

Cultural Violence in the Classroom

Cultural Violence in the Classroom:

*Peace, Conflict and Education
in Israel*

By

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural groups have many stories. In every social group there are stories of the past that become cultural symbols of their experiences. A cultural story or narrative becomes a conflict narrative when it is intrinsically tied to a struggle for recognition, resources or territory. Conflict narratives are vehicles from which events in the past help to sustain modern incarnations of conflict. First theorized by Johan Galtung a father of peace studies, cultural violence makes other forms of violence permissible (whether physical or structural) and conflict narratives can become forms of cultural (symbolic) violence if they make certain actions (hostile, aggressive or discriminatory) if not right, at least not wrong.

Every culture holds some form of violence permissible. Whether it is racism, homophobia, gendered constructs of power, just war doctrine, caste systems or ethnic prejudice, these cultural forms of violence have physical and structural limbs that act to harm and marginalize both individuals and groups. Forms of cultural violence are often found in the symbolic spheres of society and can include: religion, art, science and education. In this book, Israeli professors from five universities share their experiences and opinions regarding two research questions: 1. Do they challenge conflict narratives in the classroom and, 2. How they imagine the future? Because the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is composed of two communities of trauma and remembrance the place where official histories and cultural memories meet can be both a dynamic repository of entrenched perspectives and a place to encounter difference and increase tolerance.

This volume presents an innovative exploration of the role of educators in protracted ethnic conflict by linking perceived or entrenched perspectives of the past to how they play out in the classroom. As Jewish and Palestinian students are largely educated in segregated communities in both primary and secondary schools, the university becomes an 'encounter' zone where perspectives, cultures and conflict narratives collide. By juxtaposing the role of higher education and education for peace this book examines the challenges of 'challenging' conflict narratives at the university level and building positive peace (equitable and harmonious relationships) in the classroom.

The small N constructivist study

This book emerged because of two questions—How do university educators navigate ‘the past in the present’ in Israel and how do they see the future? Despite contacting over 100 university teachers employed in the social sciences and humanities in Israel (faculties most likely to engage with perceptions of the past—narratives of conflict—in the classroom) only 39 individuals agreed to be interviewed for my study and of those 39, only 28 of those eventually consented to have their responses shared. Some wanted their names withheld; some wanted their names revealed but all of those who contributed to this manuscript wanted change of some kind to happen—to regain academic freedom, to recognize the obstacles present when you teach in a country that burdens personal identities with collective obligations, to stop the violence against Palestinians and to have a sense that their children and grandchildren will face the future free of fear and free of violence.

In the qualitative study that leads to this book, questions were asked to investigate how the past is perceived in Israel and how the role of being a teacher in the social sciences and humanities is navigated in relation to contrasting perceptions of the past. To see how Israeli university educators navigate perceptions of the past (conflict narratives) in the classroom we need to first understand how they perceive of their roles as educators and then learn about how they behave from their own perspectives. This study took 18 months to conduct (after a primary data collection gained in roughly six-months) and almost two years to write. This empirical work presents a unique aperture into the *actual* perceptions of some Israeli academics in a sea of *potential* perceptions presented by others.

By way of example, organizations such as the following—the Students for Justice in Palestine, University of Maryland; Political Latinos/as United for Movement and Action in Society; Black Male Initiative; Organization of Arab Students; and the International Socialist Organization, University of Maryland—can be quoted online (in 2015) saying the following:

The ASA, AAAS and NAISA [The American Studies Association, the Association for Asian American Studies and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association] did not vote to boycott Israeli academic institutions because of the “national identity” of Israeli scholars but because those institutions are complicit in equipping the Israeli state with the technology and false narratives necessary to sustain Israel’s ongoing violence against Palestinians (Para 5) http://www.diamondbackonline.com/opinion/article_50c1a1ec-a7e1-11e3-99a8-0017a43b2370.html.

This statement maintains that Israeli educators are being boycotted (silenced, and deliberately marginalized academically) as a result of the political violence of the Israeli state. It then officially mentions the ‘false narratives’ that perpetuate the ideological roots of the conflict. The statement ‘false narratives’ implies that a ‘true’ or real narrative exists and that the Israeli state is acting intentionally to obscure such truth(s). As a narrative is a construction (a story) of the past it relates a variety of information, including information that is manipulated depending on the teller, the audience or the intention of the telling. The assumption in this statement is that a (false) perception of the past is being used as a vehicle for justifying violence in the present. Sustaining the ‘ongoing violence’ means holding as ‘true’ stories of the past that act to legitimize the suffering of the Palestinian people—this is referred to as cultural violence (facets of culture that make physical and structural violence against the Palestinians right, or at least not wrong). Challenging the legitimacy or rationale that makes the suffering of Palestinians tolerable requires engaging with narratives of the past. That is exactly what this research explores.

Pedagogy for Peace

Pedagogy is the science and art of teaching (Knowles 1973). During the acts of pedagogy, a student learns information, adopts certain understandings and integrates knowledge (Spencer 2006). Pedagogy is often associated with the personal, intellectual, and moral development of children. A pedagogical environment is one in which a person learns to learn: to identify, scrutinize, criticize, assess and create information. Classrooms, as pedagogical environments, are spaces where teaching techniques deliver educative assumptions about the world and where social and experiential learning take place.

