# Intergenerational intimacy geopolitics: family interviewing and generations of memory in occupied Palestine

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Critiquing the state-centrism of mainstream geopolitical scholarship, feminist geopolitics has long emphasized the need to attend to how embodied and emotional experiences of everyday life are also bound up within geopolitical processes such as conflict and displacement. Similarly, the subfield of geographies of children, youth, and families has emphasized the ways in which the everyday lives and spaces of young people are implicated within broader scale geopolitical and economic processes. In both of these interrelated strands of research, the intimacy of home and family have emerged as seemingly unlikely sites of geopolitics. Although the gendered power dynamics of the family have received attention, less often considered is the way that intergenerational interactions within and outwith the family are also intertwined within and constitute a form of geopolitics. This paper examines generational encounters, differences, and gaps, as sites of geopolitics, where resistance, resilience, and political subjectivities are formed, performed, and negotiated. To do so we draw upon two separate but related research projects examining the spaces of intergenerational memory in occupied Palestine, one examining Palestinian women's intergenerational memories of the occupation and resistance, and the other exploring intergenerational memories of a contested religious heritage site. These empirical case studies demonstrate how intergenerational relations are constrained and enlivened by differences in life-course vis-à-vis historical geopolitical events. Examining how memory and meaning are negotiated across generations injects temporality into the concept of intimacy geopolitics, defined as a set of distant and proximate spatial relations, emotional attachments, and embodied encounters through which geopolitics is performed. Alongside this conceptual contribution, we seek to advance a secondary methodological contribution to the geographies of children, youth, and families by reflecting upon the benefits and challenges to conducting intergenerational interviews in family homes and elsewhere.

Keywords: intergenerationality, family, gender, youth, Palestine

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## Introduction

Critiquing the state-centrism of geopolitical analysis, feminist geopolitics emphasizes how embodied and emotional experiences of everyday life are bound up within broader-scaled processes including conflict and displacement (Massaro & Williams 2013; Hyndman 2019). Similarly, the subfield of children's geographies emphasizes how the everyday lives and spaces of young people are implicated within geopolitical and economic processes (Katz 2004; Kallio & Häkli 2011; Skelton & Gough 2013; Woon 2017). In both of these interrelated strands of research, the intimates spaces of home and family have emerged as sites of geopolitics (Harker 2011; Harker & Martin 2012). Although the gendered constructions of home have received attention in feminist geography (Blunt & Dowling 2006; Brickell 2012), the age-related dynamics of family, and how these intergenerational relations are intertwined within and constitute a form of geopolitics, have received less attention (Kallio 2016).

This paper probes generational encounters as sites of geopolitics where political subjectivities are formed and negotiated. We draw upon related research projects examining the spaces of intergenerational memory in occupied Palestine: one examining women's intergenerational memories of political struggle, and the other exploring intergenerational memories of a contested religious heritage site. By attending to the sites, silences, and practices of intergenerational memory, these empirical cases demonstrate how intergenerational relations are constrained and enlivened by differences in life-course relative to historical geopolitical events. In this discussion of intergenerational memory, our aim is to inject a temporal element into the concept of intimacy geopolitics, defined as a set of intense distant and proximate spatial relations, emotional attachments, and embodied encounters through which geopolitics is performed. In our rendering, intimacy geopolitics is understood not only as multi-scalar (Pain & Staeheli 2014), but also multi-temporal, stretching from contemporary interactions to past traumas and memories as well as future fears and hopes. Alongside this conceptual contribution, we advance a secondary methodological contribution by reflecting upon the benefits and challenges of intergenerational family interviewing.

Most research on youth in Palestine emphasizes political agency and activism vis-à-vis the national struggle (Habashi 2019). Meanwhile, Palestinian elders typically appear as keepers of memory (Sa'di & Lila Abu-Lughod 2007; Kassem 2011). Rather than centering youth perspectives on the present, or privileging elder memories of the past, we examine the exchanges and gaps between these perspectives. Following this introduction, we situate our research at the intersection of intimacy geopolitics and intergenerational geographies. From here, we move to a methodological discussion about the challenges and benefits of family interviewing. A brief overview of the study site precedes the two empirical cases. Through these cases we note how intimacy geopolitics is performed through narrative, embodied, emotional, and material forms of intergenerational memory and how these practices and sites of memory evoke different meanings and emotions for different genders and generations. Finally, we discuss how a focus on collective memory and intergenerational encounters helps widen the scale of geopolitical analysis beyond a focus on contemporary crises.

## Intimacy geopolitics and the family

Although feminist geographers have analyzed the reproduction of capitalist/patriarchal social relations within the family (Holloway 1998; Katz 2004; Katz & Monk 1993), and although family decision-making appears in research on the geopolitics of immigration (Smith & Bailey 2006; Giralt & Bailey 2010), the family remains under-researched in geography. This reluctance to confront family spaces is perhaps due to concerns about naturalizing normative assumptions regarding "the" family as a socio-biological given, rather than geographically and historically contingent (Harker & Martin 2012). Similar concerns have held back engagement with the concept of generation in geography (Punch 2020). Valentine (2008) argues, however, that a shared concern for the multi-scalar politics of intimacy embedded in children's and feminist geographies brings about the potential for a "family turn". Geographers have increasingly come to recognize how geopolitical events and processes are experienced and negotiated within the family home (Harker 2009; Brickell & Yeoh 2014; Pimlott-Wilson & Hall 2017). As such, Botterill, Hopkins and Sanghera (2018, 4) advocate for "understanding

families as sites of geopolitics" and "sociopolitical change," rather than sites of static normativity. Specifically, they investigate family histories as a source of "ontological security" that young people draw upon to make sense of and advocate for political change. Similarly, Benwell (2019, 492) examines how young people in the Falklands are "influenced by memories of past geopolitical events [...] contextualised within the dynamics of contemporary international relations," providing a unique example of intergenerational geopolitics.

