The Impact of Protracted Peace Processes on Identities in Conflict

The Case of Israel and Palestine

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To António, Miguel and Nuno.

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About This Book

This book discusses the impact of *protracted peace processes* on identities in conflict. It is concerned with how lingering peace processes affect, in the long-term, patterns of othering in protracted conflicts, and how this relates with enduring violence. Taking Israel and Palestine as a case study, it traces different representations of success and failure of the protracted peace process, as well as its associated policies, narratives, norms and practices, to analyze its impact on identity and its contribution to the maintenance and/or transformation of the cultural component of violence. On the one hand, drawing from an interdisciplinary approach comprising International Relations (IR), History and Social Psychology, this work proposes an analytical framework for assessing the specificities of the construction of identities in protracted conflicts. It identifies *dehumanization* and practices of reconciliation in ongoing conflicts—what is called *peace-less reconciliation*—as the main elements influencing processes of othering and violence in this kind of conflicts. On the other hand, the book offers an empirical analysis of how the protracted peace process has impacted identity building and representations made of the 'other' in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It takes as a timeframe the period since the establishment of the British Mandate, corresponding to the antecedents of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, until the twenty-first century. In this regard, the book offers a genealogy of the dual process of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process. Exploring their parallel dynamics and even coexistence in certain periods of time, corresponding to continuities and changes in the conflict developments and the international peace architecture, this book offers an

account on the conditions that allow for one process to prevail over the other. Finally, and following the latter, it takes a more normative approach in exploring some empirically observable activities and practices developed alongside—as a consequence—and within the very framework—as a desired outcome—of the protracted peace process that contradict the tendency of dehumanization as a dominant feature of ongoing conflicts, thus favoring peace-less reconciliation.

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About the Author

Joana Ricarte is a researcher at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20) of the University of Coimbra (UC), Portugal. Previously she was a post-doctoral researcher at the same institution, as well as invited assistant professor at the Department of History, European Studies, Archeology and Arts (DHEEAA). Her background is in History (BA, University of Brasília—2010), International Relations, specialized in Peace and Security Studies (MA, University of Coimbra—2013) and International Politics and Conflict Resolution (PhD, Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra—2020). Her work has been interdisciplinary, in the intersection between International Relations, History, European Studies, Political Psychology and Sociology. Her overall work has sought to explain how dynamics of identity, power and otherness shape protracted social conflicts in both domestic and international levels and how these are related with the maintenance and perpetuation of conflict through time.

ABBREVIATIONS

CEIRPP	United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IR	International Relations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA oPt	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNC	Palestine National Council
PPP	Protracted Peace Process
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
RES	UN Resolution
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNISPAL	United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
USA	United States of America

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Introduction

This research was born out of the desire to understand the relationship between the existence of long-term peace processes and the persistence—and often increase—of violence among societies involved in protracted conflicts. In this book, I attempt to address the relationship between the protracted nature of conflicts and peace initiatives, focusing on the reinforcement of processes of dehumanizing the 'other', which is a central feature of most cases of multigenerational conflicts—although underexplored in protracted conflicts literature (Azar et al. 1978; Azar 1978, 1986, 1990; Bar-Tal 2000; Burton 1990; Ramsbotham 2005).

Dehumanization is a type of cultural violence[1] (Galtung 1990) that fuels conflict and contributes to its perpetuation over time. It is defined in this book as an element of identity that is constructed and reinforced within societies in the form of discursive and material practices. However, limiting the object of this study to an analysis of the dynamics sustaining dehumanization and its effect on relationships between societies would

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[1] The concept of violence that is used in this book draws from Johan Galtung's (1969) framework that goes beyond the idea of direct violence, introducing the concepts of structural violence and cultural violence. Cultural violence is "the intellectual justification for direct and structural violence through nationalism, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and prejudice" (Galtung and Fisher 2013: 12). This book identifies dehumanization as a central, although frequently forgotten, dimension of cultural violence in the context of protracted conflicts. For more about this, see Chap. 3.

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fail to reflect the complexity of protracted conflicts. Although dehumanization is the dominant aspect in many ongoing conflicts, there exist empirically observable alternative practices and policies that counteract its effects on identities in conflict. This observation justified a twofold approach that considers reconciliation as the other side of the coin. Reconciliation is a term that traditionally refers to post-conflict environments, meaning scenarios of formal peace in which a written agreement between the parties has been reached (Lederach 1997, 1999; Last 2000; Bar-Tal 2000; Bloomfield et al. 2003; Bar-Tal and Bennink; 2004; Philpott 2006). For this reason, the terminology 'peace-less reconciliation' (Biletzki 2013) is used here, in order to refer to practices of reconciliation in ongoing conflicts.

Against this backdrop, the book's main research question is how different representations of success and failure of protracted peace processes, as well as the policies, narratives, norms and practices associated to them, have impacted identities in conflict by affecting the maintenance and/or transformation of the cultural component of violence, defined as dehumanization or peace-less reconciliation processes. It then takes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a case study, which evidences strong dynamics of both protractedness and dehumanization.

Methodologically, this work deals with the role of discourses, narratives and practices associated with the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process with regard to the conflict and its transformation. It aims to analyze how these dimensions interact with the identities of and relations between the societies involved in the conflict. Exploring how dehumanization processes have developed and are addressed highlights the importance of culture, history and identity for conflict and peace. Thus, this book develops a historically based account of the genealogy[2] of both dehumanization and reconciliation in the Israeli-Palestinian protracted conflict. This is done by

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[2] I am using here "somewhat freely an expression of Foucault" (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 1), when I refer to genealogy as a method of conceptualization. My approach to genealogy sees it as a method of historiographic production that aims at studying the origins of a concept or process in a context-related manner in order to determine the conditions that allow for certain discourses, practices and norms to become possible in a specific timeframe. This approach allows me to unveil the genesis of the processes of dehumanization and reconciliation, focusing on the specific dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian case through an analysis of both languages and practices associated with the protracted peace process that help us understand the contemporary origins of dehumanization and reconciliation processes in this conflict.

mapping discourses and practices over diverse levels through the analysis of political discourses; official documents and reports; data on wars, violence and social mobilization; and media at key moments of the peace process since the beginning of the twentieth century.

This book is situated in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies and its epistemological perspective is fundamentally critical and interdisciplinary, relying on constructivism as its theoretical bias and also taking into account insights provided by studies on social psychology. This book aims at contributing to the thought and practice about peace by analyzing through a historiographic approach the relationship between protracted peace processes and the persistence of violence within societies affected by conflict.

1.1 Research Overview

The puzzle of this book is the contradiction between the existence of long-term peace processes and the development of dehumanization processes within societies experiencing protracted conflicts. It stems from the understanding that not only direct violence but also cultural violence tends to be legitimized and normalized in intergenerational conflicts (Galtung 1969; Burton 1990; Azar 1990). Dehumanization processes are an important dimension of cultural violence and become a particularly visible effect of this kind of conflict. They affect how representations of the 'other' are constructed and, therefore, the relationships and interactions between societies. Consequently, they simultaneously cause the conflict to be prolonged and allow for renewed cycles of violence, insofar as cultural violence tends to "legitimize violence in its direct or structural form" (Galtung 1990: 291). Hence, this work builds on many others which identify the role of identity, and more specifically processes of othering, as central to transform or deepen a conflict (Northrup 1989; Kelman 1973, 2004; Slocum-Bradley 2008; Strömbom 2013; Rumelili 2015, among others). It aims to explore the role *protracted peace processes*, either in their symbolic or material dimensions, have played in the reproduction, reinforcement or transformation of the representations made of the 'other' in the course of conflict.

To operationalize this proposal, this book analyzes the construction of both Israeli and Palestinian identities since the dawn of the twentieth century in light of their relationships and interactions in the context of the several peace initiatives—understood here as a part of a process in their whole—that were developed ever since, focusing on the inevitable

negative interdependence[3] between them. Through the identification of continuities and change, it approaches the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since 1947 as being constituted by three distinct phases corresponding to the Cold War period, the Oslo Era in the 1990s, and the turn to the twenty-first century. Although some might argue that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process did not initiate until the beginning of negotiations for the Oslo Accords, this book considers instead that it formally begins with the Partition Plan. Those who argue that the peace process initiated only in the 1990s and that have declared it dead in its contemporary phase take a different stand for its definition than the one I assume in this book. As we shall see in Chap. 2, I join the chorus of voices that consider that "the reality of peace processes is often a stop-start dynamic and a complex choreography whereby the sequencing of initiatives or concessions is timed to suit local circumstances" (Darby and Mac Ginty 2003: 1). Accordingly, this book approaches the peace process through a teleological perspective that allows for a deeper understanding of its dynamics, continuities and changes, as well as its continuous—symbolic and material—impacts on social identity through time.

By mapping the literature and practices on peace processes in the context of protracted conflicts, it is possible to realize that it lacks studies on how protracted peace processes affect identity by reinforcing or transforming dynamics of dehumanization and/or peace-less reconciliation in societies experiencing protracted social conflicts. The recognition that identity disturbances, in the form of dehumanization processes, are one of the main fuels for the perpetuation of protracted conflicts is already part of the narratives about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bar-Tal 2007; Kelman 1973, 1999, 2007, 2017; Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998; Oelofsen 2009; Lang 2010). These works have identified the obstacles to conflict transformation from various perspectives, ranging from a criticism of the peace process and its design (Darby 2001; Said 2003; Darby and Mac Ginty 2008; Slocum-Bradley 2008; Khalidi 2013) to the asymmetric character of the dispute—which puts into question the very usage of the term conflict (Khalidi 2017; Pogodda 2016; Bruneau and Kteily 2017)—and also questioning the ontological anxieties that are connected with the idea of peace in a protracted conflict (Rumelili 2015; Lupovici 2015). However, it lacks studies about the role the *protracted peace process* has played in the

[3] For more on the concept of negative interdependence between identities (Kelman 1999), see Chap. 2.

positive transformation or reinforcement of existing dehumanizing processes.

Against this backdrop, this book examines the mutual constitution between peace processes and the identities of societies, seeking to explain the dual process of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation that work in parallel in protracted conflicts. Taking Israel and Palestine as a case study, it traces different representations of success and failure of the protracted peace process, as well as its associated policies, narratives, norms and practices, to analyze its impact on identity and its contribution to the maintenance and/or transformation of the cultural component of violence. This book addresses three aspects that derive from the research problems set out above. In order to understand the ways in which protracted peace processes affect identity, it begins by exploring the dimensions of identity that are influenced by the lingering peace process; then, it analyzes through a historiographic approach the role cultural violence is playing on the protracted nature of conflict via processes of dehumanization; and, finally, it discusses how reconciliation has been incorporated into narratives and approaches regarding the conflict, as well as its changing meaning.

As I will explain further in this chapter, the research design presented herein has evolved deeply during the first phases of this investigation, due to the vital importance of the fieldwork performed for this book to its very formulation. Unstructured exploratory interviews and participant observation (Lichterman 2002; Snow and Anderson 1991) have proved to be useful methods for the (re)construction of the research design of this book. The former has the potential to promote the appearance of issues that structured interviews might suppress, and the latter is useful to understand internal dynamics and helps us see the social process in action, which is ideal for complex contexts in which there is a diversity of opinions, motivations and behaviors (Savin-Baden and Major 2013: 375). In fact, it was the direct observation of this case on the ground; the interactions with local scholars, activists, organizations and politicians; the two advanced training courses I took in both Israel and Palestine; and the exploratory interviews I made, that led me to a profound and more interesting reorganization of my research questions and arguments.

The field research to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories[4] was conducted in two parts: one in 2015 and another one in 2016, aiming to establish first contacts, discuss the preliminary versions of this project with local scholars and practitioners, and identify groups and organizations that developed peace initiatives; to make preliminary unstructured interviews with members of the organizations and groups, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), leaders of communities and staff of UN agencies; to participate in academic and practitioner-led short-term courses in order to learn from them and to map what is the local knowledge produced about the case study; and to preliminarily explore the field, check points and refugee camps through group-visits.

Fieldwork was a very important source of data collection for this project, although most of the information is incorporated in this book in the form of its epistemological direction and not as much as directly analyzed data.[5] In any case, most of the information I was looking for is available in the UN, governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs websites, and interesting testimonies are already documented in several ethnographic works about Israel and Palestine. For all those reasons, I decided to focus on document analysis and literature review to draw a historiographic analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The data I obtained, and in fact used, through the fieldwork were mainly personal notes and insights from informal conversations and lectures I had with

[4] Although the internationally recognized borders of Palestine include both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, due to the obstacles imposed by the Israeli government over Gaza, including the permanent situation of instability and the territorial blockade, this research refers to Palestine always as the West Bank unless otherwise noted. Therefore, it is important to highlight that no field research was conducted in the Gaza Strip. The closest I was able to get to the Strip was during a study tour to the Gaza perimeter in which I visited and talked to people in the Israeli villages of Ashqelon and in the moshav Netiv HaAsarah, both in the northern border of Gaza with Israel (see Picture A1. Gaza Strip Isolation Fence and Picture A2. Gaza Separation Wall "Path to Peace" in Appendix C of this book).

[5] The exploratory interviews and informal conversations were conducted with people from different backgrounds and regions both inside Israel and Palestine that bring diverse views and contributions to the peace process. The choice of the interviewed took into consideration an equitable distribution of people that differ in gender, age, ethnic groups, religions and geographic location, as well as a sense of opportunity, since many of those encounters were in fact provided in the context of the two advanced courses I took in 2015 and 2016. This wide range of relevant actors with whom I talked include representatives of the Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO), the PA, members of the Knesset, employees of the UN, the EU, NGOs and INGOs, as well as participants of local civil society organizations. See the list of interviews and the categories of interviewees in Appendix B.

local scholars, both in the Galilee International Management Institute, Israel, advanced training course "The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: Understanding both Sides" (July 15–27, 2015) and in the Al-Haq Centre for Applied International Law, Ramallah, Summer School "International Law and its Applicability in the occupied Palestinian territory" (July 24th–August 7th, 2016); printed pamphlets and promotional materials from several groups and organizations that deal with peacebuilding and reconciliation about their work; reports and studies from NGOs, INGOs, CSOs, the UN and both governments about the situation on the ground; as well as other materials also produced by these agents that portray several types of narratives about the conflict and the 'other'.

I encountered groups situated in the cities of Haifa and surroundings, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Nablus and Hebron. This choice takes into consideration geographic and political criteria. Haifa, in the north of Israel, is considered to be the city of coexistence while Tel Aviv is not only the capital of the state but also a city where most organizations are situated due to better perspectives on financial support. Jerusalem is in fact a binational city that is divided in East and West, respectively the Palestinian and the Israeli parts although it is controlled by Israel. Also, most international organizations have placed their headquarters in this city due to the tensions between different religious groups. In the West Bank, Ramallah is the capital of Palestine, while Nablus is the most important city in the north and Hebron is its homologous in the south. All three cities have important international organizations and vibrant civil society.

This research aims at analyzing the relationship between protracted social conflicts, peace processes and identity, focusing on processes of othering that lead to dehumanization and/or peace-less reconciliation. In order to do so, I relied on a variety of primary data which includes a series of documents from official and non-official sources related with the protracted peace process since 1947. To develop a genealogy of dehumanization and reconciliation (see Sect. 1.3 of this chapter), I decided to focus on the main moments of the peace process in order to perceive how the representations of success and failure of this process reflected in governmental speeches, policy formulations, and media reports have impacted the relationships between the societies involved in the conflict. I compared the evolution of the levels of direct violence during these key moments of the peace process with the discourse analysis of speeches, agreements and reports focused on the dimensions of dehumanization and reconciliation. The documents used in this analysis include (1) legislation, Prime Minister

and Presidential discourses (from both Israel and Palestine but also from relevant actors to the peace process), and ministerial documents available online in the governments' website and also obtained during fieldwork; (2) reports prepared by the United Nations and civil society organizations about the situation on the ground right before, during and after important peace initiatives (looking for changes in the indicators of violence—direct, structural and cultural); and (3) press and public opinion articles from main regional newspapers such as Haaretz and Al Jazeera and also from international media.

Finally, recognizing that a wide range of actors are relevant for this process—considering that all people exercise power in some degree, insofar as their practices have always the potential of reinforcing or undermining meanings—this book approaches the research questions through a multilevel analysis. On the one hand, it looks at the systemic level in order to understand how the protracted peace process has affected dehumanization and/or promoted reconciliation within societies. To this aim, I drew from the international organizations reports, resolutions, mandates and policy formulations to assess their impact to manifestations of violence among societies in each of the four periods under analysis. I also analyzed official statements, documents and discourses developed at the level of political elites (as they are privileged actors for reinforcing or changing narratives and perceptions that construct and transform relationships), such as members of governments and political parties, to assess how their representations of the protracted peace process have affected identity and interactions within societies. On the other hand, I analyzed the impact of policies, practices and discourses connected to the peace process on identities and interactions of societies by focusing on the actions and reactions of local and international media, social movements, universities, NGOs and CSOs to each moment of the peace process. This multilevel approach allows for the identification of practices and discourses that reinforce dehumanization processes as well as the ones that counteract these meanings by promoting peace-less reconciliation.

By closely examining the processes of dehumanization that take place in protracted conflicts, this book sheds light on the unseen and forgotten dimensions of identity, which are central features sustaining some conflicts. It also develops a framework to assess and analyze the elements of identity building in protracted conflicts, providing conceptual tools that may enrich the field of Peace Studies. The relevance of this research also concerns the effects of long-term enmity on the big picture of greater

politics. Firstly, this book adds to existing efforts to understand the social dynamics that enable the perpetuation of conflict over time through the investigation of the deepest effects of conflict and protracted peace processes on society. Secondly, and by addressing the co-constitutive nature of violence and identity in conflict situations, this book advocates that it is impossible to address one without taking serious account of the other. As a conclusion, this research places protracted peace processes, their policies and practices associated with them in a central position of the cycle of protractedness.

1.2   Protracted Peace Processes, Protracting Conflict

This book argues that protracted peace processes occupy a central position in the cycle of protractedness[6] insofar as the policies, narratives, norms and practices associated with them have the double potential of affecting identities in conflict by promoting dehumanization or reconciliation. The former is the dominating feature of othering in protracted conflicts, what tends to be reinforced by the interactions and new grievances sparked by protracted peace processes through time. However, the parallel and coexisting dynamics of both processes point to the appearance of empirically observable activities and practices that have emerged alongside—as a consequence—and within the very framework—as a desired outcome—of the protracted peace process. By exploring the dual process of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in ongoing conflicts, this book aims to offer a detailed analysis of the conditions that allow for one process to prevail over the other, which points to avenues for positive conflict transformation.

Although the theoretical ruminations of this book were developed based on the observation of a specific case study, that of Israel and Palestine, this is not an isolated case when it comes to the effects of protracted conflict—and, more specifically, protracted peace processes—in interactions between societies. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program,[7] 13 of the 243 conflicts since the end of the Second World War have been active for more than 35 years. The conflicts of Israel/Palestine, Cyprus,

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[6] For a graphic representation of the cycle of protractedness and its elements, see Chap. 3.

[7] Uppsala Conflict Data Program "UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia" (www.ucdp.uu.se), (January 31st, 2019).

Myanmar/Burma and the Philippines are some examples of ongoing disputes with no sign of significant positive transformation. All of them count on peace processes that have failed to prevent the escalation of violence, and many others were subjected to supposedly successful peace agreements, although there are still high levels of violence within these societies (Call *apud* Darby and Mac Ginty 2008: 304). Therefore, it seems important to explore the reasons why this apparent contradiction persists in many cases and how we should analyze and deal with conflict in order to proceed toward what some call a sustainable peace (Lederach 1997; Keating and Knight 2004).

As this book shows, this analysis is intrinsically connected with the historical developments of the international peace architecture and its dynamics (see Richmond 2022). Due to the drastic changes in the international world order, the repertoire of approaches to deal with conflict has been evolving fast since the end of the Cold War. Accordingly, academic thinking, terminology and practice on conflicts and the way they should be addressed have also developed over the last decades. While the rationale regarding peace and its promotion before the 1990s focused on the maintenance of a negative peace, the end of a bipolar confrontation marks a shift toward new attempts to build positive peace instead (Sabaratnam 2011: 14–16). Alongside this change is also the formation of a new collective understanding shared by the main actors and institutions involved in the process of building peace about what it means and how it should be achieved, what Oliver Richmond (2004: 91–92) calls "the peacebuilding consensus". This new policy formulation has dominated the approaches to conflict and peace at the international level since then.

It is important though to look back at the past not with the eyes of the present but putting in context former events as a means to avoid anachronist readings, which might obscure our understanding of history and its connection with the present. During the Cold War, ideological conflict and tensions between the two blocks limited the understanding of how to deal with conflicts to the idea of managing them, as expressed by the limited peacekeeping framework of the United Nations (Bellamy et al. 2010: 170–175). This approach was developed in the belief that *conflict management* was the best that could be achieved given the anarchical nature of an international competitive system (Ramsbotham et al. 2011). Although this is essentially a realist understanding, it can be linked to early stages of the nowadays commonly accepted and widely disseminated proposals of the 'liberal peace' theory (Paris 2004: 5). Moreover, it has promoted a

reactive and episodic approach to peacemaking that, even though differs greatly from the paradigm of peace processes that emerged in the 1990s, cannot be undervalued or set aside if one intends to look at the historiography of peace processes as a whole in the course of protracted conflicts which precede the end of the Cold War.

Conceptually and practically, this proposition tended to imply a very narrow and state-centric understanding of peace, as it was essentially focused on state-related matters, excluding non-state actors. The policies developed in this period were mostly limited to diplomatic efforts to mediate negotiated agreements between political elites and mechanisms designed to observe the application of cease-fires such as peacekeeping missions (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008; Richmond 2011; Campbell et al. 2011). Therefore, the root causes of conflicts and identity issues connected to them were not taken into a serious account. In practice this implied a rationale about peace that was directed toward negative peace (Richmond 2008) as most of the literature of this period was focused on 'problem-solving' (Cox 1981)—in this particular case, ending direct violence. Yet, as we shall see, this does not mean that peace processes during the Cold War did not unintendedly impact the identities in conflict by legitimizing one's claims in detriment of the 'other's', or by turning into another arena for conflict insofar as each actor perceived in these processes an opportunity to underscore its positions and gain recognition for its cause domestically and internationally. Although episodic, non-coordinated and, sometimes, even uncoordinated, these peace initiatives developed after the Second World War have remained part of the conflicts and their episodes of violent manifestations during the Cold War, turning into a symbolic and a material structure that, overall, has played an important part in informing the construction of interests and identities, understandings about the 'self' and the 'other', both in the state and societal levels, thus contributing directly to the reinforcement of conflict narratives.

Those approaches have been challenged over time by scholars, practitioners and policy makers who perceived the contradictions that rely upon the possibility of a scenario of formal peace in which social conflict remains as a featured variable (Bellamy et al. 2010). Thus, a radically different view was developed by the so-called second generation approaches to conflict and peace, that is represented by the assumption that conflicts can be and should be *resolved* rather than managed (Richmond 2002: 75). This is not just an issue of nomenclature, as it represents a specific way of dealing with conflict that corresponds to an "ethos of thinking that 'we' can intervene

to resolve 'their' conflicts" (Mac Ginty and Williams 2009: 24). Furthermore, most of the mainstream International Relations (IR) scholarship and policies dealing with conflicts after the end of the Cold War agreed that all states should resemble liberal democracies and that the international efforts toward peace should be transformed accordingly (Paris 2004: 16–24). This framework drew on Johan Galtung's (1969) conceptualization about peace and violence, recognizing that the deprivation of basic human needs and potential were the main causes of protracted violent conflicts (Azar 1990). This approach goes further from the previous, as it is concerned with overcoming not only direct violence but also structural violence, being also directed toward the societal level rather than just state and international levels (Richmond 2008: 99–102).

As a consequence, the debate about peace and its implementation into other spheres flourished, including in its agenda issues and expanded concerns such as development and political participation, as well as including other actors into the debate, for example, the civil society and NGOs (Sabaratnam 2011: 16), creating the idea that building peace was necessarily a process. Although this approach was still limited in terms of its practical implementation and its Eurocentric bias, it was able to push the discussions about peace beyond the state's concerns and security issues. Nevertheless, alongside the recognition of the urgency to focus on positive approaches to peace came the understanding that this objective should be pursued in 'post-conflict' scenarios, meaning that it should be deployed after the signature of a cease-fire and the conclusion of the negotiated agreement phase (Lederach 1997). Thus, the principle of the peace process as efforts directed at maintaining negative peace in the international system persisted.

The development of this new rationale for dealing with conflict can be examined through the United Nations Agenda for Peace that designed specific tools to guide interventions. The United Nations' mechanisms to deal with conflict were presented in this founding document in this order, as *preventive diplomacy* efforts, followed by *peacemaking, peacekeeping and [post-conflict] peacebuilding*. The latter is defined as the instrument directed at "strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development" through addressing "the deep-rooted, structural causes of violent conflict", as a "post-conflict" strategy (UN 1992). The foundational text for the policy of "post-conflict peacebuilding" advances a wider approach toward conflict, insofar as it considers structural violence as one of the

root causes of prolonged conflict. However, the distinction between the practical applications of these instruments on the ground is very tenuous, since they quite often overlap, and most of the efforts toward building a positive peace are left for the period after the signature of a cease-fire agreement between the political elites, acting as tools for the consolidation of what had been achieved so far in the table of negotiations. Moreover, the issue of cultural violence has remained overlooked in these approaches, thus failing to operate a change of mentalities and narratives that are deeply encrusted in societies experiencing intergenerational conflicts. Meanwhile, the situation on the ground tends to deteriorate, especially regarding protracted conflicts, in which there is a normalization of violence and animosity (Paris 2004; Paris and Sisk 2009: 2) that, I will argue throughout this book, have the potential to be even aggravated by the protracted peace process when failing to address identity issues.

Moving beyond this paradigm, John Paul Lederach stated that sustainable peace could only come through *conflict transformation*, suggesting that the former brings about the idea of constructive change, while some might argue that the word resolution implies some sort of attempt to discard the problem without addressing its causes and leaving no room for advocacy. Lederach built on the principle that conflict is normal in human relationships and that it is actually essential and even desirable as a motor of change. Accordingly, he proposes that conflict transformation "is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes, that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures and respond to real-life problems in human relationships" (Lederach 2003: 14). The author refers to relationships as both the face-to-face interactions and the very ways we structure our social, political, economic and cultural realities, bringing the societal level into the center of this approach. In this sense, rather than perceiving peace as an end in itself, conflict transformation views peace as an evolving process toward developing increased understanding, equality and respect in relationships, which cannot be done without addressing justice and identity issues.

Given that protracted social conflicts are defined as "identity-related conflicts" (Azar 1990: 2), protracted peace processes, when failing to address identity issues, have the double potential of acting as a force for positive conflict transformation and/or, on the other hand, normalization of the violent conflict and the maintenance of status quo, thus allowing and even collaborating for the development of coping mechanisms such as

processes of dehumanization of the 'other' which contribute to protracted conflict. However, the simultaneous and co-constitutive nature of these processes point to the coexistence of dynamics of violence and peace, dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation. The complexities inherent to all societies help explain why violence cannot be perceived as the only dynamic taking place throughout the protracted peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, despite (or because of) the very protracted character of the peace process, activities and practices that aim to provide new avenues for positive conflict transformation gradually became established in what we can call processes of peace-less reconciliation. Put differently, although dehumanization dominates in ongoing conflicts, it does not fully portray such complex environments. Even though the identity dimension has become a thriving field of study and practice regarding conflicts, more studies are needed about the relationship between the past and the present, aiming to understanding the historical impact of *protracted peace processes* on the identities in conflict and, even more, the role they have played in protracting conflict.

1.3   DEHUMANIZATION AND PEACE-LESS RECONCILIATION IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The case of Israel and Palestine is one of the most relevant examples in contemporary history of protracted conflict, with the important dimension of dehumanization at its core. In 1947, the year the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved Resolution 181 that determined the Partition Plan for Palestine, the world became familiar with the conflict between *Arabs* and *Jews* for land and ownership. More than 70 years have passed, and the situation seems still to be a stalemate, while conflict developments have caused it to become known as the *Israeli-Palestinian* conflict[8] (Khalidi 2010; Smith 2010; Pappé 2010). Although there has since been a peace process between the two parties, brokered by external powers (Khalidi 2013), societal interactions on the ground have contradictorily been deteriorating (Mladenov 2019: 1; Darweish and Rigby 2015; Pappé 2013; White 2009). This is particularly true since the end and failure of the Oslo Process in the 1990s, which led to a generalized feeling of hopelessness, thereby legitimizing the establishment of an orthodox and

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[8] For a contextual overview and further explanation on the developments of the conflict, see Part II.

radicalized political environment on both sides of the conflict (Cypel 2006: 291–350).

Among the main consequences of this process have been the geographical, political, cultural and social detachments between the Palestinian and Israeli societies over the past two decades (Pappé 2010; Chomsky and Pappé 2010; Khalidi 2010; Finkelstein 2003; Carter 2006). Expressions of this mutual detachment include the idea that the other side is responsible for both the lost opportunity for peace and the physical division that has been added through the building of the wall,[9] the establishment of check points and other legal mechanisms of segregation and movement control. Examples of radicalization of societies can also be seen in the election results of the last years, favoring political extremist parties such as Hamas and Likud, and allowing for and legitimizing violent policies toward the 'other', insofar as both organizations reproduce hate discourses and violent political practices. It is hard to know whether this has happened despite the peace process or because of it. However, it is clear that a process of dehumanization has been taking place, allowing for the legitimization of continuously violent policies toward the 'other' that are supported by most of the electorate on both sides (Kelman 1999; Bruneau and Kteily 2017: 6; Van den Bos 2020: 568). And, as we shall see, both the policies and discourses associated with the peace process, as well as the representations made by political elites of its failures and successes, have deeply impacted the ongoing processes that dehumanize the 'other'.

While this scenario is not limited to the Israeli-Palestinian case, the theoretical ruminations presented in this book were in fact developed in a specific time and place, through the in-depth observation of this conflict

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[9] The Israeli West Bank Barrier—also referred to as the Separation Wall or Security Fence, in Israel, and considered an Apartheid Wall in the eyes of most Palestinians—has been built alongside and in the West Bank since 2002. After the Second Intifada, the government of Israel approved a plan to construct a 710 km-long barrier, claiming that it was necessary due to security issues. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OCHA oPt), more than 64 percent of this project has already been built and almost 85 percent of its extension is within the West Bank itself. In 2004 it was considered illegal by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as it represents a violation of Israel's obligations under international law. The wall is accompanied by a regime of movement and access restriction, materialized in the existence of check points in specific passageways along the wall, forcing people to face extensive deviations and even prohibiting others from crossing in order to get to work or visit their relatives, both inside the State of Israel and also between some places inside the Occupied Territories themselves.

during exploratory fieldwork conducted in that region. During one of those trips, my interactions led me to realize that although there had been a peace process between the two parties and brokered by all sorts of external powers since 1947, the relationships between the Israeli and the Palestinian societies seemed to be deteriorating. Interviews conducted in 2015 and 2016 with Israeli and Palestinian scholars, activists and politicians,[10] as well as informal conversations with ordinary people, were unanimous in stating that the turn to the twenty-first century witnessed a deterioration of the interactions between regular Israelis and Palestinians,[11] what most of them attributed to the construction of the Separation Wall and the policies of movement control that have led to a *de facto* detachment between the two societies.[12]

It was at this point that, in the context of the interactions I had with scholars, practitioners, international civil servants, ordinary people, members of both governments and diplomatic missions to Ramallah,[13] I started to realize that dehumanization was a central part of the everyday vocabulary of both Israelis and Palestinians. In fact, despite underdeveloped in the literature about peacebuilding,[14] the term dehumanization is becoming more and more embedded in common language and is frequently referred to by local activists, CSOs and NGOs. However, it soon became clear to me that dehumanization was not a contemporary process. Although it has definitely contributed to deepening the conflict and reinforcing dominant intersubjective meanings such as enmity and conflict, as we shall see further in Part II of this book, its origins dated back to the first

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[10] For the list of interviews and categories of interviewees, see Appendix B in the end of this book.

[11] It is worth noting that this is also the official understanding of the UN. For more on the current situation, see the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East of October 28, 2019 (Mladenov 2019).

[12] See Pictures A4, A5, A6 and A7 in Appendix C of this book.

[13] The concept of dehumanization was specifically mentioned during the interviews conducted in 2015 with interviewees 1, 2, 4, 9, 10, 13 and 15. The remaining interviewees of this year, although not mentioning specifically dehumanization, referred to at least one of its dimensions identified in Table 3.1 of Chap. 3, being the denial of the 'other's' identity, conflicting narratives about the past and policies that actively promote inequality and individual discrimination against the law as the main issues of this conflict.

[14] For a notable exception, which informed the theoretical framework of this book, see Herbert C. Kelman's vast work on dehumanization and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Kelman 1973, 1999, 2004, among others).

interactions between the recently established Zionist Movement in the end of the nineteenth century and the Arab autochthonous population of Palestine. Thus, since both the concept and practices of dehumanizing the 'other' are closely related to the concept of identity and to processes of identity building (see Chaps. 2 and 3), this book frames this analysis from the beginning of the twentieth century (see Chap. 4) to nowadays. As explained before, I rely on a historiographic approach that aims at exploring continuities and changes in the dynamics under analysis, which allowed me to identify three phases of the protracted peace process, preceded by what I call the embryonic phase of such process.

As we shall see, the recognition of a legitimate Israeli identity is not a consequence of this conflict, but the worldwide acceptance of their national aspiration claims is expressed in the approval of the United Nations General Assembly's Resolution 181 (UN 1947) that determines the partition of the region and the establishment of two national states: one Arab and another one Jewish. This first phase of the peace process can be considered a landmark of the institutionalization of dehumanization, defined by Kelman (1999) as the denial of identity—agency—and community, insofar as the Partition Plan ignores the existence of the autochthonous population as a distinct identity group with national aspirations, by referring to them generically (see Chap. 5). For this reason, the contemporary version of this conflict, which includes the consolidation of the two-state formula in the context of the peace process, begins with the widespread international recognition of the Palestinian identity after the First Intifada that initiated in 1987. The following decade, corresponding to the second period under analysis, would be marked by renewed efforts to building peace through unprecedented direct negotiations between the two parties during the Oslo Process. The most important characteristic of the peace process during the 1990s was the ability to promote mutual recognition, though counteracting the already ongoing processes of dehumanization (see Chap. 6). Nevertheless, the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the failure to implement the agreements led to the frustration of expectations and a new period of radicalization that begins in the turn to the twenty-first century and that is still ongoing today. The third and last period identified, corresponding to the last couple of decades, has witnessed a deterioration of the situation on the ground, with the dying peace process serving the deepening of the status quo and, therefore, benefiting the strongest party of this asymmetric conflict (see Chap. 7). Nevertheless, it has also been marked by an increase

in local and international proactivity in promoting peace and reconciliation at the level of societies that, although has not been able to deeply transform this conflict yet, has played an important part in experimenting ways of positively impacting the ongoing processes of intensification of cultural violence in these societies.

This division between three main periods is explained by the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also relates to the international developments of policies regarding peace and its promotion. As mentioned before, the end of the Cold War and the triumph of liberalism operated a shift in the thought and practice on how to deal with conflict. The United Nations Agenda for Peace was published in 1992, thus introducing the concept of post-conflict peacebuilding. With the signature of the Oslo Accords, the expectations were that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would come to a settlement, so peacebuilding initiatives aiming at stabilizing the region and promoting a sustainable peace started to be implemented on the ground. The failure of these accords led to a schizophrenic policy development that persists to this day, since the perpetuation of this conflict over time brought about the necessity of deeply intervening in order to support the population, especially in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For this reason, the Oslo Accords are considered a turning point, since they represented a change in policy and the exercise of power both externally and internally on regarding to the conflict, allowing for a better understanding of the impacts that the peace process in its diverse forms has been having on people's lives and on identity perceptions. For instance, the Palestinian Authority was created by those Accords, changing the dynamics of power and politics in Palestine and crystalizing the wide recognition of Palestinians as an ethnic group with national identity claims. On the other hand, the failure of its implementation contributed to the radicalization of Israeli and Palestinian societies after the building of the Separation Wall, following the eruption of the Second, most violent, Intifada.

As per my already existing interest in reconciliation, I became absolutely astonished by the perception that there has been a proliferation of local and international NGOs and CSOs in both Israel and Palestine, whose work has aimed at transforming narratives, bringing people from both sides together and counteracting what they have already identified as a long-term process of dehumanizing the 'other'. That seemed to me as a type of 'peacebuilding industry' operating parallel to the peace process on the ground, insofar as all those organizations and activities have in fact

been supported and financed mainly by external actors connected to the peace process (the EU and some of its member states individually—e.g., the German GIZ—the UN, the USA, INGOs and CSOs, among others). The idea of 'industry' also came to my mind as peacebuilding activities have become a source of self-employment or a full-time job for many people, as well as the breadwinner of several families.[15] In this sense, they seemed to me as a consequence of both the peace process efforts and the extensive Western-led intervention in this region, that created a dynamic Western-like civil society in both Israel and Palestine. This perception led me to connect those parallel efforts toward building peace that are developed within societies with the peace process and a differentiated view of ongoing reconciliation, empirically observable in this case. What I realized was that the failures to produce and implement a negotiated agreement at the level of political elites were being compensated by incentives and support to initiatives at the local level with the potential of mitigating the manifestations of conflict and others that could transform identities.

Methodologically, this book proposes a genealogical approach as a means for conceptualizing and analyzing processes that constitute practices of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation. Genealogy as a research strategy accounts for the importance of historical processes (context), the conditions for the establishment of certain meanings (power) and the discourses, knowledge, and relationships that create them (intersubjectivity) (Foucault 1977). However, the approach to genealogy used here differs from that of Michel Foucault in the sense that his methodological proposal focuses on investigating "the constitution of a given discourse through the rehabilitation of counter-discourses that have been actively discarded" (Fournier 2014). Genealogy for Foucault is a type of counterfactual exercise, which focuses, then, on the literal analysis of what is "contrary to the facts" (Roese and Olson 2014: 1), thus providing the researcher with the conditions to analyze *what could have happened*, instead of the historical processes that have in fact developed within a specific context. Rather, I am more interested in the *conditions* that allow for

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[15] When I relate the idea of a 'peacebuilding industry' to the one of 'workers', I do not mean to be interpreted as having done so in a judgmental way. What in fact has been happening is that (struggling against) the conflict has become a way of living for many people in both societies and even internationals. It is worth noting that even us scholars have not been immune to the peacebuilding industry that certainly develops in other contexts of protracted conflicts and that I perceive as one of the tragic (although indeed well needed) side-effects of long-term conflict.

certain meanings and practices to prevail over others, what could be considered to be more connected to Foucault's concept of archaeology[16] (Foucault 2002).

Using the terminology of genealogy in this book is explained by the fact that the etymology of the word echoes the generation of knowledge. In this sense, the aim is to map the 'DNA' of both dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation through a historical process tracing of those practices. More specifically, the approach to genealogy developed in this book considers it as a method of historiographic production that aims at studying the origins of a concept or process in a context-related manner, in order to determine the conditions that allow for certain discourses, practices and norms to become possible in a specific timeframe. This approach allows to develop a conceptualization of dehumanization and reconciliation focused on the specific dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian case, through the discourse analysis of narratives and practices connected to the protracted peace process. It also provides a better understanding of the contemporary origins of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in this conflict since the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as the role that has been played by the protracted peace process in each of these dimensions.

A genealogical approach developed through a historiographic analysis of an in-depth case study also presents itself as a suitable technique to unveil dynamics that are not measurable through quantitative analysis. For example, research questions such as 'why has dehumanization prevailed over reconciliation in the Israeli and Palestinian societies?' can be better answered by this method. This is one of the reasons that this book relies on the choice of a single case study. Situating the research questions within specific contexts allows for the development of more focused concepts and deeper understanding of how shifts in meanings affect people living in a particular region—in this case, Israel and Palestine. Understanding the conditions for the development of dominant intersubjective understandings is important since they constitute people's identities and interests

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[16] "Archaeology is a process for working through the archives of a society (…) that have produced and shaped the boundaries of knowledge, ideas, truths, representations and discursive formations in different historical periods. Archaeology as method isolates and deconstructs components of accepted knowledge. It exposes the randomness of interpretation, the ordered procedures that made discourses possible and what conditions their unity by providing alternative accounts and uncovering popular knowledges, local beliefs and understandings that traditional history has disqualified" (Crowley 2009: 4).

(Wendt 1992; Risse-Kappen 1995). They also frame interpretations of behavior, thus influencing interests, agency and the legitimization of some policies and actors instead of others. In Klotz and Lynch's words,

> This conception of the exercise of power as the ability to reconstruct discourses and shape practices offers researchers a framework for assessing *how meanings condition identities and actions, why some dominate others, and when these patterns shift*. It also broadens the scope of our analysis beyond behavior to include *how people justify their actions*. [the italic is mine] (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 11)

According to Adler and Pouliot, ordinary people, social groups and institutions in world politics enact practices of assimilation or distinction in various levels, thus creating International Relations through their daily activities (Adler and Pouliot 2011: 16). This happens because practices are agential, being not only performative but also a means to frame actors, their understandings about themselves, and, consequently, their interests and actions. Practices are precisely the structured patterns of action that emanate from these interpretations, while the combination of language and techniques used in order to maintain those practices are defined as discourses (Adler-Nissen 2012). For this reason, it is essential to identify and explore the discourses that define and reproduce negative practices, such as dehumanization, in order to deconstruct the mechanisms that reinforce or undermine these practices, a necessary step to break with the cycle of protractedness.

1.4   STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book has two main parts, followed by a concluding chapter. The first part includes two chapters focused on identities in conflict. Chapter 2 discusses the specificities of the construction of identities in protracted conflicts. It explores the mutually constitutive nature of protracted peace processes and the identities of societies in relation to cultural violence. Chapter 3 introduces an analytical framework for studying processes of othering—the negative dimension of identity—in protracted conflicts, developing understandings and indicators for the study of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation that will be used in the following chapters.

The second part introduces the case of Israel and Palestine and addresses the effects of the protracted peace process on the identities in conflict. It develops, through a historiographic overview, a genealogy of both dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in each phase of the protracted peace process. It does so by identifying, from a teleological perspective and focusing on continuities and changes within the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, four historical periods that correspond to the genesis of the peace process (from the establishment of the Zionist Movement to 1947), followed by its first, second and third phases (respectively, from the Partition Plan to the First Intifada, the Oslo Era in the 1990s, and from the Second Intifada to nowadays). Each period corresponds to one of the four chapters of this part, covering the period from the British Mandate to the twenty-first century.

The concluding chapter brings all the previous elements together, making a final assessment of the framework of analysis proposed, evaluating the effects of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process to identities in conflict. By unravelling the dimensions and dynamics of the 'cycle of protractedness', this book contributes to the development and reexamination of key concepts in the field of International Relations, providing a renewed analysis about the role of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process to the conflict and its transformation. It concludes that even though dehumanization dominates in ongoing conflicts, it is possible to identify activities undertaken by local and international actors in the societal level that have developed alongside—as a consequence—and within the very framework—as a desired outcome—of the protracted peace process. In terms of policy design and policy making, the findings of this book provide some clues for the intensification of new—underexplored—avenues for conflict transformation that favor reconciliation rather than reinforcing dehumanization. Although focused on a single case study, being that of Israel and Palestine, the findings of this research can be applied to other cases of protracted social conflicts by way of lessons learned.

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Identities in Conflict

The Construction of Identities in Protracted Conflicts

The construction of identities in protracted social conflicts (PSC) (Azar 1978, 1979, 1986) is a process that bears specific characteristics. Identity is a product of memories, myths, collective stories, shared values, traditions and common projects (Smith 1997: 28–30). Nevertheless, it has also to do with both the identification *with* some and de-identification *from* others (Weldes et al. 1999: 10). Although most literature give more attention to the positive dimension of identity—the feeling of belonging or how people are identified and identify themselves—in the case of protracted conflicts, its negative dimension[1]—the detachment from others

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[1] This categorization of the dimensions of identity as positive and negative is not intended to be read as value-driven. Both the positive and the negative dimensions of identity can be developed in a constructive or a destructive manner (see Chap. 3), the former meaning non-comparative, self-sufficient, a perception of similar characteristics between members of a community per se that do not depend on devaluing the 'other' or overvaluing the 'self', while the latter would be a recognition of one's characteristics as better than or superior to the 'other' in a way that renders the 'other' an inferior status. Therefore, the choice of using the 'positive' and 'negative' categorization is meant to express the twofold process through which identification takes place being 'what I am' a positive way of expressing identification and 'what I am not' its negative counterpart.

or the difference from the 'other', what Herbert C. Kelman refers to as the "negative interdependence" between identities (Kelman 1999: 581)—assumes a greater role.

Edward Azar defines protracted social conflicts as "identity-related conflicts" that focus on "religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity, which in turn is dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs such as those for security, *communal recognition* and distributive justice" (Azar 1990: 2 [the italic is mine]). This is the case of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, one of the most relevant examples of protracted conflicts, in which the narratives that define both national projects are often expressed by political elites and leaders in terms of the relationship with the 'other', that is depicted as an intruder in a supposedly indivisible territory of the historical Palestine (Khalidi 2010; Sand 2010: 188). Both discourses place the 'other' as a central aspect of one's identity, since they are strongly related with opposing the enemy and denying the rights of existence to this 'other' identity (Kelman 1999). The relationship between identity and violence in these contexts then assumes the form of a continuum insofar as they are co-constituted through time. Therefore, understanding the historical processes of identity building and, more specifically, of the negative dimension of identity construction in protracted conflicts is central to understand what can be called the cycle of protractedness.[2]

Within a constructivist framework, reality is considered to be produced through meaningful action, implying that both structural continuities and processes of change are based on agency, which in turn is influenced by historical, social and spatial contexts (Fierke 2013: 187). This perspective renders a great deal of importance to ideational matters such as the (re)shaping of identities and the construction of perceptions for the simultaneous and co-constitutive processes of continuity and change. Following the constructivist ontology, the interactions between discourses and practices result in the establishment of dominant narratives and intersubjective meanings that define individual and collective identities and behaviors (Lynch 2014: 17–19), leading to the construction of social structures that simultaneously condition and are influenced by agents and their interaction. By emphasizing the role of constantly evolving shared understandings—or intersubjectivity[3]—to the process of rendering meaning to the

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[2] For more on the definition and characteristics of the cycle of protractedness, see Chap. 3.

