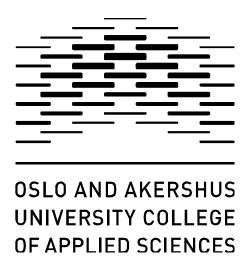Signe Marie Stendal

Narration of past and present in the Israeli education system

A CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY IN JERUSALEM

**OSLO AND AKERSHUS
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Multicultural and International Education (MIE)

Spring, 2015

Master in Multicultural and International Education

Faculty of Education

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Narration of past and present in the Israeli education system

A CASE STUDY OF A UNIVERSITY

IN JERUSALEM

Photo by Signe Marie Stendal, 2014

By Signe Marie Stendal, 2015

Let the history we lived

Be taught in the schools,

So that it is never forgotten,

So that our children may know it

(Testimony given to the Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification, in Cole, 2007).

Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the narrations of past and present among students and professors of social science and history at an Israeli university in Jerusalem. Moreover, the goal is to address the perceived effect and value of encounters between Palestinian and Israeli youth on the university campus. The fieldwork was conducted in Palestine and Israel from August to October 2014. During the fieldwork, 15 semi-structured interviews were carried out with 17 informants – 14 students and 3 professors.

This study suggests that the school system has the ability to influence relations between conflicting parts in negative and positive ways. The study further argues that history teaching effects the construction of Palestinian and Israeli social identities, and can thus inflame the conflict by presenting negative and biased images of the other group. Psychological barriers among individuals in Israel and Palestine are crucial for the understanding of the deep-rooted mechanisms in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By offering different, and multiple narratives of Israel and Palestine, the school system and the academia have the potential to play a vital role in the achieving sustainable solution to the conflict.

Findings of the study indicate that the university to a larger extent than primary education presents a variety of narratives of the Israeli and Palestinian past and present. Findings further show that the university avoids presentations of contested political issues. Thus, this seems to be an obstacle and challenge concerning the presence of the Palestinian narrative. The majority of the informants said that the university represented the first time when they could interact with members of the other group in an everyday setting. The study suggests that the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students at the university can lead to an adjustment of prejudices and negative images of the other. Experiences from a dialogue group for Israeli and Palestinian students organised by the university, show that the university have the potential enabling fruitful encounters between the two groups. Essential for positive outcomes of dialogue seems to be that discrepancies in power relations and social barriers are addressed and discussed during the encounters. However, the dialogue group at the university represent the exceptions rather than the rule at the university. This study argues that the university has the potential to do more to reduce psychological barriers in the conflictual terrain between Israeli and Palestinian students.

Acknowledgement

Abbreviations

AC – Accounting

BA – Bachelor Degree

CL – Comparative Literature

CS – Conflict studies

ED – Education Studies

GH – General History

HRIS – Human Rights in Israeli Society

IDF – Israeli Defence Force

IMES – Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

JH – Jewish History

KUN – KUN Centre for gender equality

LA – Law

NGO – Nongovernmental Organization

PhD - Philosophiae doctor

PS – Political Science

SA – Sociology and Anthropology

STE – Suitable Targets of Externalization

UN – United Nations

WZO – World Zionist Organization

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with all its complexity and brutality, has largely been the subject of vast research since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. There are multiple voices that claim to be heard regarding this geographically small area in the Middle East: the political, the ethnic, the geographical, the demographic, and not to mention the religious.

Researchers have suggested that school systems are important in the understanding of social dynamics of intergroup conflicts, like the Israeli-Palestinian one (Bekerman, 2009; Cole, 2007; Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007; Seixas, 2004). In addition, social psychologists argue that encounters between members of groups in conflict can improve relations between individuals, and thus lead to improvement of intergroup relations at society, and even the international, level (Betalncourt, 1990).

The purpose of this study is to explore the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students in an Israeli university in Jerusalem. Moreover it aims to investigate the narrations of past and present in the Israeli school system, and in particular at a specific Israeli university in Jerusalem. The study seeks to respond to the lack of research on the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students in the Israeli academia (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014). Furthermore it is concerned about students' perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and their ideas about history, identity and coexistence. Israeli and Palestinian students of higher education may possibly be seen as an indicator of how the future of Israel and Palestine will look like. It is also likely that these students will teach and present the history to the next generation of the area. As history teaching is a powerful mean in constructing social and individual identities, and beliefs about self and others, students of higher education represent an important target, which is significant with respect to further efforts of promoting peace and justice in Israel and Palestine (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007; Seixas, 2004; Wertsch, 2004).

1.1 Research questions

As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is too complex and comprehensive for adequate analysis in one master thesis, there is a need to limit the scope of this study. Accordingly, I have chosen to focus on the Israeli school system, and in particular one specific Israeli university in Jerusalem. This study is focused on Israeli and Palestinian students and professors of history and social science.

My objective is to explore and discuss narration of Israeli and Palestinian past and present in relation to the in- and out-group. With regards to the Israeli informants, the term *in-group* refers to the Israelis whereas the *out-group* refers to the Palestinians, and vice versa. The term *primary education* refers to elementary, secondary and high schools. In the study I will investigate the ideas of coexistence with the "Other" among students and professors of the specific Jerusalem University. In addition I want to explore to what extent the university facilitates sustainable encounters between the two groups. The term *encounter* in this study refers mainly to informal meetings and contact between Israeli and Palestinian students. However, as I also explore an organized dialogue group, the term includes structured meetings between them. The objectives entail the following research questions:

1: What are the narratives of Israeli and Palestinian past and present in primary education as experienced by the students, and to what extent does it influence their social identity?

2: How are the narratives about Israel and Palestine presented and addressed at the university?

3. To what extent do interaction, coexistence and dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian university students contribute to enhance or mitigate prejudices and biases of the other group?

1.2   Outline of the thesis

The first chapter provides background information of past and present in Jerusalem. As the history of Israel and Palestine are comprehensive and complex, there is a need for limitations. In this study, it is the narration of past and present in relation to the in- and out-group that are emphasised; therefore I will only provide a brief historical presentation. I will further clarify important terms that largely will be applied throughout the thesis. In chapter two I give account for the methodological choices done for this study. In this chapter challenges and ethical considerations throughout the fieldwork in Jerusalem will be stressed and discussed. Chapter three provides the theoretical framework and analytical tools applied in the analysis and discussion of narration of past and present in the school system. The main categories I will give account for are 1. Power and knowledge, 2. Social beliefs and behaviour in intergroup conflicts and finally 3. History teaching and construction of social identities. In order to gain understanding for the context of this study, the next chapter presents relevant research of history teaching in conflict-ridden areas, and research on the Israeli and Palestinian education systems. The findings and discussions of this study are divided into two chapters. Chapter five focus on narration in primary education and identity construction while

chapter six emphasises narration at the university, and the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students in Israeli academia. Finally I sum up the main findings in the conclusion chapter.

1.3   Context and background

This chapter provides relevant background information for my study of Palestinian and Israeli university students. As the city of Jerusalem is the backdrop of my informants and crucial for the understanding of their life style, I start by giving a brief outline of the city, it's people and its characterizations. I continue with a clarification of the terms *Israeli Jews* and *Palestinians* as they are expressions that to a large extent will be applied in this study. Thereafter I will provide a brief historical background of Israel and Palestine, as it is central for the understanding of the current situation on the ground, as well as the history teaching, which is a significant topic in this study. As the main topic in this study is the Israeli school system, I will finally present an overview of its characteristics in the conclusion of this chapter.

1.3.1   Jerusalem

"The history of Jerusalem, is the history of the world" (Montefiore, 2011, p. 19), Simon Sebag Montefiore claims in his comprehensive portrayal of Jerusalem, *Jerusalem: the Biography*. The city of Jerusalem is known for being the most important capital for religion and culture in the world (Dellapergola, 1999). However, it is a subject of fascination whether you are religious or a nonbeliever. Besides, it is the target of dissolutive conspiracy theories and myths on the Internet and it is constantly in the spotlight of international media. "Religious, political and media interests feed on each other to make Jerusalem intensively scrutinized today than ever before" (Montefiore, 2011, p. 19). Moreover, Jerusalem is the capital of two groups of people, the Israeli Jews and Palestinians, and the center of three world religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

 The demography of Jerusalem comprises a diverse combination of people. These variations appear in phenomenon such as ethnicity – Jews and Arabs, religion – Christian, Muslim, Jewish, cultural orientations, countries of births and origin, sub-ethnic identities, and civic statuses – "from full-scale citizens to permanent or temporary resident to refugee" (Dellapergola, 1999, p. 167). Segregation between the diverse groups is significant in Jerusalem. Dellapergola describes the city as a "social mosaic with rather rigid delineation between different subpopulations" (Dellapergola, 1999, p 167). Economically, Jerusalem ranks low on economical indexes compared to other Israeli cities. One of the reasons is the

"significant presence of traditionalist groups with large families" (Dellapergola, 199, p. 167), which are associated with lower standards of living and less economical capacity.

Throughout modern history, the municipality borders of Jerusalem have rapidly changed. This is mainly due to military, political and administrative events that have formed its characterization since the beginning of the Mandatory Palestine under British rule in 1920. As both Israel and Jordan opposed the resolutions from 1947 that suggested that UN should administrate Jerusalem, the 1948 war led to separation between West and East Jerusalem where Israel annexed the former, while Jordan occupied the latter. During the 1967 war, also East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel. However, Israel's claim of Jerusalem as their capital has not been internationally recognized. Accordingly, East Jerusalem has status as Palestinian land under Israeli occupation. Despite the international condemnation, and its violation of international law, building of Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem currently continues. Many argue that this is one of the core obstacles of achieving a sustainable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Butenschøn, 2008).

1.3.2   Israeli Jews

There are several definitions of the term *Jew*. The term can refer to a member of a Jewish community, religion (Judaism), nationality, ethnicity or race. Until the mid-1700s the definition was straightforward and strictly defined: A Jew was a person that confessed himself to the faith of his ancestors, Judaism, and was born of a Jewish mother. A Jew who deviated from Judaism was expelled from the Jewish community. In this definition the close link between the Jewish religion and ethnicity is clearly stated. Today it is widely accepted that one may be a Jew without confessing Judaism (Lorentz, 2010).

There are many stereotypes regarding the Jewish people. In a journal article from the Centre for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities, Einar Lorentz (2010) states that the public debate reveals a common assumption where Jews are considered as one homogenous group that have a shared identity towards the state of Israel. This is an essentialist understanding of ethnicity which I attempt to avoid in this study (Baumann, 1999). Defining one homogeneous Jewish identity is problematic, if not impossible. Being an ultra-orthodox Haredi Jew in Jerusalem is something very different from being a secular Jew in Tel Aviv. Likewise, the Messianic Jewish settlers on the West bank may not identify themselves with the critical analysis of the Israeli society by the former Jewish left-wing activist, politician and author Avraham Burg (Lorentz, 2010).

It is common to distinguish between three main ethnic Jewish groups. These are 1. *Ashkenazim*, 2. *Sephardim* and finally 3. *Mizrahi*. The first group refers to the Jews of European, in particular Eastern European, origin. The second group, Sephardim, refers to Jews that emigrated from the Middle East to Iberia – Spain and Portugal, during the tenth to twelfth centuries. Finally, the last group, Mizrahi, are the name of the Jews that origin from North African and Arab countries. However, the dividing line between these groups is not always clear-cut (Zohar, 2005)

Israel is a nation of ethnic, religious and political diversity (Dellapergola, 1999). Thus, it is necessary to underline the multiple meaning of the term *Israeli*. In this thesis the term refers to Jews that have Israeli citizenship and live within the state of Israel. It must be stressed that this is a restricted definition since it is highly possible to be an Israeli citizen without being a Jew. Many of the Palestinian informants in this study are Israeli citizens, and could therefore be categorized as Israelis. However, all of them defined themselves as Palestinians. Consequently, I will not use the term Israeli when referring to the Israeli Palestinians in this study.

1.3.3 Palestinians

The term *Palestinians* may refer to an ethnic group (Arabs), religion (Muslims, Christians and Druze), to a majority group in Gaza and West Bank, or to a minority group in Israel (Bekerman, 2009). The expression originates from the First World War when the current Israel, Gaza and West bank was called Palestine. Moreover, the phrase refers to the people that have the historic Palestine as their country of origin, who share a feeling of belonging in a common past and future. Within the Palestinian population one can distinguish between a three key religious groups, the Muslims who entail the majority, and two minority groups, Christians and Druze. Within these groups, there are cultural and national variations (Minkowich, Deyyis, & Bashi, 1982). Today there are approximately 10, 5 million Palestinians. Half of the population lives in the historic Palestine (current Israel, Gaza and West Bank), while the rest are spread out across the Middle East and beyond (Maalouf, 2001). In addition, half of the Palestinian population lack citizenship to any nation-state, and have the status as refugees. The struggle for an independent Palestinian nation-state has been significant for the Palestinians since the declaration of Israel as a Jewish state in 1948, when two-thirds of the Palestinians became refugees (Matar, 2011; Said & Barsamian, 2003).

In this study the majority of the Palestinian informants are from East Jerusalem. Some of them are Israeli citizens, while others have Jerusalem ID[1]. One of the informants is from the West Bank.

1.3.4 The establishment of a "National Home"

To gain an understanding of the current Israeli society, Zionism and its impact over the establishment of the state of Israel is crucial. Therefore I am going to present a brief historical overview in this section. As the focus in this study is the narration of past and present in the education system, I will underline that the history of Israel and Palestine only briefly will be presented.

Inspired by Western enlightenment and nationalism, Zionism occurred in Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th century as a Jewish national ideology. The corner stone in Zionism was the need for a sovereign Jewish state, where Jews could be safe and protected from the dawning anti-Semitism in Europe. Theodor Herzl, a secular Jew from Hungary, became the founder of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), and directed the establishment of the modern secular Zionist ideology (Cohn-Sherbok, 2012).

From the beginning there were disagreements concerning where the Jewish national state should be located. Some suggested Uganda as a suitable place for the new state. Others pointed towards Argentina. Herzl was convinced that the only possibility of achieving the Jewish dream was to actively be involved in diplomacy with the superpowers. One year before his death in 1904, Herzl achieved an agreement with Britain that involved establishment of a Jewish colony in British East Africa. After a process of argumentation and discussion, WZO accepted the suggestion at the Zionist congress in 1903. However, a minority group at the congress rejected. They argued that the only right place for a future Jewish state was in the former Palestine, the origin and symbol of Jewish culture and religion. According to these people, groups of so-called cultural Zionists mainly from Eastern Europe, the challenges for the Jews in Europa were not only about anti-Semitism, but a collective feeling of being homeless and alien. Moving to Uganda or Argentina would only mean moving from one alien continent, to another, they argued (Butenschøn, 2008).

Noticeable, the majority of the Jewish religious leaders at that time were against the claim of sovereignty of a Jewish state in The Holy Land. According to them, Zionism was a secular,

---

[1] An identification card stating that the owner of the card is a "permanent resident" of Jerusalem, but lacks citizenship. The nationality section is left blank.

blasphemously idea, opposing the holy Torah. They argued that the holy book requires for all the Jews to accept the exile, and wait for the return of Messiah. As the rabbis were the first to be murdered during the Holocaust, this position was almost extricated after The Second World War (Rabbi Yisroel Dovid Weiss, 11.5.2015, *Judaism and Alternative to Zionism*).

The First World War and its outcomes are significant for the understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. During the war, the leaders of WZO realized that the Middle East, including Palestine, probably would be involved in the battles between the superpowers. In a declaration from 1917, known as the Balfour Declarationthe British foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour affirmed his support of the Zionist project that involved the formation of a so-called Jewish *National Home* in Palestine (Essaid, 2014).

The Zionists were right about the involvement of Middle East in the war, and in 1920, as a result of the war, current Israel and Palestine became part of the mandatory Palestine, administrated by the British. Due to the Balfour declaration, the British allowed what became an extensive Jewish migration project to the area. From before, the Jewish minority population had coexisted in peace with the Arab majority population during many decades (Weiss, 2015). It turned out that there were several aspects of the Balfour Declaration that were not clarified. What was the actual meaning of the term "National Home"? An important aspect missing was the situation and the rights of the majority indigenous population who already lived in the area, the Palestinians. Consequently, the seemingly inevitable conflict resulted in at least two dominant national ideological narratives: one Jewish-Zionist and one Palestinian (Bekerman, 2009; Butenschøn, 2008)

In order to establish a national political culture and to promote their claim for national sovereignty, the Palestinians tried to influence the British from the outside during the mandate period. The Muslim council led by the mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, became the Palestinian institution with the most influence. However, the Palestinian people were divided into a variety of clans and struggled with the establishment of a unitary administration of their claims (Butenschøn, 2008).

In May 14, 1948, the forthcoming prime minster, Ben Gurion, proclaimed Israel as a Jewish, independent nation-state. Accordingly the war, referred to as the War of independence by Israel and Naqbe (The Catastrophe) by the Palestinians, became a reality. During the war, more than 700 000 indigenous Palestinians fled from their homeland. The Zionist narrative states that these people escaped voluntarily, while others argue that a systematic and vastly

violent expulsion, led by Zionist forces, took place. In the aftermath of the 1948-war, the Palestinian refugees were not allowed to return to their homes. This is the background for the current claim of the *Palestinian right of return*[2]. Yet, the majority of their descendants still live without citizenship in refugee camps in the neighbouring countries and beyond. Thus, the 1948-war joins the rank of a number of wars between Israelis and Palestinians, such as in 1956, 1967, 1974 and 1982. In addition, several violent activities have taken place in between (Bar-Tal, 2013). Numerous attempts have been made to improve the relationship between the two groups, but as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, and violent attacks from both sides continue, the conflict just seems to escalate (Bekerman, 2009; Butenschøn, 2008; Pappe, 2014).

1.3.5   Post-Zionism

During the 1990s a group of Israeli Jews started to questions the idea behind the Zionist narrative. These were artists, journalists and academicians, and constituted Israel´s so-called *post-Zionists.* Although the term is far from clear among its users and its detractors, post-Zionism has caused heated disputes about whether Israel should be a Jewish or a democratic state (Nimni, 2003). The post-Zionists shared a critical view about what Pappe (2014) refers to as "the Idea of Israel": "When the *idea* of Israel was challenged from within, it meant that the *ideal* of Zionism was deciphered as an ideology, and thus became a far more tangible and feasible target for critical evaluation" (Pappe, 2004, p. 6).

The core of the post-Zionist claim was that Israel should develop a civic Israeli identity, rather than a Jewish-Israeli, and that the institutional framework of the state should be renewed to a liberal democracy, constituted on universal values (Nimni, 2003). Social and political processes motivated the questioning of the post-Zionists, and the common ground was the re-examining of the past, in order to understand the present. For some, exposure of the unfair and brutal treatment of the Palestinians triggered the critical approach. For others, it was the logical flaws in the Zionist ideology that motivated the exploration of alternatives to Zionism. What they all had in common was that they went deep into the past: they dug into national and private archives and listened to people who saw themselves as victims of Zionism (Pappe, 2014).

---

[2] A principle ascertains that the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war, and their descendants, have a right of return to the historic Palestine, and have the right to the property they/their ancestors, left behind them due to the 1948 war (Boyle, 2011).

As the trend in Western academia during the 1990s was to raise critical questions about nationalism, hegemonic cultural positions and state policies, the scholars among the Post-Zionists were challenged to have this critical approach to the Zionist discourse. However, the critical exploration of the past, led by the post-Zionists "ended as abruptly as it erupted. After less than a decade, it was branded by the state and by large segments of the Jewish Israeli population as dangerous, indeed suicidal – a trip that would end in Israel losing its international legitimacy and moral backing" (Pappe, 2014, p. 6). Accordingly, post-Zionism was labelled as anti-Semitism and a threat to the existence of the state, and in year 2000 it was, according to Pappe, almost absent in Israel: "Its (Zionism´s) power did not lie in coercion and intimidation; it won legitimacy mainly through acceptance of the idea as being the reality. Its power to regulate everyday life is achieved through invisible means – the very means the challengers sought to expose (Pappe, 2014). However, others argues that post-Zionism still is apparent in Israel, and that the debate about the core of the Israeli state continues (Nimni, 2003).

1.3.6   Israeli School system

Formal education in Israel is mainly public, meaning that primary and secondary schools are administrated and funded by the Israeli Ministry of Education. The free schooling lasts for 13 years; one year of kindergarten, and 12 years of primary, lower secondary, and senior secondary schooling. 11 of these years are compulsory. The Israeli school system is divided into four sectors along religious and national-ethnic dividing lines. These schools have separate curricula: religious Jewish, secular Jewish, Orthodox Jewish and Arab/Palestinian (Drewry, 2007). The sectors are historically developed in light of the specific cultural and linguistic needs of the groups within the state (Resh & Benavot, 2009).

Despite the declared goal of offering equal educational opportunities for all Israeli citizens, the educational inequalities between the Jewish and Palestinian Israeli citizens are apparent. The sectors differ from each other in terms of quality and resources, as much as the degree of autonomy and supervision from central authorities. While the Jewish religious sector to a large extent is autonomous concerning pedagogical methods, and enjoys significant amounts of financial resources from the Ministry and other governmental organisations and NGO's, the Arab sector are under constant surveillance of the state (Resh & Benavot, 2009). While the Jewish curricula stress Jewish national content and Jewish nation building, the curriculum for the Israeli-Palestinian sector lacks any Palestinian national content (Rouhana, 1997 in Bekerman, 2009). In addition, Human Rights Watch stresses the disparities between Jewish

and Palestinian educational sector regarding financial support, facilities and teacher-student distributions (Al-Haj, 1995; Coursen-Neff, 2001). In addition to the public school system, there are some private educational initiatives differing from the main tendency in Israeli and Palestinian school systems. These schools, primarily represented by the organisation *Hand in Hand*, present an alternative to the separated public school system by aiming for a shared, egalitarian society for Jews and Palestinians (Bekerman, 2009; Hand in Hand, 2013).

By contrast to the primary education, higher education in Israel opens the doors for encounters between Israelis and Palestinians. At campus many experience their first contact with people from the other group. At that stage they are already young adults. Nevertheless, also in higher education, the gaps between Israeli Jews and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are evident. Although 27% of the youth in Israel are Palestinians, they constitute barely 9.5% of the students in higher education. According to Daphna Golan and Nadera Shakhoub-Kevorkian (2014) there are two main reasons for this: One is the already mentioned discrepancies between the Jewish and the Arabic sectors in elementary and high school which lead to drop outs, and avoidance of higher education. Second, is that many Israeli Palestinians prefer to study in the occupied territories, or abroad (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014).

2 Methodology

2.1 Qualitative research and methods

In this research I have attempted to explore the values, ideas, identities, personal stories and experiences of Israeli and Palestinian university students of history and social sciences in an Israeli university in Jerusalem; it is *their* understanding and experiences that are of major concern. Hence, I found it most appropriate to use a qualitative approach, rather than a quantitative, as a qualitative researcher "emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collective and analysis of data" (Bryman, 2008, p. 366). The assumption was that quantitative research methods such as statistics and survey were insufficient in order to explore the student's subjective ideas of identity and narration of past and present in Israel and Palestine. Instead, I believed that qualitative methods such as observation and interviews were more helpful. Thus, this choice has implications for other issues related to the research design: the epistemological and ontological position, the view of the relationship between theory and research and the methods applied (Bryman, 2008).

As my goal was to explore the personal stories and complexity of my informants, rather than to study phenomena "out there", my epistemological position is an anti-positivist, more specifically a phenomenological position. With an anti-positivist understanding of social reality, the question of how people make sense of the world is essential (Bryman, 2008). I aimed to avoid stereotyping and generalization, and rather explore the diversity of Israeli and Palestinian students in Jerusalem. Accordingly, my ontological position is constructionist. This position stresses that social phenomena are hybrid and dynamic, and that they continually are being accomplished by social actors (Bryman, 2008).

Overall I use a case study design in this research. "The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (Bryman, 2008, p 52). The case in this study is Israeli and Palestinian students of history and social science enrolled in an Israeli university in Jerusalem. Case studies are "concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question" (Bryman, 2008, p 52). This can be a particular community, a single school, a specific family or an organization. The use of the term "case" is often associated with a specific location, in this case an Israeli university in Jerusalem. A characterization of a case study is that the researcher typically aims to reveal the unique structures of the case (Repstad, 2007).

2.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

As my aim with this study was to grasp the personal experiences, ideas and opinions of my informants, and to recognize the contradictory opinions, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, as this method seemed most suitable for the aim of this study. According to Bryman (2008), semi-structure interviews permits to ask the same questions to the informants, and thus compare if there are any distinctions in the way the informants experience certain issues. More importantly, semi-structure interview enables the researcher to be flexible, ask follow-up questions and adjust according to the response given. The latter is essential when it comes to recognizing the personal and sole experiences and emotions of the participants (Bryman, 2008).