As a site where (in)security is experienced, where political subjectivity is formed, where agency is enacted, and where the wider historical arc of geopolitical events is given meaning, we can understand families as sites of intimacy geopolitics (Kallio 2019). Here, intimacy refers specifically to "intense emotional attachments" that are "typically relegated to the ostensibly 'private' domain of sexuality, family, and household," but in fact work to "shape and are contoured by historical residues, socio-cultural norms, state-centric policies and global economic dynamics" (Barabantseva *et al*. 2021, 347). As such, the concept of intimacy geopolitics examines not just how intimate spaces and relationships are acted upon by geopolitical events but how intimacy is already "wrapped up in national, global and geopolitical processes and [...] territorial claims" (Pain & Staeheli 2014, 345). By examining the ways that geopolitics entwines everyday sites and encounters, the concept of intimacy geopolitics works to challenge binary hierarchies of local/global, family/state, safety/security, and belonging/citizenship (Jeffrey *et al*. 2018; Botterill *et al*. 2019). Although this concept emphasizes intimacy as a "set of spatial relationships" and a "mode of interaction" that stretches from personal/proximate to distant/global, we argue that such relationships also stretch from present experiences to future hopes and past memories. Recent work by Straughan, Bissell and Gorman-Murray (2020) has examined the routines of resource extraction workers and their families, and how these temporalities are embedded within broader affective economies of exhaustion. Less attention, however, has been paid to how the rhythms of everyday life take place within wider collectively remembered and imagined intergenerational temporalities.

Existing research on generational relations has tended to foreground conflict and crisis, to the detriment of understanding other affective and agential forms of intergenerational relations, including hope and inspiration (Hopkins & Pain 2007). Research on young peoples' religiosity (Hopkins *et al*. 2011), morals (Hall 2016), and political identities (Habashi 2017), complicates top-down models of socialization and conflict, instead emphasizing intergenerationality as a relational process. Going beyond the adult/child dichotomy, intergenerationality invites a holistic approach to age-based geographies, which has tended to bifurcate between a focus on either the elderly or children and "problem youth" (Tarrant 2010; Schwanen *et al*. 2012; Valentine 2019). The following section discusses the methodological challenges and opportunities of intergenerational research methods.

## Intergenerational family interviewing

For researchers concerned with centering the voices of youth, the intergenerational turn in children's geographies raises methodological questions. As Vanderbeck (2007) observes, the connections and disconnections that constitute generational positionalities are not only temporal but also spatial, constituting what Holloway, Holt, and Mills (2019) refer to as "sites of encounter," which are traversed by power relations unique to distinct geographical contexts (Kallio & Thomas 2019). Earlier work in children's geographies grappled with questions of how to address the problem of adult power in research with children, though less consideration has been given to researching intergenerational encounters *between* younger and older people. Geographers have begun to develop creative methods that allow children to trace their generational positionalities within wider spatial-temporal processes including oral history mapping (Mitchell & Elwood 2013) and narrative biography mapping (Kallio 2018). For the most part, though, the methodological focus remains centered on youth perspectives rather than intergenerational inter-subjectivity.

The existent literature on family interviewing in geography highlights the practical pitfalls of conducting research in the home, where adults may exert undue influence on young people. Valentine (1999) suggests that family members may be reluctant to share freely in interviews due to family tension and may instead provide an "official" generic version of family history, glossing over

differences in how individual family members experienced events. Bushin (2007) observes that although the chaos and lack of privacy of the family home is not always conducive to interviewing, spontaneous moments of family interaction nevertheless provide beneficial glimpses into family dynamics. As Valentine (1999, 68) finds, such glimpses produce "richer, more detailed and validated accounts than those generated by interviews with individuals." Similarly, Punch (2007) finds that, when interviewed together, siblings think more reflectively about issues related to family dynamics like birth order. Given these constraints and benefits, Punch (2007) recommends combining individual and sibling/family interviews, an approach we took in our research.

Beyond their potential advantages to researchers, family interviews may also serve as meaningful intergenerational encounters. Friedensohn (1997), for example, found that intergenerational interviews create space for intersubjective learning, including opportunities for younger women to learn from female elders. As such, intergenerational interviews can be a space of solidarity and consciousness raising (La Porte 2000). However, such practices may also produce romantic readings of the past and reproduce notions of elders as "repositories" of knowledge and youth as "receptacles" (Kuyken 2012; McQuaid *et al*. 2017, 393). In the sections that follow, we describe our experience conducting intergenerational interviews within and outside the family. First we turn to a description of our study site.