Translated from the Greek to mean child leading, pedagogy is sometimes contrasted, in modern education, with andragogy, or adult teaching/leading/learning (Knowles 1973). While a pedagogue is involved in the social and cultural development of the young, an andragogue is an educator who specializes in the lifelong learning needs of adults (Spencer 2006). At the university level, a teacher is involved in a transfer of knowledge that results in trained, reflexive, lifelong learners (Thorpe et al. 1993). Andragogy—a form of pedagogy, acknowledges the mutuality of learning (between teachers and students) and recognizes that learning, in adulthood, involves the co-creation of understanding (Spencer 2006; Freire 2006).

Higher education, (particularly in protracted ethnic conflict), contains signature pedagogies—educations that impart knowledge and abilities but also values and attitudes (Schulman 2005). Signature pedagogies do more than convey information; they contribute to belief systems and behaviors, creating “habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of the hand” (Shulman 2005, 59). Signature pedagogies have three components,

The surface structure: the visible content of teaching,
The deep structure: beliefs concerning how best to teach, and,
The implicit structure: the moral structure behind those beliefs (Miller 2012).

Education in ethnic conflict is routinely involved with more than knowledge acquisition or skills training, it is often involved in mobilizing cultural solidarity and can act to transmit values and beliefs about others (Bar-Tal 2007) that create invisible boundaries between groups that can lead to dehumanization. Dehumanization and depersonalization are two processes that let us see our ‘enemy’ as undeserving of consideration. This makes all kinds of violence permissible as the other is seen as subordinate and unworthy of concern. Importantly, perceptions of others become “even more negative” when there is a history of conflict (Eagly 2004, 55) and during ethnic conflict, education can lead to a fortification of group boundaries.

Although there is an education hypothesis that states that “education helps prevent extremism and violence by promotion of critical-thinking skills, empathy, and tolerance,” many ethnic educations, result in the opposite, where “education is more likely to contribute to ethnic violence than to restrain it” (Lange 2012, 1-2). There is a reality here that resists parsimony—education can both increase ethnic violence and decrease it (Bekerman 2012; Lange 2012), at least temporarily. What is missing involves the balance between the social psychology of the individual and the collective socialization in society—of which education plays an enormous role.

Peace as Pedagogy

Peace pedagogies—the values and techniques of learning to be nonviolent and pro-social—are incredibly difficult to pursue in environments where ethnic education is the norm (Harris and Morrison 2003; Lange 2012). Because this book is interested in the university classroom as an encounter zone between diverse peoples—and the unique

perspective of educators as the instigators and organizers of university learning—this volume utilizes culturally constructed narratives of conflict to investigate the potential for peace. In protracted ethnic conflicts (of which Israel/Palestine is the premier example in the modern era) there are myriad opportunities for pursuing peace. If “lasting peace is the work of education” (Montessori 1992, 24) then it is critical to illuminate the conditions of teaching in Israel and the circumstances that surround educators as they encounter difference in the classroom. While the work of educators—and conflict narratives, in particular—cannot possibly be the only element that impacts the decades-old discord in Israel/Palestine, there is a value to understanding how Israeli educators teach.

Teaching the Past in the Present

There is a connection being made in this book that might bear closer examination here. Teaching the past, and in the case of Israel and Palestine, the violent past, involves the work of teachers, the commitment of educational institutions and the participation of students. This is not a simple task and any number of obstacles can derail the project of negotiating the experiences and perceptions of violent history toward social transformation (peace education). Bekerman and Zembylas (2012) caution that conflict and peace are not ‘things’ that can be manipulated and manifested and that teaching violent history is fundamentally about issues—how educational institutions in countries with hegemonic conflict narratives approach, engage with, challenge or neglect stories of conflict and therefore contribute to or inhibit building peace. The conflict in Israel/Palestine is ongoing and so many typical methods for negotiating the past remain unexplored.

In most societies recovering from violence, questions of how to deal with the past are acute, especially when the past involves memories of death, suffering, and destruction so widespread that a high percentage of the population is affected...[therefore] references to educational reform are nearly always specifically about the political community’s past: how its content must be changed to include information and interpretations that have been repressed or manipulated...as well as new representations of former enemies...to promote tolerance, inclusiveness, an ability to deal with conflict nonviolently, and the capacity to think critically and question assumptions that could again be manipulated to instigate conflict (Cole 2007, 1-2).

This volume considers the reality that to teach peace in Israel is to perhaps begin the critical process of reconciliation early, one student at a

time. The transmission of inclusive values is not the first step in this process the first step is recognition. If we cannot engage with narratives of conflict we cannot hope to change perception. It remains to be seen if merely changing our perception changes our behaviour.

Education can be a contributor to ethnic tolerance and intolerance because understandings of history are both produced and indeed, reproduced in schools. As this book is concerned with the impact conflict narratives have on the experience of post-secondary teaching in Israel, it is important to understand what conflict narratives are and how they function. Conflict narratives are stories of the past that become markers of group identity, and, as such, construct cultural exclusivities that can lead to ethnic conflict. They are communicated in informal settings (the home, the community and religious gatherings) but also formal settings (civic events and social institutions such as schools).

In conflict narratives, the past can become compartmentalized—erasing alternative experiences. Conflict narratives are incidents presented in uncomplicated and moralistic frameworks—these frameworks are digestible, communicable and linked to expressions of collective identity. In the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the meta-narrative of Zionist Israel contrasts with the unrealized sovereignty of Palestine for Palestinians. Each violent event from the past (wars, displacements, attacks, counter-attacks) is remembered and re-remembered by each new generation. Each sides narrative of conflict (in this case Israelis and Palestinians) contributes to the invisibility of the other—erasing memories of sorrow from the enemy in order to exhibit one's own suffering.

