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Diversity Management in Places and Times of Tensions

Engaging Inter-group Relations in a Conflict-ridden Society

Helena Desivilya Syna

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In memory of my mother Rajna Syna whose wisdom and remarkable resilience throughout her trying life has taught me the value of humanity in all its diversity.
To my husband Izy and my children Noa and Roi—may you continue experiencing life in all its diversity.

Foreword

In 2019, I had a pleasure to visit Max Stern Yezreel Valley College with a group of international psychology students. In the remote location, outside of large urban settings, Arab and Christian students study together in a friendly and empowering academic setting. The college is located between two towns severely affected by ethnic and religious conflict: Nazareth and Afula. In Nazareth, Muslims and Christians clash over the holy sites close to the Basilica of the Annunciation where Muslim community wanted to build a large mosque. In Afula, local Jewish population blocked Arab population from entering the public park and organised rallies against selling homes to Arabs. The dense atmosphere in both locations between the two towns, in a calm Max Stern Yezreel Valley College campus, Helena Desivilya Syna teaches Arab and Jewish students about the dynamics of intergroup conflicts and managing diversity in organisational settings. For most of her students, college time is the first moment of integration: after attending segregated high schools and having different pre-college experiences (most Jewish students would be drafted to the army right after their high school completion, which is not the case for the Arabs) students from both groups have learned how to communicate and how to coexist

in an educational setting. The Center for Diversity and Intergroup Conflict Studies, chaired by Helena Desivilya Syna, is a response to these pressing needs.

The experiences of managing diversity in an academic setting in Israel, together with very wide research interests, allowed Helena Desivilya Syna to write a powerful account of the contemporary conflicts in Israel and the tensions between high- and low-status groups. It is important to note that such book could be written only in a country that is immersed in multifaceted conflicts and inequalities. The Jewish-Arab conflict, probably known to most readers, is by far not the only one. Christian-Muslim tensions (like in Nazareth), Sephardi-Ashkenazi divide, hawkish-dovish political conflict, as well as class struggles create a unique laboratory for social researcher of conflict and diversity. Helena Desivilya Syna takes the reader for an inspiring tour of contemporary Israeli society where intergroup tensions affect people's everyday life: the medical staff working in large hospitals and small clinics; inhabitants of the large city Haifa, known for its ethnic and religious diversity; students of small academic college in Yezreel Valley. She shows that diversity looks differently from the high-status group side—and differently among the low-power groups. When analyzing these microcosms, she finds out how vulnerable are they when facing the intensification of conflict 'out there', in the political world. The reality of Israeli-Palestinian intractable conflict affects everyday contacts within organisations; it makes difficult the everyday cooperation of Arab and Jewish medical staff or students. In the words of her own model, macro-level factors (global and local forces) affects what she calls meso-level contexts that are focal to this book: organisations and communities trying to manage their diversity as constructively as possible in everyday intergroup contacts.

This book is also another important theoretical voice in psychology and beyond that points to the limitations of our discipline. The narrow look at intergroup contact, harmony, and diversity in—what Helena Desivilya Syna calls essentialist social psychological perspective—overlooks some important power issues that are critical for better understanding of intergroup relations. In this, she joins other social psychological thinkers, such as John Dixon in the UK, Kevin Durrheim in South Africa, or

Tamar Saguy in Israel, who point to the 'irony of harmony' paradox. She finds this paradox in many aspects of her work. For example, in the City of Haifa, globally known for its diversity, in fact Arab and Jewish communities live in a relative societal segregation in which status issues still play a big role. Jewish and Arab students in the same college have completely different view on diversity: Jewish declare the feeling of comfort in their ethnically diverse college, whereas Arab students (both Christian and Muslim) still see much differences between their situation and the situation of Jewish students, which decreases their sense of comfort.

Although it is clear to the reader that the author is trained within the 'essentialist social psychology' tradition, she does her best to explore the perspectives offered by other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. This interdisciplinary approach is visible not only in terms of mixed methods used to study the issue of conflict and diversity (this book is a good mixture of quantitative analyses and in-depth interviews), but also in problematising the issues of power and addressing societal-level processes that affect both organisational practices and everyday experiences of her participants.

The conflicts within Israeli society are obviously difficult to resolve. Taking into account the international context of complex relations of Israel with neighbouring countries, as well as the populist tendencies in local politics, one could become very pessimistic about the future of this society. On the other hand, Helena Desivilya Syna shows how people can manage with diversity even in the times of tensions and intensification of political conflict. She shows how to build organisational settings that allow to maintain peaceful real-life encounters between people who live and work together. Her own model of 'managing diversity in paradoxical reality' includes building partnerships, developing models of practice, implementing actions, and monitoring implementation of practices that bring more sensitive culture and allow for multiperspective view of the conflict, engaging with 'otherness' and creation of common spaces. This proposal is a promising hint to everyone working with intense conflict settings, be it in the Middle East, Europe, or the United States. Of course, it is mostly applicable to the Israeli context.

Taking it all into account, I believe that this book will be an exciting read not only for researchers looking at intergroup conflict and diversity management, but also for all the readers who are curious to learn more about current Israel and its everyday problems.

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I also would like to acknowledge Michel Kichka for letting me use one of his cartoons from the 'Oslo 20 years' collection as Fig. 4.1 in Chapter 4 of the book.

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A Prelude: The Urgency of Studying the Interface of Diversity and Political Tensions

Abstract The introductory chapter sets the stage for the book. It provides the scholarly and praxis-related rationale: the pertinent necessity for explicating engagement with diversity in contemporary societies troubled by persistent and escalating political tensions. The chapter delineates the aims of the book and presents a preview of the subsequent chapters. Finally, it sketches the professional biography of the author as a major driver for embarking on this book project and a prelude to interspersing her voice throughout the book chapters.

Keywords Author's diversity biography · Interface of diversity and political tensions · Real-life contexts · Social psychology · Critical theories

The introduction opens with a personal episode that hastened my motivation for writing this book. I was a visiting lecturer at the University of Warsaw in April–May 2018, a period coinciding with the commemoration events explicating the sources, progression, and consequences of the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign fifty years after its occurrence. The main event was a temporary exhibition in the course of March–May 2018 at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews entitled 'Strangers in Their Home'. One of the displays featured a quotation by Zygmunt

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Bauman, an internationally renowned sociologist, who emigrated from Poland in 1969: 'In a world where nobody can ever feel completely, fully at home, perhaps even the fate of the Other can turn around? Perhaps we are capable of seeing the Other as a human being just like us?'

The exhibition and Bauman's quote not only echo my work in general and this book in particular, but also intimately connect and intersect with my biography. I grew up in Warsaw in communist Poland, experiencing that country as my home. The Jewish component of my identity was shaped in the course of my childhood through commemoration of the Holocaust, mainly by attending the annual Memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Later on, I participated in Jewish youth camps organised by the Jewish Association for Social and Cultural Affairs, where we learned experientially about some aspects of Jewish and Israeli culture, such as Yiddish songs and folk dances. Thus, my knowledge of Judaism and Jewish heritage was rather limited, largely confined to the above events, occasional exposure to books in Yiddish that my parents read, and my own reading of literature related to Jewish heritage and ancient history, such as Thomas Mann's 'Joseph and His Brothers'. My mother cooked Jewish food along with some Polish dishes. My family maintained close contact with a few similar, largely assimilated, Jewish families, including spending summer vacations together on the Baltic coast or around the Tatra Mountains.

Importantly, in parallel, the local elements of my identity (Polish, communist?) crystalised very significantly by means of a socialisation process in the Polish elementary education school system, and through symbolic events, such as participating in the annual May Day Parade since very early childhood. My family did not mark the main Jewish holidays, such as the Jewish New Year, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and Passover, but we did partially celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Immigrating to Israel in September 1968 as an adolescent with my family due to the anti-Semitic campaign was a formative life event for me, both personally and professionally. It uprooted me from the environment where I grew up, geographically and physically, but primarily socially, since it isolated me from my Polish childhood friends. I vividly remember our departure from Poland, particularly the farewell scene

at Warszawa Gdańska railway station, from which we left heading to Vienna. I parted from two childhood friends, with whom I could not communicate until the fall of the Iron Curtain due to potential adverse consequences for their families should they maintain connections with Israel.

The taxing experience continued with crossing the Polish border into Czechoslovakia, where our Polish citizenship was revoked, thus actually turning us into exiles. In my memory, our migrant status was further accentuated by a short stay in a temporary locale near Vienna operated by the Jewish Agency for Israel, where I experienced alienation in a cold and mouldy physical setting. Despite the warm welcome of close relatives, who had emigrated from Poland to Israel about a decade prior to our emigration, becoming a new immigrant in Israel ironically shaped my identity as a stranger in the Jewish homeland for many years afterwards, which continued into my doctoral studies 'expedition' to the United States.

The personal experience of traversing different societies and cultures in the course of individual and societal transformations, while enacting the part of a wandering Jew, a visitor, a stranger, at times 'lost in translation' (Hoffman, 1989), has presumably inadvertently spurred an interest in the fate of 'strangers', 'others', and the 'different' dwelling alongside mainstream residents. In fact, it has been a major motivator for embarking on this book project.

This personal thread has coincided with the dramatic developments of the past few decades.

The contemporary epoch has presented a complex reality, characterised by extensive transformations and exposure to phenomena such as unprecedented migration from Africa and Asia into Europe, economic and political crises, consequently mounting social divisions, and exacerbation of protracted intergroup conflicts (Dhanani, Beus, & Joseph, 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Jones, 2014).

The present era has also featured declining democratic processes in established Western democracies, which, as expressed by some scholars, face imminent danger (Kashima, 2019; Müller, 2016). These adverse developments hinder the fundamental premise of democratic regimes, where citizenship entails active participation in policymaking through

deliberation (doing citizenship), as ardently advocated in the early twentieth century by Mary Parker Follett, and later by Hannah Arendt. In a similar vein, Kristeva (1991) has argued that the direct involvement of all stakeholders facilitates 'coordinated diversity' without ostracism, but which is also devoid of levelling and smoothing over differences. Clair, Humberd, Caruso, and Morgan Roberts (2012) concur, claiming that the active participation of all parties prevents especially marginalised individuals and groups from losing some of the deeper facets of their self in daily encounters with dominant counterparts.

Concomitantly with social, political, and economic changes, there have been significant technological advances that enable transfer of global knowledge on an unprecedented scale. The dynamics indicated above have increased the prevalence of encounters between diverse social groups, albeit meeting and interacting with the 'other' have often stemmed from necessity rather than deliberate free choice. Encounters between diverse individuals and groups have been taking place in workplaces, educational institutions, mixed neighbourhoods, healthcare organisations, commercial settings, and public/government service-providing organisations.

How have diverse individuals and groups engaged these inevitable encounters? What have been the bright sides of these experiences? What have been the harmful forces and dark shadows of such interactions? What mechanisms underlie the dynamics of these encounters? Studies attempting to respond to these queries have bourgeoned in recent years (Ali, 2019; Mutsaers & Trux, 2015; Swan, 2017; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011; Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, & Adelman, 2019; Zanoni, 2011). Yet, research on diversity management in deeply divided societies ridden by protracted intergroup conflicts has been scarce. Bauman's contemplation, cited above, echoes a perplexing query: How can people dwelling in such complex environments cope with the paradoxical reality—upholding democratic values, engendering social justice, equality, humane relations, and cooperative interactions at 'home'—in workplaces, communities, and public spaces in the face of intractable asymmetric national conflict? (Desivilya et al., 2017; Desivilya & Raz, 2015).

The main thrust of this book is to illuminate the interface of organisational diversity and political tensions, that is engaging diversity

associated with the legacies and daily reminders of protracted political conflict. What can protagonists in these perplexing settings tell us about their precarious encounters—how do they maintain humane relationships and constructive interactions between members of adversary groups beset by protracted, active, asymmetric national conflict?

This book focuses on managing diversity in places and times of political tensions. Frictions have evolved in a divided society, particularly in the light of its most salient facet—a protracted national conflict. Diversity management in sociopolitical contexts reflecting such an intense schism is still a largely unexplored terrain.

I endeavour to shed light on the relational processes underlying the perplexing encounters at the interface of diversity and political tensions, tapping the evolving dynamics of the bonds between individuals and society in changing contexts of people's interactions. The book also elucidates how societal attitudes such as prejudice (racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia) inform diversity sentiments in the workplace and forms of its engagement, especially the subtle expression of such attitudes and behaviours in the light of legal sanctions.

The book attempts to fill the gap regarding this pertinent phenomenon, underscoring the praxis perspective (Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016; Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014), understanding intergroup relations, dynamics, and interactions as they evolve spontaneously in real-life situations, rather than in prearranged intergroup encounters under controlled conditions. The book presents the real-life diversity-related experiences of protagonists in organisations and communities. Such a real-life approach has been advocated not only in social science, but has been embraced in medicine, as put by Professor Ran Balicer, Director of Health Policy Planning, Clalit Research Institute at Clalit Health Services, and a professor at Ben-Gurion University: 'Future health organizations will base their activities on constant learning of real-life data and what works. An organization that is unable to identify and focus on the populations that can gain from a particular treatment will experience the greatest difficulty. Smart use of the data is crucial and essential for the effective management of health organizations in the modern era' (TheMarker, 18 August 2017).

Drawing on a similar premise, the book reflects attempts at continuous learning of real-life data, especially of its hidden, silenced aspects. What are the genuine voices of different protagonists? What works well, and for whom? What works less, and for whom? Why and when? In order to reveal the blind spots, the research process needs to be as open as possible, to let the field talk, rather than providing Waze-like search guidelines. As succinctly put by Wilfred Bion: 'Now the point that I want to stress about that is this: that when you have a particularly dark spot, turn onto it a shaft of piercing darkness. […] I think there's something to be said for it—that if you want to see a very faint light, the more light you shut out, the better, the bigger the chance of seeing a faint glimmer, if you're not blinded by the "light"' (Aguayo & Malin, 2013, p. 9).

The book unravels the challenges and action strategies by demonstrating several cases: work settings such as medical centres and academic institutions, and diverse neighbourhoods in mixed cities. Although the cases portray Israeli society, embedded in the country's particular context, the findings and implications bear relevance for other places as well, since many contemporary societies are embroiled in intergroup tensions and face similar predicaments.

Notwithstanding the open research process indicated above, the book draws on a theoretic intersection between a social psychological perspective and critical sociological theories. I propose a dialogic approach combining the two perspectives, providing a more comprehensive and multifocal lens, better adapted to the changing realities of complex, deeply divided, and diversified societies (Kristeva, 1991). The latter integrative conceptual emphasis mirrors the author's professional development, seeking throughout her career to unravel the enigma of complex human interpersonal and intergroup relations using a multifocal and interdisciplinary lens. This standpoint also echoes the call for interdisciplinary work, flexible approaches in dealing with complexities of human relations, social structures, and research-practice interface.

This book provides the conceptual crux of the author's work, which has evolved throughout the past decade of her career, along with an empirical demonstration by means of three case studies. It subsumes several new departures, hitherto insufficiently addressed, thus supplementing extant academic and practice-oriented bodies of knowledge:

1. Portraying diversity management in places and times of tensions in a society engulfed by protracted national conflict.
2. Praxis (in-situ) lens; presenting the real-life diversity-related experiences of protagonists in organisations and communities.
3. Juxtaposing and interfacing a social psychological perspective, critical sociological theories, and social constructionist conceptual frameworks.
4. Intertwining the author's voice, echoing her professional development that parallels the amalgamated conceptual framework informing the book. It sketches the author's professional biography as a major driving force for embarking on the proposed book project, and a prelude to interspersing her voice throughout the book's chapters.

The Structure of the Book

The remaining parts of the book are organised as follows:

Chapter 2 Exposition: Engaging Intergroup Relations in a Conflict-Ridden Society.

This chapter presents studies investigating intergroup relations, contact, and interactions in the challenging context of social diversity and divisions, especially in societies afflicted by protracted intergroup conflicts. It mainly draws on conflict literature in the social psychological and social science domains (Alon & Bar-Tal, 2016; Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2004; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Maoz, 2011; Syna Desivilya, 1998). The discussion underscores the importance of a real-life, in situ research perspective and methods that allow examination of the phenomena in a manner that is more relevant for the contemporary social, political, and economic context.

Chapter 3 Understanding the Interface of Diversity and Political Tensions in the Context of Divided Societies: A Multifocal Perspective of Social Psychology and Critical Theory.

The chapter juxtaposes and interfaces social psychological conceptual frameworks and critical sociological theories. The underlying essentialist approach informing the social psychological perspective

and basic concepts and phenomena studies in social psychology, such as prejudice, stereotypes, social identity, and social categorisation, ingroup favouritism, and fault lines (e.g. Turner & Tajfel, 1986; van Knippenberg, Dawson, West, & Homan, 2011), are discussed. The essentialist school of thought focuses by and large on universal individual- and group-level limitations in processing the social world. By contrast, its counterpart, reflected in critical theories and social constructionist approaches (e.g. Derrida, 2000; Knights & Omanović, 2016; Foucault in Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Zanoni, 2011), underscores the construction of intergroup power relations, controlled through discourse by dominant social actors, such as central official authorities, elite organisations, and national majorities. These social construction processes privilege the dominant social forces, while marginalising other social players. Unlike the essentialist tradition, the critical approach emphasises the influence of the specific context of everyday practice on the development of social relations. The chapter opens a dialogue between the two perspectives in an attempt to enlist their joint potential for illuminating diversity management in places and times of tensions.