[3] Intersubjectivity has to do with how "particular meanings become stable over time, creating social orders that constructivists call structures or institutions" (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 8).

social world, constructivism allows for an exploration not only of material but also of ideational structures. This is the case of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, which material existence through time is definitely a matter of dispute while its constant symbolic influence on the conflict is well documented and easily demonstrated. Therefore, by highlighting the concrete impact of non-material structures and ideational matters on conflict and its prospects of change, a constructivist approach contributes to a deeper understanding of the root causes of conflicts, by focusing on historical dynamics in light of identity formation processes that create the context for some violent structures to exist—and persist— in specific situations. It also allows for an investigation of the conditions that favor change in the form of the development of dynamics of de-identification that focus on a constructive dimension of identity, thus contributing to positive conflict transformation.

Building on these perspectives, this chapter aims to provide the theoretical and conceptual basis for addressing the impact of protracted peace processes on identities in conflict. Firstly, it explores the theoretical literature on identity and conflict from a constructivist perspective that is complemented by insights from Peace Studies. The following section presents the dynamics and characteristics of protracted peace processes, exploring the impact of time and continuous processes on the structure of the conflict. The third section of this chapter deals with the mutually constitutive nature of identity and violence—and, therefore, also of identity and peace—in protracted conflicts, drawing a categorization of identity and violence subtypes in order to provide a basis for mapping the policies, discourses and narratives that impact identities in conflict. Drawing from many others who place identity as the central factor explaining the mutually reinforcing dynamics of protracted conflicts and protracted peace processes (Bar-Tal 2000a, 2000b; Kelman 2001, 2004; Slocum-Bradley 2008; Ghazi-Bouillon 2009; Strömbom 2013a, 2013b; Lupovici 2015; Rumelili 2015, 2020; among others) this chapter concludes that peace processes in this kind of conflicts tend to become protracted themselves, turning into a structure of their own that impact perceptions about the 'self' and the 'other', thus influencing the negative dimension of identity—the detachment or difference from others–and, therefore, the very behavior and interests of actors involved in the conflict. For this reason, identity and violence must be read as mutually constituted in the cases of historical conflicts, making it impossible to discuss conflict transformation

without addressing the main categories of identity and violence, as well as their interconnectedness.

2.1   FRAMING IDENTITIES IN CONFLICT: A CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVE

Inserted in the context of what some call the "fourth debate",[4] constructivist approaches share an emphasis in the non-material dimensions of International Relations (IR), such as the role of social meanings, beliefs, norms, rules and language to power and politics as well as the possibility of change, highlighting the importance of historical and cultural circumstances to the constitution of the world (Fierke 2013: 188). Generally speaking, agents are seen to act in a world that is not only material but also social, since material structures are understood only in terms of the meanings attributed to them by the social context (Hopf 1998). The structural environment then provides agents with the conditions for understanding and defining their interests, meaning that "it can 'constitute' them" (Checkel 1998: 325–326). Therefore, in this framework, the role of ideas, norms and processes of identity building, both in the collective and systemic levels, are considered to be of central importance for understanding the world.

In the words of Nicholas Onuf (1989), international politics is not constituted as an objective reality, as it is a "world of our making". This quote reflects constructivism's critical bias since the "sociological turn" in IR gains strength precisely as an opposition to mainstream rationalist approaches. The latter privilege the explanatory power of "observable attributes" within the international system, theorizing that pre-existing structures constrain the choices of agents through the distribution of capabilities (Kurki and Wight 2013: 20–25). Those perspectives share an epistemological concern with the explanation of social phenomena through what they consider to be material, observable facts, what ultimately implies considering that actors and concepts are exogenously given.

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[4] Some refer to it as the "third debate" (Aalberts and Van Munster 2008) while others understand that it should be characterized as part of a "forth debate" instead (Kurki and Wight 2013). The "Great Debates" in International Relations (IR) have been responsible for the theoretical development of the field and even to its birth as an autonomous discipline. In the last 100 years of IR's existence, there have been at least four great debates. For more on this see Dunne et al. (2010), Ashworth (2002), and Booth et al. (1999).

Consequently, as summarized by Maja Zehfuss, "actors act in this pre-given world according to the demands of instrumental reason" (Zehfuss 2002: 3).

Constructivism refuses this view by arguing that "actor's interests and preferences cannot be treated as exogenous or fixed in a theory of International Relations. Rather, they originate and change during processes of social interaction" (Risse-Kappen 1995: 502). In a constructivist framework, relationships are seen as a product of historical processes and interactions over time (Wendt 1992: 404–405). Interests, therefore, are connected not to rational choices—defined in terms of material interests—but to the identities of the subjects—socially constructed and, therefore, subject to change. By relating the construction of interests and identities with the interaction between agents and structures across time and space, rather than to a rational choice conditioned exclusively by a balance of material power, constructivists give emphasis to the role of agency and the possibility of change (Karacasulu and Uzgören 2007). In sum, "individuals and groups are not only shaped by their world but can also change it" (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 3). This ultimately means that there is no ontological precedence between agents and structures, as they are mutually constitutive (Wendt, 1987: 356, 1992).

Thus, for constructivism, agents are located within a social structure that simultaneously constitutes them and is constituted by their interaction (Carta and Morin 2014: 300). This means that structures are created by the actions and interactions of people through time while, at the same time, these very structures "create people" through a process that constructivists call co-constitution (Barkin and Sjoberg 2019: 61). As put by Alexander Wendt, social structures correspond to "a set of internally related elements […] [such as] agents, practices, technologies, territories—whatever can be seen as occupying a position within a social organization" (Wendt 1987: 357). Those structures create the conditions, or the 'rules of the game', in which agents (either states, society or individuals) act and interact. However, those "social structures are only instantiated by the practices of agents" (Wendt 1987: 359) insofar as "the nature and configuration of the internal relations that comprise a social structure […] define a set of possible transformations or combinations of its elements" (Wendt 1987: 357). Altogether, structures in this view not only constrain the actions of agents, they also constitute agents' own identities because norms and shared understandings of legitimate behavior guide their

choices and provide with some kind of institutional identity (Sending 2002: 449).

For the purpose of this study, such framework is important because it provides a better understanding of how some practices, norms and discourses—for instance, related with peace initiatives developed through time—become so ingrained that turn into structures in conflict situations. Since these structures influence the (re)definition of interests, actions and identities of actors involved in the conflict, it is of utmost importance to develop a full account of the role they have played in the course of a protracted conflict. As will be further explained in the next section, protracted peace processes act as both material and symbolic structures in conflict situations, alternating between phases connected to conflict developments and the evolution of the international peace architecture. However, this does not mean that the reactive, discontinuous and, sometimes, even uncoordinated efforts that are developed toward building peace in a protracted conflict before the formal establishment of a peace process should not be read in their whole as part of a process with different phases and changing dynamics. From a teleological standpoint, this reading allows for the expansion of the concept of peace process insofar as it highlights how the mere notion of its existence—despite the obvious changes in its formulation and design connected with circumstantial factors—has influenced conflict, the actions of agents and their identities. It also points to how protracted peace processes in intergenerational conflict become a structure on its own. Accordingly, this approach allows for a better understanding of the place the protracted peace process has occupied within the cycle of protractedness, by providing a pathway to explore its impact on identities in conflict.

This book draws from several others who have already explored the interconnectedness between identities and conflict, as well as their mutually reinforcing dynamics (Bar-Tal 2000a; Kelman 2001; Slocum-Bradley 2008; Ghazi-Bouillon 2009; Lupovici 2012; Strömbom 2013a, 2013b; Rumelili 2015). In the field of International Relations, identities are usually approached either as the *condition* of the human and social being, an individual or collective *feeling*, the *motivation* for collective action, the *consequence* of collective action and/or the product of *power* relations and dominant discourses within a society (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 6–8). For constructivism, identities are a product of interaction and can be formed in conflict as a consequence of self-understanding and interests associated with it (Fierke 2013: 191). According to Finnemore and Sikkink

(2001: 391), "human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones; the most important ideational factors are widely shared beliefs […] and; these shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors". Put differently, identities are not material facts, nor do they exist per se, as they are the product of social and historical constructions (Anderson 1983). They are what Searle (1995: 5–7) has called "social facts", things that have no material reality and whose existence depends upon people collectively believing that they exist and thus acting accordingly.

Identities in this framework are not considered to be exogenous or pregiven, but endogenous and constructed as a function of the intersubjective dynamic of reality (Hansen 2006: 17). This means that they are unstable and constantly evolving due to the interpretation that is made of them through time (Browning 2008: 21; Slocum-Bradley 2008: 5), pointing to the importance of comprehensive historical analyzes as a method for studying the process of identity construction. Constructivists perceive this process as foundationally linked to the 'other' insofar as the production and reproduction of practices of othering—representations of the 'other'—are a central part of the processes of construction of the 'self' (Taylor 1994: 32). According to Cerutti (2003: 27), the recognition of the narratives that define one's identity has to do not only with the internal process within a community but also with the external process that relates with the representations that the 'others' make of ourselves. This characterization of the 'self' that constitutes one's identity is, then, a process with a positive and a negative component. On the one hand, there is the perception of common features and projects of a group or community that leads to the feeling of belonging—what *'we' are*—and, on the other, there is also the sentiment of de-identification and opposition toward the 'others'—what *'we' are not*. In cases in which long-term conflict is the only known scenario for generations, with a normalization of everyday violence toward segments of the population, the latter tends to have an increased importance in the process of defining one's identity since "the relationship with the other is the very site where its original identity takes shape" (Epstein 2011: 337).

Wendt perceive identities as what constitutes interests since actors define their interests in the process of defining situations (Wendt 1992; Fierke 2013: 195). This process of defining identities and interests through intersubjective constitution implies that shared norms, values and rules impact the way an actor defines him/herself and its possibilities of action.

Therefore, identity is a product of interaction and context and is constantly evolving through time. This interaction produces not only self-definitions but also definitions of the 'other' that, in situations such as the Israeli-Palestinian case analyzed in this book, might create and reinforce intersubjective meanings of enmity, conflict and, ultimately, dehumanization. Moreover, if identities constitute interests, the perceived identities of each actor in a conflict are directly connected with his/her positionality within the conflict, meaning that identities might reinforce conflict.

The relationship between identities and conflict has been studied from various perspectives. Scholars drawing from social psychology frameworks have explored the processes of identity construction in intractable conflicts, suggesting that identity change is necessary for conflict transformation (Northrup 1989; Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998; Bar-Tal 2000a; Kelman 2004). Nikki Slocum-Bradley identifies the processes through which people form perceptions about themselves and the others as the most important root cause of conflict, pointing to the double potential of identity to promote peace or conflict. For the author, understanding the processes through which certain meanings that define actor's identities are constructed in a specific context, examining the pathways that enable the development of peace-promoting identities, is the key for conflict transformation (Slocum-Bradley 2008: 1–5). On the other hand, others have discussed the impact of conflict on identities by proposing that the prospects of change (e.g., conflict transformation and peace) create a social anxiety that is connected with a sense of losing identity due to the necessary reconfigurations of the self-identifications, narratives and stories that have formed in the course of conflict (Rumelili 2015; Lupovici 2015). This view points out that the relationship between identities formed and transformed in conflict leads to conflict being a source of ontological security (Mitzen 2006; Rumelili and Todd 2017; Rumelili 2020), while peace processes and peace itself might be considered a drive for insecurity in identity terms.

This book pushes this argument further by dealing with the protracted nature of peace processes in intergenerational conflicts. Through the aforementioned constructivist framework, it is possible to argue that symbolic structures such as protracted peace processes influence the conditions, actions and interests of agents in conflict, thus impacting identity, perceptions and representations of the 'other' and the possibilities of change. As will be further explained in the next section, a teleological approach allows for a renewed reading of several initiatives that aim at

promoting peace as being part of a wider process on its own, which gains existence through a symbolic construction and narratives that sustain it. In this sense, protracted peace processes also become a source of ontological security and an obstacle to peace.

Next section will develop further this idea by discussing the evolving meanings of peace and processes in the context of protracted peace processes through time. The importance of analyzing these dynamics in light of the peace process between Israel and Palestine has to do with the role of context to the production and reproduction of violent practices toward the 'other', as well as with the impact of the peace process to the recognition and legitimization of identities and national identity narratives. While peace processes are supposed to transform the conflict in a positive way, the contradiction between the existence of a protracted peace process and the perpetuation—and even deepening—of conflict through time must be addressed. Constructivism helps us tackle this contradiction in the perspective of the impact of some discourses and practices on identity, interests and actions of some actors, providing an explanation for the radicalization of policies and of violence in the context of a long-term peace process.

2.2   Protracted Peace Processes: Definition and Characteristics

The concept of peace process lacks a critical (re)appreciation by scholars in the field of IR. Although the idea of peace process is well established in its technical usage and in the common language, being extensively referred to in academic literature and in the media, there is no consensual definition for it and the attempts to do so usually lead to imprecise labels (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008: 4–6; Richmond 2006). This is not just a technical issue, as conceptual developments encompass practical implications and might highlight some aspects and policies while hiding others. This reflects directly on the epistemic, normative and ideological understandings, rules and discourses that allow for some practices of peace, and for promoting peace, to prevail instead of others through time. As explained in the previous section, according to constructivist ontology, the social world is constituted by "intersubjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes […] [and it is] in the context of and with reference to [those] collective or intersubjective understandings" (Adler 2013: 121) that

individuals act. This means that the conditions, meanings and characteristics of a peace process provide the *context* or *background* in which agents position themselves, thus creating a series of conditions or possibilities that enable them to act upon the world (Gould 1998: 81). As this section shows, this is particularly so when the peace process is prolonged in time and becomes a feature of everyday actions at all levels.

Conceptually, most Peace Studies literature points out that peace processes, although frequently based on liberal universal assumptions that lead to the implementation of liberal ideological frameworks, constantly differ in each context (Howard 2000; Richmond 2005; Chandler 2010; Campbell et al. 2011; Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013). Accordingly, each definition corresponds to an ethos of thinking and acting, different theorizations and empirical practices which, in turn, promote specific understandings of peace. A definition of peace process is complicated to achieve, as transitions toward positive transformation of conflicts are usually nonlinear, and long-term processes might fluctuate between agreements and cease-fires. According to Jonathan Tonge (2014: 29), peace process has become a catch-all badge for both episodic and sustained attempts at *resolving* conflict, as this label generically covers all sorts of operations toward the possible ending of a conflict. John Paul Lederach (2008: 31) defines them as persistent initiatives toward reaching a peace agreement involving the main antagonists in a protracted conflict. It might also mean the whole set of tools that are used in order to intervene in conflict scenarios such as the United Nations Agenda for Peace's (1992) preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The evolution of the term and its practice introduced a diversity of variables and objectives, thus placing it into a more complex framework. According to John Darby, the term 'peace process' replaced former approaches to dealing with conflict that encompassed ideas such as mediation, resolution or management since the construction of a peaceful society is necessarily a *process*, which includes a cycle of diverse activities and policy initiatives (Darby 2001: 10–11). Although the diversity of variables involved in those processes complicates the attempts of definition, Darby and Mac Ginty advanced a generic conceptualization that can be considered as a starting point. For the authors,

> Peace initiatives can be formal or informal, public or private, subject to popular endorsement or restricted to elite-level agreement. They can be spon-

sored by the United Nations or other external parties, or can spring from internal sources. (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008: 3)

Nevertheless, it is most usually referred to as institutional, deliberate and sustainable initiatives taken by opposing parties in a conflict, represented by political elites and/or influent organizations, toward a written consensual agreement that aims at resolving the dispute (Wallensteen 2012), followed by other initiatives aiming at consolidating the recently achieved peace (defined in negative terms). It is, thus, a sequential process that follows predetermined steps and counts on specific tools that are deployed in each phase of the conflict.

In contexts of prolonged conflict, it is possible to observe the development of what can be called *protracted peace processes*. As noted by John Paul Lederach, long-term peace processes are characteristic of protracted conflicts since the paradigm of crisis inherent to that kind of conflict requires actions that are continuous, prolonged in time, and that recognize opportunities for constructive change in the midst of crisis (Lederach 2008: 33). Nevertheless, those protracted peace processes are frequently characterized by a changing meaning of the process through time, due to the normalization of conflict and the consequent lack of perspectives for peace.[5] For Rashid Khalidi, when this happens, the idea of process gains primacy over the objective of constructing peace (Khalidi 2010: xx). In those cases, the peace process might function as another arena for conflict instead of a forum for its transformation, thus running the risk of freezing conflict into a negative peace and failing to address its root causes. In addition to the effect of normalizing conflict and violence, protracted peace processes have also the potential to directly contribute to deepening the conflict and its motives. According to John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty,

> many contemporary peace processes fail to address the underlying causes of conflicts. Instead, they concentrate on the manifestations of conflict and often deflect attention away from the real business of peacemaking. There is a danger that the protracted conflict gives way to the *protracted peace process* in which the original causes of the conflict persist *and are joined by the new grievances sparked by the peace process.* (2003: 3) [italics are mine]

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[5] The idea of process presupposes a set of activities that aim at achieving predetermined goals. For Lederach, "'Process' underscores the necessity of thinking creatively about the *progression* of conflict and the *sustainability* of its transformation by *linking* roles, functions, and activities in an integrated manner" (1997: 79).

This observation points to the need to explore the impact of protracted peace processes on the relationships in conflict through time. On the one hand, this new set of grievances produced by the protracted nature of the peace process, which are still insufficiently explored in the literature, contribute to social detachment since those processes are developed mainly by political elites, thus promoting a gap between society and elite initiatives. On the other hand, failures and successes of peace processes also have an impact on identity building insofar as they reinforce structures and inter-subjective meanings such as war and peace, dehumanization and reconciliation. For those reasons, peace processes that become protracted share different characteristics and impacts that influence not only the activities developed within its mandate but also might have unintended consequences on peace and the maintenance of the conflict. Literature review on this matter reveals that it lacks works that focus on treating this kind of processes as differentiated and that explores their impacts on conflicts. It is thus mandatory for this section to take a detour and fill this gap.

As explained in Table 2.1, protracted peace processes concentrate on the present and, as a consequence, deal mainly with urgent matters in a way that facilitates the normalization of structural violence and never-ending dependency. Their mandate is usually extrapolated due to the need of responding to everyday needs of populations in distress. The main consequence of this is the development of peacebuilding-like actions during the ongoing conflict and before the signature of a final agreement. An example of this is the construction and maintenance of UN schools in

Table 2.1 Protracted peace processes

Time dimensions	Characteristics	Activities/goals	Consequences
Past is only dealt with after formal peace	Fail to address root causes of conflicts	Reconciliation as the end of the road instead of an everyday process	Maintains and can even increase mistrust
Present is dealt with in an action/reaction manner	Concentrates on present manifestations of conflict	Peacebuilding-like actions Humanitarian relief	Deals with social injustice but not in a structural manner Normalizes conflict
Future for latter	Minimalistic approach to peace	End direct violence through negotiated agreements	Lack of consideration Disregard for past/history/memory

Source: Elaborated by the author

Palestine that explain why Palestinians are among the most well-educated Arab populations in spite of the protracted conflict and lack of formal statehood. Nevertheless, those schools have the difficult task to develop and apply a *curriculum* that educates a highly politicized population while not conciliating historiographical narratives and/or transforming them in a reconciliatory manner. It also takes back the responsibility of the occupying power (Israel) to deal with the Palestinian population, promoting social detachment instead of contact. This helps dealing with social injustice and some of the perverse impacts of long-term conflict, but without performing structural reforms, this might lead to a normalization of the conflict instead, as frequently pointed by Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank.[6] The development of policies of liberal statebuilding that often clash with the reality on the ground also reinforces cultural violence and, therefore, structural and direct violence (for more on this, see next section). This is just one example of how the protracted peace process might contradictorily promote conflict and dependency instead of emancipation, reconciliation and, ultimately, peace.

Another feature of protracted peace processes is leaving the past for later. Due to the difficulties inherent to long-term conflict and the fatigue generated by decades of what are usually back-and-forth negotiations, the past becomes a bad word. In order to avoid touching deep wounds that could compromise the already unstable relationship between the parties, a protracted peace process fails to address root causes of conflicts, considering that reconciliation should be dealt with at the end of the road instead of facing an everyday process. An example of this is contained in the United Nations Agenda for Peace (UN 1992), in which reconciliation is defined as a final step of peacebuilding processes that should only take place after the signature of a formal agreement. A main consequence of this sequencing is that it maintains and can even increase mistrust.

Nevertheless, what is in fact observed in reality is that the order of activities developed within a peace process is not without problems. By leaving the past behind, those processes also push the future for later. This means that what is left to be done is a minimalistic approach to peace that does not correspond to the immense set of activities developed on the

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[6] This view was corroborated in several interviews with Palestinian scholars, activists, refugees and politicians (Interviewee 3, 2015; Interviewee 6, 2015; Interviewee 13, 2015; Interviewee 15, 2015; Interviewee 16, 2015; Interviewee 17, 2016; Interviewee 28, 2016; Interviewee 29, 2016; Interviewee 30, 2016; Interviewee 34, 2016; Interviewee 39, 2016).

ground simultaneously by a real industry of humanitarian enterprises that ranges from local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to civil society and even individual initiatives, government agencies and other types of charity workers. While at the higher level the basis to end direct violence is being developed through negotiated agreements between political elites, this often takes place without considering the correspondence of those initiatives with its acceptance at mid-range and grassroots levels of societies (Lederach 1997). At the societal level, however, all sorts of unarticulated and sometimes even contradictory peace initiatives are being developed without considering the transformation of those societies in a reconciliatory manner. The consequence of this is a continuous feeling of lack of consideration and disregard for the past, collective histories and memories that are the basis of the identity narratives of those societies in conflict.

Accordingly, in those contexts, the peace process itself might also contribute to the protracted nature of conflicts through the deepening of a culture of violence. Cultural violence relates with identity and representations of 'the self' or 'the other' in the sense that it refers to symbolic aspects, such as ideology, language, religion, art or history, that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form. According to Johan Galtung (1990: 291),

> Symbolic violence built into a culture does not kill or maim like direct violence or the violence built into the structure. However, it is used to legitimize either or both, as for instance in the theory of a *Herrenvolk*, or a superior race. […] Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right—or at least not wrong.

In terms of its effects, the concept of cultural violence is very similar to what Herbert C. Kelman (1973: 36) calls "violence without moral restraints", which leads to—or is translated in terms of—dehumanization. Those new sets of grievances, then, also contribute to creating new meanings, practices and intersubjective understandings regarding the conflict and the 'other'. They influence identity not only in terms of the construction of the 'self' but also, and mainly, regarding perceptions of the 'other', influencing directly in the dimension of negative interdependence between identities (Kelman 1999: 581).

Even in contexts of formal peace, the emergence of processes of dehumanization that can be connected to the protracted nature of the conflict

and the peace process impact identity, hence reinforcing the potential for cultural violence to operate. When those meanings become stable, they create violent structures that contribute directly to what can be called the 'cycle of protractedness', conflicting with the objectives and aims of the very peace process. The cycle of protractedness[7] is a graphic representation of the circular dynamics that sustain conflict (or, read backward, its transformation) over time. It is characterized by the interactions between violence and peace, dehumanization and reconciliation, expressed in terms of fluctuations in the identities of societies. Those elements—and their (in) balance—are portrayed in this context as the root causes of conflict. As we shall see in the next chapter, the elements of the protracted peace process outlined in Table 2.1 unintendedly collaborate to the reinforcement of dynamics sustaining dehumanization, thus placing protracted peace processes in the center of this cycle. According to Darby and Mac Ginty,

> Indeed, in certain cases, peace processes have become so ingrained that they provide useful avenues for conflict protagonists to stall, prevaricate and deflect attention away from genuine peace initiatives. Under such circumstances, peace processes, once institutionalized, stymie opportunities for real political change, and instead channel energies in preordained directions that often reflect international rather than local opinion. (Darby and Mac Ginty 2003: 4)

In other words, the protracted nature of peace processes tends to reinforce the maintenance and deepening of status quo, thus benefiting the stronger side of an asymmetric conflict (Khalidi 2013: 37) and this in turn reinforces violent structures and constrains the actions of agents, leading to a tendency of continuity, instead of opening paths for change.

As outlined in the previous section, for constructivists, not only material but also social and ideational factors constitute and shape interests and identities (Fierke and Jørgensen 2001: 42). Therefore, social structures, institutions and other interactive settings, such as long-term peace processes, have an impact on identities and interests that can ultimately contribute to their definition and transformation. Constructivist approaches help to unravel how the perpetuation of peace processes in time can be both a stabilizing and a destabilizing factor, contributing to continuity and change in a specific context of conflict. As a constantly present

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[7] See Fig. 3.1 in Chap. 3.

initiative, even though sometimes cyclic, peace processes have an impact on the imaginaries of societies, in political discourses and identity narratives. The representations of success and failure of those processes, as well as the way the main actors in such processes are depicted (e.g., their willingness or not for peace, their perceived roles as either—or both—victims or victimizers, or even if they act as spoilers of those processes), are ways through which peace processes influence the identities of societies involved in conflict (Khalidi 2013: 37). As an almost present reality of protracted social conflicts, it is then important to analyze their impact, especially because by losing the very meaning of process through time, protracted peace processes act as a structure of their own.

Taking as an example the conflict between Israel and Palestine, Barnett discusses those effects by arguing that the peace process for Israel has never been just about withdrawing or not from territory. Instead, it should be seen as constitutive and a reflex of Israeli national identity insofar as it challenges either its liberal or its Zionist features (Barnett 1999: 6). Additionally, Herbert C. Kelman points to the twofold potential of peace processes for both fostering peace or escalating violence, insofar as the representations of success and failure of such processes impact the relations between societies involved in conflicts, therefore being able to promote some sort of political and societal reconciliation or, to the contrary, radicalization and social detachment:

> The Israeli-Palestinian peace process that began with the Oslo accord in 1993 broke down with the failure of the Camp David summit in the summer of 2000 and the onset of the second *intifada* in the fall of that year. Relationships between the two communities have deteriorated steadily over the ensuing years and have often been marked by high levels of violence on both sides. (Kelman 2007: 287)

Understanding the dynamics of the protracted peace process that constitutes an important part of this conflict and, therefore, analyzing its characteristics—that is, asymmetry, impunity, lack of success, loss of credibility, questions of legitimacy of the negotiators, and so on—and the positionality of main actors within this process helps to understand the state's performance and practices toward the 'other' and the conflict. This also allows for an understanding of the definitions and practices of peace that derive from such process, as well as of the discourses that influence society, identity and behavior.

Next section develops further the relationship between identity and violence, by unravelling the practices and mechanisms through which dominant meanings are created and reproduced in the context of a protracted conflict.

2.3   The Co-constitution of Identity and Violence

Broadly speaking, the effects of protracted violence on the identities involved in protracted conflicts have been explored from various perspectives in IR literature (Galtung 1969, 1990; Azar et al. 1978; Young 2006; Bar-Tal 2000b; Sen 2006). Scholars and practitioners concerned with positive conflict transformation have also analyzed the effects of *peace* to identities in post-conflict societies, serving as an interesting basis for this analysis. Peace sometimes might generate reactions that could be unexpected. As everything that produces change, in cases of protracted conflicts, peace might cause an "identity dilemma" as people need to reshape their own identity that was expressed for a long time in terms of the enemy, changing their very perception of who they are (Lederach 1997; Rumelili 2015). Following this idea, others have argued that peace can even be considered "ontologically difficult" in a sense that people learn to routinize and cope with violence during the conflict but after a cease-fire or after a so-called settlement, all they perceive is a contradictory feeling of grief (Lupovici 2015; Rumelili and Todd 2017). Using the example of testimonies from truth and reconciliation commissions, Brewer explains that those feelings can become then part of the identities of the victims and their families, who are now immersed in an environment of forgiveness and amnesty that comes along (negative) peace and moves away from resentment and the willingness for revenge. In the author's words, these situations "bring a particular price to peace" (Brewer 2010: 36). The other way around is also true insofar as violence and conflict constitute the identities of societies and will impact their representations, narratives and discourses about the self and, most importantly, regarding the 'other'.

This process is not developed in a static way due to the simultaneous character of processes of co-constitution. As explained before, identities are shaped and reshaped over time insofar as changes in the social setting, defined in terms of historical, cultural, and social values and shared meanings, are continuously being performed through changes in social practices and structures. Processes of identification are not only related with the 'other', but they are also reciprocally related with the 'other'. This

means that the consolidation of an individual or communal identity impacts other identities in the making, which in turn may feel threatened and respond by consolidating their own identity (Mouffe 2005: 3). A practical example of this can be found precisely in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which both the Palestinian and the Israeli identities were simultaneously impacted and transformed by the representations of the 'other' and the representations of them made by the 'other'.[8] Practices and discourses of othering constitute, then, both the 'self' *and* the 'other' (Epstein 2011: 336). Since protracted conflicts are strongly rooted in historical and cultural grievances, identities formed and transformed within those settings are influenced by narratives and discourses of legitimization of the 'self' and marginalization/dehumanization of the 'other', contributing to the cycle of protractedness by reinforcing and normalizing violence toward the other.

Johan Galtung's conceptualization of cultural violence, that is explained as "those aspects of culture and symbolic elements that can be used to justify and legitimize direct and/or structural violence" (1990: 291), is useful in order to understand the consequences of the processes of othering in protracted conflicts. According to Nikki Slocum-Bradley, "while many factors contribute to fomenting violent conflict, violence between social groups (…) necessarily entails the construction of a certain perception of one's own group and that of the 'other'" (Slocum-Bradley 2008: 1). Practically, this concept highlights how the material and symbolic effects of cultural violence on the conflicts are more important than it would seem at first sight. While it is usually regarded as the less important dimension of violence, cultural violence in societies involved in conflicts is actually what creates the ideological rationale behind the conflicts, directly allowing for the legitimization of direct violence and a perpetual state of war against the 'other'. Dehumanization of the 'other' can be identified as a type of cultural violence that tends to become an important part of the identities involved in protracted conflicts, thus reinforcing the very nature and persistence of violent conflict against the enemy over time. It is used in this framework as the *relationship* between identity and violence, as will be further developed in the next chapter.

In summary, dynamics of otherness can create violent structures that insist and persist within a conflict scenario. Insofar as we can relate identity

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[8] John Paul Lederach (1997: 55) refers to this process as the past, present and future interdependence between the parties involved in a conflict or war.

with violence, we need to examine the connection between their dimensions and the perpetuation of conflict. In order to do so, as well as to draw a framework to map and analyze how the peace process has dealt with this over the course of history, this section proceeds with a categorization of subtypes of identity and violence, arguing that the co-constitution of identity and violence presupposes also that identity and peace are mutually constituted, what allows for an exploration of dynamics of reconciliation.

2.3.1   Categories of Identity

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the process of identity building is twofold. On the one hand, there is what this book refers as the positive dimension of identity, which is the feeling of belonging, the identification with a group of people. On the other hand, there is the negative dimension of identity, being de-identification, the detachment from others, the difference from others. This process of identification with something, and the corresponding processes of de-identification, is simultaneously developed in many instances of community life. For example, people can identify themselves with others due to shared past or memories, because they live in the same territory or region, as a product of collective social action and mobilization, and/or for ideological reasons such as being rightist or leftist. To each form of identification exemplified above corresponds at least one category of identity: cultural identity, national identity, class identity, political identity, and so on. Put differently, identity is not a plain and homogenous concept, as it unfolds in a set of subtypes or categories.

Although national identity is, for obvious reasons, usually referred in IR literature as the most relevant manifestation of identification processes in the context of conflict, there are several types of identification and many other practices connected to them. According to Lederach,

> Cohesion and identity in contemporary conflict tend to form within increasingly narrower lines than those that encompass national citizenship. […] In today's settings that unit of identity may be clan, ethnicity, religion, or geographic/regional affiliation, or a mix of these. (1997: 12–13)

Following this perception, this book identifies five main categories of identity that, approached as a whole, form the core of the processes of identity building in protracted conflicts and, more specifically, in the

context of the Israeli-Palestinian case (Table 2.2). First, there is cultural/historical identity, which relates with language, memory and traditions. Geographic/regional identity on its turn is connected to the feeling of belonging to a place. Both ethnic and religious identities are related with family ties and/or cultural considerations. And, finally, national identity is a category that can encompass some or all of the latter.

It is important to note that although Table 2.2 draws a schematic distinction between those five categories of identity and their corresponding manifestations, reality proves that those distinctions are rather blurred. For instance, people can identify themselves with a group or collectivity due to shared myths and memories. In some cases, those shared myths and memories have also to do with religion that appears as a central aspect of culture for certain ethnic groups. Connecting the historical past with geographical and/or ethnic considerations leads to the constitution of national identities that, in some cases, might also be sustained by religion as a cultural feature. In other words, both categories and manifestations of identity overlap. The graphic representation of Table 2.2, therefore, is not supposed to be mistaken with rigid or clear-cut processes. As argued by Paul James (2015: 175), "categorizations about identity, even when codified and hardened into clear typologies […] are always full of tensions and contradictions". Nevertheless, Table 2.2 does place the category of national identity in the same position of the others due to what is considered to be its transversal character for this conflict.

Identities and their dimensions are manifested in common language, narratives, official discourses, values, traditions, education, historical approaches, social practices and, more generically, the individual and/or collective feeling of belonging. They might have political as well as legal

Table 2.2 Categories of identity

Categories		Manifestations
National	Cultural/historical	Language, memory, values, traditions, art, education
	Geographic/regional	Feeling of attachment to a place, land, region or country
	Ethnic	Belonging to the same family or community sharing a culture
	Religious	Pertaining to the same religious, religious group membership

Source: elaborated by the author

impact translated in citizenship and the corresponding personal documentation (a.k.a. birth certificate, an ID Card or a passport). In this sense, identity might be connected with civil rights and legal protection. Although the very distinction between categories and manifestations of identities is definitely blurred by design, in cases in which the recognition, legitimization and even the existence of an identity are threatened, this proximity within dimensions of identities and their impact becomes even more visible.

A practical example of this statement can be found in contexts of consolidated modern national identities. The construction of modern national states in Europe—and therefore, the construction of modern national identities within European countries—is a process that has been developing for at least the last 500 years, ever since the transition from the period of History called Medieval to the Modern Age (Smith 1997). In those countries, generically speaking, the very definition of what it means to be Portuguese, Spanish, French or English is well consolidated and does not constitute a case of dispute.[9] Nevertheless, in the case of Israel and Palestine, national identity is simultaneously related with territory, ethnicity, religion and cultural/historical backgrounds (Khalidi 2013; Pappé 2010; Sand 2010).

As pointed by Rashid Khalidi in his book *Palestinian Identity* (2010), although the Palestinian case—and I might add, the Israeli case—presents certain specific circumstances,[10] the process of constructing those national identities shares similar features to other cases. Perhaps a very important point of distinction to be made at this point is that both the Palestinian and the Israeli national identities have not been able yet to fulfil their purpose of coinciding the cultural and political communities that compose them in time and space. In the case of the Palestinians this is even more

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[9] Although there exists several separatists' groups and ethnic movements that claim independence or detachment from the greater national identity within which they are currently (and sometimes forcibly) inserted—for example, the Basque or the Catalan people in Spain— there is few not to say any dispute over what it takes to be part of the national community of Spanish people. Legally speaking, nationality can be attributed to people pertaining to the same cultural background (such as people that share family ties with other Spanish people), it can be related with geographical considerations (people born in the territory of Spain) or it can be the product of long-term residence (such as nationality attributed to migrants). In modern national states, rights associated with citizenship derive from what is defined within the national law and, more specifically, the country's constitution.

[10] The specific circumstances of Israeli and Palestinian processes of identity formation will be further developed in Chaps. 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Part II.

important as their national aspirations have not yet been translated into the establishment of a state of their own, although they did manage to create a proto-government for a state-to-be type of territory, in which part of their national groups live and claim to construct their state.

In the case of the State of Israel the very idea of citizenship has to do with ethnicity/religion. It can be considered, as contradictory as it might sound, a *transnational national identity* with strong legal implications in terms of nationality and documentation. More precisely, being a full citizen of the State of Israel does not depend on ever living—and even with ever having the intention to live in—the Israeli territory nor being born in Israel. The citizenship in this case is connected with the ascendency, meaning with ethnic/religious considerations. In the case of Palestine, although the national identity is not legally recognized within the international community (the dispute over the existence or not of a Palestinian state and the dispute over its hypothetical jurisdiction is the main reason for this), it would be related with geographic and ethnic considerations, being the latter more and more relocated due to more than 70 years of Occupation. For this reason, what would be today a Palestinian citizenship is not connected to the territory either, as the displacement of the Palestinian people has led more than five million people to become refugees in neighboring countries and around the world. The specificity of this case makes it impossible to deal with identity as a compartmentalized concept.

Due to the necessity of creating categories of analysis that allow us to examine the impact of conflict to the negative dimension of identity and how this is translated in processes of dehumanization or reconciliation, Table 2.2 was drawn as a way to provide a clearer assessment of types, dynamics and manifestations of identity. The important question here is similar to the one proposed by Arjun Appadurai (1999: 318): "how can forms of identity and identification […] become transformed into instruments of most brutally intimate forms of violence?" In order to answer this question, it is also necessary to define, categorize and explore the dimensions and impacts of violence in the context of protracted conflicts. Next section is dedicated to this task.

2.3.2   *Categories of Violence*

Defining and analyzing categories of violence is an important effort for exploring the causes of conflict (either protracted or not) and the means for its transformation. The centrality of war in IR literature as an object of

study instead of violence leads to a narrow understanding of conflict, peace and the transition from one to another. This observation has a practical impact on the policies and initiatives in the context of peacemaking efforts such as peacekeeping, statebuilding, peacebuilding, peace negotiations and accords, as well as other types of peace processes, either official or not, institutional or informal. According to Lynda Smith (2004: 505–506), IR's maintenance of war as its defining focus obliterates and makes invisible other forms of violence that might be related with war but that are not directly provoked by war. Similarly, the centrality of direct violence connected to the primacy of the state for peace processes leads to a marginalization of main causes of conflict and promotes continuity rather than change in conflicting and 'post-conflict' societies.

As noted by Roberta Maschietto (2019), even the literature on post-conflict violence emphasizes expressions of direct violence, failing to address or even ignoring its structural and symbolic dimensions. While acknowledging rare efforts to integrate those two dimensions both in the literature and practice of peacebuilding, she also recognizes that there remains a tendency of marginalizing symbolic or cultural violence, what is symptomatic of what she refers as the state bias[11] in the literature on violence. Sílvia Roque (2016: 39) also suggests that this mainstream literature on violence focuses on the instruments and strategies for dealing with violence rather than on the contexts that allow for the production and reproduction of violence and its representations. For this reason, it can be argued that most literature on violence and conflict still deals with symptomatic manifestations of war and conflict, marginalizing the importance of exploring their root causes for promoting sustainable peace (Lederach 1997).

According to Johan Galtung (1969: 168), violence is generically defined as the difference between human potential and the realization of this potential. In his words,

> Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations. […] Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the

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[11] According to Maschietto, the literature on violence and post-conflict violence takes as milestones for analyzing the transition from war/conflict to peace the signature of peace accords and the end of threats to the state's integrity. What she calls the state bias in the literature on violence is, therefore, a methodological choice that puts the state as the center of the analysis regarding violence. For more on this, see also Smith 2004: 506.

potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance. (1969: 168)

This is a broad definition that has at least one main implication: violence is more than the direct act of attempting against someone's physical integrity. Violence has to do with constraint, social injustice, and symbolic or material oppression too. For this reason, Galtung also proposes a broader approach to peace as the absence of violence. In his famous triangle (Galtung 1990), the author conceptualizes three main categories of violence: direct, structural and cultural, which correspond to identical dimensions of peace. Although two of them are considered 'invisible' due to the impossibility of pointing a subject that directly practices the act of violence against someone, they nevertheless have an important impact in fueling direct violence and/or creating the conditions for it to exist and operate. Therefore, structural and cultural violence are key dimensions for conflicts and their transformation.

The first category of violence identified by Johan Galtung (1969: 169–172) is direct violence. Direct violence is the easiest one to identify as it is observable, since there exists a subject that exerts violence against a clear recipient. The most common manifestation of direct violence, according to the author, is war. Direct violence corresponds to a type of peace that is called negative peace. When direct violence is absent, there exists a context of formal or negative peace, which does not necessarily mean that a sustainable and just peace was achieved. At this point it is necessary to define peace. For Galtung, if violence is the product of the difference between people's potential and its realization, a state of peace is achieved when people can fulfil their potential. For this to happen, there must exist more than the absence of war declared by means of negotiated accords among political elites in the realm of state affairs. Structural conditions such as social justice, a fair distribution of resources, access to education and health systems, and the reduction of inequalities are essential to provide the conditions for people to fulfil their potential. This idea leads Galtung to propose that there exist other categories of violence that impact the construction of a positive or sustainable peace. For peace to be built it is important to tackle those other dimensions too.

The second category of violence that is conceptualized in Johan Galtung's work is structural or systemic violence. This is not necessarily new as Marxist approaches have already touched this dimension of

violence in a similar manner. The lack of the subject-action-object formula makes structural violence into one of the invisible categories of violence (Galtung 1969: 171). Put differently, it is not necessary to exist a subject that inflicts violence against the other, turning it into what Hannah Arendt calls a "faceless violence" (1970). This type of violence is therefore considered to be produced by the social structure through the imposition of unnecessary and avoidable deprivations and suffering. According to Galtung, although there is not a direct act of violence against the body, structural violence can have as a consequence both physical and psychological effects. It can in fact be observable in social injustice and unequal access to resources and power, thus impacting not only the potential of oneself but, in extreme cases, also the person's very survival. One concrete example given by the author is the lack of access to medical resources that could cure a disease and causes an avoidable death (1969: 168).

Structural violence is not only connected to war and conflict since it can be a product of a highly unacceptable social order that is not compatible with peace, even though direct violence might not be present. Nevertheless, in protracted conflict situations such as the Israeli-Palestinian, in which direct violence is not the most important manifestation of everyday violence that characterizes the conflict in the long term, structural violence can be perceived by looking at social injustice, economic inequalities, labor exploitations and restrictions of movements, just to point a few. On the other hand, the atmosphere of constant fear due to the possibility of terrorist attacks, and the associated felling of insecurity and paranoia that is fueled by simulations of such attacks and everyday drills that include the participation of children on how to handle with them, are also examples of structural violence within the Israeli society. The important point here is that, by looking at the big picture, this form of violence has the potential of producing and reproducing direct violence, and resistance to it can even be associated with the maintenance of the conflict (Lederach 1997; Galtung 1969).

This leads us to the third and final category of violence present in Johan Galtung's triangle. Although cultural violence has been approached from various angles before, being even referred as "symbolic" violence in other works (Bourdieu 1977), it is a category of violence that has continued to be underexplored in policies and practices of peacebuilding. Failure to address this very important component of violence has been proven to have deep effects on conflicts since it legitimizes the other two categories of violence by operating in the realm of ideas and impacting identities.

According to Farmer (2004: 312), when either direct or indirect violence affects a specific social group due to gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, political preferences or nationality, it is connected with identity. Moreover, the impact of violence on identities or, put differently, the co-constitution of violence and identity in conflict situations is an important dimension of the legitimization and reproduction of violence. This is why cultural violence is a key category for analyzing protracted conflicts and the reasons for protractedness.

Galtung's definition of cultural violence emphasizes precisely this transversal aspect that makes it central in the analysis of violence and conflicts:

> By 'cultural violence' we mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical and formal science (logic, mathematics)—that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence […] [thus making] direct and structural violence look, even feel, right—or at least not wrong. (1990: 291)

In this definition, Galtung refers to the power of cultural violence to create and maintain conflict, by showing how one's identity—and, ultimately, the feeling of threats to it and the need for its preservation—might serve as a justification for violent actions (either structural or direct) against the 'other'. In other words, the author emphasizes the importance of symbolic aspects that are inserted in the identities of societies to the maintenance and deepening of direct violence and, therefore, the protracted conflict. For this reason, one of the arguments of this book is that analyzing the mutual constitution between identity and violence is central to understand the cycle of protractedness, expressed in terms of the dehumanization of the 'other'. On the other hand, the first direct implication of this argument is that identities and peace are also co-constituted, suggesting that building sustainable peace and interrupting the cycle of protractedness implies searching for practices, policies and mechanisms that promote a positive transformation of identities instead.[12] In Galtung's words,

> If the opposite of violence is peace, the subject matter of peace research/peace studies, then the opposite of cultural violence would be 'cultural peace', meaning aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct peace and structural peace. (Galtung 1990: 291)

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[12] See Fig. 3.1 The cycle of protractedness in Chap. 3.

This book considers that the process of transformation of a culture in protracted conflicts is a process called peace-less reconciliation.

Looking back at Table 2.2 it is possible to analyze the impact of cultural violence on the very manifestations of identity, thus creating and reproducing structural and direct violence against the other. Cultural violence acts within the categories of identity by denying their manifestations. For example, within the institutional realm, the mutual denial of the 'other's' right of existence in terms of a state and the consequent denial of the rights to the land relates with the category of national identity. Similarly, different and opposing narratives about the past that are expressed in representations and roles of victims and victimizers impact both cultural/historical aspects of identity and ethnic and religious perceptions about the 'self'. In concrete terms, all this creates violent structures that allow for the denial of access to basic services (education, health and state infrastructure) and resources (water, energy and, ultimately, the land) due to ethnic or religious differences.

Those and other empirical examples will be further developed in the analysis of Chaps. 4, 5, 6 and 7, pointing to the co-constitutive character of identity and violence in protracted conflict situations. Symmetrically, and considering Galtung's triangle of violence and peace, the co-constitution of identity and violence implies necessarily that identity and peace are also co-constituted. As this book will show, this understanding opens new avenues for conflict transformation that operate in the realm of peace-less reconciliation.

2.4   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the specificities of processes of identity construction in the context of protracted conflicts. Drawing from the constructivist ontology of mutual constitution of agents and structures, identities were defined as dynamic, as "social relationships that change over time and across contexts" (Klotz and Lynch 2007: 65). Nevertheless, not only identities, interests and values are impacted by context and structures, they also transform and perform changes in those very structures. As follows, this approach shows how structures are not exogenously given, they are created by human action and interaction inside the context of collectivities, social groups and political organizations (Wendt 1987; Checkel 2011; Adler and Pouliot 2011; Adler 2013: 125). These interactions might produce and reproduce dominant meanings such as dehumanization, enmity

and conflict, creating the idea of historical 'facts' and unavoidable 'reality', thus fueling the cycle of protractedness.