Before turning to educators' perceptions of challenging conflict narratives in the classroom this volume wants to recognize and position itself in relation to Pappé and Hilal's paradigm of parity, "the paradigm of parity posits that there are two warring parties in Palestine who each carry equal responsibility for both the outbreak of and the solution to the conflict" (2010, 6). By investigating conflict narratives, it can be suggested, that commentators (such as myself) are implying that Israelis and Palestinians hold symmetrical forms of power merely differentiated by perceptions of the conflict (indeed it has been suggested that perception is a smokescreen masking the concrete realities of the conflict and so studies (like this one) are part of the problem).

Similarly, analysts routinely streamline the variety of narratives held in society and present conflict narratives as monoliths of perception—this is not so—the conflict is observed in myriad ways by a variety of social group and individuals—not all Israelis hold orthodox or Zionist positions and not all Palestinians perceive of the past as colonial. However, the two

dominant narratives of the past present in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict can be safely considered as a *dualistic order* representing “the fundamental dyadic opposition of ‘good and bad’ in the nation central to a particular narrative” (Korostelina 2014, 5). From a simplistic standpoint, one cannot hold both conflict narratives as *true* (nor is that the goal of this work) but gaining an appreciation of the roots of such narratives *truths* can be useful when building understanding. The hope of this volume is that by presenting five well-known and amply researched narrative roots the words of the Israeli educators will have meaning to a reader without intimate knowledge of the stories that surround the conflict in Israel/Palestine.

Perception is not the only (nor the most important) vantage point from which to illuminate the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians but by investigating this subject matter I am proposing that Galtung’s theory of cultural violence, the dehumanization of one another through the adoption and perpetuation of conflict narratives, is a rationale for other forms of violence experienced as a result of the national conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

To explore the power of conflict narratives in the classroom this work seeks to answer a number of questions: If conflict narratives affect the content explored in the classroom do educators, support, challenge or ignore such content? Do opportunities exist to challenge conflict narratives? Do educators explore alternative cultural histories in the classroom? And, are attempts from educators to engage with such alternative/opposing histories perceived of as desirable and encouraged or discouraged or even forbidden? Moreover, do consequences exist for educators who seek to challenge dominant conflict narratives and does a relationship exist between the ability for educators to approach contested material and a reduction of inter-cultural conflict? Finally, in light of these driving questions, how do educators imagine the future for themselves and their country?

The Research

For this study, 89 academics working in five university settings: Ben Gurion University (Beer Sheva), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Jerusalem), Bar Ilan University (Ramat-Gan), Tel Aviv University (Tel Aviv), and the University of Haifa (Haifa) were contacted. The institutions in Israel were chosen because they were geographically dispersed and because they were institutions that routinely taught students from both national groups (Jewish and Palestinian Israelis). The academics interviewed had between 1-40 years of teaching experience. Participants

(in Israel and abroad) were primarily contacted by their teaching duties, social scientific discipline and publications but some were also contacted because their research/activism/interests were aligned with the study. While every attempt was made to invite participants regardless of age, ethnicity or gender the overwhelming majority of those who chose to be interviewed were Jewish Israeli males teaching in Israel. After almost a year of contact, this research resulted in 28 verified interview transcripts (a total of 11 interviews were withdrawn from consideration for various reasons and/or circumstances). Regardless, I am extremely grateful to all of the educators (in Israel, Palestine and abroad) who agreed to speak with me (despite language barriers and time zone obstacles) and particularly indebted to those who allowed their responses to contribute to this volume. Additionally, there were several conversations with Israeli and Palestinian activists from the Jerusalem Community Action Centre and Women in Black Jerusalem who felt that people were becoming 'tired' of trying to understand the conflict in Israel/Palestine and that they (the activists) were feeling less and less supported (locally and from the international community), more and more marginalized and they despaired their important work would lead to 'nothing'. This book cannot explain why the human gaze wavers or how local peacebuilders on the ground can affect change that takes generations but it can (and I hope it does) contribute to solidarity with those who want peace.

In this study I wanted to talk to educators whose subject matter concerned history or sociology and I wanted to speak to university teachers who were likely to have to address narratives of conflict in the classroom. By interviewing these individuals (educators from mostly the humanities and social sciences) I am not suggesting that other disciplines do not engage with such material and I am also not suggesting that many hard science departments are not also instrumental in (possibly) building tolerance or intolerance in Israel. My hope was that by speaking to academics whose daily lives touched upon contested history their experiences would be directly relevant when seeking to answer the question "What is it like to teach around conflict narratives in Israel?"

Happily, some of those contacted and interviewed had personally published academic works on conflict and education, conflict narratives or peace education allowing for a shared understanding of some theoretical foundations that underlay this study. Despite this happenstance, the majority of the 28 individuals included in this study were not versed in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) methodologies and although a few of those interviewed were happy to have their names and affiliations utilized in the dissemination of this work the majority of participants asked that

this research protect their identity. For this reason I will not numerically represent the percentage of educators from each institution (in, for instance a map or graph), as the size of the country, her higher learning institutions and the departments under consideration are too small for the respondents of this study to be assured anonymity.

Transferability

The goal of qualitative research is to provide an aperture from which to observe how people attach meaning to a particular social phenomenon. Unlike studies that search for incidences or quantities (quantitative research), utilize a scientific method of asking a question (or questions) and use objective measures to search for answers, qualitative research makes accessible the particular perspective of individuals—the goal is not to find ‘majority’ responses but to give voice to ‘minority’—subjective—perceptions.

