95). Israel's cultural scene also experienced swift changes. With the arrival of satellite TV during the nineties, the televised media were no longer controlled by the state, leading to an

[54] For an elaborate discussion on the Americanization of Israel, see Segev (2001).

influx of non-Israeli media, broadcasting non-Israeli perspectives of events. Some commentators assert that Israel went through a "privatization revolution" during this time, and that revolution allegedly also had an impact on collective memory, which went through its own phase of privatization (Gutwein 2010:36). This trend pointed toward individualization of Holocaust memory, commemorating "every person and every name", instead of the whole collective of victims. For some, this offered ways to memorialize the Holocaust without marginalizing Israeli minorities who did not claim membership in the historical experience of the Holocaust. According to some, this individualized memory held a promise of being less xenophobic and less self-righteous than the nationalized, collective memory of the Holocaust inherent in the master commemorative narratives of Zionism (Gutwein 2010:37-39). Those trends can be seen as antagonists to the boundaries inherent in nationalism, enhancing ethnic collectivities and potentially eroding them from below.

Israel hence experienced a whole range of cultural and ideological "earthquakes" as general notions of national politics, economy, conflict, and culture were questioned from conservative as well as politically more radical factions (Segev 2001:133). The rapid changes led an increasing number of Israelis to view Zionism as outdated. In turn, this led Zionist leaders to adopt a highly defensive posture (Gutwein 2010:39-40, Silberstein 1999:94). Taken together, those trends led to a decline of Zionist ideology, as the rapidly changing cultural, economic, and social landscapes together with altered political conditions led a growing number of Israelis to regard Zionism as obsolete in the new, globalized and pluralized Israel (Idalovichi 2004:622, Silberstein 1999:95). Thus, the master narratives of Zionism were challenged as traditional narratives of the national were under attack from various directions.

One can thus conclude that Israel experienced a change in general political climate during the 1980s and 1990s, which was a factor favoring new interpretations of traditional narratives (Shlaim 1999:290). Narratives of Zionism and conflict were clearly challenged from various directions by counter narratives enhancing differing boundary-drawing principles on many levels. Many commentators

agree on the fact that the initiation of the historiographical debates indicated a certain maturity of the Israeli society (Bar-Tal 2009, Naveh 2009, Sela 2009). Since the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, its leading politicians had been preoccupied with nation-building and state creation through various policies, during which time questioning of the nature of that state was almost unthinkable (Ben Yosef-Hirsch (2007) as well as Uri Ram (2009), talks about the Israeli history revision in terms of breaking a taboo). When the archive laws were changed in the 1980s, several circumstances, among which Israel's maturation as a state can be mentioned, combined with the opening of previously closed archives, resulted in the actual questioning of the moral rationale behind the foundation of the state of Israel (Diner 1995:148).

It is obvious that many different narratives were in flux at the time when Israeli New History was introduced. The master narratives of Zionism and conflict were alive and well, albeit being challenged from various directions as indicated above. Counter narratives promoting permeable boundaries between groups were to be found in the different spheres of economics, culture, conflict and nationalism, as well as in politics. In all those different domains, new claims for identity were raised. Thus, "old" identities were broken down to a certain extent and new ones were created, as new stories were being told and submitted to audiences, presenting new demands for recognition. According to Ringmar's discussion, the narrative constellation present in Israel at the time of the introduction of New History can thus be defined as a formative moment (1996:83). Different narratives presenting the public with thin as well as thick recognition, describing communal boundaries as permeable rather than solid, facilitated an interpretation of Israeli history in different ways than before. Following the theoretical discussions in previous chapters, this in turn makes a recognition shift possible, if and when the counter narratives of New History penetrate further into Israeli public consciousness and memory institutions. In this section, I established that the narrative constellation at the time of the introduction of Israeli New History provided circumstances that could have contributed to the fact that it also initially became quite successful when introduced to a larger public. The narratives of New

History must thus not be understood in isolation but rather as standing in an intimate relationship with other narratives in Israel at that time, also harboring notions of recognition and permeable boundaries. In the following section, I look at the debate that followed the publication of the works of the Israeli New Historians, as I venture into the social interaction between memory agents that took place in the Israeli debates over New History.

Social interaction: challenge and delegitimization

The very first accounts of the new version of historiography were found within academia. The first wave of "New Historians" to question "traditional" Israeli historiography did so on positivist grounds. Following the opening of previously closed Israeli archives in the early 1980s, a new generation of researchers, most notably Avi Shlaim and Benny Morris, published works that challenged traditional views of the events during the war of 1948 (C. f. Morris 1987, Shlaim 1988). The first historical controversy thus considered the "correct" description of the Arab Israeli war following the Israeli declaration of independence in 1948. The "New Historians", as mentioned in the previous chapter, shattered traditional myths of the war and offered new accounts of the events, claiming that they were closer to the "historical truth". Morris commented on his own research process:

> "From the new documents of that period it became clear that much of what had been told to the people - to children at school and adults in newspapers - in the memoirs and historical writings - was in the best instances distortion and in many other instances simply the ignoring of facts and plain lies" (quoted in Silberstein 1999:92).

Tom Segev in the same vein claimed that his book:

> "shattered a firmly established self-image and exposed as mere myths a large number of long accepted truisms" (Segev 1986:viii)

Those critical accounts started intense debates within academia, regarding historiographical method and its implications. Still, however, this first wave of "New Historians" remained mainly conservative, as they adhered to positivist and empiricist views of history (Naor 2001:140, Pappé 2003:106).

The second generation of "New Historians" based their critique on a more post-positivist account. They did not aspire to present the "correct" version of history, but rather questioned the objectivist claims of traditional historiography and insisted that a pluralistic view of history, and history viewed as socially constructed, would better serve the interests of society and also incorporate groups that had formerly been excluded from the official history production. Another trend visible in the second generation of historical critique was the description of the Zionist project as part of colonialism.

The most notable scholar within the second wave was Ilan Pappé. He advocated a multi-perspectival view of history and denied that objectivity is a matter of the correspondence of interpretation to fact or events (Silberstein 1999:107). Another scholar who applied this model was Baruch Kimmerling, who in his *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimension of Zionist Politics* compared the colonizing process of the Jews in Palestine with the colonial type of immigration and settlement in the Americas, Africa and Australia (1983:8). Other scholars such as Gershon Shafir followed in his footsteps and contributed colonialist interpretations of Israeli history (C.f. Shafir 1989). The narratives presented in the second wave of New History did not differ much in substance from those presented by the positivist "New Historians". Both focused on narratives enhancing different perspectives, recognizing groups that had previously been excluded from the master commemorative narratives, even though they had different theoretical and meta-theoretical outlooks. Ilan Pappé's work, even though he insists on a postmodernist and deconstructivist view, is characterized by a quite traditional political-diplomatic narrative (Howe 2000:243). Even though the New Historians thus claimed to have differing meta-theoretical outlooks, the defenders of the master commemorative narratives still attack all the New Historians alike for their supposed postmodernism (Almog 2000:243).

Shabtai Teveth was a vocal critic of the New Historians' work, and accused the New Historians of contaminating their historiography with ideological and political messages (Silberstein 1999:101). According to his view, historiography should be

independent of political concerns, and it is possible as well as desirable to separate political interests from scholarly analysis, interpretation and writing. According to Teveth´s reading, the New Historians contributed a "farrago of distortions, omissions, tendentious readings, and outright falsifications" (1989:33). Teveth also stated that the common denominator for the New Historians is their inclination to side with the Palestinians and delegitimize Zionism (1989:24). These criticisms were to recur frequently in the course of the debates.

After going on in confined historiographical forums, the controversies over the new scholarship spread throughout academia during 1994-1995. On 10 July 1994, more than 500 people gathered in a lecture hall at Tel Aviv University to listen to historians and sociologists debating each other's work. The event was the climax of several months of historiographical controversy in Israeli media (Lustick 1996:196). The debate was also carried into respected academic journals like *History and Memory* and *Israel Studies* about that time. The debates also flowed into the public sphere, taking place in the largest daily broadsheets, like *Ha'aretz, Yediot Aharonot* and *Davar*. The debate thus spilled over into the public realm (Blomeley 2005:127). The two largest universities in Israel, Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, organized conferences on the work of the New Historians and on analyses of the debate they had provoked. These conferences were open to the public and received major public attendance and attention. The media paid attention to the New Historians as well as their critics as they were interviewed in several Israeli radio and TV talk shows.

The debate was hence increasingly spread to the public, and was considered by Israeli politicians. Members of the Knesset such as Amnon Rubinstein and Yael Dayan sat at public roundtables with representatives of the New Historians and their critics as well as with Palestinians and other scholars. On both occasions the MKs expressed concern that the theses of the New Historians, especially regarding the Palestinian refugee problem and its causes, could cause potential harm to the future of Israel (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:246). This says something about the sensitivity of the issue of New History, as MKs Dayan and Rubinstein, both considered dovish leftists in the

Israeli political context, were provoked and disturbed by the works of the New Historians.

The media coverage that the New Historians received included reactions from columnists, biographers, journalists, public figures, politicians, and many ordinary citizens (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:242). The springboard to the public debate was of course the academic debates regarding historiography, which in turn rapidly transformed into debates regarding the preferred nature of Israeli society. What started as a dispute over the historiography of the Jewish settlement in mandated Palestine thus soon turned into a public debate over national identity (Levy 1999:59-60). In 1994, Yisrael Landers wrote one of the first public attacks on "New History":

> "What has previously been known in limited academic circles should now be revealed to the community at large: There has arisen a scholarly school among Israeli social scientists that challenges the Zionist world view, the Zionist settlement of the land of Israel, and the right of the state of Israel to exist." (quoted in Silberstein 1999:114)

The following debate focused a lot on morality. The legitimacy of the state of Israel was seldom directly addressed by the "New Historians'" writings; however, the nature of the state and its focus on Judaism was constantly discussed. Despite this, writers in the public debate, such as Landers, tried to depict the New Historians as delegitimizers of the Israeli state, because they point out that in some respects it "was born in original sin" (Blomeley 2005:33, Morris 1990:8). Interestingly, this in turn was coupled with other assumptions, as the New Historians were said to be self-destructive and driven by a biological urge for self-destruction (Silberstein 1999:114). One who especially emphasized this was Aharon Megged, whose argument linked the New Historians' narratives to anti-Semitic views, aspiring to the destruction of the state (Megged quoted in Silberstein 1999:115). In this way, the New Historians were linked to sworn enemies of the State of Israel, such as militant Palestinians and anti-Semites. Megged claimed that the New Historians had a "suicidal impulse" and that they were part of a new wave that increasingly distracted and weakened the immune system of Israeli society. He also charged the New Historians with providing ammunition to

Israel's enemies, and, through the delegitimization of the Zionist project, endangering the very existence of the Jewish state because it was born in sin:

> "A few hundred of our 'society's best', men of the pen and of the spirit – academics, authors, and journalists, and to these one must add artists and photographers and actors as well – have been working determinedly and without respite to preach and prove that our cause is not just: Not only that it has been unjust since the Six Day War and the 'occupation', which is supposed to be unjust by its very nature; and not only since the founding of the state in 1948, a birth which was itself 'conceived in sin' […]" (1994)

Here, critics within the Israeli collective are clearly delegitimized and identified with the other side of the conflict which was allowed to keep the perceived unity of their own collective intact whereas placing unwanted elements of the self with the immoral other.