The main data material in this thesis is 15 semi-structured interviews of Palestinian and Israeli students and professors/historians. All the interviews are tape recorded, with one exception. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) stress the setting for an interview. In order to obtain honest and sincere response from the informants, the setting should encourage them to describe their life and social world. Moreover, the first minutes of the interview setting are crucial as the informants would like gain understanding of the interviewer before they allow themselves to provide honest information (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore each interview started with coffee and conversation about daily life, and a brief presentation of the study, before the tape recorder was turned on. In addition, the majority of the interviews were conducted at the university, in locations that the participants preferred; cafeterias, group rooms and outside at the green spots on campus.

All of the interviews lasted about one hour. Kvale and Brinkmann describe how there may be tension and anxiety in relation to the interview situation at the end of an interview, "as the subject has been open about personal and sometimes emotional experiences and may be wondering about the purpose and later use of the interview" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 228). I was therefore careful to ensure that the information shared would be totally confidential, and I offered the informants to read the transcripts for correction. However, the majority of my informants provided positive feedback regarding the interview situations, and many said that they found it enriching to share their points of view and to speak freely about their opinions. Some said that they obtained new perspectives of certain themes, as they were unaccustomed to reflect on some of the topics. This is in line with Kvale and Brinkmann who state; "a common experience after research interview is that subjects have experienced the

interviews as genuinely enriching" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 129). In order to show appreciation to the informants, I gave them a small gift after the interview session.

Bryman (2008) describes how many researchers conducting semi structured interviews apply an interview guide with a list of specific topics to be covered (Bryman, 2008). This was useful for me, as I wanted to ensure that specific topics were covered during the interviews. Accordingly, two interview guides with a set of questions and topics were applied, one for the students, and one for the professors. There were some variations in the list of questions. The main topics in the interview guide were: 1) Their personal background, 2) previous exposure to the subject of history in primary education, 3) their motivation for studying/lecturing, 4) previous experiences of studying with people from the other group, and finally 5) how they experience lectures related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the university. That being said, the majority of the interviews were informal, and the questions were adjusted according to he answers of the participants. The interview guides was only applied when participants did not cover the questions by themselves. This is line with Bryman (2008) when he states "questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule" (Bryman, 2008, p. 438). Since different groups of students were interviewed, the questions were adjusted according to the study programs they attended. In addition, the interview guide was edited during the fieldwork as new concepts and topics appeared.

In some occasions the informants were asked to provide examples of events from their life in order to illustrate statements and opinions. Accordingly, several personal stories from the informant's past were shared. Thus, the form of some of the interviews can be characterized as *Oral History Interviews*. "This is an unstructured or semi-structured interview in which the respondent is asked to recall events from his or her past and to reflect on them (Bryman, 2008, p. 196). These personal stories were crucial for this study as it provided enriching information about the life, experiences and backgrounds of the informants. In addition it helped me to understand the emotions expressed, such as hate, love, frustrations, anger and happiness.

Two of the interviews consisted of two persons - one with two Palestinian students of Political Science, and the other with an Israeli professor in Modern Jewish History and an Israeli PhD Student from the General History Department. For the latter, I continued the interview with the PhD student after the professor left. This gave me an interesting opportunity to compare how the student answered when the professor was there, and when he

was alone with me. The joint interviews were similar to the individual interviews although they had an extra dimension where discussion and sharing of similar and different experiences between the informants took place.

2.1.2 Observations

Intentionally my aim was to observe lectures and student activities at the university. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to the semester break. However, much time was spent at the university, and with my informants. This gave me opportunity to observe the social life on campus. My observations were unstructured, which implied that the observation "does not entail the use of an observation schedule for the recording of behaviour" (Bryman, 2008, p. 257). Instead, my aim was to explore, as detailed as possible, the social life surrounding the informants regarding physical environment, social behaviours, and interaction.

Much time was spent as a non-participant observer, which is a term "used to describe a situation in where the observer observes but does not participate in the social setting (Bryman, 2008, p. 257). In these instances I was at the university, and observed the social life on campus. I often sat in the hall and took notice of what was taking place around me. However, as I got more familiar with the context, and got acquainted with people, my role as a non-participant observer turned into participant observer. Participant observations "entails the relatively prolonged immersion of the observer in a social setting in which he or she seek to observe the behaviour of members of that setting (…) and to elicit the meanings they attribute to their environment and behaviour" (Bryman, 2008, p. 257). As a participant observer I was involved in social settings in diverse places on campus, like the cafeteria and outside at the green spots. Here, sometimes heated discussions and conversations between students took place. This gave an interesting opportunity to confront the informants with what they said during the interviews and what I observed during the social interactions.

2.1.3 Field notes

"Because of the frailties of human memory, ethnographers have to take notes based on their observations" (Bryman, 2008, p. 417). As my fieldwork in Jerusalem was characterized by overwhelming stories, feelings, impressions and observations, I was entirely dependent of my field diary. Accordingly, I carried with me my field diary 24/7 during the fieldwork. Experiences, quotes, conversations, feelings and impressions were carefully documented. Bryman (2008) stresses the importance of specifying key dimensions of the observed or heard

situations. This implies writing down interesting observations or experiences as quickly as possible after the relevant situation occurs.

Nevertheless, it was sometimes difficult to find suitable occasions to write down my notes, as it was experienced inappropriate in certain social settings. This is in line with Bryman when he underlines that "wandering around with a notebook and pencil in hand and scribbling notes down on a continuous basis runs the risk of making people self-conscious" (Bryman, 2008, p. 417). Therefore, I was conscious to never use the notebook when I had informal conversations with people, as it appeared to disturb the natural setting (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition, I was often worried that I would miss interesting observations or conversations if I started to write. However, I always tried to find a loophole where I undisturbed could write down my notes after interesting situations occurred. Additionally, at the end of each day, I wrote detailed descriptions of interesting and relevant observations, conversations and situations. Here I included my reflections, feelings and impressions of the observed or experienced situations. This turned out to be an advantage in the aftermath of the fieldwork.

2.2 Access: "snowball sampling"

Several months before I arrived the field, a considerable amount of emails was written to assumed central actors at Israeli universities and beyond. What they all had in common was that they ended up with no response. My experience was that it was very difficult to get any assistance by phone or email while being in Norway. Moreover, I made use of Norwegian NGO´s that work in Israel and Palestine, and by their assistance I managed to arrange *one* appointment with a Palestinian Political Science student before I arrived. In addition I was lucky to have a friend who lives in Jerusalem, and she is well familiar with the context. The student and my friend helped me a great deal with explanation of practical issues and the development of the violent situation on the ground.

After spending some days in Jerusalem, I visited the university. There were not many students there due to the semester break. Nevertheless, outside the library I encountered the only two persons I saw on campus that day. This spot, in a sofa outside the library, happened to be to be a central place for my fieldwork where much time was spent, and where I encountered the majority of the participants. Throughout the conversation, two interview appointments were arranged. These were Palestinian students of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies and Sociology and Anthropology, and they were both eager to meet me again for an interview. Assisted by the three first participants, contact information to other students that could be

interested in participating in the study, was achieved. In addition, one of the participants suggested exploring the course Human Rights in Israeli Societies, since I was interested in a venue at the university with focus on Israeli-Palestinian relations.

After two weeks, more students started to come to university even though there were still no lectures. Because I had problems locating history students, I wrote a poster with explanation of the purpose of the study and contact information. This was posted several places at the university. Additionally, I made efforts of talking to students at the history departments. Many of the students were busy working with their exams. After the semester break I showed up at the office of a history professor. This professor helped me to meet students of his, and these students suggested of others that could be interested.

This way of coming in contact with informants is characterized as *Snowball sampling:* "the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others" (Bryman, 2008, p. 184). Characterizations of snowball sampling are that the informants are unlikely to be representative for a population. Thus, snowball sampling is inappropriate regarding external validity and generalizing (Bryman, 2008) . However, since the goal with this research was to highlight subjective ideas and experiences for a specific group within the Israeli and Palestinian population, Israeli and Palestinian university students of social sciences and history, the aim was never to generalize or determine trends in the overall population. It must be emphasized that the informants in this study are not representative for all the Palestinian and Israeli students in Israeli academia. Rather, their personal stories and subjective ideas are the main concern.

My experience was that it was easier to get response by email when I wrote that I was already in Jerusalem and when I had a reference person. People were in general helpful and hospitable, although it was sometimes necessary to push, in a polite way, several times before a response was received. Yet, the most effective way of achieving interview appointment was always by showing up in person and talk to people. As the context got more familiar, and I got more familiar with the culture and learned some Arabic and Hebrew phrases, I found it easier to achieve trust. Towards the end of the fieldwork, some requests from people that were interested in participating in the study had to be rejected due to the fact that I already had more than enough interviews.

2.3 Sample

In this part of the chapter I will introduce the informants of the study. Who they are, where they are from, what they study and their political and religious background will be emphasized. The main informants are eleven regular students at an Israeli university in Jerusalem, and three PhD students. In addition I have interviewed three professors, including one expert of textbooks. Moreover, several informal conversations with multiple actors that are not tape-recorded have contributed a great deal to the study. These are excluded in this part of the study.

The table below illustrates the main informants of the study related to the study program they are enrolled in. The name of all informants, except two, have been changed in order protect their anonymity. Their age is excluded for the same reason. However, I apply the real name of two of the informants since they requested it. In the table, the category "Belonging" is applied. This way of categorizing is not optimal as the semantic meaning of the terms is dynamic and the lack of equivalents is apparent (Baumann, 1999). Yet, as the informants applied these terms themselves, and there are factors that underline the requirement for distinction between these two categories, I decided to include them in my analysis.

2.3.1 Study programs

- Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (IMES) - 4
- Human Rights in Israeli Society (HRIS) - 5
- General History (GH) – 2
- Education (ED) – 2
- Jewish History (JH) – 2
- Political Science (PS) – 3
- Sociology and Anthropology (SA) – 1
- Comparative Literature (CL) – 1
- Conflict Studies (CS) – 1
- Law (La) – 1
- Accounting (AC) – 1

2.3.2 Informants

The informant chosen for the study embodies a non-representative sample of the population of Israel and Palestine (Bryman, 2008). As all the informants are either university students or professors, uneducated people are entirely omitted from this study. In addition, all of the informants are more or less fluent English speakers, which underpins the degree of educational background of the informants.

Table 1

Interview Number	Pseudonym	Sex	Belonging	Study Program	Academic Position
1 (Joint Interview)	Karam	Female	Palestinian	PS	Student
1 (Joint Interview)	Saiha	Female	Palestinian	PS	Student
2	Tibah	Female	Palestinian	SA	Student
3	Hillel Cohen[3]	Male	Israeli	IMES	Professor
4	Inas	Female	Palestinian	IMES, HRIS	Student
5	Dinah	Female	Israeli	LA, HRIS	Student
6	Meir	Male	Israeli	PS, HRIS	PhD student, Teacher Assistant
7	Anat	Female	Israeli	IMES, HRIS	Student
8	Anmar	Female	Palestinian	AC, HRIS	Student
9 (Joint Interview)	Alon	Male	Israeli	GH, ED	PhD Student
9 (Joint Interview)	Dan	Male	Israeli	JH	Professor
10	Amos	Male	Israeli	GH	Student
11	Boaz	Male	Israeli	IMES	Student
12	Falah	Male	Palestinian	CL	Student
13	Berel	Male	Israeli	JH	PhD Student
14	Esther	Female	Israeli	CS	Student
15	Sami Adwan[4]	Male	Palestinian	ED	Professor

2.3.2.1 Geographical locations

Even though all of the student informants studied in Jerusalem, there were a large geographical variety of origins. 7 were born and raised in Jerusalem, 4 from East and 3 from

---

[3] Real name
[4] Real name

West Jerusalem. Among the Palestinians from East Jerusalem 2 of them had Jerusalem ID, while 2 had Israeli passport.

4 of the informants, 2 Palestinians and 2 Israeli Jews, were from the north of Israel and lived in Jerusalem due to their studies. Moreover, 2 of the Israeli informants were from the south of Israel and 3 were from abroad, one from France and two from USA. However, they were Israeli citizens and lived permanently in Jerusalem. In addition, one of the informants was from the West Bank. He was the only informant who did not study or work in Jerusalem.

2.3.2.2 *Educational Background*

Among the Palestinians from East Jerusalem, all of them have studied in private elementary schools, while the 2 Palestinians from the north of the region went to public Arabic schools within the Israeli education sector. The majority of the Israeli students had studied in public secular Jewish schools within the Israeli education system, while a minority of them had their schooling from private Jewish schools at the border between the religious and secular sectors. One of the informants went to elementary and secondary school in France.

2.3.2.3 *Religious and Political Background*

The majority of the Israeli students defined themselves to the political left and some of them where activists who strongly opposed the Israeli occupation policy. There seems to be a tendency that the so-called "leftist", and anti-Zionists were more eager to talk about Israeli-Palestinian relations, compared to the ones that defined themselves to the right politically. Noticeable, only Israeli students defining themselves to the left politically contacted me after reading the presentation of my study at the posters on campus. Despite the fact that the majority of them regarded themselves to be at the left, opinions regarding Israel-Palestine relations differed, and very few defined themselves as anti-Zionists.

Among the Palestinian students, all of them where highly critical towards the Israeli state policy. In addition, many of them expressed frustration over Palestinian authorities, including both Hamas, which is in control of Gaza, and Al Fatah, which is the leading party on the West Bank. Many stressed the need to re-think the political situation, and a necessary unification of the Palestinian people. There were clear variations between the Israeli Palestinians from the north of the region, and the Palestinians from Jerusalem, where the former stressed the unfair treatment of Palestinian citizens of Israel, while the latter were concerned about the difficulties caused by the occupation.

For the Palestinians from Jerusalem, the aspect of religion was more apparent, compared to the Palestinians from north and the Israelis. When asked to introduce themselves, all of the Palestinians from Jerusalem stated their religious background. This was not the case for the Israelis, unless I explicitly asked about it. The majority of the Palestinians were Muslims, while 2 of them were Christians. 2 of the Israeli informants said that they confessed to Judaism, while the majority didn't mention religion at all. Some stressed that they were secular. Nevertheless, there were several of the Israeli informants who stated that Judaism was important for their identity although they were not religious.

2.4 Analyzing the data

"Because qualitative data deriving from interviews or participant observation typically take the form of a larger corpus of unstructured textual material, they are not straightforward to analyse" (Bryman, 2008, p. 538). This quote reflects some essential trends in my research. As the data material in this study consist of field notes and interview transcripts of 17 informants that to a large extent differ from each other in opinions, backgrounds, age, ethnicity, religion, political and academic positions – locating patterns in the data material was not an easy task. Before the fieldwork I had a rough draft of research questions, and two interview guides. However, while I conducted the interviews I discovered patterns and common issues in the responses given. Accordingly, new questions were added in the interview guide, while other were skipped. The research questions were adjusted and narrowed down as the scope of my study was sharpened.

2.4.1 Transcribing

During my fieldwork, all of the semi-structured interviews, except one, were tape-recorded. This was done, as I wanted to pay fully attention to the informants, and not get disturbed by taking notes of everything what was said. This is according to what Bryman states:

> The interviewer is supposed to be highly alert to what is being said – following up interesting points made, prompting and probing where necessary, drawing attention to any inconsistencies in the interviewee's answers – it is best if he or she is not distracted by having to concentrate on getting down notes on what is said (Bryman, 2008, p. 451)

After each interview, I listened through it, and wrote notes. When the fieldwork was over, I continued to listen to the interviews, before I started to transcribe. This way I got an overview of the interviews that were most useful. In the transcribing process the people appered to me in new ways. I noticed other and new elements, which I did not observe during the interview

sessions. Details like hesitation, nervous voice pitching and laughter were discovered. Through transcribing, I started to identify interesting concepts and categories for further analysis.

2.4.2   Coding/ Categorizing

In order to systematize my data material the process of coding was crucial. I started by systematizing each interview into categories. In that way I noticed which categories that were repetitive for several of the interviews. In the beginning, many sub categories appeared. This process was characterized by chaos and lack of coherence. It was difficult to discover common denominators in the data material. However, after labeling the different informants into codes such as study programs, background, political orientation and academic possession, I managed to point out three main categories that were crucial for my findings. These were *Identity construction*, *Narration of past and present in the education system* and *Interaction, coexistence and dialogue in an academic setting*.

The next step was to place quotes into these three categories. In that way, similarities and contradictions were discovered. Besides, the process of identifying narratives within the main categories was crucial for the systematizing process. These narratives were: *mainstream Israeli, deviant Israeli, mainstream Palestinian,* and *deviant Palestinian*. In that way I got an overview over the main "voices" of the informants. However, during the process of coding the narratives, categories and codes was continually replaced, adjusted, and changed. This is typical for coding in qualitative data analysis as the codes "tends to be in constant state of potential revision and fluidity" (Brymann, 2008, p. 542). For example, I discovered that a representative for a certain narrative also could be representative for other, sometimes contradictory ones. As a constructionist researcher, it is crucial to be aware of the complexity of the data material, and avoid thinking of codes as fixed and static, but rather explore them as hybrid and dynamic, where the actors are continuously influenced by social factors (Bryman, 2008).

2.5   Methodological and ethical considerations

In this section I will discuss the methodological choices done for this study. Moreover, I will reflect on the ethical aspects of the study.

There were several aspects of the fieldtrip to Jerusalem that indicated that the timing for fieldwork was not perfect. First of all, I arrived Ben Gurion Airport during the long-lasting war between Gaza and Israel. During the fifty days of bombing and rocket shooting, more

than 2000 people were killed – most of them Palestinian civilians. The atmosphere among both Israelis and Palestinians was, not surprisingly, to a large extent affected by the violent and conflicted situation. The final ceasefire was proclaimed six days after my arrival. There are reasons to believe that the conflictual and violent environment has influenced this study.

Many researchers have highlighted the challenges of conducting research in conflict zones. Issues connected to the insider/outsider position, the ethical dimension, access to the field, the questions of safety, and the requirements for methodological flexibility are stressed (Dixit, 2012; Haer & Becher, 2012). Because of the conditions described above, I left out the original plan of conducting focus groups with both Israeli and Palestinian students, as I understood more of the tension and difficult relations between the two groups. A constructed setting with random students of both groups appeared to be unethical and not fruitful, as my intention was to conduct the interviews in safe settings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The issues explored in this study are characterized by being highly politicized and polarized. There are strong and contradictory opinion about the political situation in Israel and Palestine. A clear tendency is that the narratives of Israel and Palestine to a large extent are opposite of each other: there is a consistent battle of the "true version" both regarding the history, and the current situation on the ground. This is valid inside Israel and Palestine, as much as other places in the world. Due to religious and political orientations, there are massive commitments in the International community concerning the existence of the state of Israel, and the people of Palestine.

During the fieldwork I experienced that some of the participants "tested" me regarding my political standpoints. The impression was that it was done in order to decide if it was "safe" or not, to talk openly and provide truthful information. Because of this I decided to be transparent when the participant requested my personal opinions on certain issues. This may have implicated students' participation in the study. Some appeared to be highly suspicious regarding my agenda. When I made it clear that the study involved interaction with both Israeli and Palestinians, one student stated that he would not participate in a radical experiment like that. Additionally, I experienced several times that students and professors gave me their email address after explaining my agenda, but neglected my request of an interview appointment.

Since much time was spent at the university, I met many of the informants several times and had lunch and coffee with some of them. After some time I discovered that many of the

students and professors I met, already had heard of me when I contacted them for the first time: The Norwegian girl in the sofa outside the library that talked to both Palestinians and Israelis had become a rumour in the streets of the university. This reflects a tendency were some of the informants might have shared experiences from the interviews. Thus, there are reasons to believe that this might have influenced the data material of this study.

The majority of the student participants were at the same age as me. It is likely to believe that this was an advantage in establishing an immediate common ground. I experienced that it was easier to build trust when introducing myself as a master student, compared to the occasions where I introduced me as a researcher. Another factor that I perceived as an advantage was that I did not represent any organisation. As a student on the same level as my informants, I had the opportunity to participate and get be involved in the social life on campus. Despite the same age and other commonalities, it was clearly defined that they participated in a research project, and that there was certain objectives with the conversations.

I decided to conduct interviews solely with English speaking participants since there are reasons to believe that making use of a translator could pose challenges for the research. The sensitivity of the questions exposes a risk for a third person to add his or her personal opinion to the information. There was a possibility that the appearance of a translator could be associated with members of the other group. Thus, it is likely to believe that this would disturb the objective of uncensored information. In addition, it was preferable to create a natural setting where the participant could feel relaxed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The majority of the participants understood and spoke, more or less, fluent English and managed to express themselves adequately. That being said, for some of the participants, English is their third language. Thus, it is likely that there were certain issues that the participants could not express because of language barriers.

2.5.1   The role of the researcher

Before I started the work with this study, I had, like most people, opinions about the situation in Israel and Palestine. I grew up with two grandfathers that were greatly involved in the support of the Jewish state of Israel. For them, the religious aspect, and the history of the Holocaust, formed their unconditional support to Israel and its Jewish population. I remember how magazines like *Israelvennene* (the friends of Israel), *Hjelp Jødene Hjem* (Help the Jews Home) and others, proclaimed the need for an unrestricted support to the Israeli policy.

As I got older and started to watch the news, my perceptions about Israel were broadened. Thus, my opinions became influenced by how the Norwegian media is covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conflict appeared to me as completely locked, and too complex and difficult for me to truly understand. When I was in my early 20s, I started to study Middle Eastern studies in a Norwegian University College. During these years of studying history and international relations, my engagement for the area was fully awakened. Hence, the situation of the Palestinian people appeared to me to be highly unfair, and although I truly love and admire my grandfathers, I got critical to the one-dimensional narrative they told me during my childhood. At the same time I got curious about the complexity of the population of Israel and Palestine. When I started at the Master program *Intercultural and International Education,* I wrote a semester paper about the school system in Israel. This inspired me a great deal to further explore the issue of the school systems in Israel and Palestine. Accordingly, the topic for my master thesis was decided.

Before the fieldwork, I had never been to Israel or Palestine, or in other countries in the Middle East. Thus, this made me a clear "outsider" during the fieldwork. Being an outsider represents both advantages and challenges in the collection of data material. It might be an advantage to explore the social world of Israeli and Palestinian university students from an outsider position, in order to avoid strong personal and emotional involvement (Bryman, 2008). As I see it, this position might have enabled me to be, as far as it is possible, objective and critical.

The disadvantages of being an outsider was that the cultural context was unfamiliar to me. In the sensitive landscape of ethnic, religious and political conflict, there was a risk that I could offend someone with my questions and behaviour. Therefore, much time was spent in order to understand and interpret the cultural codes, language and the diverse community backgrounds of my informants.

During my stay in Jerusalem, I had the privilege of living together with a local Christian Palestinian family in the old city. Living with a local Palestinian family turned out to be an advantage regarding the connection with many of the informants: they found it brave that I lived there, in the centre of the conflict and close to the reality of the daily lives of many of the informants. In my opinion, living in a hotel, like the majority of the visitors of Israel and Palestine choose, would not have given me the same opportunity to "get under the skin" of

how local people live their everyday life. Many qualitative researchers stress the importance of studying the social world through the eyes of the people that study (Repstad, 2007).

One may argue that the experiences of living with a Palestinian family may have influenced this study, in a "pro-Palestinian" direction. However, I was also involved in activities on "the other side", Israeli West Jerusalem. I got Israeli Jewish friends that invited me to different events: I joined an orthodox Jewish Shabbat celebration in a Jewish settlement in occupied East Jerusalem, I observed and participated in several discussion between Israeli youth, I visited many holy places for Judaism, and I had numerous excursions to Israeli Jewish neighbourhoods.

That being said, my intention is not to prove that I am completely objective and lack any biases in this research. According to my epistemological position, I believe that it is never possible, nor desirable, to study social phenomena "as they are", "out there", in fully objective and true ways. Hence, the study of social worlds is in my opinion influenced by a variety of factors, including the background, opinions and experiences of the researcher (Bryman, 2008).

2.5.2 Quality

In this section I will discuss the aspect of quality in this study. Guba and Lincoln (1985) argue that validity and reliability are unsuitable criteria in the assessment of quality in research (Lincoln & Deniz, 2004). According to them, criteria of validity and reliability "presupposes that a single absolute account of social reality is feasible" (Bryman, 2008, p. 377). They are critical to the idea that there is an absolute truth about the social reality, and that the job of the researcher is to go and grasp that truth. Instead they propose two different primary criteria for the assessment of quality in qualitative studies: trustworthiness and authenticity. For both criteria, they suggest several subcategories(Lincoln & Deniz, 2004; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2009).