## Generational geopolitics in Palestine

Intergenerational familial cohabitation is common in Palestine, where broader kinship networks linked to clan (*hamula*) are especially significant given the dispersal and division caused by the Israeli occupation (Robinson 2008). Though family configurations vary, many Palestinian children grow up in multigenerational environments characterized by interactions with parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins, and siblings. Following patrilineal naming practices, children are identified as the son (*ibn*) or daughter (*bint*) of their father and by their family home (*dar*), usually derived from their paternal grandfather's name. Most adults are known by their kunya, an honorific denoting that they are the father (*Abu*) or mother (*Umm*) of their eldest (typically male) child (e.g. Abu Ahmed). Neighbors and close friends are often also afforded honorary family status, being called uncle (*'amo*) or aunty (*khalto*). These family relations influence personal identity, business connections, and political affiliations.

Shifting geopolitical dynamics makes any attempt to generalize about "typical" Palestinian families difficult, and we should be suspicious of orientalist generalities about "the" Arab/Muslim family (Sherif-Trask 2006). Nevertheless, an archetypical family form in Palestine resembles family patterns found in other Arab countries throughout the region, often consisting of an elder patriarch living with his adult sons and their wives and children in a multi-family dwelling (Gregg 2005, 57). This family practice is patrilocal, in that a wife often goes to live with her husband's family. It is also patriarchal, in that family authority is vested in an adult male, though women share in household management and decision-making. This patriarchal gerontocracy, wherein women and youth accede to the authority of male elders, has its roots in pre-industrial agricultural economies and has taken on entrenched forms in its inscription into legal systems of landownership and state formation (Gregg 2005). Today, young people often begin contributing economically to their family early in life and stay in the family home later until marriage. Marriage is a milestone achieved with significant family influence and support, though one that is increasingly difficult for Palestinian men to achieve due to high rates of unemployment and rising living costs, and one that many Palestinian women increasingly delay for work and education (Jarallah 2008; Harker *et al*. 2019).

It is important to remember that actual family forms emerge dialectically in relation to discourses, values, norms, economies, and policies, and are not static or monolithic constructions (Harker 2011, 2012). Diverse family forms have resulted from the diverse techniques of power imposed by the occupation on different segments of the Palestinian population, including Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, Israel, and refugees. The traumatic loss of family homes and land incurred by Palestinians during the 1948 *nakba* constituted a dramatic shift in family and social structure, transforming a largely agrarian society into an urban/refugee proletariat (Kuttab 1988, 2009). The creation of charitable associations to sustain the nation in exile after 1948 and the outlawing of

political parties under the Israeli occupation after 1967, combined with expansion of universal education for Palestinians in UN schools, created new roles and spaces for women and youth to engage in grassroots social and political activism. Palestinian women increasingly took active roles in the struggle for independence during the 1960s and 1970s, with youth coming to the fore during the first *intifada* beginning in 1987. Though the Palestinian nationalist movement often relegated women to the natal-nationalist role of 'mothers of the martyrs,' the *intifada* served as both a political uprising and a revolt against existing age and gender hierarchies (Peteet 1986, 1994). As a result, women achieved greater political visibility and youth garnered more respect from their elders, although this social revolution provoked backlash (Fronk *et al*. 1999; Amireh 2003). Despite women's high educational attainment and social mobility, high unemployment and restricted physical mobility imposed by the occupation have resulted in low participation in the formal labor sector. Continued confiscation of land has also reduced women's opportunities for family-based agricultural work, thereby reducing women's economic influence and independence. Our research on intergenerational memory in Palestine is situated within these intertwining geopolitical and familial processes.

## Women's intergenerational mobilization of memory

Garner's research examines the spaces and practices through which women in Palestine mobilize memories of past and ongoing political struggle, and how younger generations of women receive, understand, and act upon such memories. To understand how women who have lived through political struggle pass down their memories in ways that might mobilize younger generations of women, the research design sought a demographic balance in the make-up of research participants. Likewise, in addition to interviewing individual women about their experiences, Garner facilitated conversations between different generations of women – and, sometimes, their male relatives – to understand the gaps and continuities in how different generations narrate and understand memories of political struggle. To do this, individual narrative interviews, multi-generational family-based interviews, and female-only focus groups were used. Generational ordering within the family (grandparents, parents, and children) was used as a way of conceptualizing intergenerational relations, correlating this ordering to pertinent political periods (e.g. the *Nakba* of 1948, invasion of 1967, and uprisings of 1987–1993 and 2000–2005). In Garner's research, the family home emerged as a central site of memory, both where memories were formed and where they are transmitted through narrative, material, emotional, and embodied forms of memory.

Interviewees in Garner's research frequently described the family home as a site of geopolitical struggle and women as key actors in that struggle. This was especially true during times of upheaval such as the First Intifada from 1987–1993 and subsequent al-Aqsa Intifada from 2000–2005. In interviews, women mostly described their role at the time as supporting their families and trying to create a sense of stability in the household. No passive role, though, women described this works as an almost miraculous form of resistance, rooted in Palestinian notions of *samud* (steadfastness). As Nakia, who was a small child during the First Intifada, put it: Palestinian women could "make food out of nothing." Other women described the strength of Palestinian women to take on multiple roles in the family and "act both as father and mother," as described by Nasira, who was married with children during the First Intifada. As Sabah recalls from the perspective of a child at the time: "When the father was arrested, the mother had to be the mother and the father." Far from being confined to the physical family home, this active support role often involved breaking curfew to get food or medical supplies for their families, or making the difficult journey to visit sons and husbands in Israeli prisons. Although Nakia describes the lack of public acknowledgement of this active role of resistance within the family as an "injustice," the example of Palestinian mothers reverberates down through generations within families. As Mahmoud, a man who grew up during the intifada recalls, without women, there would be no resistance, because "mothers taught us to fight back and to own our land," a sentiment repeated by Omar, another man from this generation. These embodied experiences of resistance are now verbally transmitted to the younger generation as lessons in perseverance.