The uniqueness of the Jewish collective experience was an important theme in the master commemorative narratives, a theme highlighted by the collective memory of the Holocaust. The New Historians hence contested the theme of uniqueness, which had been prevalent in Israeli Jewish collective memory. The narratives of the New Historians in turn conveyed a Palestinian historical experience that has also been permeated by loss and victimhood. This is clear proof that the New Historians showed little sympathy for the view that the humanitarian disaster of the Holocaust would have legitimated violence against the local population of Palestine in order to serve the moral cause of the creation of a Jewish homeland. The fact that Israeli national history is so intermingled with narratives of legitimation resulted in that the new interpretations of history culminated in a debate on the legitimacy and identity of the Israeli state as well as the national collective, reaching far beyond the professional boundaries of historiography (Diner 1995:149). Anita Shapira is an Israeli historian and a moderate critic of the New Historians' works. She asserted that due to the massive trauma inflicted upon European Jewry during the Holocaust, the huge waves of Zionist immigration into Palestine as a response must be viewed with a culturally relativist approach (Blomeley 2005:134). In her argument:

> "not every colonization movement is to be dismissed out of hand, and not every national liberation movement, by definition, sacred" (1995:69).

This reasoning clearly indicates that some historical traumas are more relevant than others and might lend legitimacy to future violent battles for independence. Here it is clear that historical references are connected to narratives of legitimacy in the master narratives of commemoration. On the other hand, Shapira also clearly indicates that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affects the ramifications of Israeli historical consciousness:

> "If the peace process is carried forward to a successful conclusion, and Israel is welcomed as a fully recognized polity among the states of the Middle East, then the perspective of the past will be reinforced, whose rudiments are already evident, though only intermittently in the writings of Avi Shlaim and Benny Morris: the perspective of realism. When reality comes more closely to approximate the moral ideals, moralism will become redundant. We will see this thick and twisted conflict more accurately and more humanely. And the power of discourse may succeed where the power of arms has failed". (1999:36)

The debate later moved on to broader layers of society, no longer solely taking place on the pages of daily newspapers. For example, an organization named "Ha-Tikva" ("hope", and also the title of Israel's national anthem) was founded, in order to save Israel from the alleged "onslaught of Post-Zionism" (Weissbrod 1997:58). Another such group was "Women in Green", an activist movement working for the vision of a Greater Israel, thus part of the Neo-Zionist movement, who also worked against the view of history portrayed in the narratives of the New Historians (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:133). Prominent promoters of the peace camp also felt obliged to announce that the quest for peace had nothing to do with the end of the Jewish state. They defended the existence of the Jewish state on the basis of the long persecution of the Jewish people, ending up in the Holocaust, claiming that this was ethically justifiable, even if the history of Israel's early years was different and somewhat more complicated than they had believed earlier (Weissbrod 1997:58). This is indicative of the tension between different boundary drawing

practices within Zionism. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the peace movement was to some extent driven by universalistic values favoring permeable borders between ethnic groups. The particularistic claim of justification due to the Holocaust enhancing stable ethnic boundaries is hence quite contradictory to other values within the movement.

It is obvious that the narratives of New History stirred intense feelings among its critics: academics, public commentators and the public. In the next section, which regards the third and last step of the first narrative cycle, the results of the social interaction, called the narrative elaboration, is addressed. I assess the balance between counter and master narratives that succeeded the social interaction covered above.

Narrative elaboration: toward thick recognition

Now "a cultural civil war" raged within Israeli society (Wurmser 1999). This resulted in a gradual change within Israeli media, as well as education policies. In the early 1980s, a TV series had been produced called "The Pillar of Fire". This documentary series covered the period before the establishment of the state of Israel and in many details converged with the master commemorative narratives of Israel. In order to celebrate Israel's 50 years anniversary in 1998, the "Tekumma" series was produced. The name Tekumma also alludes to the master commemorative narratives, and picks up the thread where "Pillar of Fire" ended. Tekumma was a 22-part documentary, broadcast by the Israel Broadcast Authority, showing Israel's history since the creation of the state, then 50 years ago. The New Historians were reluctant but quite positive to the series, because not only showed stories from the perspective of the master commemorative narratives, but also actually included critical voices and eyewitnesses from the Palestinian experiences from the war of 1948. However, some criticism was voiced, due to the fact that the series was said to be framed within traditional Zionism, an example of this being its name, coined within the traditional Zionist narrative,

meaning the resurrection of the Jewish people on the redeemed land of Palestine (C.f. Pappé 1998:99).

In many respects, the series echoed the arguments and narratives of the New Historians. In its coverage of the 1948 war, it showed not only the Israeli side, but also incorporated the Palestinian sufferings, showing "the expulsion, dispossession and killing of Arabs" (New York Times 1998). Ronit Weiss-Berkowitz, the writer-director of one episode portraying Palestinians who engaged in terrorism to fight for the return of their land, stated that she wanted to portray:

> "the creation of the ideology behind terrorism... We Israelis think that we have a monopoly on blood, tears and pain, but of course this is not true. We know our side in this story. I wanted to present the other side, loudly." (quoted in Schnell 1998:1)

Then Communications Minister Limor Livnat harshly criticized the series, claiming that it was a propaganda film for Israel's enemies. She also claimed that she stopped allowing her son to watch it. She asked rhetorically:

> "Why do we have to sit on the defendant's bench in a series run by public broadcasting in Israel?" (quoted in Miller 1998)

The Israeli media paid great attention to the series, and the daily Haaretz conducted a public opinion poll asking if Israeli society was ripe for a critical assessment of history. Many were surprised by the results of the poll, as 70 % of the respondents said "yes". The series also had high ratings, which was unexpected. In the poll, the public, regardless of gender, religion or political affiliation, responded that: "Even if I don't agree with this or that item, this series is worth seeing." (Schnell 1998:2) Heavy criticism was directed at the series, mainly from the center and left in the Israeli political spectrum. This critique held that not enough emphasis was given to the achievement of what would be described as the pioneering years of Zionism (Schnell 1998:1). Most of the material in the series, in spite of strong criticism, was based on eyewitnesses and evidence from people in the field. Yigal Eilam, one of the senior advisors in the making of

Tekumma, claimed that this decision was made in order to affirm the authenticity of the TV series, even though its critics argued that interviews with historians and VIPs would be more authoritative historical sources. The makers of the series deliberately tried to represent Israeli history in all its complexity in order to let the viewers make their own interpretations. This resulted in the strategy of assigning different directors with diverging outlooks to each episode, guaranteeing that there would not be a concentrated control of the series, thus assuring that it would not portray a uniform approach to Israeli history (Eilam quoted in Schnell 1998:2-3). It is thus clear that Israeli media started to broadcast views of history, reaching a large majority of the public, which were partly inspired by the narratives of New History. Hence, parts of the public marketplace, as constituted by the media, were changed in favor of the narratives of New History. The media hence offered more diversified views to the Israeli public than before when it came to commemorative narratives of the nation.

An important official memory institution, communicating commemorative narratives to Israel's younger public, is the education system. Due to the influence of the New Historians in Israeli universities, changes in the school curriculum were discussed in the early nineties. One of the most influential figures in the Education Ministry's Education Committees was Israel Bartal (Hazony 2000b:2). Already in the 1970s, Bartal and others tried to break free from ideology and embarked on a systematic critique of the principles of Zionist historiography. When that project ended, he stated, "there were virtually none of its teachings that they did not reject". In the early eighties, committees were assigned to modify goals and content of the history curriculum (Al-Haj 2005:54). Today Bartal claims that the "Zionist narrative has disappeared from the academic world", which in his view is part of the explanation behind the changes in Israeli textbooks during the 1990s. In 1991, committees were commissioned to review and revise curriculums on Israeli history, Jewish history, literature, Jewish studies, civics, and archaeology. The curriculums from the 1970s were deemed outdated by the committees (Hazony 2000b:2).

Bartal was the one responsible for the revision of the school history curriculum. In 1998, he claimed that:

> "There is no longer one accepted historic truth […] The old history books, which in earlier years presented the Zionist narrative as an undisputed historical fact, do not fit in with the [present] historical and political discourse after the myths have been smashed." (quoted in Hazony 2000b:3)

In a magazine for Israeli schoolteachers, Bartal also asserted that:

> "The victory of Zionism in Palestine was the catastrophe of the local Arab population. We have to teach this, and to show that nationalist movements are, by their nature, the saviors of one people and the destroyers of another." (quoted in Hazony 2000b:7)

Moshe Zimmerman, another important figure in the curriculum process, announced in 1994 that the old curriculum would be revised:

> "We've incorporated subjects that were not studied until now, such as the history of the third world […] learning about the [Jewish] people and the state [of Israel] appears in the program, but certainly not as a subject of primary importance." (quoted in Hazony 2000b:3)

The Zimmerman curriculum was released in 1995 (Hazony 2000b:5). It included Jewish history as a component of world history rather than an independent subject, and was indicative of the move from agenda-driven univocal commemorative narratives to a view that incorporates critical accounts and challenges to traditional national realms of memory (Yogev 2010:10).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first generation of Israeli history scholars portrayed the War of Independence as the Jewish David defeating Arab Goliath. This view was expressed in many works of history, perhaps most notably in Leon Uris's best-selling novel *Exodus* (1958). That narrative had been codified into different textbooks for Israeli schools, such as the *Book of the Haganah* - a history of Israel's pre-state army edited by the former Minister of Education and etched into the consciousness of Israeli schoolchildren. Such collective memories have played an important role in shaping Israeli policy toward the Palestinians (Mahler 1997:2). The changes in the curriculum now led to the introduction of a number of new history books – of which three have become the most controversial: *A World of Changes* edited by Danny Yacobi (1999), *Passage to the Past* by Kezya Tabibian (1999) and *The Twentieth*

Century, on the Threshold of Tomorrow (1999) by Eyal Naveh (Bronner 1999, Firer 2004). In these books, the role of Zionism was downplayed, and other narratives describing the history of the state of Israel were incorporated together with the traditional Zionist ones. It is clear that there are quite substantial differences between the new schoolbooks and the traditional ones. A textbook named *The Silver Platter*[55] from 1984 presented the history of the 1948 war in those terms:

> "The numerical standoff between the two sides in the conflict was horrifyingly unbalanced. The Jewish community numbered 650,000. The Arab states together came to 40 million. The chances of success were doubtful and the Jewish community had to draft every possible fighter for the defense of the community." (quoted in Bronner 1999:2)

In Eyal Naveh's book the power balance between the collectives is instead described like this:

> "on nearly every front and in nearly every battle, the Jewish side had the advantage over the Arabs in terms of planning, organization, operation of equipment and also in the number of trained fighters who participated in the battle." (quoted in Bronner 1999:2)

The middle school textbook called *A World of Changes* produced by the Education Ministry, and edited by Danny Yacoby, might be the most radical of the three. It thoroughly discusses the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem and mentions localities in which Jewish combat forces conducted expulsions (Bronner 1999). Kezia Tabibyan, author of the ninth-grade textbook *Passage to the Past,* which included a description of the 1948 massacre of Deir Yasin, an event that had never been described in a 9th grade textbook before, comments:

[55] Clearly alluding to the well-known poem referred to in the previous chapter.

> "If I want to educate the citizens of Israel after 2000 they must know that there is another point of view about things like our war of Independence […] They must deal with Deir Yasin. They must know that there was another people who had their life here." (quoted in Firer 2004:47)

Another book, written by Lifshitz, comments on the massacre:

> "However, it is one of the black marks on the conscience of the Jewish nation and proves that in a nation's war for independence there are dark areas in which horrible things were done that, under no circumstances, can be understood or justified." (quoted in Firer 2004:47)

Another textbook inspired by the New Historians also mentions the massacres and expulsions and claims that:

> "The flight by the majority of the Arab population was encouraged by the Israeli authorities." (Oren quoted in Firer 2004:47)

Here is thus an example of the theme of "original sin" that is also to be found in Morris's work. It is evident that the myth shattering and arguments of de-justification of the New Historians also can be found in Israeli school textbooks following the Zimmerman curriculum. Thus the narratives of the New Historians started to influence history as it was taught to Israeli schoolchildren. This can be understood as an important institutional change, as history as taught in schools presumably has a strong impact on the collective identifications of the future population. Daily newspapers were also influenced by New History, which was evident when journalist Rozental in Ha'aretz 1993 wrote about the Palestinian victims of the 1948 war in terms of refugees (Firer 2004:35). However, Elie Podeh, who conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of the change in history textbooks, claimed that even though they were far more unbiased than traditional accounts, they still to a certain degree presented stereotypical and delegitimizing views of Arabs (2002:149-150).