2.5.2.1 *Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness has four sub criteria in the indicator of quality in qualitative studies. The first criterion is *credibility.* This criterion is concerned about the coherence between the observations of the researcher and the theoretical idea they develop. The importance of sharing the research findings to the social reality that has been studied is underlined (Bryman, 2008). The next criterion is *transferability.* As qualitative researchers often are concerned about the uniqueness of a small group, such as this study, the aspect of external validity, or

transferability is not emphasized (Lincoln & Deniz, 2004). Instead, qualitative researchers aim to provide what Geertz (1973a) refer to as *thick descriptions,* "trich accounts of the details of a culture" (Geertz, 1973a in Bryman, 2008, p. 378). The latter is emphasized in this study. However, there are reasons to believe that the limited time frame of the fieldwork had negative implications for the quality (Repstad, 2007). As it was semester break during my stay, I never had the chance to observe lectures and the social life in an everyday setting at the university. Thus, many factors concerning the university environment are unanswered in this study. Besides, being a women from Europe might have affected the information shared during the interviews, e.g. in interview settings with males.

Dependability concerns whether one can trust the conclusions in a study. Guba and Lincoln urge the researcher to adopt the so-called "auditing" approach. This involves making all data material, such as audio records, interview transcripts and field notes, accessible throughout every phase in the research process (Bryman, 2008). The final criterion is *conformability.* Although Guba and Lincoln recognize the impossibility of complete objectivity, conformability shall ensure that the researcher "have acted in good faith; in other words, it should be apparent that he or she has not overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations manifestly to sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it" (Bryman, 2008, p. 379). What was important for me during the work with this study was to ask the question "why", instead of locating "how" social phenomena in Israel and Palestine occur. A central aim was to investigate a variety of narratives and perspectives of the informants. Nevertheless, much indicates that my background as women from the western world with a Eurocentric educational background has implications for how the social world in Israel and Palestine were perceived.

2.5.2.2 *Authenticity*

Authenticity addresses the degree of political impact of the research. The first sub criterion is *Fairness.* To what extent are different voices in the social reality studied made visible in the research (Lincoln & Deniz, 2004)? In my case, the aim was to engage an equal amount of Palestinian and Israeli informants. As I faced challenges of locating Palestinian professors at the university, this was not possible. However, there is an equal distribution of Palestinian and Israeli informants. This was crucial in order to include different perceptions of the social reality studied. That being said, of the Israeli informants, the majority defined themselves to the political left, which is a minority position in Israel. For that reason, my Israeli informants cannot be seen as representatives for the mainstream Israeli population.

The next aspect of authenticity is *Ontological authenticity.* To what extent does the research promote a better understanding of the social reality (Lincoln & Deniz, 2004)? During my fieldwork I experienced several times that my informants said that they rarely conversed or reflected on the issues I brought up in the interviews. Many claimed that these topics were unfamiliar in campus discussions. Due to lack of research on the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students in Israeli academia, there is reason to believe that this study can help to increase the awareness of the social dynamics in the Israeli academia. However, a methodological limitation of this study is the retro perspective form of some of the questions asked during the interviews. As all informants were either university student or professors, there were a significant amount of years since the informants attended primary education. Thus, noteworthy change might have occurred since then. Accordingly, the stories shared about primary education cannot be seen as valid for the contemporary primary education systems (Repstad, 2007).

The final criterion relevant for this study is *Educative authenticity.* This criterion questions the educative dimension of the study. To what extent can the members of the social setting studied, better understand and appreciate the perspectives of the other members of the same social setting (Lincoln & Deniz, 2004)? During the conversations with many of the informants, the aspect of segregation between Israeli and Palestinians was evident. Many argued that they did not know the other, and how their life was like. My aim is that this research can support both Palestinian and Israelis and increase their awareness and ability to understand how it is like being a member of the other group.

3 Theoretical Framework and Analytical Tools

This chapter introduces the core concept and theories that will be applied in the analysis of the educational systems in Israel and Palestine. The chapter is divided into three main sections. First I will present *Power and Knowledge*. To gain an understanding of the mechanisms that influence the education system in Israel and Palestine I will, from diverse perspectives, discuss the extent to which power and knowledge relates to conflict-ridden areas. I will start by giving an account of the perspectives on power and knowledge by Michal Foucault, before I continue with an exploration of Edward Said´s view of the Orientalist discourse. The next key concept in the thesis is *Social Beliefs and Behaviour in Intergroup Conflict.* In order to analyse the social factors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I will subsequently explore how different perspectives and theories explain the development of explanations, beliefs and behaviour in conflict areas. Attribution theory and consistency theory are the main theories employed for the analysis. Finally I will discuss the relationship between *Social Identities* and *History Education* in intergroup conflicts, and explore its relevance for the Israeli-Palestinian context.

3.1 Power and Knowledge

Many scholars have documented the interlinked dynamics of power and knowledge (Breidlid, 2013; Michel Foucault, 2005; Said, 1995, 2003). In conflict-ridden areas, these relations can be intricate and often complicated to reveal. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the school system in Israel and Palestine, I start by exploring the perspectives on power and knowledge by the French historian and philosopher of science, Michal Foucault.

Foucault and his theories have had great influence on disciplines like sociology, anthropology and comparative literature. His ideas are recognized as post-structuralism. During the 1960s, the poststructuralist thinkers started to questioning the established truths of philosophy and science in the West (Joseph, 2004). Foucault (2005) examines how knowledge production is influenced by power. According to him, power must first of all be understood as "the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate (…) as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverse them" (Michel Foucault, 2005, p. 86). Power creates a chain or a system of strategies, emerging from the context where power is exercised. Foucault states that power is everywhere. Not because it enfolds everything, but because power comes from everywhere.

"There is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Michel Foucault, 2005, p. 87), he claims. Further he argues that in modern capitalist states, sectors such as psychiatric hospitals, schools and prisons are essential for the understanding of social power (Olssen, 1999) . According to these ideas, the school systems can be seen as crucial for the understanding of power in Israeli and Palestinian societies. However, as Foucault underline, power must not be mistaken with an institution, or a structure, nor as a particular force that some of us have. Instead, power must be understood as "the name that one attributes to a complex, strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault, 2005, p. 86). In light of these ideas, power in Israeli and Palestinian society can be understood as something that influence all aspect of the social world in the region.

"Where there is power, there is resistance" (Michel Foucault, 2005, p. 87), Foucault argues. Resistance is interlinked with power. In fact, Foucault states that resistance can only exist in relation to power and vice versa. Because of this, there are no power relation without resistance, and thus no resistance without power. The power relations are dependent on resistance in order to constantly create new discourses (Michel Foucault, 2005). According to this theory, the Palestinian resistance, as well as the critical voices of the Post-Zionists, can be understood in relation to certain aspects of the Zionist ideology and its power of definition in Israeli societies. Yet, the lack of focus on dominance and oppression in Foucault's theorizing of power and resistance has gained criticism, among others from the Palestinian-American author Edward Said (Sazzad, 2008). The seemingly unwillingness of Foucault to speak up against the oppressive powers, and be political in his theories, is one of the major differences of Said and Foucault. In fact scholars have labelled the theories of Foucault as anti-humanistic due to his "apparent lack of agency in resisting power politics" (Sazzad, 2008, p. 4).

3.1.1 Discourse

The aspect of discourses is essential in Foucault's analysis of the relationship between power and knowledge. He defines discourse as the "group of statements which belong to a single system of formation" (Michel Foucault, 2010, chapter 2, section I). We can for example have an educational discourse, political discourse, hospital discourse and religious discourse. Discourse is about how we construct the reality around us. In Foucault's understanding, the discourses generate hegemonic power relations by determining the knowledge considered valid and legitimate in a specific context. This way, the discourse limits the sort of knowledge generated (Gillies, 2013, p. 10). Within a discourse there are certain rules in what count as acceptable, and what does not. One may therefore assume that within the mainstream Israeli

and Palestinian discourses there are certain statements that are considered unacceptable, and some seen as truisms. "Thus, the discourse limits who can be seen as worthy of holding any positions of authority or who is to be seen as capable of communicating legitimately (Gillies, 2013, p. 11). According to Foucault, power arises as a result of discourses. At the same time, discourses are an outcome of power. Hence, discourses both transform and produce power (Michel Foucault, 2005). This view of understanding the term discourse is in line with the perspectives of Said. The analysis of Said (1995) are relevant for studying narration in Israeli and Palestinian school systems, as he addresses how discourses/narratives influence the construction of social identities.

In his seminal *Orientalism* from 1978, Said argues that discourses are of major importance for the understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge. Said contends that Europeans, through teaching of history, journalism, literature etc., have created an image of the Orient as a place basically ranging from Morocco to Japan that contrasts the West. In this presentation the West is democratic, dynamic and rational while the Orient represents mysticism, irrationalism and despotism, and where societies are characterized as primitive and stagnant. Said argues that the West, in order to create a common "we", has drawn an essentialized image of "the other", the Orient. In other words, by creating a gap between "us" and "them", the feeling of belonging to a group, "the west", is being strengthened (Said, 1995). In this study the aspect of constructed social identities is highly relevant. What factors and mechanisms influence the establishment of Palestinian and Israeli identities, and which challenges and opportunities do this present?

The term *Orientalism* refers to a discourse or a narrative, invented and created by mainly white powerful European males, in attempts to define the Orient, or the East. In the construction of this discourse, the Europeans have succeeded, through institutions, vocabulary, scholarships, literature, academia, history teaching, novels, doctrines etc., in defining the East as the other. Said argues that by constructing the idea of the East as something that contrasts the West, the identity of the Occident, the West has been strengthened. Moreover, this construction has been done without confronting their interpretations with the people that have been defined. The idea was often, as Marx once put it, "they cannot represent themselves; they must be represented" (as cited in Said, 1995, epigraph). In other words, it is the words of people from the West that have created the image of the other, the Orient. Accordingly the Orient was not, and one may argue that it is still not, a free subject of thoughts and actions (Said, 1995).

Said argues that the relationship between the Orient and the Occident is a relationship of power and complex hegemonies. Thus, in the Orient-Occident relationship it is apparent who was, and still is, the powerful part. Said attempts to reveal how the Orientalist discourse, by constructing and distributing knowledge, has constructed static, essentialist images of identities of both the West and the East. By doing this he endeavoured to show how these images in fact are exactly that: constructed, and that the idea of fixed, static identities in fact is an illusion (Baumann, 1999; Said, 1995).

Breidlid (2013) is in line with Said when he argues that the knowledge system (epistemology) of the West has maintained a hegemonic role in the global world since the beginning of the colonial time, and the rise of capitalism. According to him, this position has dominated school systems all over the world, and has led to what he refers to as "The Global Architecture of Education". By claiming patent on universal knowledge production, the western hegemonic epistemology has in fact excluded, essentialized and marginalized nations and groups of people all over the so-called Global South (Breidlid, 2013). Due to the discrepancies in Israeli and Palestinian societies, Breidlids' analysis is relevant regarding the exploration of power relations in Israeli and Palestinian education systems. Who defines and produces the knowledge presented in Israeli and Palestinian schools and universities, and how does it affect the society?

In order to gain an understanding of the social mechanisms in Israel and Palestine, I will now go on and examine how researchers have analysed understandings of self, others and situations related to the conflict between them.

3.2 Social Beliefs and Behaviors in Intergroup Conflicts

Where there are people, there are a variety of conflicts. Conflicts occur in close relations: between friends, members of a family, parents and children and between partners. It can further occur between colleagues, employer and employee, seller and buyer (Graham & Folkes, 1990). Conflicts occur not at least among groups of people, nations and states. Even when political processes, such as disputes over territory, natural recourses, power or religious dogmas are responsible for conflict between groups of people, social psychologists have argued that *psychological barriers* among individuals can make solutions impossible. Examples of psychological barriers can be hate, aggression, prejudices, suspicion and distrust (Bar-Tal, 2013; Betalncourt, 1990). Accordingly, these psychological barriers are crucial for the understanding of social mechanisms in Israel and Palestine.

Intergroup conflicts have a tendency to attract social psychologists (Betalncourt, 1990). Some argue that recent developments in attribution theory provides essential contributions to the understanding of the psychological factors in intergroup conflicts (Betalncourt, 1990). How groups in a conflict attribute casual explanations to actions of self and other is highly relevant for this study. Thus, principles from attribution theory will be addressed in order to illustrate the role of causal attributions of actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The theory was developed in 1958 by Fritz Heider, and has been applied in various studies on conflict zones (e.g. North-South Sudan, Breidlid, 2010 and Israel-Palestine, Heradstveit, 1979). As social behaviour and cognitive development are crucial for the understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I will subsequently continue to explore consistency theory and discuss its relevance for the Israeli and Palestinian education systems.

3.2.1 Attribution Theory

Human beings aspire for explanations when something negatively occurs (Graham & Folkes, 1990). Essentially, attribution theory is concerned with how actors spontaneously place these casual explanations. As the explanations of actions and behaviour of Israeli and Palestinian students and professors are crucial in this study, attribution theory is highly relevant. It is common to distinguish between "dispositional properties" and "situational attributions" (Breidlid, 2010). The former refers to internal causality, where attributions are explained with essentalized, more or less inborn factors, such as "they are evil", "they are arrogant by nature" or "we are the people of God" (Heradstveit, 1979). The latter refers to external factors such as the environment, situation or the context, which is outside the control of the agent (Breidlid, 2010) .

According to Heradstveit (1979), the parties in a conflict area seek *structure*: they are constructing the "reality", in order to apply the most appropriate respond. Due to this, the parties are active information seekers, aiming to gain as much information as possible to define what is taking place and why. Second, the actors in the conflict area desire *control:* They want their theories and interpretations to be true and legitimate (Heradstveit, 1979).

In intergroup conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the hypothesis *fundamental attribution error* by Jones and Nisbett (1972) is useful. The hypothesis depicts a tendency where individuals in conflict areas overemphasise dispositional properties while explaining the good behaviour of the in-group, and are likely to exaggerate situational attributions while explaining the good behaviour of the out-group. In comparison, negative behaviour of the in-

group tends to be explained with situational attributions, while equivalent negative behaviour of the out-group is accounted with dispositional properties. Consequently, the observer will understand the negative behaviour of the out-group as a manifestation of the actor (e.g. evil intentions), while the actor himself sees it as a response to the situation (Jones & Nisbett, 1972 in Hancock & Szalma, 2008). Furthermore, similar negative behaviours of the in-group are attributed to external causes (e.g. context) (Betalncourt, 1990).

Biases in the attribution process are influenced by the involvement in the observed action: the more involvement, the greater bias. As Heradstveit states: "The higher degree of involvement the greater the chance of attributional bias. Where the observer is also an actor, he is likely to exaggerate the uniqueness and emphasize the dispositional origins of the responses of others to his own actions" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 25). He refers to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an interaction process where "the action of the other side directly affects their own side and vice versa" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 25). The Gaza War during the summer of 2014 can serve as an example of actions that directly affected the two sides. According to the hypothesis of fundamental attribution error, the conditions in Israel and Palestine should increase the degree of the attribution bias among the parties of the conflict (Heradstveit, 1979). Is the same valid for Israeli and Palestinian university students?

Social psychologists argue that the aspect of controllability is crucial for attribution of meaning to a situation related to intergroup conflicts. When internal, uncontrollable causes, such as lack of ability, are attributed to a victim, positive emotions such as sympathy and willingness to help are likely to follow. On the other hand, when controllable causes are attributed to the victim, such as lack of effort or provocative behaviour, lower level of help and sympathy are observed. Accordingly, "It is the perceived controllability and not the locus of causal attributions for the need or problem that most influence helping" (Betancourt, 1990, p. 209).

Heradstveit argues that wars may be a "testing ground for established beliefs" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 26). The most common pattern is that central beliefs will remain relatively stable over time, while beliefs that are less essential may change. Heradstveit claims that change in beliefs will regularly lead to behavioural change. He depicts the order of change as follows: 1). Stimuli, 2). Behavioural response, 3). Cognitive response (Heradstveit, 1979). However, as Herdstveit underlines, belief systems are dynamic and changeable according to the

environment that surround the actor. Consequently, the pattern predicted above cannot be understood as completely static and constant (Heradstveit, 1979).

In his study, Heradstveit is concerned with the stability of what he refers to as the *master beliefs* in Israel and Palestine. He asks: "Which beliefs must be changed in order to promote conflict resolution, and which beliefs are likely to change?" (Herdstveit, 1979, p. 26). Although the study dates back to 1979, the conflict is still going on and the issues from 1979 are still valid. In my study, the question of master beliefs, and what beliefs those are likely to change, are highly relevant. What are the master beliefs of Israeli and Palestinian university students, and to what extent does their enrolment at the university affect their beliefs and behaviour?

According to cognitive theory, the meaning we give the environment is essential regarding how we behave or act (Imsen, 2014). However, Heradsveit modifies this assumption somewhat by suggesting that there is a possibility that stimuli may have direct implications for the way we act. In retrospect, the individuals will attribute meaning to the actions: They start to reflect on why they behaved as they did after the performed action. Heradstveit puts it as follows: "Beliefs do not control behaviour, and as a consequence, behaviour cannot be predicted on the basis of beliefs (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 27). In addition, "behavioural change does not always lead to cognitive change" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 27).

As we have seen so far, attribution theory suggests that members of groups in conflicts have a tendency of bias in the attribution of casual explanations of self and others. This works as a continuation of the conflict, and can be an obstacle to the process of achieving a sustainable resolution to a conflict. I will now continue with a more detailed exploration of how individuals develop beliefs, and how this process affects their behaviour, as this is crucial for the understanding of the Israeli and Palestinian students. In order to discuss opportunities for conflict resolution in Israel and Palestine, I will further explore how the development of knowledge can lead to positive behavioural change, and thus conflict resolution.

3.2.2 Consistency theory

Social psychologists have argued that social behaviour such as competition, cooperation, and aggression, are particularly important for the understanding of the nature of conflicts and conflict resolutions (Sherif, 1958 in Betancourt, 1990). The tendency portrayed is that members of the groups in conflicts are caught in a circle of mutual judgement, blame and recrimination. As we have seen, this pattern represents obstacles for conflict resolution

(Sherif, 1958 in Betancourt, 1990). There are reasons to believe that these patterns are valid in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, in this section I will explore aspects of social behaviour and cognitive development for groups in conflict, and how individuals can modify negative impressions of others.

Consistency theory is a concept within cognitive theory and derives from the idea that human beings always strive to gain consistency between beliefs and behaviour (Imsen, 2014). Cognitive theorists claim that most parts of the learning process are a search for consistency. Accordingly, a person will always seek to adapt new information and ideas into his or her existing cognitive system. In addition, for the same reason the individual will strive to obtain consistency between his or her cognitive system and behaviour. Heradstveit describes it as follows: "The organization of ideas along rules of consistency enables a person to interpret his environment without too much pain" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 28). Accordingly one may assume that Israeli and Palestinian students will attempt to adapt new information and ideas into and the narrative they bring from their home environments.

However, the theory further states that an imbalance, or dissonance, in the knowledge system can lead to cognitive and behavioural change. New relevant information that does not fit into the established knowledge system may lead the individual to seek more information in order to gain consistency or balance in their knowledge system, which furthermore lead to additional change (Imsen, 2014). Yet, this only occurs when the new information is seen as relevant. Hence, when new information is understood as both relevant and inconsistent, it will create tension or stress. In this situation modification of beliefs, also called intellectual development, can occurs as a way to restore consistency in the cognitive system. However, it is only after passing a certain amount of inconsistent and relevant information that dissonance and thus modification of beliefs ensues. As Heradstveit states: "Imbalance does not always create stress or tension towards consistency. The controversial issue is how much inconsistency we tolerate before making adjustments" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 29). In my case it is interesting to examine how Israeli and Palestinian students experience new information (knowledge), and interaction with people from the other group at the university. To what extent does this affect the way they interpret their society and behave in the new environment?

Due to social psychological processes that occur in interaction between groups in conflict, positive behaviour and cognitive change can be realized. When this change is manifested on

at the individual level, change at a higher social political level may be facilitated (Kelman, 1986, 1987 in Betancourt, 1990). In addition, researchers have suggested that conflict resolution emerges from an attempt of understanding how the conflict is perceived from the perspective of the other group´s side (White, 1986b in Betancourt, 1990). "Such evidence supports the suggestion that empathy is a powerful factor in inducing cooperation and reducing conflict" (White, 1986b in Betancourt, 1990, p. 212).

Hence, this illustrates the importance of understanding the social psychological barriers in intergroup conflicts, and to recognize how these barriers can be challenged regarding achieving resolutions to intergroup conflicts. In the context of Israeli and Palestinian university students the question is: To what extent can higher education and experiences of interaction with the "enemy", cause an imbalance that lead to positive cognitive and behavioural change among the university students?

3.3 History teaching and the construction of social identities

As this study focuses on the narration of past and present in relation to the in – and out-group in the Israeli school system and academia, the aspect of social identity is relevant. To what extent does history teaching contribute to the establishment of Israeli and Palestinian group identities? In this section I will explore the term social identity, and discuss the role of history teaching in relation to social identity construction, described by Said (1995) and others. I start by giving an account of the term social identity, before I go on with an exploration of the extent to which history teaching is related to social identity construction.

3.3.1 Social identities

Karina Korostelina (2008) defines social identity as a "result of the processes of identification with other group members" (Korostelina, 2008, p. 26). Gillis highlights the aspect of memory while defining social identity: "The notion of identity depends on the idea of memory, and vice versa (Gillis in Seixas, 2004, p. 5). Members of a group often have equal social identity regarding values, beliefs and attitude. In addition "people with similar social positions and common histories have comparable social identities" (Korostelina, 2008, p. 26). As outlined above, the aspect of cognitive development is central regarding the formation of social identity. Accordingly, the categorization of social groups, intergroup comparison and definitions of the history of the in-group are crucial. These cognitive categorizations are connected to the aspect of emotions, whereas the feeling of belonging to the in-group and

36

relationship to an out-group is essential. These emotions that "may include love, hate, amity, and enmity" strengthens the social identity of an individual (Korostelina, 2008, p. 26).

A central aspect of social identity, in addition to similarities within an in-group, is the perceived differences between the in-group and people of the other group: "While social identity is connected with social categorizations of "us" and "others", the historical relationship between groups can reshape this duality" (Korostelina, 2008, p. 26). Psychodynamic theory suggests that the development of group identity requires a strong expression of the group's history, and the historical relation to the other group. Volkan (1997) calls this phenomenon *Chosen Glories* and *Chosen Traumas*. The former refers to important, typically mythologized and romanticized successes that took place in the past while the latter refers to suffering and humiliation. These are as well mythologized. Chosen glories and traumas have in common that they help individuals to unite around strong ideas of a group's successes and losses: they tie people together, unite individuals, and transfer meaning and belonging to new generations (Volkan, 1997, in Korostelina, 2008, p. 27). What are the chosen glories and traumas of Israel and Palestine?

This is in line with Seixas (2004) theorizing of collective memory and historical consciousness. He argues that institutions like museums, monuments, schools, archives and commemorations tie institutions together and promote national building projects as they preserve the memory of the past in contemporary time. Some analysts argue that the predominant national memory is seen in the context of other memory projects like the "family, religious communities, local and regional units, and social and political movements" (Seixas, 2004, p. 5). Despite these positive effects of the presentation of the past, others have noted that there are "unconscious structural mechanisms that contribute to the preservation of the past in the present, in laws, language, habits, and customs" (Seixas, 2004, p. 5).

Seixas further argues that beliefs about a shared past can promote "commitments to collective missions in the future" (Seixas, 2004, p. 5). These commitments are enabled through a national narrative defining the boundaries between members of the in-group, who share a common past, and those who do not. Additionally, the narrative justifies collective actions in response to contemporary challenges, due to the narration of the past (Seixas, 2004, pp. 5-6). Hence, one may assume that the national narratives of Israel and Palestine are interlinked with contemporary performed actions, like violent attacks, occupation and resistance. This is in line with Wertsch (2004) when he claims that narratives shape ways of thinking, speaking and

actions (Wertsch, 2004, p. 50). In addition, narratives are crucial for the understanding of relationships between power and knowledge, as we have seen through the theories of Foucault and Said (Michel Foucault, 2005; Said, 1995). Hence, narratives and discourses must be considered as crucial for the understanding of the social mechanism, as well as the political landscape, in Israel and Palestine.