The cultural, social, political, economic and personal circumstances of each individual differ—add to that personal and collective (social) psychology and the circumstances of life—and the idea that these responses could or should be transferable to other populations (for instance educators in Palestine or in other arenas experiencing protracted ethnic conflict) is tenuous. For readers interested in learning about how the Israeli educators interviewed perceive of their work, read on—I hope, that you find the specificity of this work both unique and important.

Finally, though this manuscript can be considered a novel investigative approach (university educators and conflict narratives in protracted ethnic conflict) and may encourage others to utilize similar methods to learn how educators navigate ‘the past in the present’ elsewhere, it does not mean that these findings are necessarily transferable to other sites of protracted ethnic violence. The goal of this study has been to make a small (and hopefully valuable) contribution.

This Book

This work is divided into two parts and contains seven chapters. The goal of Part I is to provide the reader with the tools to understand (and relate to) the interview responses provided in Part II. Part I seeks to provide the relevant information necessary, both theoretically and ontologically, to contextualize the qualitative replies provided in Part II. Generally speaking, the reader will be more able to appreciate Part II after reading Part I.

Although this work is informed by three research fields: (1) the role of conflict narratives in protracted ethnic conflict, (2) education and conflict and education and peace, and, (3) the role of the imagination in conflict transformation, this book also makes three important assumptions, (a) that interested parties want to understand how these Israeli educators perceive of their work in regards to conflict narratives, (b) that conflict narratives do impact the act, art and work of teaching, and, (c) that teaching ‘the past in the present,’ can constitute a form of cultural violence (symbolic violence that leads to physical and structural violence).

In order to understand ethnic conflict, Chapter 1 will explore the evolution from ethnicity to ethnic conflict then explore three perspectives and five theories of ethnic conflict. This chapter will delineate between ethnic conflict and protracted ethnic conflict, examine the differences between cultural memory, collective memory and narratives of conflict and explore the role of conflict narratives (as a form of collective memory) in framing ethnic mobilization. In Chapter 2 the difference between ethnic conflict and protracted ethnic conflict is explained and the conflict is analyzed using Byrne and Carter’s Social Cubism model (1996). This chapter provides the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict by exploring the role of culture, social class, religion, gender, history and politics in Israel/Palestine. Chapter 3 expands upon five roots in the Israeli and Palestinian narratives. This chapter examines the role of ideology, armed struggle, religion, the city of Jerusalem and the concepts of exile and return.

The next three chapters survey the conceptual frameworks of this book and the Israeli educators interviewed share their perspectives and opinions. Chapter 4 considers three forms of violence in education (symbolic, alienating and cultural violence) and presents the internal patterns (values and actions) educators exhibit regarding challenging conflict narratives in the classroom. In Chapter 5, the social role of the teacher is examined, conflict in teaching, and, three forms of peace education used in Israel: encounter groups, coexistence education, and the PRIME project. In this chapter, three external processes that impact teaching in Israel are described: the political environment in Israel, academic monitoring and the national conflict with Palestinians. In Chapter 6, the role of the moral imagination in manifesting peace is explored and Israeli educators share their opinions of the future. Finally, Chapter 7 re-examines ten key findings from the study that led to this book and then makes recommendations for the future.

PART I:
THE TOOLKIT

CHAPTER ONE

LEARNING CONFLICT OR LEARNING PEACE

Schools are places where we learn what is important. They can be places that teach us what our values are, how the world is shaped and ways to live. Identity is together a personal and communal characteristic that helps people define both themselves and others. Ethnic identity, as a facet of personal and group identity can either be a way of belonging or a marker for difference. In ethnic conflict, identity becomes salient and schools, because they can contribute to the way we see ourselves, also contribute to how we see others. While schools are “key sites for the promotion of both symbolic and physical violence,” they are also one of the only legitimate avenues available to promote cultural tolerance and human rights (Boulding 1988, 196). In schools, who you are, and, who you feel you belong to can be celebrated, prohibited, tolerated or ignored and during ethnic conflict, schools are places where identity really matters.

Israel—as a site of protracted ethnic conflict—contests social history through cultural and political constructions of the past that include the institutionalization of the dominant narratives. Zionism refers to the political movement that supports a Jewish homeland in Palestine and it is the dominant form of Jewish Nationalism in Israel. “Following segregated schooling until age eighteen, Israeli universities constitute the first instance of an integrated educational system where two national groups meet and interact socially and academically” (Zelniker *et al.* 2009, 200). As such, the school becomes a vital space of ‘encounter’ between competing histories, social mores and ideological values. Zionism, for the purposes of this book, is not a sinister, cultish indoctrination experienced by native and immigrant Israelis but a term that refers to a variety of ways people perceive of the Jewish Homeland.

As there are few explorations of the role and experience of educators in ethnic conflict zones this work seeks to examine cultural violence in education, how such violence is addressed, approached and managed in the classroom and whether challenging conflict narratives can be a pathway to peace. By presenting the thoughts and perceptions of university educators in the social sciences and humanities this book will illuminate

the important experiences and perspectives of professionals on the front lines of perception and understanding and then inquire as to how educators imagine the future. This book explores the unique position occupied by educators in society as well as the distinctive place held by educators during conflict.

