

Portrayal of the Other in Palestinian and Israeli Schoolbooks: A Comparative Study

Sami Adwan

Bethlehem University

Daniel Bar-Tal

Tel Aviv University

Bruce E. Wexler

Yale University

The present study examined how Israelis and Palestinians present their narratives related to their conflict in school textbooks used by the state educational system and the ultraorthodox community in Israel and by all Palestinian schools in Palestinian National Territories. The focus was on how each side portrays the Other and their own group. The content analysis was based on a developed conceptual framework and standardized and manualized rating criteria with quantitative and qualitative aspects. The results showed in general that (1) dehumanizing and demonizing characterizations of the Other are rare in both Israeli and Palestinian books; (2) both Israeli and Palestinian books present unilateral national narratives that portray the Other as enemy, chronicle negative actions by the Other directed at the self-community, and portray the self-community in positive terms with actions aimed at self-protection and goals of peace; (3), there is lack of information about the religions, culture, economic and daily activities of the Other, or even of the existence of the Other on maps; (4) the negative bias in portrayal of the Other; the positive bias in portrayal of the self, and the absence of images and information about the Other are all statistically significantly more pronounced in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and Palestinian books than in Israeli state books.

KEY WORDS: intractable conflicts, narrative, school textbooks, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, stereotypes, portrayal of Other

In the context of intractable conflict,¹ involved parties construct unilateral collective conflict-driven narratives² that include a description of the conflict and contribute to and sustain the conflict (Auerbach, 2010; Paez & Liu, 2011; Papadakis, 1998; Tint, 2010). The conflict-driven narratives of collective memory fulfill primary and essential functions of rationalizing and justifying the origin and continuation of the conflict, enabling mobilization of society members for support and

¹ Intractable conflicts are: violent, over goals viewed as existential, perceived as being of zero sum nature and unsolvable, preoccupy central position in the life of the involved societies, require immense investments of material and psychological resources, and last for at least 25 years (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013; Kriesberg, 1993).

² Collective narratives are defined as "social constructions that coherently interrelate a sequence of historical and current events; they are accounts of a community's collective experiences, embodied in its belief system and represent the collective's symbolically constructed shared identity" (Bruner, 1990, p. 76).

participation in the conflict, and facilitating adaption to stresses and deprivations resulting from the conflict (Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Kelman, 2007). These narratives are typically based on actual events but include their biased selection in order to meet present societal needs (Adwan & Bar-On, 2004; Hobsbawm, 1990; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Southgate, 2005). In general, they delegitimize the Other, present the self-collective in glorifying terms and as the sole victim of the conflict, assign responsibility for the outbreak and continuation of the conflict to the other side, focus on violence and atrocities of the Other, leave little room to acknowledge the history, culture, and future aspirations of the Other, and omit their own misdeeds (see, for example, Bar-Tal, 2013; Baumeister & Hastings, 1997; Firer & Adwan, 2004; Papadakis, 2008).

These narratives are transmitted through various channels of communication and imparted in formal and informal societal institutions such as governmental agencies, military organization, mass media, cultural products, and schools (Bar-Tal, 2013). Given the importance of the narratives both in each society and the arena of international opinion, the opposing communities seek to establish the truthfulness of their own narratives and the fallacy of their rival's (e.g., Bar-Tal, Oren, & Nets-Zehngut, *in press*; Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012).

School and schoolbooks are often primary vehicles and venues through which societies formally, intentionally, systematically, and extensively impart national narratives, having the authority, legitimacy, means, and conditions to carry it out. Also in their presentation of curricular content, schoolbooks express a society's ideology and ethos and impart values, goals, and myths which the society aims to transmit to new generations (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Bourdieu, 1973). Moreover, we suggest that in times of violent and prolonged conflict the presented narratives in the school textbooks serve as one of the indicators of the state of the confrontation. The present study used new methodology that allows relatively impartial results to investigate how Israelis and Palestinians portray each other and themselves in their schoolbooks.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has persisted for over a century, de-escalating in 1993 with Oslo accords and re-escalating following failure of the 2000 Camp David meeting between Israeli and Palestinian leaders (Tessler, 2009). Of interest for the present study is the fact that each party in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has developed a narrative that is contradictory to the other side, and struggle over the narratives has been vigorous (see, for example Adwan, Bar On, & Naveh, 2012; Rotberg, 2006). Each side accused the other of incitement through the narratives, with charges that often focused on schoolbook content. But with the escalation of the conflict in recent years, accusations about incitements in school textbooks have increased dramatically especially by the Israeli government.³ Issues around schoolbooks have made this case an inseparable part of the struggle over the narratives, and they are repeated in the internal arena as well as in the international community continuously and constantly. These accusations have become a major part of the conflict and are cited even as a condition for carrying the peace process.

There have been a number of previous studies of Israeli and Palestinian books employing content-analytic methods based on identifying and analyzing examples from the books that illustrate and deepen understanding of both major dimensions and specific contents of the narratives. Only one study within this paradigm was conducted cooperatively by Israeli and Palestinian researchers (Firer & Adwan, 2004), and almost all studies examined only Israeli or Palestinian textbooks (e.g., Podeh, 2002). These studies produced contradictory results that fueled the controversy (Pina, 2005). While some studies found that the Israeli schoolbooks present the Other humanly, recognize the legitimacy of the rival national movement, and present the conflict in a balanced way (e.g., CMIP, 2001; Teff-Seker, 2009), other studies claim that the books differ, that history books present a one-dimensional picture (Bar-Tal, 1998b; IPCRI, 2003), or even further that the Israeli textbooks contain harsh bias and deliver incitive racist messages (Peled-Elhanan, 2011). On the Palestinian side, while

³ See <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokehasata021212.aspx>.

some researchers concluded that the school textbooks negatively stereotype the Jews and delegitimize Israel (e.g., Groiss, 2002, 2009; Marcus & Crook, 2007), other studies concluded that the books do not contain anti-Jewish incitement or delegitimization of Jews and Israelis (e.g., Brown, 2003; Reiss, 2004).