Indeed, today, many older women are intentional about sharing their memories with the young generation, usually within the mundane setting of the home and the weekly rhythms of family

gatherings. Nasira, now a grandmother, describes how lessons for living in the present are passed down through stories of past struggles:

> I tell my daughter about our history before and through the occupation. I tell her everything. I tell them about how to act like a good person in their society, how to be deeper in everything in your life, your thoughts, your feelings. To feel with others. I told them from when they were so young. We made a circle every day for two hours, for example. And we discussed as many things happened in the society.

Omar similarly reported that his mother "Tells her children and grandchildren every Friday about her past." Omar expressed a sense of urgency to make sure that his children grow up hearing the stories he heard or experienced growing up. This kind of intentional storytelling is especially important to refugee families, for whom intergenerational memories of the homeland and displacement are central to their identity and right of return. As Sabah shared during an informal intergenerational gathering of women: "Here in the refugee camps in Palestine when you ask the children where they are from, they will say that they're from Akko, Ashdod, or Jaffa, because that's what they teach them growing up. Where they are originally from, so they do not forget." As another older woman who recalled the 1948 *Nakba* added, "We should not forget about returning," to which her daughter-in-law replied, "And that is what we teach the younger generations." These memories and identities are not only handed down through storytelling, but through material memories, including the embroidery tradition of *tatreez*. During this gathering, two older women, Sabah and Zaina, displayed the traditional *thobe* gowns that they had stitched using an embroidery pattern specific to their home in Ashdod, a coastal city in historic Palestine, now Israel, remarking that this refusal to forget through material, embroidered memory, was their form of resistance.

Although Palestinian women intentionally pass down their memories from one generation to next through oral tradition and material culture, very often, stories and memories arise spontaneously during gatherings with families, often eliciting a range of emotional responses. At one such family gathering in Nablus, three sisters told stories of growing up during the First Intifada. One remembered a time when Israeli soldiers fired tear gas into the courtyard of their school and all the students were forced to run. Though laughing now, one of the sisters remembered being terrified because she lost her youngest sister in the crowd. Similarly, Ayman, the grandson of a woman named Itaf, recalled a time when his grandmother's neighbors ran out of food:

> When her neighbors had no bread, she threw some of hers out the window to them because the curfew didn't allow them to leave their apartment. When they couldn't buy food, the neighbors would share everything. She would not eat if her neighbors could not also.

Remembered as a humorous anecdote rather than a tragic tale, this story nevertheless memorializes the hardships imposed by the occupation and the resilience of Palestinian women. Jamila, a Palestinian university student, shared a similar story of humor and resilience, one that her grandmother frequently told her growing up and one that she now shares with friends. Jamila's grandmother was a young girl during the 1948 *Nabka*. When Zionist paramilitaries came to their house to force them to flee, she and her sisters hid in pots in her kitchen. When the soldiers came to the house, they found nobody there. It is thanks to her grandmother's cleverness that the family kept their home. Such stories engender intergenerational solidarity and steadfastness.

Though expressed as humor now, many other memories of terror and grief are too painful to recall, and instead take on forms of embodied trauma that affects the whole family. In an interview with Itaf, a grandmother whose son was martyred and who had several children arrested during both intifadas, her grandson Ayman explained that his grandmother became very sick after the loss of her son, and that her body stopped working due to the heartbreak she endured. As Abia, another grandmother, put it, the grief of mourning martyred children and worrying about their children in jail is not just a passing emotion, but an embodied state of being: "The women in Palestine embody the pain they feel [...] You can't imagine the suffering of Palestinian women waiting for their children to be released." Itaf, like many other mothers in Palestine, wears a locket with the picture of her martyred son, frequently clasping it and showing his picture when talking about him. From *tetreez*, to the keys and household deeds of homes destroyed or seized during the *Nakba*, lockets are another form of material memory intended to commemorate past loss and inform the present generation.

Though Jamila and Ayman like to hear the stories of their grandparents and parents, not all their peers share this sentimentality. In a focus group interview, Abeer, a university student, explained that she and her group of friends avoid talking with their parents about the intifadas. Doing so causes too much pain, as they are forced to think of the tragedies that could have befallen their parents, like so many others. Indeed, many young women Garner spoke with actively avoided the topic of politics and expressed no desire to learn or hear about earlier generation of women activists. When asked about this topic, Gharam, like many young women, deflected by saying: "I think older women like my grandma would know more." This lack of interest or awareness among younger women came up in a conversation with adult women who came of age during the intifada and are now mothers. Nakia explained, "In the past, we used to know, for example, the names of women who were active. But now, women go to the classroom and none of them know – it was a shock for me." Her friend Nasira blamed consumer culture, saying, "They [the young girls] concentrate more on their looks outside, and inside there's nothing so deep as before." Another woman, Sama, suggested that the circumstances are simply different now, saying "I cannot judge the younger generation because I think they have a different life than mine." Similarly, Abia admitted that although her own generation represented the women of the revolution, "we don't pass down the same mentality." Indeed, while some members of the older generation actively try to pass down the stories of previous generations of struggle, many parents try to shield their children from these memories and attempt to provide their children with the carefree childhood they were denied.