Peace education has emerged over the last sixty years as a platform to achieve a global culture of peace (Harris and Morrison 2013). In all societies, peace education can play a vital role in delegitimizing cultural intolerance and provide people with the tools to both assess violence and confront it, nonviolently. Cultures of peace aim to promote respect for life and use education aimed at teaching (among other things) the values of tolerance and kindness and the importance of human rights and democracy. The practices, strategies, attitudes and values held by educators constitute a critical prospect for fostering the goals of educating for peace and become vital to building peace in a society. By surveying the perceptions, perspectives and experiences of educators who work in post-secondary institutions in Israel, this book explores the interesting positionality of educators as agents who wield “both an instrument for oppression and a tool for liberation” (Alzaroo and Hunt 2003, 165).

Cultural Violence

In every group there are symbolic forms of culture that help to define, delineate and express the group’s values. Johan Galtung (1990) introduced the concept of cultural violence to show how other forms of violence, direct (physical) and indirect (structural) are legitimized. While it is impossible to say that any one culture is solely a violent culture (or for that matter solely a peace culture) Galtung identified aspects of culture that act to make certain types of violence permissible and if not considered *right* they are at least not considered *wrong*.

The concept of cultural violence is a valuable and underutilized construct for investigating social institutions, such as schools, to discover the ways that symbolic aspects of culture—ideology, art, religion, science etc.—become mobilized. Galtung delineates violence into forces that affect personal and group needs and that are physical (direct), structural (indirect), or both. To that he adds the category of cultural violence and, of particular importance to the investigation of schooling as an instrument of cultural violence, the concept of alienation,

The category of ‘alienation’ can be defined in terms of socialization, meaning the internalization of culture. There is a double aspect: to be desocialized away from own culture and to be resocialized into another

culture...[and] they often come together in the category of second class citizenship, where the subjected group (not necessarily a minority) is forced to express dominant culture and not its own, at least not in public space. The problem is, of course, that any socialization...in the family, at school, by society...is also forced, a kind of brainwashing (1990, 293).

In his exploration of cultural violence, Galtung imagines violence as a triangle with each apex (direct, indirect and cultural violence) impacting and reinforcing the other. The role of cultural violence is also imagined along a timeline wherein direct violence is envisioned as an *incident*, indirect violence as a *practice* (with various incarnations over time), and cultural violence as something *enduring* and very resistant to change. Cultural violence is perceived of as nourishing direct and indirect violence “a substratum from which the other two can derive their nutrients” feeding them and sustaining their incarnations, manifestations, intentions and objectives (1990, 294). Galtung also exhibits how violence has a direction—from cultural to structural to physical. Cultural violence acts to permit, necessitate, normalize, erase, reprove, and require other forms of violence. Not from everyone, not all the time, but when required and the traumas that result from cultural violence become internalized markers of group identity.

Conflict narratives—perceptions of the past—become markers of identity and act to mobilize, direct and necessitate action in the present using enduring cultural constructs of past experiences. Conflict narratives are transmitted intergenerationally in families, societies and schools (Volkan 2006). Conflict narratives, because they can act to silence the lived experiences of outsiders and because they can become official histories can disaffect our human need for recognition. Conflict narratives, as cultural monoliths of history, are forms of cultural violence and they suggest, support and stimulate structural (indirect) and physical (direct) violence.

Peace and Conflict and Education

Nationalism is the political ideal that each distinct nation should have a homeland (Eller 1999). For many ethnic groups, the rise of nation-states (and the creation of citizen based identities) institutionalized certain nationalisms that were in fact ethnic ideologies. Nationalism holds that one ethnic group should control the state and in the extreme implies “the superiority of a people over others and even the moral right or duty to dominate and subordinate them” (Esman 2004, 41). Education systems are intrinsically associated with nation building. Social legitimacy emerges

from what schools teach and thusly; groups whose histories, life experiences and cultures are not reflected in educational systems can suffer from feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem (Tamir 2005). Further, education systems, as contributors to inter-cultural intolerance can contribute decisively to increases in social/cultural tensions and intensification of violent ethnic conflict (Seitz 2004).

There are a variety of instances in which inter-cultural tensions can be affected by education:

- Education can teach that it is ‘okay’ to oppress a people;
- Groups can be denied education;
- Official histories can be created that erase the lived experiences of people;
- Textbooks can be altered to support or repress a people; and,
- Groups can be segregated and educated according to gender, race, ethnicity or class supporting practices that amplify and solidify difference (Tawil and Harley 2004).

Conversely, education based on the mutual acknowledgement and recognition of others can reduce intercultural and interpersonal violence and contribute to a culture of peace (Boulding 1988; Davies 2004). A culture of peace “implies a richer and more sophisticated sense of belonging that sees one’s immediate community and identity as conjoined to, tolerant of, overlapping with, complementary to, and relationally implicated in other ethno-national communities” (Anastasiou 2009, 40). A culture of peace harmonizes groups, celebrates difference and it does not equate *different from* with *less than*. A culture of peace can be achieved through education (Korostelina 2013).

No one culture is purely violent, and no one culture is purely peaceful. Each society contains particular cultural aspects of both meta-values (both violence and peace are almost indefinable in their non-specificity) and likewise, no one school or educational system can be said to be only contributing to the transmission of violent ideals or those considered nonviolent and peaceful. Just like individual members of cultures are different and unique, education institutions are not monolithic—indeed the variety of educational institutions is directly related to how different groups prioritize different values and ideas. Despite this variation, it can be said, that while the content (explicit curriculum and pedagogy) of various schools may differ, the act of participating in group education (in any setting) does involve the transfer of cultural knowledge. The fact that the majority of children and young adults, globally, attend some form of

formal or informal schooling makes education—institutionally speaking—normal. However, ethnic ‘educations,’ particularly ethnic educations in contested lands, can, and often does contribute to cultural intolerance (Lange 2012).