In view of these controversial findings and heated public debate, the present study employed new methods to increase objectivity of findings. First, the study was carried out by a joint Israeli/Palestinian research team fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew. Second, textbooks were analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research team created *standardized and manualized quantitative rating criteria* using categories for content analysis based on the conceptual framework developed and used in previous qualitative studies (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1998a, 1998b; Nasie & Bar-Tal, 2012). Third, the same team used the same methods at the same time to analyze both Israeli and Palestinian books, with analysis of both Israeli books and Palestinian books by both Israelis and Palestinians. Fourth, individual raters entered data online to a central database so that no member of the research team knew how data were adding up while data acquisition was ongoing. Fifth, a subset of books was analyzed independently by two raters to allow evaluation of interrater reliability. Sixth, an international advisory panel of experts in textbook analysis evaluated study methods prior to data acquisition, participated in developing data analytic strategies, and contributed to interpretation of the study's findings.

In addition, the study was comprehensive in scope. The Israeli educational system in Hebrew is divided into three tracks: state-secular, state-religious, and independent ultra-orthodox. The law outlines the objectives of state education with regard to teaching universal values; the values of the state of Israel as both Jewish and democratic; history and heritage of the land of Israel and of the Jewish people; remembrance of the Holocaust and heroism; development of the child's personality, creativity, talents, and intellectual competencies; and acquaintance with the culture and heritage of the Arabs and of other minorities in Israel. The state-secular system provides nonreligious education with curriculum approved and supervised by the Israeli Ministry of Education (IMoE). The state religious system (includes about 18% of the Jewish pupils) educates "to a life of *Torah* and *mitzvot* [religious commandments] according to the religious tradition and in the spirit of religious Zionism" (State Education Law, 1952–53). Both systems provide the general objectives, directions, and guidelines that need to be followed, but schools and teachers have wide degrees of freedom around how to carry out their implementations. The state religious system was granted administrative and ideological autonomy and a great deal of independence to choose curricula and textbooks which are required to meet specific criteria of the religious-national code (Gross, 2003). Still each textbook used in both state systems must be confirmed by the Textbooks Confirmation Department in the IMoE. Specifically, school textbooks are written by individuals (until the mid-1990s, they were also written by the department of curricula of the Ministry of Education) who must base their writing on the published curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. Eventually every written book is examined by experts chosen by the Ministry of Education. In very few cases in 2000 were submitted books disqualified and not allowed to be used by the schools. Usually school text books being written in line with the formal and informal guideline are approved.

The Ultra-Orthodox system (with about 24% of Jewish pupils) is separate and autonomous—it is related to political parties with the goal of preserving Ultra-Orthodox Jewish religious life. According to Maoz (2007), there are at least 15 variants of school networks that belong to different Ultra-Orthodox communities, but three communities are dominant. Each of them has its own curricula and textbooks. The uniting characteristics of the different Ultra-Orthodox school networks are that they focus almost entirely on the study of holy books and offer very little in terms of secular subjects. These schools present a relatively closed, undisputable religious dogma. In this study, we considered all books approved by the IMoE for the state secular and religious schools and a sample of books purchased from ultraorthodox schoolbook stores.

The Palestinian educational system in the West Bank and Gaza was under Jordanian and Egyptian direction from the 1948 war until 1967, and from 1967 until 1994 it was under the control of the Israeli Military Authority. The Palestinian Ministry of Education (PMoE) was established in 1994 and has stated aims of preparing Palestinian children professionally and scientifically; enhancing Palestinians understanding of their history, culture, heritages, aspirations, and identity; emphasizing human values such as freedom, justice, and equality; developing children's technological and communicative abilities; and finally, widening their global understanding and willingness to live in the world. Approximately 70% of Palestinian children attend public or governmental schools in the West Bank and Gaza; 23% attend UNRWA schools including 67% of children in Gaza (the United Nations Relief and Work Agency); 11% attend private schools; and 0.1%, or about 800 students, attend religious schools with an Islamic religious curriculum (six schools in the West Bank and two in Gaza). All public and UNRWA schools use the same set of books approved by the PMoE. Private schools supplement the PMoE books with others to prepare students for further education abroad (Adwan, 2006). In terms of approval, the Palestinian school textbooks are written by the sponsors of the Ministry of Education, and thus they are in line with the official narrative (Adwan, 2001). The schools are centralized under the supervision of the Ministry of Education which dictates their way of teaching and contents of instructions. Nevertheless, there are differences of openness among schools in the way they carry out the guidelines.

Methods

Selection of Books

Books approved⁴ by the IMoE in 2011 for grades 1–12 were analyzed from the Israeli State Schools—both religious and secular tracks. In addition, schoolbooks used by the Israeli independent Ultraorthodox schools were analyzed. On the Palestinian side, we analyzed schoolbooks written and approved by the PMoE⁵ for 2011. In addition, we also analyzed books produced in Jordan and used in eight schools with a primary Islamic religious curriculum utilized by 700–800 students. Books in the following subject areas were included: Literature, History, Languages (Arabic and Hebrew), Geography, Social Studies, Civic/National Education, and Religion. The holy scriptures themselves, and books designed for scriptural study and commentary, were not included, but quotes from religious scripture (e.g., Hadith and religious codes) were included when used in books from included subject areas. From the IMoE, 381 books were identified as being in the target subject areas. Books from Ultraorthodox schools in appropriate topic areas were purchased directly from book stores, with 55 and 66 books used by the school system of Agudat Israel⁶ and Maayan,⁷ respectively. All books approved and provided for use by the Palestinian Ministry of Education were considered, and 142 were identified as being in the target subject areas. Ten books used in the Palestinian religious schools were obtained, with six identified as being in the target subject areas. In total, 492 Israeli school textbooks and 148 Palestinian school textbooks were evaluated.