Chapter 4 Case 1: Medical Staff Engaging Diversity at Work in Turbulent Times.

The chapter portrays the intricacies of engaging diversity in a real-life work context. It revolves around a series of studies conducted in Israel's major hospitals on diverse nurses pursuing their professional practice in periods of acute protracted national conflict. The research employs mixed methods, including individual semi-structured interviews with nationally and ethnically diverse nurses, and a survey using a structured questionnaire. Thus far, the case reveals the complexity of asymmetric power relations, especially in times of escalating tensions that heighten nurses' sense of inequality and discrimination, which impinges on daily practice even though medical centres are legally obliged to maintain equal opportunities policies and equitable work procedures. Michal Raz Rotem, a research partner of the author, made a significant contribution to the writing of this chapter.

Chapter 5 Case 2: Managing Diversity in Academia: The Voices of Staff and Students in the Midst of Active National Conflict.

The case mainly reflects an ongoing (the past two years) action research in an academic institution, where the student body constitutes a microcosm of Israel's diverse and divided society. The research follows, mainly in situ, the academic and administrative staff's work experiences in the midst of active national conflict, but also studies students' perceptions with regard to diversity climate. The action research draws on an appreciative inquiry approach (the research team's cooperation with local stakeholders—academic and administrative staff) and employs an ethnographic methodology: recurrent participant observations, individual interviews with faculty and students, focus groups with academic and administrative staff, and analysis of official documents. The chapter describes the findings of the needs assessment phase and planning the implementation of an intervention designed to enhance the organisation members' capacity for engaging diversity in times of tension.

Chapter 6 Case 3: Living in a Mixed City in Times of Political Tension.

The third case focuses on Jewish and Arab residents of a mixed city and explores their perceptions and life experiences in this diverse context in times of political tensions. It gauges their current experiences of engaging diversity in the mixed city, as well as their future expectations and preferences regarding co-residing with the 'other' in the city: joint living, live and let live, living apart, and other alternative models. The chapter captures the findings of individual semi-structured interviews with residents, some of them owners and/or employees of real estate agencies. The latter taps the residents' professional perception of managing diversity in a place and time of tension.

Chapter 7 The Last Act: A Guide for the Perplexed—Concluding Insights on Managing Diversity in Places and Times of Political Tensions.

This final chapter attempts to pool together the insights emerging from the analyses of the three cases with regard to managing diversity in places and times of tensions. It draws on the interfaced social psychological and critical sociological perspectives and the real-life praxis-based approach, attempting to sketch models of practice in such perplexing periods and contexts. Special effort is made to fit the forum to the fuss,

namely to identify the faint unique light in a particular setting, rather than merely providing an apparent panacea—one size fits all—theory of practice. This section also addresses the question: How do the findings and insights resonate with the work of scholars, academics, practitioners, and social activists, highlighting educational attempts to build constructive relations between conflicting and diverse parties, despite the divisions and legacies of protracted conflict. Hence, we explore how the in vivo approach can not only enrich our understanding of the elements impeding relations between diverse groups, but also its potential to illuminate ways of promoting constructive integration between groups whose relations are marked by persistent tensions. Beyond academic and professional literature, this chapter draws inspiration from the work of musicians, choreographers, cinematography, and visual arts.

The final part of the book also suggests future directions for studying ways of developing and sustaining diversity management in times of tensions in order to attain deep and meaningful engagement for all the protagonists in natural real-life settings. These encompass the following queries: Where should we go from here to further advance our understanding of building cooperative encounters and interactions between groups whose relations are marked by persistent tensions? What questions might we ask? How might they be examined?

Let us commence our journey into diversity management in times and places of political tensions. As indicated earlier, my voice is interspersed throughout the book with reference to my both personal biography and professional biography. Importantly, it has been mediated by my own search in various terrains and exposure to diverse domains of human endeavour. Specifically, scholars such as Mary Parker Follett and Julia Kristeva, musicians such as Herbie Hancock, writers such as Marcel Proust and Ian McEwen, and visual artists such as Michelangelo, JR and others have had a significant impact on my work. I have been learning from them how to engage with different people in real-life settings in my research; to embrace a critical reflecting stance, including my own role in the research process; to actively listen to a myriad of voices; and to

observe and look at the kaleidoscope of human landscapes in their particular contexts. These foremost thinkers and artists have inspired me with their message, that is my interpretation of it, to forge a dialogue between diverse approaches, outlooks, and perspectives, even though they do not necessarily coincide or overlap (as the clocks, illustrated in Fig. 1.1, in the different places of the world do not match, providing different time perspectives). Hence, their voices are intertwined in this work.

I believe that the particularly novel angles make this book of interest to diverse audiences, such as scholars, academics, and students in social and behavioural sciences, management domains, and conflict-related arenas. It can also cater to interests, needs, and actual endeavours of practitioners in diverse areas, including general and human resources managers, public policymakers, and social activists.

Fig. 1.1 Different places, times and perspectives (*Source* dreamstime.com)

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2

Exposition: Engaging Intergroup Relations in a Conflict-Ridden Society

Abstract This chapter endeavours to elucidate the complexity of encountering and managing intergroup relations in a conflict-ridden society. It presents studies investigating intergroup relations, contact, and interactions in the challenging context of social diversity and divisions, especially in societies afflicted by protracted intergroup conflicts. This chapter mainly draws on conflict literature in the social psychological and social science domains. The discussion underscores the importance of a real-life, in situ research perspective and methods that allow examination of the phenomena in a manner that is particularly relevant for the contemporary social, political, and economic context.

Keywords Divided society · Protracted conflict · Political tensions · Intergroup relations · In situ research

During a recent visit to the Old City of Jerusalem, while walking through the market I recalled a field experiment in bargaining that we conducted in the very same market as part of a second-year experimental psychology course at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We tested the effect of the opening offer on negotiation outcomes. The experiment was conducted in pairs, each one approaching a different shopkeeper and negotiating

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the price of a small carpet. Half of us were assigned a tough first offer condition, and the other half a mild first offer condition. We examined how the respective opening stance affected the final price achieved in this bargaining experiment. Clearly, this retrospection does not intend to discuss either the flaws in methodological rigour of the field experiment or its ethical aspects, but rather to illustrate how intrigued I was by the negotiation process, particularly the inevitability of relating to the other, and coordinating in some ways with your negotiation counterpart to get what you want, and often what you genuinely need, but also to give something in return, that is to reciprocate. The concept of interdependence appeared of paramount importance, remained vivid, and persisted as my professional career progressed. This notion subsequently joined my fascination with social perception, especially the deep contrast between self and others' perception of positive and negative events, and our obliviousness regarding these differences.

How do we engage with real and perceived disparities and incompatibilities in our encounters with the other? Do we always stubbornly stick to our disparate demands? These queries have become the central focus of my research throughout the different stages of my career, initially investigated by means of experimental studies of interpersonal negotiation. Gradually, I have expanded this area of research to broader conceptual and methodological approaches: integrating a micro-level social psychological perspective with a macro-level social-constructivism perspective. I have used a mixed-methods approach—quantitative and qualitative methodologies and research tools, and program evaluation research—attempting to deeply and comprehensively study the research–practice interface associated with intergroup relations in contemporary societies, characterised by mounting social divisions.

In line with the pursuits mentioned above, this chapter presents the main insights from studies investigating intergroup relations, contact, and interactions in the challenging context of social divisions, especially in societies afflicted by protracted intergroup conflicts. It mainly draws on conflict literature in the social psychological and social science domains (Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2004; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Deutsch, 1973, 2000; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Maoz, 2011; Follett, 1918; Pruitt, Kim, & Rubin, 1994; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

The discussion underscores the importance of the real-life, in situ research perspective and methods that allow examination of the phenomena in a manner that is relevant for the contemporary social, political, and economic context. Nevertheless, it initially sketches the evolution and development of research on interpersonal relations studied through controlled methods, such as experimental designs or prearranged work groups and intergroup encounters.

Interspersed throughout the chapter are relevant research projects as milestones in my journey in the field, focusing on the phenomenon of relationships, in particular elucidating how people deal with conflict and engage differences at the interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup level, looking at how these endeavours are subjectively perceived and actually implemented.

Let me commence with the definition of 'negotiation', a concept that captured my attention in the early stages of my professional journey. Negotiation entails one of the most prevalent methods of coping with social conflict. The social psychological definitions construe it as a process aimed at settling disagreements through give-and-take (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). Other definitions conceptualise negotiation as a process of searching for consensus, aimed especially at synchronising reciprocal attitudes (Dunlop, 1984; Glenn & Susskind, 2010).

Social scientists, notably organisational behaviour scholars, coined the term 'negotiating reality', referring to the parties' jointly evolving mutual understandings of their relationships and terms of interaction in a specific context (Eden & Huxham, 2001; Friedman & Antal, 2004; Kolb & McGinn, 2009; Putnam, 2010).

Advocates of the critical conflict resolution approach conceive negotiation as a social activism process seeking to redefine power relations through struggle against institutional oppression and pursuit of social justice (Hansen, 2008). Collier's (2009) definition of negotiation reflects a similar conception. It focuses on the process of identity construction, shaping the parties' stances, and, in general, developing mutual terms of engagement, as put by the scholar: 'Negotiation refers to communicative processes in which parties are engaged in developing, challenging, and reinforcing their group and individual positions in relationship to each other and the context' (p. 289).

I draw on the aforementioned definition, conceptualising negotiation as an informal communication process designed to coordinate individual or group comprehensions of the rules governing their relationships.

My doctoral dissertation on 'real' married and cohabiting couples, using structured observation of role-playing scenarios and structured questionnaires, yielded relevant findings on negotiation as a relationship development process in intimate bonds. The results pointed to the association of blame attributions and the capacity to either increase escalation or foster reconciliation between partners. Individuals who tended to exclusively blame their partners for conflicts in their relationship spurred contentious negotiations and precipitated deadlocks. Conversely, individuals who were inclined to share some blame for the couples' discords (especially women) were more likely to manage conflicts using integrative-cooperative strategies and tactics, thereby not only mitigating escalation, but promoting reconciliation between the partners in the conflict aftermath (Pruitt & Syna, 1985; Syna, 1984).

Nearly three decades later, we conducted a study in a similar context of intimate relationships, focusing on couples' conjoint negotiation with a third party (Aloni & Desivilya, 2013). The study sought to test the effects of gender stereotypes with regard to negotiation, of asymmetric contextual ambiguity, and of the couples' orientation with regard to gender equality on the choice of the negotiator with a third party (a man versus a woman).

We used an experimental design, manipulating the type of gender stereotype priming (either implicit or explicit). In the implicit condition, gender stereotypes were elicited subtly, indicating by means of the instructions that individual characteristics such as rationality and assertiveness promote successful negotiation, in contrast to emotionality and care for others that are likely to hinder the process. In the explicit condition, gender stereotypes were induced bluntly. In addition to the prior statement in the instructions, there was a message maintaining that according to research evidence, women tend to be less competent than men at negotiation. Prior research showed that the implicit priming condition tended to evoke a self-fulfilling prophecy, namely behaviour confirming gender stereotypes: women indeed achieved inferior negotiation outcomes in comparison with men. By contrast, the

explicit priming condition produced resistance, reflected in counter-stereotypical behaviour among women, that is women performing better than men, who 'rested on their laurels' (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005; Kray, Reb, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004).

We also manipulated the negotiation context. In one condition, the negotiation context was more ambiguous for women (attempting to hire, hence negotiating with a contractor), whereas in the other condition it was more ambiguous for men (attempting to hire, hence negotiating with a childminder). Previous studies showed that both women and men tended to attain better negotiation results in settings that were less ambiguous to them (Miles & LaSalle, 2007).

The couples' orientation to gender equality was measured by means of a structured questionnaire. Accordingly, they were categorised as either traditional couples who tend to embrace stereotypical gender-role expectations, or egalitarian couples, who espouse liberal gender-related attitudes, advocating equality between women and men. 'Real' married or cohabiting couples participated in this field experiment. We hypothesised that the traditional couples would choose the man to negotiate with a third party, regardless of the context (ambiguous for men or for women) and the type of priming, in line with their stereotypical belief that men do better than women in any negotiation. By contrast, the egalitarian couples were expected to be more sensitive than their traditional counterparts to the contextual circumstances and to react differently to implicit in comparison with explicit priming. Consequently, they would choose the woman in situations favourable to women and ambiguous to men, and under the explicit priming condition, and would choose the man in the unambiguous circumstances to men and under implicit priming.

The results largely corroborated our predictions. The findings demonstrated the potency of gender-role expectations, biasing judgements and, in turn, potentially impeding achievements in negotiations. Importantly, the results also indicated that the biased perceptions were not uniform among all the couples (Aloni & Desivilya, 2013). They prevailed among the traditional couples, who are prone to view the social world through a one-dimensional lens, and were more moderate among the egalitarian couples, who are more sensitive to social justice and values of equality.

Additionally, the study indicated the paramount importance of the particular negotiation context, albeit akin to the biased views, the couples' gender-role orientation largely governed the level of attention to these situational facets. While the traditional couples were oblivious to changing circumstances, the egalitarian couples were highly attuned to the contextual features and acted accordingly.

Both studies on negotiation in intimate relationships evinced the negative effects of biased perceptions on negotiation behaviour within the couples and of the couples vis-à-vis external negotiators. A tendency for internal attribution of blame to the partner, and rigid preconceptions regarding the other (gender), impedes relationship building and eventually leads to adverse consequences for both partners. Conversely, the capacity for introspection into one's own deeds and vigilance to the changing situational characteristics appear to be the necessary ingredients for effectively negotiating the rules of engagement and coordinating a joint conception of the relationship. Our findings echo Mary Parker Follett's (1918) timeless insight, underscoring the challenge of relationship construction in conflict situations: 'We must indeed, as the extreme militarists tell us, "wipe out" our enemies, but we do not wipe out our enemies by crushing them. The old-fashioned hero went out to conquer his enemy; the modern hero goes out to disarm his enemy by creating a mutual understanding' (p. 345).

This quotation also provides a link and leap to the next meaningful step in my exploration of the negotiation process and relationship building: studying the phenomena in context, particularly the one in my vicinity—the tension-ridden region of Israel and its neighbours. How do negotiation processes and relationships evolve in complex environments—divided societies, engulfed by protracted intergroup political conflict? Unlike intimate relationships, the interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup interactions with the other/s in such intricate contexts are usually not voluntary or determined by choice; rather, the encounters are compelled, such as in mixed workplaces, educational institutions, and communities, where the parties display some degree of interdependence. Mary Parker Follett's vanguard tenet guides my exploration of complex contemporary reality: 'It is said that a mighty struggle is before us by-and-by when East meets West, and in that shock will be decided which

of these civilizations shall rule the world – that this is to be the great world-decision. No, the great world-decision is that each nation needs equally every other, therefore each will not only protect, but foster and increase the other that thereby it may increase its own stature' (Follett, 1918, p. 446).

What characterises the current conflict-ridden contexts: negative interdependence, contentious rivalry relations, or perhaps traces of transformation into positive interdependence, initial tendencies for cooperation? (Deutsch, 1973, 2000, 2011).

In an attempt to examine this query, we shall delineate the main features of the intricate environment, saturated with intergroup tensions, and labelled a divided society, followed by one of its most salient reflections—a protracted intergroup conflict.

'Divided society' refers to profound ruptures underlying the social framework where various groups display clashing, mutually exclusive, national, ethnic, and cultural identities, confirmed by suppression of the competing ones. Such construction of rival identities drastically curtails the potential for shared interests between the different social groups (Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003; Schaap, 2006). Protracted political conflicts present severe cases of a divided society, demonstrating numerous salient characteristics, such as continuation, stubbornness, and inescapability of the discords, endangered existential needs, and perceptions of intractability, namely a sense that the conflict cannot be resolved (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Such prolonged intergroup tensions often compound, erupting into violence, and eventually leading to deep-seated, harmful multifaceted and multilevel transitions, labelled 'conflict escalation'.

The next section describes the nature of the escalation process.

A conflict escalation process comprises a complex system of adverse transformations at individual, group, and social environment levels (Coleman, 2000; Gottman, 1993; Kriesberg, 1998; Pruitt et al., 1994; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995; Syna Desivilya, 2004; Toscano, 1998). The escalation entails simultaneously growing corrosion in five modalities of human experience: motivation, affect, cognition, behaviour, and social environment. According to Pruitt and Olczak (1995), these adverse multimodal changes constitute a system of intertwined components,

termed the MACBE model, representing the first letters of the 'diseased' modalities.