Transforming ethnic conflict

A primary goal in the transformation of ethnic conflict involves “getting rival groups to a point of mutually acknowledging...the injury they inflicted on one another in the course of their conflict” (Anastasiou 2009, 36). Essential to the goal of transforming violent conflict is the chance for a community to release entrenched ‘perceived’ histories (taught in schools), and in breaking the apparently monolithic power of *official* histories, tells stories that were once silenced (Scham, Pogrud and Ghanem 2010). According to Salomon, “when a community’s collective narrative start becoming questioned and ‘sacred cows’ become candidates for slaughter, the monolithic grip of collective narrative weakens and an examination of each side’s actions can take place” (2004, 279). When the past becomes a construct, something created and therefore malleable, then a conversation can begin between individuals, groups, nations and the world.

Identity refers to “a sense of self, a way individuals know and understand themselves” (Cook-Huffman 2009, 19). This conceptual understanding of identity is significant because it refers to more than ascriptive markers of identity that one is born with, such as sex, or skin color, but comprises both the way in which identity contributes to how we see the world *and the way in which we see others*. As transmitters of social authority educators occupy an essential position in society capable of either supporting repressive constructs or challenging social inequalities.

In ethnic conflict, education can legitimize direct, indirect and cultural forms of violence and permit acts of exclusion and aggression. Educators who are seen to legitimize the social order may be seen as symbolic markers of the dominant group identity while educators who challenge the social order can be perceived of as upstarts or threats that seek to subvert social authority. Education contributes to an agreed upon standard for conceptualizing the self, the society and importantly, the place of history in making a people distinct. In identity-based conflicts schooling plays a central role in “the formation and transmission of collective identity, memory, and a sense of citizenship and shared identity” (Tawil and Harley 2004, 6). In identity-based conflicts, *what* a person learns can become *whom* a person *learns to hate*.

Additionally, because educators can be perceived as “a dominated segment of the dominant class” educators can feel personally and professionally threatened when their cultural identities and employment requirements affect their economic security (Schubert 2002, 1092). Educators at risk of job loss if they challenge dominant conflict narratives or hold opposing political views (or participate in activism that undermines the dominant regime), occupy a perilous position that can result in persecution, dismissal, conflict or interpersonal discord with their cultural communities (Makkawi 2002).

Transmission Belts

Education systems can be *transmission belts*—intergenerational loci for the transfer of cultural values from one group to another (Schönpflug 2001). Transmission belts are found in the family between peer groups and have particular socioeconomic and cultural incarnations. Schools, as cultural institutions, impart values to students and although the content transferred in schools is not necessarily uniform; schools themselves are sites of value transfer.

Although the transmission of values is a universal phenomenon, there may be culture-specific differences in degree, content and process of transmission. Every culture offers specific developmental niches and socialization practices for the transmission of values (Albert, Trommsdorf and Wisnubrata 2006, 221).

Every education system, whether formal or informal, is created and maintained based on certain cultural and pedagogical values. *How* education sites become transmission belts is related to their place as sites of secondary socialization. During secondary socialization (socialization that occurs outside of the home) individuals are exposed to ways of being, seeing and believing that contribute to the development of their personal values. Because humans are not born with culture, but acquire culture socially, schools are important vehicles for the transfer of cultural values (Alexander and Thompson 2011). For the purposes of this exploration, while secondary socialization is most often associated with primary and secondary schools, the role of the university in Israel—as a place of encounter between previously segregated national groups—becomes an important a site of secondary socialization.

Ethnicity, and Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict is an identity-based struggle that occurs in pluralistic societies and relates to competition over resources and/or recognition. Conflict narratives are integral parts of mobilized ethnic identity and are directly associated with defensive and offensive ethnic violence. During ethnic conflict,

If change occurs in the identities of at least one of the parties, the chances for long-term change are greatly increased, particularly if the change involves core aspects of identity that are directly related to the conflict...if the nature of the parties' interpretations...is significantly altered...there is then an investment in de-escalating the conflict and in increasing cooperation (Northrup 1989, 78).

During protracted ethnic conflict education can act as both an instrument of negative ethnic relations (propaganda, stereotyping, historical omission) and a contributor to peaceful relations (co-existence, multi-cultural and peace education). If education can become a contributor to a change of identity then addressing narratives of conflict becomes instrumental in transforming ethnic conflict.

Ethnic Pluralism and Ethnic Conflict

Several states created in the postcolonial world have experienced protracted ethnic conflict. Protracted ethnic conflict is characterized by long-term discord, rooted in a 'fear of extinction,' that contributes to an ethnic group's struggle for self-determination (Volkan 2006, Bose 2007). In order to differentiate between cultural identity and conflict the following section investigates the nature of ethnicity, ethnic pluralism and ethnic conflict.

Ethnicity is a form of social solidarity based on a mutual culture, religion or territoriality (Eller 1999). Ethnicity is inherited; it is transmitted socially, rooted historically but tangible as a modern expression of group affiliation. Today, "ethnic groups are composed of people who share more in common with one another, on average, than with other ethnic groups" (Oberschall 2007, 5). While it is normal for a single individual to possess more than one identity (including gender, social class, educational level, occupational status and sexual orientation) (Enloe 2000) in identity politics, social agents will commonly choose one or more shared characteristic—religion, geographical origin or language—when seeking to mobilize a *consciousness of difference* between peoples. This consciousness of

difference is used in identity politics to mobilize support for a group's attempt to gain power (Brubaker and Laitin 1998).