Drawing from the constructivist view about reality, this chapter has discussed how violent or conflictual environments can play an important role in defining agents' identities, interests and behaviors, as well as the other way around. Concretely, this approach enlightens analyses aiming at addressing the relationship between identities and conflict, by providing tools for the examination of the mutual constitution between beliefs, norms, rules and language to power and politics. As shown, the co-constitution between violence and identities in conflict tend to impact identity construction in a negative way. Moreover, peace processes that arise within those conflicts might become protracted themselves, risking assuming an important role in processes of continuity through the normalization of, or continuous failure to transform, violent and conflictual meanings and practices in those contexts. As has been argued, this view allows for framing the several diverse initiatives promoted toward building peace in Israel and Palestine in different periods during the history of the conflict as part of an overall process in its whole.

Methodologically, this implies that the investigation of the impact of protracted peace processes on the identities of societies requires a historically based analyses, informed by the identification of continuities and change, to trace how some practices and intersubjective meanings became so structured that they develop into a constitutive part of the very identities of societies and thus inform interests and shape actions, impacting the position of actors within the very peace process. The postulate that behavior is determined by interests defined in terms of identities also brings about a new reading about peace: its construction is also determined by agents' interests and identities—that might change. As we will see in the next chapter, constructivism offers a contribution to the debate about peace by taking seriously the role of the ideational in International Relations (IR), providing the possibility of a positive epistemology of peace through its social construction (Richmond, 2008: 82). In this sense, processes of dehumanization, which are a dominant feature of protracted conflicts, are accompanied by less visible and diametrically opposite processes of reconciliation. Their parallel dimensions point to the coexistence of these processes, leading to the interest to examine the conditions that allow for one to prevail over the other in the context of protracted peace processes.

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Elements of Identity in Conflict

Last chapter developed the argument that identity and violence, and therefore, identity and peace, are mutually constitutive in cases of protracted conflicts. This argument has two main implications. The first is that identity is central for the maintenance of conflict. The second is that identity is key for conflict transformation. When focusing on the negative dimension of identity construction in protracted conflicts—the detachment from others and the consequent representations of the 'other'—two main elements appear as central to this analysis: processes of dehumanization, on the one hand, and reconciliation, on the other. The negative interdependence between identities (Kelman 1999) in conflict promotes, legitimates and justifies violent behavior toward the 'other', thus becoming ingrained within identity in the form of processes of dehumanization, what creates and fuels the cycle of protractedness. However, the mutual constitution of violence and identity also implies the co-constitution of violence and peace, meaning that processes of reconciliation represent an avenue for transforming the impact of violence on identities in a way that might promote positive peace instead. Since reconciliation is usually referred in the literature and approached in policies as the final stage of the consolidation of peace, instead as the point of departure for its construction, this book borrows the term "peace-less reconciliation" (Biletzki 2013) to designate processes of reconciliation whose dynamics are developed in the context of ongoing conflicts.

As a structure in intergenerational conflict, protracted peace processes have a deep impact on the dual and simultaneous processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation that are developed with the passing of time. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to understanding the genealogy of processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation that are empirically observable in the contexts of protracted conflicts, as well as the dynamics influencing one or the other, using as example the case study of this book, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It dives deeper into the theoretical framework proposed in this book by identifying, characterizing and proposing concrete indicators at the observable level for assessing and analyzing these elements of identity in conflict. Section 3.1 deals with the negative dimension of identity, de-identification, which leads to social detachment expressed as dehumanization processes. Section 3.2 proposes a framework for understanding and analyzing practices of reconciliation in ongoing conflicts, what is called in this book 'peace-less reconciliation'. Section 3.3 connects these dimensions by drawing the cycle of protractedness, which is both a concept and an analytical tool that contributes to the assessment of dynamics that allow for the perpetuation of conflict over time. The argument developed is that an empirical examination of the processes of identity building in protracted conflicts shows that these feature two main elements which can be seen as opposing poles that might contribute to deepening the conflict or promoting its transformation instead. By identifying the dimensions and observable indicators that allow for an assessment of these processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation, this chapter offers a tool for empirical analyses of protracted conflicts and policy development toward their positive transformation.

3.1   DEHUMANIZATION

The concept of dehumanization appears mainly in postcolonial literature, aiming to explain the violence of colonialism and contemporary slavery (Fanon 1963: 42; Dussel 1974: 35–36; Levinas 1998) and within social psychology frameworks, oftentimes transposed to the field of Peace and Conflict Studies in order to provide analyses of the conditions that allowed for the Holocaust (Malley-Morrison et al. 2013; Lang 2010; Totten and Bartrop 2007). The former usually refers to dehumanization as a type of direct violence, as the act of treating the other as an animal, deprived of human status and, therefore, subject to slavery, forced work, and extermination due to their supposed inferiority (Maldonado-Torres 2008), while the latter refers to a psychological process that has to do primarily with

identity and recognition (Kelman 2001). Nevertheless, both frameworks identify dehumanization as an intersubjective meaning that is created through a process of social interaction and thus reflects—and informs—social practices and policies.

Dehumanization as a feature of identity is a dimension of protracted conflicts that has been insufficiently explored from both the empirical and theoretical perspectives on conflicts and their transformation, contributing to the maintenance of negative practices, policies and understandings of peace.[1] The literature in the fields of International Relations (IR) and Peace and Conflict Studies has drawn extensively on social-psychological research and theory when it comes to studies on enemy image, identity and reconciliation. This is also true for the concept of dehumanization since it leads to emotional and psychological perceptions that relate essentially with the realm of human behavior and emotions. As Kelman argues, although it brings new approaches and introduces other dimensions to analyze certain phenomena, social psychology should be seen as a way to complement other approaches in IR rather than substitute them (Kelman 2007: 61).

The importance of social-psychology frameworks for the study of dimensions and causes of conflicts has increasingly been explored by IR scholars. John Burton argues that in the case of conflicts like the Israeli-Palestinian, which can be well-defined as an identity and ethnic conflict, the needs of people include not only the obvious material ones, such as food, land, security and well-being, but also psychological ones, such as identity, recognition and social justice (Burton 1990). In fact, all protracted conflicts share this characteristic of psychological needs and dimensions, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to Political Science and International Relations. As mentioned before, Edward Azar's definition of protracted social conflicts also identifies these dimensions. According to him, protracted conflicts are the product of unmet basic identity needs such as political legitimization and social justice (Azar 1990: 2).

The relevance of bringing the psychological dimension to the study of identities in conflict scenarios lies in the perception that dehumanization

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[1] An outstanding exception—and the main source for this analysis—is the indispensable work of Herbert C. Kelman, which has been widely recognized within the discipline, but does not seem to have substantially impacted neither the overall literature on conflict transformation in terms of the incorporation and development of the concept in other studies dealing with protracted conflict, nor the policy realm, leading to an insufficient attention being paid to dehumanization as a dimension to be address in peacemaking efforts.

is an element of the negative dimension of identity building that is incorporated in official discourses and narratives in conflict scenarios to help create the image of the enemy. Moreover, dehumanization processes in protracted conflict situations must not be read as circumstantial, as episodic manifestations of social interaction. Instead, dehumanization is a reiterated practice that is consolidated over time, getting so structured and ingrained, that the actions and interactions within the very peace process reproduce this practice, which becomes a structure on its own. An integral and structural part of the relationships between societies and dehumanization is not only visible at the individual and societal levels across generations but is translated also into policies and practices connected to the very peace process at the higher political level. Therefore, practices of dehumanization echo across generations, multiple levels of analysis, official discourses and documents connected to the conflict, thus becoming an empirical observable reality in the everyday actions and reactions within societies. Hereof, dehumanization contributes to the legitimization and continuity of the conflict through the reinforcement of cultural violence, creating what this book refers to as the cycle of protractedness.

When the processes of normalizing certain structures and practices like dehumanization become stable, they can get to the point in which we consider them structural elements of politics. This happens because the "primacy of epistemology" (Pouliot 2010) makes, through discourses and practices, shared understandings become norms, which, in their turn, constitute social reality (Williams 2005; Tannenwald 2007). Social facts are constituted by the structures of language and rules (Kratochwil 1989) and they depend on the collective understanding and the attachment of collective knowledge to reality (Searle 1995). In other words, and as explained in Chap. 2, the social world is made of intersubjective understandings, subjective knowledge and material objects (Popper 1982).

The normative implication and impact of this structuration has to do with how people borrow from those structures and contexts the epistemic, normative and ideological understandings that allow them to act as agents in the world (Gould 1998: 81). As socially constructed, realities are a product of the interaction between multiple layers of actors, from individuals to communities and from communities to states. Those levels of analysis are seen as interdependent from one another in the construction of the world. Notwithstanding, there is a power element that determines which actors are more relevant in creating this world due to their place within the social structure. According to Michel Foucault (1980),

discourse is power, in the sense that it determines the ways we look into social realities and our interpretations and understandings of certain problems. In Emmanuel Adler's words, "when drawn upon by individuals, the rules, norms and cause-effect understandings that make material objects meaningful become the source of people's reasons, interests, and intentional acts; when institutionalized, they become the source of international practices" (2013: 123).

Herbert C. Kelman (2017a: 41) defines dehumanization as the act "of depriving those placed in the category of 'other' of dignity by *denying their identity* and excluding them from one's own moral community, in other words, from the community with whose members one shares a sense of mutual moral obligation" [the italic is mine]. In this process, individuals or societies are seen as less than human by others, therefore lacking the sense of identity and community that separate humans from other beings. Oelofsen (2009: 181–182) points to the consequences of this identity-driven character of dehumanization, stating that those processes might become normalized and be passed through generations due to educational practices and moral framing, becoming an important feature of cultural violence in conflicts.

The effects of dehumanization in reinforcing conflict and violence can also be illustrated through Umberto Eco's writings about the construction of the enemy. He argues that this is an essential dimension of identity and unit, impacting directly on power and legitimization (Eco 2011: 13–15). In the context of protracted conflicts and a normalized state of war, this observation takes even bigger proportions. From the point of view of the individual that is not directly taking any part in the war efforts, dehumanization acts as a coping mechanism, a way of dealing with what seems to be impossible to change. It helps evading responsibility and accountability from the atrocities that are committed during times of conflict, thus promoting continuity by removing the idea of agency from oneself and collaborating for the normalization and deepening of the status quo. According to Lebow,

> Self-identifications help shape behavior, and behavior helps shape self-identifications. Self-identifications also serve as rationalizations for actions motivated by other reasons. Rationalizations can nevertheless have important behavioral consequences when they encourage important audiences to frame a problem in a particular way. (Lebow 2016: 3)

The impacts of dehumanization for the construction of interests and the maintenance of conflict have to do with two main processes that are interrelated. First, it has to do with how dehumanization relates with identity and behavior. For Kelman (1973) dehumanization of both victims and victimizers impacts agency since it transforms intersubjective understandings of morality, allowing for a practice of "violence without moral restraint". It also contributes to the construction of narratives and roles of victims and victimizers, legitimizing political positions and the very rationale of existence and maintenance of the conflict. As the author puts it,

> Insofar as the other can be demonized and dehumanized, it becomes easier for each party to minimize guilt feelings for acts of violence and oppression against the other and to avoid seeing itself in the role of victimizer, rather than only in the role of victim. (Kelman 2008: 26)

In other words, dehumanization processes impact identity both in its positive and negative dimensions, contributing to the construction of perceptions of the 'self' as well as of the 'other'. Dehumanization thus becomes a central part of one's own identity and therefore plays a central role in influencing interests and behaviors regarding the conflict. Second, by impacting identity and behavior, dehumanization also provides an explanation for the continued violence toward the 'other'. Denying identity and humanity to the 'other' provides with "some degree of moral justification for violence" (Kelman 1973: 25), placing the interactions between societies in conflict into the psychological realm. Consequently, dehumanization becomes one of the "factors reducing the strength of restraining forces against violence" (Kelman 1973: 25), strongly contributing to the continuation and deepening of the conflict. John Paul Lederach also perceives this process as deeply connected with the cycle of protractedness. According to the author,

> the process by which this happens has its roots in long-standing distrust, fear, and paranoia, which are reinforced by the immediate experience of violence, division, and atrocities. This experience, in turn, further exacerbates the hatred and fear that are fueling the conflict. (1997: 13)

The psychological explanation for the loss of moral restraints against violence according to Kelman has to do with three processes: the process of authorization, the process of routinization and the process of

dehumanization, which comprise the latter and the former. A consequence of the first process is that individuals' ability to contest or obey authorities' orders diminishes. As argued by Kelman (1973), in those cases standard moral principles seem not to apply, thus leading to an individual feeling of absolution of responsibility for the consequences of personal actions.

This was precisely the perception that emerged from the first phase of the fieldwork developed for this book in 2015 that focused on Israel. To begin with, most individuals in informal conversations seemed to ignore the role of personal agency not only for performing potential changes in leadership but also in terms of personal responsibility for giving legitimacy to such authorities, as if authority was an inherent condition rather than a by-product of collective choices in a democratic environment. Those people were as diverse as scholars, politicians, civil society leaders and regular individuals whose place of residence either ranged from big cities—such as Haifa or Jerusalem—to small communities—such as Kibbutzim like Mizra in the Galilee region—or villages in the Negev Desert. What called my attention was the generalized feeling that most people felt both that they could not be held personally responsible for actions taken under condition of obedience to an authority and that they were not personally responsible for authorities' choices. According to Kelman (1973: 44–46), one of the ways through which processes of authorization counteract the moral scruples of society is by invoking a transcendent mission. This can also be considered the case in Israel and Palestine, as both governments claim for themselves the right to establish their state in an indivisible historical Palestine as their territory.

The second process that leads to dehumanization is routinization, transforming the "action into routine, mechanical, highly programmed operations" (Kelman 1973: 46). The author refers that the process of routinization has two main functions, to reduce the necessity of decision-making and therefore minimizing the tendency to ask moral questions and to obscure the implications of actions by taking the focus of the individual away from the meaning and toward mechanical actions. This was also confirmed by empirical experience and literature reviews on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, a highly militarized society such as the Israeli, in which military service is compulsory for most people regardless of gender and social status, definitely creates a process of routinization of both violence and the conflict. On the other hand, Palestinian society suffers from both the conflict with Israel and deep structural inequalities that are also related with the protracted conflict and corrupted political

elites, which creates its own internal oppressive structures, thus normalizing violence. While "authorization processes override standard moral considerations [and] routinization processes reduce the likelihood that such considerations will arise" (Kelman 2017b: 15), processes of dehumanization are the glue that keep all this together. Although those two processes help explain the psychological mechanisms through which individuals cope with and justify being part of atrocity crimes against human beings, they are not enough to explain the process through which people accept killing other people.

Kelman argues that in order to fully understand dehumanization, we need to engage first with the meaning of granting humanity to another human being, in the sense of applying to someone the intersubjective moral norms that govern relations between people. According to him,

> To perceive another person as fully human we must accord him identity and community, concepts that closely resemble the two fundamental modalities of existence termed "agency" and "communion" by Balkan (1966). To accord a person identity is to perceive him as an individual, independent and distinguishable from others, capable of making choices, and entitled to live his own life on the basis of his own goals and values. To accord a person community is to perceive him—along with one's self—as part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other, who recognize each other's individuality, and who respect each other's rights. (1973: 48–49)

All this could be better subsumed if, put differently, we consider that granting humanity to the 'other' equals recognizing the other as someone like 'us'. The ultimate expression of this relates with recognizing the value of the 'other'. Therefore, dehumanization is also somehow attached to objectification and failing to recognize the meaning attached to the 'other'.

Looking back at the manifestations of the categories of identity that were drawn in Table 2.2, it is possible to identify several concrete indicators of dehumanization expressed in the denial of identity and community. The first one relates with competing—and opposing—narratives about the past, such as different perceptions regarding developments of the conflict which are sustained in the denial and/or erasure of the narrative of the 'other'. For instance, the Nakba (from the Arabic catastrophe) for Palestinians, that is depicted as the 'Day of Independence' for Israelis, impacts the category of cultural/historical identity. On the other hand,

the slogan of the Zionist Movement, "a land without people for a people without land" relates with regional/geographic identity, historical/cultural identity, ethnic identity and, therefore, national identity. The Palestinian Liberation Movement (PLO), on its turn, reacted by denying for decades the right of existence for the consolidated State of Israel. And, finally, as was mentioned before, the Israeli government has increasingly approved in the last couple of decades more and more legislation that connects citizenship and legal rights with ethnic or religious considerations, turning the State of Israel into a Jewish State only. Denying identity is, therefore, an important indicator of dehumanization processes that, in conflict scenarios, also impact peoples' aspirations and the legitimization of their struggle. Those are just few examples that show how dehumanization relates with the protractedness of the conflict by producing and feeding cultural, and therefore also, structural and direct, violence.

In fact, Galtung recognizes some features in the religious domain of culture that might also be interpreted as dehumanization. His example lies directly on the specific case study for this book, arguing that the Israeli policies toward the Palestinians are many times justified and legitimized by the idea that Jews are the chosen people and that *Eretz Israel* is the Promised Land:

> They behave as one would expect, translating chosenness, a vicious type of cultural violence, into eight types of direct and structural violence […]. There is killing; maiming, material deprivation by denying West Bank inhabitants what is needed for livelihood; there is desocialization within the theocratic state of Israel with second class citizenship to non-Jews; there is detention, individual expulsion and perennial threat of massive expulsion. There is exploitation (…). (Galtung 1990: 297)

His considerations in the domain of ideology, using the example of nationalist regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism, lead specifically to the consequences of dehumanization and its effects in terms of concrete structural and direct violence:

> A steep gradient is then constructed, inflating, even exalting, the value of the Self; deflating, even debasing the value of Other. At that point, structural violence can start operating. It will tend to become a self-fulfilling prophecy: people become debased by being exploited, and they are exploited because they are seen as debased, *dehumanized* […] the stage is set for any type of direct violence. (Galtung 1990: 298) [the italic is mine]

The mutual negation of the 'other's' identity is not necessarily central to all cases of conflicts, but it is always "somehow embedded in the identities of the conflicting parties and must be addressed in the reconciliation process" (Kelman 2008: 24). It is also important to emphasize that in the case of Israel and Palestine, this is indeed a central element of each party's identity as "the other's claims to peoplehood and to rights in the land are seen as competitive to each party's own claims and rights" (Kelman 2008: 26). This will influence the actions of agents toward the conflict and thus relate with continuity and change. The relationship between a constructivist theoretical approach and the insights that social psychology brings to this book is precisely in the understanding that this behavioral phenomenon is translated into discursive, social and political practices, sustained over time and thus establishing patterns of accepted and legitimized behavior. As a consequence, a cycle of protractedness is created so that dealing with conflict transformation and reconciliation necessarily implies approaching identity change in the form of peace-less reconciliation. The latter is the task of next section.

3.2   Peace-less Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a concept normatively translated into peacebuilding activities and social practices regarding conflict. It was incorporated in the political agenda in the aftermath of the Cold War, which operated a deep change in the international environment impacting policies and practices regarding conflict and international interventions to them. The idea of reconciliation first appeared in 1992 in the UN Secretary General's document 'An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping'. Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed an approach to post-conflict societies toward sustainable peace through the development of "post-conflict peacebuilding" initiatives that should culminate with the ultimate reconciliation of societies affected by conflict. Although not explicitly referring to this term, the Secretary General brought about the idea of reconciliation processes when he proposed the development of "cooperative projects", arguing that "reducing hostile perceptions through educational exchanges and curriculum reform may be essential to forestall a re-emergence of cultural and national tensions which could spark renewed hostilities" (UN 1992). His proposal inserted reconciliation in the framework of *post-conflict* peacebuilding that consisted in an "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen

and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict (…), [and to] prevent the recurrence of violence among nations and peoples" (UN 1992). Ever since, reconciliation became part of what is considered to be the final path toward sustainable peace—or ultimately as an indicator of the achievement of sustainable peace—being incorporated in policies and practices developed in post-conflict societies, after the signature of a negotiated agreement within political elites or, in other words, after the establishment of negative peace.

In the academic literature on peacebuilding and conflict transformation, the most famous usage of the term was coined by John Paul Lederach in his book *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, published in the late 1990s. In this work, the author seeks to develop an approach to conflicts that goes beyond traditional statist diplomacy toward a more comprehensive model to enduring peace, defined as a "dynamic social construct [rather than] a stage in time or a condition" (Lederach 1997: 20). This definition of peace-as-process encompasses a broader understanding of violence and the root causes of conflict, thus inserting reconciliation in a larger timeframe. For the author, "reconciliation is understood as a *process* of relationship building" (Lederach 1997: 151). Challenging Boutros-Ghali's vision, Lederach (1997: 151) proposes that this process "is not limited to the period of post settlement restoration", since his idea of peacebuilding "involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords" (Lederach 1997: 20). Reconciliation, he adds, "is promoted by providing space and opportunity for encounters at various levels, bringing together people from opposing sides and encouraging them to articulate their past pain and to envision an interdependent future" (1997: 150).

Lederach's proposal recognizes the importance of rejecting standardized formulas for approaching conflict, as every conflict scenario has its own particularities. Nevertheless, although he argues for a definition of reconciliation that goes beyond negative approaches connected with formal peace, his work ultimately maintains the vision that reconciliation lies in the realm of institutional peace. The author develops an analytical framework, graphically expressed as a pyramid, to describe the levels within society that are affected by conflict and the approaches to building peace developed by each type of actors placed in this pyramid. Those levels are thought in terms of the leaderships, being inserted either in the grassroots, in the middle-range or in the top level of a society. Not only his approach focuses on elites within each level, the approaches to building

peace that he identified within each level[2] are mostly related with negative understandings of peace (Lederach 1997: 37–61). If it is necessary to eliminate direct violence before approaching structural and cultural violence, this framework still maintains an ontological perspective that gives precedence to the peace by the state and elites—and, therefore, a negative approach to it—before being able to address root causes that can be, on their turn, fostering direct violence in the societal level and allowing for it to persist over time.

Approaches to reconciliation whereupon peacemaking is privileged over the transformation of attitudes and behaviors (Bloomfield et al. 2003; Kriesberg 1998: 184; Crocker 2003: 54) also misplace the *locus* of reconciliation in conflict transformation. The existence of conflicts in which a peace agreement could not be reached through negotiations makes the notion of post-conflict settlement unfit to outline the very concept of reconciliation. In these views, reconciliation appears as an outcome, rather than a process. This makes reconciliation a rather intangible notion and also misplaces its role in dealing with identity issues, root causes of conflicts and relationships in general. A consequence of these minimalist approaches to reconciliation is that an intergenerational conflict that becomes protracted is automatically excluded from any framework dealing with reconciliation as a post-conflict endeavor.

Accordingly, the idea developed in this book is that reconciliation is not just the end of the process of building—or, more precisely, consolidating—peace but a means to it. Sharing this perspective, Anat Biletzki proposes an alternative role for reconciliation during times of conflict, arguing that, in certain cases, it might even be the very first step out of hostilities.

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[2] On the top-level, approaches to building peace are considered to be connected with "high-level negotiations" emphasizing cease-fire (and, therefore, formal/negative peace) and "led by highly visible negotiators"; on the middle-range level, the author points "problem-solving workshops", alongside "training in conflict resolution", mostly aimed at grassroots leadership and other relevant civil society leaders and elites as a way to connect efforts developed in the high levels with the rest of society; and, finally, on the grassroots level, although he recognizes approaches to building peace that deal with identity transformation (and, consequently, also with structural and cultural violence), most of the activities such as "local peace commissions" and "grassroots training" are still developed within elites and local leaderships while "prejudice reduction and psychosocial work in postwar trauma" seem to be considered as part of post-conflict efforts, lacking an approach to the negative dimension of identity building or representations of the other—dehumanization—in the context of ongoing conflicts and peace processes (for more on this, see Lederach 1997: 37–61).

Biletzki's (2013: 91) concept of "peace-less reconciliation" offers precisely a criticism of the before mentioned understanding of peace, rejecting the conventional approach to reconciliation that is reduced to transitional justice efforts.

> This is the conventional wisdom: first, war or violent conflict, then cessation of hostilities (termed cease-fire, truce or armistice), then a somewhat-peace, then a transitional period during which warring parties aspire to arrive at justice—i.e., to make the peace a just peace (…). The conventional assumption that accompanies such wisdom holds that *during* a time of war, *during* violent conflict, there are no normal, explicit manifestations of peaceable relational co-existence between the parties. It is after war, in post-conflict time, during a period that aspires, perhaps, to peace though not yet a just peace, that reconciliation makes its entrance. (Biletzki 2013: 94)

The author's reflections point to the necessity of challenging temporal rigidity when addressing conflicts, meaning that the sequential approach that views the stages of conflicts as a linear timeline is in fact plagued with contradictions. In this view, reconciliation is both a necessary condition for a just peace and a final stage to ensure the very same peace. That is precisely why it must precede the former. Although Biletzki's approach drives us into a more comprehensive path on the conceptual and practical developments of reconciliation, her work addresses political reconciliation marginalizing the role and importance of individual and societal reconciliation in terms of identity change. The necessity of approaching reconciliation transversally within all levels of analysis has to do with dehumanization's impact in the construction of interests, behaviors, values and norms that fuel the conflict and promote continuity of the status quo.[3] As a feature of collective identity in its various categories, it is therefore necessary to address initiatives that range from the international to the top, middle range and grassroots levels of a society, as proposed by Lederach.

First, it is important to note that in the literature definitions of reconciliation that connect the dimensions of identity and dehumanization are

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[3] See Chap. 2.

lacking.[4] It was possible to identify two main trends, on this matter. The first refers to reconciliation as positive behavior and relationship building that bring about the idea of moral/cultural and societal reconciliation (Hamber and Kelly 2009; Bar-Tal and Bennink 2004; Bronéus 2008). The second proposes an approach in terms of a political or institutional process (Kriesberg 1998; Crocker 2003). While the former invokes the transformation of perceptions regarding the 'other' without necessarily engaging with the idea of dehumanization, both are deeply connected with identity (or, at least, with the positive dimension of identity building) either explicitly recognizing it or not.

By extrapolating some of the literature on reconciliation, it is possible to establish resemblances with the framework proposed in this book. As an example, Daniel Bar-Tal and Gemma Bennink's (2004: 15) definition of reconciliation can be considered closer to dehumanization in the sense that it is approached as "*mutual recognition and acceptance*, invested interests and goals in developing peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes, as well as sensitivity and consideration for the other party's needs and interests" [the italic is mine]. The same is true for Lisa Strömbom, whose work does not engage with the concept of dehumanization but brings about more tinted dynamics of recognition defined as thin or thick. Lederach (1997: 26) also deals indirectly with dehumanization by proposing that "reconciliation [...] is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as *humans-in-relationship*" [the italic is mine]. And, finally, Hamber and Kelly (2009: 291–292) connect reconciliation with identity and, although superficially, with the negative dimension of identity building, by defining it "as the process of addressing conflictual and fractured relationships".

A more complete definition that can be considered to encompass both identity and dehumanization can be found in Ermesto Verdeja's (2012) work. In his chapter "The elements of political reconciliation", the author defines reconciliation in terms of identity change:

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[4] An exception can be found in Herbert C. Kelman's work. Although not referring explicitly to dehumanization, the author proposes that one of the main indicators of reconciliation is the removal of "negation and exclusion of the other from one's own identity" (Kelman 2004) which is a main feature of his own concept of dehumanization widely used in this book. However, the author approaches reconciliation as a rather symmetrical process, failing to recognize the very different life conditions and experiences that are part of asymmetric protracted conflicts, which makes the process of reconciliation more complicated and messier.

> I argue that reconciliation is best understood as a condition of mutual respect among former enemies, which requires the reciprocal *recognition of the moral worth and dignity of others*. Political reconciliation is achieved when previous, conflict-era identities no longer operate as the primary cleavages in politics, and thus citizens acquire new identities that cut across those earlier fault lines. [the italic is mine] (2012: 166)

The idea of recognizing "the moral worth and dignity of others" can be connected with Kelman's (1999) definition of dehumanization, presented above, which is considered to be a type of violence without moral restraints that denies agency and identity to the 'other'. Insofar as Verdeja's proposal implicitly deals with granting/recognizing identity, community and agency to the 'other', it can be put in dialogue with the concept of dehumanization. In fact, Verdeja's (2012: 178) work even mentions explicitly dehumanization processes: "political violence and rhetoric surrounding depend on a strongly binary logic of identity. In-groups use language that constructs a tightly knit community while simultaneously disparaging and dehumanizing out-groups".

Accordingly, rehumanizing or, in other terms, reconciling means focusing on morality and recognition, in order to respect the rights and aims of others. Nevertheless, for Verdeja, reconciliation is a process that is developed mainly in the political realm, within political elites, and that impacts society and their interaction in terms of identity through a changing of perception from the top-down regarding the conflict. In other words, political reconciliation for him would be able to perform changes in the representations of the 'self' due to the modification of narratives and official discourses regarding the 'other'. Moreover, according to the author, conditions for reconciliation are an accurate understanding of the past, accountability, victim recognition and the rule of law, all inserted in the institutional realm. Other empirical cases like Mozambique show that those conditions alone are not enough (Bueno 2019).

Although Verdeja relates reconciliation with identity, his work does not go further in connecting clearly identity with reconciliation by developing the ways in which an identity is denied, its dimensions, how this process works and who are the actors that perform this dehumanization and, on the other side, how they can reconcile. Also, Verdeja's (2012) framework can be placed in the group of those who consider reconciliation as a post-conflict endeavor, since he focuses on its political/institutional dimensions. Nevertheless, there are several important and useful analytical tools

developed in his work that must be considered. To begin with, Verdeja suggests that the literature and practice on reconciliation can be divided into two trends, being the minimalist and the maximalist approaches to reconciliation. The latter focuses on basic, liminal conditions for coexistence rooted on the rule of law and the end of overt violence, while the former emphasizes strong social solidarity and often mutual healing and forgiveness. He argues that neither is enough for deeply divided societies.

The approach to reconciliation developed in protracted peace processes is inserted in the context of a liberal/legalist framework (Osiel 1999; Hampshire 1989) that can be connected with Verdeja's perception of minimal reconciliation, insofar as they focus on the conditions for coexistence premised on the rejection of violence. Since it focuses on a minimalist approach that aims at achieving a common basis for coexistence anchored in institutional/legal mechanisms to contain (*direct*) violence toward the other, its impact is defined mainly in negative terms, thus privileging the political/institutional level. For this reason, this approach is insufficient to promote positive peace, lacking structural and cultural change that can affect societies and individuals in terms of an *identity transformation*. Those approaches are mainly related with establishing the basis for negotiations although they do take into consideration post-conflict settings.[5]

On the other hand, peace-less peacebuilding efforts that take place in Israel and Palestine due to the historical developments of the conflict that led experts, brokers and the international public opinion to believe that the conflict was over—that is, the Oslo Accords—also fail to deal with cultural change. While there exists in fact a multitude of instruments deployed in order to tackle issues related with structural violence (educational support such an UN schools, health care and development projects) most of them are depoliticized due to the technical bias of liberal peace social engineering (Campbell et al. 2011) and to the current stage of the conflict in terms of negotiations. Without a clear commitment with achieving a common ground in terms of the historical memory and a progressive

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[5] The approach of protracted peace processes to reconciliation that considers post-conflict settings relates with the time dimensions expressed in Table 2.1 of the last chapter in which the future is regarded for later in terms of policy (i.e., post-conflict peacebuilding), which impacts the understanding of peace developed within this framework as negative peace. This means that, in the context of protracted peace processes, reconciliation is approached essentially as a process to take place 'after peace' and as the indicator of peace consolidation, instead of as a condition for peace.

education, the peace process creates social detachment insofar as it does not involve the main actors in the conflict in the efforts for transforming it. Notwithstanding, the main argument of those who defend this approach is that institutional/legal coexistence with guarantees of limitations of *direct* violence is the best we can hope for.

On the other side of the coin, there are those who defend a maximalist approach to reconciliation. Those are the approaches that defend truth and reconciliation commissions and a transformation based on structural change and forgiveness, mainly focused on post-conflict settings. Some argue that this might lead to an apolitical form of reconciliation (Moon 2008: 118) since coexistence is created through "theological conceptions of moral renewal and community" (Verdeja 2012: 169) within a narrative of return to a condition of harmony (*re*conciliation) that understands the past in simplistic and idealized terms. On the one hand, the emphasis on transformation through forgiveness in an institutional manner is not only artificial but also leads to the danger of lacking accountability. On the other hand, the idea of forgiveness remotes to a harmonious condition of some sort in the past, which is not only a misleading way of reading the historical relations between peoples in a conflict, but also risks underplaying dissention and failing to describe what post-atrocity societies should look like. Others point to the coercive potential of such institutionalized forms of forgiving and creating forgiveness (Brudholm 2008). Verdeja suggests that minimalist reconciliation risks underplaying dissension by treating reconciliation as the mere product of moral agreements and a fallacy of homogenization of real and legitimate differences, while maximalist reconciliation might create a deficit of accountability through official apologies. Therefore, in order to achieve an equilibrium within those two trends, it is proposed that political, social, material and cultural challenges must be taken into account by an encompassing theory of reconciliation.

Therefore, Verdeja argues that we must move beyond formal conceptions of proceduralism within reconciliation that equates it "with the presence of institutionalized rights and formal democratic praxis" toward morally accepted forms of reconciliation "but resistant to an apolitical idea of forgiveness" (Verdeja 2012: 170). His approach is more related with reconciling identities as he argues that reconciliation should be seen as "mutual respect, which entails reimagining the Other as a bearer of moral worth and dignity", but not in a holistic way such as a "conception of reconciliation through forgiveness or similarly ontologically transformative faculties" (Verdeja 2012: 170). The author defines reconciliation in

terms of mutual respect across societies and tolerance of others based on an individual ontology that pivots on a particular conception of moral personhood. According to him,

> A *healthy identity* develops from intersubjective recognition among equals, which includes reciprocal recognition of claims to moral worth and dignity. Dignity is a fundamental property of what it means to be a person, as it points to the value of autonomy that is at the core of a healthy sense of self, and its restoration is particularly important to victims and others who have suffered political abuse and stigmatization and remain mistreated and devalued. A society that seeks to be reconciled must create conditions for the recognition of all citizens as bearers of moral worth and dignity. (Verdeja 2012: 170)

This definition brings us back to John Paul Lederach's work. According to Lederach and Burton, reconciliation is in fact a process of *negotiating identity* (Lederach 1999; Burton 1990). Bridges between those two approaches can be built by bringing into this dialogue the framework of Herbert C. Kelman (1999) that suggests the necessity of developing a transcendent identity in the cases of conflict. The author analyzes the negative interdependence of identity that is present in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and which leads one group to assert its identity through negating the 'other's'. He argues that there must be created spaces for negotiating identity in order to highlight the positive interdependence that also exists. Klotz (1995) also recognizes the identity-driven character of reconciliation. He has shown that the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa became possible because of the emergence and institutionalization of a global norm of racial equality. This is similar to what John Paul Lederach (1997: 34) defines as the relational dimension of conflicts, that "involves the emotional and psychological aspects of the conflict and the need to recognize past grievances and explore future interdependence", being reconciliation precisely the locus to do so:

> Beings become full individuals through mutual recognition, which emphasizes the essentially intersubjective (or social) nature of identity formation" […] "thus, rather than resuscitating problematic reductive notions of ethnic political identities (Serb, Croat, etc.) as a way of recognizing victims, societies should engage in securing what Fraser and Honneth (2003: 29) calls 'reciprocal recognition and status equality', a goal that is unachievable

if victims continue to find themselves excluded, marginalized, devalued and forgotten. (Verdeja 2012: 174)

Drawing from these perspectives, this book proposes that peace-less reconciliation comprises the whole set of initiatives developed in all levels of societies that aim at identity change by promoting the recognition of the 'other'. It is not just an outcome but rather a process that coexists with dehumanization and must be addressed even before the signature of formal agreements. Dealing with peace-less reconciliation as the other side of dehumanization means that its main indicator corresponds to what counteracts the dimensions of denial which are incorporated in the narratives that form one's identity in competing environments. While this section has shown that reconciliation was not formally incorporated into approaches toward peacemaking until the 1990s, a historical analysis anchored on the idea of peace-less reconciliation shows that this dimension of the peace process has always existed, although, as we will see, with changing meanings over time.

As a means to evaluate the connections between identity and violence, dehumanization and reconciliation, this book proposes that both dehumanization and reconciliation are composed by five main dimensions (see Table 3.1). To each dimension corresponds a manifestation of dehumanization or peace-less reconciliation that relates with one or more categories of identity and violence developed in the last chapter. First, there is the moral/cultural dimension of dehumanization and reconciliation. On the one hand, conflicting narratives about the past, competing historical traditions and memories and, therefore, the practice of denying identity and legitimacy to the 'other' are manifestations of this dimension that lead to processes of dehumanization. It is not by coincidence that this dimension is the one more closely connected with cultural violence since it creates the justification, and also narratives that function as a coping mechanism, for structural and direct violence to operate. This dimension is connected with all categories of identity showed in Table 2.2 of last chapter, since it impacts perceptions regarding the right of existence to national identity, ethnic identity, religious identity and geographic identity but defying the historical/cultural identity of the 'other'. In the realm of political/institutional processes, dehumanization appears in official discourses regarding the 'other', on militarism and securitization of identities but also on direct violence per se and on war, being the most visible manifestation of violence in this framework. Both the economic dimension and the social

Table 3.1 Dimensions of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation

		Manifestations	
		Dehumanization	Peace-less reconciliation
Dimensions	Moral/cultural	Conflicting narratives about the past, denying identity	Apologies, common moral history education, recognition
	Political/institutional	Official discourse, direct violence, war and militarism	Reparation programs, truth commissions (legal response)
	Economic	Inequality, lack of access to resources and basic needs	Promote employment, Reduce inequality, affirmative actions
	Geographic	Restriction of movement, occupation, demolitions	Freedom of access and movement, state recognition
	Social	Denying community, rights and access to state services	Basic services for individuals forcedly displaced, citizenship

Source: Elaborated by the author

dimension create deep structural violence since the former has to do with denying community, rights and access to state services and the latter with inequality, lack of access to resources and basic needs. And, finally, the geographic dimension that is connected with restriction of movement, the occupation and demolitions of houses relate with all components of violence and with all categories of identity.

On the other hand, manifestations of each dimension of dehumanization can also be seen in the correspondent dimensions of reconciliation. All of them represent processes, practices and policies that counteract the dimensions of dehumanization mentioned above. They are apologies, common moral and history education and identity recognition in the moral/cultural dimension; reparation programs, truth commissions and other type of legal responses in the context of political/institutional processes; promoting employment, reducing inequality and promoting affirmative actions are all structural reforms that impact the economic real; freedom of access and movement and the territorial recognition in terms of the state are inserted in the geographic dimension; and giving access to basic services for individuals forcedly displaced as well as granting citizenship are attitudes in the domain of social processes.

Finally, even though reconciliation literature refers to distributive justice, that is, redistribution of resources and reparations to victims, as an indicator of reconciliation in a post-conflict societies, in the cases of protracted conflicts such mechanisms cannot take place. However, peace-building mechanisms deployed in the context of humanitarian relief in cases of protracted conflicts such as human rights' monitoring, education, health, housing, etc., help mitigate the dimensions identified as promoting dehumanization. In this sense, analyzing the peace processes' mandates and actions that deal with those dimensions is a way to measure the impact of peace processes to dehumanization or reconciliation. Nevertheless, focusing on reconciliation through material capabilities is unreal in cases in which one wishes to address peace-less reconciliation, that is, reconciliation in ongoing conflicts. All mechanisms deployed in this sense tend only to mitigate the situation and not perform a deep, structural change.

3.3   Drawing the Cycle of Protractedness

This book has developed thus far the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this study using constructivism and insights from Peace Studies and Social Psychology literatures. On the one hand, it defined, characterized and discussed the consequences of protracted peace processes to conflicts (Chap. 2). Meaning to fill the gap in the literature regarding the conceptualization of those kinds of processes, this chapter suggested that their primary focus on present manifestations of the conflict, instead of dealing with its root causes and future challenges, have led to a contradictory and unintended consequence of contributing to the perpetuation of the conflict. By arguing that peace processes, once established as protracted, become a social structure that influences the attitudes, interests, behaviors and identities of actors connected to the conflict, last chapter concluded that they occupy a central position in the cycle of protractedness, thus fueling the conflict instead of promoting peace.

Following this line of argumentation, last chapter also discussed the mutually constitutive nature of violence and identity in conflict. By assuming Johan Galtung's definition of violence as opposed to peace, it is also possible to frame identity and peace as mutually constitutive. Connecting these ideas with the framework developed in this chapter, this means that the process of constructing identity in protracted conflicts is twofold: the potential for dehumanization in the process of de-identification does not

exclude the other pole, as there is the potential for reconciliation. As explained in the last section, since reconciliation is usually dealt with as a final stage of peacebuilding, after the signature of a negotiated accord between the parties to the conflict, this book refers to 'peace-less reconciliation' as the dynamics, activities, policies and practices that aim at reconciliation but are developed within the context of latent or ongoing conflict.

The main objective of Part I of this book was to unravel the mechanisms through which identities—and more specifically the negative dimension of identity, the detachment from others or the representations of the 'other'—might be impacted by the protracted conflict and the protracted peace process. Accordingly, this chapter dove deeper into two elements of the negative dimension of identity construction, suggesting that this process ranges from two poles: it might promote dehumanization or allow for the development of peace-less reconciliation instead. These are parallel dynamics which are developed simultaneously within the context of protracted conflicts, leading to the need to explore the conditions that allow for one process to prevail over the other in the course of the dispute.

The consequences of this analysis point to the elements that comprise the cycle of protractedness being violence, peace and identity. While peace and violence can be interpreted as a continuum represented in the form of a circle, the cycle of protractedness also includes the elements of identity that were identified in this chapter as paramount for understanding the root causes of conflict and addressing its transformation. Therefore, the cycle of protractedness (Fig. 3.1) is a graphic representation that places identity as the core issue sustaining protracted conflicts.

Its application outlines the hypothesis that the positive transformation of identity leads to a decrease in the levels of cultural violence, promoting the development of practices of peace-less reconciliation, while processes of dehumanization, when manifested in the identities of societies, promote the increase of violence and the perpetuation of conflict dynamics through time. By connecting this cycle with the main object of this research, the protracted peace process, the consequence and practical application of this conceptual framework is that it establishes a direct relationship between the peace process and the protracted nature of the conflict, positioning the peace process and its associated discourses, practices and policies in the center of this cycle.

Put differently, both conflicts and peace processes can create the conditions for certain norms, rules and identities to be considered legitimate or illegitimate in a specific context. On its turn, agents' behaviors and
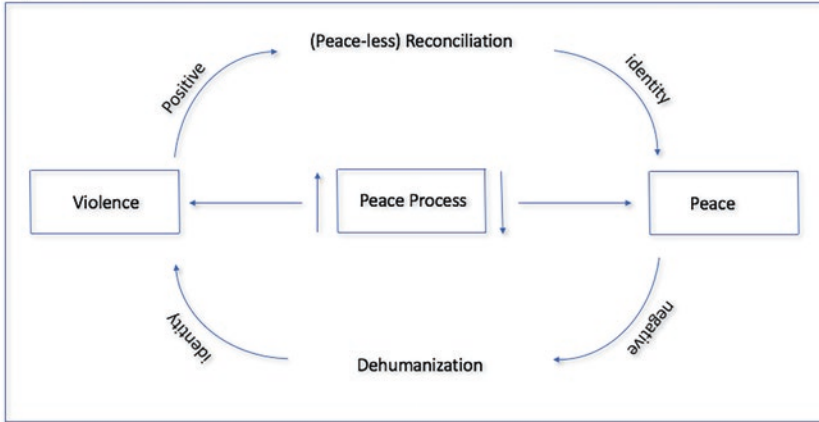
Cycle of Protractedness

Fig. 3.1   The cycle of protractedness. (Source: Elaborated by the author)

interests, which are also a product of the latter, have an important role in redefining those structures and changing their meaning through time. This means that there exists a cycle of interactions in which structures influence the behavior of agents while agents reflect these behaviors on the ways they act within structures. Simply put, if conflicts and peace processes associated with them influence the behavior of actors in a way that reinforces or normalizes meanings such as enmity and dehumanization, those will be reflected in the very way actors act regarding the conflict and the peace process. Therefore, the tendency is that enmity will be perpetuated and reflected in the negotiations creating a cycle of protractedness. For this reason, it is important to analyze the interactions between main actors and peace processes that become protracted alongside conflicts in order to realize how those processes deal—or do not deal—with the negative dimension of identity construction.

Illustrating these dynamics, next chapters will draw a genealogy of processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation, exploring the conditions that allow for one to prevail over the other, as well as their coexisting dynamics. Part II develops a historically based analysis of the construction of identities in this conflict from the establishment of the Zionist Movement in the beginning of the twentieth century to nowadays. It will provide a narrative-based account of identity building with a closer look into the

identification dynamics (the construction of a collective 'self') but into the de-identification process (the detachment from 'others') in light of the protracted peace process and its developments.

3.4   CONCLUSION

The rich intellectual heritage of Peace and Conflict Studies developed by authors such as John Burton and Edward Azar brings about questions such as human deficits and the possibility of conflict transformation to the core of the thought and practice about peace. Those scholars focus on issues such as the importance of culture, history and identity to conflicts. By combining social psychology contributions on dehumanization with the theoretical and practical work already developed in conflict transformation approaches, this chapter aimed to set the basis for analyzing the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace processes on identities in conflict. Accordingly, this chapter suggested that dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation should be addressed as the main elements influencing identity building in protracted conflicts. These two opposing poles are directly connected with the narratives, norms, practices and discourses that promote conflict or its transformation. However, as explained in this chapter, the complexities associated with protracted conflicts lead to the coexistence of both dehumanization and practices of peace-less reconciliation, which work in parallel in these kind of conflicts.