The critics scorned the books following the new curriculum and criticized them on the grounds that they were representative of universal history, which was understood as undesirable, as they thus were completely neutral toward the Zionist case (Hazony 2000b:5).

Aharon Megged commented on the New History curriculum: "Why not just translate the Palestinian books for our children and be done with it?" He also claims that the new textbooks are:

> " […] an act of moral suicide that deprives our children of everything that makes people proud of Israel." (quoted in Bronner 1999)

The debates over history were also visible in university education. When studying the narrative elaboration following the social interaction, some change in official memory institutions can be discerned, pointing toward a shift compared to the initial narrative constellation. As some institutional change took place with the introduction of the counter commemorative narratives into vital official memory institutions such as important education fora as well as into the public arena of media broadcasts, I suggest that this change should be understood in terms of a recognition shift. It took approximately 10 years from the first publication by the New Historians until they reached history and civics textbooks. That much time was needed as the new and controversial ideas had to go through certain public acceptance, confirmation from the Ministry of Education and a process of writing and publishing textbooks (Firer 2004:36). The shift in recognition took place as the counter commemorative narratives of New History grew stronger and through their placement in important memory institutions with the potential power to affect identifications of Israeli youth over time. This institutional change could in the fullness of time contribute to a shift in recognition in the identifications of the public. It can thus be concluded that the first cycle brought a recognition shift to Israeli society regarding the understanding of commemorative narratives. The shift was brought into some vital official memory institutions crucial in the communication of commemorative narratives to the public.

When it comes to the topic of conflict transformation, some commentators assert that ideas of thick recognition inherent in the counter narratives of New History spilled over into the peace process and affected negotiations in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This might have been most visible in the Israeli discussions on the

Palestinian refugee problem, which directly concerned recognition of the Palestinian Naqba:

> "In the last round of the formal Israeli-Palestinian peace talks at Taba, Egypt (January 2001), Israeli negotiators went where no Israeli officials have gone before: they negotiated over numbers related to the return of some Palestinian refugees into Israel, and considered acknowledging the Palestinian tragedy and Israel's share of responsibility for the exodus of approximately 700,000 Palestinians during the 1948 war." (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:241)

No agreement was reached at the Taba negotiations, but several commentators assert that the parties were closer to an agreement than ever, partly due to the intense discussions over the refugees (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:250, Pundak 2001). The changes in the representation of the refugee problem in Israeli public consciousness can be understood as a result of the influence of the counter commemorative narratives (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:52). This indicates that the counter narratives of New History had influenced parts of the Israeli negotiating team and made them accept that Israel had an active role in the creation of the refugee problem. It can hence be assumed that the negotiators were less constrained by the master commemorative narratives of the 1948 war, allowing them to incorporate the counter commemorative narratives, which includes a description of Israel as guilty of expulsion of the refugees, into the negotiations over a compromise solution (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:252). Different participants in the negotiations conveyed that part of the historical work made by New Historians was read in preparation for the negotiations. During the negotiations, head negotiators Yossi Beilin and Nabil Shaath cited the work of the Israeli New Historians in their opening remarks. Gidi Grinstein, a participant in the negotiations, commented on the impact of the work of the New Historians:

> "It did not change grounds but for some, including me, it gave the documentary evidence for views that we had for long. Anyone who thinks seriously about 1948 does not think that 700,000 people just left everything voluntarily; it just doesn't make any sense. The New Historians gave the historical validation and recorded evidence that support this thinking." (Grinstein quoted in Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:251)

President Clinton, who outlined the parameters for the final status agreement, commented on the role of the refugee problem in the negotiation process:

> "I believe that Israel is prepared to acknowledge the moral and material suffering caused to the Palestinian people as a result of the 1948 war and the need to assist the international community in addressing the problem." (Clinton:2000)

Daniel Levy, an advisor to Yossi Beilin and member of the Israeli negotiating team, described the importance of communicating the counter narratives of New History to the Israeli public, in order to make them willing to accept the sacrifices that peace demands:

> "A different approach of the Israelis on their history is important for the Palestinians as a way to promote acceptance for the practical solution. Mainly since the solution is not likely to include an actual return into Israel. It is also relatively important vis-à-vis the Israeli Public… If we ask the Israeli tax payer to pay for X years X amount of money (to cover Israeli compensations for the refugees), the public must be convinced that paying those compensations is justified. With the old narrative – that the Arabs fled out of free will – it will be hard to convince the Israelis that the Palestinians deserve anything." (interview with Levy quoted in Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:251)

Thus, some Israeli negotiators understood the importance of thick recognition of the Palestinian party, both in order to ease relations in the conflict and make them less violent, and in order to show the Israeli public that Palestinian demands for return and/or compensation were just. However, not all Israeli politicians reasoned like Levy. Many politicians and parts of the public who wanted to negotiate for peace felt that recognition of the Palestinian sufferings caused by occupation since 1967 was legitimate. However, when it

comes to recognition of the harm caused by the war in 1948, the discussion is very different. Yael Dayan (MK) comments on the topic of 1948 versus 1967:

> "the question is how far back you want Israel to go. On the one hand, you are saying it is irreversible. Israel is there. On the other hand, I agree with you absolutely that settlements in the territories after 1967 [are] not only illegitimate, not only unjust, [and have] to be removed or undone. Is this what your Nakba is today? Is Kdumim [an Israeli settlement in the West Bank] your Nakba today? Or the compensation or acceptance of a certain number of people back to pre-1967 borders?" (Dayan et al. 1998:8)

Dayan further focused her argument:

> "In 1948, when people came as refugees, they did not have the capacity to be sensitive to other refugees." (Dayan et al. 1998:6)

I thus conclude that some, even if certainly not all, of the content of the New Historians' works trickled down to the peace negotiators and contributed to the fact that the refugee status of the Palestinians became a subject for negotiations in 2001. Hence, the initial recognition shift for a brief period influenced the peace process and indirectly led to discussions over the Palestinian refugee problem, which was previously unheard of in Israeli master narratives of Zionism, conflict and commemoration.

The next section analyzes the continuation of the debates over New History and the intense battles that started over the continuous inscription of New History into official memory institutions. I start out by discussing the initial narrative constellation brought about by the recognition shift just mentioned, as related to other important narratives and events at that moment in time.

Memory agents and official memory institutions

The Challengers – delegitimized yet successful

As shown in the analysis, various actors were involved in the first debate cycle. Different categories of actors served as *challengers* in the

Israeli debates over history. Examples of those are primarily the New Historians themselves, such as Morris, Pappé, Shlaim, Segev, Shafir and others. Secondary interpreters of the narratives of New History who tried to inscribe them into important official memory institutions were also observed. Those actors were mainly historians writing schoolbooks, and television producers partaking in the making of the Tekumma series. Politicians also played an important part as they challenged the master commemorative narratives in the public realm, especially regarding education. Here, ministers like Yossi Sarid and civil servants such as Israel Bartal and Moshe Zimmerman played important parts as their opinions regarding important policy issues clearly influenced history schoolbooks as well as the composition of the new curriculum. The counter narratives even trickled into the peace process, where head negotiators such as Yossi Beilin and Daniel Levy served as important challengers, through the discussions over the Palestinian refugees in 2000 and 2001.

When it comes to *gatekeepers* criticizing and working against the counter narratives of New History, several individuals and collectives were involved. In this first debate cycle, academics faithful to the master commemorative narratives of Zionism were the main actors addressing the arguments of New History in academic and public forums. They were joined by politicians who expressed concerns that the New Historians' worldviews would harm the legitimacy of the state.

Discussing agency in the case of the New Historians could indicate that they intentionally tried to transform conflict. However, that was not necessarily the case. Some actors, such as Ilan Pappé and Simcha Flapan, had an explicit agenda when it came to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Flapan stated:

> "It is the purpose of this book to debunk these myths, not as an academic exercise but as a contribution to a better understanding of the Palestinian problem and to a more constructive approach to its solution." (1987:10)

Ilan Pappé has also been consistent in his agenda when it comes to takings stands with regards to the conflict. In a book written in 2004 he stated:

> "My bias is apparent despite the desire of my peers that I stick to fact and the "truth" when reconstructing past realities. I review any such construction as vain and presumptuous. This book is written by one who admits compassion for the colonized not the colonizer; who sympathizes with the occupied not the occupiers; and sides with the workers not the bosses. He feels for women in distress, and has little admiration for men in command. He cannot remain indifferent towards mistreated children, or refrain from condemning their elders. In short, mine is a subjective approach, often but not always standing for the defeated over the victorious." (Pappé 2004:12)

Others, such as Benny Morris, initially claimed to solely be interested in presenting history, detached from ideology and politics (Shlaim 1990). Benny Morris insists that he's a Zionist, and that his work has no political purpose whatsoever (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:246, refferring to the aforementioned interview with Journalist Ari Shavit). Morris claimed in a Tikkun article that:

> "[...]the moment the historian looks over his shoulder, begins to calculate how others might utilize his work, and allows this to influence his findings and conclusions, he is well on his way down that slippery slope leading to official history and propaganda." (Morris: 1988)

On the other hand, Morris also publicly confessed that his and others' writings of history might have indirect consequences for politics. The possibility that a critical revision of the Israeli historical narratives would foster reconciliation and peace with the Palestinians was alluded to in the scholarship from its beginning. He stated:

> "the New History is one of the signs of the maturing Israel […] It may also in some obscure way serve the purpose of peace and reconciliation between the warring tribes of that land." (Morris 1990:102)

The New Historians hence had no uniform agenda for change (Blomeley 2005:138), even though their work for a period of time created a shift in the narrative constellation of Israel society. Thus

one might argue that the political agenda of the New Historians was mainly created by its antagonists (Blomeley 2005:136, Caplan 2010:232). Even though Israeli New Historians cannot be ascribed any kind of intentional collective agency, the public reactions and interpretations of their historiography points toward the fact that, intentionally or not, for a time they had the power to reformulate Israeli national identity (Diner 1995:148). They described identity and difference in the formulation of Israeli national identity as separated by permeable boundaries. They thus portrayed Israeli national identity as one important construct among others, which makes it more susceptible to change.

Shabtai Teveth and other gatekeepers ascribed agency to the New Historians as they are called "a club whose members bear collective responsibility for each other's work" (Shlaim 1990). Teveth also accused the New Historians of being politically motivated, pro-Palestinian, and aimed at delegitimizing Zionism and the state of Israel. He states that Shlaim's aim when publishing *Collusion Across the Jordan* was to provide:

> "fresh sources of political sympathy for the Arabs, and fresh sources of antipathy to the Jews". (1989:25).

Benny Morris and his colleagues, according to Teveth, had set out to undermine if not thoroughly demolish earlier Israeli assumptions of history (1989:24). Efraim Karsh also clearly argued in favor of collective agency and joint intentions in the case of the New Historians. According to him the New Historians constitute a group with clear characteristics, an ideological common ground, and shared political goals (Naor 2001:141).

Peace might be a possible side effect of the writings of New History, according to Morris. Regardless of the manner in which the proponents of New History viewed the intention behind their work, proponents and opponents alike often made the association between New History and post-Zionism. This might explain the occasionally forceful reactions and the wide media attention to the works of New History. These reactions did not focus merely on historical data and

research, but on the political struggle over Israeli national identity (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007:246).