Ethnicity is not a form of cultural identity; rather, it refers to "relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive" (Eriksen 2002, 7). Cultural difference only become ethnicity "if and when a group takes it up and uses it in certain specific and modern ways" (Eller 1999, 11). In culturally homogenous societies ethnicity does not exist because there is no basis for culturally composed opposition groups (Esman 2004) but, as "most states in the world today are in fact plural," (Eller 1999, 2) and can include several ethnic minorities, ethnic solidarity in identity politics comes to express,

A profound human need to belong, a source of physical and psychological security, [and] fictive kinship that expands the boundaries of family relationships to an extended network of individuals that share the same culture and the same historical myths and collective memories (Esman 2004, 7).

Modern ethnic groups are often grouped into five social categories: (1) indigenous peoples—the aboriginal or native inhabitants of a territory prior to colonization; (2) immigrants—settlers and labour migrants; (3) proto-nations (Ethnonationalists) such as the Kurds; (4) post-colonial groups in plural societies (e.g. Kenya, Canada or Indonesia); and, (5) post-slavery minorities—descendants of slaves whose identity is based on their shared history of uprooting and suffering (Eriksen 2002). In identity politics, groups strive for self-determination, a doctrine that "in its pristine form...makes ethnicity the ultimate measure of political legitimacy by holding that any self-differentiating people, simply because it is a people, has the right, should it so desire, to rule itself" (Connor 1994, 38).

The quest for self-determination is the result of the social marginalization experienced by many ethnic minorities in pluralist societies where state institutions are infused with the cultural signifiers of the dominant (and dominating) ethnic majority. Ethnic majorities and minorities generally result from "conquest and colonization...the diffusion of religions, war and forced population movements, the formation of states, and the drawing and redrawing of international boundaries" (Oberschall 2007, 7).

Previous to the modern age, citizens of imperial empires were largely separated into religious groups and personal status laws permitted group members some measure of institutionalized support for their cultural traditions (Dockser Marcus 2007).

The end of empires led to a territorial identity that often instilled one dominant language in educational institutions agitating ethnic groups threatened by what they saw as linguistic intolerance. [In order] for Nationhood to cohere it was necessary for a multitude of ethnic groups to lose ethnic rights (Oberschall 2007, 8).

Nationalism is the political ideal that each distinct nation should have a homeland—a nation “is a fully mobilized or institutionalized ethnic group,” (Eller 1999, 17) and “imagined political community” (Anderson 2006, 5-6) that has “grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the prerevolutionary past” (Anderson 2006, 2). Nationalism “is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist” (Gellner 1965, 169). For the thousands of ethnic groups in existence today, in the quest for nationhood, whether limited or sovereign, the label of ethnicity is often used to suggest both a demonstrable different-ness and an uninterrupted continuity with the past (Gurr 2003; Eller 1999). When ethnic pluralism becomes a struggle for group interests it can lead to ethnic conflict: the competition between ethnic groups for social and political power (Ross, 2007).

Perspectives, Theories and Causes of Ethnic Conflict

Scholars of ethnic conflict can be divided into three perspectives: the primordialists, the instrumentalists and the social constructionists (Esman 2004). Briefly, these perspectives show how the facet of identity we call ‘ethnicity’ functions in society. Whole libraries exist to illuminate the scholarly exploration of ethnic conflict; the purpose of this very brief rumination is to show that the subject of ethnic conflict is theoretically rich and strongly debated. One need not choose which perspective is important to understand the data explored in Part II of this book but some understanding of how theorists position themselves in regard to ethnic conflict is both interesting and useful.

Primordialists see ethnic identity as deeply embedded in the cultural past, perpetuated by cultural myths, passed down to children and tangible through the day to day beliefs and traditions of the ethnic group. Primordialists hold that “the collective memory of ethnic communities may convert historical triumphs or rankling victimhood into living realities from generation to generation” (Esman 2004, 3). To primordialists it matters little whether the past is objectively *true* so long as the mythic past acts to make group solidarity *coherent* (Eller 1999).

In contrast, Instrumentalists see ethnic identity as a product of modern competition for resources. To Instrumentalists, ethnicity involves a

conscious and multifaceted rediscovery (and at times reinvention) of social-cultural identity (Eller 1999). In this school of ethnic conflict, persons “with self-serving objectives to exploit mass publics in pursuit of their political or economic ambitions create ethnic identity” (Esman 2004, 32). Here, political entrepreneurs use ethnicity as a surrogate for other forms of social organization in order to acquire political power. Instrumentalists reject “ethnicity as an authentic category for political or social association” (Esman 2004, 33). Instrumentalists challenge the validity of ethnic sentiment; argue that ethnic claims are modern inventions.

Social Constructionists, the third perspective, agree that ethnic consciousness is a recent phenomenon. They see “ethnic solidarity as an invention of the human imagination” (Esman 2004, 34) and contend that at the core of all ethnic conflicts are identity issues. To social constructionists, ethnic identity is not created by *ethnic entrepreneurs* but is evidence of a deeper symbolic landscape that connects an individual to his or her group. Social constructionists argue that ethnic solidarity is “seldom based on rational calculations of benefits and costs, but on intrinsic values such as dignity and collective self-esteem” (Esman 2004, 33). This feeling of connectivity is often found in every day cultural expressions such as dress, language, religion and public spectacles of commemoration (Ross 2007).