3.3.2   History teaching and social identities

Scholars have argued that the narration about the past and the present plays a major role in the foundation of ethnic, religious and regional identities, as much as intergroup relation and perceptions of others (Korostelina, 2008). Seixas (2004) puts it as follows: "A common past, preserved through institutions, traditions, and symbols, is a crucial instrument – perhaps *the* crucial instrument – in the construction of collective identities in the present" (Seixas, 2004, p. 5). Korostelina underlines that history teaching promotes the developing of meanings and beliefs about the current situations in a region. In addition, history teaching is crucial for the foundation of specific concepts of a society. According to her, history teaching in school curricula generally reflects ideologies and values of the ruling parties in power. Accordingly, it is their goals, point of views and positions that are articulated and emphasized through the school systems (Korostelina, 2008, pp. 25-26). This is in line with Foucault and others when they argue that power is important for the understanding of knowledge distribution (Breidlid, 2013; Michel Foucault, 2005; Said, 1995)

Furthermore, a specific view of the conflicted history, violence and biases among ethnic and religious groups are often promoted through the school curricula. Hence, "History education influences public discourse, reshape loyalties to particular social groups in a society, and develops perceptions of a shared past" (Korostelina, 2008, p. 26). In addition, Boon and Gopinathan state "textbooks are the key pedagogic vehicles for transforming official knowledge" (Boon & Gopinathan, 2005 in Korostelina, 2008, p. 26). Others have stressed that history textbooks are of major importance for the formation of views on citizenship, nation, past and future (e.g. Hein & Selden, 1998 in Korostelina, 2008). This underlines that history teaching in Israel and Palestine are important for the understanding of the student's beliefs and views of past and present in relation to the in- and out-group.

4 Relevant research

This chapter presents relevant research for my study on narration of the past and present in the education system in Israel and Palestine. In order to analyse this topic, I start by presenting research that is done on history education in diverse conflict-ridden areas as it may indicate some general trends for regions with a conflicted past and/or present. In order to gain relevant background information about the context of this study, I continue by presenting research done specifically on the Israeli and Palestinian school systems.

4.1 History teaching: oppression or reconciliation?

Due to the lack of sustainable solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I will in this section explore research conducted on the role of history teaching in relation to reconciliation and conflict resolution.

In her book *Teaching the Violent Past: History Teaching and Reconciliation,* Elisabeth A. Cole (2007) explores the role of history teaching in reconciliation between actors that have a conflicted past or/and present. Cole starts by problematizing the term reconciliation as it throughout the history has acquired negative overtones whereas reconciliation "with some groups was promoted at the expense of others" (Cole, 2007, p. 3). Another problem, stressed by Cole, is that the term is highly influenced by one religious tradition, Christianity. In the Christian theological sense, the aspect of forgiveness is essential to the term reconciliation. "The close link between forgiveness and reconciliation in the Christian tradition reduces the importance of justice in reconciliation" (Cole, 2007, p. 6), Cole argues. Thus, in her view reconciliation is a dynamic term referring to long-term processes, a way to manage differences rather than achieving harmony, "as not synonymous with amnesia, forgetfulness, or 'letting go' and particularly not in the long-term context" (Cole, 2007, p. 10).

According to Cole, history teaching can, at its best, contribute to the development of a new historical narrative; both in the way a group sees itself, and the other part. One way to achieve this is that groups that have been excluded from the official narrative can be brought back into the historical narrative as actors that positively have influenced the nation. Transferred to the Israeli school system this will include the issue of the Palestinians as well as the Jews with origins in Arab and African countries. Cole stresses that this approach in history teaching can lead to re-humanization of groups of people that have been portrayed in biased, one-dimensional, and in negative ways. By revising history textbooks, a bridging, and even

multiple narratives, can be promoted to reflect multiple communities in a nation. The aspect of critical thinking skills is essential in this process. Cole puts it as follows:

> Revision in the methodology, as well as the content, of history textbooks and programs can promote long-term reconciliation by enhancing critical thinking skills, willingness to question simplistic models, empathy skills, and the ability to disagree about interpretations of the past and their implications for present social issues without resort to violence (Cole, 2007, p. 21).

The introduction of history as an academic discipline with multiple methodologies, rather than a political tool for the creation of nationalism, can help students of history to realize that history is "not simply a collection of facts, not a political sanctioned listing of indisputable 'truths', but an ongoing means of collective self-discovery about the nature of our society" (Kitson in Cole, 2007, p. 21).

4.1.1   Officializing of the conflicted past

In a study of peace education in Guatemala, Elizabeth Oglesby (2007) examines how the violent recent past in Guatemala is handled and portrayed in the country's school system. As both the past and present Israel and Palestine to a large extent are influenced by violence, the study of Oglesby is relevant. Oglesby argues that *officializing* of history can widen up space for public discussion of recent past. This is crucial for de establishment of public debates about the past and present. However, the term officializing does not include a fixed version of the history, but rather a foundation of structures where future discussions can take place (Oglesby, 2007).

In Guatemala a comprehensive report has been written in order to reveal the "silence past" of violence and conflict. Still, this report is not available for most Guatemalans. Oglesby criticizes the peace education approach in Guatemala by arguing that this way of teaching merely presents a particular version of the history that is suitable for the contemporary political government, rather than promoting deeper reflections and discussions about social and political history. In addition, the history subject is replaced by social studies. Accordingly, the historical narrative is omitted and replaced by themes such as "peace accords", "culture of peace", "human rights" and "rights to children" (Oglesby, 2007, p. 185). The violent past of Guatemala is consistently explained by "the culture of violence", something that belongs to the past, and is "either limited to two opposing armed groups, or so broad as to be meaningless (The culture of violence is responsible)" (Oglesby, 2007, p. 192). Thus, the specific causes of the violence are completely excluded from the narrative.

4.1.2   History teaching as a commonplace of the society

In their study of the role of history textbooks in the establishment of collective identities in India and Pakistan, Thomas Sherlock and Jon Dorschner (2007) highlight how history education can be applied as a tool for the creation of national ideology and identity. They ask: "How are collective identities formed and what determines their content" (Sherlock & Dorschner, 2007, p. 275)? This is relevant for my study on narration of the past and present in Israel and Palestine as I aim to explore the relationship between the history teaching and social identity construction.

Sherlock and Dorschner present two contrary perspectives in order to answer these questions: primordialist and constructivist. The former would say that violence is an outcome of "incompatible and 'eternal' values that wakes conflict between certain ethnic and religious groups inevitable and continuous" (Sherlock & Dorschner, 2007, p. 275). On the other hand the perspective of the constructivists would maintain that even though part A and B currently are aggressive towards each other, "it does not mean that such hostility must endure forever" (Sherlock & Dorschner, 2007, p. 275). A constructivist would argue that collective identities of groups, including states, are not absolute, but fluid and changeable. According to this perspective, national cultures are flexible, and they may undergo considerable transformation "if exposed to powerful exogenous and endogenous forces" (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007, p. 275).

Sherlock & Dorschner argue that the telling and retelling of the past (narration) is essential regarding the construction of a robust national identity. By displacing or reinterpreting the national narrative, emphasizing new or neglected elements, different understandings of others and self can gradually emerge, and thus increasingly become an integrated part of the national identity. However, this transformation relies on the elites in the society: "If such discursive shift fail to attract sufficient elite and popular support, society may be rent by disagreement over how to interpret the past" (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007, p. 276). Further they argue that history teaching can be seen as a "commonplace" that reflects the views of the dominant elites and popular views of the society. This assumption is in line with Boon and Gopinathan (2005) when they argue that history teaching is crucial for the distribution of official knowledge (Boon & Gopinathan, 2005 in Korostelina, 2008). If these commonplaces promote aggressive nationalism and consistently portray the other in negative manners, "such ideas will contaminate society's larger marketplace of ideas, weakening its ability to assess objectively

the character and intentions of other groups, including states" (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007, p. 276).

The role of history teaching is crucial for the new generations in socializing beliefs, both about the neighbours, and the nation (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007). By perpetuating fears, prejudices, and biases of the adults to the younger generations, history education can in fact contribute to maintain conflicted relations and be a hinder for sustainable relationships between groups and states. A historian from Pakistan argued: "Most of the ills from which the country has suffered….is the bitter harvest from the seed we use in the cultivation of the minds of the young" (Sherlock & Dorschner, 2007, p. 276) . However, Sherlock & Dorschner highlight that *if* history education is taught in a balanced and honest way, conflicting relationship between groups or states are likely to mitigate hatreds, biases and stereotypes, and rather promote civic definitions of nationalism, instead of ethnic and religious once (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007; Osler & Starkey, 2005).

4.2   Narration of self and "Others" in Israel

In this section I presents research that has been done specifically on the topics in this study: Israeli narration of self, others, past and present. Due to the fact that the Zionist ideology is crucial for the understanding of the Israeli society, I will start by presenting research conducted by the so-called "New Historians" of Israel. I continue by exploring relevant research that is done on Israeli and Palestinian school system. Finally, since this study examines a dialogue approach lead by the university, I will conclude by exploring research that is done on Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups.

4.2.1   Power and Knowledge in Israel

As described in the introduction chapter, the Israeli post-Zionists aimed to challenge the classical Zionist ideology. Since the Zionist ideology is crucial for the understanding of the Israeli society, and thus the resistance of Israeli policy, I will in this section give a brief outline of the essence in the critique of the Zionist narrative.

In his book *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge* Ilan Pappe (2014) refers to Zionism as a discourse; similar to how Said coined the Orientalist discourse. Pappe is one the new historians who aims to challenge the Zionism narrative concerning its narration of the 1948-war. During the 1990s the new historians started to examine declassified documents in Israeli archives, despite the fact that traditional Israeli historians, who read the very same documents, had concluded that there was no need to rewrite the Zionist version of events.

Pappe stresses the need for ethically, morally, and politically evaluations of the narrative of the Israeli and Palestinian past and present (Pappe, 2014).

In his book, Pappe argues that the leaders of the Zionist movement have misused the results of science, historians and archaeologists in order to achieve their ideological goals about a strong Jewish nation state in Palestine. In this idea, the conclusion of historiographical and archaeological research was decided before the analysis was conducted. He claims: "Zionism was driven by a wish to rewrite the history of Palestine, and that of the Jewish people, in a way that proved scientifically the Jewish claim to 'the Land of Israel'" (Pappe, 2014, p. 18). He further argues that when the Israel state became a reality in 1948, legitimation of the idea of Palestine as "The Empty Land" before the arrival of Jewish immigrants was more than ever needed. Accordingly, scientific proof was essential in order to affirm the Zionist narrative. As the veteran Israeli historian Shumen Almog stated: "Zionism needed history in order to prove to Jews wherever they were that they all constitute one entity and that there is historical continuity from Israel and Judea in ancient times until modern Judaism" (Almog in Pappe, 2014, p. 20). Thus, history teaching and the overall academia were crucial for the establishment, and the international support, of Israel as a Jewish state.

It must be underlined that the new historians are highly contested and criticised by traditional Israeli historians. Some scholars think they are biased in terms of research methodology and resource selection, while others accuse them of creating publicity in order to promote their own careers (Caplan, 2010). As this study attempts to address the narration of past and present in relation to the in- and out-group in the Israeli school system and academia, there are reasons to believe that the critical research of the new historians may contribute to deeper understandings of the topic. Therefore, I have chosen to include some of their perspectives in my analyses.

4.2.2 History textbooks in Israeli and Palestinian education systems

As history textbooks are powerful means for the establishment of personal and national identities as much as beliefs about self and others (Cole, 2007; Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007), I present research on Israeli and Palestinian school textbooks in this section.

As the title indicates in her book *Palestine in Israeli school books: Propaganda and Ideology in Education,* the Israeli professor and peace activist N. Peled-Elhanan (2012) argues that the main purpose of the education in the Jewish sector is to strengthen the position of Israel as a Jewish state, and legitimate exclusion of the non-Jewish population in order to maintain the

status where Jews are the majority. Through research she attempts to reveal how the school system is a part of the Israeli-Zionist project where the goal is to "Jewify" the land and thus "de-Arabize" it (Peled-Elhanan, 2012). A curriculum that emphasizes Jewish nation-building and Jewish identity, but devoid any Palestinian national content, can be seen as a part of this project (Bekerman, 2009).

Peled-Elhanan examined popular schoolbooks, published during the years 1996-2009, applied in mainstream secular Jewish elementary, middle- and high schools. What she found was that the presentation of the Palestinians in the schoolbooks is dominated by several mechanisms that are racist-stereotypical. In the verbal presentation, the Palestinians/ Arabs are characterized as a homogenous group that has certain labels such as "primitive", "deviant", "criminal", "evil", "terrorists" etc. Visually, the classic "primitive" Arab with a big mustache, traditional clothing, followed by a camel is frequently repeated. This stereotypical illustration is modelled after the old European drawing of the imaginary "Arabs" (Peled-Elhanan, 2012).

In the Israeli-Palestinians sector some of the same challenges can be addressed. According to Bekerman there are, in certain versions of the Palestinian narratives, a deep unwillingness to recognize Israel as a state where Jews have the right to self-determination. The struggle is not about achieving equitable coexistence between Jewish and Palestinians. "It is a struggle for justice as seen by them – the return to the situation in which they were the masters of their own homeland in its entirety" (Gavison, 2000 in Bekerman, 2009, p. 216). In other words, the goal is a Palestinian country without Jews. According to him, an education dominated by this narrative may lead young Israeli Palestinian students to feel that the only option they have is to oppose the state they are citizens of, and underestimate the right Jews have to be part of the country (Gavison, 2002 in Bekerman, 2009, p. 217).

In 2013 another study of schoolbooks was published. The report *Victims of Our Own Narratives? Portrayal of the "Other" in Israeli and Palestinian School* was commissioned by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, and conducted by an Israeli/Palestinian research team, led by the international recognized experts in textbook analysis, professor Daniel Bar-Tal (Israeli) and Sami Adwan (Palestinian). The aim of the study was to document how the other group, and the conflict between the two groups were portrayed in the Israeli and Palestinian school textbooks. Six thematic areas were evaluated: 1) The other Group, 2) One´s Own Group, 3) Religion, 4) Peace, 5) The

Conflict, and 6) Values. The comprehensive number of books explored were from regular Israeli public schools, private Jewish Ultraorthodox schools and public Palestinian schools. Maps, photographs, tables, figures, illustrations and student activities were as much included in the analysis, as well as written text (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013).

The report presents four main findings from the study. The first is that "dehumanizing and demonizing characterizations of the other" are rare in both Palestinian and Israeli books (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013, p. 1). The second finding is that both sides present one-sided national narratives where the other consistently is portrayed as the enemy. The latter is articulated as follows; "chronicle negative actions by the other (is) directed at the self-community, and (they) present the self-community in positive terms with actions aimed at self-protection and goals of peace" (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013, p. 1).

Characterisations of the other as the enemy are based on historical events, that are not false or fictitious, but selectively presented to strengthen each community´s national narrative. The third finding reveals that there are lack of information about religion, culture and daily life of the other, and visual presentations of the existence of the other in the maps. In the fourth finding the report suggests that negative and biased presentation of the other, and the positive biased portrayal of the self, are more statistically significant in the Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and the Palestinian books than in the Israeli state schoolbooks (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013). According to the report the presentation described above is typical for schoolbooks in societies in conflict:

> Each society created a national narrative based on repeated descriptions of the other and its act in negative terms, recounting of historical events from the perspective of the self-community´s legitimate struggles for self-preservation in relation to threats of destruction or domination by the other. These narratives help sustain the community as it deals with violence, losses and deprivations of the conflict (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013, p. 2).

Nevertheless, the report suggests that these national narratives can be a hindrance to peace as they "engender fear, mistrust, misunderstanding and dehumanization of the other" (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013, p. 2). Further there is reference to social scientists who have described how it is possible to modify conflict related national narratives, and where some governments deliberate have efforts to reduce conflict and promote peace (Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land, 2013).

The report has garnered much criticism and ambiguous reactions, among others from the Israeli Ministry of Education. Some of the criticisms from the Israeli side have been that the study have included Ultraorthodox Jewish schools, but have excluded similar conservative schools at the Palestinian side. Some have questioned the validity and reliability of the study (e.g. Schwartz, 2013). Voices from the Palestinian side have argued that much of the negative characterisations of Israel are actually true important historical facts, and that it is no surprise that there are more negative characterizations of the out-group in the Palestinian books, due to the fact that more negative things have happened to the Palestinian people because of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land (Panel discussion at International Colloquium, Norwegian School of Theology, 2013).

4.2.3 Multi perspective teaching of history

In this section I will present a multi-narrative approach in the teaching of history, as some of the informants in this study mentioned this approach as a sustainable method in improvements of the Israeli-Palestinian relations. The approach is rare in the Israeli and Palestinian school system. However, some attempts have been made in order to utilize education as a tool for improvement of the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians. In order to understand the multi-narrative approach, it will be necessary to explain the mainstream narratives of Israel and Palestine. That being said, it is crucial to underline that in reality there are multiple narratives in Israeli and Palestinian societies. However, according to the review above, there is reason to believe that the primary education systems mainly present one-dimensional and monolithic narratives of Israel and Palestine.

One of the informants of this study, Sami Adwan, is the initiator behind a schoolbook project that endeavored to present both the Palestinian and Israeli historical narratives, in one single textbook. The project started already in 1993 when he collaborated, for the first time, with an Israeli academician. Together they decided to conduct a research project that explored the issue of schoolbooks. The question was: What does Israeli and Palestinian youth learn about the history, and the "Other"? How was the conflict presented at both sides?

In the study they found that history have been taught from a selective point of view, meaning that specific parts of the history that serves the identity or ideology of one's own group is highlighted. This narrative can be referred to as the *Collective* or the *Master Narrative*. According to Adwan, the master narratives in Israel and Palestine have been developed

through the daily environment of the students, the governments, the ministries - and then been incorporated into the school system (Adwan, Bar-On, & Naveh, 2012).

However, the Israeli and the Palestinian narratives are not equally constructed. For that reason they cannot be understood as symmetric. Compared to the Israeli master narrative, the Palestinian narrative is more monolithic in its internal structure. This implies the commitment to the development of an independent Palestinian state. Accordingly the Palestinian master narrative has similarities to the Israeli Jewish narrative during the struggle for an independent Jewish state (Bar-On, 2008 in Adwan, Bar-On, & Naveh, 2012). After more than fifty years of independence, the Israeli narrative is, according to Adwan, Bar-On and Naveh, more self-critical and self-reflective regarding some elements of the Zionist ideology. Nevertheless, since the rise of the Second Intifada in 2000, the Israeli narrative has returned to a more monolithic form. Another element that distinguishes the two narratives is that the Israeli narrative to a larger extent is influenced by Western values and cultures, while the Palestinian narrative are more attached to Eastern traditions and cultures (Adwan et al., 2012).

The motivation behind the two-narrative schoolbook project was to move the education system from being a part of the conflict, to be part of the conflict *solution:*

> We decided to initiate a process that would allow both peoples – especially the younger generations – to move beyond the one-dimensional identification with their own narrative and become equipped to acknowledge, understand, and respect (without having to accept) the narrative of the other (Adwan, Bar-on, & Naveh, 2012, x).

In the initial phase of the project, the researcher explored the possibility of developing a new bridging narrative that both groups could identify with. However, as the Second Intifada[5] broke out, and the violence from both sides increased, the possibility of developing such a bridging narrative seemed impossible. "The mutual suspicion, hatred, and poisoning of the minds among both peoples in relation to the 'other' have become so intense that sustaining a common bond has become impossible" (Adwan et. al.,x). Accordingly the goal was that both groups should be familiar with the narrative of the other.

4.2.4   Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue

Due to the long-lasting conflicting relations between Israelis and Palestinians, several attempts of dialogue groups between the two groups have been designed and implemented

---

[5] The second Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation. It broke out September 2000 when the Israeli politician Ariel Sharon visited Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) (Hallward & Norman, 2011).

over the last decades (Bard, 1998; Bekerman, 2009). As I explore a dialogue group organized by the university in this study, research is needed in order to gain an understanding for the attempts that have been done.

Some studies have pointed out the perceived positive personal values of dialogue groups between Israelis and Palestinians. Adjustments of negative stereotypes and recognition of the others as human beings due to the dialogue are documented (Jørgensen, 2012). However, many researchers that have analysed the dialogue attempts have agreed that the groups, often arranged as workshops, have had limited impact on the long-term improvement of the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis.

Some have emphasized the short-time events as a reason for lack of success. Since most of the workshops are one-time occasions that last only for a few days, the lesson learned during the encounters are quick to fade (Bekerman, 2009; Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014). Second, the locations for the dialogue groups are often in places far removed from the daily life of the participants. Accordingly the encounters appear as something artificial that lack correlation with the challenges of the real life. Another problem is the fact that the dialogue groups are self-selecting, meaning that people who oppose peace and reconciliation usually avoid participating (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014). In addition, there is a lack of follow up work in the aftermath of the workshops. Accordingly, people are uncertain about how they are going to implement the experiences from the dialogue group in their daily life. Finally, the organized encounters between Palestinians and Israelis typically avoid political and social issues (Jørgensen, 2012). The Israeli and Palestinian research colleagues Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2014) put it as follows:

> Many workshops focus on cultural, identity, or interpersonal issues, neglecting (indeed often intentionally avoiding) social or political issues. The conflict between Jews and Palestinians is thus reduced to the interpersonal level, obscuring the deep structural and institutional asymmetries between the two groups (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 183).

However, Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian argue that the so-called partnership courses are a more sustainable effort of bringing together Jewish and Palestinians, compared to other short-term dialogue workshop. These encounters take place in Israeli universities, and are academic programs that last for a year. The aim is collective engagement in the promotion of social justice and human rights. "Thus, Partnership courses contribute to the central goal of transformative learning by creating a relationship between NGO´s, students, academia, and the community in a democratic, anti-hegemonic setting (Hooks, 1994 in Golan & Shalhoub-

Kevorkian, 2014, p. 184). They suggest that the partnership courses "provide transformative learning experiences, enhance student´s self-examination, and allowed them to reflect on their fears an stereotypical beliefs, while acknowledging other people conditions, status, and behaviours" (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 199).

What further found where that the participants of the courses tended to define both the theoretical learning and their work in NGO´s as "non-political". The attributes to the term political were connected to the military, which was perceived as a taboo at campus. Accordingly, "the military occupation, (the) ongoing war, border control, siege on Gaza, and militarization of Israeli society are all out of bounds because they are perceived as political" (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 199). Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian claim that there were an "elephant in the room" – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that was ignored during the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students enrolled in the partnership courses. What was found was that both the students and the teachers preferred that this should be left in silence. Hence, Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014 suggest that there is a hidden message in Israeli academia and state:

> Yes, there is a large and protected space defined as 'academic freedom', but political discussions are not encouraged or even allowed. Discussing or acting on issues of social change or civic engagement within Israel is fine – as long as the most important issues of war and peace and the ongoing military occupation of Palestinian Territories are not brought into the classroom (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 199-200).

As shown, much research has been done one the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some have documented how the school system contributes to othering of the out-group, by presenting the other group in a biased and negative ways, or by completely avoiding the presence of the other group. Most of the research presented has been done on elementary, secondary and high school level. Few researchers have shed light on the Israeli academia, and explored the extent to which the encounters with the other influence the relationship between them. As students of higher education can be seen as catalysts of how the future will look like, they are, in my opinion, a crucial target for analysis of Israel and Palestine. What is the potential of the university in terms of facilitating for sustainable encounters between the two groups? How are the narratives about self and others presented and handled there, compared to the primary education system? These are questions that form the basis for this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The two following chapters present the findings and discussion in the narration of past and present in Israeli academia. The chapters consist of four main parts. These are 1) *Narration of past and present in primary education* 2) *Social Identity construction* 3) *Narration at the university* and finally 4) *Interaction, coexistence and dialogue*. The concepts have emerged from the data material and include the key categories of the thesis.

5 Part I

In order to understand the life and world of the informants, this chapter focuses on their background. In the first section I discuss the experiences from primary education before I continue to explore the identity expressed by the informants.

5.1 Narration of past and present in primary education

As the experiences from primary education are crucial in understanding the educational background of the students, it is essential to further explore the narration in the primary education in this section. The fieldwork was conducted within the Israeli academia. However, this study includes Palestinian students from East Jerusalem, meaning that the Palestinian education system will to a certain extent be discussed.

All of the Israeli students stated that they learned little or nothing about the Palestinian people, their culture and the Palestinian version of the history during primary education. In addition the majority claimed that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not emphasized in the history lessons. Some found this fact more problematic than others. Anat, an Israeli student, expressed her frustrations of what she perceived as a biased history teaching in the primary education system:

> When you study in primary school, the whole perspective about things is very Zionistic, and very Israeli. You don't even hear the word Palestinian. There are no Palestinians, there are Arabs and that's it. Israel is (presented as it is) our land, we established the country - there is never a second side. It is presented like there was no one here, in 48 all the Arabs tried to kill us, we were so smart, God was with us, and we succeeded (Anat).