This system framework illuminates multimodal flaws 'infecting' individuals on either side of the conflict. In the motivational modality, each party adopts an exceedingly competitive, obstinate position, stemming from a 'zero-sum game' perception of the conflict, and changing the motivations from beating to destroying the opponent. In the affective sphere, the parties' emotions towards one another progressively shift from anger to overall antagonism, frequently transforming into hatred, fuelled by a desire for retaliation.

Faulty processes also harm the cognitive modality; that is, they exacerbate biased processing of information about the self and the other. The parties rely excessively on stereotypes, selectively perceiving the adversary, disproportionately evaluating negative information, while overlooking the opponent's positive aspects.

Conversely, self-serving bias is apparent in information processing about one's own side. Each side either discounts negative information or attributes it to external factors, whereas favourable evidence is inflated and ascribed to internal causes. An exceedingly negative image of the other generates mounting distrust between the rival parties.

The behavioural modality manifests increasingly antagonistic actions. The parties exhibit aggressive behaviour, at first demonstrated by verbal aggression, such as disparaging statements, then largely changing to physical violence. The parties face growing communication barriers, notably reflected in difficulties in listening to one another, thus maintaining a 'dialogue of the deaf'.

Presumably, the destructive transitions at individual level are inevitable owing to universal human limitations in processing social reality, labelled by social psychologists 'bias blind spot' or 'meta-bias' (West, Meserve, & Stanovich, 2012), and by Mitroff and Silvers (2010) as 'errors of the third and fourth kind'. Principally, both conceptualisations focus on the individual's fundamental impediment to engaging in critical thinking. Bias blind spot refers to the inability to detect one's own fallacies, while easily pinpointing them in others' information processing and thus, in turn, refraining from assuming responsibility for engaging with the problems. Error of the third kind pertains to the tendency to solve old and new

problems based on obsolete approaches, and failure to defy one's desires. Error of fourth kind refers to the unintentional fallacy of solving the wrong problems precisely. This fallacy bears significant political implications. The fundamental motivation for solving the wrong problems precisely stems from being caught in false conjectures of which individuals are largely ignorant. While an error of the third kind entails deluding ourselves, but not imposing mistaken strategies on others, an error of the fourth kind involves actually deceiving others.

Intragroup transformations in the social environment accompany the changes that have evolved at individual level. These include mounting ethnocentrism and groupthink (Coleman, 2000; Pruitt et al., 1994; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995; Syna Desivilya, 1998, 2004). Each group displays a proclivity for justifying its own goals, while delegitimising the rival group's aims (Bar-Tal, 2011). Groupthink symptoms involve growing within-group conformity and attempt to crush any internal opposition (Coleman, 2000). At the societal level, there is mounting polarisation, reflected in individuals and groups joining one of the opposing camps.

The group-level patterns persist due to the cognitive and motivational processes, such as biased information processing and the tendency to maintain positive group identity (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Syna Desivilya, 1998; Turner & Pratkanis, 1997). Adverse changes at the group and social environment level foster the mutual animosity experienced by individuals on both sides of the conflict.

In addition to the multimodal and multilevel features of the MACBE model, it postulates a circular causality, that is the antagonistic motivation, negative emotions and perceptions, aggressive behaviour, and a hostile environment that nourish each other. The vicious circles created in the complex process of conflict escalation engender a growing sense of psychological escalation, namely growing pessimism regarding the potential for resolving discords (Syna Desivilya, 2004).

Pruitt and Olczak's (1995) original MACBE framework primarily concentrated on escalating interpersonal conflict, yet they maintained that it would be relevant for intergroup discords as well. Other scholars followed the assumption that the system-like model is applicable to intergroup

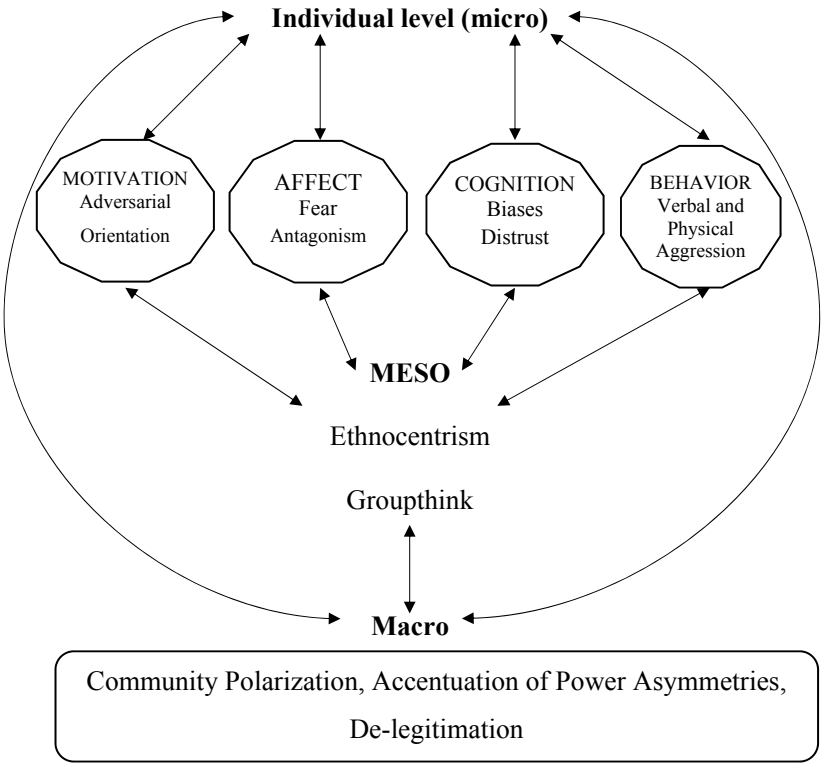

Fig. 2.1 Conflict escalation dynamics: MACBE model (*Source* Adapted from Syna Desivilya, 2004)

conflicts (Coleman, 2000; Desivilya & Gal, 2003; Desivilya & Hadar, 2001; Kriesberg, 1998; Syna Desivilya, 2004; Toscano, 1998). Our work incorporates the intergroup version of the MACBE model, schematically portrayed in Fig. 2.1, which was adapted from the one presented in Syna Desivilya (2004).

In the next section, we present research findings endorsing some components of the MACBE model with reference to intergroup conflicts.

Our first research was a case study of a conflict escalation process at a kibbutz in the north of Israel that was undergoing fundamental organisational changes (notably privatisation), which were sweeping communal settlements throughout Israel at the time. In the investigated case,

the disputing parties were two groups of kibbutz members, one supporting privatisation and the other opposing such a dramatic transformation.

The study aimed to shed light on the conflict escalation processes. Hence, we examined the emergent patterns of associations in the five domains: motivation, affect towards the other party, perceptions of the other, the actual behaviours adopted by each party, and the social environment. It also investigated the relationships between satisfaction level, investment, viability of alternatives, and the patterns of behaviour enacted by the individuals.

A stratified sample of 113 kibbutz residents (representing different age groups) participated in the study. A structured self-report questionnaire assessing all the major study variables served as the main research instrument. In addition, three individuals holding senior official positions responded to an open-ended questionnaire, addressing their perceptions regarding the conflict.

The results lent support to the systemic view of the conflict escalation process, namely a destructive sequence inflicting harmful changes in the motivational, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural spheres. The overt behaviour (notably verbal aggression) of each party seemed to suggest escalatory changes in the three other modalities. In the motivation domain, each group revealed mounting proclivity for forcing a solution on the other; at the cognitive level, members expressed growing distrust of the opponent; and in terms of affect, they displayed animosity verging on hatred towards the adversary group. Competitive motivation was the best predictor of ingroup cohesion in each of the camps. Moreover, individuals felt compelled to join one of the two camps, a phenomenon pointing to a change in the social environment domain (Desivilya & Hadar, 2001).

However, as we predicted, based on Rusbult's (1993) program of research, the actual behaviours enacted in the course of conflict escalation would not necessarily be uniformly destructive. The behavioural responses would depend on factors external to the escalation process, that is satisfaction level with kibbutz life, amount of investment in the kibbutz community, and viability of alternatives to kibbutz life. Indeed, the findings showed that positive attitudes towards the kibbutz community

tended to mitigate destructive behavioural inclinations, while enhancing constructive proclivities. The more satisfied the members were with kibbutz life, the more likely they were to enact constructive behaviours, and less likely to behave in a destructive fashion despite difficulties in the relationships between the two camps. In a similar vein, the greater their investment in the kibbutz community, the more they tended to exhibit constructive behaviour and revealed lower proclivity for enacting destructive behaviours. However, viability of alternatives to kibbutz life was not associated with any of the behavioural reactions. Conceivably, the members who opted for the most extreme form of destructive action 'exited the battlefield' (left the kibbutz community); hence, they were not included in our sample.

The model emphasises the subjective interpretation ascribed by individuals to the conflict process. Thus, the escalatory sequence evolves through a perception of divergence of interests, reflected in internal transformation in the motivational, cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and environmental arenas. When the other side shares the perception of divergence, the resultant process forms vicious circles of destructive responses. Such a process usually plants residues at both individual and group levels, which are difficult to dissolve (Pruitt et al., 1994; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

In a way, the findings portrayed a gloomy picture: the kibbutz members experienced rather severe conflict escalation, which created a split into two opposing groups living within the same community in a state of high tensions and enmity. This is in fact an almost a tragic situation, since a kibbutz is not merely a place of residence, but mainly belief in a way of life and a vision. When these beliefs are threatened and disrupted, in the individuals' perception, virtually all the foundations of their life tend to collapse.

Notwithstanding the adverse transformations at individual and group levels, the study implies that these negative consequences can be mitigated, even in the face of crisis. Presumably, when the parties' relationships rest on solid foundations, namely built on foundations of positive interdependence, as was the case in kibbutz society, there is a potential for moderating the disruptive influence of conflict escalation. Indeed, as the results suggested, a sense of investment in the kibbutz community

and overall satisfaction with kibbutz life increased the individual's resistance to destructive reactions, and their capacity to respond with acts signalling willingness for cooperation and joint attempts to deal with their differences. Such tendencies mitigate the escalation process and its adverse consequences.

Our results are congruent with the findings obtained in Rusbult's (1993) program of research, conducted in both interpersonal and organisational contexts, and at least partially support previous research in the area of conflict escalation (Pruitt et al., 1994; Rubin, 1993), indicating the significance of subjective individual experiences in this destructive sequence. Furthermore, they contribute to the generalisation of the extant results, since the research was conducted in a novel context of a cooperative community, which has not previously been investigated in the conflict escalation arena.

The transforming kibbutz represents a setting that reflects one of the fundamental schisms in contemporary Israeli society, rooted in opposed economic outlooks: the socialist outlook, instituted in the State of Israel at its inception, and the more recent prevailing trend of a neoliberal capitalist economy, shared by many contemporary societies in Europe and North America (Beck, 2000; Moreau & Leathwood, 2006; Müller, 2016). Our subsequent research focused on the most salient division in Israeli society—the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict—and its legacies on the beliefs and values of Israelis. It examined the ramifications of the prolonged political tensions on Israelis' moral judgements and perceptions concerning human rights violations, pondering whether the destructive transformations threaten democracy' (Desivilya Syna & Yassour-Borochowitz, 2010).

The subset of findings presented here emerged from an international research project, directed by Prof. Kathleen Malley-Morrison from Boston University, in which more than forty countries participated. The study used the Personal and Institutional Rights to Aggression and Peace Survey (PAIRTAPS, Malley-Morrison, 2009), which was administered to samples of ordinary people in each of the participating countries. The research instrument consisted of six sections, capturing judgements concerning the extent to which governments have the right to perform acts of aggression; perceptions concerning the rights of individuals to grow

up and live in a world of peace, and the right to demonstrate against war; attitudes towards patriotism and the United States' involvement in the Iraq War; projected emotional responses that might be experienced following direct or indirect exposure to acts of governmental violence; the study participants' subjective definitions of concepts such as 'war', 'torture', 'terrorism', 'peace', and 'reconciliation'; and views on the likelihood of attaining peace and its connection with national, individual, and family security.

Four sections were quantitative, that is largely structured, and two were qualitative, requesting open-ended, verbal responses. The Israeli sample comprised 155 adult Israeli citizens, aged 19–81. Most (84%) were Jewish, 11% were Muslim, 4% were Christian, and the remaining 1% did not indicate their nationality or religion. The majority (62%) had a high school education, 11% had a bachelor's degree, 9% had a master's degree, and 2% had a doctoral degree. Eighty-three per cent were students at the time of data collection. Over 70% rated their socioeconomic status as middle class. Seventy-nine of the respondents served in the army (nearly all of them in the Israel Defence Forces).

We shall focus here on a small subset of the results, capturing the attitudes of Israeli citizens to government aggression and human rights violations, shedding light on the moral aspects of these perceptions. The findings are based on responses to 10 items from the survey: the right of the police to use violence against citizens; governments ignoring international treaties; the rights of citizens to stage protests against war and in favour of peace; the right of the government/security forces to physically or mentally torture and kill a human being in order to fight international terrorism; judgements on whether disagreement with the government and its decisions is a non-patriotic act; the importance of supporting the government in time of war; judgement on whether in all military actions around the world it is possible to identify who is right and who is wrong; perception of the respondent's country's involvement in armed conflict as being morally right.

We also content-analysed the open-ended explanations following each of these items and extracted major themes from the verbal responses to two hypothetical scenarios: another nation recklessly bombards a city in your country, and a similar action performed by your own country.

Drawing on the social psychological theories presented earlier, the main assumption underlying our study was that the system-wide transformations developed in the protracted escalation process give rise to a utilitarian ethnocentric orientation. That is, such prolonged intergroup discord fosters each party's inclination to focus on attaining benefits for its own side, while disregarding the utility and potentially harmful outcomes for the other side (Bar-Tal, 2007; Coleman, 2000, 2004; Pruitt & Olczak, 1995; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

Hence, the specific local context of protracted political conflict may hinder moral judgements as a result of precipitating the activation of the 'enemy' schema and the proclivity for internal, ingroup conformity. These combined fallacies evolving in the social environment saturated by asymmetric intergroup tensions (between Israelis and Palestinians) interfere with the development of critical consciousness (Foucault, 1994; Freire, 1997).

Indeed, the study showed that Israelis display an inclination for limiting democratic standards and values of justice and ethics to their own side and to the abstract notion of a human being. By contrast, they tend to rely on an invidious orientation towards the opponent group, particularly as confronted in the local circumstances.

The majority of the participants stated that supporting governments in time of crisis, such as war, is important. The main responses to a hypothetical scenario of another nation's aggression against one's country were hatred, rage, and a desire for revenge. Hence, the Israeli respondents displayed very little tolerance towards disloyalty and lack of support for the official authorities in times of war. Interestingly, in general, they do not view disagreement with the government as a non-patriotic act. Presumably, the Israeli participants have internalised the fundamental democratic principles, albeit applying them rather selectively in their judgements, as befitting the particular circumstances. Consequently, they tend to morally endorse the government's military actions. Apparently, Israelis evaluate the local context embracing a utilitarian ethnocentric orientation. Nevertheless, their judgements concerning the justice and ethicality of military actions worldwide reflect the capacity for rather complex information processing.

Israelis' emotional responses to government violence reveal equivocal judgements concerning democracy and human rights. They view aggression geared at seemingly innocent civilians as violating human rights, yet do not condemn similar behaviours enacted towards the opponent—their adversary social group (Palestinians). On the contrary, such aggression elicits rationalisation and justification.

Notwithstanding such adverse and ambiguous tendencies by the Israeli respondents, the findings provide some indication of deontological reasoning, or even some evidence of ethics of care, notably when referring to general declarations extracted from the local setting. Thus, more than half of the study participants condemned the government's disregard for international treaties, claiming that such accords protect human rights and prevent abuse of power by official authorities.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents were opposed to granting the government the right to physically or mentally torture or kill a human being in the fight against terror, since such acts violate the fundamental human right to life. Most respondents endorsed the right of citizens to protest against war and in favour of peace, stating that such actions represent the basic democratic right to freedom of speech.

Hence, despite ethnocentric inclinations, in general, the Israeli respondents have not abandoned democratic principles, although they display a tendency to apply them selectively in their judgements, mostly in situations calling for evaluations of rather abstract and general statements removed from the local conflictual context.

Overall, our findings suggest that the local experiences of war and prolonged political conflict affect Israelis' moral reasoning. The recurring violence is deeply sustained in their memories, compromising the complexity of judgements and consequently relying on egocentric evaluations. Although Israelis do seem to preserve their general humanistic tendencies, a substantial proportion of their views exhibit information processing from the perspective of a threatened victim (Bar-Tal, 2007; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

Protagonists experiencing protracted national conflict are inclined to accept government violence in the course of a crisis, releasing the official political authorities from the necessity of upholding human rights. In line with Van Beest and Van Dijk's (2007) theorising, such unfortunate circumstances markedly modify moral judgements, constricting the

'casualties' scope of justice. Moreover, according to social utility theory and research on coalition formation, protracted political conflicts confine the yardsticks of justice to ingroups, consequently evaluating government aggression and abuse of human rights in a self-serving manner (Loewenstein, Issacharoff, Camerer, & Babcock, 1993; Loewenstein & Moore, 2004). Thus, people experiencing intense and prolonged intergroup conflict tend to view the government's aggression towards the opponent much more leniently, justifying it as self-defence. By contrast, judgements of the enemy's violence become increasingly harsh and viewed as immoral. Such distorted ethical evaluations tend to amplify in vague situations where clear-cut information is not available.