⁴ Israeli and Palestinian systems are not allowed to use school textbooks which are not approved by the ministries of education.

⁵ In this vein, it is important to note that Israelis have produced their own schoolbooks for over 60 years, and scholarly work has shown changes in the national narrative as presented in the schoolbooks in association with self-review and with changes in the political climate (e.g., Kizel, 2008; Podeh, 2002; Yogev, 2010). Palestinians, on the other hand, have only started in 2000 developing and writing their school textbooks for grades 1–12 in all subject matters, and there has been little analysis of the current curriculum (e.g., Adwan, 2006).

⁶ Religious schools of the Agudat Israel operate outside the public system since they are controlled by the Ashkenazi Ultra-Orthodox sector.

⁷ Independent religious schools of Maayan are controlled by the Sephardic political religious orthodox party Shas.

Analysis

Books were each ranked from 0 to 5 with regard to the degree to which study themes (enumerated above and below) were represented: Level 0 contained no pages relevant to study themes; in Level 1 up to 10% of pages relevant; in Level 2, 11% to 30% of pages were relevant; in Level 3, 31% to 50% of pages were relevant; Level 4 had 51% to 70% relevant pages; and in Level 5, over 70% of pages were relevant (see Table 1). Nearly all Palestinian books with any material devoted to study themes were analyzed (Levels 1–5). Nearly all Israeli books in levels 3–5 were analyzed, and other books were selected randomly from levels 1 and 2. A total of 74 Israeli books and 94 Palestinian books were analyzed. Among Israeli books, 21 were used in state secular schools, 20 in state religious schools, 18 in both state secular and religious schools, and 15 in Ultra-Orthodox schools. Israeli research assistants analyzed approximately one-third of the Palestinian and two-thirds of the Israeli books. Palestinian research assistants analyzed approximately one-third of the Israeli and two-thirds of the Palestinian books.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of the analysis was a literary piece (LP) that provides a holistic presentation of a topic. A Literary piece can be a poem, story, chapter, essay, map, photograph, and so on. In the case of readers, the unit can be very short—as short as a few sentences—while in the case of a history books, the unit can be a chapter containing dozens of pages. A total of 2,188 LPs from Israeli books and 960 from Palestinian books were analyzed.

Each literary piece was analyzed according to the coding system developed for the present study based on a conceptual framework proposed by Bar-Tal (2007, 2013) and used in a study by Bar-Tal (1998b). The present article focuses on reporting two themes: (1) Portraying the “Other” Group; (2) Portraying One’s Own Group. Raters followed a manual in English, Arabic, and Hebrew with instructions and anchor points for each question.

Categories of the Coding System

Portrayal of the “Other.” In Palestinian books, the Other refers to Jews in general, Jews in Israel, Israelis, Zionists, and Jews in other countries. In Israeli books, the Other refers to Arabs in general, Muslims, Christians, and Palestinians. Evaluation of material related to this primary study theme was structured by a series of specific queries. Who is described, how are they characterized, and what are they doing? Is the characterization of the Other very negative, negative, neutral, positive, or very positive? If the characterization was considered to be very negative, it was then further characterized as subhuman (e.g., like an animal), having extreme negative traits (e.g., thieves or murders), as like a group recognized as an extreme negative outlier (barbarians), as the enemy, as

Table 1. Number of Books with Each Level of Content Relevant to Study Themes and the Number Content-Analyzed

	Palestinian Books: Total	Palestinian Books: Analyzed	Israeli Books: Total	Israeli Books: Analyzed
Level 0	40	0	187	0
Level 1	49 (6 Waqf)	40	173	12
Level 2	41	39	107	38
Level 3	13	10	14	14
Level 4	2	2	3	2
Level 5	3	3	8	8
Total	148	94	492	74

a demon, or as an illness (e.g., a cancer).⁸ What is the purported intention of their acts, and are they represented as victims, perpetrators, or bystanders?

In order to provide an internal comparison, the same categories were used in the analysis of passages *portraying the self-group*. Since the purpose of this section was to provide a general comparison profile and because LPs describing the self-collective were quite common, this section was completed on approximately the first half of the books analyzed only. In Palestinian books, presentation of the self-group refers to Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims, and Arab Christians. In Israeli books, presentation of the self-group refers to Jews, Israelis, and Zionists.

Analysis was done in the language of the analyzed textbooks, i.e., using the form in the language of the book being analyzed independent of whether the rater was Israeli or Palestinian since the raters were fluent in both languages. Researchers entered quotes from LPs to illustrate the basis of their rating of that LP. Quotes were then translated into English and Arabic or Hebrew. Over 1,500 quotes in three languages can be downloaded at IsraeliPalestinianSchoolbooks.blogspot.com. Selected quotes are included in the body of this report to illustrate the types of things leading to the quantitative ratings.

Coders entered their evaluations of LPs from their own work locations via the Internet directly into a database managed at Yale University by the data analysis team. The database and entry system was developed for this project by American IT Solutions and can be interactively viewed by following the instructions at <http://americanitsolutions.com/text-book-analysis>.

Interrater Reliability

Over 670 LPs were analyzed by two coders (two-thirds of them were analyzed by an Israeli and a Palestinian researcher and one-third by two researchers of the same nationality). Overall, 91% of the time they were in complete agreement or only one step apart (e.g., one rated a passage very negative, and the other rated it negative), and 63% of the time the two raters were in complete agreement (Figure 1).