As presented in the theory chapter, the hypothesis fundamental attribution error means a tendency to overemphasize the dispositional properties while explaining the good behaviour of the in-group, and overemphasize situational attributions when explaining bad behaviour by

the in-group (Heradstveit, 1979). The quote above reveals how Anat experienced that the school system applied situational attribution while explaining the reason for the war ("our land, we established the county (..) in 48 all the Arabs tried to kill us"). At the same time, dispositional properties or attributions were applied while explaining the reason for succeeding ("we were so smart, God was with us"). This is in line with Pappe (2014) who argues that the Israeli education system consistently applies dispositional attributions while explaining the hatred and aggression of Palestinians against Israel. He ironically sums up the presentation of Arabs in Israeli school system as follows: "Jews had done nothing that warranted such an attitude. The only reason for it was that Muslims held the same anti-Semitic views as Christians" (Pappe, 2014, p. 75).

 By presenting the Palestinians as "Arabs", one may assume that it strengthened the credibility of the de-legitimation of Palestinians as a group that belongs to the area. A common perception in Israel is that the Palestinians are a part of the Arab people. Therefore, as they lack specific adherence to Israel or Palestine, they can easily move to other Arab countries. By contrast, it is often claimed that the Jews have nowhere else to go. As shown in the literature review, Peled-Elhanan argues that the Israeli school system contributes to a "Jewifying" and thus "de-Arabizing" of Israel by avoiding any Palestinian national content in the curriculum (Peled-Elhanan, 2013). This is in line with Foucault when he claims that knowledge becomes hegemonic due to power relations (Michel Foucault, 2005). Meir, an Israeli PhD student of Political Science (PS), was one of the students that reflected upon the role of the teachers and the inadequate presentation of Palestinian issues in the Israeli education system. He explained this as following:

> It was only Jewish history. I learned about the Naqba and the Palestinian history only after I started at the university. I used to live in Haifa and there are many Palestinians, and I didn't even know what their history is like. It is a strategy (not teaching about the history of "the other"). I think my teachers knew something about it; they studied history at the university, they knew something about it, I am sure. But it was not part of the curriculum. Even if they wanted to teach us about it, they could not. They could not risk their jobs (Meir).

As discussed in chapter three, Korostelina (2008) suggests that history teaching reflects the ideologies and values of the ruling parties in power, and thus articulates a specific view of the history. By doing so, the history teaching influences the public discourse and perceptions of the past (Korostelina, 2008). One may therefore assume that the lack of focus on Palestinian issues in the Israeli school curricula is an outcome of the ideology and goals of the Israeli government. However, by contrast to the explanation above, Dan, a professor in Modern

Jewish History (JH), contended that his BA students have a lack in their knowledge about Jewish history when they enter the university. He argued that the curriculum in the Israeli primary education merely focuses on the land of Israel while teaching the Jewish History. According to him, there is a clear distinction between Israeli and Jewish history, where the latter is far more comprehensive than the former. He elaborated as follows: "It is comparatively little Jewish history that is studied in the school system. There is some, but it tends to be sporadic, either focus on the ancient times or focusing on contemporary times" (Dan).

Alon, a PhD student that participated in the joint interview together with the professor, continued: "Which is exactly, I would say, part of the Zionist narrative: Jumping this kind of huge jump between the ancient time, Biblical Judaism, and then this gap with the diaspora where Jews were spread all over Europe and North Africa" (Alon). However, Alon did not agree that Jewish history is not emphasized in the school system, and referred to a research done on this topic:

> What was found was that Jewish history is way over 50 %. And I would say that most of the courses of teaching, for example if we are talking about the Second World War, it will be mainly through the perspective of the Jews. Many of the students, I would say, experience the history through a 'Jewish lens' (Alon).

As outlined previously, Heradstveit (1979) claims that groups in conflict seek structure and control: they want their theories and interpretations to be true and legitimate (Heradstveit, 1979). Since the presentation of history in the education system can be perceived as what Dorschner & Sherlock (2007) refer to as a "commonplace" of the society, the quotes above reflect some of the aspects in the Israeli master narrative (Dorschner & Sherlock, 2007). If we assume that both the student and the professor are right, although they disagree, the components of control and structure are relevant. One may argue that both the presentation of Palestinian culture, history and religion, as well as the presentation of the Jewish diaspora when the Jews were spread all over the world, could possible cause an asymmetry in the established Israeli master narrative. Meir`s assumption about being fired if teachers open up for teaching about Palestinian issues, underlines the great need for control and structure of what is taught in Israeli schools.

As discussed previously, consistency theory suggests that human beings always strive towards consistency between beliefs and behaviour (Imsen, 2014). Much of the learning processes are in fact a desire for consistency: One will always endeavour to adapt new information into the

current knowledge system one already possesses. These mechanisms enable a person to interpret his surroundings without too much suffering (Heradstveit, 1979). When Israeli schoolchildren learn that the Jews came to "an empty land" in Palestine, this can be seen as a confirmation of the knowledge they may carry from their home environment, newspapers, politics, etc. The teaching at school, will therefore not lead to asymmetry in their understanding of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people. Rather, it will confirm the established interpretation of reality.

With regard to the Palestinian students with Palestinian education background, some said that they learn much about the conflict in school, while other stressed the lack of presentation of both the conflict and the Jewish people. A Palestinian student from East Jerusalem stated: "They mentioned the other, but as the one who caused our problems" (Inas). In addition, the majority of the Palestinian informants argued that the Palestinian education system, both within the Israeli sector and at Palestinian territories, provides instrumental learning with no encouragement to develop critical reflection skills. A statement made by Karem may serve as an example: "The curriculum at our school, we just had to memorize something, and we had to write it at the exams. So there is not really a space for your mind to think, to be critical, to explore things, to think that – 'do you agree or disagree with this or that'" (Karem).

As claimed earlier, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be seen as an interaction process where the actions of one side directly affect the other side (Heradstveit, 1979). During my research, the Gaza War was in its final stage. According to Heradstveit, such conditions are likely to increase the degree of bias in the attribution processes between the two groups of people, especially when representatives from both groups are directly involved in the actions. (Heradstveit, 1979). Presentations of the other as the enemy, described by Inas, might be a result of the conditions in Israel and Palestine.

One of the Israeli students, Berel, argued that the Palestinians should learn more about the Jewish people, in order to understand their legitimate right to be in Israel. He explained:

> I would like them to understand the Israeli point of view. I read recently in a newspaper that a Palestinian professor took his students to see a concentration camp in Poland. To say 'listen, the Jews aren't coming from nowhere, they have a background, they have a history, they have a grievance, and we should understand them better'. I think that it is something that should be promoted (Berel).

When inquired about the opposite, to what extent the Israelis should learn more about Palestinians and the other version of the history, Berel stated:

It would not hurt to learn more. The question is, who is going to write the ultimate book on Palestinian history? Look how complicated Jewish history is, who is going to define Palestinian history? And who is going to teach that? Should they teach it? Should it be political? Is it a way of teaching it in a non-political basis (Berel)?

From the perspective of consistency theory, Berel´s statements are interesting. As we have seen, the need for consistency and regularity is deep-rooted in the human nature. New unfamiliar information creates imbalance or dissonance leading to tension and stress. This will challenge the established master belief (Heradstveit, 1979; Imsen, 2014). When Berel expressed ambivalence towards learning the Palestinian narrative, it can be seen as symptom of a felt inconsistency in his knowledge system, creating anxiety.

However, two of my informants, Sami Adwan and Hille Choen, a Palestinian expert in schoolbooks and an Israeli history professor, argued that the way of teaching history in both Israeli and Palestinian primary education systems in fact contributing to a continuation of the conflicted relationship between them. Sami stated:

If the Israeli children continue to learn the history in that way, and the Palestinians continue with this 'there is no way that these two people could live together, they are the other, and we are the victims'. When this is the presentation, we keep inflaming, and actually giving energy to the conflict, and each side would be the same (Sami).

The Israeli professor Hillel Choen agreed and said:

The Palestinians, many of them think that we do not belong to here – that we are foreigners, colonialists, and that we have to leave. And the same for the Israelis: They blame the Palestinians, and they think that the Arabs should not have rights here, and that this is a Jewish land only, and so on. Of course, we cannot reach any agreement if this is the idea behind (Hillel).

This is in line with Dorschner and Sherlock (2007) when they stress the role of history teaching as important for the new generations and the establishment of beliefs in the society. They argue that if fears, prejudices, and biases are sustained to the next generation, the history teaching can in fact contribute to maintaining conflicted relations and be an obstacle to sustainable relations between groups of people (Dorschner and Sherlock, 2007). Accordingly, one may assume that imbalance in the cognitive systems, contradicting information to the mainstream Israeli and Palestinian narratives, are essential for improvement of the relationship between them.

5.1.1 Arabic sector in the Israeli School System

The two Palestinian students with Israeli citizenship and background from Israeli education system differed from the rest of the informants in how they experienced history teaching

during primary education. Both expressed a deep frustration regarding the lack of Palestinian history teaching at school.

Anmar, the Palestinian female student from Haifa stated: "Where I come from, nobody talked about Palestine at school" (Anmar). Her fellow student from Haifa, Falah, elaborated by saying: "We learn about the Jewish history, but not Palestinian history. We learn about the history of their leaders and also the different kind of Zionism – the political, the philosophical, religious Zionism and the Judaism ideology" (Falah). Anmar continued: "In my society they don't teach about my nationality, not about my religion. Nothing! I am living here and we have a conflict. But I am not allowed, or they – the education system, are not allowed to talk about this" (Anmar). Anmar shared a story about a turning point in her life, changing her understanding of the history. This turning point happened after participating in a dialogue group for Israeli Palestinians, Jews and German youth:

> We went to Germany and the Holocaust centre – but they did not mention anything about the Palestinian catastrophe. They (the Israeli Jews) were crying for the Holocaust because all Arab countries are fighting against them. And we were listening to them, and having nothing to tell. Do you know how this feels for a 15 year old person? It was shocking! So, what happened in the end was that I did not have anything to talk about. We (the Palestinians) always went away without having talked to people. They had their history in their pocket. I was thinking, 'what am I doing here? I am such a stupid girl, doing nothing in my life – only learning physics and mathematics'. When I realised that I did not know my own history, I said to myself that it is not too late. And then I started to study by myself. But I had a dilemma – 'where should I start from, who will teach me'? So I went to Islam" (Anmar).

As presented in chapter three, Breidlid (2013) argues that the epistemology of the West has maintained a hegemonic role in the global world since the beginning of the colonial time, and the rise of capitalism. According to him, this position has dominated school systems all over the world, and has led to what he refers to as "The Global Architecture of Education". By claiming patent on universal knowledge production, the western hegemonic epistemology has actually excluded, essentialized and marginalized nations and groups of people all over the so-called Global South (Breidlid, 2013). The concept of The Global Architecture of Education is in line with the Orientalist discourse presented in Said´s *Orientalism* (1978). On the basis of what is outlined above, and previously in the literature review, the dominance of the Zionist narrative in Israeli school curricula may be compared with the mechanisms in both the Global Architecture of Education and the Orientalist discourse.

In the quotes above, the two Israeli Palestinian students explain how issues connected to their identity, and their interpretation of the world, were absent in the school system. As Anmar put

it: "In my society they don't teach about my nationality, not about my religion. Nothing!" (Anmar). Robert Serpell (1993) illustrates how school systems and curriculums that lack anchoring in the cultural context, may contribute to the production of school failures and thus society failures in general. He states:

> When a school curriculum is designed in a manner which is alien to the cultural assumptions informing other socialisation practices to which its students have been exposed, discrepancies are liable to arise between the goals of that curriculum and the cultural goals of the social group (Serpell, 1993, p. 2).

Serpell´s study of a rural Zambian area reveals that a great majority of the children that were enrolled in elementary school, left school with a feeling of being losers. Often the lack of success was justified with quotes like: "It was my own fault", "I didn't have the brain to it" etc (Serpell, 1993). This is in line with Anmar´s feeling of being "such a stupid girl" (Anmar). The essence of Serpell´s study is that there is a gap between the knowledge (epistemology) of the society, and the knowledge presented at school. At the same time the knowledge presented at school is often defined as the "knowledge of the state". Accordingly, people learn that the knowledge people carry from their home environment is nothing worth, and that it has little to contribute with in terms of serving of the state (Serpell, 1993).

The Palestinian expert of school textbooks, Sami Adwan, explained how avoidance of teaching about Palestinian history is a part of the occupation of the Palestinian people: "The Palestinian schools inside Israel, their textbooks have been monitored. This is one part of the occupation, not only the military occupation, but also the human way – how you occupy the human mind" (Sami). He continued by drawing a parallel between the Sami people of Norway and the Israeli Palestinians: "It's like they (Israeli Ministry of Education) detach the (Palestinian) people from their own history. It is a crime, because when you deny your own history, you deny everything. It is the same thing that happened in Norway with the Sami people – they wanted to take away their traditions" (Sami).

This in in line with Said (2003) when he argues that the Israeli regime has erased large amounts of historical material in order to prevent criticism and resistance of their policy. By doing this, Said claims that Israel joins the rank of colonial powers that have supressed Indigenous Knowledges and oral traditions in order to avoid resistance of the hegemonic powers. He further refers to Algeria where the French regime sought to prevent the schools from teaching Arabic. However, as Said argues, "people will find other places – in this case the mosque – to learn Arabic and perpetuate the oral tradition. There's always an attempt at

repression and there's always a popular ingenuity and will that resists" (Barsamian & Said, 2003, p. 161). Thus, when Anmar explained that she "went to Islam" (Anmar) in order to lean about the history and tradition of her people, this may be seen as an attempt to resist the hegemonic power in Israeli society.

5.2   Identity Construction

As presented in the methodology chapter, the group of informants consists of eleven regular students, three PhD students and three professors, including one expert in two-narratives in history teaching. In this section the focus will be on the informants identity. The way they introduced themselves, who they are and how they described their daily life, will be emphasized. Moreover, I will explore the aspect of identity in relation to narration of history and presence.

When asked to introduce themselves, and describe their national identity, both the Palestinian and Israeli students had comprehensive answers that reveal complex identities. The majority of the Israeli students defined themselves to the political left. Some of them expressed frustration regarding the political situation and the occupation of the Palestinian people. However, despite their political orientation, many articulated ambiguous thoughts about the Palestinians and the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

5.2.1   "If you have to kill, then you don't want to know whom you are killing"

One of the Israeli students of Jewish history (JH), Berel, differed from the other student informants in the explicit positive way he described Zionism and the politics of Israel. Berel stressed the important link between the question of identity and the idea of Israel as a homeland for the Jews. The national aspect was clear when he reflected upon his identity. During the interview, he frequently underlined the importance of understanding why Israel is the homeland for the Jewish people, and why Israel has to act as they do towards the Palestinians. Anti-Semitism and ignorance towards the Jewish people was highlighted as major problems when discussing Palestinians. He stated: "There is a reason why we are here. Not to sound fundamentalist or anything like that, I don't look out at the window and say, 'we got to build a temple'. But, this is a homeland, and it is probably *the* only homeland" (Berel).

Berel defined Zionism as follows:

> Zionism is an interpretation of Jewish history, reminding the Jews that we are a people not only a religion or just a culture, but a real ancient nation. And everything leads up to saying that the rest of the world is not a home, we had to come here (to Israel). This

is my headquarter. My historical roots, which are more symbolic to me, are here, but my actual roots are here also: This is where my grandparents choose to live after the (Second World) War (Berel).

The quotes of Berel reflect some of the tendencies presented in the literature review. As explored earlier, Jewish nation building and Jewish identity are highlighted in Israeli school curriculum, while similar presentations of the Palestinians are rather rare (Peled-Elhanan, 2011). The report *Victims of Our Own Narratives? Portrayal of the "Other" in Israeli and Palestinian School* shows that the school systems present one-sided national narratives where the other consistently is portrayed as the enemy. Accordingly, the reflections of Berel can be understood in relation to the master narrative reflected in Israeli primary education.

Esther, a French-Israeli student of Conflict Study (CS) and former spokesperson in The Israeli Defence Force (IDF) explained how enrolment in the army made her change her self-understanding and the view of the Palestinians:

> I grew up in a place in France with very many Arabs. So I do not see the Arabs as enemies. The Palestinians are a whole bunch of different people. We have so many things in common: we eat the same food. We are similar. So for me when I was a kid it was very easy to connect with Arab kids. And now it's like: 'Here I am, and I am told that they are all my enemies'. You learn that in the army. The way you see the other is like a group, and not people. You cannot allow yourself to see them as people. We just talk about them as 'them'. Your language becomes very security oriented (Esther).

The quote of Esther reflects how enrolment in the army challenges previous positive experiences of coexistence with Arabs. The statement further reveals how the language in the army service influences the interpretation the other. Suddenly the Arabs, who earlier were perceived as "similar to us", and a "bunch of different people" became a homogenous group that was portrayed as "them", instead of people with diverse qualities. Pappe (2014) argues that similar mechanisms take place in Israeli schools:

> We also learned that Arabs, mainly Palestinians, were the modern-day Khmelnytskys[6], but that they would be unable to implement their evil schemes because the Jewish state had an army that would use every means in its possession against this last bastion of anti-Semitism (Pappe, 2014, p. 75).

Some of the Israelis reflected about the reason to avoid other narrative than the mainstream Israeli. The fear for security, and a situation where Jews no longer are the majority in Israel were highlighted. Alon, an Israeli PhD student in General History (GH), explained that there is a fear among many Israelis, and by giving space for other ways of seeing the reality,

---

[6] Ukrainian rebellion guilty in massacre of Jewish populations during the 17th century

represent an existential threat to the Jews and their right to be in Israel. He put it this way: "People are feeling attacked - not only by rockets, but also an external attack on the Zionist narrative of people that question the reason why we are here, the building of the state and so on and so forth" (Alon). Esther reflected about the absent Palestinian point of view in the public debate during the last Gaza War:

> Look at the war this summer. There were no personal stories of the Palestinians at any point. We only saw the Palestinian rebels, and we saw funerals of Israeli soldiers, and parents of the Israeli kids that were killed during hitchhiking. I do not know their stories, I have never heard about them. In a way I understand, it is normal reactions for societies in war. If you have to kill, then you don't want to know whom you are killing. It feels to us like the only thing people in Gaza tries to do is to kill us. We know that some of them are normal, but if we could see it and we could hear them with their own voices, like 'I am a teacher and I do this and that' and then you could say 'Hey, I am also a teacher'. If you can identify to someone through their stories... But we are very afraid since the whole Israeli society is fighting a war (Esther).

What Alon and Esther shared can be seen in light of attribution theory that states the desire for control and structure among groups of people in conflict-ridden areas: The parts in a conflict seek the information that underlines their assumptions of reality (Heradstveit, 1979). It may be assumed that some aspects within the Palestinian narrative, like the legitimization of the Naqba, the right of return and other historical events, can be experienced as an existential threat to the Israeli Jews. Accordingly security arguments, such as "we are threatened", "all the Palestinians want to throw us on the sea" etc, can be understood as a survival strategy.

As discussed in chapter three, attribution theory further states that perceived controllability is crucial in the understanding of how people interpret the suffering of others. When Israelis explain the suffering of the people of Gaza as a consequence of their violent (controllable) actions, the feeling of sympathy and willingness to help should, according to attribution theory, be low (Betalncourt, 1990). Esther explained that the bombing of Gaza was a consequence of the rocket attacks on Israel; she clearly attributed external causes to the in-group (Israel) and perceived the actions by the Palestinians as controllable (provocative behaviour). When arguments such as "many Palestinians mean that we don't have the right to be here, that we have to leave" (Hillel), internal causes are attributed to the out-group. On the other hand, the majority of the Palestinians see the rocket attacks on Israel as a consequence of the blockade of Gaza (situation). Accordingly, the Israeli bombings on Gaza are perceived as evil intentions and humiliation of the Palestinian people (internal attributions). Hence, the

patterns depicted of attribution theory is relevant for the understanding of ongoing social mechanisms in Israel and Palestine (Betalncourt, 1990).

Despite the tendency described above, the majority of the Israeli students condemned the Israeli attack on Gaza the summer of 2014. Is there a possibility that enrolment in the university, and the interaction with Palestinians affect their view of the conflict? I will come back to this later in the next chapter.

Holocaust was mentioned by many of the Israeli students as an essential part of their identity. For some, the search for identity was an important component for choosing to study history. Amos, an Israeli male student of GH, described his motivation for studying history as follows: "So the goal for me by studying history is the search for identity, for roots. When I am learning about the Holocaust it is something that is hurting me. My grandparent's families were killed, murdered" (Amos). According to him, although it might be silent in the public discussion, the Holocaust and Nazi German is a crucial part of the legitimation of politics, both for left and right wing politician: "The right wing would say that we should do it (the bombing of Gaza) because they don't want them to do Holocaust for us again. The leftist says that we can't do the same things to them (the Palestinians) as Nazi German did to us (…)" (Amos).

Although she underlined that it might be a simplistic explanation, Dinah, an Israeli student of law (LA) and activist that have participated in several demonstrations against the occupation of Palestine, stressed the aspect of indoctrination as a way to construct a joint Israeli Jewish identity. In this indoctrination, the story of Holocaust is essential regarding the legitimation of the occupation policy. She said:

> You see it in the way they teach history to children, and the way they talk about Holocaust in kinder garden. They keep pumping it: 'they burned us and put us in the gas chamber. Now we have to kill (Palestinian) kids that are demonstrating'. They have trips to Auschwitz for high school people and there they are really doing indoctrination in this one line from the Holocaust to the army (Dinah).

As discussed earlier, social identity construction requires strong expressions of the group's history. In order to achieve this, *Chosen Glories* and *Chosen traumas* are suggested as effective means. According to Korestelina (2008), the concepts of glories and traumas are linked with symbolic objects: Suitable targets of externalization (STEs). "Negative STEs (…) are associated with terrible memories, threats, enemies, suffering and humiliation that took place in the past" (Korostelina, 2008, p. 27). Chosen traumas, or negative STEs, can help

individuals to unite around strong ideas of losses in the past. They tie people together, unite and transfer meaning to the new generations (Volkan, 1997, in Korostelina, 2008). According to this reflection one may assume that the terrible memories of the Holocaust in fact may help Israelis to strengthen their social identity. Moreover, one may argue that the Israeli historical master narrative contributes to a commitment to IDF, and the contemporary Israeli policy, as suggested by Wertsch (Wertsch, 2004). However, both Dinah and Amos had a critical approach toward this way of "using" the story of Holocaust. This may imply that the enrolment in the university increases the critical reflections about how history is utilized for certain goals.

Despite her "leftist"-image and apparent criticism of Israeli patriotism, Dinah explained that much changed in how she defined her national identity after she became a mother. She stated:

> I used to feel like I had nothing to do with this nationality, but now I feel very responsible, because I am Israeli; I am an Israeli Jew, no matter what. This is my language; this is everything that I was brought up with. Now I feel more connected to Judaism somehow (Dinah).

As presented in the theory chapter, Heradstveit suggests "behavioral change does not always lead to cognitive change" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 27). The quotes of Dina illustrate some of the complexity described in the introduction of this chapter. On the one hand she is highly critical to Israeli policy and she even felt that she had nothing to do with the Israeli nationality. On the other hand, becoming a mother changed and modified her self-perception. This may reflect tendencies where the Jewish identity and Judaism become more important during family foundation. It may further be understood in relation to the fact that Jews are a minority in the International Community, and that some thus feel a kind of responsibility to sustain the Jewish religion and culture.

Alon, an Ashkenazi Israeli PhD student highlighted the aspect of identity in the history teaching and explained the complexity of studying something that is closely related to your own past: "One of the reasons I chose to focus on a none-Jewish and not an Israeli history track, but on German history, is the fact that dealing with Jewish Israeli history is too close for me. I wasn't able to split between myself and the research I am conducting" (Alon). By contrast, Esther, a French-Israeli Jew and student of CS, was already a trained engineer; so her motivation for studying was not an investment in a future job, but rather an exploration of her own identity. She stated: "My motivation for studying in this program was to understand

better the place that I live in. And not just in a superficial way, like we learn through media. Right now I am doing something I need to do for myself" (Esther).

Seeing the different background of Alon and Esther, their quotes are interesting. Alon was born and raised in Israel, while Esther grew up in France. Alon's concern about being unequipped to separate his personal feelings and his research, may illustrate some of the baggage carried from his home environment and schooling. Moreover, It may be an expression of his awareness of a one-sided education system and his personal feelings about Jewish history that might affect his work as a researcher. The quote of Esther illustrates the need to understand the Israeli society, a place that was not where she grew up, but yet a place that was essential for her identity and the self-understanding of being a Jew. One may assume that her experience of being member of a Jewish minority in France, and her exposure to international media coverage of Israel, have strengthened the need to understand the Israeli society from an insider position.