As for the young women themselves, many of the college-age women in Nablus that Garner interviewed stated that they had given up hope on a political solution to the occupation of Palestine, and instead just wanted to forget politics and move on with their own lives. Though seen as acquiescence in the eyes of older women, this insistence to live life on their own terms is itself a form of youthful resistance perhaps gleaned from the previous generations. For example, Shereen, a university student who participated in a focus-group interview inverted the common understanding of apathetic youth and heroic older generations, declaring that "In the past, they weren't as brave as now," to live independently. Her friend Layla agreed adding, "Yeah, the woman now has a great character and she's strong. She has resistance." Although there may be disagreement between (and within) generations about what constitutes resistance, it is clear that through forms of inter-generational memory and storytelling, the family is fertile ground for sowing the seeds of resistance, be it against the Israeli occupation or traditional age and gender norms.

## Intergenerational place-based memory

The previous section demonstrates how intergenerational memory is transmitted in the family home through narrative, emotional, embodied, and material forms of intergenerational memory. Younger generations actively retain or avoid such stories, making their own meaning out of these memories and applying them to new social and political realities. While Garner's research showed how different generations find new meaning in old stories in different places, Mansour and Marshall's research examines the divergent meanings and emotions that different generations attach to a particular place, namely Joseph's Tomb, a contested religious heritage site in the northern West Bank. Historically, Samaritans, Jews, Christians, and Muslims revered the site due to its connection with the Prophet Joseph. Following Israel's invasion of the West Bank in 1967, Jewish settlers established a school at the site and the Israeli military set up a checkpoint forbidding access to Palestinians. The site became a flashpoint between Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers, especially during the first and second intifadas. Although the site remains off-limits to Palestinians today, the Palestinian Authority maintains the responsibility of securing the site and facilitating access by Jewish settlers, who regularly visit the site under Israeli army-imposed curfew, provoking clashes and attacks. To local youths, Joseph's Tomb is a site of confrontation with Israeli soldiers. However, older residents remember the tomb as a site of social celebrations and religious ceremonies. The purpose of our research is to trace the memories of this site as it shifted from being a site of religious and social significance to a site of geopolitical conflict and territorial contestation. Mansour and Marshall's research examines how different generations understand and narrate that site in relation to their own lived experience.

Inspiration for this research came from a pilot project on place-based intergenerational digital storytelling run in cooperation with a local youth organization in Nablus in 2016. In this project, participants produced their own autobiographical digital story combining voice, visuals, and sounds to tell the story of a place of significance in their community and how it relates to their everyday lives. Participants conducted inter-generational interviews with their elders about these and other significant places in their communities in order to explore differing inter-generational perspectives of place. Mansour, then a participant in this pilot project, chose to narrate a story about Joseph's Tomb, located close to her home in Balata al Balad, a village that now forms part of the greater Nablus conurbation. Israeli soldiers killed her neighbor during a confrontation at the tomb and she wanted to relate his story, while seeking to avoid asserting a sense of personal propriety over this story or subsiding it into a straightforward nationalist narrative. Her story was about the anxiety this place causes people in her community, in particular mothers who fear that their children will fall victim to the violence that erupts there. The story also highlights the inequality of mobility and access to holy sites that Palestinians experience relative to Israelis. In order to widen the historical frame of reference beyond her own vantage point, Mansour interviewed her parents and grandparents to hear their stories and learn about the history of the tomb before it was enclosed. She was surprised to learn about traditions associated with the tomb that she had never heard of. She learned about weddings and Eid ceremonies, as well as how women would pray for fertility at the tomb and would give their children their first haircuts there in ceremonial thanksgiving. Marshall and Mansour both became interested in how the site's association with youthful male resistance supplanted memories of women's religious practice. Just as a physical barrier now surrounds the tomb, a mental barrier seemed to surround these memories.

In the summer of 2018 and 2019, Marshall and Mansour conducted narrative interviews with multiple generations of Palestinians residents. While the creative methods that inspired this research were a useful way of enabling young people to speak about their relationship to places in their community and a way of initiating inter-generational dialogue, this method was unsuited to the task of examining the specific site of Joseph's Tomb. The politically sensitive nature of this site made it so that most young people we spoke to were reluctant to be interviewed, l*et al*one produce a digital story about a site that is forbidden to enter or photograph. Mansour and Marshall wanted to reassure people that they did not intend for their research to determine the exclusive legitimacy of any historical or religious claim on the tomb. Rather, their aim was to document the memories of this site as recalled by different generations and explore the divergences and discontinuities in the way different generations transmit or omit memories about this site. To do so requires sufficient time and space to allow multi-generational narratives to unfold and intertwine in intergenerational conversation.

Starting with personal contacts, Mansour and Marshall sought out members of an older generation who remembered the tomb as adults before the 1967 invasion and as early as the time of the 1948 Nakba. Interviewing a local elder often turned into a family affair. Thus, Mansour and Marshall began conducting multigenerational interviews in family homes and land. In most cases, they would arrive at a family home to interview an elderly grandfather or grandmother living with one of their sons and his wife and children. That son would serve as host, helping with the consent process and helping to clarify questions and responses, while the grandsons and granddaughters would serve refreshments while listening quietly, offering observations after the elders had spoken or in quiet moments when one of the older interviewees would step out of the room. Sometimes, neighbors and extended relatives would also drop by to join in.