Results

Data are presented indicating the number and proportions of LPs assigned each of the rating options in each thematic area. Differences among school systems were evaluated for statistical significance using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Since nearly half of the books used in Israeli State secular schools were also used in state religious schools, the two components of the Israeli State system do not constitute independent samples and were considered together for comparison with Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and Palestinian schoolbooks. Israeli State books averaged 267 \pm 110 pages; Israeli Ultra-Orthodox 231 \pm 98; and Palestinian 106 \pm 48. Considering the number of books, total pages reviewed were: Israeli State 15,753; Israeli Ultra-Orthodox 3,465; and Palestinian 9,964.

Absence of Dehumanization

Use of delegitimizing categories such as dehumanizing and demonizing characterizations was very rare in both Israeli and Palestinian books. Table 2 shows the counts of LPs from each school system rated as very negative, negative, neutral, positive, or very positive. Table 3 looks specifically at those rated as “very negative” and identifies them further with reference to types of delegitimizing

⁸ This negative characterization was based on the conception of delegitimization developed by Bar-Tal (Bar-Tal, 1989, 1990; Bar-Tal & Hammack, 2012). Delegitimization is defined as “categorization of a group, or groups, into extremely negative social categories that exclude it, or them, from the sphere of human groups that act within the limits of acceptable norms and/or values, since these groups are viewed as violating basic human norms or values and therefore deserve maltreatment” (Bar-Tal & Hammack, 2012, p. 30).

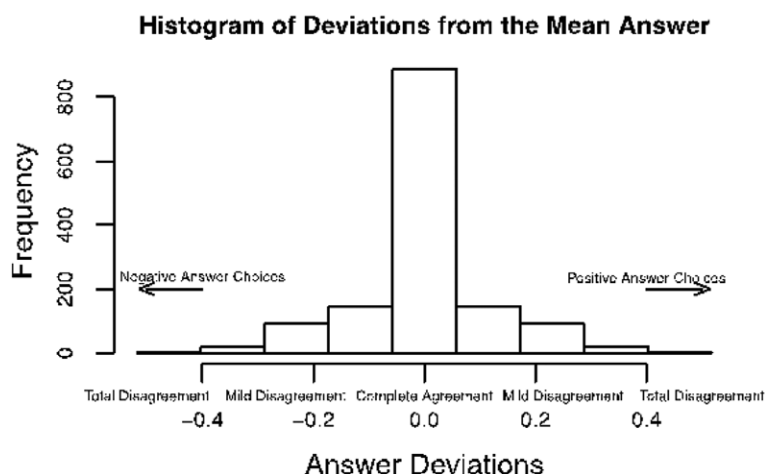


Figure 1. Interrater reliability: Numbers of times ratings of the same LP by two raters were identical, slightly apart, or substantially apart.

Table 2. Characterization of the Other: Counts (and percentages) of LPs from Each of the Three School Systems Ranging from Very Negative to Very Positive

	Israeli: State	Israeli: Ultraorthodox	Palestinian
Very negative	103 (26%)	21 (34%)	34 (50%)
Negative	93 (23%)	24 (39%)	23 (34%)
Neutral	157 (40%)	12 (20%)	10 (15%)
Positive	43 (11%)	4 (7%)	1 (1%)
Very positive	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3. Subtypes of Extreme Negative Characterizations of the Other: Counts (and percentages) of LPs from Each of the Three School Systems

	Israeli: State	Israeli: Ultraorthodox	Palestinian
Subhumanization	5 (6%)	2 (12%)	0 (0%)
Extreme Negative Trait Characterization	10 (12%)	5 (31%)	2 (6%)
Extreme Negative Group Comparison	4 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)
Characterization as the Enemy	61 (75%)	9 (56%)	25 (81%)
Demonization	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)
Biological/Zoological/Medical Terms	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

categories: subhumanization; extreme negative group comparisons; extreme negative trait comparisons; enemy; and demonization. The great majority of extreme negative characterizations of the Other were the “Enemy” and not the types of dehumanizing and demonizing statements apparent in books elsewhere and of great concern to the general public. The number of extreme negative characterizations other than as the “Enemy” per page of text analyzed were: Israeli State schools: .001 per page; Israeli Ultra-Orthodox: .002 per page; and Palestinian: only .0006 per page.

When observed, dehumanizing, demonizing, and extreme negative group comparisons were extensions of the primary national narratives described below and not as extreme or as common as has been seen in textbooks elsewhere. For example, Israeli books described an Israeli settlement as established upon the ruins of an Arab village that “had always been a nest of murderers”

(Ultra-Orthodox schools, *The Good Country* [הארץ הטובה: ספר למוד לידיעת הארץ], Grade 4, Part 2, 1991, p. 126, LP167) or referred to “masses of the wild nation” (State religious schools, *Open the Gate: Anthology for 6th Grade* [פתחו את השער: מקראה לכיתה ו], Grade 6, p. 130, LP1215) or “a convoy of bloodthirsty Arabs” (Ultra-Orthodox schools, *Country and Its Inhabitants: Israel Studies* [ארץ ויושביה: למודי ארץ ישראל], Grade 2, Part 1, p. 192, LP1280). Palestinian books referred to extreme inhuman actions by Israelis: “I was in ‘the slaughterhouse’ for 13 days (‘the slaughterhouse’ is the interrogation place, and the prisoners gave the place this nickname due to the brutality of the interrogators)” (Palestinian schools, *Our Beautiful Language* [לغتنا الجميلة], Grade 6, Part 1, p. 93, LP349), and “It (Israel) also destroyed large sections of the water utilities, such as by demolishing wells, and destroyed irrigation networks, water storage facilities, and water pipes, . . . [and] threatens to not supply a number of Palestinian cities with water” (Palestinian schools, *History of the Arabs and the World: in the Twentieth Century* [العرب والعالم في القرن العشرين تاريخ], Grade 12, p. 139, LP844). None of the six LPs in Palestinian books that were rated as portraying the Other in extreme negative ways other than as the enemy were general dehumanizing characterizations of personal traits of Jews or Israelis.