While it is not possible to make generalizations from one theatre of ethnic conflict to another—every conflict has different roots, actors, stakeholders, histories and goals—several theories of ethnic conflict have emerged seeking to explain the reasons why ethnic conflict occurs. While the scope of this book does not allow for an in-depth investigation of each theory a very brief exploration of each perspective is useful.

The ‘ancient hatred’ theory of ethnic conflict sees ethnic solidarity as something prehistoric, primordial and historically distinct (Kaplan 1994). Here, ethnic identity is infused with collective fears that “highlight past conflicts and threats from other groups” (Oberschall 2007, 11). This theory sees the mixing of ethnic groups as an invitation to recurring violence and views modern conflicts as continuations of a historical contestation.

The ‘manipulating elites’ theory maintains that ethnic elites use manipulation (fear and misinformation) to belligerently mobilize ethnic solidarity (Gagnon 1994). In this theory leaders “demonize ethnic rivals,” present them as a threat that must be “dominated or defeated” (Oberschall 2007, 11) and consolidate their group’s ethnic differences, forcing ethnic members to risk being ostracized if they do not support their interests.

The ‘identity politics’ theory states that divisive ethnic consciousness pre-exists conflict, and that conflict is rooted in cultural folktales and ethnic myths (Kaufman 2006). In divided societies such ethnic consciousness

includes divisive stereotypes and cultural insecurities entrenched in social institutions. As ethnic groups are socialized these markers of identity can become mobilized at the first discernment of aggression from other ethnic groups (Oberschall 2007).

The ‘security dilemma’ theory is also called a ‘spiral of insecurity,’ and posits that in times of state breakdown the escalation of ethnic tensions relates to a group’s fear that their property, livelihoods and very lives will not be adequately protected by law enforcement (Posen 1993). In such a situation, a group will arm themselves in defence but their actions signal to others a *potential* for aggression. The primary group’s mobilization, in turn, leads secondary groups to perceive a threat and then counter-mobilize. In this theory, past hostilities become justifications for pre-emptive strikes and rationalize mistrust.

The final theory relates to a materialist viewpoint of ethnic conflict wherein ethnic groups are mobilized by economic insecurity, poverty, unemployment and political corruption (Collier 2003). This theory imagines that economic underdevelopment is at the root of all conflict and can be exacerbated or improved with economic aid and investment (Oberschall 2007). Supporters of this so-called “eco-nationalism” (Connor 1994, 145) theory also hold the belief that criminal aggression, violence and lethal brutality continue during ethnic conflicts as long as it remains economically profitable for ethnic groups to either control resources or participate in illegal activities (Napoleoni 2005).

In many ways, how a violent conflict is perceived affects what interventions are considered necessary to transform the conflict but individuals who are living in conflict zones have experiences and perspectives that are not tidily addressed by any one theory of ethnic conflict (Lederach 2005). As external observers, the best we can hope for is to understand that there are a variety of ways of assessing and considering violent conflict—some of which have several examples globally—and a panoply of perspectives regarding what is important when trying to build peace.

Ethnic conflict is a complex interplay of structural, political, economic and cultural/perceptual factors including, “the existence of antagonistic group histories...mounting economic problems...[And] the emergence of elite competitions” (Brown 2001, 20). Scholarship has shown that rather than the result of a single trigger, “hostilities escalate only because of the existence of other underlying problems or permissive conditions” not because of any one factor (Brown 2001, 20).

Protracted ethnic conflict, based on a ‘fear of extinction’ is not only a consequence of between-group competition for political, economic or

cultural rights; it is a vehicle for the transmission of the past into the present day (Volkan 2006; Wolff 2006). One of the greatest contributors to the symbolic mobilization of ethnic groups in conflict involves the manipulation of myth and memory into stories of the past. These narratives become symbolic markers of group identity. These cultural memories are shared by the collective and during ethnic clashes become conflict narratives (Smith 2009).

Cultural Memory, Collective Memory and Conflict Narratives

Some clarity can be gained by briefly exploring the terms used to connote the “joint awareness and recognition that members of a group share” regarding the past (David and Bar-Tal 2009, 356). Cultural memory, “an act in the present by which individuals and groups constitute their identities by recalling a shared past on the basis of common, and therefore often contested, norms, conventions, and practices,” (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 5) is used to describe how modern individuals harness the historical/memorial/personal past and is present during *positive peace* “the presence of symbiosis and equity in human relations” (Galtung 1996, 14).

Cultural memory often takes the form of civic communications, “public discourses about the past...that speak in the name of collectivities” (Olick 1999, 345). While public displays of shared identity often form a component of conflict narratives, in protracted ethnic conflict they become more than an expression of group identity, they become delegitimizers of the collective memories of others.

Bar-Tal and Rosen consider collective memory as, “knowledge that is passed on to members of a certain society through social communication channels regarding that society’s past [and is] the keystone of national identity” (2009, 358). In this sense, conflict narratives are a type of collective memory harnessed in ethno-national campaigns such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

In contrast, Gedi and Elam propose that collective memory is merely myth and question its relevance in opposition to actual memory “a personal human faculty that is related to actual personal experience” (1996, 43). They argue that the “mechanism of collective memory and the mechanism of personal memory are one and the same” and see the attempt to turn mythology into group history problematic (Gedi and Elam 1996, 47). However, collective memory—knowledge that is transferred intergenerationally—does function in protracted ethnic conflict as “a