However, the challengers' message of deconstructing myths and presenting alternative truths has been widely described as *one* version of history, even though the New Historians themselves insist on a diversity of views. Thus, even though their narratives were multivocal, the message inherent in them is often described as quite consistent in the secondary literature and has also often been perceived as such by the public. The Israeli New Historians can hence be understood as memory agents when it comes to history and recognition, which given the theoretical understandings developed here could in turn lead to conflict transformation. During this first debate cycle, gatekeepers took few practical actions to get rid of New History. They mainly tried to *delegitimize* the New Historians' works, linking them to the worst connotations in the master narratives: those of anti-Semitism, and the morally unjust Arab and Palestinian enemy.

Recognition openings - toward institutionalization

Official memory institutions have the power to affect conflict as they can support or help bring changes in the understandings of self and other, which is a vital part of the environment embracing a mutually constitutive relation to intractable conflict. When official memory institutions come to embrace views of thick recognition, and those views are communicated to the public, they can thus be part of the processes of self- and other-transformation, which are central features in the transformation of intractable conflict.

This chapter mainly concerned the initial public discussions of commemorative narratives. Commemoration narratives are communicated through official channels to citizens and also of course through the private realm — discussed in families and among friends. All of those commemoration narratives are prevalent in the narrative constellation of society. However, not all of those narratives are inscribed into the official memory institutions. It is clear that up until the 1980s the institutionalized narratives of commemoration mainly related to master narratives of Zionism and conflict. The debates regarding New History through the interaction among different

actors, over time started to affect official memory institutions. Thus, counter commemorative narratives were inscribed into Israeli memory institutions, starting out during this debate cycle. As mentioned above, they also made their way into the peace process, showing the way in which narratives of thick recognition can influence the process of conflict transformation.

This indicated changed power relations in the higher order of power, as the counter commemorative narratives gain an important function when transferred to institutions. They then become more forceful competitors to the master commemorative narratives because they then become communicated directly to the public through official memory institutions. Two dimensions of narratives can hence be discerned here: all are parts of the overarching narrative constellation, and only some are institutionalized. If the aim is that the whole of the narrative constellation over time will experience a recognition shift, it is indeed crucial that counter commemorative narratives are inscribed into official memory institutions.

Facilitating circumstances for thick recognition

This last section considers circumstances that could lead to introduction of narratives of thick recognition in Israeli society. One way to understand those phenomena is that other narratives that were important during the same time-span can support and render legitimacy to the ideas. This discussion concerns the macro level of society, and addresses its broader narrative constellation. As shown previously, the counter narratives of Zionism and conflict indicate permeable boundaries between national groups and, as they were gaining acceptance, the chance was greater that the narratives of New History would resonate with the broader public. In the initial narrative constellation of cycle one, different counter narratives regarding nationalism and conflict presenting ideas of recognition to the Israeli public, were gaining acceptance. When Israeli New History was introduced in society, the public had therefore already been exposed to the theme of recognition through counter narratives of Zionism and conflict, which were central at this point in time. Thus,

there was a greater chance that the counter narratives of New History would resonate with the public, as the Israeli narrative constellation in general experienced a shift toward more recognition. During the end of cycle one, both thin and thick recognition were gaining strength, implying that a shift toward thick recognition in the Israeli narrative constellation may have been closer than ever before. The peace process with its inherent thin recognition can be seen as a good start toward relationship transformation, which in turn was spurred by the thick recognition inherent in the narratives of Israeli New History, and strengthened by the ideological impulses of post-Zionism. If the official memory institutions had remained relatively intact, there is great likelihood that thick recognition over time would have gained more acceptance among the public. This hypothesis concerns the macro level and points to structural factors that are important for creating acceptance of thick recognition by the public.

The micro level concerns how individuals perceive narratives of thick recognition, i.e. how to understand that some individuals found the counter narratives of New History acceptable whereas others fiercely opposed it. A key factor when addressing individuals' proneness to accept alterations in narratives of identity is the phenomenon of core constructs. The macro level of the narrative constellation influences actors' willingness to accept thick recognition, as it communicates security aspects that can influence individual perceptions of threat. If the narrative constellation goes through a shift toward more recognition, parts of the public might be more willing to accept permeable boundaries as their perceptions of threat are lowered. Different human beings perceive their identities and relevant and irrelevant threats to those depending on the narrative constellation as well as individual predispositions. When a narrative constellation in which narratives emphasizing permeable boundaries between groups are gaining strength, individuals might become less security oriented as a result. This in turn could lead to a higher acceptance when core constructs are challenged, which in its turn could result in transformation of core constructs.

In this section I have discussed recognition openings, and have covered important facilitating circumstances, contributing to the introduction of narratives of thick recognition in Israeli society. Here

I mainly addressed circumstances facilitating the introduction of narratives of thick recognition in the Israeli context. The next chapter turns to the second debate cycle, during which narratives of thick recognition eventually waned.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Confrontation

This chapter addresses the second debate cycle, during which the challengers met increasing resistance as the gatekeepers tried to regain power over official memory institutions. The outline of the chapter aligns with the previous one. Hence the cycle is broken down into initial narrative constellation, followed by social interaction between memory agents, ending up in narrative elaboration. In the final sections the interplay between memory agents and official memory institutions is discussed, moving over to a discussion of circumstances that may have inhibited further success of the narratives of New History.

Narrative constellation: ambiguous tendencies

The previous chapter established that there was a shift in the narrative constellation in Israeli society taking place during cycle one. Not only did the narratives of New History become more publicly noticed. Additionally, they started to become inscribed into official memory institutions through changes in education on different levels. They also underwent changed representation in the media. As mentioned above, the institutionalization of commemorative narratives continued during the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, this does not by any means imply that the narratives of New History were uncontroversial. As the previous section suggested, the tone in the debates over history was quite aggressive and the New Historians had enemies who tried to do delegitimize them in many different ways. In the late 1990s, the narratives of New History were increasingly assaulted by powerful neo-Zionist actors who played on insecurities brought about by increased violence levels and the stagnated peace process.

This time period also brought about swift changes domestically as well as globally. When trying to understand the context surrounding the decline of New History, it is important to keep in mind the local political circumstances possibly bringing about new formations in the narrative constellation. When it comes to narratives of conflict, those were altered, partly due to an increase in violence levels and fear of physical threats. Israeli Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein killed 29 Palestinians in a Hebron mosque in 1994, and radical fractions of Hamas and Islamic Jihad subsequently carried out several suicide bombings in Israeli cities. Even though a majority of the population initially supported the peace process, the growing violence slowly started to affect the public (Shamir and Shikaki 2002). In 1995, the spectacular violence peaked with the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. The heightened degree of violence partly resulted in hard-liner Benyamin Netanyahu of the Likud-party winning the general elections in 1996 (Lindholm-Schulz 2004). Israeli politics faced serious challenges in the late 1990s. In addition, violence against Israeli soldiers and civilians rose, resulting in wide-spread mistrust of both the prospects of the peace process as well as of the opponent in the conflict. Many commentators agree that Israel was at a crossroads in the mid-nineties, and the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin resulted in consciousness of the fact that Israel was experiencing an identity crisis, which had to be addressed in one way or another. As the Israeli Likud party gained power, the peace process experienced difficulties. Israel did not put a halt to settlements in the West Bank as stated in the DOP, and Palestinian frustration and violence increased. A number of simultaneous processes touched on the narratives of New History. Palestinian violence increased, resulting in the fact that many lost confidence in the future of the peace process. This also brought about negative thoughts about the conflicting party, as prejudice against the Palestinians as being aggressive and unwilling to negotiate for peace could be understood as verified. This development was at its peak in 2000 at the outbreak of the second Intifada, as well as a breakdown in the peace negotiations at Taba.

The late 1990s saw some efforts at peace by Israeli Labor leader Ehud Barak, but after his failure to reach an agreement with

the Palestinians in Camp David 2000 and in Taba 2001, many regarded the peace process as terminated. New actors were brought into politics due to new political conditions as the Likud party again won the general elections. The actors in political power during the second Intifada were closely affiliated with the idea of Neo-Zionism. When it comes to narratives of Zionism, this period hence saw increased support for Neo-Zionist ideas, which was especially evident at the time of the election of the well-known hard-liner Ariel Sharon in 2001. The second Intifada coincided in time with the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001. The Israeli right could then use the threat of global terrorism as fuel in their political rhetoric against Palestinian violence during the 2nd Intifada.

It is hence clear that even though New History experienced substantial initial success, the turbulent time period in the end of the 1990s resulted in the upheaval of master narratives of Zionism and conflict. New actors hence came to power who would try to exert influence to remove New History from official memory institutions.

Social interaction: gatekeeping interventions

We now know that the counter commemorative narratives of New History slowly started to affect official memory institutions in the late 1990s. The counter commemorative narratives were hence increasingly communicated to the Israeli public, and created strong feelings among its opponents. This coincided with increased violence toward civilians. At this point several groups were formed, all aiming at the removal of New History from the Israeli official scene. "Hatikva" and "Women in Green" were loosely formed interest groups. At this time a group formed by Israeli history professors also worked against introducing New History into Israeli school books. This loosely formed organization was called "Professors for a Strong Israel (PSI), and they worked hard at discrediting the history book written by Eyal Naveh (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:137, Nets-Zehngut 2009).

Then Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu raged over Israeli universities and their alleged pro-Palestinian tendencies, and pledged to support the creation of alternative institutions (Mahler 1997:9). At

this time, more official centers such as The Shalem Center and the Ariel Center for Policy Research, ACPR were also formed.[56] The Shalem Center is a right-wing think tank run by Yoram Hazony. It was established in Jerusalem in 1994 and focuses on influencing society through cultural ideas (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:126). Since 1997, the center publishes the quarterly journal *Azure*, which deals with scholarship and opinion on issues of concern to the Jewish public in Israel and abroad. The Shalem Center was intimately connected with then Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's political establishment. Netanyahu had close relations with Hazony, and several of the coworkers in his administration had been involved in the Shalem Center's activities prior to their governmental appointments (Gutwein 2003:36). The ACPR is an organization of intellectuals aiming at policy research in order to promote Israeli security, which was understood as endangered by the Oslo process. The ACPR website states that:

> "the peace which will force Israel to its pre-1967 borders, i.e. losing those territorial assets critically needed for the very existence of the Jewish state, will not be but a recipe for war." (2005)

The ACPR connected the security concerns of the Israeli state to the universal security claims of all nation-states. Their mutual concern has been to engage in the war on terror, adopting a neoconservative agenda. The think tank deals with domestic issues, such as the Oslo process, the danger of the New Historians, and insecurities brought by post-Zionism, which in their rhetoric often are linked to anti-Semitism. They have also addressed global issues such as the war on terror, drawing on Samuel Huntington's work *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996 [1988]) (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:139). The ACPR has also issued various publications that defend Zionism and depict post-Zionism as well as New History as a "risk" for the Israeli nation (C.f. Sharan 2003a). Statements in which post-Zionists and New Historians are

[56] "Women in Green", "Ha-Tikva", as well as other movements such as ACPR and the Shalem Center, turned against many of the counter narratives. Hence they sometimes directed actions aimed at the New Historians, but they also targeted the anti-occupation movement, the peace process and the more general ideas of post-Zionism.

claimed to be anti-Semites are also voiced in some of the publications from ACPR (C.f. Sharan 2003b:51).