Importantly, such biased justice perceptions largely escape the actors' awareness, in turn resulting in the belief that their views of reality are accurate and objective (Van Beest & Van Dijk, 2007). Drawing on Batson et al. (2003), conceivably, harmed moral reasoning also stems from lesser ability to view the situation from the other's perspective by people embroiled in protracted intergroup conflict (Desivilya & Rottman, 2008; Syna Desivilya, 2004). The deep-seated psychological transformations resulting from adverse experiences in continuing political discord impair the individual's capacity for observing reality from the other's (the adversary!) vantage point, precipitating the utilitarian ethnocentric moral approach.

In conclusion, this chapter presented the complex processes characterising protracted conflicts, especially their escalation process, manifesting fundamental multilevel and multimodal psychosocial changes. These transitions have profound ramifications for individuals, groups, and communities, particularly for how they negotiate and construe meaning with regard to their social environment and their actual interactions. 'Veterans' of protracted conflicts tend to use universal standards and values with great reservation, mainly towards members of their ingroup.

The sparse and ethnocentric orientation hinders collaborative relations at best, often promoting actual aggressive behaviour and feeding the vicious circles of escalation. Thus, although people living in dangerous sociopolitical environments of protracted conflict have not fully abandoned their ability to value human rights, equality, and justice, safeguarding the humanistic and democratic principles poses an arduous task under such complex circumstances of continuous political conflict.

We have described how the divided context, notably protracted conflict, informs the subjective perceptions of the protagonists actually experiencing such a complex reality. The next chapter elucidates the reflections of such a reality in attempts to manage diversity in real-life settings, such as work, educational, and community contexts. It places special emphasis on the contribution of critical theories to understanding diversity management in places and times of political tensions.

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3

Understanding the Interface of Diversity and Political Tensions in the Context of Divided Societies: A Multifocal Perspective of Social Psychology and Critical Theory

Abstract This chapter juxtaposes and interfaces social psychological conceptual frameworks and critical sociological theories. The essentialist school of thought focuses on universal individual- and group-level limitations in processing the social world. By contrast, the critical theory underscores the construction of intergroup power relations, controlled through discourse by dominant social actors. These social construction processes privilege the dominant social forces, while marginalising other social players. Unlike the essentialist tradition, the critical approach emphasises the influence of the specific context of everyday practice on the development of social relations. This chapter opens a dialogue between the two perspectives in an attempt to enlist their joint potential for illuminating diversity management in places and times of tensions.

Keywords Diversity · Political tensions · Social psychology · Essentialist approach · Critical approach · Divided society

This chapter opens with a virtual visit to the visual arts, observing ways of depicting contrasting elements in a complex configuration. Michelangelo's masterpiece at the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican Museum constitutes a vivid example of such accomplishment.

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The renaissance artist's revolutionary early sixteenth-century frescos on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel render a remarkable attempt to spatially, physically, and symbolically interconnect disparate elements. Hence, it is a fitting prelude to the present chapter on diversity management, interfacing scholarly disciplines, and evolving in a divided society reflecting persistent political tensions.

Michelangelo did not create separate paintings, but rather positioned an intricate multifaceted staging of scenes from the Book of Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament, in a Catholic church, albeit devoid of images of Jesus Christ. Despite his physical absence, Jesus' presence is implicitly foretold by the portrayal of the Sibyls, the pagan oracles of the inevitable coming of the saviour of humankind.

Michelangelo juxtaposes contradictory elements: the omnipotent God and the creation of the world, separating light and darkness; the hallmark of the divine project—the creation of the most perfect creature—man—and distinguishing between the sexes; Adam and Eve's disobedience of God, which illuminated the opposites of good and evil; the juxtaposition of the Prophets from the Old Testament and their astonishing pagan female counterparts, the Sibyls, and Noah's sacrifice. The Libyan Sibyl and the nude figures incorporate the revival of the ancient art into the complex configuration (http://www.oldandsold.com/articles11/culture-14.shtml).

How does Michelangelo's exceptional artistic achievement echo the contemporary reality of diversity overshadowed by social divisions, especially protracted political conflicts? Are scholars and practitioners devising complex frameworks, capturing the complex reality through a multifocal lens, highlighting its dialectic and paradoxical elements, yet interconnecting them? This chapter sets out to explore this query. It interfaces and interlocks conceptual frameworks founded on social psychological and sociological critical theories in order to more fully grasp the intricate endeavour of managing diversity fraught with political tensions.

The previous chapter addressed the experiences of people living in areas and times of political tensions that not only persist over lengthy periods, but often rocket and spiral. It focused on the meaning of the encounter with the 'adversary' in the eyes of the beholder, and the actual

ways of engaging such harsh events. Indeed, the participants in our studies described their experiences as quite precarious and revealed the multimodal and multilevel legacies of protracted conflicts. These residues involve increasingly contentious motivation, invidious perceptions, distrust, deep antagonism and fear of the other, as well as magnifying communication barriers, and growing tendencies for aggressive actions.

The fundamental systemic transformations evolving in the course of escalation phases of protracted conflict seem to have grave consequences for the individual's capacity to live with the other, who is viewed as an enemy threatening one's own existential needs and identity. This growing sense of animosity and fear of the other joins the tendency to deny the legitimacy of the other's needs and identities. Apart from the ramifications at individual level, the vicious circles of escalation impede intergroup relatio ns, hinder cooperation, and obstruct adherence to democratic principles at the macro societal level (Müller, 2016).

The present chapter elucidates the reflections of this complex reality in attempts to engage diversity in real-life settings, such as work, educational, and community contexts. It portrays a broad perspective by interfacing and intersecting two disparate approaches to diversity—essentialist and critical—that have rarely converged and conversed.

Studies on organisational diversity have drawn on two main theoretical orientations: the essentialist approach, based on a social psychological perspective, and the critical approaches, subsuming post-structuralism, discourse analysis, cultural studies, post-colonialism, institutional theory, and labour process theory (Janssens & Zanoni, 2014; Knights & Omanović, 2016; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). Each approach is reviewed separately, and the two orientations are subsequently interlocked.

The essentialist orientation conceptualises diversity as differences in a wide range of group members' characteristics, mainly demographic features, such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Scholars embracing the essentialist approach proposed additional typologies of diversity. Mohammed and Angell (2004) distinguished between surface-level diversity, referring to demographic differences, and deep-level diversity, pertaining to disparities in attitudes, values, capabilities, and personality.

Harrison and Klein (2007) coined three distinct elements of diversity: variety (differences in expertise and knowledge), separation (differences in position among unit members, that is incongruences on a horizontal range), and disparity (differences in control of valued social resources, notably status and pay among unit members, namely on the vertical range). Ostensibly, the variety component carries the potential for promoting the functioning of work teams in organisations: it allows organisational issues to be viewed through different lenses, and a myriad of alternatives to be considered for dealing with organisational problems. Conversely, separation and disparity are the elements of diversity that hinder work team functioning and performance (Harrison & Klein, 2007).

The essentialist school of thought, which is informed by the basic concepts and phenomena studied in social psychology, such as prejudice, stereotypes, social identity, and social categorisation, ingroup favouritism, and faultlines (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; van Knippenberg, Dawson, West, & Homan, 2011), has focused by and large on universal individual- and group-level limitations in processing the social world. Thus, drawing on social categorisation and social identity (SIT) models and the concept of 'faultlines' (Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the essentialist approach attempted to explicate the mechanisms operating in diverse groups and organisations. SIT posits that individuals develop their social identity by differentiating themselves from the 'other' through their group affiliation. Interaction with members of other social groups spurs categorisation and an inclination to view the ingroup more positively in comparison with the outgroups (ingroup favouritism).

The faultline notion (hypothetical dividing lines splitting a group into subgroups and spurring polarisation between ingroup and outgroup members) further expanded analysis of the negative effects of separation and disparity in heterogeneous groups. According to van Knippenberg et al. (2011), the central aspect governing the valence of diversity effects is the salience of social categorisation, and not the mere existence of differences. Hence, the positive effect dominates a group adopting a cooperative motivation, manifesting a team-identity and common goals, and in turn promotes within-group cooperation. By contrast, the negative influence of diversity prevails when social categorisation

is highly conspicuous. Conceivably, the context of a divided society characterised by persistent intergroup schisms fosters the salience of social categorisation, accentuating the ingroup versus outgroup split, and giving rise to the faultline phenomenon. The section on critical approaches to diversity further elaborates on the contribution of the divided context to the adverse effects of diversity on intragroup and intergroup relations in such intricate settings.

Organisational research driven by the essentialist approach focuses on fixed categories and objective differences, underscoring the individual's cognitions, motivations, affect, and behaviours at group level, and their reflections in intergroup dynamics. Notwithstanding the contributions of this approach to understanding diversity, most of the theoretical frameworks neglected to consider the internal variations and intersections of social categories and the contextual influences, especially the implicit and largely hidden aspects that encapsulate power asymmetries orchestrated by social institutions (Becker, Kraus, & Rheinschmidt-Same, 2017; Desivilya Syna, Yassour-Borochowitz, Bouknik, Kalovsky, Lavy, & Ore, 2017; Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016; Knights & Omanović, 2016).

Another limitation of this orientation pertains to the insufficient consideration of the subjectively embedded identities and their changing aspects. The dynamic nature of identities occasionally enables individuals to use their agency even under clearly inferior social circumstances (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2015; Calás, Ou, & Smircich, 2013; Fuller, 2011; Li & Sadler, 2011).

The praxis angle of the essentialist diversity perspective focuses on the instrumental aspects of organisational practice. In other words, this approach aims to reap the benefits from effective diversity management in terms of organisational performance, referred to as the 'business case of diversity' (Zanoni et al., 2010).

In recent decades, the critical approach to diversity has contested the hegemony of the social psychological essentialist perspective. In contrast with the impersonal and apolitical nature of the social categorisation perspective, this alternative school of thought, inspired by Foucault (1994) and Derrida (2000), concentrates on the construction of intergroup power relations, controlled through discourse by dominant social

actors, such as central official authorities, elite organisations, and national majorities. The social construction processes privilege the dominant social forces while marginalising other social players (Dhanani, Beus, & Joseph, 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014; Jones, 2014; Müler, 2016; Zanoni, 2011).

The critical theories view diversity as socially (re)created in continuous processes that unfold in specific contexts. Beyond challenging the instrumental standpoint of differences ingrained in the essentialist diversity framework, the critical perspectives attempt to illuminate the mechanisms underlying the social construction processes, namely how current power asymmetries in a specific context influence attempts to sustain the inequalities, resist such forces, or modify them (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2015; Zanoni et al., 2010). The critical approach also highlights the influence of the specific context of everyday practice on the development of social relations (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2015; Holck et al., 2016; Knights & Omanović, 2016).

At this point, the chapter opens a dialogue between the essentialist and critical diversity research perspectives in an attempt to enlist their joint potential to illuminate diversity management in places and times of tensions. Integrative communication between the two perspectives can make the encounters with social issues bolder and better adapted to the changing realities of complex, divided, and diversified societies, as succinctly phrased by Kristeva (1991: pp. 1–2): 'The question is again before us today as we confront an economic and political integration on the scale of the planet: shall we be, intimately and subjectively, able to live with others, to live as others, without ostracism but also without levelling? The modification in the status of foreigners that is imperative today leads one to reflect on our ability to accept new modalities of otherness…'

My own professional development mirrors this proposed multifocal gaze and analysis, namely embracing the dialectic stance of the insider-outsider position, adopting the essentialist social psychological orientation, while also considering the critical perspective, being at times 'lost in translation', but despite the ambiguities and confusion, attempting to discover new translations. This also echoes the call for interdisciplinary

work, flexible approaches in dealing with complexities of human relations and social structures, and shedding light on the research-practice interface.

Hence, I draw on Boxenbaum and Rouleau's (2011) 'bricolage' approach to promote deep learning and understanding of a complex phenomenon, while juxtaposing two streams of literature: legacies of protracted conflict as reflected in organisational intergroup relations, and diversity management in organisations. This approach aims to develop a framework for pooling together existing theories and surmising, rather than inventing, a new theory, as put by Dawkins and Barker (2018: p. 3): '…integrating similar but somewhat divergent literature streams into a more focused trajectory'. The improvisational mode of knowledge production enables the distilling of novel insights with regard to the scantly researched phenomenon of diversity management in the shadow of political tensions.

The universal individual-level limitations, as well as the meso- and macro-level social construction processes underlying the protracted conflict legacies, produce a complex organisational reality, saturated with overt and hidden intergroup tensions. How do these frictions unfold in everyday interactions between diverse members of an organisation in the context of social divisions, especially protracted conflict? To unravel this query, we interlock the essentialist and the critical orientations to the study of organisational diversity management. The former approach mainly focuses on individual motivations, perceptions, emotions, behaviours, and intragroup dynamics as they evolve vis-à-vis the adversary group (Desivilya Syna, 2015). The critical approach captures intergroup tensions as an organisational phenomenon, intertwined with regular work practices and routine activities (Gadlin, 1994; Kolb, 2004, 2008; Kolb & Bartunek, 1992; Mikkelsen & Clegg, 2018; Putnam, 2010). Organisational protagonists seldom identify and term interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup tensions as conflicts, often dealing with frictions informally 'behind the scenes' (Desivilya Syna, Shamir, & Shamir-Balderman, 2015; Kolb & Putnam, 1992; Putnam, 2010).

The social construction of intergroup tensions links them with organisational power dynamics, reflected in everyday interactions and communications between the protagonists in organisations (Foucault, 1994;

Kolb & McGinn, 2009; Kolb & Putnam, 1992). Accordingly, everyday organisational activities reveal how organisational actors realise, individually and collectively, their resistance and opposition. They do so through communications attempting to reframe their power position vis-à-vis the other(s), namely by negotiating the rules of engagement (Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012; Fuller, 2011; Kolb, 2004, 2008).

What do such informal negotiations of the game rules look like in organisations operating in the context of a protracted, active political conflict, with its profound negative multimodal and multilevel legacies? How do the dominant (power elites) assert their legitimacy and supremacy, and how do their less powerful counterparts negotiate legitimacy, express resistance, and exercise their agency? What is negotiable for each party? How does the structural advantage of the dominant groups and the disadvantage of their counterparts unfold in the process of negotiating the rules of the game?

In divided societies, especially those engulfed by protracted conflicts, the power asymmetries reflect unequal relationships between the dominant political factions and the underprivileged groups. The former subsume a national or ethnic majority, dominant religious groups, and individuals and groups with strong ties to the governing political leadership. The latter include ethnic or religious minorities and other excluded groups, such as women, low socioeconomic status groups, residents of the socio-geographic peripheries, and intersections between these socially disadvantaged populations (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Desivilya et al., 2017; Peled, 2016).

Extant, albeit rather scant, research shows the manifestations of political tensions in diverse organisations and communities entrenched in divided settings. This line of research mainly reflects the social psychological, essentialist orientation. Studies conducted in post-conflict societies (Northern Ireland and South Africa) that addressed people's daily experiences in work organisations and communities point to the 'long-arm' of the legacies of protracted conflicts. Formal peace agreements and desegregation policies have hardly mitigated the negative psychological and social ramifications for intergroup relations. Individuals in the rival groups continue to experience a sense of threat and distrust towards the other, tend to display mutual disrespect and prejudice, and consequently

avoid contact (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003; Schmid, Tausch, Hewstone, Hughes, & Cairns, 2008).

Research conducted in the context of active and asymmetric national conflict that embraces both the essentialist and critical perspectives shows that such settings enhance the destructive ramifications for the adversaries' relationships, while accentuating the existing structural power asymmetry of the broader sociopolitical context in real-life work settings (Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Maoz, 2011; Syna Desivilya, 1998, 2004).

Zooming in on the Israeli scene, recent years evince mounting escalation episodes, accompanied by growing delegitimisation of the Arab minority[1] by the political elite—the militant right-wing Jewish leadership—by means of rhetoric as well as actions, such as legislation undermining democracy, particularly minority rights (Desivilya Syna, 2016; Jabareen, 2016; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016; Zoher, 2016). This trend exacerbates the intergroup divisions and tensions in work-related and community encounters, while intensifying the vulnerable position of the Israeli Palestinian minority (Alon & Bar-Tal, 2016; Bekerman, 2018; Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016; Weill, 2011, 2016).

Thus far, research suggests that the residues of protracted, active national conflict pose a special challenge for diversity management in organisations and communities, turning it into a paradoxical endeavour. It entails engendering equality, social justice, humane relations, and cooperative interactions in the face of intractable asymmetric national conflict (Desivilya, Rottman, & Raz, 2012; Desivilya et al., 2017; Maoz, 2011).

