Scientific Research

Hyphenated Identity Development of Arab and Jewish Teachers: Within the Conflict Ridden Multicultural Setting of the University of Haifa

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The theory of "hyphenated identity" (HI) argues that people living in complex political-social contexts construct HIs with various sub-identities. The University of Haifa (UH) is a meeting space and experience for people of different nationalities and religious backgrounds. Thus they live "on the hyphen", between identities found in contrast vs. harmony. This study was initiated and carried out as part of a Cooperative Participatory Action Research (CPAR). Nineteen graduate students, all teachers in a multicultural society ridden with conflicts, were interviewed about their life stories, their family background and the development of their identity as shaping their personal and professional lives. At the end of the interview, they were asked to draw an Identity Drawing Map (IDM) and add an explanatory text. Finding indicated that many women transferred their complex identity in order to create a balanced and a challenge in their life; they became leaders in their communities and empower other women to follow them toward self actualization. The study's contribution is in broadening the understanding of concepts of HI development, by analyzing the similarities and differences within each ethnic/national group. Since identity development influences significantly people's life, we can learn about these processes. Using the creative methods of drawing identity fabricated a deeper understanding and emotional presentation of the person.

Keywords: Identity; Teachers; Arab and Jews; University of Haifa; Israel

Introduction

This research is rooted in identity theories that seek to generalize the conceptual understanding of Hyphenated Identity (HI). Studies on this subject have been conducted mainly among youth who define themselves using a large repertoire of identities, and embrace the hyphens among their many identities depending on the social, historical, and political context (Sirin & Fine, 2008). Several studies investigated how culture and global politics affect the life and identity of young people (Appadurai, 2006; Katsiaficas, Fine, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Sirin, Yosef-Meitav, Farah, & Zoabi, 2012; Yuval-Davis, 2001).

Israeli society is bi-national, comprising a Jewish majority and an Arab minority. For many years, the Arab population in Israel was referred to by the majority as "*the Arabs*", as a matter of distinction from "*the Jews*". Throughout the years, definitions have changed and developed for and within each group. Jews are now defined also by the collective terms: Israelis or Israeli-Jews, and the Arab citizens of Israel are defined by the state as Non-Jews or Israeli Arabs. However, the Arab minority in Israel defines itself in many hyphenated identities, among them terms of collective identity: Palestinians, Arab-Palestinians, and Palestinian citizens of Israel (Yosef-Meitav, 2008).

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, identity has been a core concept that challenged Israeli society. Particularly challenging has been the term *Jewish*, as it refers to both religion and nationality (Herman, 1977). Young Arabs and Jews have encountered complex political changes, adjusting to

greater diversity of ethnicity, culture and religion, while continuing to live in the context of an intractable conflict (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006; Rouhana, 2004; White-Stephan, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker, & Stephan, 2004). Over time, identity definitions in Israel changed moving from simple or binary to multiple and more complex identities (Ghanem, 2001; Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, & Fakhereldeen, 2002). This process has occurred in all groups, but it has been experienced to a greater extent by Arabs and immigrants, who negotiate their identity via a complex course of action (Gerges, 2003; Leonard, 2003). While there are numerous studies on the identity of Arabs and Jews, there remains a need to explore the deeper meaning youth in Israel assign to their identities (Herman, 1977; Hertz-Lazarowitz, Rouhana, Hofman, & Beit-Hallahmi, 1978; Rouhana, 2004; Smooha, 2011).

Because of the continuous struggle between religions (Islam, Judaism and Christianity), young people may experience Islamophobia or anti-Semitism, amplified by one's own ethnocentrism (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Rouhana, 2004). As noted by Yuval-Davies (2001), cultural binaries and oppositions proliferate the intense stereotyping and dehumanization of youth of different religion, racial and ethnic origin, constituting "micro cultures", which are diverse social groups representing different sets of cultural, ethnic, and religious scripts. Micro-cultures include secular and religious Arabs and Jews, Muslim, Christian and Druze Arabs, Jewish immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and from Ethiopia, and

Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. Individuals who belong to the same micro-culture maintain cultural identities and values that bind them together as a group, in addition to sharing some cultural elements with all members of the Israeli macro-culture (Smooha, 2011). Differences between the micro-cultures are sometimes addressed as an issue of "identity" related to historical developments and politics.