Consistent Negative Portrayal of the “Other” in Unilateral National Narratives

Books from Israeli State, Israeli Ultra-Orthodox, and Palestinian schools present history and the current situation from a unilateral perspective that provides many more negative than positive descriptions of the Other and provides little information about the religions, culture, and life of the Other. The self-community, in contrast, is characterized in generally positive terms, as a victim needing to defend itself against the acts and negative intentions of the Other and as wanting nothing but peace. Thus, books of each community undermine the Other’s presence by the combination of negative descriptions and lack of information about the Other. *Negative characterization of the Other is not the result of historically false statements but results from selection of true-negative actions and the omission of true-positive actions and information.*

Descriptions of the Other

Characterization in Negative Terms

When characterizations of the Other as very negative or negative are added together, 49% of LPs in Israeli State, 73% in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox, and 84% in Palestinian books describe the Other in these ways. Number per page rates of the very negative and negative characterizations were: Israeli State schools: .012 per page; Israeli Ultra-Orthodox: .013 per page; and Palestinian: .006 per page. The lower frequency per page in the Palestinian books despite the higher percentage of characterizations of the Other that were negative is due to the fact that, overall, characterizations of the Other in general are less common in Palestinian than in Israeli books.

Characterization of the Other in Positive Terms

The Other is characterized in positive terms in 11% of LPs in the Israeli State books, 7% in LPs in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books, and 1% in LPs in Palestinian books.

Overview of Characterization of the Other

Books from Israeli State schools had more characterizations of Palestinians and Arabs per page (.025) than did Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books (.018 per page). Both sets of Israeli books had more passages per page characterizing Palestinians and Arabs than did Palestinian books characterizing Israelis and Jews (.007 per page). When the distribution or balance of positive, neutral, and negative characterizations are compared, the Israeli State school books have a significantly less negative

overall balance in characterization of the Other than do Israeli Ultra-Orthodox (difference significant at $p = .004$) and Palestinian books ($p < .0001$). The difference between Israeli Ultraorthodox and Palestinian books was not significant ($p = .416$). The average ratings on the scale of 1 (*very negative*), 2 (*negative*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*positive*), and 5 (*very positive*) were 2.36 in Israeli State books, 1.98 in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books, and 1.68 in Palestinian books. Characterizations of acts of the Other were very similar to the general characterizations of the Other. Descriptions of acts by the Other were more common in both sets of Israeli books than in Palestinian books. Israeli State books have a significantly less negative overall balance in characterization of acts of the Other than do Israeli Ultra-Orthodox ($p = .02$ without correction, $p = .06$ with correction) and Palestinian books ($p < .0001$); at the same time the difference between Israeli Ultraorthodox and Palestinian books was not significant ($p = .17$). Average ratings were 2.44 in Israeli State books, 2.05 in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books, and 1.93 in Palestinian books.

Characterization of the Aspirations Attributed to the Other

Only two LPs in all the books suggested that the goal of the Other was equal coexistence: one in a Palestinian book (equal coexistence in two states) and one in an Israeli State school (equal coexistence in one state). Israeli State schoolbooks very rarely (11% of the time) made a clear attribution of aspirations of the Other. This was more common in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox (25%) and Palestinian (61%) books. The vast majority of LPs describe the aspirations of the Other as destruction or domination of the self-community. Israeli and Palestinian books differ, however, with LPs in Israeli books more commonly describing the aspiration of the Other as destruction rather than domination of Israel, and Palestinian books more likely to describe Israeli aspirations as domination rather than destruction of Palestinians.

Examples from Israeli Books

"Israel is a young country and surrounded by enemies: Syria, Egypt, Jordan. And on every side [. . .] enemy states are hatching plots that are only waiting for the right time to be carried out. Like a little lamb in a sea of seventy wolves is Israel among the Arab states. . . ." (Ultra-Orthodox schools, *Country and Its Inhabitants: Israel Studies* [ארץ ויושביה: למודי ארץ ישראל], Grade 4, Part 3, 2008, p. 118, LP1333)

Example from Palestinian Books

"I am learning—Zionism: a colonialist political movement founded by the Jews of Europe in the second half of the 19th century, with the goal of bringing together the Jews of different nationalities from all across the world, and amass them in Palestine and neighboring Arab countries through migration and displacing the Palestinian people in Palestine from their land in order to found the state of Israel." (Palestinian schools, *Modern Arabic History* [تاريخ العرب الحديث], 2009, Grade 9, pp. 72–76, LP 2722)

These two examples illustrate the above noted difference. While the Israeli book referred to intended Palestinian destruction of Israel, the Palestinian book described the colonialist intention of the Jews.

The Self-Community

Characterization of the Acts of the Self-Collective

The acts of the self-collective are generally described as neutral, positive, or very positive. However, some differences exist among school systems. Israeli Ultra-Orthodox (100% and .003 per

page) and Palestinian (88% and .005 per page) books almost exclusively present actions of the self-collective that are positive or very positive. In Israeli State books, in contrast, 10% (.001 per page) of the characterizations of acts of the self-collective are self-critically negative or very negative/evil ratings, 30% (.004 per page) are neutral, and 60% (.008 per page) are positive or very positive. When the distribution or balance of positive, neutral, and negative characterizations of the self are compared, Israeli State books have significantly less positive overall balance in characterization of the self-community than do Palestinian books ($p < .003$). The difference between Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and Palestinian books was not significant ($p = .8$). The average ratings on the scale of 1 (*very negative*), 2 (*negative*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*positive*), and 5 (*very positive*) were 3.8 in Israeli State books, 4.5 in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books, and 4.2 in Palestinian books. (Some LPs were rated as other meaning “not one of the choices offered.” These are not calculated in the above percentages or those in subsequent questions. Providing the response option of other for the research raters gives more confidence that the LPs rated as consistent with specific response options do indeed fit those options. The reason the difference between the Israeli State and Israeli Ultra-Orthodox books in self-characterization was not statistically significant despite the fact that the average self rating in the Ultra-Orthodox was even more positive than in the Palestinian books is due to the small number of passages analyzed from the Ultra-Orthodox books that described the self community.)