Edward Azar's theoretical development of protracted social conflict draws on the recognition of social groups' prolonged struggle for their basic human needs, social justice and social welfare. It also reflects on how this is often obscured by state-centric approaches that tend to analyze conflicts from the perspective of the nature and organization of the international system rather than from the individual and societal levels (Azar 1990: 12). What Herbert C. Kelman calls dehumanization is a process that leads to the weakening of moral restraints against violence, in which the victims are deprived of their human status through the removal of their identity—agency—and community (Kelman 1973). In other words, it means ignoring that the individual has value and is valued by others, thus allowing for his or her objectification. On the one hand, this acts as fuel for the conflict in a way of a political and societal legitimization of violence toward the 'other' and, on the other hand, it appears as a coping mechanism for societies that will most likely become militarized and/or accustomed to deal with everyday violence and disruptions.

This framework emphasizes the importance of intersubjective meanings to identity building, in the form of narratives, norms and social practices that are constructed through time in specific historic and geographic contexts. In other words, it helps us analyze the impacts of long-term conflict on the identities of societies and vice-versa, contributing to a better understanding of the relationships between rival societies. This is particularly useful to address cases of protracted conflicts, in which violence and animosity tend to be normalized, being the dominant reality for different generations and even a constitutive aspect of one's very identity (Burton 1990; Ramsbotham 2005: 114–116). While John Paul Lederach "views peace as centered and rooted in the quality of relationships" (Lederach 1997), his proposal fails to recognize the central role of dehumanization processes to the deterioration of such relationships and to the maintenance of the protracted nature of conflict.

Despite the changes in the peace agenda that have operated with the end of the Cold War, the liberal peace model of international interventionism still focuses primarily on the dynamics of negative peace and state-level negotiations, thus neglecting the importance of identity issues to conflict transformation. While the concept of reconciliation was coined in the context of those debates in the 1990s, most literature on reconciliation refers to this process as a final step of conflict resolution, thus introducing it in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding, after formal peace is established. This chapter built on the works which counteract this tendency to frame an understanding of the processes of peace-less reconciliation that take place in protracted conflicts, as well as its manifestations, which are indicators for the analysis that will be developed in the next chapters.

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The Genealogy of Dehumanization and Peace-less Reconciliation in Israel and Palestine

Before the Peace Process: Historical Roots of a Dysfunctional Relationship

The historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict date back to much earlier than the decision to partition the land between two peoples, which led to the creation of the Israeli State in 1948 and the beginning of the official dispute between Arabs and Jews. This moment was—and is—of central importance for the current format of the conflict and the following attempts to solve it. However, the narratives that have created the rationale for the discourses, policies and practices of conflict that prevail until today were actually formed in the first half of the twentieth century. These have arisen in the context of the establishment of the Zionist Movement and the subsequent attempts made by the British Mandate to conciliate the intentions of the latter and the claims of the autochthonous population of Palestine—the Palestinians—after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. Although it is impossible to talk about a peace process—at least the way the scholarship and policy makers traditionally define it—before at least the end of the Second World War, through a teleological approach it is possible to frame the first attempts to deal with what was still a young dispute between political elites as the embryonic phase of what would later become a protracted peace process.

Aiming to take full account of what some have referred to as a conflict of narratives (Shlaim 2010: ix) and the very specific identity dynamics that have arisen from it, this chapter develops a contextual analysis of the historical roots of what came to be a dysfunctional relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian national identities. It focuses on first attempts

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developed toward peacemaking following the establishment of the Zionist Movement in Palestine in light of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation. Section 4.1 traces early signs of negative interdependence between the national identities in the making, focusing on discourses and official documents related to the newborn conflict before the Second World War and the decolonization processes in the Middle East. Section 4.2 explores the meaning of reconciliation that had emerged during the period of the British Mandate. By bringing together the analysis developed in the previous parts of this chapter, Sect. 4.3 identifies the need for legitimacy and recognition in the context of the interactions between local and international powers as the main drivers of the dawn of dehumanizing processes in this conflict. This chapter argues that the first attempts to accommodate opposing interests of both Palestinian and Zionist elites during the British Mandate, what can be considered the embryo of the peace process, have introduced a self-perpetuating dynamic of defining the 'self' as opposed to the 'other' that has marked greatly the process of both Israeli and Palestinian identity building. This chapter concludes that the first approaches to deal with what was still a young dispute between political elites were not only defining features for the subsequent periods, but also had deep implications in the very course of events.

4.1   EARLY SIGNS OF NEGATIVE INTERDEPENDENCE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITIES

A land without a people for a people without a land
Israel Zangwill, 1901[1]

Dehumanization of both Jews and Palestinians is a process that started many years before the establishment of the United Nations and the peace process between the two parties of the conflict. For instance, Jewish persecution across Europe dates back to the Middle Ages, while anti-Semitism during the Second World War turned the Jewish question into one of the most emblematic cases of dehumanization of a people in History. The interconnectedness of preliminary stages of what is now the Israeli and the Palestinian identities can be associated with those events that created the

[1] The precise origin of this sentence is still a matter of dispute. Some point to nineteenth-century Christian writers (Muir 2008: 55), while others argue that it was institutionalized as the Zionist movement slogan by the Jewish poet Israel Zangwill, in 1901 (Said 2003: 9).

rationale and the motivation for a massive Jewish immigration to Palestine. However, the origins of the negative interdependence between these two identities can actually be found in the birth of the Zionist Movement, at the end of the nineteenth century (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998: 762; Halpern 1969; Hertzberg 1973).

Commonly associated with the slogan quoted at the beginning of this section, "a land without people for a people without land",[2] the Zionist Movement was developed from its inception as a nationalist ideology that aimed at the colonization of Zion, the land of Israel—or, in other words, Palestine. As shown by Ilan Pappé in his book *A History of Modern Palestine*, this movement was not homogeneous at first, neither regarding the origin of its members nor their plans for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people (Pappé 2010: 35–40). Nevertheless, its aim of uniting the Jewish people under national claims, translated in terms of the establishment of a modern national state, and the idea that there could not be other alternatives for this community to live without the fear of persecution and isolation were a constant in the diversity of manifestos and discourses of Zionists in the turn to the twentieth century.[3]

Early signs of a narrative that dehumanizes the 'other' by implicitly or explicitly denying identity and community to the autochthonous populations of Palestine can be seen in the first documents associated with the Zionist Movement. The Manifesto of the Bilu Group (1882)[4] makes the claim for "a home in our country" that is considered Jewish by divine and historical right since "it was given to us by the mercy of God; it is ours as

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[2] See Joan Peters' (1984) *From Time Immemorial.* For a detailed criticism of her analysis, see also Norman G. Finkelstein's (2003) *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict,* from pages 21 to 50.

[3] See, for example, the Manifesto of the Bilu Group (1882), Theodor Herzl pamphlet "The Jewish State" (1896) and The Basle Declaration of the First Zionist Congress (August 1897). All those documents focus on the narrative of a more than two thousand years old "exile" of the Jewish people, on the premise that the land claimed was taken (the Bilu Group Manifesto states that "we lost our country")—*ergo*, the autochthonous population, if regarded at all, would be considered alien to the region—on the urgency for a solution for the anti-Semitism and the so-called Jewish question (Theodor Herzl justifies his proposal by saying that "we naturally move to those places where we are not persecuted, and there our presence produces persecution"), and on the manifested intention of creating "for the Jewish people a home in Palestine" based on colonialist pretentions that ignore the existence of a people that already lived in the land (The Basle Declaration proposes "the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers").

[4] Available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/bilu-manifesto, [February 1, 2020].

registered in the archives of history". Theodor Herzl's pamphlet "The Jewish State" (1896),[5] on its turn, proposes "the *restoration* of the Jewish state" [the italic is mine], thus invoking the moral/cultural dimension of dehumanization outlined in Table 3.1 of Chap. 3. Although at this point the Zionist Movement strategy was that of diplomatic channels and negotiations with the Sultanate of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the region until the First World War, as well as a financial enterprise expressed in the systematic purchase of private land, there is a clear claim for the colonization of Palestine, mostly explicit in all those documents (see, e.g., the Basle Declaration of the First Zionist Congress, August 1897[6]). Those perspectives either deliberately ignore the existence of several communities that lived in Palestine at that time or imply that their will over the land is not worth consideration.[7] By silencing or even erasing the existence of other identities that were connected to Palestine—and, needless to say, corresponded to the majority of its population[8]—this narrative has granted those individuals the status of mere observers, thus removing their right of agency—an imminently human condition. According to Ilan Pappé in his book *The Forgotten Palestinians*, there is plenty of evidence from the many diaries left to the analysis of contemporary historians by early Zionist settlers that although they

> were well received […] [and that] the local Palestinians in most cases offered these newcomers some accommodation and advice on how to cultivate the land, […] the settlers did not reciprocate in kind […] [since] they referred to the native Palestinians as aliens roaming the land that belonged to the

[5] Available at https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1896herzl.asp, [February 1, 2020].

[6] Available at Laqueur and Rubin (2008: 9).

[7] Some exceptions are worth mention. According to Avi Shlaim in his book *The Iron Wall*, one of the consequences of the Basel Congress was the constitution of a field mission to Palestine that led to a declaration by two rabbis that "the bride is beautiful, but she is married to another man" (*apud* Shlaim 2000: 3). As the author puts it, "the Zionist movement, with the exception of a few marginal groups, tended to ignore the Arabs who lived in Palestine (…). [Theodor Herzl] viewed the natives as primitive and backward, and his attitude toward them was rather patronizing. He thought that as individuals they should enjoy full civil rights in a Jewish state but he did not consider them a society with collective overwhelming majority" (Shlaim 2000: 3–4).

[8] According to Cleveland and Bunton (2013: 228), by the end of the First World War, there were 668,258 Arab inhabitants in Palestine, which corresponded to over 85 percent of the population.

Jewish people [while] some came with the notion that the land was empty and assumed that the people they found there were foreign invaders. (Pappé 2013: 1)

As per the Palestinians—mostly Arabic autochthonous populations living under the Ottoman Empire in the region of Palestine—their national claims were not structured at the beginning of the twentieth century. In this regard, it is worth noting that it would be anachronistic to analyze the rise of this identity in formation by using the lenses of Western modern thinking, in which identities started to be expressed in terms of national aims, because this understanding only became universalized after the territorial reorganization and decolonization processes that followed the Second World War. Notwithstanding, according to Rashid Khalidi, in his book *Palestinian Identity* (2010), there exists a great amount of evidence that the relative administrative autonomy granted by the Ottoman Empire to important cities in Palestine such as Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus, Hebron, Nazareth and Gaza[9] created the conditions for the construction of a modern national consciousness that became increasingly expressed as differentiated from the Arabic identity as a whole (Khalidi 2010: 35–38). By investigating the story of important Palestinian families (notables), in the end of the nineteenth century, Khalidi argues that there was already a widely spread will between political and economic elites connected with European scholarship, and sharing liberal values of modernity, secularism and nationalism, to establish a Palestinian state in the region. His research challenges mainstream contemporary narratives that attribute the existence of the Palestinian identity to later reactions and resistance to the establishment of the Zionist Movement alone (Peters 1984; Avneri 2009).

For the purpose of this book, it is important to note that the Palestinian identity is the product of a twofold process of differentiation and affirmation that is not only connected to the Zionist 'other' but also that, from its inception, arises from the greater Arabic identity into which Palestinians were assimilated at that time (Muslih 1988; Khalidi 2010). Nevertheless, references to what was supposed to become a "Palestinian citizenship"

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[9] The Ottoman Empire referred to this administrative region as Filastin, which is the transliteration of the Arabic word for Palestine, suggesting that the relatively autonomous political organization and its territorial boundaries were already defined in the end of the nineteenth century, thus allowing for the development of feelings of attachment to the land that go beyond the simple notion of pertaining to a community circumscribed only to the microverse of villages and cities.

date back to 1922.[10] It would be then simplistic to state that the Palestinian identity is the mere product of the opposition to the Jewish immigration and the discourses and narratives of the Zionist Movement that organized the international Jewish community into a Jewish national identity—which is also a product of heterogeneity since it is composed by several communities from diverse origins. Moreover, this view could be considered complicit with the mainstream Zionist narrative that denies the existence of the Palestinian identity (Pappé 2013: 1–8). As a matter of fact, many efforts toward self-determination were taken during the late Ottoman rule of Palestine and especially during the British Mandate, simply because the situation had changed with the fall of the Empire (Smith 2010: 33–36). For instance, documents from this period reveal a clear intention on the part of the indigenous population of constituting a national state in Palestine, although the formula for this aim was definitely diverse (Cleveland and Bunton 2013: 228–229).

   Albeit, as has been argued, the first stages of the construction of both Israeli and Palestinian national identities can be dated back at least to the end of the nineteenth century, both have begun to assume a strong character of opposition to the 'other' only after the developments of the end of the First World War, when the fall of the Ottoman Empire led the League of Nations to the decision of placing Palestine under the administration of Great Britain. Despite the commitments made in order to respect the wishes of the people of Palestine (UNISPAL 1978), the British Mandate legitimated the claims to a Jewish State in that region by conceding to the Zionist Movement's requests. The Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917),[11] in which Lord Balfour declares the British Empire's commitment with the establishment of a Jewish homeland, is considered by many the birth certificate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Laqueur and Rubin 2008: 16; Tessler 1994; Mendelsohn 1989; Gerner 1991). In this letter written by Lord Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, it is said that "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object". Reactions from

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[10] See League of Nations' decision of July 24, 1922, in the San Remo Conference that established the British Mandate (UN 1922).

[11] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration. aspx, [February 1, 2020].

Arabic communities[12] inaugurated discourses aimed at the affirmation of their national identities—given what started to be perceived as a threat to their claims and very existence as a people.[13] These discourses have been strongly connected with the negative dimension of identity building, being its relationship with the 'other', rather than with identification and a sense of pertaining to the same community.

The growing tension that led to early signs of the negative interconnectedness of those identities expressed in terms of dehumanization processes can already be seen in the first documents related to the conflict. As an illustration, both the King-Crane Commission's Recommendations (August 28, 1919)[14] and the Churchill White Paper (June 1922)[15] express great concern with the growing opposition to the Zionist Movement in Palestine and Syria, anticipating what was about to become one of the most emblematic cases of protracted social conflicts in contemporary history. On the one hand, the former identifies the increase of cultural violence and its potential for the escalation of the conflict by warning that "the Peace Conference should not shut its eyes to the fact that the anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine and Syria is intense and not lightly to be flouted". On the other, the latter summarizes the feelings of the indigenous populations at that time by assuring that the British Empire had not "at any time contemplated, as appears to be feared by the Arab Delegation, *the disappearance or the subordination of the Arabic population, language, or culture in Palestine*" [the italic is mine], what is an evidence that Arab concerns at that time already corresponded to what was identified in this book as the dimensions of dehumanization in Chap. 3. Both documents, as well as the ones connected to the Zionist Movement that were mentioned above, point to the beginning of what was about to become an identity conflict, focused on identity needs such as those of recognition,

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[12] Those reactions against the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and opposing Zionism and Jewish immigration culminated, among others, in the very violent 1920, 1921, 1929 and 1936–1939 Arab riots (Morris 2009: 19). According to Laqueur and Rubin, the report of the Peel Commission (July 1937) considered that the increase of direct violence was a product of "the desire of the Arabs for national independence" and that "their *hatred and fear* of the establishment of the Jewish National Home were the underlying causes of the disturbances" [the italic is mine] (Laqueur and Rubin 2008: 41).

[13] See Chaps. 2 and 3 for a more detailed theoretical discussion on ontological security, identities in conflict and features of dehumanization.

[14] Available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/recommendations-of-the-king-crane-commission-on-syria-and-palestine-august-1919, [February 1, 2020].

[15] Available at https://ecf.org.il/media_items/439, [February 1, 2020].

community rights and distribution of resources (Lederach 1997; Regehr 1993; Burton 1990).

Although this book defines the peace process as having been initiated with the United Nations' interference in the matter, since it established the contemporary characteristics of this conflict, some argue that it in fact began with the developments that followed the Balfour Declaration (e.g., Khalidi 2006: xi). This section made the brief point that although dehumanization cannot be considered a product of the protracted peace process, it has definitely been impacted by this process from whichever starting point one wishes to define it. However, as could not have been different, the first attempts to peacemaking in the region were deeply influenced by the goal of promoting reconciliation. More specifically, in this case, the British Mandate's approach to accommodate divergent interests has dominated the understandings of reconciliation in this period.

Next section will analyze the meaning of reconciliation employed in this period, trace its manifestations in early discourses and discuss briefly the implications of this approach to the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4.2   Reconciliation as the Accommodation of Interests in the British Mandate

The Principal Allied Powers […] [are] in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine […].
    League of Nations, 1922[16]

The quotation above represents a great summary of the meaning of reconciliation employed by the British Mandate in the first attempts to solve the early manifestations of what would become a more than a century-long protracted conflict between two national projects. The idea of reconciling divergent and competing interests was key for the interventions that took place in the region before the Second World War. This section traces early signs of reconciliation developed during the period of

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[16] League of Nations: The British Mandate (July 24, 1922), available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20mandate%20for%20palestine.aspx, [February 6, 2020].

the League of Nations' mandated British rule over Palestine. It assesses the evolution and development of policies and practices that have attempted to promote some form of reconciliation in the dawn of what would become known as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as their impact on social identities. This is an enlightening analysis since the absence of a peace process under the League of Nations did not mean extensive international interventionism in the region did not take place. Moreover, the first approaches to deal with what was still a young dispute between political elites were not only defining features for the subsequent periods; they also had deep implications in the very course of events.

Resuming the narrative developed in the last section, this analysis begins with the consequences of what was already referred that is considered by many scholars to be the birth certificate of the conflict, the more than a hundred years old Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917).[17] As such, this important historical landmark can be considered the very reason why reconciliation would become a necessity in the years to come. In this document, Lord Balfour made a twofold promise that has determined the fate of the region (and the decisions made about the region) in subsequent decades. On the one hand, he declared His Majesty's sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations and officially accepted their national claims for Palestine. On the other, he conditioned this promise to the safeguard of the "civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". Nevertheless, as argued in last section, this declaration provided the legitimization of the Jewish aspirations yet ignoring the Palestinian identity claims and even existence.

Instead of promoting recognition, one of the indicators of reconciliation identified in this research,[18] this declaration reinforced the Zionist Movement's denial of the Palestinian identity. In this document, the Arab Palestinian people, that, as mentioned before, constituted more than 85 percent of the population, were actively made inexistent by the Mandate that merely referred to them as non-Jewish communities, "a strange reference to the vast native majority" (Pappé 2006: 13), and promised them "civil and religious rights at the expense of crucial political and national rights" (Khalidi 2017: 8). The legitimization of one's identity alongside

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[17] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration.aspx, [February 6, 2020].

[18] See Table 3.1 Dimensions of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation of Chap. 3.

the denial of the 'other's' makes it an unavoidable milestone for any analysis about dehumanization and reconciliation in Israel and Palestine.

A consequence of this approach, Arab rejection to the Balfour Declaration provoked violent reactions and contestations all over Palestine (Sorek 2013: 6; Darweish and Rigby 2015: 15). Following the controversy of the Declaration, first signs of discourses and policies that aimed at promoting the conciliation of narratives, claims, aims and, more importantly, identities of Palestinian Arabs and Jews can be seen in the 1922 Churchill White Paper.[19] In this document, there is a clear effort of the then-British Colonial Secretary to create a paradigm of cooperation instead of competition, at least in the official discourse, since the British Government policy during the period of the Mandate consisted mainly of an attempt to balance Zionist claims and local pleas for self-determination, while maintaining their very position in the region (Smith 2010: 67). Churchill's argument in this document was that cooperating would be a way to improve Arab standard of living at the same time that it would allow for the creation of the Jewish homeland.

According to Cleveland and Bunton, the Churchill White Paper was an attempt at promoting coexistence—that, as set out in Chap. 3, is a minimalist albeit necessary condition for reconciliation—as the basis for future relations and politics in the region, since "his first constitutional proposal called for the creation of a legislative council composed of elected Muslim, Christian, and Jewish representatives plus eleven members nominated by the high commissioner" (Cleveland and Bunton 2013: 228). This proposal can be connected to the political dimension of reconciliation, insofar as it consists in an attempt to balance previous declarations by promoting the reparation of what was assumedly a past wrongdoing at the institutional level. In doing this, it consisted of an important recognition of the existence and claims of other identity groups, at least at the symbolic level. Nevertheless, this was an episodic situation that can be better connected to the exception rather than the rule, thus failing to find echo in future approaches to this conflict in the years to come. Moreover, this proposal granted equal treatment and opportunities to groups whose representation in society was severely disproportionate, therefore still privileging a minority over the majority. As Rashid Khalidi points out, despite the conciliatory tone of the content of the Churchill White Paper, the British Colonial Secretary had in fact promised the Zionist leadership that

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[19] Available at https://ecf.org.il/media_items/439, [February 6, 2020].

Palestine would be turned into a Jewish State (Khalidi 2017: 9). The feeling of injustice sparked by the British suggestion of parity led not only to the Arab refusal to accept it, but also to a Palestinian uprising in 1929 (Pappé 2006: 14).

However, an analysis of this document is in order since it addresses the dimension of recognition of identities that is present in the concept of peace-less reconciliation developed in this book. Although it was just one of the few glimpses of recognition in this period, the Churchill White Paper is paramount in reversing the denial of the Palestinian Arab existence that was a dominant feature of the Balfour Declaration. In his narrative, Churchill assured both parties to the recently created conflict that "the Secretary of State is of opinion that [the Balfour Declaration] does not contain or imply anything which need cause either alarm to the *Arab population of Palestine* or disappointment to *the Jews*" [the italics are mine]. Differently from Lord Balfour's discourse in 1917, the Churchill White Paper recognizes explicitly the existence of at least two competing claims, expressed in the existence of legitimate identity groups with national aspirations, and the need to manage them in order to reach a solution to the recently created conflict. Therefore, Winston Churchill's document was one of the first to recognize the need to promote some type of reconciliation between the two peoples and their identity needs.

Almost ten years later and following the riots of 1929 against the intensification of Jewish immigration and the extensive land sales to Jews (Laqueur and Schueftan 2016: 36–37), British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald issued a document known as The MacDonald Letter (February 13, 1931).[20] Although this document maintains the tendency of addressing the conflict in an asymmetric and, above all, unbalanced way, which did not correspond to the actual disproportionate weight of each party in the region, reinforcing Zionist claims to the land already recognized by the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Balfour Declaration, it can also be read as another expression of early signs of reconciliation, this time in its economic and social dimensions. In his Letter, the Prime Minister recognizes "the existence of differing interests and viewpoints" and goes even further in affirming that "these, indeed, are not in themselves irreconcilable, but they can only be *reconciled* if there is a proper realization

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[20] Available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-macdonald-letter-february-1931, [February 6, 2020].

that the full solution of the problem depends upon an understanding between the Jews and the Arabs" [the italics are mine].

While this document reinforces the British policy of artificially establishing a future Jewish State in Palestine, it expresses concern regarding the "control of [Jewish] immigration", the "number of displaced Arabs" and the deprivation of "the present population of their employment". Nevertheless, this document is another example of how reconciliation was mainly addressed in this period. It was seen as a balance between interests in the political level and a way to mitigate the conflict (usually referred in the documents of this period as a "problem") between the population of Palestine and the Jewish immigrants, that was in fact created by previous promises made by the Mandate to the Zionist Movement. According to Ilan Pappé, those were "British ideas of how best to solve the conflict Britain itself had done so much to exacerbate" (Pappé 2006: 13).

Another example of a document in this period that refers to reconciliation—although very different from the others in its consequences and actual impact on the conflict—is the Peel Commission Report (July 1937).[21] However, this document is relevant not because it considers the need to promote some sort of reconciliation, defined in terms of *interests* to solve the dispute, but because it explicitly addresses the relationship between reconciliation and *identity*. It was precisely due to the recognition of the existence of two different identity groups with competing national claims that Lord Peel recognizes in this document that the national aspirations of Arabs and Jews could not be reconciled under the Mandate. According to Lord Peel, Arabs and Jews

> differ in their religion and in language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as incompatible as their national aspirations. These last are the greatest bar to *peace*. Arabs and Jews might possibly *learn to live and work together* in Palestine if they would make a genuine effort to *reconciliation* and *combine their national ideals* and so build up in time a joint or dual nationality. But this they cannot do. […] no solution can be satisfactory or permanent which is not *based upon justice*. [the italics are mine]

As emphasized by the italics on the text, the Peel Commission Report was also the first document produced in the context of this conflict to connect

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[21] Available at https://ecf.org.il/media_items/290, [February 6, 2020].

reconciliation to coexistence, identity, justice and peace.[22] Based on the belief that the proposal to create a Palestinian citizenship—into which Jewish and Arabic peoples would be assimilated within a liberal secular state with equal rights and international governance of religious sites, in order to protect the major faiths of Jews, Christians, Muslims and Armenians—would not be possible, Lord Peel suggested in this document what would become the actual implemented solution to the conflict: the partition of Palestine.[23]

In conclusion, these examples show that reconciliation in this period of the British Mandate had been approached as a delicate balance between divergent interests (including British ones). As Rashid Khalidi puts it, those documents were in fact "quintessentially colonial proclamations by the greatest power of its era of its intent to replace an indigenous people with another, whom it proposed to bring into existence on their territory" (Khalidi 2017: 8). As argued in the previous section, the inability (or willful lack of intention) expressed in most documents of this period to recognize the identity of the people of Palestine, as well as their active denial of this people's national claims, is reflected not only in a grossly misrepresentation of the idea of reconciliation but has actually promoted the dehumanization of Palestinians. Moreover, based on the widespread belief that reconciliation was not a possibility, future approaches to this conflict have developed into the idea of artificially partitioning the land, thus institutionalizing divisions in the political, moral, cultural, geographic, economic and social realms that were to be translated into practices in the societal level. As we will see in the next chapter, this approach to reconciliation merely as reconciling interests will be maintained and reproduced during several decades in the context of the newborn peace process after the Second World War.

4.3   Legitimacy and Recognition in the Wake of Conflict

The analysis developed in this chapter thus far shows how the international attempts to manage the region of Palestine in the beginning of the twentieth century, following the establishment of the Zionist Movement and the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, had created

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[22] For more on the interconnectedness between these concepts, see Porter (2015).

[23] For a detailed analysis of the Partition Plan and its developments, see Chap. 5.

the very need for external intervention in the decades to come. It was in the context of the first declarations of the British Mandate and the League of Nations about the future of the region that the conflict, or to use the words at the time, the "problem", has arisen. In this sense, the mediation of the external powers and the first attempts to negotiate a solution for the competing aims and expectations regarding the political and national projects that were being drawn for Palestine at that moment had become a privileged arena for manifesting one's claims and identity as opposed to the other's, a paradigm that will continue and intensify during the next decades in the context of the protracted peace process.

This chapter has shown how the development of competing narratives and aims, connected to the necessity of *legitimization* in the face of the international powers that administered the region, created the basis for disputes over the land and, later on, over the affirmation and *recognition* of identity needs (Pappé 2013: 1–2). Practices and discourses that aim at the dehumanization of the 'other' appear in this context as self-defense mechanisms, a way to legitimate one's national claims by delegitimizing the 'other's' (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998: 763–764). This has created the beginning of what Herbert C. Kelman calls negative interdependence between identities (Kelman 1999: 581), insofar as the existence of the 'self' became intrinsically related to the conflictive relationship with, and representations made of, the 'other'.

Moreover, the impacts connected with these documents on social identity are manifold, since the discourses and practices in the political level about the future of the territory under British jurisdiction, known as Palestine, have affected the very relationships between Jews and Arabs in this period and, more importantly, found resonance in the years to come. On the one hand, by activating the moral/cultural and political/institutional dimensions of dehumanization, with few exceptions mentioned in last section, this approach has contributed to the institutionalization of meanings, policies and practices that aimed at legitimizing one's identities and claims by denying the existence of the other's (Kelman 1999; Khalidi 2010). This can be seen in the reactions and discourses of both Israeli and Palestinian political elites in this period, analyzed in the first section.

The examples addressed in this chapter that counteract this pattern in the period of the British Mandate were episodic manifestations of what Lisa Strömbom calls "thin recognition" (Strömbom 2013) of the indigenous population's claims for self-determination and were accompanied by a disproportionate support of the Zionists claims (Pappé 2006: 12–15),

thus failing to create a sustainable reconciliatory paradigm and actively promoting direct violence and conflict. On the other hand, the political/institutional approach to reconciliation, defined as the balance between competing interests, had promoted a series of reactions in the societal level that allowed for a reorientation of the political leadership and collaborated to an increasing self-awareness as an identity group in the societal level (Khalidi 2013). In sum, the very actions undertaken in this period that can be connected to the concept of reconciliation have in fact collaborated to the exacerbation of the conflict, the increasing feeling of injustice and disregard for history, collective memory and the past.

In this sense, and as has been suggested and will be further argued in the next chapters, internationally mediated attempts to solve the question of Palestine have played a huge part in both reinforcing and transforming those processes of dehumanization, deeply affecting the interconnectedness of both identities ever since its first interference in the region. This has happened because the mediation of those powers has been considered to be legitimate and, therefore, as briefly showed in this chapter, a convincing narrative of one's rightful claims necessarily started to be connected with the devaluation of the other's. The self-perpetuating dynamics created in this phase will be reproduced in the next ones, creating the paradigm of protracted conflict that exists until today. This is because the very existence of each national project became intrinsically connected with the conflict and the enmity toward the other, turning since this moment the very conflict of an aspect of ontological security (Rumelili 2015; Lupovici 2015).

In conclusion, this chapter identifies the struggle for legitimization and recognition as the main drivers of dehumanization in the first stages of the conflict. Recognition is understood here as the product of intersubjective human negotiations that are connected to their identities insofar as these are shaped and become meaningful only in relation to others (Strömbom 2013: 24–25). In this sense, the need for recognition in this phase of the conflict led to the denial of the 'other' and their existence, insofar as the realization of the competing claims regarding the region was only possible insofar as the 'other's' were rendered illegitimate. Since both projects have positioned themselves in terms of which claim was more accurate, legitimate and just, the defense of one's case became increasingly related to the deconstruction/delegitimization of the other's. As the examples aforementioned show, this led to the creation of a narrative about the 'self' that was strongly connected with the inexistence of the 'other', thus turning

the denial of the 'other' into a very important aspect of the definition of the self, reinforcing what Chap. 2 refers to as the negative dimension of identity building.

As a final note, even though this book considers that the beginning of the contemporary version of the conflict and, therefore, of the peace process, coincides with the United Nations resolution 181 (UN 1947) that created two states, the period analyzed herein is relevant for this study since it sets, as explained above, the basis for the next one. While the League of Nations through the British Mandate had attempted to manage the conflict by dealing with political elites in a colonialist style, the United Nations will maintain this paradigm almost until the end of the Cold War, thus collaborating in the alienation of the population and actively promoting social detachment instead of reconciliation. Next chapter will deal with these dimensions, levels and practices of dehumanization and reconciliation developed within the peace process from the Partition Plan to the First Palestinian Intifada.

4.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter has set out the basis for the main argument of this book. It suggests that a teleological view over the peace process reveals that although it was not—understandably—constructed since the beginning as such, as there was not an ongoing conflict yet, let alone a protracted conflict, to address in the first half of the twentieth century, it can be read in retrospective as a set of non-coordinated—and, sometimes, uncoordinated—initiatives toward promoting peace, coexistence and reconciliation. By looking at these events from the point of view of the current historical developments between these relationships or, put differently, identities in conflict, it is evident that they have systematically influenced the course of the events and, as we will see in the next chapters, have become an invisible, although ever existing, presence—or, in constructivist terms, structure, either material or symbolic—in the dispute, thus impacting the actions, interests and identities of the parties involved in what is now a widely recognized protracted conflict.

The importance of taking full account of what Avi Shlaim called a conflict of narratives urges for a historiographic analysis that can trace the early manifestations of both dehumanization and reconciliation in light of the peace process, even before its official beginning—what I have designated in this chapter as its embryonic phase. This is a way to grasp how these two

intertwined processes came to existence, the conditions that have allowed for one to prevail over the other and even their still coexisting dynamics. Moreover, the contextualization of the antecedents of the peace process shows how recognition, legitimacy and ontological security are so closely connected with the concept of dehumanization. It also allows for an exploration of the impact of dehumanization on identity building and of the role the peace process has played in this regard even before its first breath.

Finally, this chapter also makes the point that investigating national identities in the making is an indispensable enterprise as a means to avoid anachronistic readings of a period that antecedes the widely spread establishment of modern national states in the International Relations system. The impact of the protracted peace process on identities in conflict at this point was connected to the efforts to gain international legitimacy and recognition for the future existence of each national project in the context of a yet colonial world, which also implied the need to render the other national project illegitimate. In this sense, both identities became forever intertwined making it impossible to conceive the history, narratives and collective memories of both Israelis and Palestinians without the other. While these negotiations were not part of the peace process as we understand it and were only between political elites of national identities still in formation, this phase has set the basis for the next ones and the way the international powers responsible for managing the region in the first half of the twentieth century dealt with the situation greatly informed the future paradigm of the conflict and the subsequent attempts to solve it.

As we will see in the next chapter, it was in the midst of the decolonization wave that followed the end of the Second World War that this process intensified and consolidated by widely reaching the societal level rather than just official discourses in the political elites' level. The decision of the United Nations to legitimize the claims of the Jewish people definitely partitioning the region into two states strongly contributed to the unavoidable interconnectedness of those identities from then on. Ever since, developments connected to the establishment of a peace process deeply affected the construction of Israeli and Palestinian identities, national claims and policies designed to strengthen statebuilding efforts since both developed the need of affirmation and international recognition as the future of the territory was mediated by international powers. Next chapters analyze how what was about to become a protracted peace process has affected identity building impacting dehumanization processes and the

failed prospects of reconciliation in the more than 70 years that have passed since 1947 to nowadays.

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The UN Approach to the 'Question of Palestine' During the Cold War

This chapter explores the first phase of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and its impact on identities in conflict by analyzing the period that starts with the Partition Plan and lasts during the Cold War, until the First Intifada (1947 to 1987). Following the main reasoning of this book, I hereby propose that the panoply of actions taken after the end of the Second World War and the dismantling of the British Mandate to decide on the future of the region should be read as the beginning of what would become a protracted peace process. A systematic, planned and sustainable approach to peacemaking in the region was not in place at that time and, more importantly, not before the process that led to the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. However, the teleological approach taken in this book allows for a reframing of the episodic, reactive, but ever more constant attempts to mediate a solution to the so-called Question of Palestine during the Cold War as the first phase of the historiography of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process.

The Cold War period is considered a phase of its own as it marks an important moment in terms of the formulas for solving this conflict—the two-states solution—and the (re)definition of actors that were deemed relevant for such solution. Moreover, this phase corresponds to a very

specific type of peace architecture which was constrained in its repertoire by the latent conflict between the two political, ideological and military superpowers. To draw a complete overview of the peace process, avoiding anachronistic analyses that might obscure its long-term existence due to the differences in the interventionist paradigm at the moment, it is necessary to combine the study of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process with a contextual analysis that puts in perspective the limitations and possibilities that derived from the international world order during the Cold War.

Hence, this chapter situates the mandates, mechanisms and tools employed toward peacemaking in a period of bipolar confrontation in which direct international interventionism in any region was always a balance between frequently opposed interests and aims. Section 5.1 traces the long-term effects of the two-side politics that prevailed in this period, and which initiated with the Partition Plan that recognized the Jewish identity claims as opposed to 'Arabic' ones, analyzing how this has affected the already existing processes of dehumanization explored in the last chapter. Section 5.2 examines the approaches to *political reconciliation* that had dominated in the context of the bipolar world order and their consequences to peacemaking in Israel and Palestine in both the societal and the national level. Section 5.3 discusses how the reactive approach of the peace process at this moment impacted identities and the course of the conflict during the Cold War. This chapter concludes that the reinforcement of dehumanization processes in this period is connected with a defensive reaction of the two competing identities to developments in the international level related with the peace process, that was mainly restricted to elite-driven negotiations toward reaching an agreement regarding the governments and boundaries of the now partitioned territories.

5.1   Recognition and Denial from the Partition Plan to the First Intifada

There was no such thing as Palestinians, […] they did not exist. (Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, 1969)

There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. (Hamas Charter, 1988)

The above-cited quotations summarize the double paradigm of denial and conflict that has dominated the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians during the period of the Cold War. By the end of the Second World War, what is now widely known as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict started to develop in its current shape due to the end of the British Mandate and the insertion of the so-called Question of Palestine into the United Nations' agenda. In fact, the conflict between these two identity groups with increasing national aspirations took its current shape only when the UNGA approved Resolution 181 that partitioned the land of Palestine into two states: one Jewish and the other one *Arabic* (UN 1947a). This decision deeply impacted both the formula for transforming this conflict up to today and the national claims of both peoples, whose very existence started to be connected with official international discourses about their identities—or, in the Palestinian case, its constantly argued inexistence (Pappé 2013: 2; Said 2001; Khalidi 2013: xviii).

In order to draw a genealogy of dehumanization, it is important first to put into context the construction and transformation of the Israeli and the Palestinian national identities in light of the peace process that has developed in this region during the period of the Cold War. The end of the Second World War operated a paradigm shift in the International Relations. The creation of the UN and the simultaneous development of a bipolar system during the Cold War were both responsible for the appearance of new approaches to conflicts and the promotion of peace (Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 42–49; Wiberg 2005). On the one hand, the failure of the League of Nations, and the dimension of the war that followed it, urged for the construction of diplomatic conflict resolution mechanisms that could substitute the resource on armed conflicts. On the other hand, the need to avoid an escalation in the debuting conflict between the two superpowers (with nuclear weapons capabilities) that emerged with the beginning of the Cold War led to the consolidation of a praxis of proxy wars in recently decolonized territories, as well as in the context of several self-determination conflicts that developed as a result of the collapse of former empires (Richmond 2008: 50).

It was in this very specific environment that the United Nations was established, as an organization whose mandate included the task of maintaining international peace and security, as well as intervening

diplomatically in any situation that could undermine the established international world order (UN 1945). At the systemic level, the Cold War and the bipolar world order created the context for the development of specific mechanisms for dealing with conflict and limited to the idea of managing them, as translated into policies such as conflict management and peace-keeping (Bellamy et al. 2010: 170–175). Fearing the escalation of conflict between the superpowers that sought for spheres of ideological influence, international interventionism at this time was mainly restricted to observer missions and diplomatic efforts at the level of political elites (Weiss et al. 2014: 49–52). The societal level was not taken into serious account as this phase is marked by negotiations between states, also as a way to legitimize the nation state system that triumphed after the Second World War, and thus reflecting in practice a narrow and state-centric definition of peace as the absence of direct violence (Richmond 2008: 50–51).

In the case of Israel and Palestine, in which one of the main actors is not widely—and, in fact, was not at all by then—recognized as a sovereign, legitimate and consolidated nation state, this meant that negotiations on behalf of the Palestinians were made by proxy.[1] Palestinians were not recognized as an identity group fighting for self-determination as they were inserted in the greater Arabic identity, especially in the context of Pan-Arabism movements that were strong due to the liberation wars that had been fought in that region. In this context, Palestinians were denied identity and singularity by the international community, their neighbors and the peace process alike (Khalidi 1997).

Last chapter highlighted that the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is deeply connected to that of the international environment in which it has developed. Even more so, since it was one of the first topics in the United Nations' agenda, having been discussed in its first and second especial meetings of the General Assembly. Moreover, the aftermath of the First Arab-Israeli War of 1948 created the first peacekeeping experiences of the United Nations, having deployed an observer team within the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) following the order of cease-fire under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Weiss et al. 2014: 49). Although the conflict was not created by the decolonization

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[1] According to Rashid Khalidi in *The Iron Cage*, "for most of this ten-year period, the key actors in this story are not Palestinian, and many are not Arab. Its most important element is how the Palestinians themselves lost agency, whether to the nascent Israeli state, to the neighboring Arab states, or to international actors" (Khalidi 2006: 125).

process that had initiated with the resume of the British Mandate for Palestine, it is quite evident that its current configuration and existing approaches to resolving the conflict are directly linked to November 29, 1947, the day of the approval of the Partition Plan. For this reason, and as per what was explained in the previous chapter, although many authors (Pappé 2013; Said 2001: 7; Khalidi 2009) refer to the origins of the conflict as dating back to the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century, this book places a stronger focus on the period from 1947 onward. Therefore, the main goal of this work is to analyze the impact of the peace process initiated through the UN in 1947 on the conflict, and particularly its protracted nature. Whereas more than 70 years have passed since that moment, it is relevant to investigate the reasons why what can now be called a *protracted peace process* has not succeeded and, more importantly, what it has achieved and how it has impacted the conflict and efforts toward its transformation.

First, it is worth noting that the idea of partitioning the land of Palestine dates back to a decade before its actual implementation. As discussed in the last chapter, this proposal first appears in the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission, headed by Lord Peel in July 1937,[2] which reached the conclusion that "the grievances and claims of Arabs and Jews (…) cannot be reconciled". Although the British Government had changed this position later due to the strong and violent opposition of the Arab leadership, issuing a Policy Statement Against Partition in November of the next year (Alatout 2009: 379), this proposal would become relevant again in light of the events of the Second World War, namely the Holocaust. The shocking genocide of the Jewish people reinforced the idea that the Jewish problem would only reach a definitive resolution if their national aspirations were to be met in a land of their own (Pappé 2010: 179–181). However, while for the Israelis the approval of the Partition Plan meant independence and self-determination, for the Palestinians the beginning of the UN-sponsored peace process had only initiated the *Nakba* (catastrophe in Arabic). It was at the end of August 1947 that the Summary Report of the UN Special Committee on Palestine was published with two recommendations, being one approved by the majority of its 11 members and the other one by the remaining three members. The former was a plan of partition with an economic union while the latter would be the

[2] Available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-peel-commission-report [June 1, 2022].

establishment of an independent federal state comprised of an Arab State and a Jewish State enjoying "full powers of local self-government" (UN 1947b). Despite the doubtful and uncritical methodology applied by the members of the commission,[3] the proposal of the majority was approved on November 29, 1947, during the 128th plenary meeting of the UNGA, thus creating the Resolution on the Future Government of Palestine (UN 1947a), also known as the Partition Resolution or the Partition Plan.

This resolution can be considered the birth certificate of this conflict and the first action taken in the context of the peace process that had affected identities by reinforcing previous narratives and dynamics of dehumanization of the 'other' in the national and societal levels. As already mentioned, the UNGA Resolution 181 (II) not only inaugurated the actual widespread formula for solving this conflict (the two-states solution), it also partitioned the land of Palestine into a *Jewish* and an *Arab* state. On the one hand, this decision legitimated, and ultimately made possible, Jewish claims for an ethnically based state. On the other hand, it deliberately ignored the existence of *Palestinian* identity claims and downplayed the importance of their feelings of attachment to that land. Rashid Khalidi (2006: 125) affirms that "they [the Palestinians] were either not consulted, or were effectively ignored by the various international efforts that culminated in this resolution". According to Ilan Pappé, "this is a pattern we will see recur frequently in the history of peacemaking in Palestine […] [in which] 'bringing peace to Palestine' has always meant […] [acting] without any serious consultations with, let alone regard for, the Palestinians" (Pappé 2006: 32). In addition, the resolution was approved mainly by external actors that represented political elites, many of them lacking legitimacy and recognition at the societal level for representing their populations.

This top-down model of promoting statebuilding artificially conveyed practical implications. First, the Partition Plan—boycotted by the Arab leadership—was drawn without serious consideration for the real situation

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[3] According to Ilan Pappé, "these officials had no experience in the Middle East or any knowledge of the Palestine situation and had visited the area very briefly" (Pappé 2010: 122). Nevertheless, the UN was not unfamiliar to the many questions on the feasibility of the proposal. Months before the Second Special Meeting of the General Assembly that approved the Partition Plan, the population of Palestine publicly resisted the proposal contained in the recommendations of the UNSCOP commission. The increase in direct violence immediately followed the presentation of the report: "the next day brought the first outburst of intra-communal violence" (Pappé 2010: 125).

on the ground, dividing the region in a disproportionate way.[4] And second, the geographical representation of Palestine proposed by the partition created two states with somewhat intertwined territories due to the discontinuousness of borders and with Jerusalem as a permanent trusteeship that should have been administered by the UN.[5] In the words of Charles D. Smith, data from 1946 estimated that there were

> 1.269 million Arabs in Palestine and 608,000 Jews, a two-to-one ratio. Jews owned approximately […] slightly over 6 percent of the total land area (…). [For this reason], few Palestinians were probably willing to agree to partition. They occupied most of the area and were still a sizable majority in their homeland. (Smith 2010: 190)

What can be considered an exercise of social engineering had its costs. According to Ilan Pappé, although there were already documented intentions manifested by Zionist leaders to enforce eviction of the local Palestinian population regardless of their acceptance of the UN resolution,[6] the Arab refusal of the Partition Plan "provided a pretext for implementing a systematic expulsion of the local population within the areas allocated for a Jewish state" (Pappé 2010: 123–124), contributing to the beginning of the refugee problem.[7] Reactions to this Resolution, contradictorily to the UN's intentions of implementing a peace plan, also culminated in the First Arab-Israeli War, following the State of Israel's Proclamation of Independence. Correctly fearing what was about to become a civil war due to the already perceived escalation of violence between Jews, Palestinians and Arabs from the neighboring countries, the British Mandate delivered on its promise to leave the region in the shortest

[4] In Ilan Pappé's (2006: 35) words "Palestine was actually to be divided into three parts. On forty-two per cent of the land, 818,000 Palestinians were to have a state that included 10,000 Jews, while the state for the Jews was to stretch over almost fifty-six per cent of the land which 499,000 Jews were to share with 438,000 Palestinians. The third part was a small enclave around the city of Jerusalem (…)".

[5] See the map of UN Resolution A/RES/181(II) Annex A (UN 1947a).

[6] The Israeli intentions and strategy are documented in the Plan Dalet, the "blueprint for ethnic cleansing" (Pappé 2006: 86–126). This document challenges the official Israeli historiography that characterizes this period as one of the defensive efforts that turned into offensive actions only due to the danger posed by Arab military strikes.

[7] Recent numbers from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) place the current number of Palestinian refugees at over 4 million (https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees) [October 1, 2019].

period possible without any arrangement for a transitional period or a provisional government, thus creating a vacuum of power that was going to be filled by the Zionist political leadership.