On a number of occasions, an elder male would interweave his own memories within the broader temporalities of religious memory. One older man recounted the story of Joseph, intertwining it with his own memories:

> Joseph, was Jacob's son. I remember, he used to tend to his sheep. He would water his sheep at Jacob's Well, then graze them here in this valley. His brothers left him in a well, maybe this well, God knows.

Another older gentleman recounted the same story in a similar manner. "The Prophet Jacob, peace be upon him, became very sad about his lost son. He would go to a cave, which is now the Green Mosque

in the Old City of Nablus, it was built around this cave." He continued: "We kept these memories of Jacob's family alive until the present. We called the field below Jacob's Field."

When prompted, men from this older generation would shift from religious memory to their personal memories of Joseph's Tomb:

> For us, Joseph's Tomb was a mosque and a school. It was where we had all our occasions. Wedding parties, haircuts, circumcisions, mawlid celebrations, and Eids. The wedding parties would stretch from Jacob's Well down to Joseph's Tomb.

It is with these embodied memories of those celebration, in which women played a central role, that most of the older women we interviewed began their recollections. As one grandmother recalled: "On Friday, the procession would come from Nablus to Joseph's Tomb, they would bring their children, and food and drinks and go to see Prophet Joseph." Adult women who were children at the time share similarly sentimental memories. As one woman recalled:

> We lived in Balata. All of us young kids, every Friday, we'd see the women come, bringing their children, bringing their supper, coming from Nablus and from Askar, from Balata, from Balata Camp, they would come from all around and the neighborhood would be full. They would pray Friday noon prayers there. They would eat breakfast there, drink, have supper there, and at the end of the day they would go home. We were kids and we would go up and see, what they are doing. We would go out and see the ladies. Just like that. It was freedom.

In these recollections by older women and their adult children, the feeling of peace, freedom, safety, and joy are emphasized, in contrast with the feelings of fear and sadness that mark the space for most parents and young people today.

In the course of a family interview, once the narrative arrived at the 1967 invasion and occupation of the West Bank, very often the adult male son in the family would often begin steering the conversation and explaining how the current political situation came to be. As one adult male recalled, after the occupation, the situation of the tomb changed: "At first, [Israelis] started visiting it normally. Like visitors. [...] Then suddenly it was a Jewish tomb! Then a Jewish school! The Settlers were using the shrine as a foundation to establish themselves in the land. [...] They turned it into a conflict point." As another respondent elaborated:

> The problems started after '67 [...] The settlers started to come, every week at first, on their Sabbath. The army would come and guard the tomb. In 1982, the settlers established their own school in the shrine. Then the army stayed permanently there, twenty-four hours a day. Clashes took place after school between the army and the boys from the village. They would forbid us from coming close to the shrine. Once, they arrested me for questioning and took me to the police barracks.

In this man's interview, in contrast with older generations, he downplayed any religious significance of the site insisting that folk traditions associating the shrine with the Prophet Joseph were being used as an excuse by the Israelis "...to establish a foothold in our land." While most adult men and some of the elder generation shared this perspective, many nevertheless regret the loss of connection to this and other heritage sites the conflict has caused. As one man from Nablus put it: "Since the occupation began in 1967, each generation has been cut off from this place and have forgotten its meaning and importance." As he expounded:

> If generations do not learn from one another, then there is no continuity, no meaning. You don't know anything about where you are or where you are going if you don't know where you've been. People walk down the street and only think about what is immediately in front of them, they don't look up or around... people are disconnected. They want to spread out. Have their own home and their own space. No one is connected with where they live any more. Two years I have lived in my building, and I don't know who lives above me. We are disconnected, becoming more individualized.

Here, the loss of connection to Joseph's Tomb due to the occupation is generalized to include a broader loss of connection to collective memory and a general trend toward ever increasing isolation, underscoring the social importance of intergenerational connections.

During family interviews, the natural rhythm of home life would allow for different voices to come to the fore at different times. The adult son might step out to pray, allowing space to speak more directly with his parent or with his older children. We would ask the younger members of the family whether

they had heard their grandparents' stories about the tomb before. Many would have heard their fathers' stories of confrontation and conflict and would have their own harrowing encounters with soldiers to share, but most admitted to having heard very little from their grandparents about the cultural traditions associated with the shrine. Some expressed shock, surprise, sadness, and even anger having not heard these stories before. As one male youth stated one-on-one, "No one told me, even my grandmother who told me a lot of things from her past, she never mentioned these things." Seeking to create space for more youth perspectives on the shrine, Mansour and Marshall reached out to youth in the area but received a tepid response. Many young women responded by saying they had no comment about a site that they had nothing to do with, whereas many young men said they wanted to avoid talking about politics, expressing understandable trepidation about discussing such a politically fraught topic. Through personal contacts with close associates, though, one-on-one interviews were conducted with youth who felt comfortable sharing their views and experiences. One male youth recalled that, although he would walk by Joseph's Tomb every day after school, he was "too scared to go in there." As he explains: "I heard terrible stories. Like, scary stories. Like horror movies. They said that settlers come here and light candles that float up and move around. Childish things like that." Today though, he says the shrine plays no particular role in his life and that it is "just a place to avoid." As he puts it:

> For me, I don't care about this place. I don't feel like it's a symbolic place. You know, when you go to a symbolic place, you have a feeling in your soul? But I don't feel this, so I don't care about it, whatever happens. [...] Personally, I tried to avoid it. As a kid, it was a scary place. As a young man, it is a political place. I tried to avoid it. Different reason, same result. Until now, I'm still trying to avoid it. I want nothing to do with it.