Positive self-descriptions are often in relation to the Other as an enemy. Here is an example from a Palestinian book:

The people of Palestine decided to wage a struggle and jihad with their money, themselves, and their pens to prevent Britain from establishing the Jewish state in Palestine . . . The tragedy of Palestine and the inexhaustible calamities which befell it provided authors and poets with their greatest creations and best songs, enflaming feelings and passions, and overwhelming minds until it became a source of inspiration and creation. (Palestinian schools, *Arabic Language: Reading, Literature, and Analysis* [اللغة العربية: المطالعة والادب والنقد], Grade 12, 2008 (2nd ed.), pp. 98–99, LP886)

Here is an example from an Israeli book:

“Since its establishment, the State of Israel sought to make peace with its neighbors, the Arab countries, through Israeli-Arab negotiations (the Six-Day War).” (State secular and state religious schools, *Being citizens in Israel- In a Jewish and Democratic State* [להיות אזרחים בישראל: במדינה יהודית ודמוקרטית], Grade 11, p. 332, LP3275)

In these examples, we see that while the Palestinian book glorifies the resistance to Jewish attempt to establish a state and the spiritual support of the writers and poets, the Israeli book refers to the Israeli pursuit of peacemaking in face of the Arab intransigence.

An Example of Self-Critical Presentation of Actions by the Self-Community in an Israeli State Book

In reference to violence in the Arab village Deir Yassin:

“In the middle of Nachshon, the battle of Deir Yassin took place, which developed into the killing of dozens of helpless Arabs [. . .] and created a negative and terrifying image of the Jewish occupier in the eyes of the Arabs of the Land.” (*Nationality in Israel and in the Nations: Building a State in the Middle East* [הלאומיות בישראל ובעמים: בונים מדינה במזרח התיכון], Grade 11, p. 113, LP1429)

Example of Self-Criticism from a Palestinian Book

“Omar’s policy with his subjects is an example illustrating how careful Islam is to guarantee subjects’ rights and provide them with a dignified life whatever their religion. When Omar saw an elderly Jew begging because of his poverty and need, he (may God be pleased with him) told him: ‘We were unjust to you, we took the jizya (poll tax) from you as a young man, and then we abandoned you in your old age.’ ” (Palestinian schools, *Islamic education* [التربية الإسلامية], Grade 10, Part 2, 2005 (2nd ed.), pp. 67–68, LP2789)

Maps

Maps of the space between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea were examined to answer the following questions. Do maps acknowledge the existence of the Other entity? In the case of Israeli textbooks, is it indicated that the West Bank and Gaza strip are occupied (i.e., a separate entity not part of the state of Israel) and from 1993 are a formally established entity (Palestinian Authority). In the case of the Palestinian textbooks, do the maps acknowledge the existence of the state of Israel? These questions were investigated by noting use of borders and the names describing areas.

We examined 304 maps from Palestinian books of which 83 were post-1967 maps including the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Of these 83 maps, 48 (58%) had no borders within the area, no reference to Israel, and referred to the entire area as Palestine. Another 27 (33%) included the Green Line (borders set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreement after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war) but had no reference to Israel and referred to the entire area as Palestine. Another eight maps (9%) had the Green Line and in addition separated Israeli and Palestinian areas by color, and one map (1%) further defined Palestinian areas by the terms “Areas A, B, and C” and “Area under Control of the Palestinian Authority” (designations resulting from the Oslo 2 agreements⁹). None of these nine maps used the label “Israel” anywhere. Finally, of the 83 maps, three (4%) indicated the Green Line border and labeled the area west of the border as “Israel.”

Researchers examined 555 maps from Israeli books, of which 258 were post-1967 maps including the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. These included 162 of 199 maps from state systems and 96 of 131 maps from Ultra-Orthodox schoolbooks. Of these 258 maps (which includes the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea), 196 or 76% did not indicate any borders (i.e., line, color, or other demarcation) between Israeli and Palestinian areas, although borders were indicated between Israel and neighboring countries (e.g., Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria), and the labels “Palestine” or “Palestinian Authority” did not appear anywhere on the maps. Since these maps are presented as maps of Israel, the absence of borders between Israel and Palestine and the absence of the label “Palestinian Authority” can be seen as implying that the Palestinian areas are unidentified. In the state system, 65% of the maps do not have borders, and in the Ultra-Orthodox systems, 95% of the maps do not have borders. In the 62 maps that included borders, 33 (13%) demarcate areas “A,” “B,” and/or “C” as per Oslo2 and indicate they are under the Palestinian Authority. In the remaining 29 (11%) maps with borders, the borders are indicated by colors or lines, but without labels or reference to Palestine or the Palestinian Authority. The

⁹ The Oslo II Accord signed in 1995 created three temporary distinct administrative divisions in the Palestinian territories, the Areas A, B and C, until a final status accord would be established. The areas are not contiguous, but rather fragmented, depending on the different population areas as well as Israeli military requirements: *Area A* (18% of the West Bank) includes all Palestinian cities and their surrounding areas, with no Israeli settlements. It has full civil and security control by the Palestinian Authority; *Area B* (21% of the West Bank) includes areas of many Palestinian towns and villages and areas, with no Israeli settlements. It has Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control; *Area C* (61% of the West Bank) includes all Israeli settlements (cities, towns, and villages) and also about 150,000 Palestinian residents in villages. It is under full Israeli civil and security control, except over Palestinian civilians.

demarcations generally appear to follow 1967 borders (Green Line). Among maps from the Ultra-orthodox system, the West Bank areas are named “Yehuda” and “Shomron” in 20 maps (25% of the 81 maps from the UO system that show the West Bank area). This is true of eight maps (5% of the 148 maps from the state system that show the West Bank area) in the state system. Use of the labels “Yehuda” and “Shomron” potentially adds further to the sense that these are—or should be—part of Israel.