The Israeli Proclamation of Independence, published on May 14, 1948,[8] was strongly marked by a will to gain international endorsement for the national claims of the Jewish people. This document is interesting to the argument developed here since it is a reaction by Jewish political elites to the first decision within the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, that is deeply connected with the making and consolidation of the Jewish national identity at the international level. This document's narrative on the definition of the Jewish identity is one great example of how the peace process has impacted the construction of identities and how this impact has been reflected in the negative dimension of identity building, being the relationship with the 'other' or the differences from the 'other'.[9] As argued by Shlomo Sand, it is an ambivalent document since it meets the UN requirements regarding the democratic character of the state by promising "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants" but embodies the Zionist view of its founders (Sand 2010: 281–283). Without any explicit mention of the existence of any other population or identity group that inhabited Palestine, following the praxis of denying their existence, the document begins with a strong statement that consists in an attempt to counteract the Palestinian position and undermine their claims to the region based on the Jewish people's previous attachments to the land of Palestine or, in the document's terms, Israel: "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here, their spiritual, religious and *national identity was formed*. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance" [the italic is mine]. It goes further by proclaiming "the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country […] [through] the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel". As per what is stated in the document, this decision was grounded in the adoption by the UN General Assembly of "a Resolution requiring the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine […] [since] this *recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent State* is unassailable" [the italic is mine]. The beginning of the peace process thus provided the

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[8] Available at https://m.knesset.gov.il/en/about/pages/declaration.aspx [June 1, 2022].

[9] For an overview of the dimensions of identity in protracted conflicts, see Chap. 2.

pretext, legitimacy and justification for the actions that were about to come from both sides.

It is worth noting that this phase of the peace process can be associated with more than the increase of cultural violence, expressed in the above-mentioned references of absence, inexistence or denial of the 'other'. Data from that period shows an outburst of direct violence ever since 1947, connected to widespread popular knowledge of the UN arrangements of the UNSCOP committee and to the posterior decision of the General Assembly (Khalidi 2010: 177–179; Darweish and Rigby 2015: 21–22). The war that was initiated in 1948 by the Arab neighbors against Israel, as well as the latter's actions against the local population in the form of an ethnic cleansing[10] and forced displacement, is also linked to the decisions taken by an unexperienced UN in the first years of its existence.[11] The famous Israeli historian Ilan Pappé connects the elite-driven character of the peace process to its consequences. He considers that "partitioning the country—overwhelmingly Palestinian—into two equal parts has proven so disastrous because it was carried out against the will of the indigenous majority population" and that "instead of calming the atmosphere, as it was meant to do, the resolution only heightened tensions and directly caused the country to deteriorate into one of the most violent phases in its history" (Pappé 2006: 32–33) According to him, those tensions were directly connected to the developments of the peace process since

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[10] According to Henry Siegman (2004 *apud* White 2009: 22–23), "dismantling the Palestinian society […] was a deliberate and planned operation intended to 'cleanse' (the term used in the declassified documents) those parts of Palestine assigned to the Jews as a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of a Jewish state". Ben White (2009: 23-24) defines ethnic cleansing as policies that "include the creation of fear, humiliation and terror for the 'other' community and provoking the community to flee, with the overall aim being the extermination of certain groups of people from a particular territory, including the elimination of all physical traces of their presence". Therefore, it can be considered as one of the mechanisms connected to dehumanization insofar as it aims to promote the actual erasure of a people's existence and the symbolic denial of their identity and connection to the land.

[11] Corroborating this relationship, Ilan Pappé (2006: 35) wrote that "by drawing the map as they did, the UN members who voted in favor of the Partition Resolution contributed directly to the crime [the ethnic cleansing of Palestine] that was about to take place". Rashid Khalidi (2006: 125) directly binds the increase of violence to the decisions taken by the UN on November 29, 1947: "the civil war erupted as soon as the United Nations General Assembly voted for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state in Resolution 181".

as it was unclear which way the UN would go, life continued more or less as normal, but the moment the die was cast and people learned that the UN had voted overwhelmingly in favor of partitioning Palestine, law and order collapsed and a sense of foreboding descended of the final showdown that partition spelled. (Pappé 2006: 33)

The Arab decision to boycott the UN proceedings and their first move toward war are depicted to this day in Jewish propaganda as a proof of their unwillingness for peace.[12] Differing narratives regarding those events (e.g., in the Israeli side they are related to independence while in the Palestinian side they are characterized as a catastrophe) also created long-lasting myths in the political and cultural imaginaries of those peoples. Some have even served as ammunition for disqualifying the 'other's' narratives and claims, hence creating discursive and political legitimacy for the continuation of actions of direct, structural and cultural violence toward one another.[13] As a matter of example, according to Peretz Kidron,

Israeli propaganda has largely relinquished the claim that the Palestinian exodus of 1948 was 'self-inspired'. […] Even though the historical record has been set straight, the Israeli establishment still refuses to accept moral or political responsibility for the refugee problem it—or its predecessors— actively generated. (Kidron 2001: 94–95)

[12] More recent pieces of propaganda such as a parody-like video entitled "Welcome to the home of the Jewish people" published in the official YouTube channel of the State of Israel on October 6, 2016, have focused on denying the Palestinian presence (or, more generically, the Arabic presence) in the land before the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which the British government attests to the Zionist Movement its commitment to the idea of the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. Instead of promoting the argument that the Arabs did not accept the terms of peace, it depicts a young Jewish couple having their house invaded over and over again in the last 3000 years by several peoples and it finishes with what is depicted as a surprisingly unexpected Arabic visit after the signature of the Balfour Declaration (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrBEImNCHFo) [October 10, 2019].

[13] A letter from May 4, 1949, addressed to the Chairman of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine by Mr. Howard Wriggins, Geneva Representative of the American Friends Service Committee, with a statistic analysis of Palestine's population focused on the origin of refugees receiving assistance from the UNRPR, corroborates this idea by affirming that "sections of the Jewish press has apparently asserted that these persons fled before the pillage and burning of 'Arab mercenaries' or were lured to flee by Abdullah's propaganda" (UN 1949).

The UN response to this was paramount in considering that those people should have the status of refugees. Nevertheless, the United Nations Resolution 194 (III), of December 11, 1948, that became famous especially due to Article 11, in which the UN "resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date" (UN 1948), never got into effect.

Charles D. Smith characterizes the period from the conclusion of the 1949 armistice agreements between Israel and its neighbors as an era of "no war—no peace", since belligerency still existed but the success of the Israeli leadership to secure the newly acquired borders of the recently created state led to a situation in which the status quo was maintained and a permanent state of latent conflict became the norm (Smith 2010: 222–223). During this period from 1948 to 1967, there was a drastic separation of the territories of the historical Palestine and their societies. This situation generated an almost absolute lack of contact between Israelis in their newly acquired territories and Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, that had been controlled respectively by Jordan and Egypt (Kelman 1999: 584). Thusly, it created the perfect environment for cultural violence to develop and flourish, henceforth contributing to the development of discourses and practices of dehumanization on both sides. This can be seen in documents such as political declarations and the constitution of new representative organizations that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, and it culminated in the Six-Day War, in 1967. In the Israeli side, discourses about 'security' and 'defense' became the norm (White 2009: 1–2), thus reinforcing an atmosphere of fear at the societal level, as well as the image of the enemy. On the Palestinian side, after a period of relative political apathy, increasing radicalization in terms of both discourses and actions marked the development of a new, restructured national movement.

Regarding the latter, the consequences of the war they started alongside their neighbors and allies were disastrous for the Palestinians. The years that followed the First Arab-Israeli War—that can also be called the War of Independence or the *Nakba* (catastrophe), depending on who the

interlocutor is[14]—are depicted in the Palestinian historiography as "lost years" due to the almost disappearance of popular (re)action (Khalidi 2010: 178–179). Marwan Darweish and Andrew Rigby point to the characterization of this period as one of apathy in the societal level due to the demobilization of the Palestinian population that was dispersed, dispossessed and divided by the war between Israel, Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and other Arab countries. As they put it, "between the disaster of 1948 and the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 there was virtually no significant public manifestation of Palestinian resistance of any sort" (Darweish and Rigby 2015: 53–57).

Geographical, national and political separation were the rule in this period, being the Israelis directly accountable in the Palestinian narratives and collective memory for such situation. Demobilized, Palestinians started to regroup in neighboring countries, enjoying different legal and social status, taking almost two decades until their national movement was fully reconstructed. This period is also marked by attempts of assimilation faced by this people in the context of Pan-Arabism. From the end of the 1948 war and the beginning of the 1950s, the Israeli position of power in the region got consolidated and the State of Israel became "a status quo power" (Shlaim 2000: 54). Therefore, clashes between the State of Israel and its neighbors were frequent, culminating in the 1956 Suez Crisis or the Second Arab-Israeli War and, as a result, the feelings of injustice and revolt were kept alive by the narratives that formed the Arabic collective memory and thus influenced the (re)construction of the Palestinian identity.

In this context, the reorganization of the Palestinian national movement that marked what Rashid Khalidi (2010: 177) called the "reemergence of Palestinian identity" started to be marked by strong opposition

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[14] In Ilan Pappé's words, "The Catastrophe that befell the Palestinians would be remembered in the collective national memory as the Nakbah, the catastrophe, kindling the fire that would unite the Palestinians in a national movement. […] The Israeli's collective memory would depict the war as the act of a national liberation movement fighting both British colonialism and Arab hostility, and winning against all odds" (Pappé 2010: 140).

to the 'other', now depicted as colonizer and invader.[15] Counting on the support of the Egyptian leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization published in 1963 its Draft Constitution calling for the "liberation of their [Palestinians] homeland". The creation of the PLO was an attempt at establishing a united and cohesive front against Israel, bringing together the dispersed Palestinian people under the auspices of the Pan-Arabic movement. The Organization declared that its Assembly should gather representatives of "all Palestinian factions, emigrants and residents, including organizations, societies, unions, trade unions and representatives of (Palestinian) public opinions of various ideological trends" and, in a state-like fashion, established, among others, the collection of "fixed taxes levied on Palestinians" as a source of funding. The Palestinian National Charter, also known as the PLO Charter,[16] was adopted in the next year during the First Palestinian Conference. It defines the Palestinians as "those Arab citizens who were living normally in Palestine up to 1947, whether they remained or were expelled" and their children (Article 6). This characterization bounds the Palestinian national identity to both the UN decision of partitioning the land and the relationship with Israel connected to the events of the *Nakba*.

Put differently, the Charter was written in direct opposition to Zionism—and ultimately, to the State of Israel—hence defining the Palestinian identity, its union and cohesion, in terms of the (negative)

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[15] The Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser wrote in "The Philosophy of the Revolution" in 1959 that "fighting in Palestine was not fighting on foreign territory. Nor was it inspired by sentiment. It was a duty imposed by self-defense". In his Address on February 17, 1960, in Aleppo, he affirms that "They [the people of Palestine], and we, are working for the restoration of their rights in their homeland. The rights of the people of Palestine are Arab rights above all" (*apud* Laqueur and Rubin 2008: 89). And, finally, in the Manifesto of the United Arab Republic, published in April 1963, Nasser and the presidents of Iraq and Syria (the three signatories of the document) qualify the enemy as the oppressor bourgeoisie—following the socialist inspiration of the Pan-Arab movement—affirming that "the disaster of Palestine revealed the conspiracy of the reactionary classes and […] awakened the spirit of revolt against imperialism, injustice, poverty and underdevelopment".

[16] Available at Laqueur and Schueftan 2016: 117.

relationship with the 'other', now clearly depicted as the enemy.[17] The Palestinian national narrative became so interdependent of the Israeli that asserting their identity implied negating the 'other's' (Kelman 1999). This relationship is mentioned and characterized in the first lines of the document, where it can be read that the Palestinians "faced the forces of evil, injustice and aggression, *against whom the forces of international Zionism and colonialism conspire* and worked to displace it, dispossess it from its homeland and property (…)" [the italic is mine]. It considers that "Judaism, because it is a divine religion, is not a nationality with independent existence. Furthermore, *the Jews are not one people with an independent personality* because they are citizens to their states" [the italic is mine] (Article 18). Article 19 goes even further in defining Zionism as "a colonialist movement in its inception, aggressive and expansionist in its goal, racist in its configurations, and fascist in its means and aims".

From this period on, the resistance to the 'other' also became one of the words used to define the Palestinians, their national movement and their historical collective memory, both internally and internationally: "in spite of all this [we, the Palestinian Arab people] refused to weaken or submit" (PNC 1968). But this period is also marked by a violent narrative that also got entrenched in the Palestinian political discourses ever since, focusing on the struggle for liberation. The Charter calls upon the people of Palestine "to amass its forces and mobilize its efforts and capabilities in order to continue its struggle and to *move forward on the path of holy war* (al-jihad) until complete and final victory has been attained" [the italic is mine]. The idea of war as a right connected to "self-defense" is justified in the document, which considers that "the liberation of Palestine, from an international viewpoint, is a defensive act necessitated by the demands of self-defense as stated in the Charter of the United Nations" (Article 16).

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[17] According to Rashid Khalidi, these new Palestinian groups and national movements that emerged in the refugee camps, universities, workplaces and schools in the 1950s and went into the open in the mid-1960s developing a bigger network of Palestinian nationalist organizations and culminating in the appearance of the PLO, share with their pre-1948 counterparts "the theme of historic Palestinian rootedness in the land, the same symbols signifying Palestinian identity, and the same *obsession with Zionism, further accentuated by the traumatic impact of the events of 1947–49 in the Palestinians*" (Khalidi 2010: 180). For the reason, the term "State of Israel" is usually obliterated in the Palestinian documents. This can be seen in the "Arab denial of legitimacy to Israel, and the absolute refusal to recognize its existence, or even its name ('the Zionist entity' was the favourite term for Israel in the Arab world in those days)" (Khalidi 2010: 186).

The document also opposes the decisions taken by international political elites in the context of the peace process by declaring Palestine "an indivisible territorial unit" (Article 2) and affirming that

> the partitioning of Palestine, which took place in 1947, and the establishment of Israel is illegal and null and void, regardless of the loss of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and its natural right to its homeland and were in violation of the basic principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, foremost among which is the right to self-determination. (Article 17)

As per the Israelis—or, using the most current nomenclature of the period, the Jewish people—the construction of a cohesive national identity formed by different people from several parts of the world and with the most distinct historical, national and linguistic backgrounds can definitely be considered a challenging enterprise even nowadays. It is actually worth noting that the Jewish character of the newly founded state, that had been recognized by the UN in the Partition Resolution (UN 1947a),[18] is still a matter of dispute.[19] The efforts to establish a Jewish national identity that would arise from the junction of an ethnic and/or a religious community composed by people that immigrated from diverse origins and others whose ancestors were already living in the land of Palestine or neighboring Arabic countries created a highly divided society (Gratch 2015: 30–31). There are several adjectives in the Israeli society to characterize the many distinct types of Jews, either from Arabic provenance—Mizrahim and Ethiopians—or from the diaspora

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[18] Shlomo Sand (2010: 280) explains the UN usage of the term by saying that "the governments that voted for the resolution did not concern themselves with the precise meaning of the term 'Jew', and did not imagine what it would come to means as the new state consolidated. At the time, the Zionist elite [...] would have been unable to define clearly who was a Jew and who a gentile".

[19] After many years of discussions, on July 19, 2018, the Israeli Knesset passed the "Basic Law Proposal: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People", also known as the Nationality Bill, in which it is specified that the nature of the State of Israel is that of the nation-state of the Jewish people (https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/News/PressReleases/Pages/Pr13979_pg.aspx) [October 12, 2019]. While some have considered this the formalization of intentions to establish a regime similar to the South African Apartheid due to the potential of discrimination and the creation of a second-class citizenship, the Israeli government, led by the political extremist right-wing party Likud, considered this the embodiment and recognition of a more than a 100 years-old struggle to create a national home for the Jewish People. Those discourses will be analyzed in Chap. 7.

communities—Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Russians—just to name a few. And, more importantly, the Israeli society is not composed exclusively by Jews, since the creation of the state led to the assimilation of at least 170,000 Arabs that refused to flee or were not successfully expelled in the context of the 1948 war (Morris 2004: 602–603), as well as Bedouin and Druze populations in the Negev, and other minorities. Uniting this newly found national identity requires the construction of narratives of a common enemy based on a perceived threat to their very existence.[20] Although the constitution of the Jewish society is definitely relevant for any work that deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this book is more concerned with the representations made of the 'other' for the cohesion of this identity and its impact in the protracted nature of the conflict than with defining features, symbols, practices, traditions and other elements connected to the construction of a general sense of belonging to an identity group.

In this regard, it is curious to note that the literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is filled with similar quotes regarding the definition of a national identity. Shlomo Sand cites Karl Deutsch to affirm that "a nation […] is a group of persons united by a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbors" (Deutsch, 1969 *apud* Sand 2010: 1), while Avi Shlaim (2000: xi) goes even further by saying that "'a nation', said the French philosopher Ernest Renan, 'is a group of people united by a mistaken view about the past and a hatred of their neighbors'. The Israelis are no exception". Both Israeli historians begin their books, respectively about the Jewish people and the Israeli relationships with their Arab neighbors, with those quotes. This coincidence reflects the weight given to the 'other' in the narratives about the 'self' in the construction of the Jewish/Israeli identity. Ilan Pappé (2010:174) points to the institutionalization of this process in the political and governmental spheres, related with what he calls a "marginalization of 'Arabism' in Israeli society", although never referring to the term dehumanization (throughout the book, he mentions a few times "inhuman" situations). In his own words,

> The sense of inferiority attached to anyone Arab, whether Jewish or
> Palestinian, was reinforced by the state's cultural policy. A monolithic culture

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[20] See, for example, the analysis of first documents of the Zionist Movement in Chap. 4, the discourses of the first Israeli Prime Minister, that was in office in the first years after the Partition, David Ben Gurion, as well as his personal diary entries.

of memory developed that repressed the experiences of marginalized groups within society. The economic policy, their exclusion from the cultural canon and their entrenchment on the social and geographical margins of society alienated the Mizrachi Jews, particularly from Morocco, as well as the Israeli Palestinians. (Pappé 2010: 174)

During this period, dehumanization had also appeared mainly in the constant reference to Palestinians as "Arabs" and in the many discourses about their recent presence in the region (Kelman 1999: 590), or about them belonging to neighboring countries—the latter inserted in the narratives in the context of the peace process about the emptiness of the land, which remained a constant in official discourses of this period. Other times, dehumanization would be expressed in the formulation of policies and legislations that ignored the Palestinian presence in the country, thus promoting the legalization of an unequal treatment to those populations that lived in the same territory. In 1950, the State of Israel published the Law of Return, directly binding the right to acquire nationality to the Jewish origin of the proposed immigrant, to the detriment of privileging the person's connection to the land. Twenty years later, the Law was amended to include a definition of the members of the community called people of Israel, putting into question the secular character of the state: "a Jew is one who was born to a Jewish mother, or converted to Judaism and does not belong to another religion". As put by Rashid Khalidi, in Israel, nationality is "not automatically associated with citizenship, but rather with religion" (Khalidi 2010: 260). More examples can be found in Ilan Pappé's (2006: 92–96) *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, in which the author proves the premeditated and documented intention of "de-Arabizing" the territory through the analysis of the Plan Dalet and using entries of Ben-Gurion's diary.

Those examples of developments that followed the UN Resolution 181 (II) are only a part of the picture that was being drawn during the Cold War. Tensions between the two peoples and their opposing and dehumanizing narratives toward the 'other' had constantly increased in the decades after the approval of the Partition Plan, culminating in a large-scale violent conflict. In 1965, the historical leader of the Palestinian people Yasser Arafat founded the Fatah, a political movement that became deeply attached to the PLO ever since. In its Charter, the Fatah takes a more radical turn compared to the narrative of the first version of the PLO Charter, calling for armed struggle as the main form of resistance "until the Zionist

entity is wiped out and Palestine is liberated". This movement first appears in direct opposition to the 'other' (that, in the beginning, was defined as the Zionist Movement and later started to be mixed with the State of Israel, and ultimately Israeli Jews) and promoted a discourse that denied their right of existence as an identity group with national aspirations.

Months before the beginning of the 1967 War, in which Israel expanded once again its territories and took control of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (among other territories belonging to neighboring Arab countries), there can be seen a radicalization in the discourse regarding both the 'other' and the peace process itself. The Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the face and spokesperson of the powerful Pan-Arab movement, questioned in his speech at the United Arab Republic Air Headquarters on May 25 the validity of international discourses about the idea of peace for the Middle East. In this document, he accused the UN of bias against the Palestinians, characterized it as an imperialist tool serving the interests of the United States and Israel, and raised serious concerns about the nature of the peace process and its very definition of peace:

> We notice that there is a great deal of talk about peace these days. Peace, peace, international peace, international security, UN intervention, and so on and so forth, all appears daily in the press. […] There is talk about peace now. What peace? […] Does peace mean ignoring the rights of the Palestinian people because of the passage of time? […] How does the UN stand with regard to the Palestinian people? How does it stand with regard to the tragedy that has continued since 1948? Talk of peace is heard only when Israel is in danger.

The protracted nature of the peace process is also questioned in this speech ("the passage of time") and many others from the Palestinian leadership (see, e.g., the PLO Charter that refers to the "loss of time" in its Article 17). This is symptomatic of the lack of enforcement and results related to the UN resolutions ever since the Israeli Declaration of Independence, which had led to increasing feelings of injustice, abandonment and suspicion regarding the peace process. Twenty years of what was considered to be international inertia, which became associated in the Arabic narratives with the legitimization of the Israeli identity claims and the reinforcement of their position of power in the region, had provided the conditions for the escalation of violence. This is also reflected in several discourses of that period that explicitly or implicitly accuse the peace

process of inefficiency or even bias and call for armed struggle as the only possible option toward self-determination. In that same document, Nasser accused the Jewish leadership of threatening to go to war and stated that "we are ready for war".[21] In May 29, he declared in his Speech to the National Assembly Members that "we are now ready for the confrontation [with Israel]. We are now ready to deal with the entire Palestine question. The issue now […] is the aggression which took place in Palestine in 1948".[22]

Despite Nasser's confidence before the war, the events that took shape in June 1967 can be characterized as a huge victory for the Israeli political elites and a trauma with long-standing consequences for the Arab populations and their leaderships, with a special impact on the Palestinian people. The previous narrative of the *Nakba*, which had been the most formative event in the Palestinian collective identity and historical imaginary, was forcibly put in perspective after the less than one week-long Israeli military offensive. The Six-Day War was not only a territorial and geostrategic catastrophe. A study prepared by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat a decade after the war characterized the situation on the ground as a human disaster in which "the great majority of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza were made refugees—many for the second time, having sought refuge in these areas during the first exodus of 1948" (UNISPAL 1979). This same study also refers that, differently from those who stayed within Israel's pre-1967 border and that were entitled to Israeli citizenship, the population from the newly acquired occupied territories has constituted a new class of people living under military occupation and subject to military rule, what created a situation of suppression of their civil liberties and rights—that persists until today. And, finally, it was the understanding of the committee that prepared this study in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of December 2, 1977, that "at the international level, the Palestine question at this point [1967] was still being treated as principally a 'refugee problem', *with little attention to the Palestinian Arab identity*" [the italic is mine] (UNISPAL 1979).

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, the UN involvement on this matter during the Cold War was mainly restricted to diplomatic efforts

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[21] Available at Laqueur and Schueftan 2016: 96.

[22] Available at https://israelipalestinian.procon.org/background-resources/gamal-abdel-nasser-speech-to-egyptian-national-assembly-members/ [June 3, 2022].

of mediation and peacekeeping missions. With regard to the latter, from the 1948 Partition Resolution to the Suez Crisis of 1956, a fragile state of negative peace was maintained with the help of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), and after 1967, peacekeeping responsibilities were assumed by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), both sharing monitoring and observing activities as the main focus of their mandates. The UN efforts for settling the most recent armed conflict counted on the Security Council Resolutions 237 and 242 that, respectively, called for the observance of humanitarian principles of the Geneva Conventions (UN 1967a) and established the principles for "a just and lasting peace in the Middle East" (UN 1967b). The latter has become one of the bases for all subsequent discussions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since it determined the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and the "acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area". Nevertheless, the generic tone of this resolution has contributed to the reinforcement of processes of dehumanization since it completely obliterated the Palestinians. No reference was made to them, either as a party to the conflict or as the people who had been most affected by the instability of the last 20 years, as the resolution "simply spoke of 'a just settlement of the refugee problem', without even specifying the Palestinians by name" (Khalidi 2013: 2). This understanding was later shared by the UN through the already mentioned 1979 UNISPAL study, that pointed to the many flaws of the Resolution 242, such as that

> it did not explicitly mention Palestine; the only cognizance of the underlying issue of Palestine was in the reference to 'the refugee problem'. Further, on the territorial place, resolution 242 (1967), by calling on Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 war borders, implicitly endorsed Israel's jurisdiction over the territory occupied by Israel in the 1948 war beyond the lines laid down by the partition resolution. (UNISPAL 1979)

This later recognition by the UN of the peace process failures in the understanding of the conflict, its causes, and main actors followed the reactions of the Palestinian political representation at that time. In the Resolution of the Palestine National Council (PNC) Meeting of June 1974, the PLO declared that "the Security Council Resolution 242 obliterates the patriotic and national rights of our people and treats our national

cause as a refugee problem". For Rashid Khalidi, the widespread perception of "disappearance" of the Palestinian identity during this period can be explained by the actual hiatus that existed in the manifestation of Palestinian identity. According to him, Palestinians perceived nonexistence during the first couple decades after the partition is in fact justifiable since "during the 1950s and early 1960s there were few indicators to outside observer of the existence of an independent Palestinian identity or of Palestinian nationalism", what can be partly explained due to "a series of overwhelming military defeats of the disorganized Palestinians by the armed forces of the Zionist movement" (Khalidi 2010: 178).

This perception of the need to affirm the Palestinian existence and get international recognition for their identity claims is a distinctive mark in the discourses within Palestinian politics and society ever since. In January 1969, the Central Committee of the Fatah approved The Seven Points in which the movement "rejects the Security Council Resolution of 22 November 1967 [...] [since it] ignores the national rights of the Palestinian people—failing to mention its existence".[23] It can be argued that the drastic failure of UN diplomatic and mediation efforts until this point to recognize the distinctiveness of the Palestinians and their national identity claims culminated in the constant denial of their agency and right to self-determination, and directly contributed to the reinforcement of already existing processes of dehumanization. Edward Said referred to this later as a situation in which Palestinians did not have "permission to narrate" (Said 1984). Nevertheless, the continuous obliteration of the Palestinian identity by the UN, Israel and the international community was a common practice that was about to change.

In the context of the Six-Day War and the Israeli occupation of neighboring territories, which included all the remaining areas that were attributed to an Arab state by the Partition Resolution, the Palestinian national movement gained a new momentum. The idea of a struggle to claim their rights reached the grassroots level and allowed for an intensified dynamism in the Palestinian society followed by renewed narratives on the Palestinian identity and unity as a people (Khalidi 2010: 193–195). Following the Palestine National Council reunion on July 1968, the PLO adopted a new Covenant[24] with several amendments that changed the contents of the first version of 1964, emphasizing the idea of a revolution for attaining

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[23] Available at Mahler and Mahler 2010: 139.
[24] Available at https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/plocov.asp [June 3, 2022].

self-determination through armed struggle and the PLO's independence from the previous pan-Arab control. Even more explicitly than before, a narrative that intrinsically connects the history, collective memory and experiences of the group that constitutes the Palestinian identity to the negative interactions lived with the Zionist Movement can be seen in this document. On its Article 4, it can be read that

> the Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The Zionist occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

The need to affirm their existence as a national community also appears in Article 7 of the document referring that the existence of a Palestinian identity and community are "indisputable facts". This affirmation was rendered necessary in light of the already mentioned dispossession and dispersion of the Palestinian people, as a consequence of the partition and subsequent marginalization of their claims and self-representation within the peace process that established their status as non-existent within negotiations with Israel.

Regarding directly the relationship with the 'other', although the Palestinian National Charter does not refer to the now commonly used term "State of Palestine", their ambitions over the territory increased with the radicalization of discourse and following the 1967 war. The original document specifically refrained from sovereignty over the West Bank (considered part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan), the Gaza Strip or the Himmah Area. Notwithstanding, the text contained in Article 24 of the 1964 version was amended in 1968, leading to its exclusion. The new document included in the definition of the Palestinian territory not only the State of Israel contained in the 1964 version, but also the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that had been captured by Israel in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War, initiating a long-lasting policy of refusing recognition to the already established State of Israel. Other changes operated in the Charter after the War were the idea that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine", marking a change of discourse that created the idea of annihilating Israel and denying its right of existence.

On the Israeli side, the understanding that the root causes of this conflict are connected to identity needs became even more marked in official

discourses.[25] As shown in the previous chapter, due to the nature of this situation, identity needs have always been connected to more than the assertion of 'one's' claims to include the consistent negation of the 'other's'. The speech of the Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban to the Special Assembly of the United Nations on June 19, 1967[26] blames the neighboring countries for the war, since they have "denied" and "attacked" Israel's "very right to exist". He also considered the constitution of the Palestinian Liberation Organization a "growing danger" and justified Israel's actions with "the paralysis of the United Nations". In 1969, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir declared in an interview published on June 15 in the *Sunday Times* of London that there was "no such thing as Palestinians […] they did not exist". A few years later, in her Statement in the Knesset on October 23 in the aftermath of the 1973 war,[27] she declared that "since the outbreak of the war on Yom Kippur […] it has been proved once again that defensive action alone is not sufficient to put an end to acts of terror".[28] In terms of the territory, a permanent geographical separation began to be drawn. From the Six-Day War in 1963 to the war on Yom Kippur in 1973, fortified walls were erected, new roads were added to illegal Israeli settlements that were being built in the occupied territories and a building boom took place as a way to secure the new borders of the Israeli state (Pappé 2010: 186). Furthermore, in 1974, Gush Emunim, an openly colonialist movement headed by Israeli Orthodox Jewish right-wing activists, was founded. The strength of this settlement movement in the occupied territories institutionalized the intention of dispossessing Palestinians and erasing their existence from the whole territory of Palestine, raising the construction of settlements by 45 percent between mid-1975 and 1977 (Smith 2010: 329).

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[25] As explained in Chap. 3, this is one of the characteristics of dehumanization processes. This situation is described by Herbert C. Kelman as "a state of negative interdependence between the two identities such that asserting one group's identity requires negating the identity of the other" (Kelman 1999: 581). This is also associated with what John Burton defined as identity needs—that, according to him, are the root causes of protracted conflicts—which transcend the material ones by including psychological needs such as identity, recognition and social justice (Burton 1990).

[26] Available at https://israeled.org/resources/documents/abba-eban-speech-at-special--assembly-of-the-un-june-19-1967/ [June 6, 2022].

[27] The October War or the Yom Kippur War.

[28] Available at Laqueur and Rubin 2008: 152–157.

Surprisingly as it may sound, the new wave of radicalization in dis-
courses and actions of both sides that marked the 1970s and the begin-
ning of the 1980s ended up in the greatest victory of the Palestinian
leadership so far: the international recognition of the Palestinian identity.
This is not just a symbolic recognition, as it encompassed practical impli-
cations leading to the legitimization of Palestinians as a relevant actor in
the peace process efforts. The Palestinian achievement of the right to
speak for themselves after more than 25 years of the beginning of the
already protracted peace process deeply impacted the new formulas for
dealing with this conflict from the 1990s on. The first great expression of
this change was the UN decision in 1974 to include Palestine on its agenda
and invite the PLO as an observer (A/RES/3237). Following this deci-
sion, on November 13 of the same year, the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat
addressed the UN General Assembly with a speech that stressed the inter-
national recognition of the Palestinian identity and their struggle for self-
determination more than two decades after the resolution that partitioned
the land between "Jews" and the generic designation "Arabs". Most of
Arafat's speech was dedicated to sharing his narrative about the "Palestinian
question", going back to the end of the nineteenth century and the estab-
lishment of the Zionist Movement. The main aim of his speech was to
argue that Zionism was an imperialist movement, and that Palestine and
Palestinians were contradictorily being subjected to colonialism precisely
in the era of decolonization and self-determination. He accused the UN
of legitimizing the Israeli claim over the land stating that "the General
Assembly partitioned what it had no right to divide—an indivisible home-
land" (UN 1974a). By referring many times to the State of Israel as "the
enemy",[29] Yasser Arafat deeply connected the enmity toward their neigh-
bors with the national history, collective memory and shared experiences
of Palestinians. The Palestinian identity is expressed in this discourse in
terms of the (negative) relationship with the 'other'.[30]

[29] The speech lasts for ten minutes and three seconds and uses the word "enemy" to refer
to the Zionist Movement and the State of Israel ten times. Out of curiosity, it is also worth
noting that Arafat mentions in this address to the UN the word "colonialism" 31 times and
"imperialism" 13 times during the speech.
[30] In fact, Rashid Khalidi's identification of the elements of Palestinian identity includes the
resistance to Zionism. As he puts it, "if the Arab population of Palestine had not been sure
of their identity before 1948, the experience of defeat, dispossession, and exile guaranteed
that they knew what their identity was very soon afterwards: they were Palestinians" (Khalidi
2010: 194).

This first step of the UN to reverse the tendency of reinforcing the dehumanization of the Palestinians—expressed in the denial of their identity and community by Israel and international actors—to which the UN unintendedly had collaborated, was a symbolic action that gave strength to the Palestinian struggle at the political elite level. Nevertheless, although the period from 1975 to the end of the 1980s is marked by a series of advancements in peace efforts in the Middle East—that culminated in the 1978 Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt, and in partial withdrawals of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) from some of the territories acquired during the Six-Day War—the radicalization of both Palestinian and Israeli politics—with the creation of the right-wing party Likud, and its rise to power through the election of Menachem Begin in 1977, and the increase in guerrilla warfare and terrorism on the Palestinian side—intensified the desperate situation of the Palestinian population in the refugee camps and the Occupied Territories. In 1982, the escalation of violence between Israel, the PLO and Lebanon culminated in the Israeli operation 'Peace for the Galilee' or, better put, the Sabra and Shatilla Massacre. The invasion of Lebanon by Israel, that culminated in the massacre of hundreds of defenseless Palestinian refugees, was officially an Israeli response to PLO guerrilla and terrorist activities in the northern part of the country. Nevertheless, the attempt to siege the PLO in Lebanon was also an offensive reaction on the Jewish side to the Palestinian resistance to the occupation, their increased self-awareness regarding the Palestinian identity and their national movement, and part of Likud's intentions to demobilize and even completely dismantle the Palestinian leadership and its national identity claims (Pappé 2010: 219).

Although both the Israeli and the Palestinian societies had been deeply controlled by their political elites, who had only demanded popular participation in their military and nationalistic efforts between the 1948 and the 1967 wars, this situation changed rapidly in the years that followed the 1973 war. The economic situation of marginalized groups that suffered from extreme deprivation regarding housing, employment, health access and other indispensable conditions for life, turned the individual attention to the concern with survival rather than state affairs. The huge investment in the military budget before the Six-Day War, taking priority over social and economic needs, deeply impacted both the Israeli and the Arab societies. Specially for the Palestinians, whose existence started to be connected with surviving the political reality of occupation, the beginning of a systematic policy of collective punishment and aggressive military rule after

losing the war and the disappointment with their political leadership united both the poor and the rich (Pappé 2010: 183–184). After 40 years since the partition, life under occupation, although somewhat normalized, became more and more intolerable. The feeling of lack of hope in the Arab leadership, as well as in the PLO and the international community's efforts through the UN, converged, in 1987, in a popular uprising known as the First Intifada—from the Arabic 'shaking off'. The Intifada was a spontaneous movement that begun in the grassroots level of the Palestinian society, being initiated within the refugees of the Gaza Strip and later bringing both sides of the Green Line[31] together in what resembled an anti-colonialist movement.

The extremely mediatized character of the Palestinian uprising reached the international civil society, presenting the Palestine Question for the first time since 1948 in a way reflecting the Palestinian narrative. One year after the Intifada—and a few months after the foundation of a radical Palestinian Islamic movement called Hamas, and the publication of its Charter—the PLO produced the Declaration of Independence[32] that simultaneously recognized that the partition was a crime against the Palestinian people and a necessity to end the conflict and achieve self-determination. This declaration and the political gains of the Intifada at the international level turned the direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaderships in the context of the peace process into a valid option. It is worth noting that the Israeli response to the Intifada was brutal. More than 400 Palestinians were killed, many of them women and children, and thousands more were injured. However, the disproportionate IDF reaction became known worldwide, definitely playing a role in the increase of the symbolic power of the Palestinian cause that would culminate in the negotiation of the Oslo Accords, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

[31] The Green Line refers to the pre-1967 border or the 1949 Armistice border.
[32] Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-181782/ [June 10, 2022].

5.2 Paving the Way to Political Reconciliation in a Bipolar World

At the international level, the Palestine question at this point [1967–1977] was still being treated as principally a 'refugee problem' with little attention to the Palestinian Arab Identity. UNISPAL 1979

As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, with the end of the Second World War and the British Mandate resolution to terminate its rule over the region of Palestine, the more than a half-century conflict between Jews and Arabs for land and ownership was handed over to the United Nations (Smith 2010: 179–181). Following this decision, the UN proposed its very first attempt to promote a solution to the conflict in the Middle East: The Partition Plan (UN 1947a). According to the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, everyday life in Palestine before the Partition was marked mainly by "bi-national cohabitation and economic interaction opposed strongly by the political leaderships on both sides" (Pappé 2010: 123). Although occasional clashes between Jews and Palestinians in major cities such as Jerusalem and Jaffa had become a reality for the last 30 years since the Balfour Declaration (Shlaim 2010: 15–19; Darweish and Rigby 2015: 19–26), the overall social environment was that of economic agricultural ties and other forms of interaction between Palestinian peasants and Jewish settlers (Pappé 2010: 124). As discussed in the last section, this situation has deeply changed ever since the UN decision to partition the land and its consequences, for example, the Israeli Proclamation of Independence and the Palestinian Nakba that sealed once and for all the interconnectedness between Israeli and Palestinian identities, history and memories of the past.

As has been argued in this chapter, the international environment during this period is an important variable to consider insofar as the tensions connected to the Cold War between the two superpowers in a bipolar world order had led to a restriction of peacemaking efforts to the level of political elites (Khalidi 2006: 125). Efforts toward peace in this period were marked by reactive diplomatic attempts to mediate the negotiation of cease-fire agreements in the aftermath of violent conflicts. Therefore, reconciliation in this period was mainly addressed within the peace process as the promotion of negative peace between states, being the Palestinians constantly marginalized in the negotiating process and even made inexistent by the main documents connected to the conflict that were produced

in this period (e.g., the UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of 1947 and Security Council resolutions S/RES/242 of 1967 and S/RES/338 of 1973).

Nevertheless, as briefly mentioned before, a glimpse of change can be seen in the mid-1970s, as it marked the beginning of a shift in the policies connected to reconciliation in the next decades. First, the reintroduction in 1974 in the United Nations General Assembly's agenda of the question of Palestine as a national matter, with resolution 3236 (UN 1974b) reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and specifying their right to self-determination, national independence, and sovereignty. Second, the widespread international acceptance of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people, that was granted observer status in the United Nations in the same year by resolution 3237 (UN 1974c), ultimately promoted not only the acknowledgment of the Palestinian identity but also the international recognition of the very existence of this people and their national claims.[33] This change would unavoidably lead later to the period of mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians during the Oslo Accords in the 1990s. Finally, the establishment of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), that was first mandated to "establish contact with, and to receive and consider suggestions and proposals from, any State and intergovernmental regional organization and the Palestine Liberation Organization" (UN, 1975) and that later included in its activities to "extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations" (UN 2004), has promoted cooperation with and within civil society organizations, as well as enhanced support to their development and activities.

Created on November 10, 1975, by the General Assembly's resolution A/RES/3376, the CEIRPP was first designed to "recommend to the Assembly a program of implementation to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its rights" (UN 1975) of self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. It aimed to address in a practical way the societal level, interacting with local individuals and organizations, and breaking

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[33] As shown in the last section, in previous documents connected to the conflict, when specifically mentioned, the Palestinians were referred merely as refugees. As has been argued, the peace process until this moment was actively contributing to the dehumanization of the Palestinians by corroborating the narrative of their inexistence as a people insofar as they were solely treated as part of a bigger Arabic identity.

with the established paradigm of addressing the conflict mainly at the level of political elites. It proposed in the year following its foundation

> a two-phase plan for the return of Palestinians to their homes and property; a timetable for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories by 1 June 1977 […]; an end to the establishment of settlements; recognition by Israel of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories pending withdrawal; and endorsement if the inherent right of Palestinians to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. (UN 1976)

However, the recommendatory character of the Committee has rendered its reports a symbolic impact. Without the means to enforce such proposals, which failed to be adopted by the Security Council due to the negative vote of a permanent member,[34] their actual impact to conflict developments have been limited. However, the CEIRPP, which is the only body within the United Nations exclusively devoted to the question of Palestine, still counts on yearly renovations of its mandate, and its reports have been endorsed by an overwhelming majority of UN members in the General Assembly, thus reflecting the relevance of its work for the transformation of official positions and discourses regarding the conflict.

The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) was also created in this context and has produced reports, maps, provided open-access to official UN and non-UN documents and promoted the widespread information about the conflict (UNISPAL n.d.). It has published since 1978 a series of historical studies about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,[35] produced by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat under the guidance of the CEIRPP, that have provided a more truthful account of the history of the

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[34] Information available at https://www.un.org/unispal/committee/mandate-and-objectives/, [February 6, 2020].

[35] Part I, encompassing the period of the British Mandate and the background of the conflict, was published in 1978 (UNISPAL 1978); Part II, beginning with the UN involvement in the matter and finishing in 1977 was published in 1979 (UNISPAL 1979); Part III from 1978 to 1983 was published five years later (UNISPAL 1984), Part IV covering the events from 1984 to the First Intifada was issued in 1990 (UNISPAL 1990); and, finally, Part V, published in 2014, deals with the period that this book addresses as the Oslo Era, from 1989 to 2000 (UNISPAL 2014). Among others, all these reports explicitly recognize the failures in the UN approaches to the conflict by denying the Palestinian identity and treating their national aspirations merely as a refugee problem.

conflict and a source of factual information about the UN's involvement in the matter. Those were efforts clearly developed in order to correct the wrongdoings of biased and conflicting narratives about the past, what started to pave the way for reconciliation by promoting recognition and justice. Also, they aimed at overcoming the UN paradigm of denying the Palestinian identity, expressed in its main resolutions on the conflict, which dealt with the "Palestinian problem" as merely a refugee issue. This statement is based on the information about the study found in the General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of December 2, 1977, in which it is expressly assumed that "the study should place the problem in its historical perspective, emphasizing the national identity and rights of the Palestinian people" (UN 1977). By reorienting the official narratives and discourses about the conflict toward the recognition of the Palestinian identity, these initiatives have affected the perceptions about the conflict, at the level of both international and local political elites thus contributing to the creation of the conditions that have made the Oslo Agreements a possibility.

These late changes in the approaches, narratives and policies connected to the peace process during the Cold War encountered correspondence on the ground. Several NGOs and CSOs aiming at the defense of community rights, such as those of social and political inclusion, education, access to health and services, as well as other organizations focused on the assertion of the Palestinian identity and nationalist aims were founded. Shany Payes (2005: 317–320) provides a detailed map of the organizations that were created in this period as well as their activities, having traced the creation of at least 28 NGOs in this period operating in Israel alone, being most of them founded from 1974 onward. Some have acted in the field of human rights, lobbying and advocacy, being the Arab Association for Human Rights (1989), B'Tselem (1989), the Centre for Jewish-Arab Economic Development (1988), the Association for Support and Defense of Bedoin Rights in Israel (1976) and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (1972) enduring examples of this. Others like Abna al-Balad (1973), The Arab Student Union, Haifa University (1972), the Association of Forty (1978), the Follow-up Committee on Education in the Arab Sector (1980), The Galilee Society: The Arab National Society for Health Research and Services (1981) and so on, have acted at the social, political and institutional realm by promoting political participation of minorities, lobbying for equal access to social services and resources and community rights. A consequence of the increasing international recognition of the national aims and claims of the Palestinian people and, therefore, the legitimization

of their existence and rights, these organizations have struggled for political change, social awareness and de-alienation of minorities within the Israeli political system with some success (Payes 2005: 230–231).

Also part of the changes of narratives and discourses regarding the Palestinian identity in the context of the peace process, the creation of assumedly peace movements that aimed at mutual recognition and political advocacy in the higher levels became perceptible, favoring a negotiated solution to the conflict and thus impacting the very peace process through lobbying within the national political systems. Just to cite an example, in 1978, the Peace Now movement was founded in Israel. According to their website, they are "the largest and longest-standing Israeli movement advocating for peace through public pressure" and their work aims at "arriving at peace agreements between Israel and its neighbors […] [and] to ensure Israelis embrace the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: two states, meaning the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel".[36] To this aim, they have for the past 40 years or so organized demonstrations, debates, social mobilization and public campaigns with the purpose of impacting the peace process and political reconciliation by advocating for further Israeli involvement in negotiations. Through the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens in public demonstrations, they have collaborated to pressure the Israeli government to commence direct negotiations with the PLO, withdraw from settlement constructions and educate the public opinion about the Palestinians (Kelman 1998).

It is important to note that the Peace Now movement, created by Israeli veteran soldiers, is associated with a pragmatic Zionism that in fact aims at defending the institutionalization of the Jewish character of the State of Israel—and, according to Ilan Pappé, the movement has even failed to oppose the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, having most of its members in fact taken part in the fighting (Pappé 2010: 222). Nevertheless, regardless of its underlying motivations, this movement and others appeared in the context of a larger debate with the settler's movement Gush Emunim, raising public awareness about the Palestinian identity and, therefore, actively collaborating to the reversal of the narrative of their inexistence, while combating the expansion of settlements (Newman and Hermann 1992).

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[36] Available at https://peacenow.org.il/en/about-us [June 10, 2022].

Following the growing recognition of the Palestinian identity in both Israel and internationally, in the late 1970s, and even more intensively in the 1980s, several organizations that aimed at promoting intergroup dialogue and organizing structured encounters between Jewish and Palestinian youth in Israel were established. According to Shany Payes, most of these encounters were organized by institutions such as universities and organizations like The Jewish-Arab Centre in Giv'at Haviva, the Arab-Jewish Centre Bet-Hagefen and Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, the latter being the only jointly run Jewish-Palestinian organization. However, the author draws harsh critiques to the work developed by the organizations. On the one hand, she argues that these encounter groups "do not contribute to conflict resolution, as they do not question the status quo nor discuss the roots of the conflict" (Payes 2005: 211–212). By promoting interactions and building relationships in a depoliticized fashion, the actual range and long-term effects of these activities are remarkably limited. On the other, she points to the romanticized vision of life together promoted by Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, for example, that is seen to create an artificial reality as if in a bubble. As will be further discussed in the next chapters, despite the positive dynamics of dialogue and positive identity building entailed by such initiatives, they nevertheless risk normalizing the conflict instead of promoting its positive transformation.