Drawing on extant research, from the social psychological, essentialist perspective, the paradox involves engaging diversity by the protagonists

[1]The terms 'Arabs', 'Israeli Palestinians', and 'Arabs/Palestinians' will be used interchangeably throughout the book to designate the Arab population (including Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Bedouins) living in Israel, who stayed within the borders of the State after its establishment in 1948 and/or were born in the State of Israel and hold Israeli citizenship. Such variant use of the terms is due to the paucity of a neutral term for this ethno-national group, recognising its own diverse preferences and the shifting and contextual character of identity.

while confronting the other who embodies the adversary. The enemy image of the other precipitates the parties' prevailing tendency to concentrate on deterring the apparent threats posed by the outgroup, protecting the ingroup's interests, therefore embracing either contentious modes of handling the persistent tensions, or resorting to avoidance. The former stance tends to be adopted by the dominant group, whereas the latter proclivity is more prevalent among members of the disadvantaged group (Desivilya et al., 2017; Raz-Rotem, Desivilya Syna, & Maoz, 2019).

Such inclinations hardly encourage transformation of the intergroup encounter into cooperation. In the course of active political conflict, the parties are highly unlikely to accept the differences and are consequently hardly motivated to synergise their efforts (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2016). On the contrary, negation of the other triumphs due to the salience of oppositions, hence amplification of faultlines. The adverse tendency prevails despite the interdependence reflected in common goals, such as patient care in medical settings, and inter-organisational partnerships (Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012).

Connecting and integrating the critical perspective with the social psychological, essentialist orientation provides a broader understanding of the paradoxical task of engaging diversity in contexts engulfed by protracted political conflicts. The sociological critical orientation contributes to the contextual aspects, notably the mechanisms whereby the dominant social institutions accentuate the asymmetric power relations between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups, thereby fostering a societal climate that undermines mutual respect, equality, and social justice, and consequently impedes an inclusive orientation, and collaboration and partnership building between diverse groups.

The social elites propagate societal unity as embedded in the privileged group's identity, such as the dominant nationality, ethnicity, and religion. These prevailing forces claim authority over the national, social, and cultural agenda, while neglecting differences at best, and at worst portraying the other (the minorities) in sombre colours, such as a traitor or a fifth column (Desivilya Syna, Arieli, & Raz-Rotem, n.d., unpublished).

These societal tendencies of political elites seem to thrive in the light of the recent rise of populist leaders around the world, such as Trump, Orbán, Erdoyan, Putin, Berlusconi, and Marine Le Pen. Their ideas and

leadership pose threats to core democratic principles, restricting freedom of speech and pluralism. Contrary to their proclamations of representing and protecting the interests of all, the populists continue to build up their own power, precipitating increasingly authoritarian regimes that delegitimise the 'incongruous' citizens and residents. Free democratic elections do not guarantee democratic governance, for the populist leaders manage to twist the political system to match their needs and agendas (Müller, 2016; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016).

Beyond unravelling the social construction of power asymmetries, the critical approach also allows exposure of the dialectic facets of diversity management at the interface of political tensions: contradictory and polar elements operating in tandem. The overt and hidden opposites constitute the most evident duality.

Thus, at the overt level, diversity management points to efforts designed to establish intergroup relations based on equality and social just ice. These attempts pertain to legislation directed at equal opportunity in employment, workplaces, and public service. Although some of these efforts indeed contribute to pluralistic orientation and effective diversity management rooted in social justice, ethnographic research evinces the other, disguised pole, where power asymmetries between the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' are sustained and even loom larger due to the very effort to generate (ostensibly) diversity-related policies and practices (Mutsaers & Trux, 2015). As the old adage maintains, good intentions sometimes pave the way to hell.

The latent pole also subsumes the declarative elements, manifested in the rhetoric among upper echelon personnel oriented to public relations and organisational marketing, mainly pursuing the 'business case' of diversity rather than promoting genuine expression of diverse voices and their inclusion in strategic decision-making in organisations (Ali, 2019). In addition, notwithstanding the value of legislation promoting equal opportunities in organisations, the populist leaders attempt, and often accomplish, the opposite. They manipulate democratic rules while mobilising political support, thereby undermining diversity based on social justice and equality by means of antidemocratic legislation and bills, such as the recently passed Nation-State Law in Israel, regressive legislation, such as denying abortions, and immigration of diverse

social groups (refugees from warzones) in Poland and various states in the United States.

Resisting the dominant trends reflected in the social ethos and political agendas becomes increasingly difficult in the context of divided societies, especially those engulfed by protracted national intergroup conflicts. These societies present a major challenge for underprivileged social players, such as national or ethnic minorities as well as other non-mainstream political factions, in exercising agency (Ali, 2019; Desivilya Syna, 2016; Müller, 2016; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016).

Interestingly, the dialectics of diversity management at times manifests in achieving its goals of social justice and equality despite the deliberate lack of institutional diversity policy. The equitable and cooperative relationships between diverse employees become feasible due to genuine values and norms encouraging inclusion and participation (Mutsaers & Trux, 2015).

Table 3.1 recaps the comparison between the essentialist, critical, and integrated perspectives in the following dimensions: theoretical foci; levels of explanation; consequences for the protagonists; and nature of the paradoxes. The interlocked framing attempts to broadly and comprehensively capture the inherent paradoxes and challenges of diversity management in times and places of political tensions.

The next three chapters present organisational and community cases that attempt to shed light on the protagonists' experiences of engaging diversity in the context of divided Israeli society with its most salient schism—the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Each case is viewed through the multifocal lens of the integrated perspective. I now turn to contextualising these cases.

Looking superficially at everyday life, Israeli Jewish and Palestinian citizens maintain largely undisturbed and calm relationships despite the deep schisms plaguing society. Yet, as indicated earlier, this seemingly peaceful intergroup atmosphere constantly carries the potential for conflict escalation that quite often materialises.

Israeli society is composed of a national majority of Jewish immigrants and their descendants, and a minority of Palestinians, who remained in Israel after 1948, and their descendants. The Jewish majority presents five major internal splits: religious-secular, Ashkenazi (European)-Sephardic

Table 3.1 The paradox of diversity management in times and places of political tensions: essentialist, critical, and integrated perspectives

	Essentialist	Critical	Integrated
Theoretical foci	Social psychological: social schemas (stereotypes and prejudice) social identity and social categorisation (ingroup favouritism, ethnocentrism, fault lines)	Sociological: institutional and societal construction of power relations construction (accentuating dominating-dominated power gaps); contextual mechanisms: divided society (protracted national intergroup conflict), populist political leadership	Social psychological and sociological: reciprocal relations between individual and group-level biases and institutional/social construction of power asymmetries and specific contextual facets
Level of explanation	Micro: Individual and group levels	Macro and Meso: Organisational and societal level	Multilevel: micro, meso, and macro
Consequences for protagonists	Delegitimisation of the minority group ('enemy') by the majority and use of contentious strategies; minority embracing avoidance; diminished motivation of both groups' for contact and cooperation	Social climate undermining mutual respect, equality, social justice between the social elites and the underprivileged, impeding inclusive orientation	Infiltration of contextual influences into groups, organisations, and communities; enhanced power gaps (dominating vs. dominated) accentuating delegitimisation of the 'other' (adversary/rival); constricting synchronisation and collaboration among diverse individuals, groups and communities
The nature of paradoxes	Delegitimisation of the other due to enemy image contradicting diversity management—dis-respecting and de-valuing the other's perspective	Antidemocratic social climate fostering exclusion of the 'other' contradicting diversity management based on social justice, equality and inclusion	Paradox dialectically embedded: surface (overt) and hidden (covert) contradicting (prevailing force) and simultaneously encouraging diversity management in accordance with essentialist and critical perspectives; challenge of negotiating reality (coordinating meaning) and the rules of engagement, exercising agency and resistance counteracting the dominant ethos and agendas

(Asian-African), veterans-newcomers, and doves (political left)-hawks (political right). The Arab minority subsumes several subcategories: Sunni Muslims, various Christian groups, Druze, and Bedouin. All the Palestinian minority groups face inequality in comparison with the Jewish majority, but they also display internally different statuses and identities that at times lead to tensions and open confrontations.

Over the years, encounters between different groups and subgroups in Israeli society have at times generated intergroup conflicts due to the manifold divisions. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the Jewish–Palestinian schism has remained prominent in the light of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as well as the discord and tensions with neighbouring Arab countries. The past decade has featured frequent violent outbursts in the political Israeli–Palestinian conflict, exacerbating the intergroup tensions (Alon & Bar-Tal, 2016; Bekerman, 2018). Israel's current political leadership, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, reflects the populist tendencies indicated earlier, that further incite and nourish the internal schisms (Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016).

Research on the ramifications of such escalating tensions for the actual functioning of Israeli Jews and Palestinians in mixed organisations and communities is scarce. How do the protagonists make sense of such an intricate reality, and negotiate reality and the rules of engagement in organisations operating in the context of protracted active political conflict, with its profound multimodal and multilevel negative legacies? How do the dominant (power elites) assert their legitimacy and supremacy, and how do their less powerful counterparts negotiate legitimacy, express resistance, and exercise their agency? What is negotiable for each party? What stories and narratives do the protagonists relate?

The analysis of the cases elucidates how the experiences of organisational members or community residents appear in the eyes of the beholders: How do the protagonists perceive diversity given the persistent political tensions? How do they cope with such a complex societal and relational reality? What strategies do they embrace?

The next three chapters allow the protagonists to speak in their own voices, depicting their interactions as they evolve in real-life settings. Since I sought to elucidate not only the cognitive, but also the emotional facets of the protagonists' experiences in their encounters with diversity

and political tensions, I embraced the performative inquiry approach as advocated by Shotter and Tsoukas (2014). Consequently, the analysis of the cases concentrates on: 'Exploring felt emotions and the actions they prefigure, and looking for particular sequences of actions and how they interactively unfold' (p. 379). By focusing on the research participants' interpretation of their experiences, I aim to portray their attempts at negotiating their terms of engagement at work, in academia, and in the community.

In concluding the present chapter and making the transition to the real-life arena, I pay another visit to an exhibition, this time a local one in the domain of architecture. This show is highly relevant to the three cases, as it deals with real life, imposed daily reality of engaging diverse religious rites in a protracted political context. The exhibition, entitled 'In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation', was exhibited at Tel Aviv Museum of Art from 15 January to 12 June 2019. It was curated by Deborah Pinto Fdeda, Ifat Finkelman, Oren Sagiv, and Tania Coen-Uzzielli. The exhibition represented Israel at the 16th International Architecture Exhibition, La Bienalle di Venezia, in 2018.

As phrased in the accompanying materials distributed at the museum, the exhibition explored 'the codes that govern holy places shared by different religious groups and communities. In the region known as the Holy Land, an ancient arena of struggle over both territory and worship rights, the Status Quo is an essential regulatory tool […] "In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation" offers a contemporary reading of these unique and ever-challenging mechanisms of coexistence and their impact on the local landscape. The exhibition focuses on five major holy sites, using an architectural lens to expose the spatial and temporal strategies by which places in conflict manage to retain their modus vivendi…'

Each of the five holy places reflects a different negotiation structure—spatial and temporal arrangement—attempting to engage the complexity of the contested site. The curators named them as follows:

1. **Monument: Permanent Temporariness** (The Mughrabi Ascent). Numerous plans for the permanent structures leading from the Western Wall Plaza to the Mughrabi Gate have been proposed, none has been approved by the adversaries—the Islamic Waqf, the Palestinian Authority, and the Israeli authorities. A wooden bridge erected in 2005 after

the collapse of the former pathway, reflecting 'permanent temporariness', provides a deferred political solution.

2. **Scenography: Object Politics** (The Cave of the Patriarchs). Following the 1994 massacre of twenty-nine Muslims by Baruch Goldstein, there are strict arrangements in place, dividing the shrine into separate days for each of the two religions (Jewish and Muslim). There is an exception of twenty days a year (important holidays) on which each side has sole use of the entire site under close military supervision. During these periods, the shrine changes hands for twenty-four hours. The Jewish and Muslim artefacts, respectively, are swiftly removed, allowing the other party to bring in its own objects and embrace its transitory identity. Akin to a stage set, the shrine changes from synagogue to mosque, and vice versa.

3. **Landscape: The Land as Palimpsest** (Rachel's Tomb). The site has gradually changed from granting access to all religions, to an exclusive place of worship for Jews. It constitutes a fortified structure, surrounded by an eight-metre wall, a territory within a Palestinian urban area. Thus, the changes in the physical landscape are directly related to the territorial Israeli–Palestinian conflict, shaped by political negotiations and actions, representing a kind of exchange between the land and the episodes that inform it.

4. **Project: From Modus Vivendi to Modus Operandi** (The Western Wall Plaza). Following the Six-Day War in June 1967 and Israel seizing control over Jerusalem in its entirety, the Western Wall area has been expanded into a large plaza, an ambiguous area calling for diverse definitions and interpretations. As a response to this changed nature of the site, architects and entrepreneurs endeavoured to influence its development. The various proposals reflect the interplay between two distinct yet connected conflicts: One focuses on the balance between Judaism and Israeli society's statehood, and the other pertains to the religious hegemony among various religious Jewish streams in Israel and the Diaspora. The proposed designs provide an opportunity to elucidate the ways whereby

architectural projects express their standpoints in one of the most disputed national controversies concerning the identity and nature of the Israeli state after 1967.

5. **Choreography: Protocols in Space and Time** (The Church of the Holy Sepulchre). Common worship at this site by different Christian communities has provoked frequent conflicts between them throughout the centuries, each claiming territorial control and ownership along with worshipping rights. The status quo is maintained through precise protocols with respect to the daily rituals and routines of the six denominations: Greek Orthodox, Latin, Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, and Ethiopian. However, the status quo remains highly tenuous: continuously contested, and consequently reframed. This situation demonstrates the tense manoeuvring (choreography) of sharing and division.

Drawing on the ideas presented at that exhibition, I proceed to explore my three cases and learn whether and how the protagonists maintain a status quo, modus vivendi, or modus operandi in the complex reality of diversity at the interface with political tensions in organisations and communities. Are their strategies and solutions similar to, or perhaps different from, the architectural structures of negotiation in the contested Old City of Jerusalem and its vicinity?

Reverting to social sciences and organisational behaviour, are they attempting and actually creating synergy that effectively manages diversity as advocated by Mary Parker Follett (2018, p. 39)?: 'Unity, not uniformity, must be our aim. We attain unity only through variety. Differences must be integrated, not annihilated, nor absorbed. Anarchy means unorganised, unrelated difference; coordinated, unified difference belongs to our ideal of a perfect social order…'

Are the diverse organisational members and community residents capable of coordinating and integrating their differences in mixed spaces of encounter, as Michael Angelo did in his complex series of paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel?

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4

Case 1: Medical Staff Engaging Diversity at Work in Turbulent Times

Abstract This chapter portrays the intricacies of engaging diversity in a real-life work context. It revolves around a series of studies conducted in Israel's major hospitals on diverse medical staff pursuing their professional practice in periods of escalating protracted political conflict. The reported research employed mixed methods, including individual semi-structured interviews with nationally and ethnically diverse medical staff, and a survey using a structured questionnaire. The case reveals the complexity of asymmetric power relations, especially in times of escalating tensions that heighten the medical staff's sense of inequality and discrimination. These experiences impinge on daily practice even though medical centres are legally obliged to maintain equal opportunities policies and equitable work procedures.

Keywords Diversity management · In-situ work setting · Medical teams · Political tensions · Conflict escalation

This chapter provides a close look at, and a demonstration of, the interface of social conflict and diversity management as it evolves in the context of enduring political tensions. It aims to unravel how changing

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local circumstances—the political climate—inform engaging the paradoxical endeavour of diversity management in joint spaces of encounter in the course of daily real-life interactions at work.

The chapter revolves around a series of studies conducted in Israeli medical facilities on diverse medical teams, predominantly nurses, pursuing their professional practice in different periods of active protracted national conflict. Some of the studies employed mixed methods, including individual semi-structured interviews with diverse medical staff, and a survey using a structured questionnaire. Other studies were based on qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews with members of nurse teams.

The first study attempted to capture diversity management by medical staff in real-life work settings following the Israeli–Palestinian Oslo Accords. The subsequent research projects took place nearly two decades later, again concentrating on the real-life encounters of medical staff, focusing on nurse teams working in medical centres in the north of Israel. The latter studies were conducted in partnership with Michal Raz-Rotem, who made a significant contribution to the writing of this chapter.

To embed the cases in the temporal context, a brief chronology of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict is provided, as well as some of the main local events associated with its development.

The inception of an explicit Israeli–Palestinian conflict dates to the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which granted the foundation of a 'national home' for Jews in the Land of Israel. This declaration ignited a struggle between the two nations over a territory that was called 'Palestine' at the time, culminating in the War of Independence in 1948, and the subsequent establishment of the State of Israel. With the foundation of this new state, the status of the Arabs/Palestinians shifted from a well-to-do majority to a defeated minority, oppressed by Jewish rule (Gabison & Abu-Raya, 1999). Due to the protracted armed conflict between Israel and its neighbours, the Arab citizens of Israel have been viewed as a subversive element, and thus as a security risk.