5.2.2   A black spot in the history

My Arabic is Mute
Strangled in the throat
Cursing itself
Without uttering a word
Sleeping in the suffocating air
Of the shelters of my soul
Hiding
From family members
Behind the shutters of the Hebrew (Almog Behar, 2005)

Although some mentioned strengthening of the Israeli identity as a motivation for studying history and social science, others highlighted the exploration of alternative Israeli-Jewish identities as an important aspect of studying history. The Israeli student of GH, Amos, argued that the university gave him this opportunity:

> We (the history students) are looking for another form of identity, not only national identity towards Israel. Maybe the university gives the opportunity to people to learn more about their identity. I think studying of your historical background is a personal thing, maybe anti-national. When my Mizrahi friends are celebrating their Arab identity – it is kind of radical in Israel (Amos).

As shown in the literature review, Dorschner and Sherlock (2007) argue that new perceptions of self and other can gradually emerge as a result of the encounter with new or neglected elements in the narration of past and present. This may further increasingly become an

integrated part of a new national identity. The quote of Amos indicates that the university opens up for exploration of alternative aspects of Israeli identity.

As relationship between Palestinians and Israelis are rare in the societies and on campus (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014), one of the Israeli students, Anat, differed from the rest due to her frequent interaction with Palestinian students. In addition, Anat introduced herself as an "Arab Jew". This is a contested term in Israel. The term caught my attention and I confronted a professor of JH about this. He replied as follows: "You see the terms used sometimes. It is very controversial. I think the term is beginning to come back as a kind of an edgy way of recombining sort of hybrid cultural ideas for people that grew up in two or three cultural families" (Dan). When I asked why the term fell out of use, he explained: "It is partly because the Jewish Arab-thing is so politicized (…) There are connotations, once you use the word Arab, there is many connotations that flow (Dan).

Anat explained that she have a special interest in the history of the Jews that origin from Arab countries, as her grandparents came from current Iran and Iraq, in addition to a grandfather from India. Anat highlighted the multiple aspects of Israeli identity: "And what they, the government, the state, or the Zionists, wants you to feel is that you are Jewish above all. I am kind of against it because I think that there is a lot more to identity. You are not only Jewish, you are Jewish and Arab and I don't know what" (Anmat). Regarding her own identity, she explained how a highly multicultural family has influenced her childhood:

> I grew up in an Arab mentality, I grew up as an Israeli, as Jewish, but sometimes I say expressions in Arabic that are from home. My grandma came from Iraq, she studied to read and write in Hebrew after she came her. I also have a grandfather from India that came to Israel, so I also grew up with a lot of Hindu culture. And I have another grandmother from Kurdish area, and last year we realized that she was from current Iran. And another grandfather from Urfah, which is a city in Syria or Turkey. At that time there were no borders since it was the Ottoman Empire. If you ask my grandmother where she is from she says 'I don't know, there were no borders, but we used to speak Kurdish with Iranian accent'. When I sometimes say expressions in Arabic, people look at me like this 'this is so Arabic of you to say'. It is because I have it from my grandparents (Anmar).

Anat had been through a long process of exploring her Arabic Jewish origin. This was mainly done on her own initiative, as teaching about these issues is rare in Israeli primary education. In addition, many Jews of Arab origin experience that their parents avoid talking about this aspect of their background (Baskin & Cohen, 3.3.2015, *The history of the Jews in the Middle East*). While Anat appeared to be proud of her Arabic heritage, Esther was more ambiguous about this aspect of her family background. However, after being encouraged to answer

whether Arabic was a part of her identity or not, she admitted that she had an Arabic heritage. She explained how her grandparents from Arabic countries would react if she maintained Arabic as a part of her identity:

> I guess I am a bit Arabic…I think that my grandparents would be very proud to hear the fact that we can say it, and relate to it. The way they were received in Israel was very traumatic, because the idea of a Jewish state was a modern, European idea. So when the European Jews came, the whole idea was very modern; 'drop our religious identity etc.'. The Arab Jews were looked down on. It is a black spot in the history (Esther).

During the Saladin Days in Oslo, 2015, the Mizrahi-Israeli poet Almog Behar and the historian Orit Bashkin argued that a new kind of identity was formed during the first waves of the Jewish immigration to Palestine. The idea of the "melting pot" was that the Jews should be considered as *one* group with a shared identity. In this new established identity, European, secular, so-called "modern" values were highlighted (Behar & Bashin, 4.3.2015, *The political Poet*, 5.3.2015, *Language, religion and identity in todays Israel*). These ideas influenced policy makers and signified that the state had the authority to define who was modern and who was not. Pappe states:

> These means included de-Arabising of the Mizrachi Jews, secularising Orthodox Jews, and braking traditional practices of rural or immigrant societies while at the same time compensating or rewarding these people by locating them at the same social and geographical margins of the society until the process of modernisation was successfully completed (Pappe, 2014 p. 95).

As a consequence, the culture and language of the Jews from Arab and African countries were perceived as non-Israeli, and the idea of mixed identities was erased. The new generation grew up without practicing the language and culture of their parents. Behar and Bashkin explained how it was usual that the elder generation spoke to their children in their first language, Arabic, while the children answered in Hebrew. Arabic was considered primitive, and not a part of the Israeli culture. Many were shameful of their parent's mother tongue. Thus, they neglected it as something connected to their identity. Behar explained how many Mizrahi Jews, which by appearance resemble Arabs, have to underline that they really are Jews. "Your mind may forget, but your body remembers" as he poetically put it (Behar, 2015) His poem "My Arabic is Mute" in the introduction of this section, expresses how his linguistic and cultural heritage are suppressed in the Israeli society (Behar, 4.3.2015, *The political Poet* and *Language, religion and identity in todays Israel*).

Further Behar and Bashkin explained that dividing lines occurred in the Israeli society during the establishment of the state. These dividing lines created discrepancies among social groups, discrepancies that are maintained in current Israel. Examples of such dividing lines are Europa vs. Middle East, secular vs. teligious and Tel Aviv vs. Jerusalem. This is in line with what Pappe (2014) states: "If modern Judaism epitomised enlightenment, then Arab nationalism was the heart of darkness, and as Ashkenazi Jews were progressive, Mizrachi Jews were regressive (Pappe, 2014, p. 95). Still, Behar suggested that the third generation of the Jewish immigrants are more curious about language and culture of their grandparents, compared to the previous generation. Behar has a desire for change and would like to see the new generation of Arab Jews to be more familiar with their origin. He further argued that this part of the Jewish identity have the potential of bridging the gap between Israelis and Palestinians (Behar, 2015).

As Esther mentioned, the history of the Jews that immigrated to Israel from Arab and African countries might be considered as a "black spot in the history" (Esther) of Israel. As we have seen, this part of Jewish history is not emphasised and highlighted in the school system, nor in the public debate. By contrast, another big trauma, the Holocaust, is to a large extent highlighted as an important historical period for the understanding of Jewish history. As presented above, chosen traumas and negative STE´s have the potential to unite and tie individuals together in order to strengthen the social identity of individuals (Korostelina, 2008) . One may assume that the history of the Jewish immigrants from Arab and African countries lack this uniting power, rather it might cause an imbalance in the established Jewish-Israeli identity, and thus weaken the social identity of the Israelis. This is in line with the critical research of the post-Zionist historians that claimed that there has been an official construction of collective memories through the education system, media and the academia:

> Directly, and indirectly, they accused Israel's mainstream sociologists of employing methodologies that suited Zionists claim on the land and the Jewish people, and that excluded marginalized groups and narratives that did not fit the self-image of Israel as a Western, Jewish society" (Pappe, 2014, p. 96).

The tendency seems to be that there is a conscious strategy behind the selection of which historical events that is emphasized in the Israeli education system.

5.2.3 "I know what my identity is – but it's not stated"

The majority of the Palestinian students emphasised the occupation as an essential aspect of their identity. Inas, a Palestinian student from East Jerusalem tried to explain the geographical complexity related to her identity:

> It is not the easiest way to introduce myself. Sometimes it is very easy for people. You can just say, 'I am Norwegian and I am from Norway'. It is easier. In my case it is more complicated: Look, I am a Palestinian and live in a village in Jerusalem. But it is not Palestinian territory, and neither Israeli territory. The village is Palestinian, but next to us there is an Israeli village. It is very near, but yet so different (Inas)

Her friend Karam, another Palestinian female student from East Jerusalem, described the feeling of not having a citizenship and how this affected her identity:

> In my case I am a Muslim Jerusalemites Palestinian. But I don't really have any paper, any documents that state my identity. The ID that we have is just to have the ability to move from one place to another. So the truth is that I am a Palestinian, but there is no document that declares my nationality. I know what my identity is – but it's not stated (Karam).

In contrast to Karam, Saiha, another Palestinian female from East Jerusalem, had Israeli citizenship. She stressed the gap between her felt national identity and her passport: "For me I am a Christian Palestinian. I have an Israeli passport, but it is only on paper. I don't feel any belonging to the Israeli society. I think it's all a matter of belonging. My mother tongue is Arabic. The things from when we grew up make our national identity" (Saiha).

As the quotes above illustrate, the majority of the Palestinian mentioned their religion when they were asked to introduce themselves. This aspect distinguished them from the Israeli students, where none mentioned religion unless I explicitly asked about it. This is compatible with Bar-On (2008), when he suggests that the Palestinian narrative is more monolithic in its internal structure, and that traditional values to a larger extent are apparent (Bar-On, 2008 in Adwan, Bar-On, & Naveh, 2012).

Exemplified in the quote by Saiha, many Palestinians highlight their mother tongue, Arabic, as important to their self-understanding. As the language of instruction is in Hebrew in Israeli academia, many Palestinian students stated that they struggled with their studies and the communication with Israeli classmates and teachers. For some, the language barrier was an obstacle for them to express their point of view. Inas stated:

> Sometimes when the professor say something that you do not agree on, and it's only you that are Palestinian in the class, it is not so easy to speak up. First of all you have

the problem of the language. You won't be really fluent in the language only after one year of learning it; you have many things to learn (Inas).

Her classmate Saiha further stressed the difficulties regarding class discussions: "In the class I do not discuss a lot. I have never discussed unless it was small classes. It's not because I don't speak, I think if it was in Arab university it would be much easier. Here, I don't have the courage" (Saiha).

The two Israeli Palestinian students from north Israel mentioned arrogance and discrimination as the main obstacles. Falah put it like this:

> When I say something, all of them look at me because my accent is different. My Hebrew is very good, but you can feel that you are not a Jew. One of the problems is to express myself. Because I feel that when I express something to them, it is exactly the same as when poor people from the third world are trying to explain themselves to the rich company in the first world (Falah).

Hillel Cohen, an Israeli professor that taught in the department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (IMES), confirmed the tendency of Palestinian students avoiding discussions in class. He explained:

> It is not very common to have contributions of Palestinian students to the discussions in class – especially in the first year of study. Maybe it's because of the language barrier, or because they do not feel safe enough to talk as members of the minority, so it's rare that a Palestinian tell the Jewish students something they wouldn't know because they are Israelis. It happened, but quite rarely" (Hillel).

Despite the challenges regarding language barriers and discrimination, some highlighted positive aspects of studying in an Israeli university. Tibah, a Palestinian student from East Jerusalem highlighted education in Israeli academia as a way to empowerment and awareness:

> I got to know much about the conflict and I know that not knowing the other – this won't help. In order to live your life correctly – you have to know the other, and how they think. I have developed my knowledge about them through conversation with them. I know how to talk with them, and I know what my rights are. So if someone for example says that speaking about the Palestinian case is not my right, now I know very well that it is my right - I can say everything that I think about. I know better what the case is like (Tibah).

This is in line with Sakhsir (2011) who claims that in Palestinian societies, education is perceived as a tool for survival in the harsh economic and political environments in which the Palestinians live (Sakshir, 2011). As indicated in the statement by Anmar who "went to Islam" (Anmar) to learn about the history and tradition of her people, there seems to be a tendency where religion and education are used as tools of resistance against discrimination and suppression of Palestinian claims and identity.

5.2.4 "Everywhere people are afraid to tell that they are Palestinians, so they call themselves Arabs"

As highlighted by Palestinian students from East Jerusalem, being different, and in many ways opposite to the Israeli Jews, is a central aspect of their identity. A statement of Tibah can serve as an illustration: "For me it is not possible to have close Israeli friends, but maybe Jewish friends. I have always believed that Israel and Palestine are two opposite things that cannot be mixed (Tibah). Korostelina's view of social identity construction may further enlighten this matter. She states that the perceived differences between the in- and the out-group are crucial for the establishment of a robust social identity. The social categorizations of "us" and "them" contribute to the reshaping of a duality between the conflicting parts (Korosteina, 2008). Therefore, when Tibah states that Israel and Palestine are two opposite things that are immiscible, this might be understood as a way to strengthen the Palestinian social identity. Moreover, it might be understood as a social mechanism that increases the barriers between Israeli and Palestinians.

 Nevertheless, Anmar, the Palestinian female student from North Israel, told another story. She described how Palestinians that live within the borders of Israel are undermining their Palestinian belonging. She explains:

> Where I am from, they (the Palestinians) try to be like Jews. They try to show themselves like not conservative people and open-minded – not to have danger in their life (…) Nobody (of the Palestinians in the north) are allowed to talk about politics – politics is something that we are not interested in. It only threatens our lives, and we are not able to live good if we are connected to it (Anmar).

As we have seen, Anmar shared a story about a turning point in her life were she started to study the history of Palestine on her own, as it was not taught at school, nor at home. In the beginning she went to Islam in order to strengthen her knowledge about the Palestinian case. She explained the lesson learned in the religious community as follows:

> After I went to religion I found out that this is not about religion, this is Palestine. I define myself only as a Palestinian. Everyone has their religion for themselves. But my family define themselves as Arabs. Everywhere people are afraid to tell that they are Palestinians, so they call themselves Arabs (Anmar).

Mittelman and Chin stress that agents of resistance "emerge from interactions between structure and agency that lead to the contextual privileging of particular intersections of different modes of identity" (Mittelman & Chin, 2005, p. 25) The statement by Anmar illustrates how religion was utilized as a tool in her search for a Palestinian identity. The fact that she identified herself as Palestinian instead or Arab, may be seen as form of resistance to

the hegemonic Israeli master narrative, and an outcome of the interaction with the Israeli hegemonic structure, described by Mittelman and Chin (2005).

Similar to Serpell's arguments on how absence of a group's culture and history in school creates society failures, Anmars statement may represent a challenge for Israeli Palestinians who want to contribute and participate in the society (Serpell, 1993). Both Anmar and Tibah became more conscious and aware of the Palestinians situation by studying Palestinian history. At the same time this consciousness was followed by a sense of alienation towards the Israelis. As we have seen, Korosteina (2008) argues that separation between "us" and "them" works as a continuation of conflicted relationship, and represent an obstacle for a sustainable solution to the conflict (Korostelina, 2008). Yet, as the Palestinians still live under Israeli occupation, the consistent separation between Israeli and Palestinian identity might be understood as a survival strategy, similar to when Israelis argue that they face an existential threat, as explained earlier. Besides, it may serve as resistance towards Israeli assimilation policy, and a way to strengthen their Palestinian identity.

As we have seen, the motivation for studying history and social science seems to be interlinked with identity, whether the aim is to strengthen the Israeli or Palestinian identity, or to explore alternative aspects of the mainstream identities expressed by the primary education system and the public debate. However, a common denominator for all the Israeli students, whether they defined themselves to the left or to the right politically, was the significance of the Jewish heritage in their self-understanding.

For the Palestinians, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land was emphasised in the question of identity. Many referred to practical obstacles, like the separation wall, called the "Apartheid Wall" of the Palestinians and "The Security Wall" of the Israelis, checkpoints and lack of citizenship as major challenges that formed their identity. Central was the struggle for an independent Palestinian state, and freedom for their people. Some highlighted education as an important component for empowerment of the Palestinian people, and a tool for resistance towards the Israeli hegemonic power. Language and religion was also highlighted as central to their identity. Palestinian students from North Israel described how many Israeli-Palestinians suppresses their Palestinian belonging in order to blend into the majority culture, and avoid problems with the Israeli regime.

6 Part II

As described in previous chapter, the majority of the students, both Palestinians and Israelis expressed dissatisfaction regarding the history teaching in the primary education systems. In this chapter I will examine how the informants experienced the presentation of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives at the university. I will start by examining whether the Palestinian narrative and related topics are present at the lectures in the university. I continue by discussing the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students on campus, and explore the challenges and opportunities this present. Subsequently I will explore and discuss a dialogue group, organized by the university.

6.1 Narration at the university

In this section I will discuss how the informants experienced the presentation of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives at the university. I start by exploring the presentation of history, before I continue by discussing challenges and opportunities for the presence of different narratives at the university. Subsequently I will explore a multi-narrative approach in history teaching, as a potential tool for reconciliation and improvement of Palestinian-Israeli relations.

Many of the informants claimed that the presented historical narratives at the university differed from the presentation in the primary education. In this section I explore the presence of this difference.

> Israeli primary school is awful when it comes to history presentation. From this point of view I can tell you that university does a good job – it is objective, it is cool, it is interesting. It is things that I never heard before. It makes you think a lot, it makes you analyse and understand things. It is cool – I love it (Anat).

> For example if you are in a class, and a discussion take place – you will be able to hear different opinion from the society of the other side. This wouldn't really have happened if you had studied in an Arabic university because you wouldn't have been having different opinions since they all agree about the same things (Karam).

Nevertheless, when I asked about the presentation of the Palestinian version of the history and topics that are related to the conflict, the responses were multiple.

6.1.1 History teaching: establishment of group identities and fulfillments of political goals

One of the history students reflected on the fact that the faculty of history is split into three different departments: one for Jewish history (JH), one for General history (GH) and a third for Islamic and Middle Eastern studies (IMES):

> The university put the Palestinian issues in the Middle East section, and the Jewish in everything else. It is only the two last decades that they have started to question the old narrative in Jewish history – it is a new movement. Of course this is also a orientalist thing I guess, we (the Ashkenazi Jews) are from the west, and they (the Palestinians) are from the east, so we should put them in the Middle Eastern box – they are all the same, so whatever. I don't know, maybe I am just making it up, but that is how it appears for me (Amos).

As previously presented in chapter three, by constructing the orientalist discourse, Europeans succeeded in constructing a specific Western identity by labelling "the East" as a homogenous group with certain properties in contrast to the "democratic and rational" West[7]. In the statement above, Amos argued that in restricting Middle Eastern history to one specific department, some of the mechanisms described in *Orientalism* are present at the university. A professor in JH reflected on the relationship between national identity and Jewish history as a distinctive academic discipline as follows:

> The fact that there is a Jewish history department in a major Israeli university automatically has a kind of strengthening effect of the idea that 'yes Israeli culture have a national component and there are ways of which that is neutered as the idea that this is something that is worth studying' (Dan).

The Israeli historian Uriel Tal was one of few academicians during the 1980s that questioned the newly formed discipline in Israeli academia named Jewish studies. During the 1970s every Israeli universities established a separate department for Jewish history. Tal objected to the idea that the study of Judaism, Zionism and the Israeli history required particular methodologies, different from other disciplines. Instead he argued that these topics should be taught with a universal approach. In his opinion, there was only the subject of history, not a specific discipline named Jewish history. He argued that the methodologies, theories and tools applied should be equal to the study of European, African or Jewish past (Pappe, 2014). Pappe shows that Tal failed in his which for a common approach to history:

> The politicised academic structure, displaying continued indifference to what was going on in the rest of the world, remained impenetrable to any genuine interdisciplinary influence, let alone any comparative studies. Zionism and the Zionists

---

[7] See chapter 3, section 3.1.1

version of the Judaism continued to be taught and researched as unique case studies that lay outside the framework of general historiography (Pappe, 2014, p 91).

Some informants stressed the lack of specific Palestinian issues within department of IMES. A statement by Inas, a Palestinian student of IMES, can serve as an illustration: "We do not have any Palestinian teachers in the Middle Eastern Studies, not a single one (…) We had many courses in the Middle Eastern studies, but I never had one course only about the Palestinian case, or about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" (Inas). This is similar to what another Palestinian history student stated in an informal conversation. She argued that the history presented at the university is not incorrect, but that there are "two faces" of the history, while the university mainly present "the one face".

The majority of the students stated that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was rarely taught at the university. Meir, the PhD student in Political Science (PS) stated: "In university it is more comfortable to avoid the contested issues, and the professors *are* avoiding it. It is more comfortable not to talk about it" (Meir). The same student referred to research done on this phenomenon. He stated:

> A teacher in sociology that teaches about the occupation found out that very few courses are discussing the occupation. It is still a very delicate topic in Jerusalem University. They (professors) do not discuss it that much and especially they do not call the courses in a name that expresses something that is related to the conflict. Maybe they can get problems from the state, the university or maybe from right wing student organizations (Meir).

As shown in the literature review, the so-called "New Historians" of Israel have conducted comprehensive historical research during the last decades. By re-examining the history, they have provided alternative information to the modern history of Israel. This information contrasts the Israeli master narrative. Some of these researchers claim that relevant information regarding the encounter between Palestinians and European Jewish immigrants, have been left out, and in fact lied about, in the official narration of Israel (Pappe, 2014). The new information provided, and the officialising of the conflicted and violent past can widen up space in public discussions, as suggested by Oglesby (2007). This process can promote new understandings of the official narratives of one´s one own group as well as the groups established as the other. This may be significant in reconciliation processes between groups with a conflicted past (Oglesby, 2007).

The professor in Modern JH, Dan, confirmed that the historical encounters between Palestinians and Jews were not emphasised in his lectures. He explained the reason why as

follows: "The Jewish historical discipline is not dependent upon the Palestinian phenomenon; but the Palestinian phenomenon has some semantic dependence on the encounter with Jews/Israel" (Dan). Some of the students argued that such reasoning, exemplified in Dans quote, are a part what constructs the Israeli Zionist narrative, and de-legitimates the Palestinian point of view. Falah, a Palestinian student of comparative literature (CL), shared his experiences of gaining less academic credit for courses related to Arabic identity. He stated:

> The university is trying to support the Israeli point of view. Because when you are going to study comparative literature, the courses that are connected to the history of Jews give you four points. But for example the course of Bishara (Palestinian writer) – two points. Or the course of the philosopher Alzir – two points (Falah).

Tibah, a Palestinian student of Sociology and Anthropology SA, agreed and confirmed the experiences of Falah. She said that although studying Arabic at the university, the issues are connected to the Israeli case: "I know someone that studied Arabic here at the university, and he tells me that all the stories, all the information – they connect it to the Israeli and the Jewish case (Tibah)".

According to quotes above, there are factors that indicate that officialising conflicted history, suggested by Oglesby (2007), is deficient at the university. Dinah, the Israeli student of law, highlighted the limited expression of freedom for professors questioning the Israeli master narrative. She said: "There are some teachers that are trying to bring up some issues in class, and are more political. But most of them have to defend their position after a while" (Dinah). A professor in IMES, Hillel Cohen, is one of these teachers that are trying to present different narratives at the university. He described how teaching both sides of the conflict are considered as being political in Israel as following:

> I try to bring both sides, not to convince to one side. Even to bring both sides for me is a political act because they don't do it in other places, except for the university. And second, I don't think that you have to reach to one conclusion about it, but you have to discuss it, and we have to understand different perspectives – so this is what I try to do (Hillel).

However, Hillel confessed that there are variations in teaching both narratives:

> It depends on the professor, because some professors think that their mission is to strengthen the Jewish identity program. And in Palestinian universities, many see the mission as to be part of the struggle for independence. It should not necessarily be like this, because the universities should be more open for other ways of seeing things (Hillel).

From an orientalist perspective, the statements by Falah Tibah and Professor Hillel express a tendency where education is reduced to a tool in the strengthening of a specific identity, in this case the Jewish (Said, 2003). Hillel further argued that at Palestinian universities, many professors apply the history teaching as a struggle for independence. The quote of Professor Hillel reveals an assumption that history teaching is utilized to stress certain political goals. As we have seen, the role of history teaching is important for the new generations in the establishment of beliefs in the society. If biases are sustained and continued to the next generation, history teaching may uphold conflicted relations, and thus be an obstacle to sustainable conflict resolutions (Dorschner and Sherlock, 2007).

Despite the limited presentation of conflicted political issues on campus, there seems to be an impression among the public that the Israeli academia is too critical to the Zionist narrative. Alon, the PhD student in GH explained it as follows:

> The Israeli public opinion is that the academia is way too far to the left, compare to the public opinion. There are some groups now that are right wing who started as a student group movement. Now they are very big and they are all over Israeli academia and beyond (Alon).

6.1.2 Practical barriers for other narratives

Dinah, an Israeli student, explained how the university attempts to appear democratic and open for everyone, but fails in reality: "The university is trying to be very politically correct. We have Palestinians students, but that's it. They don't let the political selves of the Palestinians show, like to have demonstrations or to have information centres and such" (Dinah). According to Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2014), "few academic bodies in Israel make any conscious or active attempt to explore and develop this encounter (between Israeli and Palestinian students)" (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, 180).