The second research question regarding the maps focused on representation of Jerusalem. Of the 83 relevant maps in the Palestinian books, in 50 (60%) Jerusalem was not labeled at all although the area where it exists was included in the maps. Among the 33 maps that did indicate Jerusalem, 16 (50%) presented Jerusalem as a Palestinian city, three (9%) presented it as an Israeli city, and in 14 (42%) maps, the status of Jerusalem is left unclear.

In maps from Israeli books, the area where Jerusalem exists is part of 233 or 70% of the post-1967 maps (150 maps from the state system and 83 from the Ultra-Orthodox). Of these, in 99 maps (42%) Jerusalem was not labeled at all. Among the 134 maps that did note Jerusalem by name, 87 (65%) have no borders between Israeli and Palestinian areas, Jerusalem is similarly undivided, and again the maps can be seen as implying that Jerusalem is entirely within Israel. In 38 maps (28%), Jerusalem is presented entirely as an Israeli city, and in nine maps (7%) it is represented as divided between an Israeli and an Arab city (although in these the word “Arab” and not “Palestinian” is used). Looking again at the 233 maps, it is of interest to note that in the textbooks of the Ultra-Orthodox system, maps either do not note the name “Jerusalem” (69%) or note it as undivided city (28%), without noting specifically whether it is Jewish. In contrast, in maps from textbooks of the state system, only 28% of maps leave Jerusalem unnamed, and in 40% it is presented as an undivided city, without noting specifically whether it is Jewish. In 24% of the maps from state schools, Jerusalem is clearly noted as an Israeli-Jewish city only, and 8% of the maps note it as a city divided into Jewish and Arab areas.

Discussion

There are four primary findings.

- 1) Dehumanizing and demonizing characterizations of the Other as seen in textbooks elsewhere and of concern to the general public are rare in both Israeli and Palestinian books. In Israeli books, these statements, when present, were linked to the concern about the violent efforts of Palestinians and other Arab nations to destroy them through violence, referring for example to a Palestinian village as “a nest of murderers” or to “bloodthirsty Arabs.”
- 2) In general, both Israeli and Palestinian books present exclusive unilateral, national narratives that present a wealth of information about the Other as enemy and a dearth of information about the Other in a positive or human light. Historical events, while not false or fabricated, are selectively presented to reinforce each national narrative.
- 3) The absence of information of various kinds about the Other serves to delegitimize the presence of the Other. This important problem can be addressed by the addition of information about the culture, religions, and everyday activities of the Other.
- 4) The negative bias in presentation of the Other mainly as enemy, the positive bias in presentation of the self, and the absence of images and information about the Other are more pronounced in the Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and Palestinian books than in the Israeli State books, and these differences are statistically significant. Within the Israeli State system, the positive bias in presentation of the self in books used in the religious track is similar to the Israeli Ultra-Orthodox and Palestinian books, and only books used in the Israeli State secular track have statistically significantly more self-critical content.

Unilateral and Exclusive National Narratives

It has been repeatedly demonstrated that societies in prolonged conflict construct reasoned, coherent, and meaningful narratives that explain and justify events related to the conflict (Hadjipavlou, 2007; MacDonald, 2002; Papadakis, 1998, 2008; Slocum-Bradley, 2008; Torsti, 2007). This is especially important in conflicts that involve death, injuries, destruction, suffering, and hardship that lead unavoidably to uncertainty, helplessness, unpredictability, chronic stress, and distress (Bar-Tal, 2013). The findings of the present study are, thus, consistent with the extensive literature based on evidence from other cultures in conflict around the world. Both Israeli and Palestinian schoolbooks forcefully and consistently establish distinct unilateral and opposing narratives about the same period of time in the same region of the world (Adwan et al., 2012). This is a result of selective focus on certain aspects of history from a unilateral perspective rather than falsehoods (Rotberg, 2006). Both narratives present the Other as an *enemy* aiming to destroy or dominate them and call for individuals in their communities to be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice of life for the collective good. From outside of the communities involved, it is reasonable to assume that there are true negative things and true positive things about each community, just as there are about most individuals. The narratives selectively present true positive things about the self and true negative things about the Other. This presentation is problematic as it would be when introducing one person to another and describing only true negative things about each person.

Lack of Recognition of the Presence and Absence of Information about the Other

In addition to the consistent presentation of the Other as a violent enemy bent on destroying or dominating the self-community, there is a lack of information about the Other's religions, culture, beliefs, and activities. This lack of information constitutes a lack of recognition of the Other's legitimate presence. In this conflict, perhaps more than many others, this lack of recognition of the Other's legitimate presence is a central obstacle to respect and tolerance necessary for peace. Connection to the land on the basis of religion is of particular importance to many in both communities. Feelings are often strong and contentious regarding access to and ownership of holy sites. Average ratings of the amount of information provided about the holidays, holy sites, major figures, and major beliefs of the Other's religion(s) was approximately 0.20 on a scale where "0" means no information is provided, "1" means a few examples are provided, and "2" means many examples are provided. It is hard to imagine Israelis and Palestinians living in peace without their children learning more about the religion of the Other. But it is also clear that to provide more such information would also increase understanding of how and why the Other is connected to and feels entitled to be living in the area.