In 1997, Ephraim Karsh wrote a book called *Fabricating Israeli History - The New Historians*. There, he accused the New Historians of bad methodology and of being "partisans seeking to provide academic respectability to long-standing misconceptions and prejudices relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict" (Karsh 1997:195). The New Historians were accused of being unprofessional and unscientific, and the book makes an effort to prove their methodological shortcomings (Naor 2001:142). Another frequent critique regarded the coupling of history with ideology. This is something that Karsh also pointed out, when he accused the New Historians, on ideological ground, to aim at propagating lies. He highlighted that by using a reference to Orwell's *1984*:

> "In this Orwellian world, where war is peace and ignorance is strength, not only are falsifiers not censured by their milieu – they are applauded." (Karsh 1997:xix)

The tone in the academic debates was hence quite sharp; an example of this is Lustick's review of Karsh's book *Fabricating Israeli history: the 'New Historians'*. He states that readers:

> "[...] are sure to be stunned by the malevolence of his writing and confused by the erratic, sloppy nature of his analysis. Errors, inconsistencies and overinterpretation there may be in some of the Israeli histories, but nothing in them can match the howlers, contradictions and distortions contained in this volume." (Lustick 1997:156)

Karsh made an assault on the revisionists, claiming that they: "violate[s] every tenet of bona fide research", and that their work comprises a "new Israeli distoriography", constructing a "fictitious historical edifice. ´". The work is also shrouded in a "cloud of innuendo", reflecting "perverted thinking" as well as "utter hypocrisy". Strong adjectives such as "absurd", "crude", "mind-boggling", "patently false", and "sinister" are generously spread throughout his book. This vocabulary is indeed used, even though Karsh claims that his book offers a "sober attempt to set the record straight and to make the case for fair play in the study of the Arab

Israel conflict in general, and Israeli history in particular" (1997:205). In a later publication, Karsh tried to produce evidence for the fact that Morris engaged in many types of distortion: he misrepresented documents, resorted to partial quotes, withheld evidence, made false assertions, and rewrote original documents (1999). Karsh concludes his article by asserting that:

> "Regrettably, Morris's distortions in the article under consideration are neither a fluke nor an exception. As I have sought to demonstrate elsewhere, they typify the New Historians' whole approach. Lacking evidence, they invent an Israeli history in the image of their own choosing."

Yoram Hazony, as already mentioned, partly through articles published in *Azure*, was one of the most vocal critics of New History and made an effort to delegitimize their arguments, claiming that anyone trying to combine Judaism with universal values is an enemy of the Jewish state. In Hazony's argument, even those who formulate criticism against nationalism are portrayed as enemies of Jewish sovereignty (Shapira 2003:68). Hazony wrote about the history debates in his 2000 book T*he Jewish State: the Struggle for Israel's Soul.* There he refers to author David Grossman, who discussed the new views of history and of Zionism in terms of redeployment and withdrawal of entire regions of the Israeli soul. Hazony comments:

> "The redeployment of which David Grossman speaks is the destruction of the Jewish state in the mind of the Jewish people. It is the return to exile. It is a retreat into the void". (2000a:72-73)

The book also highlighted direct or indirect links between the debate over the War of 1948 and the collective memory of the Holocaust. Historians who see Palestinians as victims of Zionism and link the Holocaust to the birth of the state of Israel are claimed to diminish the importance of the Holocaust, regarding it to be mainly a reason for something else, and hence contribute to the denial of the Holocaust (2000a:9). In this way, Hazony directed his criticism toward Tom Segev, who indirectly compared the suffering and victimization of Palestinian refugees with the victimization and suffering of the Holocaust in his book *The Seventh Million* (1993

[1991]). People who mention the notion of Palestinian refugees were hence also indirectly accused of Holocaust denial.

Various collective actors such as the ACPR, the Shalem Center, "HaTikva", "Women in Green", "Professors' association for political-social strength", together with individual authors, academics, and right-wing politicians in the late 1990s, intensely promoted ideas aiming at the removal of New History from Israeli official memory institutions. Thus, intense efforts coming from various official locations were launched, aiming at the removal of the counter commemorative narratives of New History from Israeli public consciousness. In the debate and actions that followed, it was clear that the attacks were made at all the institutionalizations of New History, meaning the Tekumma series, the New History schoolbooks, as well as individual academics.

The New Historians were hesitant, yet optimistic about the content of Tekumma, whereas parts of the establishment were outraged by it. Limor Livnat, then Education Minister in the Israeli Likud government, stated that the series, instead of showing Israel's history:

> "[…] with a sense of pride and confidence in the historical justice that was done to the Jewish people, depicts the Palestinian side sympathetically, systematically distorts the great Zionist deed and causes severe and probably irreparable damage to our image." (New York Times 1998)

She also expressed great apprehension that the show propagated positions for the Palestinians, while "pushing aside all our myths". Ariel Sharon, then cabinet minister, protested in a letter to the education minister, that:

> "The film distorts the history of the rebirth of the Jewish people in its own national homeland and undermines any moral basis for the establishment of the State of Israel and its continued existence." (New York Times 1998)

The simultaneous changes in the curriculum led to fierce debate within the Israeli establishment. In a 2000 article in *New Republic*, Yoram Hazony criticized the new curriculum and *A World of Changes*. He claimed that they taught "universalism" in such a way that

Zionism was lost. He also insisted that Zionist history should be taught from a Jewish perspective. He claims not to dismiss the Palestinian perspective. However, he perceives that it is natural for parents:

> "to want their children to understand their own values and perspectives better than those of a stranger." (2000b)

Here, Hazony emphasizes the value of stable moral boundaries between ethnic groups. He does not deny the existence of another, perhaps righteous, Palestinian narrative, but clearly indicates that it should be kept far away from the minds of Israeli students and pupils. "Women in Green" published an advertisement in Israeli daily newspapers condemning Eyal Naveh's textbook. The advertisement was signed by well-known political figures from the Likud, the National Union Party, the National Religious Party, as well as other neo-Zionist organizations. The advertisement read:

> "Oppose it! Do not buy it! Do not study from it and do not teach from it. The book is written in a post-Zionist spirit that will weaken the pupil's sense of the rightfulness of the Zionist way and of the establishment of the state of Israel, to the point of undermining our rights to our country... This book rewrites our history, distorts and falsifies facts, and trains pupils to identify with the Arab side and even to understand Arab terrorism as a supposedly legitimate political struggle. Do not allow your children, the citizens of the future, to serve as hostages in the hands of the New Historians. Do not buy Eyal Naveh's book!" (Haaretz 1999)

The Shalem Center also made an effort to protest against the new curriculum. They launched a media campaign targeted at all of the new textbooks on history. Many school principals were sent copies of the articles in order to prevent them from choosing the new textbooks for their pupils. However, many teachers were upset with the campaign and went on to sign a public declaration in support of the new books, as they claimed that the boycott was against the principles of free speech inherent in modern democracies (Yogev 2010:2). As a result of the protests against the books, the Knesset appointed an education committee to evaluate Naveh's textbook in November 2000. The committee was composed by members of

various political affiliations. They unanimously voted in favor of the withdrawal of the book until a number of distortions had been corrected. This was done in spite of Yossi Sarid's[57] firm statement in 1999, in which he expressed his complete support for the book. He also warned that he would reject any attempt to revise its contents (Naveh 2006:246). The Shalem Center also published a research report dealing with *A World of Changes*. The center thus took the debate regarding history and moved it to a societal level, relating it to the preservation of the Zionist national identity of Israel (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:135).

Also PSI raged against the New History curriculum as well as against the new history books:

> "The new literature curriculum, together with that for history, is indicative of the systematic politicization of the educational system under Minister-Commissar Yossi Sarid." (www.professors.org.il 2000)

In 2000, Teddy Katz, an Israeli student, wrote his Master's thesis called *The Exodus of the Arabs from Villages at the Foot of the Southern Mount Carmel*, about the alleged Tantura massacre. The thesis came to public attention when Israeli journalist Amir Gilat, who published an article on the topic in the daily Ma'ariv, picked up its theme. The author of the controversial thesis was arrested and put on trial. He was accused for having fabricated sources and tainting the names of the Israeli soldiers in the interviews, as according to the author they had taken part in the killings. The trial dealt with alleged falsifications and distortions. Experts were appointed to evaluate the correctness of the facts presented in the thesis. The experts claimed to have found several cases of negligence, falsification, fabrication, ignorance and disregard in Katz's thesis (Gelber 2003:122). Katz, in turn, argued that this should be an academic debate among scholars, rather than being fought in the realm of law (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:112). Ilan Pappé, who has some methodological criticism against Katz's thesis, still believes that Katz presented a rather fair picture of what took place in Tantura. He claims to have evidence supporting that an

[57] Sarid was then Education Minister and represented the left-of-center Meretz-party.

ethnic cleansing took place there, and that the Israeli establishment, most notably the IDF, does all that is in its power to keep the story of Tantura from being told to the public (Pappé 2001:22-25 passim).

Narrative elaboration: backlash

I have now gone through the social interaction that took place during the second cycle in the debates over history. It is clear that the contenders in the debate tried fiercely to make their views resonate in Israeli society. The New Historians and their followers such as textbook authors, college students, TV producers and others made efforts to introduce New History into different segments of Israeli society. Their efforts were successful to a certain extent, as the counter narratives of New History initially started to become inscribed into some vital official memory institutions, communicating collective memory to members of Israeli society.

During the second debate cycle, several interest groups with varying degrees of organization were formed in Israeli society. Their common aim was to criticize Israeli New History and to prevent those narratives from being inscribed into Israeli official memory institutions.

Debates regarding history schoolbooks raged for a period of time, ending up in the banning of several of the new books and the shredding of all the copies of *A World of Changes*. The Knesset Education Committee unanimously rejected the book. Limor Livnat, at that time Education Minister, claimed that this was a step in her "crusade to return post-Zionist thought to its rightful place" (Livnat 2001). It was removed from the list of texts approved by the ministry of education at the recommendation of the Knesset Education Committee (Naveh 2006:244). The ban was motivated by the argument that the book was unfaithful to the traditional Zionist narrative, overlooked central events in Zionist history and did not adequately reinforce the national-Zionist ethos for students (Al-Haj 2005:55). Livnat defended the ban in the Israeli daily Maariv (2001):

> "No nation studies its history from the point of view of its enemy or the point of view of the United Nations. The state of Israel is a Jewish and democratic state and this should direct the perspective of its educational system."

Also members of the PSI joined in the heavy criticism of the new history books. Ron Breiman, then chairman of the organization, stated that Israel had a heavy bias amongst its academics, which made it nearly impossible for right-wing academics to make their voices heard. Therefore, Breiman stated, it was necessary to get support from the political establishment, as the left-wing academics within the humanities would never let those voices in (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:136).

In the early 2000s, Israeli right-wing politicians were very troubled with the state of mind of Israeli youth, who were claimed to demonstrate complete ignorance toward their heritage (Naveh 2006:244). Apart from banning textbooks expressing the views of New History, a new subject called "Heritage", was introduced in the curriculum during the school year of 2001-2002 (Naveh 2006:245). It was also clear that the ministers in the government had different views on education policy than their predecessors, as they banned books that had been recommended and defended by former Education Minister Yossi Sarid.

Israeli society turned against Teddy Katz. Even though his thesis was initially awarded a high mark (97), the University revision committee ordered a suspension of his thesis, giving him six months to submit the revised version. The master's thesis did thus generate plenty of controversy, together with a lawsuit. The content of Katz's thesis was thus not only a subject for academic debate, but was brought into the realm of law (Ghazi-Bouillon 2009:113). The trial was never concluded, as Katz had a nervous breakdown and later admitted that he did not have enough material to support his conclusions (Aggestam 2004:137).

Tekumma, the Israeli documentary TV series presenting alternative views of the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, was also under heavy attack. Livnat, who referred to the series as "post-Zionist", demanded that it should be taken off the air (Silberstein

1999:1). The series was banned from schools, but had until then created major debate within society.

As a result of the social interaction in the second debate cycle, the initial partial acceptance of the ideas in the counter narratives of the New History declined. During this cycle a backlash is evident, in which the balance between the former master narratives and the counter narratives of New History almost returned to status quo ante. Influential politicians and interest groups supported the master narratives of commemoration, which again resulted in teaching at universities and schools alongside the master commemorative narratives of Zionism. The cultural scene was also affected because influential politicians made an effort to criticize and delegitimize cultural products created outside of the frame of the master commemorative narratives of Zionism. After the breakdown of negotiations at Taba in 2001, coinciding with the outbreak of the second Intifada, the peace process went into seemingly total stalemate. Willingness to negotiate was low and violence levels escalated.