In addition to the multicultural make-up of Israel, education is structured within almost totally segregated systems, regulated by the State. Preschools, elementary schools and high schools, for Arabs and for Jews are segregated (Al-Haj, 1998), minimizing contact and interaction between these two groups. An important exception is higher education in Israeli universities and colleges, which are integrated (Hertz-Lazarowitz & Zelniker, 2004). Campuses in general are significant and symbolic spaces for shaping identities among youth. Hurtado (2005) points out that "*Higher education plays a central role in shaping the leadership, change agents, and professionals who will take responsibility in closing the gaps and devising creative solutions to contemporary social problems that are both global and local*" (p. 607).

Identities are shaped within socio-cultural environments, where domination and oppression play a role in shaping identity structures. According to Taylor (1995), campus "wars" have become a stage for political activism, entailing issues of legitimacy of opposing collective narratives, with violent and sometimes non-violent conflicts. Harre' (1979) suggested that by confronting the authorities, students are the "actors" who "play" various types of "social beings" in a "social drama". Hertz-Lazarowitz (1988, 2003) extended this conceptualization and proposed that this "social drama", sets in motion, the redefinition of power, status and majority-minority relations, which in turn leads to the reconstruction of identity.

The University of Haifa

The University of Haifa is a unique place for studying how nationality, religion, and ethnicity contributes to students' construction of their identity, and how identity is related to students' perception of their experience on campus. UH is a meeting place for Arab (Muslim, Christian, and Druze), and Jewish students, religious and secular students, with different holy books, values, practices, dress codes, as well as different calendars that mark their religious and civic holidays and vacations. Within this context, identities are constantly under reconstruction as young people live with concurrent conflict and harmony.

From our long-term research on the social and academic aspects of the life at UH, we learned that students are aware of the negative aspects of life on campus, such as experiencing surveillance, discrimination, injustice and racism. At the same time, they also experience positive aspects, such as exposure to students from other groups, integration and multicultural enriching experiences. Some students become more negative and critical about the "other" national/religion groups, segregate into their own group and perceive the university as a site of conflict, hostility, political tension, discrimination and oppression. Other students create friendships with students from other national/religion groups, and perceive the university as an opportunity to create an academic and social space of coexistence, tolerance, and self empowerment (Zelniker, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Peretz, Azaiza, & Sharabany, 2009; Gilat, 2006; Hertz-Laza-

rowitz, 2006; Hertz-Lazarowitz & Shapira, 2005; Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2007; Hertz-Lazarowitz, Yosef-Meitav, Farah, & Zoabi, 2010).

The literature suggests that identity development and construction is intense for young adults living within complex societies. In Israel, Arabs and Jews live in the context of an intractable conflict and in a rich multicultural setting. Israel's educational system is segregated and universities are the first integrated educational system. The UH campus is the first opportunity for Arab (20%) and Jewish students to experience a fully integrated social and academic milieu. The issue of acceptance and/or de-legitimization of the other group identity—as Arab-Palestinian (for Israeli-Arabs) and Zionist-Jews (for Israeli Jews)—creates tension and unrest, but also holds potential for learning about closeness and coexistence.

Purpose

This study was initiated and carried as part of a Cooperative Participatory Action Research (CPAR). Its aim was to achieve a deeper understanding of how students perceive and explain the many facets of their identity—known in the literature as the Hyphenated Identity—and to examine how this influences their personal and professional life (Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker, & Azaiza, 2010).

Method

Participants

The larger study included 93 students and student-teachers in the Faculty of Education. They belonged to six national/religious/ethnic groups: Arabs (Muslims, Druze and Christians, all born in Israel); and Jews (born in Israel, immigrants from Ethiopia, and immigrants from the Former Soviet Union).

Procedure

Personal interviews were conducted with 93 students. The participants were asked to define their identity and explain each component (For example: "I am an Arab, Muslim, student, and Palestinian living in Israel". Or "I am a woman, Jewish, teacher, mother, artist). As part of the interview, they were asked to relate to their professional life as teachers. At the end of the interview, each student was asked to draw an "identity map" and write a text about the meaning of her/his drawing. The drawings-maps, the text on the map and the students' analysis of their drawings, form the basis for our presentation of the case studies.

Three Case Studies

In this paper, we will present the stories of three teachers who were MA students in the Faculty of Education's Department of Curriculum and Instruction during the 2006 academic year. The women are: **Rula**, a Muslim woman; **Nurit**, a Jewish woman born in Israel to parents who immigrated from Morocco; and **Malka**, a Jewish woman born in Georgia who later immigrated to Israel.