While this young man has successfully avoided the shrine in his daily life, for others who live next to Joseph's Tomb, avoidance is not an option. For them, the shrine is a site of tragedy and trauma. As one young man explained:

> I always have problems there because I live by the location. When the Israelis come there, always there are clashes, you know, they throw tear gas, they shoot. I have an especially bad memory from 2015. A friend of mine was killed near Joseph's Tomb.

His friend went out to confront the soldiers one evening during an Israeli incursion into the area. An Israeli soldier shot and killed him. Like other interviewees, this young man had conflicted feeling about this form of resistance saying he does not think throwing stones is the best way to resist the occupation, but also that the Israelis should not feel free to seize this site without a struggle.

In some of the inter-generational interviews with adults and youth, these conflicting feelings came uneasily to the surface. Some adults blamed the stone-throwing youths for causing all the trouble, while others said there was no choice but to resist. One adult woman, expressed admiration for the youth:

> The older generation was more afraid than the new generation. Because the new generation, like these young ones [gesturing to her grandchildren], since the first time they opened their eyes all they have seen is the occupation. They lived in harsh conditions, you know. The older generation, we were living differently. So, we were more afraid, the older generation. The young generation came out bold and faced them, more than the older generation. This is what I've understood from life.

In this quote, this grandmother indicates how the young generation are positioned differently than her generation vis-à-vis the occupation, suggesting that older generations could learn from the boldness of the youth. Still, she laments the fact that the young generations have not known the carefree enjoyment of the shrine, saying "I really want to go in again. Just let us go in. But they don't let us. Forbidden. If it were open, of course we'd go. The young kids, they don't know it." On this, there was intergenerational agreement. Despite differences in opinion regarding the shrine's status as a folk relic or holy site, younger and older interviewees agreed that the site should be open to everyone, regardless of religion, so long as visitors came "in peace" and not "like an army of occupation," as one adult male put it.

## Discussion

Memory is not solely the domain of personal experience, but is rather undergirded by social structures including families and religious communities (Halbwachs 1992). Individual memories only become

whole when situated in their particular social and geographical contexts (Hutton 1988). Though memory becomes spatialized in what Nora (1989) refers to as *lieux de mémoire* (places of memory), site-memory is in a constant state of flux, with subsequent generations renegotiating the meaning of these sites and reworking narratives of the past to fit present circumstances. Mannheim's (1952) definition of generational positioning informs understandings of collective memory by emphasizing diversity of experience and positionality within an age cohort, as well as the interactions and continuities between generational groupings. Existing symbolic and material surroundings provides a sense of identity, stability, and continuity to the generation that comes into this readymade word. However, members of this generation may also reinterpret, repurpose, and reject the meaning of their inherited symbolic surroundings. Intergenerational encounters can help bring to the surface changes in place and place meaning. This is particularly relevant in contexts of geopolitical conflict over land and territory like Israel/Palestine where, as Hammad (2011) argues, it is often wrongly assumed that a sense of place and place attachment remains stubbornly static. An intergenerational perspective is crucial to understanding how sites in such contexts undergo "significant geopolitical reconfiguration" resulting in "shifting" experiences and interpretations of place across generations (Hammad 2011, 556). Intergenerational interviewing brings these shifts to the fore.

In Garner's research, family interviews provided a glimpse into how memories are transmitted intergenerationally in the intimate space of the family home. However, domestic distractions inevitably arose, including clearing dishes or attending to a fussy child. Most often, women in the family attend to such matters, disrupting their participation. When the focus is on the older matriarch of the family, her son, as host and head of household, often took on the role of interpreter of his mother's story, often adding his own memories and interpretation of events. While this added depth to the story and clarified some historical points, it also sometimes drowned out the female voices. As such, it was beneficial to spend time in intergenerational female-only spaces where women spoke more openly and without interruption. For example, after the blessing ceremony at a housewarming party, the event transformed as women brought out food and *argileh* to share. Despite the festive nature of the occasion, topics such as domestic abuse and women's rights were more freely discussed in this intergenerational female space. Similarly, while conducting a focus group with women of different ages at a Quran study group held at a local community organization, women felt free to discuss intimate topics like moral growth and overcoming personal challenges posed by the occupation including the death or imprisonment of a husband. However, even in an exclusively female environment there were instances when age hierarchies dominated the narrative. In many intergenerational interviews, the women from the younger generation often sat quietly listening to their elders without response, raising the need to hold focus groups with young women in cafes and female dorms. In these interviews with young women, they sometimes interwove their personal stories with the stories and memories handed down to them from their parents and grandparents. Moving between these different spaces and settings enables different forms of intergenerational exchange.