The reflection that can be made regarding this development is that the heaviest critique and efforts to stop the content of New History were made at the institutional level, rather than at the level of academic publication. Publication of historical revisionism within academia can thus be viewed as one thing, as those works are less inclined to reach the general public, whereas the inclusion of that perspective in school books is something entirely different as all countries, especially new ones, typically view schools as a place not just to learn but to foster patriotic spirit (Bronner 1999).

The conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion is that academic debate tends to be understood as a minor threat to collective identity, compared to public debates and the inscription of those ideas into official memory institutions. During this period the Israeli debates over New History waned. Temporally, this coincided with the collapse of the peace process and the beginning of the second Intifada. As the arguments of New History had been coupled with the theme of delegitimization of the existence of the Israeli state, it was also easy to renounce those arguments in the light of direct physical threats to the Israeli public. The promoters of the master commemorative narratives easily found resonance for their

arguments in the current political situation, as master narratives of Zionism and conflict were gaining ground. It thus becomes quite clear that the counter narratives formed a serious challenge that was picked up by the gatekeepers. Those in turn had different functions. Some formed mostly an academic critique, and fought their battles within the academic sphere. Some, on the other hand, worked intensely in order to rid official memory institutions of narratives of New History. Some only pointed toward the possible threats from New History, whereas others acted on the alleged threats and worked to remove them from the public debate. In this case, challengers and gatekeepers alike tried to define the most suitable historical facts and to institutionalize them. During the time span of debate cycle 2, the gatekeepers of the master commemorative narratives turned out to be most successful in their endeavor, leading to the deinstitutionalization of New History from Israeli society.

The New Historians allegedly faced professional consequences of introducing the counter narratives. Benny Morris claimed that Israeli universities ostracized him, and that after many years of job search he managed to get a position only in one of the less prestigious universities in Israel. Ilan Pappé was scorned by the Israeli establishment, where many refused to publish his works, and also actively stopped him from communicating his views in public. For example, he tried to organize a conference together with his colleague Asad Ghanem on the topic of the memory of the 1948 war, which was stopped by authorities at the University of Haifa. He wrote an article on the topic called *Why Haifa University Cancelled My Conference* (2003). After that incident, he referred to himself as "the most hated Israeli in Israel" and had to find an academic position in Great Britain, as it was hard for him to find work in Israel (Blomeley 2005). Also Eyal Naveh confesses to have suffered professional consequences after writing the controversial history textbook book. He now claims that he can present his multi-narrative approach in academic forums, but if he wants to keep his job as a writer of educational texts in the Israeli school system, he must remain true to the master narratives in those texts (Naveh, 2009). Baruch Kimmerling commented on the professional treatment of the New Historians:

> "in the past four or five years, an almost coordinated campaign on the scale of the McCarthyistic witch-hunts has been waged against academics in Israel who do not accept the basic ideological premises of a mobilized research or who are critical of some of the paradigm of the elder generations." (quoted in Mahler 1997:9)

As a result of this, many New Historians have been unable to publish their works in Israel, and for many of them the only option for publication is now in the international press.

In contrast to this development there are still traces of the counter commemorative narratives of New History in Israeli society They hence still exist to some extent, but due to the political context, the ideas have not yet been further institutionalized and the debate regarding history today does not permit the same extent of criticism.

Another change that points to the influence of the New Historians' views on the public is visible in the work of Israeli researchers Daniel Bar-Tal and Rafi Nets-Zehngut, which was carried out during 2008. Through a number of questions in a poll carried out by the Israeli opinion poll institute Dialog, they investigated the collective memory among a representative sample of 500 Israeli Jews. Some, but not all, of their questions relate to the main themes discussed in the Israeli debates over New History. The question most obviously connected to this study regards the main reasons for the departure of Palestinian refugees during the War of Independence. Here 40.8 % answered that they left due to fear and calls of leaders to leave, 39.2 % answered that they left due to fear, calls from leaders, and expulsion by the Jews, whereas 8 % answered that they left solely due to expulsion by the Jews. The last 12 % answered that they did not know. With regards to the narratives it is clear that nearly 41 % remained true to the master narratives, whereas roughly 39 % believed in the version presented by the master narratives, but were partly influenced by the counter narratives as they saw Jewish expulsions as part of the reason behind the departure. 8 % believed the counter narratives to be correct as they believed that the Jews were the only ones responsible behind the Palestinian exodus (for an English summary of the findings of their study, see Columbia University 2009). Given the results of the survey, one can reflect upon the impact of the New Historians on the collective memory of

the Israeli public. It is clear that some of the explanations of the New Historians are accepted fully or partly by a large part of the public, and to a certain extent might have seeped through to the Israeli public.

In 2002, the Israeli NGO Zochrot was founded. Based in Tel Aviv, its aim is to promote awareness of the Nakba (Bronstein 2005:220). Its slogan is "To commemorate, witness, acknowledge, and repair" (www.zochrot.org, 2010). Zochrot organizes tours of Israeli towns, which include taking displaced Palestinians back to the areas they fled or were expelled from in 1948 and afterwards. A key aim is to "Hebrewise the Nakba" by creating a space for it in the public domain of Israeli Jews. Zochrot acts in many ways to advance this goal. The group erects street signs giving the Palestinian history of the street or area they are in. It is also known for the organization of tours for Jews and Arabs to Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948. During these tours, signs are posted that commemorate the different sites in the destroyed villages. Refugees and their families provide knowledge of village history, and an attempt is made to expose as much of the ruined villages as possible. Through these stories participants can get an idea of what the village actually looked like, and what it was like to live in it. The event is also seen as important in establishing the historical/collective memory of the land (Musih 2010). Zochrot has created a website in Hebrew, devoted to the Palestinian villages that were destroyed or resettled as a result of the War of 1948. Even though Zochrot is a small organization, it aims at communicating counter narratives of Israeli history, contributing to a raised awareness of the Palestinian formative identity experience of al-Naqba.

This section has covered the narrative elaboration that resulted from the social interaction in the second narrative cycle of the debates. The main conclusion is that the counter narratives of New History disappeared from the Israeli official scene by the early 2000s, coinciding with the eruption of the second Intifada. However, Israeli New History lives on, albeit once more on the margins of Israeli society.

Memory agents and official memory institutions

Gatekeeping

After a while, when New History started to become inscribed into official Israeli memory institutions, other actors opposing the counter narratives became involved in the debates. Influential politicians, mainly from the right, mobilized to rid the Israeli society of New History. The *delegitimation* taking place in the first debate cycle continued and seemingly increased, together with direct efforts to clear institutions from ideas of New History. Various organizations were also formed, sometimes in cooperation with leading Likud politicians like Benyamin Netanyahu. The organizations often aimed at New History, but also often linked that to the dangers of the Oslo Process and the threat of annihilation of the state. During this period, strong politicians from the right also played a vital part as their gatekeeping activities effectively removed New History from the vital official memory institution of education. The peace process has also been stagnated ever since, partly due to certain of the above agents' ability to delegitimize anyone who tries to base politics on the idea of permeable boundaries between Israelis and Palestinians.

Some memory agents promoted and communicated new views of history directly to the public and to secondary actors. Others had the power to in different ways import those ideas into official memory institutions. Those institutions in turn continue to communicate these narratives until altered. The activities aimed at official memory institutions are understood as gatekeeping. It has also been clear that the politicians in charge of education politics tried to influence memory institutions in order to make them reflect their views on history. In this way memory agents on different levels have tried to influence memory institutions through challenging and gatekeeping, which can be understood as lower order forms of power. Through their actions, the narrative constellation becomes affected, which over time might lead to changed identifications. This analysis hence enables an understanding of how the lower order affects the higher order of power. Memory agents may thus, through their actions, be successful in influencing identifications in society.

When examining the debates and the social interaction surrounding them, it is clear that the counter narratives were treated differently depending on their degree of institutionalization. As long as the counter narratives existed mostly in academic and public fora for discussion, their opponents fiercely opposed them, but conducted no practical attempts to stop the ideas. However, after some years during which the counter narratives of New History had experienced initial success, and were imported into official memory institutions, the social interaction became qualitatively different. Now different gatekeepers worked together to uproot the counter narratives of New History, and eventually turned out to be quite successful in that endeavor. As the debate took place within academia, the battle was thus very much one of words, and it proved difficult to silence the "New Historians" within the academy. When dispersed to the public scene through media, and later on also to education policy, the challengers' attempts at gatekeeping, where they fiercely guarded the boundaries of the master narratives, were however quite successful. It is hence obvious that political efforts were mostly aimed at stopping the message of New History when it came to education, which is a realm where ideas of thick recognition really could have made a difference. Some of the most controversial schoolbooks were removed, Teddy Katz became a notorious example of what happens to students questioning the master commemorative narratives of Israel, and the television series Tekumma was taken off the air and banned from school curricula. Individual challengers who had promoted narratives of New History, such as Ilan Pappé, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim and Eyal Naveh, all suffered professional problems due to their views on Israeli history. The result of all this was that the counter narratives of New History were removed from official memory institutions and once again reside on the margins of the Israeli narrative constellation.

Inhibiting circumstances for thick recognition

When commemorative narratives become inscribed into official memory institutions that constantly communicate the narratives of commemoration to the public, they tend to be quite forceful when it comes to identification. Counter narratives can always be observed in the margins of narrative constellations, forming challenges to current master narratives. As master narratives have a history of being dominant and thus strongly institutionalized and embedded in the minds of the members of that community, they are quite difficult to alter. In societies involved in intractable conflict, of which Israel is somewhat of a prime example, master narratives have proved to be extremely resistant to change. This has to do not only with the fact that they have become heavily institutionalized into official memory institutions, but also the fact that during this process they have been strongly intertwined with security concerns.

It is obvious that the ensuing political efforts to get rid of Israeli New History and ban it from official memory institutions were quite successful during the second cycle of debates. One factor contributing to this development is of course the actuality that the peace process was stagnating at that time, resulting in the counter narratives of conflict losing strength. The meager results of the peace process also resulted in increased violence against Israeli civilians, contributing to the fact that the public was losing faith in prospects for peace. Violent spectacular events at the time also contributed to heightened tensions. In September 2000, a 12-year-old Palestinian boy and his father were caught in a crossfire, ending up in the boy being shot to death by Israeli soldiers. Around the same time, two Israeli soldiers were brutally killed by a lynch mob in central Ramallah. Pictures of the innocent dead boy together with his grieving father and the two dead Israeli soldiers together with cheering Palestinians were broadcast throughout the world. The aggressive rhetoric of promoters of the master commemorative narratives thus tied into the general development of the conflict, since ideas of recognition at that time were waning as polarization and violence grew. Memory agents in the government such as Ariel Sharon and Limor Livnat took measures to hinder further

institutionalization of New History in official memory institutions. As violence continued to increase, ending up in the outburst of the second Intifada in 2001, the Israeli narrative constellation as a whole clearly did not favor counter narratives containing ideas of either thin or thick recognition.

Moving over to the micro level of analysis, I take up the question of why counter commemorative narratives containing ideas of thick recognition can cause such feelings of threat in a society involved in intractable conflict. As the self has been portrayed as vulnerable and in need of heavy security measures in the past, identity has been augmented with security concerns. The insecure state of the collective self has thus been constantly emphasized in order to justify aggressive struggles in the past and present, and attempts to change those narratives might entail massive feelings of threat. In this case the other is described as vulnerable and a victim of aggressions in the counter commemorative narratives, which clearly destabilizes the former boundaries between identity and difference.