Generically speaking, these changes in the societal level in both Israel and Palestine from the 1970s onward, accompanied by the international recognition of the PLO and institutional efforts toward changing narratives and correcting misinterpretations of the past, had, as history has shown, limited capacity to perform actual changes and meet the expectations of people on the ground. However, the effects of such transformations, although mainly limited to the symbolic realm, were at least twofold. On the one hand, these symbolic changes in this phase allowed for the proliferation of organizations, movements and activities that sought within the changes of discourses and narratives for an opportunity to manifest their aims and claims and to amplify their voices to a new audience willing to hear from them. This alone has promoted the enhancement of democratic practices and the strengthening of institutions, as well as helped to bring the topic of peace into the public agenda. On the other hand, the limitations of such transformations within the symbolic realm led to the feeling that actual change would not come without social pressure and involvement in the peace endeavor.

It was in this context that the First Palestinian Intifada erupted, with an actual impact of forcing Israel to cease temporarily the annexation of territory, creating political pressure for both sides to engage in direct conversations and bringing the concept and practice of peace into the grassroots' level (Pappé 2010: 230–235). The reach of the Intifada, part and consequence of this process of democratization of society initiated in the 1970s, ranged from the local to the international level, contributing to important changes in conflict developments in the years to come. For instance, according the Darweish and Rigby (2015: 63),

> over the Christmas/New Year of 1989–90 thousands of international peace activists joined Israelis and Palestinians in a series of demonstrations in Jerusalem under the banner of 'Time for Peace'. In retrospective this was the high point of the Intifada as an unarmed mass-based popular resistance movement.

Notwithstanding its symbolic character, the consequences of these gradual changes in the discourses, official documents, vocabulary and behaviors regarding the conflict can be expressed in quite material terms, since they have affected the cultural component of violence, "defined here as any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form" (Galtung 1990: 291). By promoting a shift toward reconciliation and coexistence in the societal level, these actions have contributed to pave the way for political reconciliation. As discussed in Chap. 2, Galtung's generic conceptualization comes along with various concrete examples that range from religion and ideology to culture and art explaining how those aspects of a culture might produce and reproduce direct and structural patterns of violence, while the transformation of cultural violence promotes positive peace instead. This is also the case of processes of dehumanizing the 'other', which reinforces the idea that identity issues should be tackled when dealing with conflict. As will be further discussed in the next chapters, by promoting mutual recognition and building relationships, the activities developed by these organizations have had the potential of deeply transforming the conflict from the bottom-up, thus impacting the very peace process.

5.3   An Action-Reaction Approach
and the Construction of National Identities

The period of the Cold War marks an important moment in terms of the formulas for solving this conflict until today and the (re)definition of the actors that have become relevant for such solution. Although unintendedly, the balance of the first phase of the protracted peace process can be considered to have affected the identities in conflict by pending toward dehumanization rather than reconciliation. As shown during this chapter, representations made of the peace process at the political elite's level intensified discourses of enmity and national identity narratives connected to the negative relationship with the 'other'. At the societal level, the increase of violence justified in the political narrative by decisions connected to the peace process, or because of its perceived absence, culminated in diverse armed conflicts (Khalidi 2006: 105–139; Smith 2010: 223–325; Pappé 2010; Shlaim 2010). The UN itself also directly contributed to the reinforcement of dehumanization processes by failing to acknowledge the Palestinian identity claims and their agency, thus denying them the right to speak for themselves and accidentally corroborating discourses that aimed at disproving their existence as a people (UNISPAL 1979). Contradictorily, the peace process introduced in this phase new grievances that were added to the already existing ones, increasing resentments and feelings of injustice rather than promoting peace.

Due to the geopolitical and ideological constraints derived from the Cold War, from 1947 to the end of the 1980s, international interventionism took the shape of a series of mediated accords between political elites, as a reaction to each moment of escalation of violence that culminated in several armed conflicts.[37] Initiatives that aimed at transforming the conflict in a positive manner by dealing with the societal level and identity issues were practically inexistent, since the UN efforts on the ground were mainly restricted to peacekeeping missions (UNTSO) and humanitarian relief provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

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[37] See in Appendix I, the chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the various moments of violent eruption from 1948 on.

for Palestinian refugees.[38] The UN interference was designed as efforts toward dealing with threats to international peace under chapter XVII of the UN Charter (UN 1945) and, therefore, were intended to maintain a state of negative peace, being unable to deal with—and many other times misinterpreting—the root causes of the conflict. Because of this, what can now be perceived all in all as a peace process proved itself incapable of avoiding the series of escalations that culminated into several armed conflicts during the more than 40 years that encompass this first period into analysis. Moreover, it was actually the first decision in the context of this process, the Partition Plan, that provoked the first war between Israel and its neighbors.

On the Israeli side, following the violent reactions after the Partition Plan, discourses about 'security' and 'defense' became the norm (White 2009: 1–2), thus reinforcing an atmosphere of fear at the societal level, as well as the image of the enemy. As for the Palestinians, after a period of relative political apathy—a consequence of the demobilization connected with the massive displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians after the 1948 war—increased radicalization in terms of both discourses and actions marked the development of a new, restructured national movement. Consequently, the 1950s and the 1960s were marked by social detachment and separation between the two groups, thus reinforcing narratives of conflict, enmity and hatred. After a period of demobilization, the (re)construction of the Palestinian national movement was deeply influenced by the conflict and the attempts to provide a permanent solution for the 'Question of Palestine' that was initiated with the Partition in 1947.

The events that preceded the Six-Day War led to the understanding that no peace process could provide a solution to the situation of the Palestinian people due to its compliance with the Israeli narrative that actively promoted the erasure, denial and dehumanization of the Palestinians. As showed by the analysis of Gamal Abdel Nasser's discourses months before the 1967 war, the radical decision to rely upon a violent action was justified by the inability—or lack of will—of the peace process to deal with this matter in a just way. In this sense, even the symbolic

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[38] According to Ilan Pappé, UNRWA policy changed after the 1967 war due to the lack of donations. Data on the organization's budget show that the amount of 13 dollars a year that was spent on each refugee for food, housing, health and education was reduced in the 1970s, being the economic deprivation one of the main consequences of the Palestinian refugee problem that initiated in 1948 and intensified during the next decades (Pappé 2010: 187).

construction of a peace process (as showed in Sect. 5.1, Nasser mentioned the "great deal of talk about peace" at that moment as an everyday appearance in the media) had a deep impact on the identities in the conflict insofar as it reinforced the feeling of desperation and injustice that led to the mobilization of the population in a violent way. However, it is important to note that the actions of the peace process at that time were restricted to a reaction to direct violence due to the fragile international peace architecture in the bipolar world order of the Cold War, meaning that violence became a means to force action internationally, what created a contradictory effect.

As we will see in the next chapter, the term peace *process* only became widespread used in the 1990s. However, the analysis developed in this chapter makes it evident that there was a consensual understanding at that time that the international attempts toward peacemaking were not episodic. Rather, they were depicted as ever going—even when stalled. This notion can be seen in official documents and discourses of the period of the Cold War, showing how the peace process had become an enduring social structure (Hopf 1998; Checkel 1998; Kurki and Wight 2013; Barkin and Sjoberg 2019) impacting the positionality of actors, their actions, interests, and identities, in the context of the conflict. The idea of a *peace process* had come into being by means of its action but also through discourses and narratives which rendered it a bidimensional existence, ranging from material to symbolic (Bourdieu 1977). The construction, or better put, consolidation, of national identities in this period was, similarly to the previous moment analyzed in Chap. 4, strongly influenced by the search for international legitimacy and recognition. But differently from the interwar period, the beginning of the peace process has actively promoted a geopolitical change expressed in material terms, insofar as the partition meant the creation of the Israeli state and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people who lived in the region. From this moment on, the narrative representation of both national identities became explicitly connected with the denial of the 'other', which is the main indicator of dehumanization as per the definition used in this book (Kelman 1973).

The discourses analyzed so far related with the peace process during the Cold War had an unpredictable impact on the identities in conflict. Although until mid-1970s most had portrayed the denial of the Palestinian identity, in different ways, they were responsible for strengthening the very sense of unity of both communities. At the same time, these

discourses had contributed to the already existing process of negative interconnectedness between the two national identities, which continued to position themselves increasingly in a competitive way, with a strong focus on de-identification or the differences from the 'other'. For example, it is possible to connect the lack of recognition of the indigenous people of Palestine's self-determination claims with the strengthening of a cohesive Palestinian national identity. The fact that during decades Palestinians were considered by the international community a homogenous part of a very diverse group of Arab peoples helps explain why Palestinian self-determination claims only got internationally recognized by the end of the 1980s, in the aftermath of the First Intifada.

In sum, the pattern of actively ignoring the Palestinian existence that initiated with the Balfour Declaration would endure for more than 60 years until the widespread recognition of the Palestinian identity, consolidated in the context of the First Intifada. This first period of the peace process is marked mainly not by reconciliation between the two parties of the conflict but by a negative approach to peace that aimed at brokering cease-fires and promoting the pacification of the region as a reaction to episodic outbursts of confrontations. While reconciliation was dealt as establishing a minimum basis between political elites to terminate war and bypass the escalation of direct violence, a glimpse of change can be seen by analyzing the period after the Yom Kippur War in the 1970s which witnessed the creation of specific agencies within the UN to deal with the Palestine question and their effects on social identity. The correction of misinterpretations that had been made regarding the conflict expressed mainly, but not only, in the recognition of the PLO and the inclusion of the Palestine Question in the UN agenda, promoted a reframing of established meanings, policies and practices regarding the conflict. The incorporation of the moral/cultural and political/institutional dimensions of reconciliation into narratives and approaches regarding the conflict in the international level has also encountered echo in the societal level through the development of several CSOs and NGOs in both Israel and Palestine which, despite their limitations, have brought the discussion and practice about peace to other levels.

In the context of these transformations that started to take shape in the Israeli and Palestinian societies, the historical changes in the international structure in the turn to the 1990s promoted new opportunities and bigger challenges. The following period is marked by a pre-emptive approach to conflict that aimed at building institutions and infrastructure

(statebuilding and development), while promoting relationships and an atmosphere of peace. Nevertheless, as we shall see, reconciliation is addressed in this next period as a post-conflict tool for building sustainable peace, thus maintaining the limitations of conflict transformation and the state-centric character of the peace process and neglecting to incorporate the potential of grassroots initiatives developed in the previous decades. The next chapter addresses the implications of this approach to conflict transformation and its impacts on the identities of societies.

5.4   CONCLUSION

This chapter began by putting in context the mandates, tools and mechanisms employed to promote peace during the Cold War. Then, it proceeded with an analysis of official documents connected to the peace process from 1947 to the First Intifada, to examine how these policies and mechanisms have affected identities and, more specifically, dehumanization and reconciliation. Finally, it analyzed the reactions in the Israeli and Palestinian societies to each moment of the peace process in this period, aiming to draw some conclusions on the consequences that representations at the official and public discourses of failure and success of this process have in the levels of direct and cultural violence within societies. The analysis presented in this chapter shows that dehumanization processes have increased during the Cold War, above all as a defensive reaction to developments in the international level related with the peace process that was mainly restricted to elite-driven negotiations toward reaching a written agreement concerning the governments and boundaries of the now partitioned territory, regardless of the increasing identity needs and claims fueling the conflict. Ever since, the process of dehumanizing the 'other' has become part of the narratives and official discourses that are connected with the identities of both societies, thus influencing their very positions within the peace process, which, as we will see, directly feeds back the cycle of protractedness of this conflict.

This model of peace building focused on avoiding war and managing the escalation of direct violence had proven its failure. Nevertheless, the changes operated in the 1970s that led to the inclusion of the PLO as an observer member of the UN General Assembly would culminate in the first direct talks between Israelis and the Palestinians. Next chapter, dedicated to the short but intense period of ten years in which were developed the Oslo Accords, deals with changes in the international interventionist

paradigm that, although failing to solve the conflict, were able to create bridges across what seemed to be an impossible divide.

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Reconciliation and Recognition in the Oslo Accords

This chapter analyzes the brief, although game-changing, Oslo Era. The changes operated in the world order by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent end of the Cold War led to a profound alteration in the international peace architecture from 1990s onward. Free from the constraints of the bipolar power system, international interventionism evolved into a series of mechanisms that began to be deployed in a more coordinated, systematic and sequenced fashion with the objective of promoting peace, development and liberal democracies in the peripheries of the so-called Western world. With regard to Israel and Palestine, the gradual changes in discourses and practices concerning the conflict at the societal level—which simultaneously were potentialized by and culminated into the First Intifada, discussed in the previous chapter—have paved the way to a more focused and planned approach toward promoting a definitive solution to the dispute between the—now widely recognized—two national identities. This has inaugurated a new phase in the efforts to intervene in the situation which, at that time, was officially baptized as the beginning of an official *peace process* between Israelis and Palestinians.

Mirroring the objectives and structure of the previous chapters, Sect. 6.1 examines the changes in the international peace architecture in the 1990s and how this has affected the ongoing process of dehumanization. While this period was marked by a peace process that, as has been argued, had already been established as protracted, Sect. 6.2 discusses how the late recognition of the Palestinians as an identity group and a legitimate

interlocutor for peace negotiations in this period have impacted reconciliation efforts. Section 6.3 brings the two analyses together and explores the consequences of both the feeling—and, above all, discourses—of hope that had emerged in this period and the impact of the subsequent failure of the Oslo Accords to the relationships in the societal level. This chapter argues that the Oslo period has operated a rupture in the already existing tendency of dehumanizing the 'other', as discourses and narratives connected to dehumanization in the elite level deeply impacted perceptions on the societal level, creating the environment for the positive transformation of the conflict. However, its conclusions point to the pernicious impact of the disappointment connected to the feelings of loss of expectations and hope, as well as the emergence of new narratives about blames and responsibilities, which have added new grievances to the already existing ones.

6.1   Liberal Peace, Mutual Recognition and Dissent

From this moment on, the term "peace process" is no longer relevant. Starting today we will not talk of a process, but of making peace.
(Yitzhak Rabin 1992)[1]

The collapse of the USSR, in 1989, and the end of the Cold War marked a huge change in international attempts to promote peace and in interventionist praxis, especially due to the triumph of liberalism, that came along with the transformation of the bipolar world order. The liberal peace approach was based on a consensus that democracy, free markets and the rule of law would be indispensable ingredients for promoting sustainable peace in post-conflict societies (Campbell et al. 2011: 1). The simplistic idea of managing conflicts, that had dominated international interventionism during the Cold War, was replaced by the ambition of actively making peace through development promotion and social justice (Sabaratnam 2011: 13–14). This whole apparatus has been introduced within a more sustainable and coordinated approach to peacemaking which led to the widespread use of the term peace process, as can be seen in Yitzhak Rabin's quotation in the beginning of this section. Nevertheless, as its critics point out, liberal peacebuilding would become excessively

[1] Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Inaugural Speech to the Knesset, July 13, 1992.

concerned with political and economic liberalization (Paris 2004), over-looking important aspects of protracted conflicts such as identity needs.

The ultimate expression of the liberal peace model can be seen in the 1992 United Nations' Agenda for Peace (UN 1992). This document represents a paradigm shift in the approaches to conflict and their resolution,[2] as well as the very definition of peace employed by the organization. It is an ambitious proposal that includes the already existing mechanisms of peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy, the ideas of statebuilding, and post-conflict peacebuilding. This change of policy was not only instrumental. It also represented an epistemological turning point, since the UN redefined the very nature of the peace it would help to shape (Richmond 2008). Instead of cosmetic remedies that should attenuate the symptomatic manifestations of conflict (i.e., direct violence or war), this new approach proposed "to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression" (Boutros-Ghali 1992). Nevertheless, identity needs continued to be absent of this understanding, creating a situation in which a new narrative about the conditions of conflict societies had emerged, allowing for "a representation of the periphery as a place of menace and chaos, in which the lack of governability (invariably attributed to internal causes) […] legitimizes the externalization of the medication"[3] (Pureza 2011: 32). In this sense, it can be perceived as a continuation instead of a rupture in the practices developed within the peace process rationale.

Nevertheless, in practical terms, this shift in the policies toward conflicts due to the end of the Cold War produced a hegemonic approach to peace that indeed had accentuated international interventionism and its practices in the periphery of the world (Pugh et al. 2008). For this reason, it is frequently compared in Peace Studies and critical IR (International Relations) literature to the sixteenth century "*mission civilisatrice*", reflecting the idea that peacebuilding missions can be considered a form of Western imperialism (Turner 2012). As put by Roland Paris, this modern version of the colonial discourse is based on the continuation of a former "belief that European colonial powers had a duty to improve the people

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[2] For a more detailed analysis of the Agenda for Peace, the characterization of post-conflict peacebuilding and its critiques, see the state-of-the-art in the introductory chapter of this book, as well as next section.

[3] Translated from the original "uma representação da periferia como lugar de ameaças e de caos, em que a ingovernabilidade (invariavelmente atribuída a causas internas) […] legitima a externalização das terapêuticas" (Pureza 2011: 32–33).

living in their overseas possessions—now translated into contemporary parlance of 'capacity building' and 'good governance'" (Paris 2011: 41). This argument has in fact been developed within postcolonial theoretical frameworks, which take it to the extent of saying that both interventionism and the study of intervention need to be decolonized (Sabaratnam 2017: 17). The main consequence of this change was that the whole body of tools and mechanisms available in the context of peace processes got much more complex, since the idea of solving conflicts—and, therefore, making peace—became even more attached to the Westernization of post-conflict societies (Shilliam 2011: 16). To this aim, the peace process goals would now include development, (liberal) statebuilding and the construction of market economies (Mac Ginty and Williams 2009). In practical terms, this meant that building peace should go beyond the signature of formal agreements between political elites that represent states, encompassing activities within the institutional and societal levels. This new formula deeply impacted the ambitions and scope of the second phase of the now Israeli-Palestinian peace process that corresponds to the brief but game-changing Oslo Era.

While the international developments that gave way to the Oslo Agreements were only made possible after the end of the Cold War, winds of change started to blow in the mid-1970s. The USA first got involved in the peace process from 1973 to 1977, following the war on Yom Kippur, which culminated in the signature of the Camp David Accords, in 1978. This mediation effort was meant to gather Israel and the neighboring countries to discuss the basis on which peace would be achieved, namely the UN Resolutions 242 and 338. The first resolution called for Israeli withdrawal from the territories conquered in the 1967 war, establishing the so-called green line as the border of a future Arab state (Pappé 2010: 205–206), and emphasized the necessity of achieving "a just settlement for the *refugee problem*" [the italic is mine] (UN 1967). The second urged for the implementation of the former resolution and the reactivation of negotiations, although in a very superficial and imprecise way (UN 1973). However, both resolutions failed to even mention the Palestinians by name, always referencing them implicitly when addressing the "refugee problem" (Khalidi 2013: 2–3). In fact, the discussions of this period ultimately had little to do with the Palestine Question, since they were still focused on the so-called Arab World. This situation would only be reversed by the end of the 1980s, promoting an important paradigm shift in the

conflict that led to the recognition of the Palestinian people as the key actor to negotiations.

As mentioned in the last chapter, the Palestinian Intifada played a huge part in changing this situation, promoting a reorientation of official discourses by the end of the 1980s that started to address the possibility of peace, and even contributing to identity shifts within the Israeli society (Strömbom 2013a; Darweish and Rigby 2015). The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), mainly controlled by the political party Fatah, had co-opted what was a spontaneous Palestinian uprising and instrumentalized its political gains in order to advocate for the legitimacy of the movement as the representative of the Palestinian people both internally and internationally (Ricarte 2013: 52–59). As per the former, in the Political Resolution of the Palestine National Council[4] of November 15, 1988, the PLO declared that the Intifada demonstrated the "national unity" of the Palestinian people and "its comprehensive loyalty to the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of our people—of all our people in every place where its members are gathered—both inside and outside the homeland". Regarding the latter, the beginning of a 'quest for survival' was a strategy that had also proved itself effective, since the Palestinians—and, more specifically, the PLO leadership—gained the right to represent themselves in the peace process efforts and became widely recognized internationally.

The change in international perceptions of the Palestinians, their identity and historical narratives was also accompanied by a subtle but important shift in official discourses regarding the 'other'. The moderation of

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[4] Available at Laqueur and Rubin (2008: 349).

the PLO discourse[5] can be perceived, for example, in the change of nomenclature when referring to the neighbor, previously represented as 'the enemy' or 'the Zionist entity' and identified in the PNC Political Resolution solely as 'Israel', what implies a recognition of its statehood condition. Although this document does not refrain from denouncing the war crimes perpetrated by the State of Israel and the condemnation of the occupation, it does so in light of international law and the UN resolutions, expressing an institutionalization of the PLO's position. It also represents a compromise in such position that counts on several mentions to the pre-1967 borders (the green line), "affirms the determination of the Palestine Liberation Organization to arrive at a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, which is the question of Palestine" and, to this end, calls upon the international community and, more specifically, the UN, to convene an "international peace conference".

This more mature stance of the PLO, that reflects its will to position itself—and to be considered by others—as a state-like entity, was accompanied by the publication, in the same date, of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence[6]. Parallel to the State of Israel's Proclamation of Independence[7], the Palestinian Declaration of Independence begins with an indirect reference to the 'other' by affirming that "Palestine, the Land of the three monotheistic faiths, is where the Palestinian Arab people was born, on which it grew, developed and excelled. *The Palestinian people was never separated from or diminished in its integral bonds with Palestine*" [the

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[5] It is worth noting that this moderation of the PLO discourse did not represent the positions of the entirety of the Palestinian community, as it was seen with suspicion by radical Palestinian factions. The Hamas Charter of August 1988 strongly denounced the peace process that is characterized as "a vain game". On its Article 13 it can be read that "the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem, are all contrary to the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement" and that "there is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad". The radicalization in the discourse toward the 'other' is also part of this document. Hamas characterizes the Zionist Movement as a "Nazi-like enemy" and goes even further by generalizing this perception to "the Nazism of the Jews". It denounced, among others, that "it has resorted to breaking bones, opening fire on women and children and the old, with or without reason, and to setting up detention camps where thousands upon thousands are interned in inhuman conditions". Hamas also considers in this document that the peace efforts of the 1970s and, especially, the Camp David Accords consisted in a premeditated attempt to push the Arab states out from the "circle of conflict" (namely the Palestinian Question) and to isolate the Palestinians.

[6] Palestine National Council: Declaration of Independence (1988), Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-178680/ [June 20, 2022].

[7] For a more detailed analysis of this document, see Chap. 5.

italics are mine]. The document also places the right of self-determination as inalienable and indisputable, concluding that "the Palestinian Arab people ensured for itself an everlasting union between itself, its land and its history".

Nevertheless, the characterization of the Palestinian identity, and the justification of its right of self-determination in the land of Palestine, appears in this document as an explicit response to the Zionist narrative about the Palestinian connection (or lack of it) to the land, reinforcing the tendency of negative interconnectedness between these two national identities (Kelman 1973). It emphasizes the long-lasting struggle with the occupation, the continuous obliteration of their existence in the Zionist national discourse and how this interaction with the 'other' has shaped and affirmed the Palestinian identity. On this regard, the document states that "resolute throughout that history, the Palestinian Arab people forged its national identity, rising even to unimagined levels in its defense", that "it was the Palestinian people, already wounded in its body, that was submitted to yet another type of occupation over which floated the falsehood that 'Palestine was a land without people (…)'" and that it was "from out of the long years of trial in ever mounting struggle, [that] the Palestinian political identity emerged further consolidated and confirmed".

These quotations emphasize the continued interdependence between those two identities and their national narratives, that is explained in this document as a consequence of the "historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian Arab People […] following upon UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947), which partitioned Palestine into two states". Although there was a widespread recognition of the state of Palestine by several countries (Tessler 1994: 722), the lack of definition regarding its borders, institutions and situation with Israel contributed to the failure of its establishment in practice. Nevertheless, the pragmatic change in the PLO's discourse and its will to compromise on the future resolution regarding the question of Palestine was an important rupture with the former period that allowed for the beginning of a renewed peace process that, this time, was directly between Israelis and Palestinians, instead of other Arab country (Strömbom 2014: 179).

The Israeli willingness to embark in such endeavor took its time to come. On May 14, 1989, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir proposed a peace plan, but only to reactivate the peace process with Egypt. In its "basic premises", the Prime Minister specifically stated that "Israel opposes the establishment of an additional Palestinian state in the Gaza

district and the area between Israel and Jordan", that "Israel will not con-
duct negotiations with the PLO" and finally that "there will be no change
in the status of *Judea, Samaria* and Gaza other than in accordance with
the basic guidelines of the Government"[8] [the italic is mine]. Although
not mentioned directly, this document can be considered in some of its
parts a response to the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. The offi-
cial Israeli position was not only of rejection of the Palestinian ambitions
and the repeatedly categorization of the PLO as a terrorist movement—
and, sometimes, as the Palestinians in general as a terrorist people—it also
maintained the already frequent policy of denying both the Palestinian
identity and, most importantly, their existence as an autonomous people,
by referring to the West Bank as the "area between Israel and Jordan" or
"Judea and Samaria", the biblical terms for the region that encompassed
the former Kingdom of Israel. Nevertheless, the Israeli elections of 1992
would play an important role at least in the change of this discourse since
"Jewish society was now willing to give a chance to a government openly
declaring its readiness to vacate occupied land" (Pappé 2010: 241).

It was in this context that the term peace process would become usual
in the 1990s, mainly under the auspices of the United States[9]. The Madrid
Peace Conference of 1991 was the first time that a Palestinian delegation
(albeit part of the Jordanian delegation) participated in direct talks with
the Israeli leadership (Kriesberg 2001: 379; Khalidi 2013: 32). In this
regard, the United States issued on October 18, 1991, a Letter of
Assurances to the Palestinians[10]. In this document, the US government
expressed the expectation that the renewed peace process would positively
impact the dimensions of dehumanization, namely the denial of identity
and community, that had been important parts of the relationships estab-
lished within those two societies since 1947: "The United States also

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[8] Available at Laqueur and Schueftan (2016: 358).

[9] According to Ilan Pappé, the origin of the term 'peace process' dates back to the first
direct interferences of the United States in the Arab-Israeli Conflict from 1973 to 1977. As
he puts it, "The American peace effort, after almost twenty years of isolation from such dip-
lomatic activity, was accompanied by a new diplomatic jargon, borrowed from the world of
business, built on cost-benefit principles and devoid of any reference to moral values. Its
'buzzword' was 'peace process'" (Pappé 2010: 206). Although the common usage of this
term only became recurrent 30 years after the UN Resolution 181, this book considers 1947
the year of the actual beginning of such process since the very terms of reference that have
been used as the basis of the peace efforts from 1973 onward are grounded on the UN
Resolutions that include and follow the Partition Plan.

[10] Available at Laqueur and Rubin (2008: 385).

believes that this process should create a new relationship of mutuality where Palestinians and Israelis can respect one another's security, identity, and political rights". However, as we shall see, the beginning of this renewed process was marked instead by a discursive dispute over which would be the most truthful historical narrative about Palestine and its people, thus turning the negotiations into another stage for conflict and dissent.

Just a few days later, on October 31, 1991, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the Leader of the Palestine Delegation Haydar Abd al-Shafir spoke on the Madrid Peace Conference. Both discourses can be considered very strong statements about each group's understanding of their history and identity. Moreover, both equally address the relationship with the 'other' as a key aspect of these narratives, institutionalizing the already existing tendency of turning the peace process into an arena for legitimizing one's identity by undermining the 'other's'. The Palestinian speech emphasized the asymmetric character of the conflict, questioned Israeli willingness for peace in face of settlement activities in the occupied territories[11] and denounced the conditions of life under occupation that encompasses dispossession, house demolitions, arrests and other collective punishment policies. But it also mentioned cases of Jewish solidarity and empathetic behaviors toward the described situation, expressing a will to achieve peace and reconciliation. The narrative of the speech is focused precisely on combating the dehumanization of Palestinians, by responding to what is called the 'myth' of invisibility, silence and even inexistence of the Palestinian people. As put by Haydar Abd al-Shafir, "we refuse to disappear or to accept a distorted identity"[12].

On his turn, the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's speech accused the Palestinians and, mostly, the PLO, of terrorism and emphasized Israeli needs of security. His narrative about the Israeli identity went back to 4000 years ago and depicted what he referred to as the "Palestinian Arabs" (a terminology frequently used as a way to deny the Palestinians a separate

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[11] In the speech, Palestine Delegation Leader Haydar Abd al-Shafir denounces the Israeli settlement effort by saying that "Israel, on the other hand, has placed many obstacles and barriers in the path of peace to negate the very validity of the process. Its illegal and frenzied settlement activity is the most glaring evidence of its rejectionism, the latest settlement being erected just two days ago".

[12] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/mfadocuments/pages/address%20by%20dr%20haider%20abdul%20shafi-%20-%2031-oct-91.aspx, [February 6, 2020]

identity, by implying that they were generically Arabs) as a very recent creation that appeared as an opposition to the establishment of the Jewish State only[13]. Although the speech began with several references to coexistence, reconciliation and peace, Shamir insisted in framing the Palestinian situation as internal affairs of both Israel (depicting them solely as "Arabs who have chosen to remain in Israel" and that "have become full-fledged citizens") and neighboring countries (that bore responsibility for the "Arab refugees"—obliterating, and therefore dehumanizing, once again, the Palestinians—whose problem had supposedly been created by the Arabs and not by Israel).

The Prime Minister's narrative, that was strongly rooted in a distortion of the situation of the Palestinians living both in Israel and under occupation, and that relied deeply in the international ignorance so far about such situation, was considered by the Arabs a proof of Israel's unwillingness to negotiate in fair terms (Barak 2005: 731; Lupovici 2015: 41). In fact, Likud Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's real perspectives with joining the Madrid Talks in October 1991 would later be known worldwide, as he declared after leaving office in June 1922 that his intention "was to drag out talks on Palestinian self-rule for 10 years while attempting to settle hundreds of thousands of Jews in the occupied territories" (*apud* Smith 2010: 419). Put differently, he was one of the first Israeli politicians to admit having planned on taking advantage of the façade of commitment with a solution that the participation in a peace process implied, to deepen the status quo and promote irreversible geographic changes on the Palestinian map, what some have called the politics of creating "facts on the ground" (Khalidi 2013: 21). Consequently, references to the peace process as *the so-called* peace process or simply the *'peace process'* started to appear very soon among Palestinian intellectuals, such as Edward Said, that started to use quotation marks to refer to the peace process already back in 1995, in an opinion article in the newspaper *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Said 2003: 3–7).

The change of government that led to a modification (at least in the realm of political discourse) of this policy after the election of the Labor Party did not impact instantaneously the public opinion and societal interactions that emerged as a reaction to this process. The instability and uncertainty associated with the Madrid Peace Talks inside both Israeli and

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[13] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/mfadocuments/pages/address%20by%20mr%20yitzhak%20shamir%20-%2031-oct-91.aspx, [February 6, 2020].

Palestinian societies was responsible for an increase of despair and insecurity that allowed for a posterior characterization of this period as one of violence and terror. According to Charles D. Smith, from the December 1992 to March 1993 alone, the increase of violence led to 73 Palestinian deaths, being at least 50 killed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which used to fire indiscriminately into crowds during demonstrations to repress and disperse the protesters. On the other hand, 22 Israelis were killed by Palestinians belonging to radical groups such as the Islamic Jihad although some seemed to be individuals acting out of spontaneity (Smith 2010: 419–420). However, as argued by Rashid Khalidi, although the results of this Conference changed nothing on the ground, its symbolic importance in terms of the irreversible recognition and assertion of the Palestinian national identity was unprecedented (Khalidi 2010: 201). By placing the Palestinians as rightful interlocutors in the direct negotiations with the Israelis, and by promoting dialogue between the two peoples (finally equally recognized as such internationally, regionally and nationally both inside Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories), this phase of the peace process promoted a very important rupture that was able to transform the ongoing processes of dehumanization of Palestinians in the official and institutional level, due to the recognition of their existence as a people, as well as their national identity.

With this change of paradigm, the new phase of the Oslo Process that started with the Declaration of Principles that followed this meeting two years later, in 1993, is marked by an "apparent approach of peace" (Laqueur and Rubin 2008: 401). In his Inaugural Speech of July 13, 1992[14], the new Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, from the Labor Party, affirms that Israel "must join the campaign of peace, reconciliation, and international cooperation" with what he referred to simply as "the Palestinians". One year later, "the Government of the State of Israel and the PLO (…), representing the Palestinian people" signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements—the Oslo Agreement—in which they

> agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, *recognize their mutual legitimate and political rights*, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just,

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[14] Available at Laqueur and Rubin (2008: 403).

lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process. [the italic is mine]

The Declaration of Principles[15] was ultimately a negotiated accord for institutional—needless to say, state-centric—peacebuilding, with a strong component of statebuilding that included the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) and several other governing structures to assure the "transfer of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration to the [Palestinian] Council". However, it was established by its Article V that key issues such as "Jerusalem, the refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors" would be discussed later in the Permanent Status Negotiations that would "commence as soon as possible, but no later than the beginning of the third year of interim period".

This imposition of postponing negotiations on key issues to the Palestinians, subordinated to the outcomes of the transitional period that was grounded on the perspective that it should work as a trial period for the Palestinians and their leadership, denounces the asymmetry of the parties involved in this process (Khalidi 2010: 203; Pogodda 2016). Moreover, the subsidiary understanding of this agreement—and the ones that followed such as the 1994 Cairo Agreement that, among other things, demarcated the powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian Authority; the 1994 Paris agreement, which was the economic component of Oslo; and the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, that further developed the mutual understanding on the future infrastructures of the "Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority"—is that promoting (liberal) peace in the state/political elites level would be the road to peacemaking in Israel and Palestine, what maintains an overall negative understanding of peace and its consequences. According to what was stated in the 1993 Declaration of Principles, the timeline to commence "final status negotiations" would be 1995 so that the final agreements were to end by 1997. Nevertheless, nothing in the negotiations went according to plan, as evidenced by its later failure and subsequent deepening of the conflict. What Rashid Khalidi had already categorized as the "protracted nature of the process" became "an enormous victory for Israeli partisans of the status quo in the occupied

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15 Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180015/ [June 20, 2022].

territory" (Khalidi 2013: 27) and, as we shall see, in fact functioned as a key mechanism for deepening this status quo.

However, notwithstanding its failure, the process did impact both the Israeli and the Palestinian societies in terms of the negative dimension of identity building, changing irreversibly their public discourses, narratives and perceptions about the 'other' and the conflict. On the one hand, the peace process was one of the factors that contributed to the process of disrupting the hegemony of the Zionist ideology in the Israeli society, either by making it seem anachronistic or because it highlighted the aggressive policies that have been adopted in its implementation, for example, by settlers in the occupied territories (Strömbom 2013a). Ilan Pappé classified this new period as the "Post-Zionist decade" and argued that "the Zionist identity of the land and society was undermined" (Pappé 2010: 270). Also, the prospects of peace and the atmosphere of hope that was created by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1994, to Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres also played an important part in transforming relationships and, especially, representations of the 'other' in the official discourses, thus impacting the public opinion and media. The main indicator of change on this regard has to do with former categorizations of the 'other' as 'the enemy', that shifted in official discourses and in the conflict lexicon as a whole to a discourse about 'the neighbors', as seen in the examples analyzed thus far, stressing the importance and inevitability of coexistence. On the other hand, the lack of results and the ultimate failure of such process have been regarded by both Israelis and Palestinians with suspicious and feelings of uncertainty. According to Ilan Pappé, "as early as 1995, most Palestinians had labelled the Oslo process as yet another form of occupation, and most Israelis felt that it had failed to safeguard their personal security" (Pappé 2010: 272). The assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 by a member of the far-right settler movement is a drastic and unfortunate example of this. The new wave of violence that appeared as a reaction on the societal level to the uncertainty and fear connected to the failure of the elite-driven peace process ultimately converged to the stalemate of negotiations over a permanent settlement further in 2000, at Camp David.

Regarding the main objective of this section, that is the analysis of dehumanization in light of the peace process' role to its reinforcement or transformation, this brief but intense phase is considered a turning point in the history of the conflict. As has been argued, although the Oslo Accords failed in their finalization and implementation, the early

expectations connected to this phase, as well as the politics of mutual recognition that it provided, changed forever the relationships and narratives of these two peoples regarding the 'other'. This represented an unprecedented transformation in the cultural dimension of violence[16] that, as will be further discussed in the next section, was reflected in the discourses about the 'other's' aims, struggles, rights, identities and even existence, persisting until today. Moreover, its consequences were not only symbolic, since the Accords did enforce the materialization of a state-like entity for the Palestinians which exists until today, the Palestinian Authority.

In conclusion, as far as dehumanization processes are concerned, this phase and its politics promoted huge changes toward the positive transformation of their dimensions. However, in the turning of the millennia, this movement will be reversed again following the failure of the Accords. The disappointment connected to the feelings of loss of expectations and hope, as well as the emergence of new narratives about blames and responsibilities, have added new grievances to the already existing ones and thus have played an important part in another increase in the levels of violence and dehumanization, that will be analyzed in the next chapter about the final phase of the protracted peace process.

6.2   Policy Changes in the 1990s: Post-conflict Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

It is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict […] and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.
(Declaration of Principles 1993)[17]

The quotation above, extracted from the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, known as the Oslo Accord, is a portrait of the changes operated in the international interventionist paradigm during the 1990s and its intention to break with the former approach to peacemaking during the Cold War, that had characterized the first phase of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process. Ever since the subtle but important changes initiated in the 1970s and analyzed in-depth

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[16] For more on the dimensions of violence and its subtypes, see Chap. 2.
[17] Available   at   https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20principles.aspx, [February 7, 2020].

in the last section, reconciliation has been incorporated into the narratives and approaches to conflict. In the case under analysis, this happened either explicitly and intentionally or by means of recognizing the identity claims and needs of Palestinians through the gradual incorporation of this actor within the peace process. This section will analyze what the changes in the international environment meant for the concept and practice of reconciliation in the context of peacemaking, as well as its impact on social identity in Israel and Palestine.

As discussed in the last section, the collapse of the Soviet Union did not simply mean the transformation from a bipolar to a unipolar system. According to the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, this change in the international world order represented an opportunity to strengthen, complexify and enlarge international efforts to promote peace and security from prevention to post-conflict consolidation (UN 2000). It also represented the triumph of the liberal (capitalist) order that would inform the model and design of such interventions. Recapitulating this ideological standpoint is key to understand the development of new, more intrusive but also more complete approaches to conflict insofar as reconciliation is concerned, encompassing not only the management of violent conflict but also the long-term (re)building of institutions and political systems resembling liberal democracies and free markets (Paris 2011; Sabaratnam 2011). This one-size-fits-all model will also be attempted in Israel and Palestine through a major process that was materialized in the Oslo Accords. The deployment of new mechanisms such as post-conflict peacebuilding, state-building and development promotion within the UN framework through the already mentioned 1992 Agenda for Peace is also responsible for a big change in the meaning of reconciliation and the historical evolution of this concept and practice in Israel and Palestine.

While reconciliation in the first phase of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process had meant *political* reconciliation alone, representing a continuity in the paradigm of the British Mandate attempts to conciliate political elites' interests in the first half of the twentieth century[18], the concept of reconciliation presented in the 1992 United Nations Agenda for Peace frames it as a more holistic *post-conflict* mechanism in the context of peacebuilding activities (Paffenholz 2015). However, the state-centric bias of its concept and practice is maintained, insofar as reconciliation was addressed as a means to consolidate the peace efforts

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[18] See Chaps. 4 and 5.

developed first in the political elites' level (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013: 774–775). Although the UN expanded the concept to "address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression" (UN 2000), the approach undertaken had mistaken causes with manifestations. Moreover, this perspective encompassed a negative view of reconciliation, insofar as it is understood as dependent upon the settlement of the conflict and the consolidation of a negative peace.

By failing to deal with root causes of conflict, this new vocabulary of peacebuilding and reconciliation had promoted in practice little change in terms of the level within which the peace process operated. However, it had allowed for the development of a differentiated global approach to peace that, although proposed as a systematic model with clearly sequenced activities, in practice created overlapping phases of peacemaking and the coexistence of several mechanisms deployed in order to mitigate the manifestations and effects of long-term conflict in societies (Darby and Mac Ginty 2008). For this reason, the idea of peace-less reconciliation (inspired in former works such as Biletzki 2013; Strömbom 2013b) is brought into this book in order to represent the set of empirically observable peacemaking efforts developed in contexts of ongoing conflicts that aim at promoting relationships, mutual recognition and respect (and, therefore, act in the realm of reconciliation), dealing with the dimensions of narratives, discourses and practices that have the potential of promoting a positive identity construction through the (re)definition of perceptions about the 'other' (Verdeja 2013: 170).

As the analysis developed so far has suggested, although there has been an evolution in the incorporation of reconciliation in approaches regarding the conflict, peace-less reconciliation is not a feature of the peace process in this period. The main promise of the Oslo Accords, as outlined in the 1993 preamble of the Declaration of Principles, quoted in the epigraph of this section, still consisted of the possibility of *political reconciliation*, expressed in the settlement of the conflict through the signature of a negotiated agreement (although a very comprehensive one) between political elites. Nevertheless, as discussed in the last section, representations of success of the peace process during the negotiation of the Accords played a central role in the transformation of dehumanization processes and promoted peace-less reconciliation at all levels by reinforcing a new paradigm of mutual recognition and creating the idea that peace was in fact achievable. This has allowed for the construction of an alternative view of the conflict reality, in which peace was in fact a concrete possibility,

thus affecting the long-established intersubjective meanings such as dehumanization, enmity and conflict and allowing for an actual transformation of societal behavior and interactions, norms, interests and identities.

Although most critical literature represents the Oslo Process either as disadvantageous for the Israelis in terms of the already established balance of power or as a farce or a trap insofar as the Palestinians are concerned (Said 2003; Khalidi 2013: 29; Pappé 2010: 243), in terms of the transformation of relationships, it has changed the conflict forever and for good. In fact, as this chapter has shown thus far, during the Oslo Process, the representations made in the public and official discourses have promoted a reorientation of the established lexicon of the conflict that impacted narratives and identities by consolidating the recognition of Palestinians and their national identity claims, as well as the acknowledgment of the neighboring country by Palestinian political elites, thus promoting mutual recognition. Although, as we shall see in the next chapter, this process will suffer a throwback later on in the turn of the millennia, some of its most important gains were maintained, such as the recognition of the Palestinian people and its materialization within the establishment of a proto-state entity with (limited) governing functions.

In the societal level, in the context of the increase of hopes and changes in the vocabulary and discourses connected to the peace process in the 1990s, the foundation of new organizations can be perceived. During the period of the Intifada (1987–1993), the number of registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Israel and Palestine had already experienced a great increase, being one-third of all NGOs that are still active today founded during these years[19]. Notwithstanding the many problems connected to the nature of the Oslo Accords[20], such as the clear

[19] Including two examples of organizations that promote peace-less reconciliation, through building relationships and creating a space for Israelis and Palestinians to share their narratives and family perspectives about the past, whose activities and impact will be briefly addressed in the next chapter, that is, The Parents Circle Family Forum and The Centre for Humanistic Education of the Beit Lohamei Hagetaot, both founded in 1995.

[20] According to Ilan Pappé, "the Palestinians searched this new vocabulary in vain for terms such as 'decolonization', 'an end to the occupation' and 'moral justice'. They were instead confronted with a language that regarded the balance of power as one between two partners equal in all aspects of the conflict: blame, guilt and justice. There was in reality no peace process. But, as Noam Chomsky rightly remarked, this jargon very conveniently allowed American involvement as coaches of the so-called 'process'. It also meant that there was no comprehensive attempt to solve the conflict, but that progress in negotiations, or even the negotiations themselves, became more important than results" (Pappé 2010: 206).

asymmetry between the two sides expressed in the terms of the 1993 Declaration of Principles[21], the lack of identification of mechanisms to enforce the decisions and the option of dealing with core issues of the conflict in future negotiations, the atmosphere of peace created by them has impacted conflict developments in all levels. The Oslo period has witnessed a rapid rise in the establishment of civil society organizations and NGOs in Israel and Palestine, thus creating what can be called a real peacebuilding industry. According to Payes (2005: 61) "while in 1991 the number of registered associations (*amutot*) [in Israel] reached 16,728, in 1998 this number grew to 28,885".

However, the liberal reframing of the international doctrine regarding peace in this period has performed a change in their nature, since "most of these popular initiatives had transformed into professionally-based, foreign-funded and development-oriented organizations" (Payes 2005: 104), thus evidencing the political economy of conflict and, more specifically, protracted conflict. For Gearoid Millar (2014: 168), "the very structures of the peacebuilding industry and the economic incentives that drive the international system seem to work against any truly local ownership of peacebuilding processes in contemporary transitional states". As we shall see, for better or worse, these organizations got effectively institutionalized in the context of a greater peace process. This institutionalization has allowed for the development of the organizations but has also promoted some sort of alienation of their agendas and separated many of them from the grassroots.