Analysis of Nurit's Life Story:

Nurit, who was 33 years old at the time, defined her identity as Jewish-Israeli-religious-woman. She is a religious woman, married for 10 years and the mother for 3 daughters, and works

as an educator of grades 5 and 6 at a state religious school. Her parents immigrated to Israel in 1964 from Marrakesh in Morocco because of Religious-Zionist motives. They came with two young children and with her grandparents, who lived with the family until they passed away.

Nurit's practical experience in teaching started when she finished high school, during the period before her conscription to Israel defense forces (IDF). Nurit worked as a substitute teacher in a junior high school. There, she first met resistance from the students and tried to adapt to dealing with discipline problems. With time, she improved her acquaintance with the students, learnt more about them and their interests. From her family came the message that teaching does not pay enough to make it a good investment, and that it requires a lot of mental strength. During her military service, Nurit continued in the education field and was a non-commissioned teacher in a military prison. These early experiences were a starting point of her professional development.

The choice to study education was natural to Nurit after her military service. She had many and varied areas of interest including art, spirituality, academic, and therapeutic fields. She chose to attend a university and not a lower educational institution, due to her drive for excellence. She attributes her love of learning to her parents, who inspired her to be educated, to develop and to realize her capabilities. In her opinion, self-realization and empowerment were reflected in her choice to pursue the MA degree at the university. She perceived the MA as achieving more autonomy and control, and the degree gave her a sense of personal empowerment. It was clear that women's educational leadership and introducing changes in the system were very significant for her, and that leadership in education was not a traditional path.

Throughout her adult life, Nurit has been in a state of dialogue, negotiating between the religious and the secular world. In retrospect, she finds that her religious identity has been transformed, but feels that she has always kept in touch with her basic needs for solid, spiritual believes.

In conclusion, Nurit has developed two major themes in her life: personal empowerment through study, and a dialogue between religious and secular life. Her life experiences intertwined with overt personal and family events as well as covert implicit messages about socialization of life. This tension between repressed and expressed desires, were fulfilled by education and practical experience related to significant figures. Nurit believed that identity is constantly changing, depending on the development of her life experience.

Personal drawing:
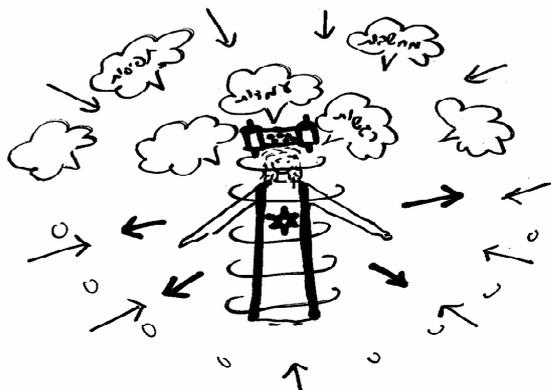
Nurit's interpretation of her personal drawing:

In the center of the page, I drew a figure that represents me: *her hands are open on both sides of the body. I feel that the wide-open hands symbolize acceptance. I am the type of person who is outgoing toward the surroundings, with qualities of tolerance to the difference, who loves to learn new things and to get acquainted with new people.*

The outfit represents my national and Israeli civic identity, and it is strongly bonds with being Jewish, as it reminds a prayer shawl (*Talit*).

The Torah appears open above the figure's head, represents my religious character. Yet, there is another aspect for the choice of drawing an open Torah. It reflects my inner negotiations of my religious identity. The Torah, in my view, is not a fixed and closed thing, but rather it is open for observation, learning and even criticism.

The thinking bubbles around the figure's head represent my way of thinking, my attitudes, my thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and all the internal processing of what goes on in my mind and heart, which is affected by the inner and the outer conditions.

The arrows that point towards the figure represent all the things that I achieve and get from the outer surrounding. The arrows that come out of the figure represent what I contribute to my surroundings.

The spiral, which wraps the figure's body, symbolizes the combination between the insights, attitude, criticism and all the other things that I get from outside (*the arrows*), *and everything that is inside of me: feelings, thoughts, attitudes, etc. The whole drawing is in a circle shape, this was not deliberate but I have noticed that I tend to be dragged to circular shapes.*

In conclusion, in my characteristic drawing, the different components of my identity are manifested: a Jewish-Israeli-religious-woman. Moreover, the conflict or negotiation that I experience being religious, is also expressed in the drawing.