One example of the boundary destabilizing character of the counter narratives of New History regards the large number of Israeli kibbutzim that were established on the ruins of Arab villages. The master commemorative narratives rarely mentioned the causal relationship between the success of the Israeli state in 1948 and the devastating collapse of the Palestinian collective that followed (Massad 2000:53). This link was highlighted in the counter commemorative narratives, which emphasize, among other things, another side of the story of the newly founded villages and kibbutzim. Tom Segev gives us a vivid example when he describes the history and creation of Kibbutz Lohamei Ha Getaot (Ghetto Fighters House). That kibbutz houses the Ghetto Fighters' Museum and was built by survivors from the Warsaw ghetto after their arrival to Israel. The kibbutz was built on top of the destroyed Palestinian village of al-Sumayriyya, whose inhabitants according to Segev had been deported during the 1948 war (1993 [1991]:156). Segev writes that there is "no settlement in Israel that better illustrates the link between the Holocaust and the Palestinian tragedy" (Segev 1993 [1991]:451).

As the boundaries are destabilized through the introduction of the counter commemorative narratives, the other might be perceived as coming closer to the insecure self, which might be understood as extremely threatening given the fact that in the master narratives that collective has been described as vindictive, unreliable, and aggressive. This can be understood as a result of the fact that the core construct of national identity is perceived as being challenged, and those challenges tend to bring about feelings of threat. This perceived instability of boundaries can thus result in actions of defending core constructs, employing far-reaching measures to make sure that the core construct of Israeli national identity remains in line with the master commemorative narratives.

It is obvious that in the fight against New History, academics, journalists and politicians tried to portray the sometimes post-positivist, post-nationalist and most of all boundary-provoking message inherent in New History as a threat to the unity of the Israeli nation, and sometimes also as a lethal threat to the existence of the state. In their rhetoric, they thus enhanced the need of stable boundaries between national groups, underscoring the insecurity of the Israeli national collective and its legitimate fight for land against a strong and aggressive counterpart in conflict. The New Historians themselves, in the arguments of their opponents, are actually described as enemies of the Israeli state. In this way, they are connected to alleged lethal enemies of the Jewish national cause, such as anti-Semites and Palestinian nationalists. The gatekeepers, opposing New History, thus played on sentiments of insecurity, victimization, and justification in order to delegitimize its arguments. During the second cycle of debates, the success of their efforts was experienced, temporally coinciding with increased violence levels, as the counter narratives of New History were erased from Israeli official memory institutions. The counter narratives, however, still exist in the margins of the Israeli narrative constellation, and have also apparently had some vital influence on the proceedings of the peace process (Ben-Josef Hirsch 2007) as well as the collective memory of the Israeli public (as indicated in the study carried out by Bar-Tal and Nets-Zehngut 2009).

Part IV – Conclusion

CHAPTER NINE

Thick recognition and conflict transformation

Theory revisited

Through the investigation into understandings of core constructs and the development of the concept of thick recognition, this study has addressed the linkage between intractable conflicts and understandings of history. The research has also served to increase our understanding of processes of identity change in intractable conflicts. Commemorative narratives have been theoretically linked to important narratives of identity and conflict in the present. Hence the importance of the construction and reconstruction of historical understandings in intractable conflicts has been highlighted.

The over-arching aim of this study was to provide understandings on how different and shifting accounts of history inform relationships between parties in intractable conflicts. It developed the concept of *thick recognition* and moved it into the setting of intractable conflicts, in order to provide further insight into possibilities to transform them. Conceptions of the past are crucial in all identity establishing processes. In intractable conflicts, history tends to resonate with the main features of the core constructs involved. When narratives of thick recognition are introduced in settings of intractable conflict, previously stable boundaries within core constructs are instead described as permeable. This brings with it *boundary shifts*. These are in turn understood as processes that might bring about relationship transformation between groups. That is done through the initial process of transformation of core constructs of the collectives involved. The view of self is adjusted parallel with that process, making possible the acceptance of responsibility for actions carried out towards the other through the course of conflict. That often entails a renouncement of deeply felt identity aspects formerly

understood as crucial to the group's core constructs. Then the possibility of relationships to transform into more peaceful ones increases. The theoretical chapters developed the concepts of memory agents and official memory institutions, which are understood as crucial in that process. Memory agents have the ability to influence memory institutions through their actions, which visualizes how the interplay in the lower order of power has influence on formulations of identity on the higher order. The abovementioned concepts are fleshed out in more detail in the discussion below.

New History, thick recognition and relationship transformation

The empirical research questions addressed how the Israeli debates over history can be understood in terms of conflict transformation, as well as circumstances that facilitated and inhibited the introduction of New History in Israeli society. In order to probe these questions, the study scrutinized Israeli commemorative narratives regarding the 1948 War and investigated the dynamics of the debates over history, which regarded core aspects of Israeli national identity as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Below, the results emanating from the Israeli case study are related to the concepts of conflict transformation, thick recognition, and identities in conflict. Facilitating as well as inhibiting circumstances for the transformation of relationships in intractable conflicts are also discussed. The empirical analysis contributed three significant findings, which feed back into theories of conflict transformation:

(1) *Inside actors* are crucial because they can communicate narratives of thick recognition in intractable conflicts. They have the potential to question governing assumptions of identities and relationships in conflict. Inside actors, in our case for example historians, politicians and civil servants working with education policy, hence have the potential to influence identities in conflict through the introduction of narratives of thick recognition. That might be understood as possibly influencing relationships in conflict. In turn, that might have repercussions on the conflict dynamic.

Hence, the theoretical implication of this study is that inside actors and their interaction regarding identity dynamics are a crucial component in any analysis dealing seriously with relationship transformation in settings of intractable conflict. It might appear self-evident that it is crucial to scrutinize inside actors in the analysis of deep-seated conflicts. Nevertheless, there has been surprisingly little research on the topic. Therefore it is important to encourage more studies conducted in accordance with the theoretical framework developed here. Inside actors are also relevant objects for study in other societies involved in intractable conflicts. They can serve as crucial agents for change, as their acts of challenging may have the power to influence the narrative constellation

(2) The identification of *memory agents* as having influence on power relations in society is also crucial. The act of *challenging* master narratives of history and conflict - through the telling of counter narratives - may influence official memory institutions, which can result in transformed relationships in conflict. The act of *gatekeeping* is also an important component here, as promoters of master narratives try to exert influence to safeguard the master narratives and hence attempt to maintain continuity within the social system. In this study their most important actions have been delegitimation and, later on, also trying to exert influence on the contents of official memory institutions. A clear example of this in our case was challengers' as well as gatekeepers' attempts to influence which view of history should be taught in Israeli schools. This points toward crucial study objects in conflict analyses, and contributes to a furthered understanding of identity dynamics in conflict-ridden societies. The acts of challenging and gatekeeping can also travel to other conflictual contexts, and might then, depending on the circumstances, lead to recognition openings or recognition closures in societies involved in intractable conflicts, which in turn has an impact on conflict transformation. The importance of the narrative constellation when narratives of thick recognition are introduced has to be highlighted in all conflictual settings. Previous and contemporary narratives enhancing permeable boundaries are understood as crucial when assessing the possibility of introducing narratives of thick recognition in contexts of intractable conflict. Thus, the theoretical insights

emanating from this study can indeed be used in other inquiries discussing the possibility of transforming conflict initiated by inside actors who promote narratives of thick recognition. However, when it comes to the exact character of a narrative constellation, different themes of debate, and the specific development in a certain intractable conflict, every study has to be sensitized to its unique context.

(3) This study also contributed to a deeper understanding regarding the processes of *recognition openings* or *recognition closures* in intractable conflicts. Recognition openings are achieved when counter narratives of recognition take root and subsequently become inscribed into official memory institutions. This is brought about by the act of challenging mentioned above, which in turn spurs change in the narrative constellation that may bring transformed conflictual relations. When other narratives containing thick as well as thin recognition were winning ground, narratives of New History carrying notions of thick recognition also started to take root. The narrative constellation at that time can be understood as a *facilitating circumstance* for narratives of recognition, as it might have contributed to readiness to accept novel narratives of recognition among the public.

An important conclusion from that discussion is that narratives of thin and thick recognition seemed to assist each other in the process of conflict transformation. There was hence an opening during which members of the community felt free to formulate criticism of the contemporary system. One might understand the circumstances surrounding a recognition opening as a moment in time when different actors in the political environment are able to *voice* their criticism (Hirschman 1970). Thus, during times of the ideational liberalization linked to post-Zionism, which incorporated notions of thick recognition, and a peace process that forwarded narratives of thin recognition, the counter commemorative narratives of thick recognition were initially successful. The memory agents were aided by the wider narrative constellation, which enabled them to voice criticism against traditional historiography. An examination of the wider narrative constellation of societies has proved to be crucial when aiming to increase understandings regarding whether challengers come to be successful in their promotion of narratives of

thick recognition. The period of recognition openings also saw embryos of thick recognition in the peace process, when Israeli negotiators at Taba for the first time brought the issue of Palestinian refugees to the negotiation table. Hence the works of New History for a brief time contributed to changed interactions between parties to conflict.

Recognition closures can be understood as a result of the gatekeepers' struggles to maintain continuity in the social system. Through acts of gatekeeping they delegitimized and worked to remove New History from official memory institutions. In the case studied here, the gatekeepers were successful in their attempts and successfully removed many of the narratives of thick recognition from institutions. The analysis showed that several circumstances worked *inhibitingly* when it came to further spread of the narratives of thick recognition. The gatekeepers described the narratives of New History as a threat to the core construct of Israeli national identity. They aimed at recognition closures through delegitimation and later on managed to remove the counter narratives from the official sphere, and seemed to be most successful in that endeavor during times of increased violence and threats to physical security. The stagnated peace process and advances for narratives of neo-Zionism, neither of which carried notions of recognition, assisted the gatekeepers in their quest to restore the power of the master commemorative narratives. Apparently then, large parts of the public as well as the elite turned to the stable boundaries inherent in the master narratives of Zionism and conflict, which closely correspond with the master narratives of commemoration. At the time of the recognition closures around year 2000 studied here, there was hence little room to voice criticism, as the challengers were excluded from dialogue as well as from political influence. One option for the critics was then to *exit* (Hirschman 1970) the situation, as in the case with Ilan Pappé, who found work in Great Britain. The final alternative was *loyalty* (Hirschman 1970), meaning to stay within the system and conform to its formal and informal rules.

However, given the processual approach here, the counter narratives still exist in the margins of Israeli society. Given facilitating circumstances and agents willing to promote ideas of thick

recognition, they might hence again take root. If narratives of thick recognition promoting understandings of the national collective as demarcated by permeable boundaries instead of stable ones could be accepted by the public, they could again voice their understandings of national history, which in turn could lead to changes in the makeup of Israeli national identity, resulting in less antagonistic feelings toward the adversary in this conflict. Then relationships between adversaries could again be influenced by permeable boundaries, spurring the process of more peaceful conflict relations.

The discussion above indicates that the understanding of transformation of core constructs developed here can in a way serve as a basis for generalization when it comes to other intractable conflicts. The processes discussed are to a large extent universal, whereas the outcomes of those processes depend on contextual factors. Thus, other societies involved in intractable conflicts and experiencing societal debate over recognition can be analyzed through the conceptual framework developed here. After having discussed answers to the empirical research questions, and the possibility of the theoretical findings to travel to other empirical contexts, I turn to more general theoretical insights emanating from the study. The section below discusses the theoretical framework developed here and its implications for further conflict research.

Moving the research agenda forward

In what ways can the knowledge emanating from this study contribute to the development of conflict theory? It has suggested alternative ways forward in the analysis of intractable conflicts. A good deal of interesting research has previously been conducted in the intersection between theories of intractable conflict, identity and history. However, in this study´s elaboration on a theoretical framework that through a processual perspective incorporates the identity dynamics of those conflicts into the realm of conflict transformation, new insights have been developed.

The findings point toward the importance of considering inside actors and their interactions in conflict-ridden societies. As

identity aspects are part and parcel of the development of intractable conflicts, it is indeed futile to study those conflicts without taking their identity dynamics into consideration. Due to the fact that all conflicts – even the seemingly most intractable ones – go through constant transformation, there are always opportunities for change. However, when scrutinizing constituencies for change, it is imperative to look beyond the actors and interactions that have been the most traditional loci of interest in conflict research. In order to address profound identity aspects of intractable conflicts, I argue that there are more fruitful ways forward than the orthodox focus on elite negotiations and/or third-party interventions.

