

Memories and Fears of Nakba and Displacement Events as Perceived by the First and Second Palestinian Generations of Deir Yassin Village

Haneen Zidan & Iyad Hallaq

Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the memories and fears of Nakba and displacement events as perceived by the first and second Palestinian generations of Deir Yassin village, Jerusalem Governorate, Palestine. The study approached the literature as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The significance of this recent study is the first, which dealt with this theme, after seventy years of the Nakba, to the author knowledge, which will be an important reference to those concerned in the area of collective memory.

To achieve this end, the study adopted the qualitative research approach using the sampling survey method. The interview is appropriate for the exploratory nature of the research, which consists of 20-items. The random purposive method was utilized which comprised of a sample size of (8) male and female Palestinian refugees of Deir Yassin village, at Jerusalem Governorate, Palestine. Participants were approached in the West Bank by the researcher, and were asked to participate in the interview officially. The collected data was analyzed by the researcher using the qualitative research approach.

The study attained a number of findings, mostly; the residents of Deir Yassin exposed the trauma of asylum, displacement, loss of security and stability to their sense of defeat, frustration and denial, and entering into a state of mental mourning. Findings show that the participants preserved a very strong collective memory of the Nakba; and fear is the natural feeling of the inhabitants of Deir Yassin under the daily massacres and the on-going Israeli occupation.

The results revealed differences in expressing the fears among the refugees, due to place of residency. However, the inhabitants of Deir Yassin village have the feeling of grief and pain. Additionally, the findings of the study revealed nostalgia is the natural feeling of insecurity and there was a consensus on mechanisms to express nostalgia among the refugees.

The study may contribute to the realization of the extent to which the events of the Nakba are deep rooted for the refugees, and the subsequent generations' knowledge on the Nakba events. In addition, the study may assist in revealing the fears of the first generation, which has been transmitted to the second generation, that are unerasable. It is true that aged refugee may die but the youth will never forget.

These findings confirm the Nakba traumatic events, which have become firm in the collective memory of the Palestinian refugees in general and in the inhabitants of Deir Yassin village in particular and recommend, to make a comparative study between the inhabitants of Lifta and Deir Yassin villages in relation to the psychological and social effects of uprooted and displacement; to conduct a study of the psychological aspects related to the denied right of return for the Palestinian refugees in general and of Deir Yassin in particular. A further research is essential in the area of psychological trauma among the second generation of the Nakba, and finally, the need to establish programs for psychosocial support for the refugees based on the refugees' memory and identity.

Keywords: Collective memory, Nakba, displacement, Deir Yassin.

Additional information

Hallaq, Iyad. Committee President, Assistant Professor of Psychology (Clinical Psychology), Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Quds University, Main Campus, Jerusalem- Abu Dies, Palestine.

Banat, Bassam. Internal Examiner, Associate Professor of Sociology (Statistical Methods and Research Techniques), Department of Applied Sociology, Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University, Main Campus, Jerusalem- Abu Dies, Palestine.

Khateeb, Salam. External Examiner, Assistant Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Professional Health, Al-Quds University, Main Campus, Jerusalem- Abu Dies, Palestine.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Haneen Zidan, MA. Psychological Counselling, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Quds University, Main Campus, Jerusalem- Abu Dies, Palestine. Social worker, Defense for Children International, Palestine. hanizedan92@gmail.com

Iyad Hallaq, Assistant Professor of Psychology (Clinical Psychology), Department of Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Al-Quds University, Main Campus, Jerusalem- Abu Dies, Palestine. ihalag@staff.alquds.edu