Regarding approaches to reconciliation at the institutional level connected to the actual peace process, despite the changes of doctrine promoted by the incorporation of a liberal vocabulary into international interventionism, it failed to operate a clear rupture with the former period, maintaining the negative understanding of reconciliation in terms of political reconciliation alone. Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) argue that one of the reasons that explain the failure of the peace process in this period relates precisely with how it had refrained from dealing explicitly with the importance of the past, history, collective memories and narratives (in other words, identity) to the present relationships and reconciliation. For instance, the 1993 Declaration of Principles only mentioned reconciliation once, in a vague and symbolic way that seems to invoke a final stage

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[21] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20principles.aspx, [February 7, 2020].

status and that can be seen in the quotation of the epigraph of this section. Two years later, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip used the word reconciliation only twice. The first time was connected to the same meaning of the former agreement. The second time, in Chap. 4, Article XXII about Cooperation, addressed identity in its moral/cultural dimension and seemed to encompass the present manifestations of conflict in its timeframe, although lacking any operationalization for the concept:

> Israel and the Council will ensure that their respective educational systems contribute to the peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and to peace in the entire region, and will refrain from the introduction of any motifs that could adversely affect the process of reconciliation.[22]

Also, "it has increasingly been acknowledged that Oslo also failed due to its inability to address the conflict's more affective dimensions, sidelining the relational dimensions of peacebuilding as peripheral rather than regarding them as central building blocks in bringing about peace" (Burkhardt-Vetter 2018: 238). According to Sara McDowell and Márie Braniff,

> while the failings of Oslo are often attributed to unresolved physical lines and places, there is another school of thought attesting that, as with many peace processes, Oslo did not engage with the past (and therefore with the present) and its conflicting narratives (Hill 2008), with questions of truth and reconciliation, with the victims of past violence and with issues of culture and identity. (McDowell and Braniff 2014: 103)

However, it can be considered that although the Oslo Accords failed to achieve its objectives and, as explained above, according to some, has even worsened the Palestinian position and prospects for the future, the Oslo Process and this phase of the peace process indeed succeeded—more due to historical circumstances than because of the content of the Accords—to transform the process of dehumanization of Palestinians and Israelis in the official discourses, since its main consequence was the mutual recognition of the 'other' and the acceptance of each group's national aims as a community. Nevertheless, in the realm of policies and practices, the failure of

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[22] Available at https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20israeli-palestinian%20interim%20agreement.aspx, [February 7, 2020].

the Oslo Accords deeply affected future developments of the conflict in a way that promoted an institutionalization of dehumanization since the occupation intensified, the so-called Separation Wall started to be built and more policies of discrimination and exclusion were written, mainly by the Israeli leadership. In terms of the societies, a twofold consequence can be drawn: dehumanization has intensified, but a peaceful response to it has also emerged. Next chapter will deal with the consequences of this change to the peace process and its future dynamics.

6.3   From Hope to New Grievances in the Conflict of Identities

In Rashid Khalidi's words, "so far as the Palestinians were concerned, at this stage the *'peace process'* did not encompass the basic elements of a real, lasting and just peace, or a resolution of any of their basic problems" [italics are mine] (Khalidi 2013: 36). The author goes further by pointing to the contrasting consequences of this process to Israelis, which he considers to have been of alleviation of the burdens of the occupation promoted by the interim period which gave the "illusion that Israel was moving toward peace with the Palestinians, while leaving in place and indeed allowing for the reinforcement of all the fundamental elements of Israeli occupation and settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories" (Khalidi 2013: 36). Joining the choir of many other voices who consider that the process was biased in favor of Israel since its beginning (Pappé 2010; Barak 2005; Said 2003; among others), Khalidi concludes that the terms of the negotiations were never favorable to promoting peace in the first place. This perception about the peace process and the attribution of blames for its failure is one fragment of the new discourses that have arisen in the turn to the twenty-first century and that became incorporated in the main narrative about the conflict and the relationships between the two national identities ever since.

However, an analysis of the second phase of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process anchored on the concepts of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation reveal a different diagnosis. Besides the symbolic changes in the peace process performed by this phase, there can in fact be seen some important advances in the Oslo Era encompassing practical implications that did collaborate for the positive transformation of the processes of mutual dehumanization. Those included the acknowledgment and specific nomination of Palestinians as a people bound together

by their national identity, as well as the legitimization of their claims of self-determination; the declarations of mutual acceptance and recognition; the establishment of some kind of Palestinian self-rule, albeit very limited, over a portion of the territory through the creation of the PA; and the intention of establishing cooperation in several areas ranging from security to technology, management of resources, infrastructure building (including housing and social rehabilitation), economic development, media and the environment. Although the root causes of the conflict, that are connected to the dimensions of cultural violence and reconciliation, were postponed for later negotiations, the amplitude of the agreement and the economic prospects of development and cooperation were aimed at tackling not only direct violence but also structural violence, inequality and social injustice. Furthermore, those accords in fact established the basis of the new vocabulary that would be applied from now on to refer to this conflict, although some argue that the very idea of a 'peace process' that was promoted in this period was nothing more than Orwellian newspeak (Khalidi 2013: xiii).

Most people interviewed during my first fieldwork trip to Israel and Palestine[23] in 2015 agreed that the Oslo Accords represented a watershed not only in terms of the history of the conflict but also because of the transformation of relationships within societies, both at the collective and at the individual levels. Albeit some defended that the Accords were an important step toward the positive transformation of the conflict, since they respected and institutionalized the two states (one Israeli and the other one *Palestinian*) formula, and attempted to build institutions in order to achieve a transition of power that would lead to both peoples' self-rule, others believe that they were an orchestrated farce. According to the latter, its purpose was to weaken the Palestinian position and strengthen the asymmetry that already existed between both parties, while buying

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[23] I performed non-structured exploratory interviews that played a huge part in shaping this project's puzzle and argument. These interviews included Israeli and Palestinian scholars from the fields of International Relations, Law, Sociology, History and Social Psychology; activists and members of social movements, NGOs, INGOs and other civil society organizations working in Israel and the West Bank; international participants of the summer course in which I was enrolled at the Galilee International Management Institute, as well as the organizers of the course; tourist guides; diplomatic personnel from the PLO, the Israeli Government, the Brazilian Permanent Mission to Ramallah and UN Staff in the Occupied territories. The list with the categories of interviewees can be found in Appendix B, in the end of this book.

Israel time to deepen the colonialist effort by definitely changing the map of the region in the meantime. From an a-historical standpoint, meaning without taking full account of the conflict since its beginning and failing to recognize the constant denial of the Palestinian identity and agency within the peace process until 1990s, this is an understandable argument due to the current developments in the situation. For example, Sandra Pogodda argues that the final balance of the second phase of the protracted peace process shows that the asymmetry of power became even more evident, pointing to some of the most dreadful consequences of its failures. According to her, "using the 'peace process' as window-dressing for expansionary policies has turned Palestine into an archipelago of villages and towns dotted around an Israeli-controlled territory" (Pogodda 2016: 406). She considers that this outcome is a product of Israel's unwillingness to compromise and the consequence of the significant concessions imposed upon the Palestinians in the context of the Oslo Process.

Nowadays a harsh critic of this process, as can be seen in the quotation in the beginning of this section, the historian Rashid Khalidi, who participated in the Palestinian delegation as a consultant during the Madrid Peace Conference, had already recognized in 1997 what was at that time a huge change of paradigm in the relationships between the two peoples. In his words, "irrespective of the many flaws in the accords with Israel, and the bitter Palestinian critiques of them, *a process with great importance for issues of Palestinian identity has now begun*" [the italic is mine] (Khalidi 2010: 203). The scholar acknowledged back then that the year of 1993 represented a huge change in terms of the recognition of the Palestinian people by the Israelis, citing as example how Labor Party leaders like Yitzhaq Rabin and Shimon Peres "spoke freely about an independent Palestinian personality and a Palestinian people with a national cause— something that twenty-five years earlier Golda Meir could not bring herself to say" (Khalidi 2010: 204). Regardless of the current developments of the conflict, this late recognition of the Palestinian identity claims and needs became in fact institutionalized to the point that Khalidi's words in the end of the 1990s might sound anachronic nowadays. Another important change of discourse that was operated by this process has to do with the incitement to violence. As the analysis in this chapter has shown, the former vocabulary of armed struggle was abandoned from the PLO's documents and speeches; its Covenant was even modified due to the arrangements made during the negotiations. On the other hand, the Israelis refrained from categorizing the PLO and the Palestinians as terrorists.

Talks about war were replaced by the perspective and, above all, the promise of peace. Mutual acceptance was the main consequence of this process and, with it, a renewed feeling of hope.

However, as we will see in the next chapter, the representations of the failure of the Oslo Accords will play an important role in reversing this tendency again. The feeling of hope will give way to the appearance of new grievances connected with the discourses on blames and responsibilities for the lost prospect of peace. The end of the 1990s is marked by an increase in the levels of direct violence, which will culminate in the renewal of the Israeli discourse about its security and threats to its existence. The eruption of the Second—more violent—Intifada in the beginning of the twenty-first century will be a visible symptom of what Edward Said called "the end of the peace process" (Said 2003). All in all, the overall dynamics of the protracted peace process will be maintained so far as the search for recognition and legitimacy is concerned, serving as yet another arena for the reenactment of exclusionary narratives and conflict. In this sense, little space is left for change, insofar as each actor—not only in IR terms but literally performatively speaking—seems to be compelled to keep playing its previously assigned role.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter about the Oslo Accords brief but watershed period has argued that the peace process during the 1990s has positively impacted the construction and transformation of the identities in conflict, especially with regard to its negative dimension,[24] related with de-identification or the difference from the 'other'. One of the main indicators of the positive impact of the Oslo Era in the transformation of processes of dehumanization is the modification of vocabulary that was performed during this period. As shown in this chapter, instead of the "enemy" or "the Zionist entity", the Palestinian neighbor began to be addressed solely as "Israel"; instead of "Arabs", "Arab citizens of Israel" or "Palestinian Arabs", the people led by Yasser Arafat were finally widely recognized as the "Palestinians". Even the "Arab-Israeli conflict" became internationally known as the "Israeli-Palestinian" one. This terminology was in fact already employed by both the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and

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[24] For more on the positive and negative dimensions of identity building in protracted conflicts, see Chap. 2.

the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in their December 10, 1994, speeches, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize that was shared between them due to the peace efforts of the Oslo Process.

This change of vocabulary—that implied the actual material recognition of both national identities and their claims—has endured until nowadays, deeply impacting the developments of the conflict during its final and current phase. On the one hand, the important symbolic gains witnessed in this period, performed by the mutual recognition of each national identity, led to the reversal of the tendency of denial of agency and community which had been the main manifestation of dehumanization in this conflict. On the other hand, this change was also expressed in material terms, insofar as the PLO was recognized as the main interlocutor on behalf of the Palestinians in the scope of the peace process. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority was stablished with self-governing powers, although limited, creating a Palestinian proto-state which is widely recognized internationally nowadays either as a future state or even as the Palestinian state itself. Finally, the idea that the two peoples should see their claims for self-determination expressed in the peaceful coexistence between two national states became the indisputable formula for addressing the conflict until today.

Nevertheless, the failures of the Oslo Accords connected with the lost hope of peace and frustration of expectations had had a pernicious effect in the conflict developments. As we shall see in the next chapter, the collapse of the Oslo Era and the selective implementation of the accords have taken the conflict to a different level. Part of the self-perpetuating dynamics of protracted conflicts, the peace process and the discourses and representations of its failure have given way to a new phase. Narratives about blames and responsibilities connected with the rise of violence due to the frustration and lack of expectations created by the breakdown of the Accords have allowed for an intensification of the exclusionary discourses and the reinforcement of narratives about security and defense. The turn to the twenty-first century was then marked by a period of extreme social detachment and separation, both symbolic and material, in which the distance between both societies has never been bigger.

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The Twenty-First Century 'No War, No Peace': From the Second Intifada to the Stalemate of the Protracted Peace Process

This chapter examines the last phase of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, corresponding to the period from the Second Intifada (2001) to nowadays. The turn to the twenty-first century was accompanied by another important change in International Relations, yet less exuberant and disruptive than the end of the Cold War about just a decade before. The extensive international interventionism during the 1990s and the Western attempts to fill in the ideological and political gap that was created by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, led to a growing resistance on the ground. Some of the peacebuilding and statebuilding initiatives of this decade finished with no sign of success while others have just contributed to the deterioration of the situation after trampled power transitions that culminated in anything but liberal democratic states. Furthermore, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the war on terror which ended up in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the technological advancements employed in the arms industry that allowed for a different type of warfare from afar, changed forever the face of international interventionism and marked an important shift in the international peace architecture in the twenty-first century. With regard to Israel and Palestine, following the failure of the implementation of the Oslo Accords, the situation of social detachment between the two peoples became even

more evident, with both symbolic and material manifestations of exclusionary politics and radicalization.

The final phase of the historiography of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process corresponds to a period in which its existence was maintained more by discourses and the social imaginary of a perspective for peace, insofar as the actual attempts to promote a negotiated solution have all shown little success. As we shall see, in the turn to the twentieth century, a politics of 'no war, no peace' has been established and normalized, while cultural violence has deepened in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords. Section 7.1 examines the effects at the observable level of the stalemate of the protracted peace process and the (re)institutionalization of dehumanization as a radical political agenda. Section 7.2 explores one of the main effects of the now stalled peace process, being how peace has been subcontracted by the very international actors that have acted as mediators in the negotiations between the two parties. They have acted as donors and sponsors of an increasing number of civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have been involved in the peacebuilding process by bridging reconciliation in the societal level. Section 7.3 discusses empirical examples that point to new avenues for conflict transformation from dehumanization to peace-less reconciliation. The argument developed is that the dual and simultaneous processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation that work in parallel in this conflict suggests that in the almost absence of the peace process there have emerged and intensified several activities that seek to counteract the already verified tendency of dehumanization in the societal level, pointing to alternative routes and their potential for peacemaking.

7.1   Political Radicalization and the Increase of Cultural Violence

Is there a clear bridge linking the interim stage with the final stage to reassure us that the interim stage will not be the final one?
   Mahmoud Darwish (1993)[1]

This is the original, ancient home of the people of Israel and we will build another Elkana (…). We will extend Jewish sovereignty to all the settlements as part of the land of Israel, as part of the State of Israel

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[1] Marmoud Darwish: Resigning from the PLO Executive Committee (August 1993).

Benjamin Netanyahu (2019)[2]

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's quote from 1993 cited in the epigraph of this section perfectly captures the effects of the protracted nature of the peace process until our days. Whether the reader agrees that this process has started in 1947 or considers that its beginning goes back to the 1990s, it is undeniably protracted after more than 30 years of existence (or, as I have argued, more than 70 years), being easily classified as one of the longest peace processes in contemporary history. It is true that it has not been a continuous process. The phases depicted and analyzed so far in this book showed a series of interrupted and sometimes discontinuous attempts to peacemaking, usually interleaved with wars or other types of armed conflicts. Nevertheless, the vocabulary of a peace process has persisted after the turn to the twenty-first century, thus making it even more relevant to the construction and transformation of perceptions, practices, identities and interests within both societies, regardless of whether such process exists in reality or is just a discursive creation.

The most important change in the peace process in its last and contemporary phase is that it became practically frozen, despite definitely not inexistent, since it remained part of the political vocabulary and the historic imaginary of the two peoples. What effectively happened in practice was that the concerns expressed by Mahmoud Darwish in 1993 actually came true. With few adaptations that could not but have happened with the passing of time, the transitional interim period for the Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank occupied territories and Gaza have turned so far into the final one. In this context, radicalization within both sides took over, leading to the explicit construction of exclusionary politics, discourses and infrastructures (such as the check points and the so-called Separation Wall) in the Israeli side, condensed in the words of the former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2019, quoted in the beginning of this section.

It is true that most of the decisions negotiated in the Interim Agreement were not even applied. The self-rule experience of the Palestinians was only conceded in 22 percent of the territory and the measures destined to

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[2] Ha'aretz (2019) "Netanyahu vows to apply Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank" https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/elections/.premium-opening-school-year-in--settlement-netanyahu-vows-to-apply-sovereignty-in-w-bank-1.7773602   [October 30, 2019].

promote joint development and mutual cooperation turned to be in fact mechanisms for facilitating Israeli control over the Palestinian political will (Dana 2021: 30). Also, most of the adaptations of the former situation that occurred with the passing of time worked against the Palestinians, such as the building of the 'Separation Wall', accompanied by a policy of restriction of movement through its checkpoints; the construction of new settlements in the West Bank and the extension of older ones; the very long Gaza Strip blockade; and several others that will be further addressed in this section. The situation of political immobility that was created by the failure of the Oslo Agreements became, and still is, somewhat Kafkaesque. After the Palestinian victory that was the recognition of their self-determination claims,[3] and the actual institutionalization of those claims into (what was supposed to be) a temporary proto-state structure—the Palestinian Authority (PA)—it was common sense that the solution to the Question of Palestine was close, and that the construction of an independent Palestinian state was just a matter of time. Nevertheless, after the almost ten years that encompassed the Oslo period, from 1991 to 2000, Palestinian politics has drifted during new times of crises that came along the Second Intifada (Khalidi 2006: 141–142) and, later, the death of their historical leader, Yasser Arafat, in 2004.

Before approaching this new period of the now undeniably interconnected Israeli-Palestinian history, it is worth noting that this third phase of the conflict is also marked by new events that somehow disrupted the international environment. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, promoted a renewed interest and a change in Washington's policies regarding peace and its definitions in the periphery of the world but, most importantly, in the Middle East and North Africa (Pappé 2010: 277). While the 1990s represented a change in interventionism that, as mentioned in the last chapter, included new peacebuilding mechanisms and several other actors like humanitarian and transitional justice agencies, the turn to the twenty-first century did not represent a serious rupture with the former period but was marked by a "renewed interest in the question of state fragility, and the principles of statebuilding have become pervasive not just in responses to conflict but the governance of the global South more generally" (Sabaratnam 2011: 13–14). Furthermore, transnational terrorism became a new kind of threat that although was not bounded to a specific country or territory, it became associated with Islam and the

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[3] See Chap. 6.

so-called Arab World. All this converged to strengthening of US military, diplomatic, financial and political interference in the territories that were classified by President George W. Bush as part of the 'axis of evil', and their surroundings.

In this context, what Edward Said called "the end of the peace process" (Said 2003) was materialized by both the failure of another intense round of negotiations in Camp David in the summer of 2000 and the escalation of hostilities between the parties that marked this last attempt of the Clinton administration, culminating in the Palestinian Second, more violent, Intifada. The very tone of official political declarations from this period had increased after the fatigue and mistrust that the stalemate in the implementation of the Oslo Agreements provoked. In July 25, 2000, the US President Bill Clinton declared on a Statement after the Camp David Peace Talks that "after 14 days of intense negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, I have concluded with regret that they will not be able to reach an agreement at this time".[4] After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, and the subsequent election of Benjamin Netanyahu for the first time, Israeli policies regarding their basic guidelines for negotiations became even more unyielding. According to Ilan Pappé, "as the 1996 Israeli elections have shown, the majority of Jewish voters were willing to enforce the Israeli version of the Oslo accord even more harshly, as advocated by Likud" (Pappé 2010: 273). Four years later, the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's reaction to the stalemate in negotiations in Camp David reinforced this view. In his Statement after the Camp David Talks of July 25, 2000,[5] he justified the failure of negotiations by declaring that

> we were not prepared to relinquish three things: the security of Israel, those things that are holy to Israel, and the unity of our people. *If we will be faced with the alternative between compromising one of these and a confrontation, the choice is clear to every Israeli* [the italic is mine].

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on its turn, rejected the proposals made by President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, that included settling for an accord that would undermine the right of return for refugees expelled by Israel in 1948.

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[4] Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/26/world/impasse-camp-david-words-camp-david-negotiators-unprecedented-both-scope-detail.html [July 1, 2022].

[5] Available at https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israeli-pm-barak-speaks-after-the-camp-david-summit [July 1, 2022].

The results of the Second Camp David Summit were portrayed by the Palestinians as another humiliation. The negative representations regarding the failure of the peace process in the Palestinian official and public discourses, alongside the events that were to take place next, had profound consequences in the interactions between the two peoples and, more specifically, in the levels of both cultural and direct violence against the 'other'. On September 28, 2000, a congressman from the Likud Party (opposition to Ehud Barak's Labor), and former military and Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, who would be elected Israeli Prime Minister in the next year, entered—uninvited and accompanied by a heavy military escort—into the Al-Haram Al-Sharif Plaza (Temple Mount) in the Jerusalem Old City. Although this place is considered holy by both Israelis and Palestinians, it has been administered by Islamic authorities since the end of the Six Day War in 1967, since there exist nowadays two important buildings for Islam, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. This was seen by Palestinians as a deliberate provocation and a power demonstration (in Arafat's words, it was a "premeditated desecration […] planned in collusion with the Israeli Government"[6]) and led to a wave of rage that was already connected to the latent generalized feelings of injustice, frustration and deceit that became associated with the decay of the Oslo Process.

The popular protests that followed this incident brought together two agendas. The first one was the fury created by Ariel Sharon's action, which may be considered an explicit affront to the Palestinian people and their claims of self-determination. And the second one was the disappointment with the peace process and, more importantly, the absolute opposition to what was considered a shameful and undignified offer made in the context of the recent Camp David talks. As put by Rashid Khalidi,

> The intifada was a direct result of the disillusionment of most of the once-hopeful Palestinian population of the occupied territories with nine years of a "peace process" that had deferred statehood indefinitely while in practice allowing for the consecration of occupation, the expansion of Israeli settlements, and increasingly severe new restrictions on the movement of the Palestinian populations. (Khalidi 2013: 38)

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[6] PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat: Speech at the Arab Summit (October 21, 2000) available at Laqueur and Rubin (2008).

However, it is worth noting that the popular protests that gave birth to the Al-Aqsa Intifada did not initiate as a violent movement. The violence of the Intifada was a product of the disproportionate reaction of the Israeli border police that shot dead 13 unarmed Palestinian citizens that protested in the next day (Usher 2003). According to Ilan Pappé, "after the deaths after Sharon's visit, the Palestinian resentment took another form: old and new Palestinian militias […] took up suicide bombing as the sole way of ending occupation" (Pappé 2010: 277). The brutal and powerful Israeli reactions, that Yasser Arafat classified as "the wave of savage violence that our Palestinian people have been subjected to",[7] led to another escalation of violence that, this time, impacted Israeli individual security and standard of living in an unprecedented way.

Once again, cultural violence gained strength, and this can be seen in the content of the declarations about the 'other' made in this period. Those either implied that the other group's culture was imminently violent or that their people's nature was simply deceitful. The mutual provocations in the official and public discourses started even before the election of Ariel Sharon, in March 2001. Fatah's Secretary General Marwan al-Barghuthi declared on October 26 of the previous year, in an interview to *Le Monde*, that the Palestinians should not restore peace and order as they had done during the years of the Oslo Process, since the consequence had been the deepening of Israeli efforts to irreversibly change the situation on the ground. In his words,

> after seven years, we have experience of the Israelis (…): they never let go of anything without being obliged to do so by force. […] The Israelis want everything: Peace, security, stability, the settlements, and a Palestinian state without Jerusalem and without real sovereignty. That is impossible. They must leave the territories, and there will be no more confrontations.

Interestingly, similar representations of the 'other' were made on the Israeli side in the same period. On December 26, a *Ha'aretz* right-wing Zionist commentator, Yoel Marcus, wrote that

> the Palestinian leaders […] negotiate while shooting their six-guns, [and even so] are getting things that they never even dreamed of getting. Yet they incite their public to attack us, while they never stop whining and

[7] This declaration is also part of Yasser Arafat's Speech at the Arab Summit on October 21, 2000.

complaining. […] Instead of leading his people down the road to concilia-
tion with Israel, he is leading them down the road to terrorism, murder and
anti-Semitic incitement.

In the same text, he also reminded the Palestinians of the imbalance of
power between them and the Israelis by warning that "Israel can live with
the status quo for many years and with much less trouble than the
Palestinians. They need our approval if they want to set up an independent
state (…)".[8]

It is important to note, though, that those two examples also show that
the changes[9] promoted by the brief Oslo Era were in fact consolidated,
having modified the vocabulary that had persisted for more than 40 years,
from 1947 to the end of the 1980s (the first phase of the peace process
analyzed in Chap. 5). Thus, dehumanization in this last phase gained a
new, more literal instead of psychological, dimension, as the denial of the
other people's existence as an identity group was no longer the main goal
of dominant narratives in the contemporary phase of the conflict. At this
point, it is important to refer back to the definition of dehumanization
developed in Chap. 3. Complementarily to conceptualizations that aim to
explain the conditions that allow for genocide, war, human subjugation
and slavery, mostly found in postcolonial literature that considers dehu-
manization primarily as the act of treating the 'other' as an animal, deprived
of human status and, therefore, subject to direct violence (Fanon 1963;
Dussel 1974: 35–36; Levinas 1998; Maldonado-Torres 2008), dehuman-
ization is defined in this book as a psychological process that is related with
the denial of identity and community (Kelman 1973, 2001; Burton 1990)
and whose greatest expressions can be traced within manifestations of cul-
tural violence, consequently allowing for the reinforcement of structural
and direct violence (Galtung 1990). The consequences of dehumaniza-
tion as a type of cultural violence, and its pervasive impact in the dimen-
sion of structural violence, became more obvious in this phase, whereas in
the first decades of the conflict it seemed easier to connect the symbolic
violence entrenched in official narratives and discourses to the levels of
direct violence on the ground.

[8] Both interviews can be found reprinted in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin's *The Israel-
Arab Reader,* pages 560–561 and 565–566, respectively.
[9] The changes in the vocabulary from the first to the second phase of the peace process
were analyzed and explained in the last chapter about the Oslo Process.

An example of this can be found in events that took place in the next year following the beginning of the Second Intifada. In the context of fear and insecurity felt by most Israelis in face of the violent uprisings, the person responsible for the eruption of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Ariel Sharon, was elected Israeli Prime Minister. Mandated by the majority of the Israeli public opinion and electorate, his policies were even harsher than those of his predecessors. During the five years he remained in office until he became incapacitated by a stroke, Sharon

> acted ruthlessly in expanding Jewish settlements, demolishing Palestinian houses, constructing a 'security barrier' through the West Bank, undermining the Palestinian Authority, and breaking up the West Bank into a collection of enclaves with no territorial contiguity. In a word, the overarching aim of the government was politicide: to deny the Palestinians any independent political existence in Palestine. (Shlaim 2010: xiii).

In the context of the extreme violence and absolute lack of confidence expressed in the continuous accusations between the two parties in the aftermath of the failure of the Oslo Accords, international efforts to reverse this situation could not reach a favorable outcome. In the meanwhile,

> Israeli authorities kept up their domination of every aspect of Palestinian life: border closures, abuse at checkpoints, house demolitions, the assassination of military and political activists, mass arrests and the start of the construction of a wall separating the territories of the West Bank from Israeli territory.[10] (Pappé 2010: 278)

In May 2003, the US administration alongside the European Union, Russia and the United Nations—known as the Middle East Quartet or the Madrid Quartet that was established in the beginning of the Oslo

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[10] Or so was the belief when Ilan Pappé wrote those words (his book's first edition dates back to 2004). It is widespread knowledge nowadays that the actual configuration of the Separation Wall—or the Apartheid Wall, as some refer to it—does not consist in the 'green line' established as the basis for negotiations. Neither is it limited to include the Israeli established settlements into the state's territory. Some segments of the 'security barrier' in fact separate parts of Palestinian villages from one another, as is the case in Bethlehem, where I could see for myself how the path of the wall led to the absolute uselessness of a gas station that was once positioned in a privileged position right next to a busy and central street, and is now completely abandoned since it only faces the more than two times higher than the Berlin Wall Israeli 'military fence'.

Process—attempted another approach to revive the dying peace process. The Roadmap for Peace established another set of steps, this time "with clear phases, timelines, target dates, and benchmarks" (UN 2003) for building peace in Israel and Palestine that were supposed to culminate in the establishment of the Palestinian state in 2005. The Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas' Speech at the Palestinian Legislative Council on April 29, 2003,[11] connected the escalation of the conflict and the wave of violence of the Second Intifada to the loss of hope and desperation that were a consequence, among others, of the several failures of the peace process. Notwithstanding, he still urged the Palestinian people and leadership to maintain their hopes in the process:

> The peace process has gone through essential failings and major deteriorations, to the point that we have now reached the most difficult stage of this bloody and escalating conflict. While we should learn from the lessons of the past, what we are living under does not cause us to lose hope in the benefits of peace, or to turn our backs on Arab and international initiatives that aim to achieve peace.

Once again—just as its predecessors—this negotiated accord maintained several flaws from previous documents connected to the peace process and, for this reason, constituted another failed attempt at promoting a peaceful transformation in the region. For example, it failed to define clear borders for this future state and insisted on the definition of the starting point for the conflict as 1967, thus permanently excluding from the negotiations the situation of the descendants of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians that became refugees during the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948, as a consequence of what the Palestinians call the *Nakba* (catastrophe).

Although his leadership and political legitimacy was already being questioned both nationally and internationally at that time, the already mentioned death of Yasser Arafat, in 2004, culminated into a huge demobilization of his political movement, Fatah, that faced a great loss of political capital among Palestinians. After more than ten years of the first Oslo Agreement, the idea that a solution for the conflict through peaceful means was possible became more and more discredited in the Palestinian society. In addition to this, the inability of the Fatah leadership to provide

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[11] Available at Laqueur and Schueftan (2016: 510).

public services such as health, security and education for the areas under its jurisdiction, the high levels of unemployment in the Palestinian society and their further deterioration due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli building of the wall and the accusations of corruption and nepotism of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority also collaborated to undermine the legitimacy of this movement (Khalidi 2006: 143–150). The main consequence of the power void created by the loss of the symbol of the Palestinian resistance and the very face of the Palestinians internationally, similarly to what had happened in Israeli elections, was the radicalization of Palestinian politics.

In the 2006 elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council, the radical Islamist movement Hamas emerged victorious, reflecting the discontentment of the Palestinian population with their living situation and the ineffectiveness of the peace process efforts. The results of the scrutiny led to a sort of civil war between Fatah and Hamas factions that resulted in the cut of funds by the members of the Quartet, which were the main sponsors of the Palestinian Authority (Le More 2008). This, alongside the Israeli decision to withhold taxes collected on behalf of the PA, resulted in the collapse of the already fragile Palestinian economy. In 2007, the Hamas occupied the Gaza Strip—from which Israel had withdrew unilaterally, following its 2004 Disengagement Plan[12]—that already counted on its own version of the Israeli 'security fence'[13] built in the mid-1990s, "which had effectively sealed off the Strip and turned it into a kind of a huge prison camp" (Pappé 2010: 278). The Hamas constituted an autonomous government in the Strip, creating a situation of separation between the

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[12] Although it can be argued that the withdrawal from Gaza was in fact a strategic decision that aimed not at representing a gesture of good will toward the future of the peace process but at facilitating Israeli control from the outside rather than taking part in the everyday confrontations in the inside (Pappé 2010: 291), it was done alongside a discourse of fatigue with the status quo situation and the inexistence of a "partner on the Palestinian side with whom progress can be made on a bilateral process", leading to the State of Israel to represent this decision internally and internationally as an unilateral decision of taking "action to improve the current situation" (Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon: Disengagement Plan of May 28, 2004, available at https://www.haaretz.com/2004-05-28/ty-article/prime-minister-ariel-sharons-four-stage-disengagement-plan/0000017f-e828-df5f-a17f-fbfe85df0000 [July 1, 2022]).

[13] For an illustration of how this fence looks nowadays, see Picture A1 in the Appendix C at the end of this book. This photo was taken by me in July 2015 during a guided research tour from the Israeli side, in the city of Ashqelon, that is situated in the northern border of Gaza.

two Palestinian leaderships and correspondent territories and peoples. Israel has continued to react violently to this day against the Hamas and the citizens of the Gaza Strip, imposing a blockade of people and goods, as well as engaging in several wars[14] that have turned the situation into the worst ongoing humanitarian crisis of the twenty-first century.

All new developments in the peace process were not able to promote real changes in the now already established and uncontested status quo. US attempts at promoting another round of bilateral talks, launched in the Annapolis Conference on November 27, 2007,[15] are an example of this. In his speech to this conference, the US President George W. Bush declared, in a statement previously agreed upon by the two parties, that the main goal of this new process was to "conclude an agreement before the end of 2008" based on the previous road map initiative. This time, according to the President, both parties had agreed to resolve "all outstanding issues, including the core issues, without exception (…), in furtherance of the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine". But this endeavor also failed due to the Israeli Operation Cast Lead, launched in 2008 against the Hamas, that promoted the occupation of the Gaza Strip during the negotiations of the peace process. This operation was largely (mis) represented in the Israeli media coverage, that relied mostly on official government sources, depicting the Palestinians as terrorists and the operation as an uncontested necessity in order to provide security to the Israeli territory and its people (Shlaim 2010: 307). This view disregarded the great asymmetry between the parties of the conflict and contributed to the further dehumanization of Palestinians within the Israeli public opinion.[16] The Palestinians refused to resume talks for the next couple of years and the relationship between the two parties further deteriorated with mutual accusations of dishonesty and lack of real intentions to engage with a lasting peace.

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[14] The 2008 Operation Cast Lead, the 2012 Operation Pillar of Defense, the 2014 Operation Protective Edge and the 2021 Gaza War, as well as other continuous bombardments and air strikes launched as another disproportionate response to the frequent rockets that have been fired from the Gaza Strip to the neighboring cities in Israel every week.

[15] Available at Laqueur and Schueftan (2016: 547).

[16] According to Avi Shlaim, "Israel's war on Gaza begun at the end of 2008, lasted 22 days and claimed the lives of over 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis" (Shlaim 2010: 307). In his chapter called "Israel's War Against Hamas: Rhetoric and Reality", Shlaim, who has served in the IDF in the mid-1960s, argues that the Israeli occupation has "very little to do with security and everything to do with territorial expansionism" (Shlaim 2010: 307–308).

The last peacemaking attempt that deserves attention, although not necessarily being part of a peace process, is the Palestinian unilateral approach to the UN. After trying in vain to rescue the peace plans of the Roadmap in 2010, the successor of Yasser Arafat, Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, had started to change his discourse to the impossibility of achieving peace through bilateral negotiations and decided to embark in what became known as the Palestinian UN Bid. In the context of the loss of power and political legitimacy of the Fatah-led PLO and PA, the Palestinian UN Bid was another form of instrumentalization of the peace process for internal political gains, this time performed by the Palestinians (Ricarte 2013: 60–61). Nevertheless, this strategy that aimed at changing perceptions and representations toward gaining international recognition to the leadership and the cause, as well as internal political legitimacy, in fact succeeded in the symbolic realm and it marks the further consolidation of the change in the Palestinian leadership approaches and discourses to building peace.[17] This strategy consisted in denouncing the impasses of the direct negotiations with Israel, the requests to allied countries for unilateral recognition of the Palestinian state in the 1967 borders and, finally, the attempt to gain its recognition in the United Nations, what failed due to the pre-announced veto of the US in the Security Council (for more on this topic, see Ricarte 2013). Nevertheless, this attempt indeed had promoted symbolic gains for the Palestinians but, at the same time, has not been able to guarantee real changes in the imbalance of power between the two parties of the conflict.

In terms of the Israeli society, 2009 was the year in which a pro-settler coalition government headed by the Likud Party came to power. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was elected again as head of this government and, although facing serious charges of corruption and dwelling on his increasing inability to constitute a viable coalition, still remained in power until 2021, becoming the longest serving Israeli Prime Minister. During the 12 uninterrupted years of his government, Bibi, as he is known in the Israeli society, has benefited from his discourse focused on fear and security. In 2015, Netanyahu won the elections—that had appeared to be

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[17] In fact, in 1974 the Fatah published its 'Program of Stages', in which it reorganized the priorities of the movement and focused on the two-states solution rather than the dream of the whole Palestine. This pragmatic shift, as discussed in Chap. 5, was the beginning of the gradual abandonment of the armed struggle option and a move toward diplomacy that culminated in the 2010 decision to move toward the UN.

a lost poll before this statement—with the promise that he would not agree with the establishment of a Palestinian state,[18] breaking with a decade's long consensus.

From 2009 to 2015, Netanyahu himself spoke in favor of the two-states solution many times, including in front of the US President Barack Obama, although in practice his government had intensified the politics of settlements expansion, collective punishment and discrimination against the Palestinians (Landy 2011: 8–10). According to Sandra Pogodda, the results of most recent Israeli elections *vis a vis* the discourse of the elected candidates show that the Israeli strategy of boycotting negotiations is widely accepted in the Israeli society and that security defined as the maintenance or even deepening of the status quo is the formula that meets most of the electorate priorities (Pogodda 2016: 406). This takes us back to the second quotation cited in the epigraph of this chapter. In April 2019, Netanyahu promised he would annex the territories of the West Bank and, right before the September elections, he added to this proposal the occupied territories of the Jordan Valley and the settlements. Facing serious charges of corruption, abuse of power and being considered by the public opinion, after his third mandate, a despotic leader with few inclinations to democracy, Netanyahu was nevertheless not pushed away from power until 2021. The second stalemate in Israeli elections in the same year converged in the Trump administration declaration in November 2019 that the US no longer considered illegal the building of settlements in the occupied territories.[19]

Ever since, the peace process has continued to exist in the political and public vocabularies but ceased to effectively reach any type of follow up. Several were the challenges faced by the stillbirth attempts to reactivate the peace process in the last ten years. First, as pointed by Rashid Khalidi,

> The enduring, profound, and destructive split in Palestinian ranks between Fateh and Hamas, and therefore between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, dominated by rival "Palestinian Authorities" […] made a unified consensus on Palestinian strategy, and therefore successful negotiations, impossible. (Khalidi 2013: 69–70)

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[18] Source available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31937224 [June 14, 2022].

[19] Source available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/18/us-israeli-settlements-no-longer-considered-illegal-palestinian-land-mike-pompeo [June 14, 2022].

An era of normalization of the conflict has been established, punctuated by frequent episodes of direct violence that have impacted less and less the gross of the Israeli population but that has deepened structural and cultural violence, that I referred in the title of this section as of 'no war, no peace'. This chapter will not focus on the peace initiatives that followed, since they were unable to perform considerable change, either in reinforcing or transforming dehumanization in discourses and interactions, as most people simply started to disregard those efforts by believing that they were nothing but a farce.[20]

Next section will deal with the consequences of the stalemate of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process insofar as peacemaking is concerned. As we shall see, while the peace process has become stalled, other initiatives have flourished which aimed at promoting peace in the margins of the formal negotiated agreements between elites. These are a consequence of the paralysis of the peace process but have also been developed within its context, considering these initiatives have been supported by the main sponsors of the peace process, leading to what I call a politics of subcontracting peace.

In conclusion, dehumanization in this last phase under analysis has been marked by a more literal, instead of psychological, dimension, as the denial of the other people's existence as an identity group has no longer been the main goal of dominant narratives in the contemporary phase of this conflict. Nevertheless, as has been argued, the changes in the symbolic dimension performed by the Oslo Process in the 1990s were not accompanied by real improvements at the practical realm. Instead, the politics of dehumanization can be considered to have even intensified since Israeli

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[20] The other attempts that were made to reactivate the peace process were the 2013–2014 talks, that did not manage to find a common ground, collapsing after the deadline proposed by the United States Secretary of State John Kerry to reach a final agreement; Mahmoud Abbas' 2014 peace plan that was presented unilaterally to the United Nations Security Council after a declaration in the 69th Section of the General Assembly that "it is impossible to return to the cycle of negotiations that failed to deal with the substance of the matter and the fundamental question" and failed to be approved due to the veto power of the United States; and the so-called Trump peace initiative (White House 2020) that seemed to be another fiasco following the very changes of policies of this new American administration that has moved its embassy to Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a symbolic recognition of the Israeli claims over the city and has ruptured with a decades long international consensus by declaring that will not consider the construction of settlements in occupied territory as illegal anymore, agreeing with the Israeli position that those are disputed territories and excluding once again the Palestinians as interlocutors for the process.

policies have institutionalized and legalized the already existing discrimination and denial of self-determination to the Palestinian people. Ultimately, these have promoted a legitimization and justification of violence based on identity considerations, impacting the everyday lives of the Palestinian people under occupation, siege (in the case of the people of Gaza) and living in the State of Israel either as citizens or residents. This has also affected the Israeli and Palestinian public opinions, thus deteriorating even further their relationships. This has been expressed both in the increase of violence against the 'other' and the legitimization and reinforcement in local politics of radical leaders, contributing to a definite detachment from the peace process efforts and adding to the cycle of protractedness.

7.2   Subcontracting Peace: Reconciliation as an Everyday Process in the Twenty-First Century

> States, however, cannot do the job alone. We need an active civil society and a dynamic private sector. Both occupy an increasingly large and important share of the space formerly reserved for States alone, and it is plain that the goals outlined here will not be achieved without their full engagement.
> UN (2005)

The turn to the twenty-first century is marked by the collapse of the peace process and the increase of violence and social detachment between Israelis and Palestinians. As last chapter has shown, the Oslo Process activated the political/institutional and moral/cultural dimensions of reconciliation by irreversibly recognizing the Palestinian identity and their agency within the peace process, changing forever the lexicon of the conflict, as well as the formula for its resolution and the understanding about the actors who were deemed to be relevant for such solution. Nevertheless, the consequences of the failures regarding the implementation of the Accords and the next stage of negotiations have also promoted the normalization of the conflict and dove the situation deeper into one of the most violent phases of its history (Tonge 2014: 15; Pappé 2010: 275). According to Darweish and Rigby (2015: 53),

> it was the anger that the despair brought on by the failure of the [Oslo] peace process that sowed the seeds of the second intifada, a period of violence and horror that in turn created the environment within which the

Israeli state could justify its construction of the Separation Wall/Barrier by which it was able to encroach even further onto the diminishing territory of the Palestinians.

There is in fact a widely spread belief on both sides of the conflict that relationships have changed after the Accords. Most people interviewed during the fieldwork performed for this book recollected that before the failure of the Oslo Process, although conflicting relationships had already become a reality at the societal level, at the individual level, interactions between the two peoples were common and frequent.[21] An example several times mentioned was that it was normal and common to see a Jew buying bread in the Palestinian bakery, as well as the opposite, and that, after Oslo, those kinds of interactions started to become more and more unusual and complicated.[22] This and other examples demonstrate that the peace process has played an important role not only in the construction, definition and assertion of each group's identity but also in the representations made of the 'other'.

Nevertheless, while the 1990s advanced a more complex framework to deal with reconciliation in protracted conflict situations, what might appear to have been a step back during the almost complete stalemate in the peace process in the last couple of decades can in fact be read as a policy change toward the idea of subcontracting peace.[23] This term is employed here due to the increasing support for new and established CSOs and NGOs from the part of the main actors connected to the peace process (e.g., the UN, the EU and the US), suggesting a shift in the approaches to peacemaking in the twenty-first century as expressed in the quotation cited in the beginning of this section. Incentives for local ownership in building (liberal) peace in this context and others have ranged

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[21] This view was explicitly and spontaneously shared by Interviewee 1 (2015), Interviewee 2 (2015), Interviewee 3 (2015), Interviewee 5 (2015), Interviewee 24 (2016), Interviewee 32 (2016) and Interviewee 39 (2016). The list of all interviews performed for this research and the categories of the interviewees can be found in Appendix B, in the end of this book.

[22] Some of the immediate consequences of the Oslo Process were the radicalization in exclusionary politics after the failure of the Accords and the lack of hope and increase of desperation as a consequence of the inability of political elites to agree on a feasible implementation of the negotiations, but also due to the representations made of who was to blame for the failure. For examples of the contrasts between the Israeli and the Palestinian societies nowadays, see Pictures A3, A5, A6 and A7 in Appendix C of this book.

[23] Although from very different perspectives, this idea and its effects have been analyzed and discussed previously in several papers such as Turner (2011) and Steinberg (2021).

from financial support to capacity building and personnel. This has not come without consequences. I join the chorus of critical voices, such as Meera Sabaratnam, that problematize the vocabulary and practice of terms like capacity building (Sabaratnam 2017: 1–4), as well as the ones who call attention to the social engineering bias inherent to the conditionalities connected with the 'opportunities' offered by external donors (Pogodda and Richmond 2017). However, as the formers and others have shown, those domestic initiatives, instead of simply normalizing conflict, have the potential of promoting a better involvement of the population with the quest for and attempts to build peace, removing the responsibility solely from the political elites and promoting the construction of a dynamic civil society.

Moreover, regardless of whether this 'local turn' in peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2008; Richmond 2009; Richmond and Franks 2009; Öjendal et al. 2017) has been based on the development of new forms of governmentality from above (Pogodda and Richmond 2017); represents a resistance to the liberal peace architecture connected with ownership and emancipation (Mac Ginty 2011; Richmond 2012); or is a symptom of the disengagement of international interventionism which leads to a policy of 'subcontracting' the peacemaking business, as suggested in this book; its potential for promoting reconciliation and the emergence of new forms of integrated identity narratives must be explored. It is important to mention that this is not a recent issue. The literature on peace and conflict has long identified the need to overcome the state-centric paradigm of peace initiatives under penalty of undermining the sustainability of any type of negotiated peace. According to John Paul Lederach,

> we need to examine how to integrate a reconciliation paradigm at the middle-range and grassroots levels on both sides of the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict. Unless that can be accomplished, the innovation and progress made at the highest level of the peace process will always remain under severe stress and in danger of outright collapse. (Lederach 1997: 34)

The incorporation of both reconciliation and actors such as local civil society and NGOs into international approaches to conflict can be traced in the shifts in policy making regarding peace promotion expressed in UN official documents. In August 2000, the United Nations issued the "Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations", also known as the Brahimi Report (UN 2000). In this document, the organization

addressed the failures of peace operations in the 1990s and suggested improvements in the UN's mechanisms of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in alignment with the former doctrine established by the Agenda for Peace (UN 1992). Departing from the recognition that an important part of the failures of the organization since the end of the Cold War were due to financial restrictions and staff insufficiencies, the Brahimi Report performed a shift in the policies of the organization so far by giving increased importance to regional and sub-regional organizations in both the establishment of peace and its maintenance.[24] Focused on peacekeeping operations, the report also promoted a differentiated reading of conflict transformation by connecting—although still timidly—the efforts toward maintaining negative peace and the activities aimed at conflict prevention, one of the central aspects addressed in the report. Although both the concepts of peacebuilding and reconciliation are repeated several times throughout the document, the definition of reconciliation proposed is still limited to minimal approaches. Reconciliation in the Brahimi Report is understood either as political (national) or as a final stage to peace. On the other hand, the very definition of what is referred as "reconciliation tools" is vague and points to the traditional post-conflict framework of reconciliation manifested in apologies and forgiveness (Philpott 2006; Brewer et al. 2010) or to its political/institutional dimension manifested in reparation programs. Moreover, the report lacks any mention to identity and its role for the perpetuation of the root causes of conflict whatsoever.