Even though the notion of recognition in both thick and thin forms has been much elaborated within the field of political theory, it has been surprisingly missing in research within conflict theory. One strand of conflict research ventures into thoughts on de jure recognition in negotiation settings, but little if any research has been conducted on the topic of profound identity aspects. If we are to investigate possibilities of transforming intractable conflicts with strong identity elements, thick recognition must be taken into consideration and be related to the process of relationship transformation. The results from this study highlight the transformative potential of thick recognition in those settings. If the aim is to transform war-torn societies into more peaceful ones, we cannot afford to ignore their identity dynamics. In any such analysis, it is crucial to consider aspects of recognition and how the public as well as elite relate to issues of thick recognition. If notions of thick recognition are introduced in conflicted societies, leading to the recognition of crucial identity aspects of the other, the conflict might move onto a more peaceful path.

That interaction has the possibility to influence relations between parties profoundly, and can hence lead the conflict onto a more peaceful trajectory. Parties to conflict are provided with a sense of security and self-worth, because their former enemy accepts the legitimacy of their most central dimensions of identity. Thick recognition is hence of crucial significance in influencing identities and relationships in conflicts. That is of utmost importance if the conflict is to shift onto a more peaceful course.

Thick recognition can by definition only be expressed by the parties in conflict, which gives third-party actors a more marginal role in the analysis. When paying attention to acts of thick recognition, the light falls on inside actors. The conflict's identity dynamics hence automatically becomes a focal point. It is essential to consider intrasocietal discussions among inside actors regarding identity, as they are vital for the development of relations within conflict. It is also clear that commemorative narratives of groups involved in conflicts are relevant for relationships in the present, which is why understandings of history should be a vital ingredient in all analyses of conflictual relations. Within disputes over history, seeds might be sown that, under facilitating circumstances, could contribute to the transformation of conflictual relations. Here academia serves an important function. Individual researchers can gain impulses from the global academic collective, and can thus import and disseminate those ideas into societies involved in intractable conflicts.

Analytically, the method suggested here directs attention to narratives of thick recognition, which can be expressed by a variety of actors in different areas. The study of thick recognition might hence lead in multiple directions, due to the fact that the researcher looks for acts of thick recognition within conflict settings, rather than a priorily focusing on a specific level of analysis. In this way the researcher is not predisposed to look at a specific actor or level-of-analysis, but rather he or she can embark on a broad search for narratives of thick recognition and their surrounding social interaction. That search provides opportunities for thoroughgoing analyses penetrating into profound identity aspects – which are necessary if we are to visualize the transformation of intractable conflicts into more peaceful forms.

The international community of researchers as well as practitioners concerned with conflict transformation should thus pay attention to endogenous processes and interactions among inside actors of this kind. They should constantly underline the urgency of, as well as intellectually encourage, a multiplicity of narratives regarding identity in societies involved in intractable conflicts. Societal discussions regarding recognition contribute to the fact that boundaries of national identities come under constant pressure. In

the end, that might affect the boundaries of national collectives involved in conflict. Thus, ideas of thick recognition inherent in all forms of narratives should be promoted. This means that researchers and practitioners alike should pay attention to official memory institutions as well as memory agents with the potential power to influence them. Indeed, if peace processes continue and there is no change in official memory institutions, there might be little support among the public for peace efforts, as the boundaries between the collective self and the opponent in conflict are continuously perceived as stable. This only brings about momentary changes in relations, as thick recognition must be allowed to permeate society in order for the intractable state of conflict to be transformed into a tractable one, where destructive relations are replaced by more peaceable ones. It is thus key to pay attention to counter narratives containing thick recognition in conflict-ridden societies, as over time they might form the most important domestic challenge to core constructs of groups involved in conflict.

Visiting the present: Israeli civil society at a crossroads

Israeli society goes through constant change. The debates covered in this study were very lively, and many have followed since. During the 1990s, narratives within many different areas came to challenge conventional wisdom in Israeli society. A lively peace movement supported the Oslo process, and the societal debates within the media and other areas were indeed vigorous. However, the recognition closures that took place around the eve of the new millennium had grave consequences. The conflict dynamics, which were turbulent and went through significant changes during the 1990s, have become altered in an unfortunate way, implying that critics have little or no opportunity to make themselves heard in the societal setting. Intractability seems to be more entrenched than ever at the moment, and prospects for peace are dim. There are worrying signs in at least three areas, indicating that it will take some time before Israeli society is presented with new recognition openings.

The first area is academia. The climate for critical academics is becoming harder, with new claims from the right-wing establishment demanding the banning of books expressing views that break with master narratives of Zionism (Kashti 2010a). One significant feature of the interaction in the debates studied here was attempts to delegitimize challengers of Israeli master narratives. Since then, many academics as well as other pro-peace activists have struggled to communicate views that break with Israeli master narratives. In 2006, Sari Nuseibeh, president of Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem, claimed:

> "If we are to look at Israeli society, it is within the academic community that we've had the most progressive pro-peace views and views that have come out in favor of seeing us as equals." (AP 2006-06-18)

However, in the increasingly polarized political environment critics have more frequently become faced with delegitimation. At this very moment, vocal civil society actors such as IZL (the Institute for Zionist Strategies) and Im Tirtzu (another Israeli pro-Zionist group) are working hard on campaigns to delegitimize anyone who promotes what they see as anti-Zionist views (Kashti 2010b). Accusations have been directed towards teachers in Ben Gurion University of the Negev as well as Tel Aviv University who are accused of teaching anti-Zionist views (Kashti 2010c). The silence of the Israeli public can hence partly be seen as a natural outcome of the forceful delegitimation campaigns directed toward anybody who tries to express criticism vis-à-vis the policies of the Israeli government.

A second area that shows troublesome signs of decline is the traditionally so vibrant Israeli civil society. After the war in Gaza at the end of January 2009, international as well as domestic criticism was raised against what was seen as disproportionate Israeli use of violence. In order to get a clearer picture of what happened during the war, the UN established the "The United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict" team, under the leadership of then president of UNHCR, Richard Goldstone. It published the so-called "Goldstone Report" in September 2009, which accused both the Israeli Defense Forces and Palestinian militants of war crimes and

possible crimes against humanity (www.un.org 2010). The Israeli reactions to the report were very strong. Israeli Information Minister Yuli Edelstein gave a speech on the topic of the Goldstone Report stating that the results are simply expressions of anti-Semitism (Keinon 2010). Again high-ranking Israeli officials have countered criticism of actions carried out by the Israeli government with delegitimation in the strongest sense. The writers of the UN report were accused of anti-Semitism, even though Richard Goldstone himself is part of the South African Jewish community.

Naomi Chazan, former member of the Knesset, and a columnist at Jerusalem Post, encountered heavy criticism after the Goldstone Report. Chazan presently heads the Israeli National Fund, which is a U.S.-based organization that funds activist Israeli civil society NGOs, some of which provided material for the Goldstone Report. Following the publication of the report, the Israeli political establishment turned against Chazan, and she was additionally fired from her position as a columnist at Jerusalem Post (Lis 2010). Interior Minister Eli Yishai claimed that she, together with the INF, were backing civil society organizations that "aim to destroy Israel" (Susser 2010). In the same vein, Moshe Ya'alon, Minister of Strategic Affairs, referred to Israeli human rights organizations as "enemies from within" (www.jewishreview.org 2010). Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has further claimed that "Goldstoneism" is one of three existential threats to Israel today, the other two being Iran and a Palestinian state without adequate security arrangements (Jerusalem Post 2009, Susser 2010).

Following the Goldstone Report and the Chazan affair, the current Law Committee, headed by Yisrael Beiteinu's[58] David Rotem, has set up a subcommittee to examine the sources of funding of NGOs active in Israel (Ronen 2010). Some of the committee members aim to ban funding by foreign countries, which is seen as interfering in Israel's internal affairs. Kadima Party's[59] Otniel Schneller wants to go a step further, proposing the establishment of a

[58] A right-wing nationalistic party, presently led by Avidgor Liberman.

[59] A liberal-centrist part, presently led by Tzipi Livni.

parliamentary inquiry commission to probe the conduct of the INF and its grantees. Schneller says he is against the absurdity of Israeli civil society "paying organizations like Physicians for Human Rights to slander us", and wants to stop the INF from supporting what he sees as anti-Zionist groups (Ha'aretz 2010).

Through forceful delegitimation strategies, gatekeepers have silenced Israeli civil society actors. In that context, there is little if any room for critics to voice their concerns. In February 2010 a group of leading Israeli academics, writers, actors, directors and political activists including novelists A.B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, placed a full-page ad in Ha'aretz. It expressed "disgust at the campaign of incitement and hatred" being waged against Chazan and the INF (Susser 2010). Notwithstanding the support of Chazan, the delegitimation of critics of Israeli policies is troublesome as the linking of criticism with existential threats to security, and especially to anti-Semitism, might quiet the fiercest critic. Even the Israeli public, which historically have been involved in vigorous dispute with its elite, have become increasingly quiet. That development might result in depriving Israeli society of intrasocietal dialogue, which is a crucial component in any democracy.

Thirdly – and of crucial importance – the prospects for peaceful conflict transformation in such a closed societal setting are very glum. In the wake of the war in Lebanon in 1982, hundreds of thousands of Israelis demonstrated in the streets against what was seen as disproportionate use of violence and "a war of choice" rather than "a war of no alternative". During and after the Gaza war, the previously fierce Israeli civil society, as well as its peace movement, remained silent. Even in the aftermath of the war, after the publication of the Goldstone Report, only very radical groups together with a small number of pro-peace academics openly criticized Israeli actions during the war.

This development is unfortunate, although not entirely surprising. One can conclude that the debate climate in Israel today shows meager prospects for recognition openings, as internal as well as external critics are dismissed and often linked to anti-Semitism. Even Jewish groups in the Diaspora, which have historically expressed strong support for Israeli actions and policies, have

expressed concern with the present climate in the domestic Israeli debate. The newly founded American pro-Israel, pro-peace lobby J-street has been delegitimized in the Israeli public debate. On the 10th of July in 2010, Jerusalem Post ran an article in which columnist Isi Leibler rhetorically asked himself if J-street, being such a critic of current Israeli policies, really should be incorporated under what he described as "the Jewish tent" (2010). Again, a group expressing pro-peace views and criticism of Israeli policies has become defined as outside of the Jewish collective, appearing to be siding with "the enemy". The signs are indeed worrying. The current Israeli isolation, in which critics from within as well as from without are constantly dismissed, is harmful to future peace efforts. In order for the conflict to move onto a more peaceful track, this isolation must be broken. It is imperative that the Israeli establishment stops the delegitimation of critics and instead engages in dialogue with the international community and responds to its criticism in order to find viable ways toward a more peaceful future.

This study has highlighted the important role of academic as well as intra-societal debates in conflicted societies. When internal as well as external critics against Israeli politics are delegitimized and linked to anti-Semitism, it is crucial for commentators to destabilize that link and show that policy has nothing to do with ethnic or national affiliation, but is what actors make of it. It has been shown here that intrasocietal criticism can have a destabilizing effect on master narratives that encourage ethnic entrenchment. It has also been argued that contentious voices might create space for debates that can contain seeds spurring processes of peaceful conflict transformation. This study has shown that important social criticism against the exclusionary principles through which conflicts are constituted can spring from professionals in the academic sphere, who are often influenced by debates that transgress national boundaries. Those social critics serve a pivotal function in conflict-ridden societies, as their voicing of criticism contributes to the existence of a plethora of counter narratives that over time might challenge master narratives and assist in the transformation of conflictual relationships.

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