Analysis of Malka's life story:

Malka defines her identity as the youngest in the family-Georgian (from the country of Georgia)-woman-working-mother. Malka's personal identity is dynamic, which has evolved throughout her life and in her opinion is continuing to evolve today. She is a product of social events that she was exposed to during her childhood and as a young adult. Her social characteristics are connected to her ethnic identity as a minority group within a collective identity group.

Malka is the youngest daughter of a Georgian family. Her father left home when she was seven months old, and worked as a wandering merchant in the northern USSR. Her mother worked in a canned goods factory, and her eldest brother worked after school hours. Another brother cooked for the family while her eldest sister kept the house clean.

Malka's ethnic identity is the very basic component among the other components of her personal identity: she identifies with the Jewish Georgian community. She kept her ethnic identity even after immigration to Israel, but was more open to accept the social and cultural customs of the modern, contemporary characteristics of Israel. Malka's feelings on gender are related to her collective identity. These changed during her adolescence in Israel, when she rebelled against the ethnic norms that demand a woman to stay home and care only for her husband and her children's needs.

Her professional identity is related to her grandparents: Malka says that her grandfather was one of the "Men of Wisdom" in the community and the town's people used to turn to

him for advice in times of need. She feels that this was what caused her to work in the field of guidance and educational counseling, where she can provide social assistance to her community. Malka believes that the educational system, its attitudes towards the individual and the experiences a student are exposed to, can greatly influence the insights which the individual uses to build his character, on both the personal and the public level. Being an immigrant made her aware of the complexities of adjusting to a new life in Israel.

She became a source of influence and help for others. The caring, guidance and leadership she showed gave Malka a sense of positive self esteem and feelings of satisfaction from her actions. She accepted positive recognition related to her performance ability, and this in turn enabled her to stand confidently in front of the majority group, which she once considered a discriminating group towards her minority community. Work taught her the importance of disseminating knowledge and achieving the influence that would allow her to aid and bring change to her community.

The structuring and enforcement of her personal identity and its components improved her self-evaluation and self-confidence. While in her childhood Malka saw herself as a "quiet girl", who loved to sit aside, watching and listening to what was going on around her, in young adulthood she stood up for herself, expressed her views clearly and made her own decisions. "Always just like in my childhood, even when I accepted and was obedient, I keep to myself the right of making a choice and looking for freedom".

In sum, Malka identifies herself as a human being, a woman, a family member, and Jewish Israeli. Her gender identity is a crucial part in her being. She fights for equal rights for herself and other women. In her opinion women should struggle for "professional knowledge" because it is the most impotent tool for women to get job opportunity based on abilities. She sees professional identity as significant part of general women identity. She describes her national identity as Israeli Jew. As a Jewish daughter of immigrants from Georgia, she sees Judaism as a nationality, although she is not religious or particularly traditional. She believes that Israel has a historical right to exist as a country.

Personal drawing:
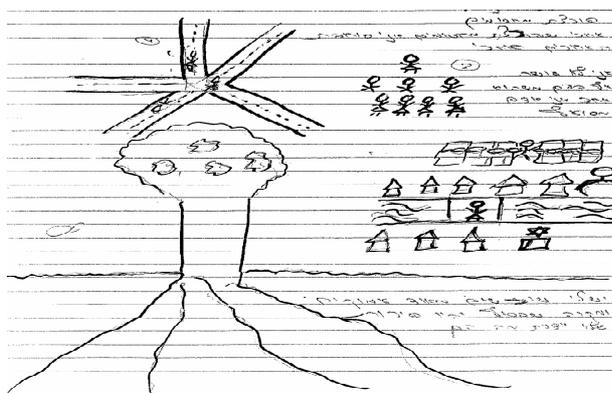
Malka's interpretation of her personal drawing:

In my drawing map, one can see all of my identity components: houses in my village, and the Georgian community I grew up in, on the riverbank with the small Islamic community on the other side. In the drawing one can see an intersection of roads which indicates my diversified activities. For me there is always a chance to approach new fields and new "roads" and deal with new challenges, just as in the drawing I know where I started and came from but don't know where things might lead me.

The drawing of the tree expresses my deep roots regarding the values and the historic aspects. Similar to any tree, I believe that my deeds and efforts bring and will always bring results/ fruits.