Notwithstanding these limitations, there is an explicit reference to the need to promote reconciliation beyond the political level, by proposing the involvement of the society at large in peacebuilding efforts and even suggesting the need to financially support programs that impact directly the everyday lives of ordinary people. As can be read in the Report, "among the changes that the Panel supports are: a doctrinal shift […] that emphasizes a team approach to […] helping communities coming out of a conflict to achieve national reconciliation" which encompasses "flexibility for heads of United Nations peace operations to fund 'quick impact

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[24] This shift was later reinforced and intensified in other documents such as In Larger Freedom (UN 2005), Review of UN Peacebuilding Architecture (UN 2010), World Development Report (2011) and Governance for Peace: Securing the Social Contract (UNDP 2012). All of those mention the 'local' and the necessity to interact with this level for building sustainable peace. More importantly, according to Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver Richmond (2013), the attention given to this actor increases in each of those documents through time.

projects' that make a real difference in the lives of people in the mission area" (UN 2000). In this sense, the Brahimi Report not only proposed a change in the peace doctrine of the organization, emphasizing hybrid approaches to peacemaking (Mac Ginty 2011), it also pointed to the need to fund projects and organizations that can help mitigate the manifestations of conflict, opening up to a wider definition of peace process. Yet, however innovative, this approach maintains the former paradigm of proposing a remedy to alleviate the symptoms of conflict ("quick impact"), rather than an actual treatment for the long-term disease. The role and importance of civil society and local and international NGOs is also key to the report that points to the need to "bring together many different actors", and to the challenges inherent to the coordination of their activities and amplification of their individually small impact: "all of them need a mechanism that makes it easier to share information and ideas efficiently, the more so because each is but the small tip of a very large bureaucratic iceberg with its own culture, working methods and objectives" (UN 2000).

These changes in the doctrine, adopted by the organization through the Security Council, have accompanied a tendency that was even intensified after the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. As mentioned before, a consequence of these events, the 'global war on terror' deviated attentions from peacebuilding and reinforced a negative image of Arabs in the West, who became increasingly depicted as terrorists, thus promoting radicalization. In this sense, the support for and reinforcement of local civil societies became trendy not only in the context of finding better ways to promote the values of liberal peacemaking but also as a way to pass the responsibility of building (liberal) peace to local actors.

In the specific case of Israel and Palestine, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People's (CEIRPP) draft program of work for 2004 mentioned civil society organizations nothing less than 22 times in what was a relatively short document.[25] First, in the section about the mandate of the Committee, it can be read that "the General Assembly […] requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations […], and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work" (UN 2004). Without ever explicitly mentioning reconciliation, a concept still regarded as part of a post-conflict settlement by the

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[25] Available at https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-177799/, [February 8, 2020].

Organization, the program also advocated for the further involvement of civil society in Israel and Palestine in "international and regional meetings and conferences [organized by the CEIRPP] to promote constructive analysis and debate on the various aspects of the question of Palestine" (UN 2004). The organization of meetings and conferences with the participation of several actors from different levels and nationalities, however, points to the moral/cultural dimension of reconciliation insofar as it deals with dialogue, education and mutual recognition. In respect to the cooperation of CEIRPP with civil society (one specific and distinct topic within the other five activities of the Committee outlined in the program), the document refers to the important effects of activities upheld by the civil society to peacebuilding, such as advocacy work, mobilization of public opinion, providing humanitarian relief and assistance to the Palestinian people and sharing insights into reports and situations on the ground (UN 2004). All these references serve the purpose of illustrating the increasing involvement of CSOs, NGOs and other grassroots movements into peacebuilding efforts that have been actively promoted by the United Nations itself, which this section refers to as subcontracting peace.

Not only the UN but also other major actors connected to the peace process such as the European Union and its member states have embarked on the practice of subcontracting peace. As stated in the website dedicated to the European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, "the European Union is the biggest provider of external assistance to the Palestinians [...] [and] by far the largest provider of assistance to Palestine refugees" through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and regional cooperation funds.[26] The European Peacebuilding Initiative, which aims to "facilitate the peace process by supporting a solid foundation at civil society level for a fair and last settlement in the Middle East", also disburses "€5 million per year to Civil Society Organizations promoting links across the political divide".[27] All these initiatives can be understood as yet another type of peace process, pointing to its changing definition through time, as well as to the need of examining the

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[26] Available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/palestine_en, [February 8, 2020].

[27] Available at https://eeas.europa.eu/generic-warning-system-taxonomy/404_en/12391/EU%20Peacebuilding%20Initiative%20(formerly%20EU%20Partnership%20for%20Peace%20Programme), [February 8, 2020].

historiography of protracted peace processes as whole and its impact on the identities in conflict.

In conclusion, the widespread dissemination of peace activities and organizations in Israel and Palestine is symptomatic of two things: (1) that the structural transformations performed by the changes in the lexicon of the conflict during the Oslo Accords has endured and (2) that the failures of the peace process in the higher political level started to be compensated by other types of activities financed, trained, stimulated and even coordinated by the main actors of the peace process, in which the peace enterprise is subcontracted to local and international civil society and grassroots actors. Next section will explore further the impact of those changes to the construction of new avenues for conflict transformation, focusing on their potential for transforming dehumanization through peace-less reconciliation.

7.3   New Avenues for Conflict Transformation from Dehumanization to Peace-Less Reconciliation

Notwithstanding the current (lack of) developments of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, this book has shown that a dual process of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation has been working in parallel in this conflict. This is as a consequence of the intergenerational dispute, but also of the protracted nature of the peace process and the representations made of its failures. The process of dehumanization precedes the beginning of the peace process. However, it was unintendedly reinforced by its dynamics and intensified by the semi-implementation of the negotiated accords resulting from the Oslo period. As discussed before, the latter has allowed for the consolidation of what Lisa Strömbom (2013) calls thin reconciliation, as well as for a glimpse of thick reconciliation. Nevertheless, the step backs on its implementation have led to a renewed conflict of narratives, focusing on the attribution of blames and responsibility for the lack of success of the peace process, which introduced new grievances to the conflict and increased social detachment. As a result, the turn to the twenty-first century, alongside the developments of the liberal peace architecture, has witnessed the appearance and strengthening of several grassroots organizations within the Israeli and Palestinian societies that have transformed the peace enterprise into their very labor.

While this chapter has shown that the normalization of the status quo has benefited the strongest side of the conflict, the generalized appearance of organizations aiming to deal with manifestations of the conflict or to denounce the wrongdoings of political elites in either side of the Separation Wall has been remarkable. In Herbert C. Kelman's words, written still in the end of the twentieth century, "there are numerous private and governmental efforts in Israel to promote cooperative relations between its Jewish and Palestinian-Arab citizens" (Kelman 1999: 584). The same is true for the Palestinians, who have taken their efforts to the point of assuming state functions, creating the basis for viable communities, defending historic rights and conducting public diplomacy in what has been called a resistance to the domestic "dis-unity", being regarded as "everyday state formation" actions (Pogodda and Richmond 2017). Their activities have ranged from advocacy in national and international organizations to filling the governance gap within the Occupied Palestinian Territories, by providing services (such as health, education and legal support) and humanitarian relief. Moreover, there exist some organizations and movements that deal specifically with the transformation of relationships and narratives, working in the realm of what this book has called peace-less reconciliation.

During the fieldwork performed for this research, I encountered several outstanding organizations that deal with the identity dimension. Just to cite a few, there are the Combatants for Peace, the Bereaved Parents Circle, the Humanistic Centre in Ghetto Fighters' House, B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, activists and organizations that promote politically oriented guided tourism for foreigners, transformative theater groups such as the Freedom Theater and the Yes Theater, and research/advocacy centers such as Adalah, Adameer and Al-Haq. All these are examples of organizations that promote peace-less reconciliation in different levels since they work toward thick recognition and the transformation of identities, overcoming the paradigm of the conflict being regarded a source of ontological security (Lupovici 2015). Also, they contribute to counteract the dimensions of dehumanization (Kelman 1973) since they increase Palestinian agency within the conflict by developing advocacy work, lobbying in the political elites' level, producing reports and fact sheets, promoting courses and educational activities about the conflict, spreading personal testimonies and narratives, and promoting cultural activities that address identity and reconciliation.

However, most of these organizations act in a localized manner, dealing specifically with one or the other national community. Although this is an important effort to transform the understandings about the conflict or to provide support to those who are more affected by its long-lasting injustices, by their nature, they fail to deal with the problem of social detachment that was exacerbated by the stalled protracted peace process. Despite being rarer due to several reasons which include the geographical separation between the two peoples connected with the Israeli policies of movement control, bi-national activities were the ones that called my attention since they seem more prone to deal with the dimensions of peace-less reconciliation, by counteracting the historical processes of mutual dehumanization that have been discussed in the last pages. Building on John Paul Lederach's (1997: 34) proposal of considering the "importance of developing relationship—of providing a space for the parties to encounter and engage with each other as people and a place where they can express feelings openly while also recognizing their shared future"— this research suggests that new avenues for conflict transformation from dehumanization to peace-less reconciliation can be found in the activities that have been developed by bi-national organizations self-identified as non-violent and pro-coexistence.

Two groups stand out as the very few that are in fact self-described as joint Israeli and Palestinian organizations: the Combatants for Peace and the Bereaved Parents Circle of the Families Forum. The latter is an interesting enduring example of organization which promotes joint narratives and the perception of humanity within both peoples (Braun-Lewenshon and Kitain 2016). The Parents Circle Families Forum[28] was created in 1995 and their activities aim at exposing adversarial groups to the narrative of the other side by promoting inter-group encounters within a reconciliation-oriented framework (Furman 2013). This organization brings together Palestinian and Jewish families who have lost immediate family members to the conflict and that decided to promote dialogue, share narratives and grief together instead of searching for revenge. They deal with identity, past, memory, history, narratives and the very positionality of each group, addressing their roles in the conflict as both victims and victimizers.

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[28] For more detailed studies about this organization and its impact on the transformation of identities, narratives and perceptions regarding the conflict, see Prato (2006), Braun-Lewenshon and Kitain (2016) and Furman (2013).

In his book *Bridges Across an Impossible Divide: The Inner Lives of Arab and Jewish Peacemakers*, Marc Gopin analyzes this organization and transcribes an interview made on August 24, 2008, with Ibrahim, an Arab translator that is a member of the joint Israeli-Palestinian group the Bereaved Parents Circle. In this interview, Ibrahim reproduces a very common story I heard many times from other people during fieldwork in Israel and Palestine. He says that a trip organized by his university to the Hebrew University, when he was in his early twenties, was

> the first time for me as a Palestinian, I am going to meet normal Jewish one, not an Israeli soldier, citizens, normal ones, with two ears and two eyes […]. We sit with the Israelian students, we start to talk not about Jerusalem, not about the big issues of the conflict, we start to talk about the daily life problems for both sides as students. Then at the end of the day they took us to the Truman Centre at the Hebrew University, and I am so surprised. Despite what I have listened to about the Jews, that most of them were our enemies, they like to kill us, I find a professor who runs a center there. The main aim of the center is to care about the Palestinian needs from Gaza Strip and the West Bank under full occupation. So it surprised me. From that time, I used to be in contact with all the Israelian groups who believe in my rights as a Palestinian. (Ibrahim 2008 *apud* Gopin 2012: 14)

Also by drawing on interviews conducted in 2016 with members of the Bereaved Parents Circle conducted, Olga Burkhardt-Vetter's analyses suggest that the activities developed by this group promote identity transformations by emphasizing the shared humanity of both sides (Burkhardt-Vetter 2018: 239). These activities aim at remembering the past, sharing narratives and recognizing the identity needs of the 'other', addressing the moral/cultural dimensions of peace-less reconciliation identified in this book (see Table 3.1 Dimensions of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in Chap. 3).

Similarly, the Combatants for Peace[29] is a grassroots movement which bring together former combatants from both sides (former Israeli soldiers serving in the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] and former Palestinian combatants) who have decided to break with the cycle of violence and chose to walk the path of non-violent activism together. Founded in 2005 in the aftermath of the Second Intifada and right before the Palestinian Legislative Elections which resulted in the victory of the radical movement Hamas,

[29] For a very complete account of this movement, its history and actions, see Perry (2011).

their actions range from joint demonstrations; national and international advocacy; education-driven meetings, workshops and seminars; the production of documentaries, newsletters and other advertising materials for English-speaking communities denouncing the situation in the OPt; and artistic interventions such as community and forum theater. Their revenue comes from diverse sources, being their international counterpart, the American Friends of CfP, the most relevant one, which includes several types of donations ranging from individual to institutional. However, they also receive funding from a Christian American charitable organization and several German non-governmental organizations,[30] which points to the argument developed in the last section regarding the twenty-first century turn toward subcontracting peace. Their activities aim to transform societies, contributing to challenge the feeling of ontological security (Lupovici 2015; Rumelili 2015) associated with protracted conflict. In the book *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Movement—Combatants for Peace*, Donna J. Perry describes first-hand the construction of this movement, arguing that its bi-national character makes it unique in the efforts to peacebuilding. In her words, "peace cannot be made on one side only" (Perry 2011).

This and other examples deal specifically with social detachment, which is identified in this book as one of the most pressing challenges of this conflict impacting any future developments since it reinforces dehumanization processes. In the context of protracted conflicts, it seems essential not only to transform narratives within societies but also to promote a space for joint encounters and sharing experiences related with the common, although differently narrated, past. However, the very welcomed and even strictly necessary people to people[31] character of this kind of initiatives makes the range of their work a matter of dispute. In order to have a real impact in the transformation of the conflict, more initiatives like this one would have to proliferate.

The brief analysis developed in this section showed how the changes in the international environment and the conflict developments following the collapse of the Oslo Accords have marked another change of the

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[30] Information available in the financial reports from 2021, 2020 and 2019: https://cfpeace.org/about/ [July 10, 2022].

[31] Some scholars share a different view from the one presented here, arguing that P2P initiatives might uncover the settler colonial context of Palestine by framing the conflict as some sort of symmetric protracted conflict, which fails to recognize the oppressive structures and tend to normalization.

meaning of reconciliation. While the protracted conflict becomes normal-ized and the protracted peace process loses sense of promoting peace giv-ing way to the perpetuation of the process, other dynamics have emerged that aim at promoting peace. As explained in the beginning of this chap-ter, these are both a consequence of the protracted nature of the peace process but also an outcome that marks another approach to peacemaking connected to the notion of subcontracting peace. Notwithstanding the limitations and biases of this proposal, it has opened up new avenues to conflict transformation yet to be further explored by policy makers, donors and the very peace process.

7.4   Conclusion

As explained in the beginning of this chapter, in the turn to the twenty-first century the peace process became frozen but certainly not inexistent. The option of insisting on this term—although to take an ideological stand, many contest it or even choose to refer to it as a 'peace process' in quotation marks or the *so-called* peace process (as explained before)—has to do with the representations made of it in the political discourses and the continuous impacts of those representations on identity narratives about the 'self' and the 'other' shown in this section. Even though I do agree with those who question either the process or its actual aim toward build-ing peace, as shown throughout this book, its existence—even symbolic—has borne consequences. The beginning of this last phase of the peace process, marked by the demise of the Oslo Process, initiated as a very violent one. The normalization of the conflict turned it into what we can call a 'no war, no peace' situation. In the past two decades it has been common to witness Israeli actions aiming to reinforce what already seems to be an irreversible situation on the ground in detriment of the Palestinians. This has been done through new settlement constructions, settlements expansions, war, mass arrests of Palestinians, house demolitions in strate-gic places such as Jerusalem, and so on, sometimes announcing these mea-sures on the very same day, or the day before preparations for resuming direct bilateral talks would commence.

More so than direct violence, in the case of intergenerational conflicts, the maintenance of this status quo seems to collaborate with the

deepening of structural[32] and cultural violence, which leads to the aggravation of the self-reinforcing dynamics between violence and conflict. In this sense, conflict transformation in these cases necessarily imply the understanding that cultural violence and, more specifically, dehumanization are not dimensions to be addressed only in post-conflict settings, as the traditional sequential approach to peacebuilding tends to imply. Edward Azar argues that "groups which seek to satisfy their identity and security needs through conflict are in effect seeking change in the structure of their society" (Azar *apud* Ramsbotham et al. 2011: 101). Accordingly, John Paul Lederach points out that the minimization and ultimately the elimination of violence requires a process of change that focuses on developing structures that meet basic human needs (substantive justice), while maximizing the involvement of people in decisions that affect them (procedural justice). The *cultural* dimension refers to changes produced by conflict in the broadest patterns of group life, including *identity*, and the ways that culture affects patterns of response and conflict (Lederach 2003: 26) [the italics are mine].

What this last phase of the protracted peace process has shown was that, either intentionally or not, the normalization of conflict and the lack of results of the peace process have given way to the appearance of several initiatives developed at the level of the civil society which aim to transform the conflict and promote narrative changes. While the stalled peace process has allowed for the deepening of the conflict and the increase of asymmetric relations, the idea that peace was 'in process' has been maintained. However, although these activities represent interesting examples of local peacemaking, their impact is still reduced. On the one hand, joint organizations face the challenge of trying to promote interaction in an extremely polarized environment, in which the barriers to the 'other' transcend ideology and politics, being actually represented by the existence of the Separation Wall, check points and the blockade in the Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the challenges faced by these organizations regarding the amplification of their voices, the limitations within their political and ideological agendas connected to the imperatives of international funding, and

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[32] See Pictures A5 and A6 in Appendix C of this book which portrays the contrasts in the Israeli and Palestinian landscapes through an image of the city of Haifa and another one of the rooftop water tanks in Ramallah, which are a necessary measure to cope with Israel's constant boycott in the water supply to the Palestinians, with military and geopolitical consequences.

the difficulties in the actual interaction between these activities and the political/institutional level make most of them episodic examples of good practices that fail to impact the society and social identity at large.

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Conclusion: Unraveling the Cycle of Protractedness

This book has addressed the protracted nature of conflicts that benefit from peace initiatives. Its aim was to explore the contradiction between the existence of long-term peace processes and the persistence, and sometimes increase, of violence in societies experiencing protracted conflicts. The latter are frequently defined as identity conflicts, with their core laying in a social group's search for recognition and their prolonged struggle for basic human needs, social justice and social welfare (Azar 1990; Burton 1990). Literature about protracted social conflicts renders great importance to the positive dimension of identity building—that is, how people are identified and identify themselves—for analyzing the construction of collective interests and needs that may lead to conflict. However, further interdisciplinary and historiographically grounded research is needed on the long-term impact of its negative dimension—processes of de-identification—that, in complex competitive environments, features in not only the assertion of one's identity but also the denial of the other's. Moreover, even though critical scholars from Peace Studies have written extensively about the positive and negative effects of peace processes for conflict transformation (Said 2003; Stedman 2003; Kelman 2007; Darby and Mac Ginty 2008; McDowell and Braniff 2014; Tonge 2014; among others), a gap persists in extant literature regarding their long-term influence on societal identities. More specifically, it lacks studies on how *protracted peace processes* affect identity by reinforcing or transforming narratives, practices and discourses that correspond to a need to routinize

violence and develop mechanisms, such as dehumanizing the 'other', to cope with the never-ending reality of conflict. This book aimed to fill in this gap by contributing to a better understanding of the root causes and dynamics of protracted conflicts and their relationship with protracted peace processes.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this book was to analyze the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process on the *identities in conflict*. It sought to explain the processes of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation in the Israeli and Palestinian societies by investigating the ways in which the protracted peace process and its associated policies, narratives, norms and practices have contributed toward the maintenance and/or transformation of cultural violence. This book also answered the following questions: What dimensions of identity are affected by the lingering peace process? What role is cultural violence, through processes of dehumanization, playing in the protracted nature of the conflict? And how is reconciliation incorporated into narratives and approaches regarding the conflict? To develop such tasks, it relied on a historiographic approach to draw a genealogy of the processes investigated in this research. Through a teleological reading that allowed for the expansion of the concept of peace process in this conflict, it analyzed the effects that representations made in official and public discourses about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since 1947 have had on the levels of direct and cultural violence in said societies. It also mapped the dimensions of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation developed throughout the policies, practices and discourses connected to the peace process, with the intention of assessing the dynamics of existing paths for positive conflict transformation.

This book was divided into two parts. Part I developed the theoretical and conceptual framework that was employed in this book to assess the relationships between identities in conflict. In an attempt to advance the debate about conflict and its transformation, while at the same time providing a framework for the analysis of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation processes, my study first explored the foundations of identity construction in protracted conflicts (Chap. 2). Drawing from constructivist approaches to IR, it addressed the roles of time and context to the establishment of dominant narratives and intersubjective meanings that create and define identities, interests and behaviors (Lynch 2014; Fierke 2013). According to constructivists, when stabilized, these dominant narratives and intersubjective meanings create social structures that condition

the actions, identities and interests of agents while, at the same time, is influenced by the very behaviors and interactions of agents. Within this framework, the re-historicization of protracted conflicts shows the need for expanding the concept of peace process, insofar as it reveals how *protracted peace processes* come into being not only as a material but also as a symbolic structure of conflict through time, even during their most stalled phases. Hence, this chapter aimed to provide the basis on which to analyze how discourses, narratives and practices connected to protracted peace processes, as well as their characteristics, policies and dynamics, impact the maintenance of conflict through time. As a result, my analysis suggests that violence and identity in conflicts are co-constitutive, insofar as the normalization of violence through generations directly affects the way people in such scenarios perceive themselves and, more importantly, the 'other'. By unpacking the categories of identity and violence, as well as their manifestations in conflict, the result is a framework that allows for the operationalization of analyses, focusing on cultural violence (Galtung 1969, 1990) as the most important—although frequently referred to as invisible or symbolic—component of violence.

Along the same lines, the theoretical framework of this book adds to several existing studies about identities and conflict (Northrup 1989; Kriesberg et al. 1989; Kelman 2004; Slocum-Bradley 2008; Rumelili 2015; and others) by connecting this body of literature to scholarship on protracted social conflicts (Chap. 3). Firstly, the identification of dehumanization as an element of identity in protracted conflicts allows for a better understanding of the relationships between opposing parties and enemies. Building on many others who have dealt with the effects of dehumanization on conflict (Kelman 1973, 2017; Lang 2010; Bruneau and Kteily 2017), this approach reveals that narratives, discourses and meanings that dehumanize the 'other' provide coping mechanisms within societies, in order to deal with the normalization of intergenerational conflict. As a consequence, dehumanizing processes allow for the legitimization of the use of violence against the 'other' (Galtung 1990), fueling and perpetuating conflict, what makes it impossible to address protracted conflicts without taking seriously the effects of dehumanization on the construction of identities and further development of relationships. Secondly, it adds to existing frameworks about conflict and its transformation (Lederach 1997, 1999, 2002; Bar-Tal 2000; Bar-Siman-Tov 2004; Bar-Tal and Bennink 2004; Darby and Mac Ginty 2008; Verdeja 2009, 2013; Wallensteen 2012; among others), proposing a more comprehensive

approach to reconciliation that considers its empirically observable manifestations during times of ongoing conflict as peace-less reconciliation processes. In doing so, this book contributes toward a deeper understanding of the root causes of conflicts, joining the choir of voices that emphasize the importance of historical dynamics for identity formation processes, which provide the context for some violent structures to exist—and persist—in specific situations. It also allows for an investigation of the conditions that favor change, searching within processes of de-identification for the dynamics and attributes that promote the development of constructive identities, contributing to peace-less reconciliation instead.

The consequences of this theoretical framework are manifold. Firstly, by putting into dialogue existing concepts and frameworks that are usually perceived as independent from one another, my research adds to other voices which have already identified dehumanization as a key element to identity-building analysis within protracted conflicts, emphasizing the need to re-historicize the analyses of this process. Secondly, by unpacking the dimensions of identity and violence, it provides conceptual tools for exploring the role of the 'other' with regard to the protracted nature of conflicts, along with its narratives, history and representations. Thirdly, it allows for the assessment of the impact of protracted peace processes on identities, contributing to more accurate evaluations of its positive and negative outcomes. Finally, with regard to the role the protracted peace process has played in light of the protracted nature of the conflict, my theoretical framework provides a means by which to draw conclusions and make connections between its policies and long-term conflict.

In the specific case of this book, the theoretical framework applied also contributed to the investigation of the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process on societal identities, as well as on the protractedness of the conflict. The empirical analysis developed in Part II aimed at comparing the three moments of the peace process that not only are connected to historical landmarks of the conflict, but also coincide with major transformations in the international environment, leading to great changes in policies, practices and discourses about peace and its promotion. The three phases of the protracted peace processes were identified through a historiographic analysis of the conflict and relying on constructivist theory that focuses on moments of continuity and change. These are the beginning of the UN intervention during the Cold War to the First Intifada (1947 to 1987); the Oslo Era (1990s) and the turn of the twenty-first century, which is marked by the failure to implement the negotiated

agreements and the increase in violence with the Second Intifada (2001 to present).

First, and before addressing the three periods of the peace process, this genealogic analysis began by exploring the origins of dehumanization by drawing a contextual picture of the construction of Israeli and Palestinian identities since the establishment of the Zionist Movement, in the end of the nineteenth century, in light of their interconnectedness (Chap. 4). Then, it investigated the actual first period of the peace process, that coincides with the Cold War, from the UN Partition Plan in 1947 to the First Intifada of 1987 (Chap. 5). Analysis of documents, agreements, reports, official discourses and narratives from the first period of the peace process indicates that this was marked by increased levels of cultural violence within society. Initially, the very peace process simultaneously reinforced and legitimated the existence of the Jewish people as a national identity group while at the same time promoting the marginalization of the Palestinian identity, which was considered part of the greater Arabic whole. Consequently, it unintentionally corroborated the Israeli narrative of the inexistence of a Palestinian people and thereby contributed to the process of dehumanizing the 'other'. The context of the Cold War also promoted a reactive model of peacemaking, focused on mitigating manifestations of direct violence through negotiated agreements between elites. Managing conflicts was a way to avoid the escalation of violence and, more specifically, the recurrence of war at an international level, but it gave no guarantees of pacification at a societal or national level. Therefore, these policies created distance between the peace process and the societies in conflict. While root causes of the conflict were not dealt with, resentments and the increasing feeling of injustice grew under international interventionism, thus promoting dehumanizing narratives and, therefore, conflict, in the long term, instead of minimizing it. My analysis shows that this model of promoting peace, or rather of avoiding war, at this point impacted the very protracted nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The second period corresponds to the Oslo Agreement's brief but intense era that occurred in the 1990s (Chap. 6). This period is considered a watershed in terms of not only the conflict but also international peacemaking. The end of the Cold War brought about a major shift in the policies and practices regarding interventionism and peace. For instance, a more complex framework was developed in the UN's Agenda for Peace that included its (liberal) development and post-conflict peacebuilding. This period also brought about a great change in the current paradigm of

the conflict until then, through the recognition of the Palestinian identity and the promotion of direct negotiations between the two parties involved in the conflict. As shown in Chaps. 6 and 7, through the analysis of public and official discourses during this period and the next, this change was also reflected in a permanent alteration of vocabulary regarding the conflict, impacting the narratives and relationships between the two peoples. In this sense, it was a decade marked by some sort of reconciliation, although failure to implement the accords and the detachment of society from the peace process efforts developed among political elites had deep impacts on the renewal and increase of dehumanizing narratives and processes. Moreover, the peace process has remained state-centric in essence, and the changes of policies regarding peace and its promotion were mainly directed toward post-conflict efforts.

The third phase of the peace process represents the institutionalization of its protracted nature, since the turn of the twenty-first century immediately followed the conflict's 50th anniversary[1] (Chap. 7). First, the contemporary phase of the peace process was developed in the aftermath of the failure of the Oslo Agreements. As my analysis shows, the dying peace process among political elites, accompanied by an astonishing lack of results although characterized by the maintenance of the idea that 'peace is in process', has actually been responsible for the normalization of conflict, the deepening of the status quo and an accentuated asymmetry of power between the two parties. Indeed, this is one of the characteristics of a protracted peace process, as explained in Chap. 2: the asymmetric fostering of the most powerful party to a conflict, since it promotes the continuation, normalization and even deepening of the status quo while 'ongoing negotiations' are taking place. By failing to involve society at large in the peace process, the failures associated with the Oslo Process have raised even more doubts, fears and feelings of insecurity that have amplified the negative reaction to its failure. The Palestinian historian and Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University, Rashid Khalidi, expressed this idea with great precision: "[…] while the cumbersome wheels of the 'peace process' never ceased to turn, these accords gravely

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[1] As concerns this book, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict began in 1947. Accordingly, I also consider the beginning of the peace process to be the approval of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) in 1947. One of Chap. 4's key arguments is for this characterization of the conflict. For a complete chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian protracted peace process, see Appendix A of this book.

exacerbated the deepest problems between the two sides" (Khalidi 2013: 65).

In this context, one of the findings of the analysis is that, although dehumanization processes were neither created by nor originated from the peace process, some of its policies, as well as the protracted nature it has assumed, have collaborated to exacerbate several dimensions of dehumanization.[2] These dimensions are manifested in (1) conflicting narratives about the past; (2) the denial of identity; (3) the normalization of conflict, which has led to the reinforcement of cultural violence and, therefore, (4) episodic manifestations of direct violence. Some of these were already existing dynamics that have developed within the historical relationship between the two peoples. But others, such as the denial of identity expressed by the late recognition of the Palestinian identity, were in fact actively promoted by the peace process. Its protracted nature has also contributed, if not directly then at least by omission, to the reinforcement of other dimensions of dehumanization, such as the construction of conflicting narratives about the past, due to political elites' instrumental use of the peace process as an arena to promote the recognition and legitimization of their discourses and interests through their own representations of the process. Over time, the protracted peace process and its dynamics have also added new grievances to the already existing ones, also serving as a new arena for conflict and functioning as another feature of dispute between the parties.

For this reason, this research places protracted peace processes in the center of the cycle of protractedness. When the idea of a process gains primacy over the objective of peace, protracted peace processes might delay peace insofar as the façade of a predisposition for peace might benefit the stronger side of the conflict and contribute to the normalization of said conflict and the deepening of the status quo.[3] It makes people lose confidence in the peace process or even creates the idea that peace is not possible. As such, it might further consolidate meanings such as enmity and conflict.

As this book shows, the balance between the coexistence of peace and violence, reconciliation and dehumanization is expressed in the form of a cycle that represents the central dynamics allowing for the perpetuation of

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[2] See Table 3.1 of Chap. 3.

[3] For more on the characteristics and attributes of protracted peace processes, see Table 2.1 of Chap. 2.

the conflict.[4] Thus, the graphic representation of a cycle is the more adequate one to portray the contradiction between the existence of a peace process and the increase of violence. On the one hand, when peace processes fail to achieve peace, they might contribute to the development of new grievances and meanings such as dehumanization affecting identity in a negative way and leading to the increase of violence. On the other hand, when peace processes contribute to the increase of violence, the cycle points that walking in the direction of peace means dealing with identity issues in a positive way, leading to peace-less reconciliation in ongoing conflicts.

By mapping the literature and policies connected to peace processes, this book concludes that they operate mainly at the level of political elites, which reinforces divisions within and between societies, since violence and identity in conflict situations are co-constitutive. In doing so, peace processes might contribute to social detachment by failing to address the role of issues such as the constant construction and reshaping of identities that lead to processes of dehumanizing the 'other' in scenarios of protracted conflicts. When this happens, the potential for instability and violence increases, causing a disconnection between the peace efforts that are made from the top-down perspective and the willingness for such transformations concerning the mid-range and grassroots levels of society. In other words, if the affected societies are not prepared for such peace, any effort at the top will encounter major obstacles for its implementation, as it might not be consistent with the reality on the ground, creating and perpetuating the cycle of protractedness.

However, it would be misleading to finish my analysis with these conclusions alone. As shown throughout all chapters of Part II, the protracted nature of the peace process has also been responsible for the development of parallel deeds and initiatives connected to said process, if not assumedly, at least as collateral effects. These have developed due to the need to mitigate the manifestations of the conflict, as well as to provide assistance to the affected populations over time. These have contributed, although still in minor scale, to counteracting the already mentioned dimensions of dehumanization. Part II also shows that, although reconciliation in the first phase of the peace process was restricted to providing space for political elites to meet and negotiate cease-fire agreements, from the 1990s onward, a new dynamic has emerged in the conflict. Several NGOs, CSOs

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[4] See Fig. 3.1 of Chap. 3.

and individual initiatives have flourished in the context of the Oslo Era and, notwithstanding its failure, they have even intensified in the turn of the twenty-first century. These initiatives can be connected to the peace process insofar as they are financed and encouraged by the main actors and institutions connected to said process (for instance, the EU and some of its isolated countries, the UN, the USAID and others). By acting from within and in the context of the Israeli and Palestinian societies, these initiatives have the potential to transform narratives, create shared memories and promote peace education, thus impacting the dimensions of identity that are affected by cultural violence and, therefore, counteracting dehumanization. Some contemporary projects and initiatives are explored in Chap. 7 as a way to draw lessons for peace-less reconciliation dynamics.

Finally, and taking a more normative stance, the conclusions of this book point to policies and practices regarding the Israeli-Palestinian case and other situations of protracted conflicts that emphasize the dimensions that favor reconciliation and others that reinforce dehumanization, what might contribute to the thought and practice about peace processes by way of lessons learned. This book enhances scholarship by contributing to debates dealing with the development and application of the concepts of peace, violence and reconciliation, as well as the development and incorporation of the concept of dehumanization in the framework of protracted conflicts. Consequently, it sheds light on the need to re-historicize a dimension of identity obscured and forgotten, and which is a central feature sustaining some conflicts. By investigating the deepest effects of conflict and protracted conflicts within society, it also contributes to existing efforts to understand the social dynamics that enable the perpetuation of conflict over time. Nevertheless, it still leaves some avenues for future research open. First, further research is needed to apply this framework to other cases of protracted conflicts that count on equally protracted peace processes to check the relationship between said processes and the protracted nature of conflict. Also, further research should incorporate additional characteristics and refine the concept of protracted peace process and its consequences by evaluating other cases. The incorporation of the concept of dehumanization into protracted conflict analysis should also be tested, not only on cases of international conflicts but also on other identity conflicts, as well as the coexisting dynamics between dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation. Cross-case comparison can help to clarify further the concepts and its associated dimensions and manifestations. Finally, the development of the idea of peace-less reconciliation can

contribute to advancing the debate on the concept and practices of reconciliation in ongoing conflicts.

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Appendix A: Chronology of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process from 1947 to 2022[1]

From the Partition Plan to the First Intifada (1947 to 1987)

1947—Partition Plan (UNGA RES181, November 29)
    1948—Proclamation of Independence of the State of Israel (May 14, 1948)

First Arab Israeli War (1948–1949)
UN RES212 Assistance to Palestinian refugees
UN RES194 repatriation of refugees and internationalization of Jerusalem

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[1] This chronology was elaborated using, among others, the following sources: Ilan Pappé's *History of Modern Palestine* (2010); Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin's *The Israel-Arab Reader: a documentary history of the Middle East conflict* (2008); Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity: the construction of modern national consciousness* (1997); Charles D. Smith's *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: a history with documents* (2010); and Avi Shlaim's *Israel and Palestine: reappraisals, revisions, refutations* (2010); as well as sources from the UNISPAL documents Centre; UNISPAL developments related to the Middle East Peace Process; UN website sources; data from OCHAOPt reports, fact sheets, statements and press releases; other websites and media.

1949—Armistice agreement signed between Israel and the Arab states (apart from Iraq)

1950—Tripartite declaration by USA, Britain and France recognizes final borders in the Middle East

1956—Suez Crisis (1956–1957)

Eisenhower Campaign (Cold War between Nasser and the West)

1964—PLO founded

1965—The Fatah founded

1967—Six Day War

UN adopts UNSC RES 242

1969—Civil war between Jordanian army and the PLO

Nasser dies

Beginning of direct involvement of the USA in solving the conflicts of the Middle East

1972—Husayn plan for federation between Palestine and Jordan

1973—Yom Kippur or October War

UN adopts UNSC RES 338

1974—UN includes Palestine on its agenda and invites PLO as observer

PLO is recognized by the Arab summit in Rabat as the sole representative of the Palestinian people

Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' in the Middle East to seek bilateral peace between Israel and its neighbors

Gush Emunim settlement movement in occupied territories founded

1975—Arafat addresses UN General Assembly

First disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt

Partial Israeli withdrawal in Palestine

UN General Assembly adopts a resolution (rescinded in 1991) that describes Zionism as a form of racism.

1976—Land Day

1977—Likud (Menachen Begin) comes to power in Israel and the PLO is declared a subversive movement

The expansion of settlements in the Occupied Territories begin
    1978—Camp David Accords (peace treaty between Israel and Egypt—brokered by the US)

Peace Now movement founded in Israel
    1982—Operation 'Peace for the Galilee'—Israeli invasion of Lebanon (PLO)

Massacre of Sabra and Shatila
The Reagan Plan

    1985—Agreement between PLO and Jordan (the latter represented the Palestinians)
    1987—First Intifada
    1988—Hamas founded

Palestinian Declaration of Independence
    1989—Collapse of USSR

The Oslo Period (90s)

1991—Madrid conference (Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine)

Gulf War
    1992—The Oslo Channel (secret talks between Israel and the PLO)

Tripartite peace talks in Washington between Israel, Palestinians and Jordan
    1993—Signature of the Oslo Declaration of Principles

End of First Intifada
    1994—Cairo Agreement—Israeli withdrawal from most of Gaza and the West Bank and Jericho

PLO moves to Palestine and Palestinian National Authority is created with
    Yasser Arafat as its President
Jordan and Israel sign peace treaty
Join Nobel Prize awarded to Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres

    1995—Israel and PLO sign Oslo B
    Signature of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip between Israel and the Palestinian Authority

Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist
The Parents Circle—Family Forum founded
The Centre for Humanistic Education of the Beit Lohamei Hagetaot founded

   1996—Benjamin Netanyahu elected prime minister
   1997—Hebron Accords between Israel and the PA
   1998—Wye River Memorandum

Twenty-First Century Peace Process (2001 to 2022)

2000—Bilateral talks between PM Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat break down

Second Intifada
   2001—Ariel Sharon (provoker of Second Intifada) elected prime minister
   2002—Operation Defensive Shield launched by Israel on the West Bank
   2003—Road Map for Peace—Quartet: US, EU, Russia and UN

Ariel Sharon re-elected
   2004—ICJ declares the Separation Wall in the West Bank illegal

Disengagement Plan
Breaking the Silence founded

   2005—Israel withdraws from Gaza

Combatants for Peace founded
   2006—Hamas wins Palestinian parliamentary elections

Second Israel-Lebanon War
   2007—Annapolis Conference ("two-state" solution established as the basis for future talks)
   2008—Israel invades Gaza in 'Cast Lead' operation

Negotiations interrupted as a consequence
   2009—Barack Obama elected President of the United States with a campaign promise to resume talks between Israelis and Palestinians and to solve the conflict once and for all

Settlements construction frozen for one year by US pressure

 2010—"A Quest for Survival" strategy in four phases begins (Ricarte, 2013)

 Direct talks resume between Israel and the Palestinian Authority but do not prevail due to the question of settlements

Gaza flotilla raid
Brazil recognizes Palestinian State
UNESCO accepts Palestine as a Member State
Arab Spring

 2011—Bilateral recognitions of the Palestinian State under de 1967 borders in Latin America

PLO formally requests the UNGA that the UNSC vote for the recognition of the Palestinian State (the request is not integrated into the Council's agenda)

 2012—66th Session of the General Assembly votes for the modification of the PLO's status from observer entity to Non-Member Observer State

Netanyahu addresses the UNGA with a "us" and "them" discourse stating that Israel is the only Western-like liberal democracy of the Middle East
Week-long Israeli military campaign 'Pillar of Defense' against Gaza

 2013—Talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority resume under US auspices but reach no conclusions

 2014—Military campaign 'Protective Edge' against Gaza

Egypt brokered ceasefire

 2015—Wave of violence referred by some as the Knife Intifada

Israel suspends contact with European Union officials in talks with Palestinians over the EU decision to label Jewish imported goods from the West Bank as coming from settlements

 2016—US approves 10-year military aid package to Israel worth 38 billion dollars (the largest deal of this kind in US history)

UNSC RES condemns settlement building (US abstains for the first time) and Israel suspends relations with 12 countries that helped approve this resolution

   2017—Israeli Parliament passes a law retroactively legalizing dozens of
Jewish settlements built on Palestinian private land in the West Bank

New Jewish settlement in the West Bank begins construction after 25
   years of the last one
UNESCO declares the Old City of Hebron a Palestinian World Heritage
   site and Israel leaves the Organization
US President Donald Trump recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel
   and Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights

   2018—UN and Egypt attempt to broker a long-term cease-fire between
Israel and Hamas

American Embassy moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem
   2019—Two elections in Israel in one year

PM Benjamin Netanyahu speech promising the annexation of land in the
   West Bank if elected
US President Donald Trump reverts historical policy considering illegal
   the construction of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Occupied
   Territories

   2020—US Administration revels the 'peace plan' (without the partici-
pation of the Palestinian delegation) "Peace to Prosperity: a Vision to
improve the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli people"

COVID-19 pandemic deflects attentions away from the Israeli-Palestinian
   conflict and creates another humanitarian crisis in the Occupied
   Palestinian Territories while Israel is depicted as one of the world's suc-
   cessful cases of mass vaccination
   2021—Israeli elections' results ends Netanyahu era through an unlikely
coalition

Palestinian displacements in East Jerusalem
War between Israel and Gaza

2022—Israeli court rules in favor of the eviction of about 1000 Palestinians
   from the West Bank for military use in the biggest expulsion decision
   since 1967 occupation

Appendix B: List of interviews

Interviewee 1 (2015) Israeli Mizrahi Jew Scholar. Mizra: July 15
Interviewee 2 (2015) Former IDF Col. (res.). Mizra: July 16
Interviewee 3 (2015) Israeli-Palestinian Scholar. Mizra: July 16
Interviewee 4 (2015) Israeli Activist. Ashkelon: July 17
Interviewee 5 (2015) Israeli Druze Activist. Golan Heights: July 18
Interviewee 6 (2015) Arab-Israeli Scholar. Mizra: July 19
Interviewee 7 (2015) Israeli Ashkenazi Jew Scholar. Mizra: July 19
Interviewee 8 (2015) Israeli Lecturer and Activist. Mizra: July 21
Interviewee 9 (2015) Israeli East-European (Russian) Jew Scholar. Mizra: July 21
Interviewee 10 (2015) Israeli Scholar. Kibbutz Lohamei Hagheatot: July 22
Interviewee 11 (2015) Israeli-Palestinian Christian Scholar. Jerusalem: July 23
Interviewee 12 (2015) Israeli-Palestinian Scholar. Jerusalem: July 24
Interviewee 13 (2015) PLO Delegate. East Jerusalem: July 26
Interviewee 14 (2015) Scholar and Negotiator. Mizra: July 27
Interviewee 15 (2015) Diplomat in Ramallah. East Jerusalem: July 29
Interviewee 16 (2015) Palestinian Activist Women Committee. Sussyia: July 29

Interviewee 17 (2016) Palestinian Lawyer Al-Haq. Ramallah: July 25

Interviewee 18 (2016) Palestinian Lawyer and Human Rights Activist. Ramallah: July 25

Interviewee 19 (2016) Palestinian Human Rights Activist. Ramallah: July 26

Interviewee 20 (2016) Israeli-Palestinian Scholar. Ramallah: July 26

Interviewee 21 (2016) Palestinian Activist Addameer. Ramallah: July 26

Interviewee 22 (2016) Member of the Defense for Children International. Ramallah: July 27

Interviewee 23 (2016) UN Officer—High Commissioner for Human Rights. Ramallah: July 27

Interviewee 24 (2016) Lawyer and Activist Badil Resource Center. Ramallah: July 27

Interviewee 25 (2016) Employee of the Norwegian Refugee Council. Ramallah: July 27

Interviewee 26 (2016) Lawyer and Activist Diakonia. Ramallah: July 27

Interviewee 27 (2016) Activist Hebron Rehabilitation Committee. Bethlehem: July 28

Interviewee 28 (2016) Palestinian Researcher Badil Resource Center. Bethlehem: July 29

Interviewee 29 (2016) Palestinian Refugee Lajee Center—Aida Refugee Camp. Bethlehem: July 29

Interviewee 30 (2016) Palestinian Refugee Walajah Village Council— Aida Refugee Camp. Bethlehem: July 29

Interviewee 31 (2016) Palestinian Researcher and Activist Adalah—The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. Sussyia: July 30

Interviewee 32 (2016) Activist Alternative Information Center—Beit Sahour. Bethlehem: July 30

Interviewee 33 (2016) African Palestinian Activist. Jerusalem: August 1

Interviewee 34 (2016) Palestinian Activist. Silwan: August 1

Interviewee 35 (2016) Lawyer Adalah. Haifa: August 2

Interviewee 36 (2016) Employee Arab Association for Human Rights. Nazareth: August 3

Interviewee 37 (2016) Employee Jerusalem Legal Aid Center. Jerusalem: August 4

Interviewee 38 (2016) Palestinian Refugee Yafa Cultural Centre, Balata Refugee Camp. Nablus: August 4

Interviewee 39 (2016) Member of the Palestinian Negotiation Support Unit. Ramallah: August 6

Appendix C: Pictures[1]

Picture A1   Gaza Strip Isolation Fence. (Source: Gaza isolation fence, Ashkelon, Israel) (color online)

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[1] All pictures reproduced in the Appendix C were taken by the author during her fieldwork trips to Israel and Palestine in 2015 and 2016.

Picture A2   Gaza Separation Wall "Path to Peace". (Source: Gaza Separation Wall, Netiv HaAsarah, Israel) (color online)

Picture A3   Aida Refugee Camp Wall "We Can't Live". (Source: Separation Wall, Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem, Palestine) (color online)

Picture A4   Bethlehem Separation Wall "Concrete Proof of Apartheid". (Source: Separation Wall, Bethlehem, Palestine) (color online)

Picture A5   Haifa Landscape: Contrasts. (Source: Haifa Port, Haifa, Israel) (color online)

Picture A6   Ramallah Landscape: Rooftop Water Tanks. (Source: Ramallah City View, Ramallah, Palestine) (color online)

Picture A7   Movement Control "Dangerous to Your Lives". (Source: Road Sign, West Bank, West Bank, Palestine) (color online)

Picture A8   Separation Wall Graffiti. (Source: Separation Wall, Bethlehem, Palestine) (color online)

Picture A9   Separation Wall Graffiti "Make Hummus Not Walls". (Source: Separation Wall, Bethlehem, Palestine) (color online)

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.