A national security doctrine has become the primary social ethos in the State of Israel. It has evolved in a process of a national liberation struggle and nation building. The trauma of the Holocaust heightened the

fear of annihilation, which in turn nourished the security doctrine and the striving for national cohesion and unity. As expressed by Muhlbauer (2001, p. 287): '…Any digression from this dominant national security doctrine has been criticised for promoting internal factionalism and risking the nation's well-being…'. The following pivotal events constitute the direct context of the three cases presented in this book.

- 13 September 1993—Oslo I Accord (Declaration of Principles) between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority was signed in Washington, DC.
- 26 October 1994—A peace treaty was signed between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan at the Wadi Araba Border Crossing in the south.
- 25 February 1994—The Cave of the Patriarchs massacre; Baruch Goldstein murdered twenty-nine Muslim worshipers.
- 8 September 1995—Oslo Accord II between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority was signed in Taba, Egypt.
- 4 November 1995—The assassination of Prime Minister of Israel Itzhak Rabin by Igal Amir.
- 2000—The end of the Peace Process following the failure of the Camp David Summit.
- September 2000–February 2005—The Second Intifada/Al Aqsa Intifada: a period of intensified Israeli–Palestinian violence, with 1000 casualties on the Israeli side, and 3000 on the Palestinian side.
- 2005—Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.
- 2005–2013—Continuing tensions and periodical eruptions of violence, concentrated in the Gaza Strip area, including Hamas and other militant Palestinian factions firing Qassam rockets and missiles on civilian Israeli towns and settlements in the vicinity, and Israeli counter military operations to halt the rocket fire (Operation Hot Winter, February 2008; Operation Cast Lead, December 2008; Operation Pillar of Defence, November 2012). International efforts were undertaken to mediate between Israel and Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, which have been largely unsuccessful.
- 2014–present—Israel–Gaza Conflict. Continuing escalation of violence, including Palestinian violent attacks and Israel Defence Forces

operations (Operation Protective Edge), with sporadic international efforts to stop the violence (mainly Egyptian mediation between Israel and Hamas, with temporary success), and to resume negotiations and the peace process (unsuccessful).

The above chronology indicates the intertwining of violence with attempts to resolve the protracted conflict. Importantly, the past decade, especially the past five years, has been marked by an increasing escalation of violence, especially in the Gaza Strip region, periodically contained by ceasefire agreements mediated by Egypt.

The analysis of the case seeks to unravel how different medical team members experience diversity, given the persisting political tensions. How do they cope with such a complex societal and relational reality? What strategies do they embrace? How do their actions contribute to relations in mixed medical teams?

In an attempt to illuminate both the emotional and cognitive aspects of the protagonists' experiences in their encounters with diversity and political tensions, we adopted the performative inquiry approach proposed by Shotter and Tsoukas (2014). This line of research examines how felt emotions nourish decisions with regard to actions and their implementation. While focusing on the research participants' construal of their experiences, we endeavoured to depict their attempts at negotiating the terms of engagement with their diverse counterparts in their everyday work settings. Hence, we also draw on the meta-paradigmatic perspective of frames and framing research in an area of conflict proposed by Dewulf et al. (2009). This perspective distinguishes between cognitive frames and interaction framing but considers them simultaneously. The former pertains to 'the way people experience, interpret, process or represent issues, relationships, and interactions' (Dewulf et al., 2009, p. 160). The other paradigm defines framing as interactional co-construction of meaning in the course of the opponents' interactions: 'Frames are communicative devices that individuals and groups use to negotiate their interactions […] captures the dynamic processes of negotiators' or disputants' interactions'.

Specifically, our analysis of the medical staff and teams encompassed three main issues:

1. The meaning of diversity in the eyes of the beholders; what cognitive frames do the protagonists use in their interpretations of diversity in their work settings: gain, that is an opportunity to interact with the other, or loss (threat), that is experiencing encounters with the other as engendering discomfort and fear (Dewulf et al., 2009).
2. The strategies used to engage the paradox of diversity management in turbulent times: How do the protagonists frame their daily interactions with their diverse counterparts at work?

   We draw on two distinct frameworks—structures of negotiation in the context of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, elaborated upon in the previous chapter (Keshet, 2019), and Siira's (2012) framework of third-party influence in organisational conflict interventions, adapted to the conflict parties' conflict behaviour (Desivilya Syna, Shamir-Balderman, & Shamir, in press). The latter conceptualisation surmises a two-dimensional model depicting managerial interventions, directedness, and communicative influence, yielding five modes of attempted influence on the opponent. The specific patterns are: (a) direct influence—confronting the other party about the conflict issues through direct interaction; (b) indirect influence, directed at the context and circumstances of the specific conflict; (c) distancing—maintaining contact with the other party, but not addressing the conflict issues; (d) constrained influence—restraining one's own discrepant voice when interacting with the opponent; and (e) enabled influence—voicing one's opposing stance when interacting with the other party.

   Accordingly, we explored the use of various action strategies by diverse medical staff. These include mild coordination (constrained influence)—a shaky bridge between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian medical staff members; approach-avoidance (direct influence/enabled influence—distancing)—manoeuvring of sharing and division; rotation arrangements—allowing one party's dominance for a limited time; placing barriers/separation; from modus vivendi to modus operandi (indirect influence)—searching for arrangements that allow joint work despite tensions.

   We also examined how the action strategies change under different circumstances in relation to the temporal local context.

3. The consequences of the diversity frames and action strategies for their work relations, such as power relations, sense of equality, inclusion-exclusion, quality of performance at work—cooperating and synchronising (Dewulf et al., 2009; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2016).

Study 1. The Peace Dove's Comeback: Jewish–Arab Relations and Diversity Management at Work, Verging on Revival of Hopes for Peace

I now turn to the first study on the real-life encounters of diverse medical staff at work in the context of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The study was conducted in 1996, the period of Oslo Accords punctuated with some violent episodes, including Rabin's assassination and the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre. It was funded by the Tami Steinmetz Centre for Peace Research, which was established at the outset of Israeli–Palestinian negotiation process. We draw on the article presenting the study findings published by the author of this book in 1998 in *Journal of Peace Research*. The published paper was based on analysis of the findings, informed by the social psychological perspective. We derive insights from the findings, drawing on the multifocal lens of the integrated framework of the social psychological and critical sociological approaches.

This research sought to examine the effects of working in mixed professional settings on Jewish–Arab relations in Israel in the context of protracted political conflict. The study participants were 46 medical doctors and nurses (34 Jews and 12 Arabs) working in a large medical centre in the north of Israel, and 14 medical doctors and nurses (10 Jews and 4 Arabs) employed in two ambulatory (community) clinics. The choice of two types of sites—a large hospital and small clinics—was grounded in the assumption that they markedly differ in work patterns, and in turn potentially affect the quality of Jewish–Arab relations and mutual images. Medical staff in medical centres predominantly work

in teams composed of diverse members who are interdependent with regard to the goals and tasks they perform. By contrast, in ambulatory clinics, notwithstanding their diversity in terms of the medical staff's characteristics, the medical doctors and nurses are largely independent as far as their work is concerned.

Thus, in the former case, interdependence presumably constitutes an incentive for cooperation (Desivilya Syna, Somech, & Lidogoster, 2010; Somech, Desivilya Syna, & Lidogoster, 2009), which, if successful, may positively colour their daily work encounters, thus contributing to positive mutual images. In the case of ambulatory clinics, such incentives are much less evident, and hence unlikely to affect daily interactions between medical personnel and, in turn, their mutual images.

The research tools were individual semi-structured interviews and a structured questionnaire adapted from Smooha's (1992) questionnaire, which was previously used in nationwide surveys of Jewish–Arab relations.

The interview attempted to reveal the work experiences of Jewish and Arab medical staff in diverse settings: interaction patterns and quality of interaction, amount of conflict, and modes of coping. We also examined the participants' perceptions regarding the impact of diversity on the quality of their performance, and the effects of violence associated with the protracted conflict on the atmosphere and their functioning at work.

The questionnaire gauged the mutual national images of the Jewish and Arab medical staff members. Specifically, it examined the perceived legitimacy of Jewish–Arab coexistence in Israel, definitions of self-identity (based on profession, nationality, religion, and other facets), ethnocentrism, social distance, perceptions regarding equal opportunities for Arab citizens of Israel (especially in public service), support for or opposition to institutional separation between Jewish and Arab citizens, and the impact of professional contact on mutual attitudes.

How did medical staff members construe the meaning of diversity? How did they engage diversity at work, especially in the light of the events associated with the protracted conflict? And, what were the consequences for their relations in and outside the work setting? It is

worth noting that the study was conducted during a relatively 'optimistic' period in terms of the prospects for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The meaning of diversity. Most of the Arab/Palestinian and Jewish participants in the medical centre framed the diversity of medical staff in a positive light. They viewed the heterogeneous composition of medical teams as an opportunity to practice ethno-sensitive medicine. Having diverse physicians and nurses on the medical staff allows learning about the other's culture (values, norms, and habits), and incorporating such an understanding in medical care for diverse patients. Such adaptation, in the team members' view, tended to enhance the quality of care. These perceptions of diversity as an opportunity were somewhat mitigated by the extreme violence associated with the prolonged political discord. These incidents bred some tension and discomfort in the general work atmosphere in the mixed medical teams.

In the ambulatory clinics, the advantage of diversity was hardly noted, presumably due to the independent work patterns of the medical staff in such settings. The meaning of diversity, notably the mixed Arab/Palestinian and Jewish medical staff, as a threat or potential loss, emerged following violent events associated with the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The Jewish and Arab/Palestinian employees expressed some fear of their counterparts.

Action strategies. A vast majority of the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian team members in the medical centres indicated effective cooperation between the two groups in the professional arena. In other words, the diverse team members were quite successful in coordinating and synchronising their work tasks. Such collaboration was prominent in cohesive departments/teams that were highly aligned around the superordinate goal of providing high-quality care to all patients (Syna Desivilya, 1998; van Knippenberg, Dawson, West, & Homan, 2011). Most of the reported professional disagreements were between the senior nurses (department heads) and the physicians, rather than between demographically diverse team members. The latter were handled by means of attempts at direct influence, namely confronting the conflict issues.

As noted earlier, the violent events associated with the protracted conflict did affect the team atmosphere; however, according to the protagonists from both groups, their impact was transient, leaving no long-term residues. In most team members' views, these violent acts had barely any impact on the professional cooperation between diverse team members. As to action strategies in dealing with such incidents, they reflected mainly mild coordination, that is attempts by the Jewish majority to act with sensitivity towards the Arab/Palestinian minority in the mixed medical teams, including expressions of universal solidarity with regard to the loss of human life on both sides of the conflict. However, most of the Arab/Palestinian employees opted for avoidance strategies (restrained influence), refraining from communicating with their Jewish counterparts about the violent events.

It is important to note that most of the respondents in the first study reported dovish political proclivities. The right-wing/hawkish study participants reported considerably greater discomfort following the violent events than their dovish counterparts, mainly adopting a distancing strategy, namely avoiding contact with their Arab/Palestinian team members as much as possible.

The findings indicate that escalation episodes in the protracted conflict not only have an effect on the general atmosphere, but also influence the strategies for engaging diversity at the interface with political tensions. These action strategies manifest variations among the different actors: the dovish Jewish majority, the Arab/Palestinian team members, and the Jewish employees with hawkish tendencies.

In the ambulatory clinics, the prevailing action strategies were distancing, namely attempts to avoid contact with the other side. Such inclinations were most prominent among the Arab medical staff members, some taking a day off following a major violent incident, such as a Palestinian terrorist act, in order to avoid blame attribution by their Jewish counterparts.

Consequences for Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations and mutual images. During relatively tranquil periods, work-related contact within the hospital's diverse teams contributed to perceptions of satisfactory Jewish–Arab relations, especially in cohesive departments. Such a benevolent implication was also reflected in the two groups' joint leisure-time

activities in non-work contexts. Additionally, the positive outcome was manifested in the dovish Jewish respondents' survey responses; they felt quite comfortable having (hypothetically and actually) an Arab superior, and strongly advocated equal rights and opportunities for the Arab citizens of Israel.

The benevolent consequences were significantly less visible among hawkish Jewish respondents, and most of the Jewish and Arab medical staff members in the ambulatory clinics.

Importantly, the vast majority of study participants at both research sites maintained that professional contact at work had no effect on their mutual national images, that is their general attitudes to the other national group remained the same. These results need to be guarded with caution (especially the findings based on the survey) due to the small sample size, skewed towards the left-wing end of the political spectrum. Thus, a ceiling effect might have explained the latter finding for the left-wing medical staff members; their attitudes to the other national group were already positive, leaving little room for further change. However, additional factors presumably account for the findings of the first study, as elaborated below.

In sum, using our integrated framework, we can point to several conclusions emerging from the first study with regard to engaging diversity at the interface with political tensions. Drawing on the essentialist perspective, the findings suggest that positive professional contact, especially in the light of perceptions of a superordinate goal and intrateam cohesiveness (despite differences), is quite effective in engendering cooperative orientation and actual collaboration, mitigating avoidance of the other even in the face of violent events associated with the protracted conflict. This appears to validate the assumptions of the contact hypothesis, and further corroborates the research on diversity management in heterogeneous teams (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969, 1976; Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009; Stephan, 2012; van Knippenberg et al., 2011). The intergroup tensions do not disappear altogether; rather, they are contained in a sort of a shelter, as I have argued: 'The professional domain, then, may serve as a refuge, especially

for those who feel hostility towards the national outgroup. Their professional identity would appear to free them from the bondage of divergence because it is based on professional standards irrelevant to political inclinations or national membership' (Syna Desivilya, 1998, p. 444).

Yet, the 'sanctuary' seems permeable to both individual-level limitations and personal political proclivities, coupled with contextual influences that mitigate generalisation of positive experiences at work to mutual national images. At the individual level, cognitive limitations, such as sub-typing and the rebound effect, interfere with the transformation of the mutual images (Kunda & Oleson, 1995; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994). The former refers to the mechanism of preserving the image of the entire social category (e.g., Arabs/Jews), while dividing the group into subcategories, such as Arabs/Jews with whom a team member has had positive experiences at work (a sub category of 'good' Arabs/Jews).

The rebound effect also explains the failure to generalise positive contact at work to the overall mutual images, while emphasising the restraining role of the work setting on stereotypical and prejudicial perceptions. Thus, the common goal of medical care, and actual effective cooperation at work, curtail negative emotions and perceptions towards members of the other national group. However, upon returning to their homes, usually in separate neighbourhoods or communities, the local sentiments towards the other group prevail. These fall short of bounding the distrust and tensions.

Notwithstanding the importance of individual-level barriers for the transformation of Jewish–Arab mutual images, the social construction of power relations plays a fundamental role in sustaining the resistance to change. The critical theory facet of our integrated framework accentuates the persistent nature of the structural and institutional construction of power asymmetry between Jews and Arabs/Palestinians in Israel, which is further amplified by the specific violent incidents associated with the protracted conflict (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). These elements permeate into the work context, nourishing individual-level limitations, and blocking transformation of the mutual national images. It appears that the peace dove is rather fragile,

not sufficiently resilient to counteract the individual-level and contextual impediments.

Data collection for the second study took place nearly two decades after the first. Its temporal context largely coincided with events at the national level, namely escalation of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip region. The next section explores how this particular context manifests in the meaning of diversity, action strategies aimed at engaging differences, and the consequences for Jewish–Palestinian/Arab relations.

Study 2. The Wounded Peace Dove: Managing Diversity at Work Following Escalating Political Tensions

The study was conducted in 2014, during a relatively calm period, but following rather severe phases of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Fig. 4.1). The escalation revolved around the Gaza Strip and bordering Israeli settlements, and encompassed major violent exchanges between Hamas and other Palestinian factions (firing Qassam rockets and missiles at Israeli settlements), and the Israel Defence Forces, launching three major military operations (Operations Hot Winter, Cast Lead, and Pillar of Defence).

This was a pilot study preceding a more extensive study on real-life work encounters between Jewish and Palestinian/Arab nurses in mixed nurse teams. Our decision to investigate diverse nurse teams stemmed from two reasons. First, we attempted to discern the team-level factors potentially promoting engagement with diversity and cooperative relations between team members, versus factors that impede such processes and outcomes. Second, nurses are usually at the forefront of patient care, obliged to solve problems instantaneously. As we learned in the first study, the issues they confront while performing their professional roles often expose them to events associated with the protracted political conflict.

The pilot study sought to examine the residues of a divided society, notably the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict, on the nature of

Fig. 4.1 The wounded peace dove (*Source* he.kischka.com)

the mixed team members' interaction at work and on their overall relations. Individual semi-structured interviews were held with twelve nurses employed in public medical centres (3 Muslim, 1 Druze, 1 Christian, and 7 Jewish). Following approval of the research by the Institutional Ethics Committee, they were recruited for the study by the author's research partner from the Department of Health Systems Management at YVC (the academic institution where both are academic staff members).