Analysis of Rula's life story:

Rula defines her identity as woman-mother-Arab-Muslim-traditional-Israeli-political left. She starts her life story by presenting her parents' influence on her personality and professional development; her father is a 1948 refugee. Rula presents herself as a Muslim-Arab, since this is her primary collective identity. Her parents are more traditional than religious, and have eight children, of whom she is the fifth. Rula objects to the idea of families blessed with lots of children. Her mother was forced by her grandparents to be married at a young age, despite her pledges not to be wed at such age. Her mother's lack of options and awareness at the time can be seen in the size of the family and its effect on the quality of life the parents could afford their children. Her mother's example led Rula to understand that one cannot bring a child into the world every year. She believes that a child needs a good foundation in order to learn how to deal with modern life, something that requires parents to put a lot of effort into child education during their formative years. This cannot be done properly in a family blessed with many children.

Rula says that she has suffered from poverty, and that this has pushed her to deal with everyday adversity within her family. Therefore, she decided to work and earn money to fulfill her ambitions and not feel poor. Her mother is considered a very strong woman, with a tough and strong personality, diligent yet rebellious and dominant. She is also seen as an intellectual woman compared to other women in her age. Rula resembles her mother in parts of her personality.

From a young age, Rula was given a lot of responsibility regarding the family home, and this, together with her dedication to studying, helped Rula grow and develop quickly. She says that she always felt older and wiser than girls her age. Being seen as a rebel, and the conflict that she felt back then, points out how much she wanted to be independent. She was sometimes beaten by her parents for refusing to do certain things.

Rula lacked a father figure in her life, and today she knows that a father's existence is important. She now asks her husband to be home with the children as much as possible, despite his work that seemingly keeps him busy all the time.

Rula today does the same jobs around her house without feeling pressured and even enjoys cleaning and cooking. Being more mature, she is more aware of her actions and responsibilities. She thinks of them as means for achieving goals that she has set for herself. Unlike her experience as an adolescent, when she was forced to do tasks that she didn't like and often refused.

At school, Rula was chosen to represent the school at a seminar with Jewish students in Neveh Shalom. She was later chosen by the seminar moderators to be a representative of the co-existence seminar participants at an international conference in Germany. Rula says that these meetings resulted in a conflict within her concerning feelings of belonging. One of those feelings was being an Israeli student who was supposed to suc-

cessfully and loyally represent Israel in front of the rest of the world. The second was the fact that she is a Muslim-Arab student who lived and felt for the suffering of Arab community in the country.

After graduation, Rula wanted to study at university. She says that going to university was an excuse to leave home and live an independent life, and this is how she started her journey and experience to find herself and her position in the academic and social world. It was highly important to her not to depend on her parents, and as a married woman. She does not like to depend on her husband. At university, her true independent life started, and she became self-reliant, leaving her parents' home and pursuing her career. At first it looked like an easy thing to do, but today she realizes that it wasn't as easy as she thought it would be. Reaching her goals required that she "let go" of some meaningful things in her life.

Rula worked in many jobs in Jerusalem during her academic studies. These enabled her to become familiar with different cultures and behavioral codes. For instance, she became very familiar with the difference between a religious Jew and a secular one. She continued studying for teaching certificates at David Yaleen College in Jerusalem, which is a symbol of co-existence. At that time, the country suffered from a wave of suicide bombing attacks. Being the only Arab student in her class, it was difficult for her to feel for the others, who were different from her. She constantly felt that everyone's eyes were only upon her. Although she used to talk to everyone, now she ended up sitting silently, and was afraid to express her feelings. However, dealing with that difficult time raised her power to struggle, and succeed in proving herself.

Rula's professional work started in a Jewish school, and she adopted the positive aspects and learnt from them. Her identity and culture were strengthened along with her national feeling. Religion didn't affect Rula much but she remained a traditional Islamic Arab. Rula combines her job as a teacher and her life as a woman and a mother at the same time. This is her way of achieving empowerment and personal enrichment. Starting as a teacher, her rapid advance made her believe in herself more and learn more, despite the discrimination by men. She says: "*So last year I signed up for the second degree (MA) in the mathematical education department at the University of Haifa, in order to advance and become a supervisor or consultant with the Ministry of Education, to work in different schools, learn from them and internalize what have been learnt and then to transmit it to teachers and students.*"

Rula's story has a happy ending, like the extension of the classic story. It testifies to the importance of stability and independence. The good things she has gained so far in her life are ones that she teaches her children about. Trying to educate them about peace, coexistence, urging them to learn about their identity and their nation's history so they can become good children and affect society.