Dinah continued by stressing the lack of objectivity at the university by giving an example from the last Gaza war:

> During the war this summer, the president of the university sent letter to support our troops, to support the army. In Israel this is not considered as being political[8], it is

---

[8] Several of the informants used the term "political" when they referred to critics of the official Israeli policy. In comparison, it seemed like support to the Israeli policy, for example when the president of an university are encouraging their student to send soaps to Israeli soldiers, is not considered as being political.

considered as being Israeli, a patriot. Only if you are against it, then you are political. And we kept getting emails about collecting soaps to send to soldiers – through the university (Dinah).

Inas illustrated how the expression of the Palestinian narrative is received at campus by referring to a photo exhibition that was located at the university:

Those photos were from the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza. It was not acceptable for many of the Israeli students because it was showing the Palestinian side - photos of children for example, or photos of houses that are being ruined and demolished. They (Israeli Jewish students) got really, really angry and said 'this is an Israeli university, Palestinians shouldn't be doing this' and 'it is not acceptable to have this kind'. For example there was one picture of a soldier grabbing a boy. For me I looked at the child, the Palestinian child. But for them, they looked at the soldier. Someone said, 'they are there to make you safe - to protect you. You are not supposed to put these kinds of photos of soldiers' (Inas).

The statement of Inas illustrates how the university to some extent is open for expression of the Palestinian narrative, as they allowed the exhibition to take place. On the other hand, the responses of the audience (Israeli students) illustrate the massive objections of the presented Palestinian narrative. Three of the informants referred to a demonstration, taking place on campus to exemplify how the university administration hinders the expression of the Palestinian struggle. A statement of Dinah serves as an example:

Last year it was a very, very quiet demonstration – Christian Palestinians that were against drafting Palestinians to the army. People where just standing on the side with some big banners. And the administration brought police in to university. That is a very extreme thing to do - they never bring police inside. The police were brutal; the university reacted very brutally (Dinah).

Although the university allowed the Palestinian photo-exhibition to take place, the quotes of Dina and Inas indicate that avoidance of the Palestinian narrative are apparent at campus. When controversial topics related to the conflict are expressed, the reactions seem to be massive. This may explain why conflictual and contested issues are avoided in the history lecturing. Three of the informants who referred to the demonstration against the drafting of Christian Palestinians to IDF, mentioned that several history lecturers stood up for their Palestinian student. A Palestinian student of Political Science stated: "I remember once, there was a problem at the university, and some students were arrested. Some teachers from the Humanity Studies protested for the sake of the Palestinian senior students. We won't see teachers from the social sciences are doing the same" (Karam). The Israeli GH student, Amos, put it as follows: "There was a big drama here a few months ago when the university called

for cops to end a demonstration of Palestinians. And actually it was nice to see that a lot of history lecturers came to support (the Palestinian students)" (Amos).

A clear tendency in Jerusalem is that the Palestinian and Israeli historical narratives are contradicting. I was therefore interested in exploring how the university presented historical events like the 1948 and 1967 wars, the intifadas, the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories etc. As the conflict still goes on, and the lack of sustainable solutions are evident, I was surprised to discover that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was rarely discussed, or taught, in the history departments of the university. The impression is that the university seems to avoid topics that are connected to controversial and conflicted topics. Moreover, the tendency seems to be that discussion, lecturing, and reflection about the Palestinian version of the history are scarce. Thus, by putting obstacles for a proper presentation of the Palestinian history and present, othering of the Palestinians seem noticeable on campus. One explanation might be that the conflict is on-going, and violence is still apparent in the contemporary Israel and Palestine. Another reason might be the political pressure from the public opinion and other stakeholders.

Despite the tendency presented above, there were exceptions. One of the professor informants of this study stated that his aim was to present different, and often contradictory narratives of Israel and Palestine in his lectures: "everything in Israeli and Palestinian history is controversial. Of course I talk about controversial issues" (Hillel). The stories of the history professors that stood up for the Palestinian demonstrators are other exceptions. In addition, the majority of the informants claimed that the university gave them the opportunity to explore diverse aspects of Israeli identity, not part of the mainstream narrative. Thus, despite the tendency of avoiding conflicted topics, the university seems to present an alternative to the mainstream narrative embodied in the primary education system.

6.1.3 Multi Narrative Perspectives in the history teaching: "the first step of not hating each other?"

This section focuses on a multi-narrative approach in history teaching, and explores whether this approach is implemented in the Israeli and Palestinian education systems. In addition I will discuss the extent to which a multi-narrative approach can be utilized as a tool for reconciliation and improvement of the Israeli-Palestinian relations.

As presented in the literature review, one of the informants, Sami Adwan, is initiator of a schoolbook-project attempting to present both the Palestinian and Israeli historical narratives,

in one single textbook. The principles of the project are in line with the theory of history teaching as reconciliation, described by Cole (2007). As previously explained, Cole claims that history teaching has the potential of developing a new historical narrative about self and other. In addition, by revising history textbooks, inclusive and multiple narratives can be given more space to express diverse communities in a nation. A prerequisite is to include groups of people previously excluded from the master narrative. By doing this, Cole argues that humanization of groups of people can be achieved. However, Cole stresses the importance of the methodology applied. History teaching must be introduced as an academic discipline where critical thinking and reflection about the past and present, is promoted. The student must develop abilities to question simplistic models and discuss the interpretation of the past. This way, history teaching may contribute to long-term reconciliation between groups in conflict (Cole, 2007).

The objective with the two-narrative schoolbook-project of Sami was not to change the national narratives, but to gain more knowledge of the narrative of the other. Thus, the project differs from the scenarios described by Cole. According to her, the development of new national narratives is crucial for the reconciliation process (Cole, 2007). However, one may argue that in time of conflict, it is very challenging to change the master narrative of a nation. Learning the narrative of the other may be a first step to start thinking about sustainable solutions to a conflict. In Sami´s two-narrative schoolbook-project, the book was structured with an empty space in the middle of the two narratives, in order for the students to write their opinions on certain issues. The idea was that the approach could empower both the teachers and the students, and help them to become critical thinkers. As Sami stated: "Because we want the pupils to ask questions, to think when they learn history" (Sami).

To what extent can history teaching contribute to reconciliation while groups still are in conflict? Sami stressed that the schoolbook-project initially was supposed to be a post-conflict project, and one of the premises was Israel's effort in achieving sustainable agreements. Hence, the project faced many challenges. First of all, in time of conflict, it is vastly challenging to present the other side in the school system. He explained: "You fear that you will weaken your position, and that you can create confusion among yourselves. That is not easy - it creates emotions, and it creates challenges." (Sami). Second, the ministries of education are controlling the learning materials that are applied in the school systems - and these are in line with the official narratives. Accordingly, the teachers are not allowed to teach other topics than those approved by the ministries. The two-narrative textbook is currently

prohibited of the ministries of education. Nevertheless, it is well known that many teachers apply the principle from the book in their teaching: they photocopy it, and they use the book as supplement to their teaching. Thus, the two-narrative book project has caused heated debates concerning who is right and who is wrong.

One teacher that has applied the principle of the book in his teaching is one of the informants, Alon. He argued that as a teacher, he found the approach highly radical, as it is very rare in Israeli school system. However, as a researcher it wasn't radical at all, as many Israeli researchers approach other narratives than the mainstream Israeli. When asked about the reaction of the students in using the textbook, he replied:

> For most of the students it was a bit shocking in the beginning. They were in 11th grade. After the first two, three lessons it started a really intriguing conversation. Most of them found it very useful, not all of them liked it. But my personal thoughts is that young people want to give you the opportunity to have a broad look at the narratives, and then they can judge for themselves their narrative, and you shouldn't be so careful and afraid to concern them with the narrative of the other (Alon).

It must be stressed that Alon was teaching in an Israeli elite school. He argued that the reaction probably would be harder if applied in a regular school in Jerusalem. According to him the problem with the Israeli narrative in the two-narrative book was that the stories were not in line with the mainstream Israeli narrative. He explained:

> In the Palestinian side it was the Palestinian narrative, but on the Israeli side it was not exactly the Israeli narrative. It was more of a left wing version. For example you can find the word 'Naqba' there, of course in the Palestinian narrative, but in the Israeli as well. If you look for 'Naqba' in the regular mainstream Israeli textbooks you won't find it. For me as a teacher I have never used it as a single textbook. It is too complicated, but as to use it here and there – I find it very useful (Alon).

The statements of Alon can be seen in relation to the discourse theory by Foucault, discussed in the theory chapter. Foucault claims that a discourse contains certain rules regarding in what knowledge is considered legitimate and valid in a certain context. "Indeed, it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Michel Foucault, 2005, p. 90). According to Alons' reflections, the story of Naqba seem to be an aspect of the Israeli and Palestinian past that is perceived as illegitimate within the Israeli master discourse.

As described earlier, one of the professor informants, Hillel Cohen, applies the principles of multi-narrative approach in his teaching of Palestinian and Israeli history at the university. In one of his courses, the Israeli Palestinian conflict is an essential part of the curriculum. Hillel argued that learning the narrative of the other is crucial in achieving a peaceful solution for

the conflict. He explained: "I don't think that we are dealing with solving the problem now, because we are not there yet. But even in order to start to think about solutions, it is necessary to make the people understand and see each other. It can be through the historical narratives" (Hillel). According to Hillel, history teaching may be utilized as a tool for change. He elaborated: "I think the basic question is to whom this country belongs. So if you study only your history, you believe it is yours, either you are Israeli or Palestinian. If you study both histories, you know that theoretically it can belong to both" (Hillel). When asked for his opinion regarding how both narratives can successfully be taught, he replied:

> This is a question of the 'hen and the egg'. Because when there is conflict, everybody sticks to his narrative. In order to end the conflict we have to listen to the other. But if there is conflict you do not want to listen to the other, and this is what we should try to break. But it is against the common sense of both people, so that is why teaching both narratives are not a mass movement (Hillel).

Some of the Israeli students mentioned violent resistance from Palestinians as a major challenge for a peaceful solution of the conflict. The statement shared by Berel, the Israeli PhD student of JH, may serve as an example: "A few years ago the whole university was locked down because some Palestinians was throwing rocks and burning cars on the parking place" (Berel). To the reason why they behaved like this, he replied as following: "The bigger question is not so much why they are throwing rocks, but what do we do to prevent it or to handle it better – to manage the conflict" (Berel)?

According to Said, one of the objectives of the Israeli regime is to prevent resistance in order to maintain the hegemonic power relations (Said & Barsamian, 2003). This was reflected in an informal conversation with a Palestinian student regarding her struggles of obtaining Israeli citizenship. She explained that she had to swear, with her hand on the Israeli flag, that she never would oppose the Jewish state, or support any groups rejecting the state. The statement by Berel indicates some of the same approach towards resistance. He argued that the response to violent resistance is to "prevent it or to handle it better" (Berel). Attention towards understanding the violence was less noticeable.

These observations are not exactly in line with the statement by Foucault when he states that power relations are dependent on resistance in order to constantly create new discourses (Michel Foucault, 2005). As presented in the theory chapter, the aspects of hegemonic and oppressive powers are not emphasized in Foucault´s theorizing of power and knowledge. By contrast, Gramsci addresses the importance of asymmetry in power relations when discussing hegemony. According to him, hegemony is a "dynamic lived process in which social

identities, relations, organizations, and structures based on asymmetrical distributions of power and influence are constituted by the dominant classes" (Mittelman & Chin, 2005, p. 18). In light of this perspective, much indicates that the asymmetry in power relations is crucial in order to understand the barriers between Israelis and Palestinians. As illustrated in the story about the struggle of achieving Israeli citizenship, shared by the Palestinians student, Israel has the power in defining the rules of the master discourse. This discourse seems to favour a particular group of citizens, the Israeli Jews. Furthermore, this power position runs the risk of neglecting the Palestinian claims and identity.

Hillel argued that learning the Palestinian narrative is essential regarding the understanding of the behaviour of the other. He explained:

> You don't have to adjust it, you don't have to take it, you don't have to adopt it - but you should really understand why the Palestinians believe that this is their land, why they support armed resistance, why they support brutal attacks. You don't have to accept it, or to join the Palestinian struggle, but you have to understand why they do it: They have their reasons for resisting Zionism, so let's understand (Hillel).

This is similar to what an Israeli student expressed when he said: "If we could deal with the pain of the other, maybe it would be the first step of not hating each other (Amos). Much indicates that the same also is valid the other way: In order to improve the relations between the two groups, the Palestinians need to encounter the perspective of the Israeli Jews.

6.2 Facing the "Other": Interaction and Coexistence in an Academic Setting

Social psychologists argue that interaction between conflicting parts have the potential to reduce bias, prejudices and animosity at individual levels, which again can facilitate further change at social, and even international policy level (Kelman, 1986 in Betancourt, 1990). In this part of the chapter, I will highlight how the students experienced coexistence and interaction with people from the other group on campus. I will start by emphasizing the experiences of being a minority at the university. Thus, the main focus will be on the Palestinian students, as a minority. The Palestinian students were asked to what extent they could discuss their situation and relate to people from the other group. Finally I will discuss a dialogue approach, organized by the university. The focus will be on dialogue and interaction in an academic setting, but general dialogue approaches between Israeli Jews and Palestinians will also be addressed.

This is very different! It is like even if we are not friends, we see each other. Jerusalem is supposed to be a mixed city. But when you think about it, it is a separated mixed city. So there are almost no Arabs in the city centre. They have their own busses. Our busses don't want to go to their neighbourhood because the drivers are too scared of driving there. It is so separated. They don't speak my language; I don't speak their language. So you go to the university, and here you have Arabs, people that are wearing hijab, and you hear Arabic! (Esther).

As this quote illustrates, the first year at the university is the first time to deal with people from the other group in a natural setting for a majority of the students. Due to lack of shared space were Palestinian and Israeli youth interacts, the university could represent a difference. However, while walking around on campus, the first impression was that segregation is still maintained between the two groups. It was rather rare to observe Palestinian and Israeli students communicating in cafeterias or other places at the university. Yet, on campus the students are, to some extent, forced to deal with each other. This makes the campus different from the Jerusalem society,

6.2.1 "I am sick of talking to Jews"

Many of the Palestinian highlighted uncomfortable experiences being the minority at the university. Inas recalled her first experience at the university as follows:

During the first days at the university, it wasn't really obvious for them that I am Palestinian, and we were only two Palestinians in class. 'Where do you come from'? I said Jerusalem. 'No, but where do you actually come from? Russia?' 'No, I come here from Jerusalem'. 'So, you are a Palestinian?'. You could see the reaction on their faces (Inas).

Karem had a similar experience:

So we talked and talked. And then a friend of mine came over and we start to talk in Arabic – so he just looked at me and he turned his face. And the other time I was talking to two students. We were discussing things and it was really nice. Then I had to answer my phone or something, so the next class I smiled, they just turned their face. I just decided from that day I wouldn't be having any relations or connections (Karam).

Reflections by an Israeli student, Esther, may supplement the experiences above from another perspective:

It is insane how threatening it is for many of us. I see them (Palestinians) on campus. I do not think I am racist, I do not think I am extremist of any kind, but when I see them, my first reaction is that I steps back, because we have learned that they are the threat. It is also hard for them too to be in contact with us. Last year I had to do an introduction course, and I remember there was an Arab girl speaking to me, and there was another girl behind her that told her to stop speaking to me. She was Arab as well. I heard the word 'Jews', which is one of the fifteen words I know in Arabic, came out

> like seven times in two sentences. And it was so obvious that she was telling her like 'what the fuck'. So it is like we can speak together, but at the same time we cannot speak (Esther).

As discussed in chapter three, Heradstveit suggests that stimuli may have direct implications for the way we act. In retrospect, the individuals will attribute meaning to the actions: They start to reflect on why they behaved like they did after the performed action. He puts it as follows: "Beliefs do not control behaviour, and as a consequence, behaviour cannot be predicted on the basis of beliefs (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 27). As seen previously, Esther grew up with Arab friends in France and she argued that the Arabs are "a bunch of different people" and that "they are similar to us" (Esther). As she stated in the quote above, she does not see herself as a racist. Her behaviour may therefore be understood according to the observations of Heradstveit: She "steps back" (Esther) when she sees the Palestinian students, not as a result of her beliefs, but because of stimuli (she has learned that they are the threat).

Anmar expressed her frustration regarding the behaviour of many Israeli students. She explained that she, during the first period at the university, attempted several times to converse with her Israeli classmates and explain the situation of the Palestinian people. She was thinking that maybe they did not know; maybe she had to tell them about their situation in order to make them change. This was her conclusion:

> They came with the idea that they wanted to talk to Arabs. But when we were talking, they even felt more far in the same way as I felt more far from them. They saw themselves that they had right, and that they had nothing to talk to the Arabs about, so 'Hallas' (end of discussion). After the dialogues, I felt that I couldn't go on like this. I am sick of talking to Jews. I don't want to talk to them. They are not changing. This is their way of living. They will not change. I need to do something different" (Anamar).

As shown in chapter three, consistency theory suggests that new relevant information that contradicts the established beliefs in the knowledge system of an individual might cause an imbalance. This imbalance in the knowledge system might lead to adjustment and change of beliefs (Imsen, 2014). Yet, it is only after passing a certain amount of relevant information that this change in the knowledge system occurs (Heradstveit, 1979). The quotes above indicate that the new knowledge obtained in the dialogues with members of the other group, was lacking this transformative dimension.

Furthermore, the experiences of the students quoted above are neither in line with the research on social psychological processes between groups in conflict, as referred to in the introduction of this section and in chapter three. In the case referred to above, dialogue and interaction with people from the other group worked merely as a confirmation, and even reinforcement,

of the prejudices they carried. According to Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian, relations between Jews and Palestinians in Israel continue to deteriorate against the backdrop of violent conflict, distrust, and prejudice. The university encounter remains momentary and meaningless (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 181). Hence it is reasonable to argue that the Israeli academia does not fully utilize the potential they have to explore sustainable encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students.

6.2.2   Friendship with the "Other"

Still, in the middle of the conversation where Anmar explained how provoked she was regarding the behaviour of "the Jews"; a female student entered the room. The face of Anmar lit up while she gave the girl a big hug and told her how much she had been missing her. The happiness over her presence was apparent. This girl was an Israeli Jew, and she was one of Anmar´s closest friends. When I confronted Anmar with what she said earlier about "The Jews", she explained that this girl is different. "I really love her. She is with us, and she understands our situation" (Anmar).

The same was observed when the Palestinian student Falah explained his close friendship with "Anat", an Israeli Jew:

> And you have met my Jewish Israeli friend Anat. I know that it is very difficult for her, and it is difficult for me, to stay friends in this place. We are good friends, but there is a lot of Arabs asking, 'Why are you going with her'? My answer is very clear: Not all of the Jews is the same thing, and our problem is not because of his or her religion, our problem is with the Zionism as a movement, with the occupation, the leaders of the occupation - and with everyone that support the occupation (Falah).

Anmar´s love for the Israeli student, and Falah´s friendship with Anat were both connected to the feeling of being understood. As we have seen, conflict resolution emerges from an attempt of understanding the conflict from the perspective of the other group (White, 1986b in Betancourt, 1990). The sequence with Anmar and her Israeli-Jewish friend indicates that there are discrepancies between how some of the students talks about the other as a group, and what they experience through individual encounters. Thus, a central element of sustainable relationships between people from the two groups seems to be the degree of empathy – The ability to understand or to identify with the situation or feelings of the other.

Although both the Palestinian and Israeli students said that it was difficult to become friends with individuals from the other group, the majority said that they had at least one friend from the other group. However, there were exceptions. A Palestinian student from Jerusalem, Tibah, clearly attributed internal explanations when she stated the impossibility of having

Israeli friends as a member of the Palestinian people: "If I had an Israeli friend, I know that in the end, if he were obliged to kill me, or someone else from my people - he would do it. I know that very well, so I know that this could not be called friendship" (Tibah). As described in chapter three, internal attributions contribute to stereotyping members of the other group. This is because behaviour and actions of members of the out-group are explained as static, and inherited in their human nature. This way of attributing meaning to explanations inflames the conflictual relations between individuals, and present obstacles for a sustainable conflict solution (Betalncourt, 1990). Furthermore, the explanation of Tibah may be understood in light of Korostelina when she argues that emotions such as hate, enmity and suspiciousness towards the other strengthen the feeling of belonging to the in-group (Palestinians). Thus, one may assume that internal attributions to explanations of behaviour and actions of Israelis may strengthen the Palestinian social identity.

6.2.3   "Well, maybe we do miss opportunities too?"

A Palestinian student from Haifa, Falah, explained the complexity of being classmate with someone that is part of what he perceived as oppression of his people. He said: "I know that maybe I will meet my Israeli classmates in Qalandia checkpoint. I have experienced that, and my classmate said to me 'hey, you can pass'. It is difficult to think about that. Many of them are still soldiers" (Falah). Others reflected about the complexity of having Israeli friends, and at the same time go through a highly conflictual and violent situation as witnessed the summer of 2014. A Palestinian student, Inas, stated:

> You don't know what to really feel, you have these puzzled emotions, and you do not know what to do. On the one hand you want to be only with Palestinians, because I am a Palestinian. And from the other side, you feel that you do have Israeli friends that are willing to support. It does not matter who or what, they are willing to support. They do not see themselves as the dominant people. They are willing to coexist, to see the other (Inas).

The Israeli student, Esther, highlighted the benefits of her friendship with a Palestinian classmate:

> It is refreshing in a way. I would never become friend with 'Muna' if it hadn't been for the course. We became good friends. Good enough that we can say things that are against our own camps. She can say that she is against Hamas[9], and I can say that I don't agree with what Netanyahu[10] is doing. However, it is hard to express criticism against Israel to her, because she questions the very reason why we have to have a country here. And it is really easy to say things like 'we are the good side. And you

---

[9] Palestinian political party with the position of power in Gaza
[10] The Israeli prime minister

guys fuck up your own country, and you never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity', and all these things Israelis say about Palestinians. But then I come home and think like 'well, maybe *we* do miss opportunities too'. But you do not allow yourself to say it to her (Esther).

According to consistency theory, discussed in the theory chapter, the "puzzled emotions" (Inas) regarding her Israeli friends, and Ester´s self-reflection in the aftermath of the conversations with her Palestinian classmate, might be an expression of an imbalance in their knowledge systems (Imsen, 2014). Heradstveit argues: "The controversial issue is how much inconsistency we tolerate before making adjustments" (Heradstveit, 1979, p. 29). The quotes above indicate that discussions of different views between friends from conflicting groups can initiate an imbalance that may lead to adjustments of an individual´s belief, although it might be difficult to explicitly express this adjustment to the other part.

Although the students quoted above stressed the importance of addressing politics, many mentioned that it was easier to stay friends with people from the other group when they avoided political discussions. A statement of Karam, the girl who experienced that her Israeli classmates "turned their faces" (Karam), may serve as an example:

> But it is important to know that, I studied in the political science department, people are nicer in the Humanities. When you go to the politics, people are becoming less nice. Maybe it is because what gets you to study the topic. Maybe the people that go to the politics have a specific way of thinking, or a specific way of thinking towards the Palestinians. I don't know, maybe the students of Humanities are more moderate – they just leave the politics away (Karam).

6.2.4 Academic dialogue: An example from the university

Five of the informants, three Israelis and two Palestinians, were enrolled in the course *Human Rights in Israeli Society* (HRIS). This is an academic program for student from diverse academic disciplines and with different socioeconomic backgrounds. The course focuses on Israeli-Palestinian relations, and Human Rights, and combines theoretical leaning with practice in various Human Rights organizations. In the classes, political issues that are not only highly controversial in Israel, but as well on campus, are discussed. A central aim of the course is dialogue between Israeli Jews and Palestinian students, and Israeli Jews with diverse backgrounds. In the final phase of this chapter I will discuss how the students experienced the course, and their reflections regarding the requirements for successful dialogues between Israeli Jews and Palestinians.

All of the informants that participated in the course emphasized the political aspect as something unique. Dinah put it like this:

> She (the professor) says that everything is political, and 'you are students, why aren't you being political'? When I studied literature we were talking about texts that is very political, but they kept trying to present them neutral and clean from everything from outside the university (Dinah).

The Israeli participants said that many of the discussed issues, were unfamiliar topics to them. Anat explained: "Many things came up, like 48 and 67 (wars) - how we feel towards each other. Or about things that happen all the time, like demolishing houses, and how it affects the societies there" (Anat). Some of the informants stressed the political position of the professor as something rare: According to them the professor did not try to appear neutral regarding political issues. The fact that she applied words as "Occupation", "Apartheid State" "Naqba" and "Illegal Settlements" underpins the uniqueness of the course.