We asked the nurses to relay a narrative account of a recent team-related conflict event. Subsequently, the interview questions revolved around the atmosphere in the diverse teams, the nature of the communication between diverse members, their interaction patterns (e.g., cooperation), the effect of diversity on team performance (advantages and pitfalls), and the impact of the violent events associated with the political conflict on the team dynamics.

The findings of the pilot study were published in 2015 in *EuroMed Journal of Business*. I draw on these findings and present the main insights that inform our three main queries: the meaning of diversity, action

strategies, and consequences for the protagonists' relations when encountering the reality of escalating political tensions.

The meaning of diversity. As in the first study, the nurses predominantly framed diversity in positive terms. They noted the advantages of diversity in practicing culture-sensitive care by means of enhanced intercultural understanding, thus enriching their knowledge and perspective of the nursing field. The study participants also indicated a pragmatic benefit of diversity. Having members with different ethnic characteristics and religious inclinations on the team allows work schedules to be tailored to each group's particular holidays. Notwithstanding the benefits of diversity, the interviewees did indicate some pitfalls of diversity in nurse teams. One of the disadvantages was the difficulty in coping with differences of opinion on work-related matters, which are often construed as an affective or relationship conflict rather than a task conflict, which in turn engenders a tense intrateam atmosphere (Desivilya & Palgi, 2011; Desivilya & Raz, 2015).

Another disadvantage of diversity was use of languages other than Hebrew at work, noted mainly by the Israeli-born Jewish nurses. These nurses considered such behaviour disrespectful, undermining the internal atmosphere of trust and cohesion (Tyler, 2012).

The meaning of diversity changed most dramatically following crisis situations, particularly violent escalation episodes. The latter cast a pall on the bright atmosphere within the mixed teams, affecting diverse team members' action strategies (Desivilya & Raz, 2015).

Action strategies. During relatively calm periods, both Jewish and Arab/Palestinian nurses view their work interactions as highly cooperative, grounded in pursuit of a common goal—providing high-quality patient care. Nevertheless, following violent escalation episodes, their narratives in this regard shifted markedly. The motivation for contact and cooperation deteriorated, leading to evasive communication patterns, and a greater tendency to distance and avoid the other (Jewish or Arab/Palestinian nurses). How did the modified meaning of diversity and the action strategies following escalating political tensions in the broad context influence Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations?

The consequences for Jewish–Arab relations. Deep social schisms, especially when accentuated by violent escalation episodes in prolonged

political discord, have impinged on Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations in mixed work settings, amplifying the challenge of engaging diversity. The findings of the second study substantiate the difficulty of containing the mounting tensions and preventing their adverse impact on professional intergroup relations and actual performance. The study participants reported that they experienced difficulties in communicating with their Jewish or Arab/Palestinian counterpart, including maintaining eye contact and restraining their negative emotions.

As we showed earlier, based on the first study, the protracted conflict has permeated into the work setting, even when the prospects for peace have increased. Wounding the fragile peace dove with continuous escalation phases makes diversity management at work much more taxing for Jewish and Arab/Palestinian employees alike. Escalation episodes tend to underscore the power asymmetry and increase polarisation between the national majority (Jews) and the national minority (Arabs/Palestinians), each avoiding confrontation, and attempting to push the difficulty to the hidden sphere (Desivilya Syna, Shamir, & Shamir-Balderman, 2015; Kolb & Putnam, 1992; Putnam, 2010; van Knippenberg et al., 2011). Yet, perceptions of inequality and discrimination experienced by the Arab/Palestinian team members often inadvertently 'leak' in the course of daily encounters at work.

In a similar vein, the Jewish nurses fail to restrain their sense of distrust towards their Arab/Palestinian counterparts following violent incidents associated with the protracted political conflict. These events also magnify the need of the Jewish employees to protect and assert their formal majority status (Desivilya & Raz, 2015).

In sum, the second study showed the continuing emerging trend of difficulty in managing diversity in times and places of political tensions as experienced by Jewish and Arab/Palestinian employees in daily real-life encounters. While in the course of the first study, the broad context seemed to revive some hope for the peace process, during data collection for the second study, the optimistic atmosphere was considerably hindered by escalation cycles in the protracted conflict. This adverse change made Jewish–Arab/Palestinian contact at work increasingly tense. The mounting challenge of daily work encounters reflects the contribution of individual-level limitations, such as prejudice, stereotypes, ingroup

favouritism, and faultlines, along with social construction of power relations, as proposed by our integrated framework (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Zanoni et al., 2010).

What happens when the peace dove is lying on its deathbed? Is it possible to revive constructive diversity management at the interface of intensifying and accumulating political tensions? The third study addressed these queries.

Study 3. Resuscitating the Peace Dove? Managing Diversity at the Interface of Active Escalation in the Protracted Israeli–Palestinian Conflict

The next section presents relevant findings from the third study on the lived experiences (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014) of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian members of mixed medical teams working in medical centres located in the north of Israel. It constituted an extension of the pilot study (Study 2) and was a part of the doctoral research conducted by Michal Raz-Rotem.

The study sought to broaden our understanding on diversity management in times of tremendous political tensions, propagating a highly pessimistic atmosphere regarding potential resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Alon & Bar-Tal, 2016; Bekerman, 2018; Halperin, 2011, 2016). We examine how different members of the mixed nurse teams construe diversity, given these particularly harsh circumstances. Our analysis focused on the nurses' attempts to negotiate the terms of engagement with their diverse counterparts in their everyday work settings. What strategies do they adopt? How do their actions affect Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations in the mixed nurse teams?

Data collection took place between December 2016 and April 2017. This period comprised active escalation cycles in the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict, mainly in the Gaza Strip region. The exchange of violence included Palestinian terrorist attacks and Israel Defence Forces operations (e.g., Operation Protective Edge). These escalation cycles

were interspersed with international attempts to achieve long-term ceasefires—modus vivendi or modus operandi (mainly Egyptian mediation between Israel and Hamas, with temporary success)—but also to resurrect the peace process, that is to resume negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The latter have thus far been unsuccessful.

The third study employed two main research tools: (a) a qualitative in-depth semi-structured interview with 17 Jewish nurses (12 women and 5 men) and 13 Arab/Palestinian nurses (7 women and 6 men), members of mixed medical teams in medical centres in the north of Israel; and (b) a quantitative, structured questionnaire administered to nurses in medical centres in the same region. Here we shall report the findings obtained in the qualitative component.

The interviews addressed the following main issues: the atmosphere, dynamics, and performance within the mixed teams in periods of escalating political tensions (terrorist incidents perpetrated by Palestinians and Israel's military operations against Palestinians). Specifically, we asked the study participants to provide narrative accounts of their feelings and thoughts concerning the team climate, the nature of interactions with their diverse counterparts (communication patterns), and the implications of the violent escalation episodes for professional collaboration and intergroup relations within the mixed teams.

The next section presents the main findings that emerged from the interviews on the meaning of diversity, action strategies, and consequences for Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations. We provide some illustrations of the protagonists' experiences by means of verbatim quotations.

The meaning of diversity. The vast majority of respondents framed diversity as a threat, namely emphasising the impediments of diversity in times of escalating political tensions. Looking at the entire sequence of the three studies, the difference between the first two studies and the third one was quite striking (albeit not surprising). While the former evinced both types of frames: a benevolent frame of adversity (an opportunity), and a negative one (a threat), especially in turbulent times, the latter concentrated on the negative frame, hardly showing the advantages of diversity for the team.

The Jewish nurses described a very tense atmosphere following Palestinian terrorist attacks. Their strong sense of discomfort reflected not

only anger towards their Arab/Palestinian team members, but nearly unequivocal attribution of blame to the Arab/Palestinian nurses for siding with the Palestinians in Gaza, as put by a Jewish nurse (relayed in a similar fashion by other Jewish respondents):

> The terrorist attacks… there are the Muslims, especially the religious ones, they're more connected to the Palestinian thing… I heard from the Jewish staff members that their reaction [the Arab nurses] was "what are you [the soldiers] doing to them," like they were siding with the Palestinians. When I hear such things, on the one hand, I can understand it, but on the other I can't understand, what I can't understand is that the Muslims who work here with us are supposed to be enlightened, right? More progressive, more understanding, and know very well whether we started, our soldiers started, who started this whole story? They talk sometimes as if they live there, and they don't know that who started it were in fact the organisations that want to annihilate our country, the Jews, that don't want the Jews to exist. Then you ask yourself, why don't they go live there? Go there and be with them, maybe you can help them better there… I don't understand this thing. Okay, you're sad, it's sad when people get killed, regardless of who they are. But you can't say, your soldiers deserve it, you're to blame. You're here, you know who's guilty. You know who started it.

The Arab/Palestinian nurses shared their Jewish counterparts' sense of severe tension and discomfort in the course of the frequent violent episodes, but relayed it from the standpoint of a threatened national minority, as illustrated by an Arab/Palestinian male nurse:

> Something changes, something in the atmosphere, the atmosphere heats up… By the way, it is not just TV, they post messages [on Palestinian terrorist attacks] on their cell phones. This does no good.

Clearly, escalation of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict permeates into everyday work reality in the mixed nurse teams, damaging the atmosphere and dampening the potential advantages of diversity. The growing frequency of violent escalation episodes not only influences the meaning of diversity, it also changes the dynamics of

the daily encounters between Jews and Arabs/Palestinians in the mixed teams. The following excerpts from the interviews illustrate the shifts in modus vivendi and modus operandi.

> When there are incidents, you feel it. It's difficult to work with them [Arab/Palestinian team members], with their silence on those difficult days… It's difficult for everyone, in all the departments… There's nothing to be done, what can you do? You can talk about it, open it up, but they don't dare because that would open a Pandora's box… You can see it here; people don't speak with the other…. (Jewish female nurse)

Another Jewish female nurse described a similar experience:

> When there are tensions, for example knife attacks… there was some talk [about a terrorist attack that day] in the dining hall, and when the doctor (a Palestinian from Ramallah) came in everybody fell silent… I ask, why should we be silent? Maybe he also has an opinion… I asked him, "Do you want to say something about it?" He said, "I can't talk, anything I say will sound bad". I ask him many times, "How do you feel about what you see here, our fear here, and then you go back home and see the misery there… How do you manage?" Then he says, "When I want to say there that it's almost the same here, they don't really want to hear it, it sounds as if I am on your side, so I keep quiet there and I keep quiet here."

These quotes demonstrate the mounting difficulty in direct communication between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian team members. Moreover, they reveal the implicit social construction of asymmetric power relations between the two social groups (Becker, Kraus, & Rheinschmidt-Same, 2017; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016).

Notwithstanding the Jewish nurses' reports regarding the difficulty in communicating, empirical evidence suggests that at times they have embraced a patronising stance, confronting their counterparts in an attempt to break the silence. By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian nurses use the only option available to them in their experience: avoidance and constrained influence (suppressing their personal views) (Dhanani, Beus, &

Joseph, 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014; Jones, 2014).

Beyond communication difficulties, the study revealed other perceived changes in action strategies associated with the mounting political tensions.

A Jewish nurse described an instance of a Jewish physician's very dramatic act of 'leaving the battlefield':

> There was news about a woman suicide bomber… A woman doctor had just treated a child in ICU, a matter of life and death, and another Palestinian patient, she was like really happy about the incident. The doctor said she can't… she just stood up and left and asked somebody else to continue.

The above example might have been an exception, but there were several other instances reported by Jewish nurses portraying polarisation in the dynamics of the daily professional encounters between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian nurses. The examples referred to situations of care provided to Palestinian patients (especially children) from Gaza. These accounts contrasted the perceived action strategies of the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian staff members.

> Sometimes you see them giving better care to Arab patients. You, a Jewish nurse, treats a child from Gaza, then an Arab nurse suddenly comes in and says, "Leave it, I'll do it", she'll do it even though she's busy, she'll do that too… She'll take care of him… There's some closeness, to help them more. [Palestinians from Gaza]

Two other Jewish nurses expressed their condescension:

> You know these are Arab patients from Gaza. You know what they think about you… Face to face I'll provide her with the best care, but I don't know what she thinks about me? Does she curse me? Does she hate me? They come with prejudice… We also come with prejudice. They come here and we welcome them. We give them the full treatment. If I came to Gaza, they'd slaughter me. It's not the same attitude. You understand, this is what annoys me. When they come here, they get all the attention,

> the best care, the best doctors… We're not ashamed to say, "Again many patients came from over there". It makes the Jewish nurses angry because a Jewish child comes, and you have to put him in the corridor because there's an Arab boy from Gaza… You don't have room for the Jewish boy in the room… This Jewish boy pays health insurance and taxes in Israel. Why? This bothers us…

> I won't forget we were working on a Saturday and an Arab girl had a birthday. She [an Arab/Palestinian nurse] came in, not on her workday, and brought the girl a birthday cake. Everyone looked at it badly. Why, because she's from Gaza she's miserable? There are children here who've come as medical tourists from Russia. They're also miserable… They pay for their treatment. They [Palestinians] don't pay a single shekel. The Peres Centre pays for them. They started talking about it. It annoyed them.

The modified meaning of diversity and the patterns of engagement in the face of persisting escalation of the protracted conflict bear distinct consequences for Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations at work. These involve reduced motivation for contact and actual attempts to avoid the 'adversary' on both sides. Additionally, the negative ramifications entail reduced trust, increasingly averse emotions, and reduced tolerance by the Jewish nurses towards the Arab/Palestinian nurses' 'otherness', including cultural aspects and artefacts, as expressed in the following quote (Raz-Rotem, Desivilya Syna, & Maoz, 2019; Syna Desivilya, 2004):

> We ate supper and she [an Arab/Palestinian nurse] suddenly turned on Arabic music. It made us very angry. Because, how come you turn on the music for yourself? We're sitting here together, and you turn on Arabic music for yourself? It annoyed us, especially because of the language, because it was Arabic, as if she did it out of spite. It's like people say they hate Arabs. It's something in them. You sit with your team members… This department is in Israel, the team is mixed, but there has to be one language… Why do you need to turn on that music at that very moment? … Just hearing that it's in Arabic it like blows your fuse, wow, why do they speak in Arabic?

Both parties also exhibit a sense of discrimination by the other, although such experiences of inequality and lack of fairness seem much more pronounced among the Arab/Palestinian nurses, as put by an Arab/Palestinian male nurse:

> For example, two staff members come to the department: a Russian [from the former Soviet Union], they have about 10 years of seniority. The Russian is more assertive and says what he thinks, the Arab is still inferior.
> Q: Why, how is it manifested?
> A: It's reflected in professional advancement. No advancement, not only in this department, I'm talking about the entire hospital. I don't know what they've got against the Arabs. Although in the past two years there is some momentum, two or three Arab nurses became department heads. But the Russians have this self-confidence, because they've got more people from the nursing management on their side. They've got more backing. That's why they let themselves speak their mind. An Arab feels inferior because of the situation in the country, so at work, too, he feels inferior, doesn't advance, can't express his opinion. Every word of what he says is interpreted the wrong way, so he's afraid.

A female Arab/Palestinian nurse revealed a similar perception:

> Many people [Arab/Palestinian nurses] feel that they're given the more difficult jobs. I personally don't feel it because I've got the courage to say, okay I'm here, I also understand […] The Russian head nurse can decide that she takes her friend to work in the easier section, and we Arabs, as they say, "screw the blacks…" You hear it a lot on the more difficult side of the ward and it hurts…

What can we conclude about the precarious encounters of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian medical staff in Israeli medical organisations at different phases of the protracted political conflict? How does the condition of the peace dove affect the meaning of diversity? And, how do the protagonists actually engage it in situ, in a real-life work setting and in their intergroup relations?

The three studies comprising the case of a mixed medical staff work setting enables us to evaluate the contribution of the temporal context to diversity management at the interface with political tensions (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2015; Calás, Ou, & Smircich, 2013). The first study looked at the rather healthy peace dove, the second at the wounded one, and the third looked at the peace dove on its deathbed.

Integration of the findings suggests progressively deteriorating relations between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian medical staff with the increasing escalation of the protracted political conflict. The manifestations of the upward trend include a greater tendency to experience diversity at work as a discomfort and threat, mounting proclivity to (mis)manage diversity by distancing, avoidance, and restrained influence, and a growing sense of separation and distrust, along with perceived inequality and injustice by both parties, including competition over victimhood (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Holck et al., 2016; Noor, Schnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012; Raz-Rotem et al., 2019; Siira, 2012; van Knippenberg et al., 2011).

The current phase of persistent escalation has the most severe consequences for the protagonists' relations, casting serious doubts on the chances of resurrecting hopes for constructive engagement with diversity. Using the metaphor from the exhibition on structures of negotiation in the holy sites of Jerusalem (Keshet, 2019), the status quo in medical organisations becomes more and more fragile and difficult to maintain.