Personal drawing:

Rula's interpretation of her personal drawing:

The agricultural building (small houses and a school) and the mosque symbolizes the Muslim Arab village where I live. It also describes my identity as a Muslim Arab. The school is my work place as a teacher, the university is a symbol of academic studies, the figure of the woman (me) leaving from the village to the university in the form of "flight" supposedly represents the difference between the village and the university in search of a career, and the boy in the picture is my son, symbolizing my desire for him to go my way.

I drew myself in a big figure because I consider myself large relative to my village and I was ready to deal with resistance from the village. I see the Arab Muslim woman as a unique personality from both sides, in terms of biological and personal talents, who can play a role at the level equal to that of men.

Learning is a recipe for a safer future. Professionalism is the realization of the self, creating a high social and community status, designing the cultural character in a developed way to enable me to face challenges and difficulties of life.

Therefore, the Arab woman should aspire to academic studies and to be ready to raise educated and modern children—it is the cornerstone of an intellectual society.

Discussion

These three women represent three minorities in Israel; they share a strong desire for integration into the Israeli Jewish society. Nurit, Malka and Rula chose to work in the educational field. They cross borders of nationality (Rula) religion (Nurit) and ethnicity (Malka). By crossing these borders, they express the high value and respect they have for their hyphenated identity (HI), and keep strong ties to their past, present and future histories and social political reality. It takes a lot of courage to keep these hyphenated identities and live about the live as they told us about.

In our study, we found many women who transformed their complex identities in order to create a balanced and a challenging life. They become leaders in their communities and empower other women to follow them. They did so by giving prominence to personal identity terms more than collective terms.

Usually the personal terms express the identity core while the collective terms express the hyphenated identity. The women include many dimensions in their hyphenated identity, such as: personal, affective, professional and family, together with collective identities, such as nationalism, political, and religious identities. In the overall study we found that indeed women's identity was richer and more elaborated than men identity terms.

Arab women are approaching higher education in growing numbers in Israel, and Arab women are the group that are currently making the revolution toward the degrees of MA and PhD (Shapira, Arar, & Azaiza, 2010, 2011).

All groups of students express tensions that relate to situations that threaten their collective identities. Their physical existence is a major source of threat. The many wars, bloodshed, terror and occupation have been hard on all the groups. It appears that both national groups experience two types of threat in similar situations but with an opposite content. The Arab is threatened by the image of "a terrorist", while the Jew is threatened by the stereotype of "an occupier". The Arab is discriminated against inside Israel by Jews—who feel discrimi-

nated by non-Jews out of Israel.

In this reality, the University of Haifa can be a place for dialogue and conflict at the very same time. Member of different groups experience academic/social/political life as students, which is a reflection of their life in general. They share learning in a significant developmental stage, as they enter adulthood. Arabs talked about attending UH as an empowering experience, even if they see it is a discriminating institution to a degree. The contact with the Jewish students and the University gives salience to their collective identities, which are openly expressed and discussed on campus. This includes issues and struggles around their legitimacy as a minority group.

The Jews, who are the majority on campus, are usually older than the Arabs, because they enter the university after they serve in the army. They are engaged in a different world of daily contact and interaction with Arabs. The Jews were more isolated from this type of relations with Arabs, and they have to redefine their experience and perceptions about Arabs.

It seems that even during this difficult period in Arab-Jewish relations, both groups are constructing their identity by acting in this "social drama" of the campus (Harre, 1979). Discussion, harmony and conflict, protests, battles for legitimization and mutual recognition of the other groups, are daily practices on campus. The students experience the partial and not complete democracy on campus and in the state of Israel.

It suggests that negative perception is interwoven alongside positive perception. It seems that there are no defining borders between the dialogue and the conflict and between the acceptance and the rejection of the other. Indeed the two processes occurs simultaneously.

Summary

The study's contribution is mainly in broadening the subjective understanding of HI development for each ethnic or national group on campus. Using the creative methods of drawing identity resulted in a deeper understanding of this matter. At this stage of their life, usually in their mid to late twenties, the students are engaged with the dynamics of shaping their identity and gaining maturity as each group learns from the other group.

From these three cases study, we can be aware of general processes that characterize Israeli society. The study provides insights and can help the university authorities and student organizations become more knowledgeable about identity development and encourage dialogue, equality and justice between the diverse groups of Jewish and Arab students on campus.

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