Similarly, in Marshall and Mansour's research, the organic unfolding of the household interview brought with it many benefits. First, the domestic and familial setting of the interview helped move beyond narratives of the shrine that only highlighted its geopolitical significance as a flashpoint. Instead, more personal and nuanced memories emerged of celebration as well as confrontation. Likewise, the family setting created an atmosphere of trust and rapport and led to conversational interviews in which members of the family could add important details, refine points, and correct information. Conducting interviews in the family home provided greater access to the perspectives of different generations and allowed us to participate in intergenerational dialogue that laid bare the differences in perception and experience between generational cohorts. Although younger members of the family were often quiet at first, a pause in the conversation would allow us to ask about their perspectives and experiences. Many would recount their own encounters with soldiers during incursions into the village, but most also admitted to having heard very little about women's cultural traditions associated with the shrine. At a certain point as well, the formality of hosting a guest and conducting an interview would give way to a more relaxed atmosphere. Often, once the recorder was turned off, mother, daughters, neighbors or other extended relatives who were not previously participating, would speak up. While young people and some women's groups had been reluctant to

respond to an invitation to a focus group interview, these informal "off-the-record" conversations allowed women and their children to discuss the contemporary challenges they faced living in proximity to the shrine. Within the context of a family conversation, the focus shifted away from the big-P politics of the site and toward personal memory and family history, attracting the participation of elders and youth alike.

Despite the natural pauses and the informal spaces of dialogue these created, family-based interviewing nevertheless also came with challenges. While the family home setting afforded rapport and intergenerational dialogue, it also imposed a formal guest/host relationship between interviewer and interviewees along with age and gender hierarchies that limited participation of wives, daughters and sons. During the interview, wives busied themselves fulfilling social expectations of preparing refreshments. Likewise, young people, rather than sharing their views, helped to host the guests. In some cases, it was necessary to follow up with young people from the families to invite them to one-on-one interviews in a local café where they could more freely discuss their experiences, including their views on more sensitive subjects like the confrontations with soldiers. Similarly, some of the gendered limitations of the family-home interview were overcome by conducting interviews with mothers and their younger children at local cafes. Here, too, though, the informal atmosphere (sitting in the family section of a cafe) allowed for a more conversational interview and allowed for exchanges with the younger members of the family, as well.

In fostering intergenerational dialogue through family interviews and focus groups with age/gender-based cohorts, the authors found that memories of struggle punctuated by key geopolitical moments provide a powerful framing for narrating collective memory and organizing generational cohorts. Stories of national struggle and resistance intertwine with family stories and generational orderings. While a powerful form of social solidarity, stories of past conflict, whether told as funny anecdotes or tragic tales, serve as a form of unresolvable traumatic post-memory that occupies the psychic terrain, making the transmission of other forms of memory more difficult. The structure of settler-colonialism imposed on Palestine reduces the space for commemorating other forms of social and cultural memory outside of national struggle. This present absence is apparent in the way that narratives of Joseph's Tomb downplay the cultural and religious importance of this site to women, reducing it to a conflict "flashpoint." It is also apparent in the relative invisibility of older women's domestic contributions to the Palestinian struggle, and of younger women's struggle for gender equality. By examining the ways that memories of political violence and struggle are not only enshrined within particular public places, but also remembered and retold within the intimate settings of the family home this research problematizes the conceptual division between public sites of memory and private family stories.

Research on generational relations has tended to focus either on internal familial decision-making or on intergenerational issues at a national policy level (Hopkins & Pain 2007), with a bias toward the research and policy interests of families in the global North. Geographers have given less attention to the relevance of familial and extra-familial forms of intergenerationality and their relation to geopolitical issues (Hopkins 2006). Similarly, research on the geographies of memory has tended to focus on the spectacular sites of memory and counter-memorial contestations that take place within public space in the context of national memory related to geopolitical conflict. There has been less focus on mundane sites of memory such as the family home, where personal, familial, and collective memory intertwine and fray. Till (2012, 7) refers to memory work as an "intergenerational place-based ethics of care" honoring past struggles, calling for justice for past injuries, and imagining different futures. Research on geographies of memory regards artists, activists, planners, and designers as the primary practitioners of memory work, with museums, monuments, and other public places serving as key sites of memory. The politics of memory has thus mainly been concerned with the political contestation over these places and the contested historical narratives spatialized therein (Dwyer & Alderman 2008), and less concerned with how such memories are received, renegotiated, or forgotten or in everyday life. Despite research revealing how memories of home are situated within wider (post)colonial geographies (Blunt 2003; Legg 2003; Tolia-Kelly 2004), private memories of the family home have largely been dismissed as regressively nostalgic. In contrast, Meah and Jackson (2016) offer the private space of the kitchen as an important site of memory, where

personal and familial identities are formed and curated, and where these memories are contextualized within, and often complicate, broader historical narratives. As Văran and Creţan (2018, 511) observe, "personal recollections of place and connection or attachment to place serve as the basis of memory and intergenerational memory transmission." For young people, this intergenerational transmission of memory plays a central role in their socialization and formation of political subjectivities and thus is deserving of greater scrutiny and attention (Mitchell & Elwood 2013).

If memory is shifting rather than static (Till & Kuusisto-Arponen 2015) and "communicated across spaces through shared affects and emotions" (Văran & Creţan 2018, 511), then more attention should be paid to the affective and emotional processes of intergenerational sharing of memory across public and private places. In sharing these experiences through intergenerational family interviews, the authors join calls for greater inclusion of multiple age cohorts within the geographies of children, youth, and families. Such intergenerational encounters can make valuable contributions toward understanding the (geo)politics of memory and how the spectacular sites and events narrated in collective public memory are interwoven, reproduced, and contested within the intimate spaces and stories of the family.

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