The Specific Case of Maps

Maps in books from all school systems provide concrete examples of contrasting and problematic aspects of the narratives (Leuenberger, & Schnell, 2011; Wood, 1992). In Israeli books, 76% of the maps show no border in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea implying that the whole area is Israel. These, and even many of the maps that do show borders, make no mention of Palestine or the Palestinian Authority (87% in total). Among the maps from the Ultra-Orthodox schools, 95% show no borders and 25% also label the West Bank as Judea and Samaria. These features of the maps in Israeli books resonate problematically with the central concern in the Palestinian narrative that Israel seeks to keep and expand occupied territories and eliminate any chance of a viable Palestinian state. In Palestinian books, 58% of the maps show no border and label the entire area as Palestine. Despite indication of the Green Line on other maps, Israel is identified

in only 4% of the maps. These features of the Palestinian maps resonate problematically with the central concern in the Israeli narrative that the Arab nations seek to wipe Israel off the map. These features of the maps shape the child's cognitive image of their homeland, and any subsequent division of the land is viewed as unilaterally giving it away (Bar-Gal, 1996; Leuenberger & Schnell, 2011). Israelis and Palestinians both grow up with patriotic attachment to the whole land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Differences Between Israeli and Palestinian Books

Books from Israeli state schools included more positive and more negative portrayals of the Other, more self-criticism, and more information about the Other than books from either Israeli Ultra-Orthodox or Palestinian schools. The existing scholarly work on textbook content has noted relationships between the content of a community's schoolbooks and both the security of its national political identity (Cash, 1996; Podeh, 2002) and its relative power in the sustained conflict (Firer & Adwan, 2004). Differences between Israeli and Palestinian societies in these regards may be relevant to understanding the differences noted between their books. Israel is a young nation and feels vulnerable in relation to the combined power of countries surrounding it but has established an independent nation-state; Palestinians are at an earlier stage of nation building. Palestinians are also the weaker of the two adversaries in this conflict, suffering greater financial hardship, higher unemployment, and substantially more deaths both in absolute numbers and per capita. The conflict, while sustained and deeply problematic for both Israelis and Palestinians, has more continuous and multifaceted impact on the daily life of Palestinians. They are faced, for example, with limits on free movement associated with the occupation that separate some families entirely, add large and unpredictable delays to travel to and from work, can make it essentially impossible to get from one Palestinian community to another, and contributes to the difficulty around thinking of it as an independent entity (e.g., Gordon, 2008; Makdisi, 2008). These considerations do not alter the reality of what is in the current books and the impact of that content on a culture of peace versus a culture of conflict. But these difficulties are important to acknowledge if information gained from this study is to be used constructively and not itself folded into the narratives of distrust and blame.

School Textbooks as Indicators of the Intensity of Intergroup Conflict

The present study provides a well-documented glimpse into the nature of the present relations between Israeli Jews and Palestinians and indicates that the rivals are far apart in socializing the new generation more towards the continuation of the conflict than preparing it for a new era of peace. Moreover, the continuous mutual accusation strengthens this observation signifying that the struggle over the narratives proceeds instead of trying to move towards mutual acceptance.

Changing National Narratives

The process of ending incitement, hatred, and misrepresentation of the Other in areas of sustained violent conflict is exceedingly difficult and requires deliberate and courageous effort (Bar-Tal, 2013; Fitzduff & Stout, 2006; Zamir, 2012). Rather than attempt to change any specific aspects of the historical narratives that currently exist, a first step may be to add some more information about the Other that could humanize them and legitimize their presence. This could include exposure to the narrative of the rival group (e.g., PRIME proposed project: Learning each Other's Trauma, Holocaust, and Catastrophe) and can begin before and help lead to peaceful conflict resolution (Torsti, 2007). One example of such a collective memory transformation is the conflict in Cyprus. Papadakis (2008) reported significant changes in Turkish Cypriot history textbooks in 2003 following the ascendance to power of a new government in Turkish Cyprus which had a more

accommodating view towards resolution of the Cyprus conflict. For example, the new school textbooks used very different concepts of nation, nationalism, and identity referring to “our island” or “our country” for Cyprus instead of the term “motherland” that was used for Turkey. Similarly, in Northern Ireland, two communities that were involved in a long and bloody conflict began to change their school textbooks to accommodate the different narratives long before “the Good Friday” agreement that was struck in 1998 (Duffy, 2000; Gallagher, 2010). On the basis of these examples, it is possible to conclude that changing the national conflict-driven narratives is one of the major challenges that societies face if they are willing to embark on the road of peacemaking. These narratives fuel and maintain conflicts. Providing a more balanced and informative view that humanizes the Other is a first step to seeing the Other as a potential partner in a peace process. Even minor change in this direction is one of the indicators that signal de-escalation of the conflict.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The study was initiated by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land and funded by a grant from the United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor awarded to A Different Future, a nonprofit public service organization. The researchers would like to express their highest appreciation to the research assistants who with their uppermost skills and devotion helped to carry the study: Iqbal Abdalrazizq, Samar Aldinah, Yonatan Belinkov, Sigal Daya, Uri Eran, Eman Abu-Hanna Nahhas, Alhan Nahhas-Daoud, Meytal Nasie, and Yolanda Yavor. In addition, the researchers would like to thank the managing editor and the anonymous reviewers whose comment helped to make the study clearer. Correspondence regarding this article should be referred to Daniel Bar-Tal, School of Education, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel. Email: daniel@post.tau.ac.il

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