In addition to the political tone of the course, all of the participants mentioned the dialogue between people with diverse background as the aspect that differed the most from the rest of the university. Anat stated: "I think it is the only course that I have been in to hear Palestinian speak in class" (Anat). Dinah added:

> I think everyone will tell you that they have never talked as much as they did in this course. The professor brings up all these intense, hot issues. So it will explode in class, and people will have to talk. It is very intense sometimes because it really touches people's soft spots (Dinah).

Meir elaborated: "There we talk to Palestinians. In the daily life in the university, we do not. Normally we sit in different places in the cafeteria, in class, so this was a good effect of the course" (Meir). Inas, a Palestinian student, confirmed the feeling of thrust regarding freedom of expression: "Here we can express ourselves, and this is not something you can argue or talk about in any other course here because it might cause you problems that you really do not need" (Inas). At the same time, many stressed difficulties regarding this kind of encounter between Israeli and Palestinian students. A statement of Dinah can serve as an example:

> We brought up some issues that were not so comfortable. Now she is a very good friend of mine, but one of the Palestinian girls was very shocked to hear that I was in the army. And I think we both went this process of understanding the complexity of the whole situation. I needed to explain my selves – 'it is very hard to avoid the army. Do I need to justify my self'? It was a very deep discourse. We brought up all the 'not say' subjects, all the subjects that I am not comfortable talking about in front of them (Dinah).

Inas continued:

> It is not always easy to hear the opposite of what you have heard all your life. But it is also interesting because you see what other people think. It might be the same thing, but you look at it from this point of view, it is the same thing and I am looking it at

from my point of view – with my background, with my… everything! So that is why it is challengeable because, first of all, you have to be matured in order to accept what other people are saying, and also to have a good conversation. Not to get angry. It is really easy to get angry and end everything (Inas).

Despite the positive experiences of being able to speak freely and being respected, one of the Palestinian women revealed ambiguous thoughts regarding the course. Anmar stated:

But I was still feeling that as much as I know about myself, I still know nothing. They know much. I am 22 years old, and many of them are at least 25 - they are all at least three years older than me. So they are more educated, more experienced in life. And I always felt that I am this little girl (Anmar).

Many of the Palestinian informants mentioned several mechanisms favouring the Israelis more than the Palestinians in dialogue groups, and in the academia in general. Anmar highlighted the aspect of the different educational traditions. Because the Palestinian students come from a different school system, more monolithic in its internal structure, they will struggle more in the Israeli academia (Bar-On, 2008 in Adwan, Bar-On, & Naveh, 2012). "They understand things more quickly than you, because they are from this system. For us it is like s a different country" (Anmar). In addition, due to the mandatory army service for Israeli youth, they are older than the Palestinians when they are enrolled in higher education (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014). The scepticism among Palestinians towards Israeli-Palestinian dialogue groups was apparent in the HRIS course. Although the administrators of the course strived to acquire equal distribution of Palestinian and Israeli students, it was only three Palestinian out of fourteen students in total. One of the teacher assistants of the course explained it as follows:

They (Palestinians) are tired of dialogue because they do not experience that it help. They do not experience that it change reality both in their daily life, but also in the bigger picture. We must end the occupation, the inequality. We are just talking, talking, talking (Meir).

As discussed in chapter four, many scholars have documented how dialogue has different effects on advantaged and disadvantaged groups. When there are discrepancies in power relations between the groups involved, as it usually is in conflict areas, encounters with the other has notably less effect on the attitudes of the disadvantaged group. It is also documented that the disadvantaged and advantaged groups have different expectations to dialogue. The advantaged group usually prefers to talk about commonalities, while the disadvantaged group wants to focus on the discrepancies in power relations (Golan & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2014, p. 182).

This is in line with the findings of this study. All of the Palestinian informants stressed the importance of discussing political issues in order to achieve a successful dialogue. They wanted to highlight the suffering of their people caused by the occupation. Topics as checkpoints, violence from the Israeli police, the Separation Wall and other physical and psychological barriers were stressed as significant in their daily life. Some argued that many dialogue approaches between Israelis and Palestinians excessively emphasise the aspect of becoming friends, and that similarities between the two groups are emphasised. Several of the informants argued that there is a risk that these approaches might hide the power imbalance and structural inequalities in the society. Some of the Palestinians expressed an anxiety that the dialogue groups could work as a normalization of the Palestinian suffering. If dialogue groups are structured this way, the term reconciliation might be understood as synonymous with harmony, forgiveness and friendship. As we have seen, this way of understanding reconciliation runs the risk of neglecting the aspect of justice and truth as an outcome of reconciliation processes (Cole, 2007).

Falah, one of the Palestinian students that did not participate in the HRIS course, argued as follows when I asked him about his opinion regarding dialogue groups:

> The claim is false, because it has ideological views. And they are just trying to discuss what they think themselves should be discussed, not what we really should discussed. I think these discussions support the Israeli view because it is the strong that can tell you what are facts, and what is false (Falah).

As presented in the theory chapter, Foucault (2005) states that power is exercised with a series of specific aims and objectives. The one in power defines the rules of the master discourse, and thus delineates the knowledge and statements counted as valid and legitimate. Foucault rejects the idea that power is embodied in a particular institution or entails a force that some people possess. Instead, power must be understood as "the name that one attributes to a complex, strategical situation in a particular society (Foucault, 1981, in Kiersey & Stokes, 2013, p. 139)". In light of the conflict between Israel and Palestine there is a power asymmetry, seemingly ignored in the analysis of power and knowledge by Foucault. This implies that for example the dialogue groups arranged by the Israeli state might are influenced by the hegemonic power in Israel. Anmar said:

> And with the course, as much as we talked, I think people stayed in the same position as they were. It is something, maybe, between you and yourselves. The Arab Jew girl that we met, I think this was something between herself, not because of something that one academic course made her do. She has been in a long process (Anmar).

She continued: "Now I feel that I have to work in my society. Not to be in any coexistence or dialogue group or something like that. I have to teach the people of my society their history, their own…Everything!" (Anmar). Despite these ambiguous thoughts about the effects of the course, much indicates that the HRIS course is different than the Partnership courses presented in chapter four, and many other Israeli-Palestinian dialogue attempts. In this course the political discussion regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was central and structural inequalities were addressed and discussed. The majority of the participants claimed that positive change happen as a result of the course. A statement of Inas can serve as an example:

> I changed a lot after this course. On the personal level I changed a lot. I learned how to understand different point of views, even if I don't agree with everything. It was 20 students, if we were 20 now in this room I would not accept the 20 point of view. I would maybe accept some, not agree so much with some. But it is about learning to listen to the other. Maybe it would just give you time to think, rethink about the things you have been going through (Inas).

Dinah added: "It has brought me closer, and I started to understand how difficult it is to be a Palestinian student in this university, and how it is to be Palestinian in this city also" (Dinah). This is in line with social psychologists arguing that adjustment and change of belief may happen when members of the conflicting groups interact (Kelman, 1986, 1987 in Betancourt, 1990). However, a premise for this positive change in the knowledge systems seem to be that the participants of the dialogue group experience attempts from the other group to understand their perspectives. Again, the aspect of empathy must be understood as crucial for sustainable encounters between Israelis and Palestinians (White, 1986b in Betancourt, 1990).

The structure of the dialogue groups seems to be another significant element in perceived positive outcomes: The participant must experience that their position and identity are recognized and respected. Furthermore, the participant must be able to speak freely and truthfully. Thus, a culture dominated by exposure of different narratives should be promoted. This does not necessarily involve an acceptance of the different narratives, or that the goal is harmony and friendship. "But it is about learning to listen to the other", as Inas stated. As many Palestinians claimed, they want to act, not simply talk. Thus, the HRIS course seems to be a sustainable approach as it involved practice in Human Right organisations. This way, the lesson learned during the dialogue group can be implemented in actions on the ground.

Moreover, the experiences from HRIS indicate that the presence of a conscious organizer of the group is significant: Somebody needs to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas. The non-theoretical aspect of the course was also

highlighted as essential for perceived positive effects. This involved that the participants shared meals and met each other outside campus. Consciousness of ensuring a safe environment for the unprivileged group is central. Hence, the force of the hegemonic power might be reduced. If these criteria are ensured, dialogue groups may work as a tool for management of differences. Further it may provide honest insight in the social world of the participants, and thus lead to long-term reconciliation, as suggested by Cole (2007).

7 Conclusion

This study has focused on a particular group of students and professors enrolled in a specific Israeli university in Jerusalem. In the study I have tried to show how past and present in relation to the in- and out-group are presented in the Israeli education system. Moreover, I have explored the social dynamics between students from the two groups of people.

The study suggests that exposure of both the Israeli and Palestinian narratives in the education systems may reduce psychological barriers between Israeli and Palestinian students. However, there are many challenges related to history teaching with a multi-narrative approach. Findings of this study indicate that the narratives presented in Israeli and Palestinian primary education contribute to a perception of the in-group as victims and "the good side", and thus a view of the other as "the bad side". A tendency seems to be that the Israeli primary education emphasizes certain elements in the story of Israel, and excludes other topics from the history teaching, e.g. the time of the Jewish diaspora, and information about the Palestinian population. By doing so, the Western-Jewish connection to Israel is emphasized, while Jews with origin in Arab and African countries, as well as the Palestinians, seem to be left out of the Israeli master narrative. My assumption is that this is done in order to strengthen the Jewish-Israeli social identity. However, by doing this other identities may be supressed and omitted from the Israeli society. In my opinion, there are reasons to believe that this biased presentation runs the risk of inflaming hostile relations between Israelis and Palestinians. Thus, Jews of Arab and African origin, and Palestinians might experience that they are second-class citizens, and that their identity is not recognized as genuine Israeli.

According to the findings, the university presents multiple narratives of past and present in relation to the in- and out-group, compared to what the students were told in the primary education systems. There are factors indicating that the lectures about Israeli and Palestinian past and present are to a certain degree unbiased, offering different narratives. Findings indicate that some Palestinian students use education as a tool to resist the hegemonic Israeli discourse, and thus preserve their Palestinian social identity. The same is to some extent valid for the Israeli students of Arabic origin. This study suggests that history lecturing at the university gives the students opportunity to explore aspects of their background excluded from the Israeli and Palestinian master narratives.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study also show that the university avoids lecturing about conflictual and contested issues connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several factors

indicate that lecturing about the Palestinian narrative is rare at the university. Findings further designate that the university does not privilege the Palestinian narrative, in example providing less academic credits to courses connected to the Palestinian social identity, and by obstructing Palestinian students to demonstrate against Israeli policy.

The study demonstrates how some students become friends with members of the other group, due to the interaction on campus. Some Palestinian students claimed that the encounters with Israeli students had an empowering dimension, as they got more familiar with the narratives of the other side. According to them, this knowledge strengthened their ability to resist the hegemonic Israeli discourse. Furthermore, the study shows that coexistence with members of the other group is problematic, where racism and prejudices are major challenges. My research indicates that previous prejudices are sometimes confirmed, and even reinforced due to the encounters. Thus, this study claims that the encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students on campus both reduce and reinforce the psychological barriers between them.

As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involves one occupied part, the Palestinians, and the occupier, Israel, there are many challenges for sustainable dialogues. A premise for a successful Israeli-Palestinian dialogue seems to be that asymmetric power relations, and social and physical barriers are addressed and discussed. Another premise for perceived positive outcomes of dialogue necessarily includes the ability of the dialogue participants to understand and identify with the situation of the other. The example from the dialogue group HRIS ascertains the potential of the university in facilitating successful encounters between Israeli and Palestinian students. Observation of HRIS shows that positive change of behaviour and beliefs about self and other occurs. Yet, the HRIS course represents the exception rather than the rule on campus. Thus, the university has undoubtedly the potential to do more in facilitating sustainable encounters between the Palestinian and Israeli students. In my opinion, this may reduce psychological barriers and improve relations between Palestinian and Israeli individuals. Further it may facilitate positive change at society level since the students can possibly be seen as indicators of the future situation in Israel and Palestine.

7.1 Avenues for further research

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to the overall Israeli academia. Due to the limitations in the data material and the scope of the study, many questions regarding the social dynamics between Israeli and Palestinian university students, and narration of past and present in Israeli school system are left

unanswered. Hopefully other researchers can find this contribution helpful for future attempts of addressing narratives of past and present, and/or social mechanisms between Israeli and Palestinian students. Comparative studies of different universities may perhaps indicate site-specific trends in the Israeli academia. Moreover, larger samples including document analysis of curricula and observations of lectures will add useful information of past and present narratives at Israeli universities. Quantitative studies could be helpful to explore broader trends among Israeli and Palestinian students. A final suggestion might be to compare the perceived perceptions of "the other" among university students and people without higher education. This may possibly provide valuable insight into the effect of higher education in terms of psychological barriers between Israelis and Palestinians.

8 Literature

Adwan, Sami, Bar-On, Dan, & Naveh, Eyal. (2012). *Side by side : parallel histories of Israel-Palestine*. New York: The New Press PRIME.

Al-Haj, Majid. (1995). *Education, empowerment, and control: the case of the Arabs in Israel*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Bar-Tal, Daniel. (2013). *Intractable Conflicts*. New York: Cambrigde University Press.

Bard, Mitchell G. (1998). The Variety of Coexistence Efforts in Israel: Lesson for the United States. In E. Weiner (Ed.), *The Handbook of interethnic coexistence* (pp. 653 s.). New York: Continuum.

Baumann, Gerd. (1999). *The multicultural riddle: rethinking national, ethnic, and religious identities*. New York: Routledge.

Bekerman, Zvi. (2009). Education programs for improving relations between Jews and Palestinians in Israel. In J. A. Banks (Ed.), *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education* (pp.

210-222). New York: Routledge.

Betalncourt, Hector. (1990). An Attributional Approach to Intergroup and International Conflict. In S. Graham & V. S. Folkes (Eds.), *Attribution Theory: Applications to Achievement, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Conflict*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Boyle, Frencis Anthony. (2011). *The Palestinian Right of Return Under International Law*. Atlanta, USA: Clarity Press.

Breidlid, Anders. (2010). Sudanese Images of the Other: Education and Conflict in Sudan.

Breidlid, Anders. (2013). *Education, indigenous knowledges, and development in the global south: contesting knowledges for a sustainable future*. New York: Routledge.

Bryman, Alan. (2008). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Butenschøn, Nils A. (2008). *Midtøsten: imperiefall, statsutvikling, kriger*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Caplan, Neil. (2010). *The Israeli-Palestine Conflict Contested Histories*

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. (2012). *Introduction to Zionism and Israel*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Cole, Elizabeth A. (2007). *Teaching the violent past : history education and reconciliation*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land (Ed.). (2013). *"Victims of Our Own Narratives?"*

Coursen-Neff, Zama. (2001). Discrimination Against Palestinian

Arab Children in Israel's Schools. *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics, 36*(4). Retrieved from Human Rights Watch website: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/JILPfinal.pdf

Dellapergola, Sergio. (1999). Jerusalem's Population, 1995–2020: Demography, Multiculturalism and Urban Policies

. *European Journal of Population, 165–199, 2001.*

Dixit, Meha. (2012). Field research in conflict zones: Experience from India and Sierra Leone. *International Studies, 49*(1-2), 133-150. doi: 10.1177/0020881713504678

Dorschner, Jon, & Sherlock, Thomas. (2007). The Role of History Textbooks in Shaping Collective Identities in India and Pakistan. In E. A. Cole (Ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*. United States of America: Rowmna & Littlefield.

Drewry, Ilona. (2007). Important Lessons: Integrated Education in the State of Israel

. Retrieved from The Electronic Intifada website: http://electronicintifada.net/content/important-lessons-integrated-education-state-israel/6698

Essaid, Aida. (2014). *Zionism and Land Tenure in Mandate Palestine*. New York: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. (2005). Method. In L. Amoore (Ed.), *The Global Resistance Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel (2010). *The Archaeology of Knowledge* M. Foucault (Ed.) *And the Discourse on Language*

Gillies, Donald. (2013). *Educational Leadership and Michel Foucault*: Routledge.

Golan, Daphna, & Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera. (2014). Community-engaged courses in a conflict zone: a case study of the Israeli academic corpus

. *Journal of Peace Education, 11, No. 2. 181-207.*

Graham, Sandra, & Folkes, Valerie, S. (1990). *Attribution Theory: Applications to Achievement, Mental Health, and Interpersonal Conflict*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Haer, Roos, & Becher, Inna. (2012). A methodological note on quantitative field research in conflict zones: Get your hands dirty. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 15*(1), 1-13. doi: 10.1080/13645579.2011.597654

Hallward, Maia Carter, & Norman, Julie M. . (2011). *Nonviolent Resistance in the Second Intifada*: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hancock, Peter A, & Szalma, James L. (2008). *Performance under Stress*. England: Ashgate Publishing.

Hand in Hand. (2013). Education in Israel. Hand in Hand. from http://www.handinhandk12.org/

Heradstveit, Daniel. (1979). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Psychological Obstacles to Peace*.

Imsen, Gunn. (2014). *Elevens verden : innføring i pedagogisk psykologi* (5. utg. ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforl.

Joseph, Sarah. (2004). *Political Theory and Power*. The Netherlands: Foundation Books.

Jørgensen, Katrine Ness. (2012). *Grassroots reconciliation in Palestine and Israel: participants' perceived value and effect of dialouge*. (Master), Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås.

Kiersey, Nicholas J, & Stokes, Doug. (2013). *Foucault and International Relations*: Routledge.

Korostelina, Karina. (2008). History Education and Social Identity. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 8:25-45*.

Kvale, Steinar, & Brinkmann, Svend. (2009). *Interviews : learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed. ed.). Los Angeles, Calif: Sage.

Lincoln, Yvonna, & Deniz, Norman K. (2004). *Turning Points in Qualitative Research Tying Knots in a Handkerchief*

Lorentz, Einar. (2010). Jødisk historie, kultur og identiteter. Mangfoldet i jødedommen. *Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities*.

Matar, Dina. (2011). *What it means to be Palestinian: stories of Palestinian peoplehood*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Mertens, Donna M, & Ginsberg, Pauline E. (2009). *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. United States of America: Sage.

Minkowich, Abram , Deyyis, Dan, & Bashi, Joseph. (1982). *Success and Failure in Israeli Elementary Education* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Mittelman, James H, & Chin, Christine B. N. (2005). Conceptualizing resistance to globalization. In L. Amoore (Ed.), *The Global Resistance Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Montefiore, Simon Sebag. (2011). *Jerusalem: the Biography* (Eivind Lilleskjæret, Mediatekst DA & G. Nyquist, Trans.). Sweeden: Cappelen Damm.

Maalouf, Amin. (2001). *In the name of identity: violence and the need to belong*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Nimni, Ephraim. (2003). *The Challange of Post-Zionism*. London: Zed Books.

Oglesby, Elizabeth (2007). Historical Memory and the Limits of Peace Education: Examining Guatemala´s Memory of Silence and the Politics of Curriculum Design In E. A. Cole (Ed.), *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*. The United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, Inc.

Olssen, Mark. (1999). *Michel Foucault*. Westport: Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data.

Osler, Audrey, & Starkey, Hugh. (2005). *Changing citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Pappe, Ilan. (2014). *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge*. London: Verso

Peled-Elhanan, Nurit. (2012). *Palestine in Israeli school books* New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Repstad, Pål. (2007). *Mellom nærhet og distanse : kvalitative metoder i samfunnsfag* (4. rev. utg. ed.). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Resh, Nura, & Benavot, Aaron. (2009). Educational governance, school autonomy, and curriculum implementation: diversity and uniformity in knowledge offerings to Israeli pupils. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 41*(1), 67-92. doi: 10.1080/00220270802446826

Said, Edward W. (1995). *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. England: Penguin Groups.

Said, Edward W. (2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.

Said, Edward W., & Barsamian, David. (2003). *Culture and Resistance*. Cambridge: South End Press.

Sakshir, K. (2011). Palestinian Education under Occupation: Success and Challenges. In I. Nasser, L. N. Berlin & S. Wong (Eds.), *Examining Education, Media, and Dialouge under Occupation: The case of Palestine in Israel*. UK: British Library Catalouguing in Publication Data.

Sazzad, Rehnuma. (2008). Hatoum, Said and Foucault: Resistance through Revealing the Power-Knowledge Nexus? *Postcolonial Text, 4, No 3*.

Schwartz, Adi. (2013). The Palestinian Textbook Fiasco, *The Tower*. Retrieved from http://www.thetower.org/article/the-palestinian-textbook-fiasco/

Seixas, Peter. (2004). *Theorizing historical consciousness*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Serpell, Robert. (1993). *The significance of schooling: life-journeys in an African society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weiss, Yisroel Dovid. (2015). Neturei Karta. *Jews United Against Zionism.* Retrieved 12.05.2015, 2015, from http://www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/

Wertsch, James A. (2004). Specidic Narratives and Schematic Narrative Templates. In P. Seixas (Ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*. U.S.A: University of Toronto Press.

Zohar, Zion. (2005). *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry*. New York and London: New York University Press.

9 Appendix: Interview guides

9.1 Students

Phase 1: Framework	1. Informal conversation (approximately 5 minutes). - Locate information about ethnicity, family background, religion etc.
	2. Information (5-10 min) • Provide information about the topic for the interview (background) • Explain the purpose of the interview and give information about confidentiality and that I will ensure anonymity. • Ask if something is unclear and if the respondents have any questions • Inform about the tape recording, and ask for permission to do this • Start the tape recorder if the respondent allows it
Phase 2: Experiences	3. Background questions: (15 min) • Which personal experiences did you have regarding interaction and coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis before you started at the university? • How would you describe how the history teaching in primary and high school have presented the Palestinian/ Israeli people and the conflict between the two groups? • To what extent did you learn about the other group regarding history, culture and religion at school? • Which words would you use to describe the Palestinian / Israeli people as a group? (Consider if its better to ask them

	to spend three minutes writing)
Phase 3: Focus	**4. Key questions: (50-60 min)**
	• What was you motivation for studying in this program?
	• To what extent does this course represent a difference compared to other courses at the University?
	• How do you experience studying together with Israelis/Palestinians?
	• What do you see as strengths and challenges by studying together?
	• To what extent would you say that studying together with Israelis/Palestinians has changed your perception of the other group?
	• To what extent do you have friends from the other group?
	• What have you learned about Israelis/Palestinians and the Israeli/Palestinian society by studying here?
	• To what extent does the university facilitates for the Palestinians regarding language, Christian/Muslim holidays and so on?
	• How do the history teaching at the university present the Israeli/Palestine conflict?
	• To what extent does your study program focusing on contested issues like the settlement, the intifadas, the 1948 and 1967- wars etc.?
	• How would you define your national identity?

	• To what extent do you think (intergroup) education can improve relations between Israelis and Palestinians? • What do you think are required to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians?
Phase 4: Retrospect	**5. Summarize (approximately 15 min)** • Summarize my findings • Ask if I have understood the respondent in a correct way • Ask if the respondents will add something • Give a small gift

9.2 Professors

Phase 1: Framework	**1. Informal conversation (approximately five minutes).** - Locate information about ethnicity, family background, religion etc.
	2. Information (5-10 min) • Provide information about the topic for the interview (background) • Explain the purpose of the interview and give information about confidentiality and that I will ensure anonymity. • Ask if something is unclear and if the respondents have any questions • Inform about the tape recording, and ask for permission to do this • Start the tape recorder if the respondent allows it
Phase 2: Experiences	**3. Background questions: (15 min)** • How long have you been teaching in this program? • How would you describe how the history teaching in primary and high school presents the Palestinian/ Israeli people and the conflict between the two groups compared to the history teaching at the university?
Phase 3: Focus	**4. Key questions: (50-60 min)** • How do you experience that Israeli and Palestinian students are studying together? • What do you see as strengths and challenges by studying

	together?
	  • What would you say are the main goals of studying Israeli and Palestinian history? • To what extent would you say that studying Israeli and Palestinian history strengthens the national identity? • To what extent does the history program aiming to present both narratives? • How does the history teaching at the university present the Israeli/Palestine conflict? (E.g. The establishment of Israel in 1948, the 1967- and 1974-wars, the intifadas, the settlement at the West bank etc.) • What do you see as the main goal by studying history that is related to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians? • To what extent is there an aim that history shall contribute to improve the relationship between the two groups? • To what extent do you experience that history teaching contributes to friendship and interaction between Israeli and Palestinian student? • To what extent do you think (intergroup) education can improve relations between Israelis and Palestinians?
Phase 4: Retrospect	**5. Summarize (ca. 15 min)** • Summarize my findings • Ask if I have understood the respondent in a correct way • Ask if the respondents will add something

	• Give a small gift