The two social groups share the experiences of growing disruption in their mutual relations. However, the national minority employees (Israeli Arab/Palestinian citizens) reveal a stronger sense of fear and discrimination as the escalation cycles become more frequent and intense compared with their national majority counterparts (Israeli Jewish citizens) (Desivilya Syna, 2016; Dhanani et al., 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Janssens & Zanoni, 2014; Jones, 2014). The social construction of power relations seeps into the work setting and accentuates the asymmetry between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian employees despite their officially equal professional status, common goal of providing the best medical care, and formal institutional measures for ensuring equal opportunity (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012;

Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016; Peled, 2016).

The findings of the three studies lend support to previous research on intergroup contact in divided societies, especially during protracted political conflict (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Shapira, & Kahn, 2016; Hameiri, Sharvit, Bar-Tal, Shahar, & Halperin, 2017; Syna Desivilya, 2004). However, they expand the knowledge base on managing diversity in times and places of political tensions. The empirical evidence provides a deeper look at the interface of social conflict and engagement with diversity as it develops in the context of active and escalating political conflict.

This first case of professional intergroup contact in medical organisations reveals how changing local circumstances—the political climate and the intensity of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict—inform coping with the paradoxical endeavour of diversity management in joint spaces of encounter in the course of real-life everyday interactions at work.

The findings show that the transition from a revival of hopes for peace to their gradual eradication has a profound effect on the capacity of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian medical staff members to manage diversity at the interface of escalating political tensions. This complexity stands out in the last study due to the particularly grave national context. It was conducted in a period of mounting escalation episodes, increasing de-legitimisation of the Arab/Palestinian minority by the political elite—the militant right-wing Jewish leadership—using not only rhetoric, but also actual actions, such as legislation undermining democracy, particularly minority rights (Desivilya Syna, 2016; Jabareen, 2016; Müller, 2016; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016; Zoher, 2016).

Such increasingly adverse circumstances aggravate the intergroup divisions and tensions in work-related encounters, while intensifying the vulnerable position of the Israeli Arab/Palestinian minority (Alon & Bar-Tal, 2016; Bar-Tal, 2011; Bekerman, 2018; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016; Weill, 2011, 2016). These developments drastically impede transformation of the intergroup encounter

into one engendering respect, humane orientation towards the other, and collaboration in daily professional interactions. In the course of active political conflict, the parties are highly unlikely to accept 'otherness' and are consequently hardly motivated to synergise their efforts (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2016).

To conclude, the social construction of power, contextual factors such as escalation episodes, organisational features, and individual-level factors (motivational, cognitive, and behavioural inclinations), all orchestrate the protagonists' ability to manage diversity in times and places of political tensions. The dying peace dove constitutes a major obstacle to constructively engaging the challenge, or even maintaining the status quo. The seemingly promoting forces at the organisational and team level, such as professional similarity, equal opportunity regulations, common goal, and task interdependence, fail to counteract the social construction of power asymmetries, and de-legitimisation by power elites (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969, 1976; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Tyler, 2012; Zanoni et al., 2010).

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the diverse medical staff members manage to maintain a reasonable modus operandi and continue performing their work, providing their patients with high-quality care. However, they pay a price at the relational level, missing the opportunity to synchronise their differences as is pertinent in today's complex reality. The dying peace dove appears to exact a heavy toll from the divided diverse society at large (Follett, 1918; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2016; Kristeva, 1991).

Promoting meaningful transformation of the cognitive frames and interactional framing of the adversaries' relations, given the complex residues of the active and accumulative intergroup political tensions, requires combined attempts directed at multiple levels and modalities of human experience, accompanied by grass roots and civil society efforts (Bekerman, 2018; Dewulf et al., 2009; Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Syna Desivilya, 2004). We shall return to this issue and elaborate upon it in the concluding chapter of this book.

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5

Case 2: Managing Diversity in Academia: The Voices of Staff and Students in the Midst of Active National Conflict

Abstract This chapter presents a case reflecting on an ongoing action research in an academic institution, where the student body constitutes a microcosm of Israel's diverse and divided society. The research follows, in situ, the academic staff's work experiences and studies students' experiences in the midst of active national conflict. The action research draws on an appreciative inquiry approach and employs mainly a qualitative methodology: individual interviews with faculty and students and focus groups with academic and administrative staff. It also incorporates students' survey on diversity climate. The findings underscore the infiltration of the escalating tensions of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict to the campus, enhancing the intergroup tensions among the students and the faculty–students relations.

Keywords Escalating political tensions · Diversity climate · Diverse students–faculty relations · Social construction of power relations · Privilege versus exclusion

H. Desivilya Syna, *Diversity Management in Places and Times of Tensions*,
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The first case presented research pertaining to the context in my second home country, after emigrating from Poland. The second case focuses on my professional home—the academic institution where I have been working for over two decades as a faculty member, chairing the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Department of Graduate Studies in Organizational Development and Consulting, and serving on various committees. Hence, the insights reported in this chapter, along with research evidence, incorporate my reflections as an insider.

The Setting of the Case

The second case revolves around the academic staff working in a public college located in the north of Israel and the diverse students attending this institution. The demographic composition of this region is quite distinct in comparison with other regions, since it comprises 56% Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens (a majority in the region) and 44% Jewish Israeli citizens. The student body consists of Jews and Arabs/Palestinians from cities, towns, and rural settlements. Seventy per cent of the students are Jewish and 30% are Arab/Palestinians. The students come from different faith backgrounds (Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Druze faith) and reflect varying levels of religiosity. The disparities between the students stem from cultural background and language differences. For many students, Hebrew, the official language, is not their native tongue.

In contrast to the diversity of the student body, the academic staff are highly homogeneous. The vast majority are Jewish and born in Israel. Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens and Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union and other countries constitute a minority. Most of the faculty hold doctoral degrees, gained at Israeli universities, and universities in the United States and Europe.

The social composition of the college constitutes a microcosm of Israel's divided society, which is saturated with tensions between different social groups.

Perplexing Encounters with Diversity Interfacing Political Tensions in Academia

Presentation of the second case commences with the author's work on the encounters between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students at the college in the shadow of mounting political tensions—in the midst of the Second Intifada (Al Aqsa). We then proceed to the core of this chapter, an ongoing action research in the author's academic institution. The research follows, in situ, the academic and administrative staff's work experiences, and the students' diversity-related experiences in the course of the active and protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Thus, we continue our exploration of the lived experiences of the protagonists in places and times of political tensions (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014).

Our initial attempts to engage with student diversity at the academic institution in the context of growing political tensions entailed designing and implementing an educational project embedded in the academic curriculum. The project was based on an action science approach (Dewey, 1938; Lewin, 1951; McEwen, 1999; Schön, 1983, 1987) that has evolved from a theoretical framework into an attempt to operationalise its premises within the educational endeavour. The conceptual model informing the program combines three bodies of knowledge:

- **Social identity**, with emphasis on the complex and dynamic characteristics of identity, and its ramifications for interpersonal and intergroup relations;
- **Social conflict**, underscoring intergroup conflict and tensions;
- **Power relations**, highlighting majority-minority power asymmetries, and their effects on relations between the parties in the local context of an academic institution.

The educational project sought to promote change in the participants' views with respect to intergroup relations. Special attention was devoted to developing awareness and deep understanding of the protracted conflict dynamics on the protagonists involved in this discord. Thus, we aimed to foster legitimisation and acceptance of the 'opponent', and alleviate mutually averse emotions (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005;

Syna Desivilya, 2004; White-Stephan, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker, & Stephan, 2004). Moreover, the project sought to revive hopes for the joint and constructive existence of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens by creating dialogue (stressing active listening and formulating a joint agenda) between the two groups of students.

With regard to diversity management, the program aimed to promote the *variety* element of diversity, while mitigating the adverse contribution of *disparity* and *separation*, and to address the social construction of power relations between the national majority and national minority (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Harrison & Klein, 2007; van Knippenberg, Dawson, West, & Homan, 2011; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010).

The Project's Main Features

The project constituted a workshop, which was an elective course in the Sociology and Anthropology Undergraduate Program offered in the Fall semester of the 2004–2005 academic year. It comprised 13 weekly encounters—4 academic hours each—facilitated by the author and a teaching-research assistant, who fully documented the proceedings. Twenty students participated in the workshop (16 Jewish and 4 Arab/Palestinian; although these numbers matched the representation of these two groups in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, we initially hoped for more balanced participation between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students). The participants were required to keep a personal workshop diary as part of a reflection process on learning and to submit a group assignment—a project proposal for a joint Jewish–Arab/Palestinian social enterprise.

The workshop incorporated lessons learned in other projects that had taken place in the same institution, particularly two conducted between Fall 2001 and Spring 2002, and Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 (Syna Desivilya & Abu-Bakkar, 2005).

The project's methodology rested on integration of theory and practice, that is gaining knowledge and skills through conceptual and experiential learning. It consisted of small groups and plenum discussions

concerning actual events (daily newspaper articles, media presentations, etc.), exercises and role-playing simulations, and brief lectures summarising the major theoretical models and concepts.

Formative evaluation was incorporated into the project design. Data collection included observation and documentation of all class meetings, content analysis of the participants' diaries, and individual interviews with the participants.

Studying Together with the 'Enemy' at the Interface of Protracted Political Conflict

The insights presented in this section concentrate on the students' perceptions concerning the persisting political tensions, their motivation for contact with the 'adversary', and their perceptions of Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations on campus. The findings of the follow-up study clearly point to the multimodal and multilevel legacies of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students (Coleman, 2003, 2004; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

The protracted discord colours the students' construal of the persistent political conflict. Both groups reveal a psychological escalation, namely a highly pessimistic proclivity concerning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which they consider intractable—with no viable resolution (Bar-Tal, 2007; Pruitt, Kim, & Rubin, 1994; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

Notwithstanding the similarities in how the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students construed the meaning of the protracted conflict, they also exhibited disparate perceptions. The Jewish students primarily focused on the tangible and practical aspects, especially environmental resources, such as land and water. By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian students' experiences revealed mainly the emotional symbolic aspects underscoring their social identity. The political conflict also featured more prominently in the Arab/Palestinian participants' construal than those of the Jewish students. These differences in construal of the persistent discord can be explained by the combined effects of cognitive processing, structural differences in the participants' group status, and the social construction of power relations (Bargh & Ferguson, 2001;

Bar-Tal, 2011; Coleman, 2004; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Maoz, 2011; Stapel & Suls, 2004; Zanoni et al., 2010). The political status of the Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens (a national minority, considered by many Jewish citizens as a 'fifth column'—an ally of the Palestinian adversary)—combined with the intricacy of their self-definition—amplifies the salience of the conflict in their minds.

The findings also showed that the protracted political conflict has corroded the students' motivation for contact with the other. However, comparing the two groups of students, the Arab/Palestinian participants revealed a higher tendency for contact with the Jewish students than vice versa.

The motivational differences presumably stemmed from the power asymmetry between the national majority and minority, embedded in the Israeli political context and the specific institutional circumstances (a public institution in the State of Israel, dominated by the Jewish majority). The Jewish students (the national majority) saw less need for contact, dialogue, and cooperation with the Arab/Palestinian students than vice versa, particularly due to frequent reminders of the violent incidents perpetrated by the Palestinians (Desivilya Syna, 2015).

The reasons underlying the motivation for contact with the other were different. The main motivator for the Jewish students to participate in joint encounters involved individual curiosity and seeking to expand their knowledge about the other. Their Arab/Palestinian counterparts' impetus for contact with the Jewish students rested on their quest for a voice that could potentially moderate the biased, prejudicial, and stereotypical images held by national majority students (Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, & Fakhereldeen, 2002). The Arab/Palestinian students' stronger motivation for contact might have also stemmed from strictly pragmatic reasons: helping them reach their educational objectives and in turn fostering social mobility.

Beyond eroded motivation for contact, the protracted conflict has also hindered intergroup behaviour, reflected in communication difficulties, especially among the Jewish participants. They evinced impaired capacity for listening to the Arab students' conflict narrative. The communication barriers revealed in this project corroborate prior findings on the negative

ramifications of lingering political tensions (Bar-Tal, 2007; Maoz, 2004; Suleiman, 2004; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

The follow-up research findings demonstrate the fundamental contribution of power relations to the participants' subjective construal and actions concerning diversity at the interface of political tensions. The asymmetrical relations profoundly affected the workshop dynamics (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Maoz, 2011).

The Jewish participants revealed proclivities 'befitting' the national majority: they adopted a patronising stance, manifested in lower motivation for contact aimed at expanding their knowledge and getting to know the other, and reluctance, often inability, to listen to their Arab/Palestinian counterparts. By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian participants displayed tendencies more typical among minorities. This manifested in the centrality of the protracted conflict and national identity, and a stronger tendency to seek contact and dialogue with the Jewish participants in an attempt to sound their voice and correct the biased image of their social group.

Ironically, notwithstanding their formal dominant position (national majority) and adopting a patronising attitude, the Jewish participants also displayed a victim identity, presumably internalised in the process of socialisation and indoctrination of the national security ethos (Bar-Tal, 2007; Muhlbauer, 2001). They strongly resisted blame attributions of the Arab/Palestinian participants, particularly with respect to actions of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers towards the Palestinian population beyond the Green Line (the 1949 armistice lines established between Israel and its Arab neighbours in the aftermath of the 1948 War of Independence). The interaction dynamics at times reflected a competition over victimhood between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012).

Reflecting on the workshop from an insider's perspective highlighted for me the elementary role of the social construction of power relations, of which individuals affiliated with hegemonic groups (like myself) are notoriously oblivious. Presumably, due to my biography as a wandering Jew, and personal experiences of 'otherness', of feeling as an outsider, expertise in social conflict, and perhaps also my political inclinations, I have not been utterly blind to the effects of social construction.

Yet, the disparate experiences of the Arab/Palestinian students vis-à-vis their Jewish counterparts accentuated the privileged status of the Jewish faculty (myself) and students, especially in times of mounting political tensions (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016). This increased my sense of responsibility for preventing the silencing of minority voices, which proved to be a considerable challenge in a period of escalating protracted political conflict. We engaged this challenge using multiple avenues throughout and after the workshop, all derived from dialogic approaches: conversations with individual students, plenum reflections on the workshop processes, and separate meetings with Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students. As indicated earlier, on conclusion of the workshop, we analysed the students' diaries and conducted individual follow-up interviews.

Overall, the student workshop indicated similar findings with regard to the meaning of diversity, action strategies, and consequences for relations between the parties to those obtained in mixed medical staff work settings (Case 1), especially in periods marked by escalation episodes of the protracted conflict (the wounded and dying peace dove phases). The emergent resemblance inspired us to pursue studying the contribution of the temporal context at the author's academic home in the recent period of mounting escalation.

The motivation for continuing research at the academic institution was also nourished by my personal professional experiences in foreign lands, notably during my doctoral studies in the United States in the early 1980s. During those years, I experienced numerous perplexing interactions with American students, faculty, and administrative staff in academia. The strange encounters began with my search for an apartment to rent, included participation in scientific conferences, and culminated in some attempts at searching for postdoctoral fellowships and academic positions. Thus, as a young professional abroad, I often felt like an 'outsider' or 'other', even though I also shared many similarities with my peers. Interestingly, both my academic partnerships and my social ties have always included other foreign students and faculty members, presumably sharing otherness, but also enjoying diversity. The manifold experiences of engaging diversity in self and with others further stirred

my interest in exploring it in my home country and home academic institution.

Since that workshop and other encounter groups I led at the college, many other projects addressing relations between diverse students have taken place at our academic institution. Most of the projects evolved from a multiphase entrepreneurial organisation-wide program ('Academic Puzzle'). It was based on a participatory action research approach (PAR), organised and launched in 2012 by the Center for Action Research and Social Justice (chaired by Prof. Victor Friedman, Ibrahim Abu Elhaija, and later Israel Sykes) in conjunction with the Dean of Students Office (Dean, Prof. Javier Simonovich), and the Unit for the Advancement of Arab Students (Unit Head, Nizar Bitar). This enterprise was designed to promote a system-wide transformation of relations in mutual spaces of encounter at the college, namely developing constructive and meaningful interactions between diverse students, notably Jews and Arabs/Palestinians (Friedman, Arieli, & Aboud-Armaly, 2018; Friedman et al., 2019).

Notwithstanding the scope and variety of projects designed to engage with student diversity in efforts to foster positive contacts and relations, none have captured the experiences of academic and administrative staff who encounter the diverse student body on a daily basis. I have been searching for an opportunity to address this missing element. The opportunity presented itself almost two decades later through an international project.

The Precarious Encounters of Academic Staff with Diversity in the Context of Protracted Conflict

My academic institution was a partner in a TEMPUS/IRIS consortium (sponsored and funded by the European Commission), involving other academic institutions in Israel and Europe, with the aim of developing internationalisation of higher education at Israeli public colleges. Due to my attraction to and preference for working in academic partnerships,

especially with international partners, and my personal and professional interest in diversity management in real-life settings, I volunteered to coordinate the project on behalf of our institution.

In the course of this international project, my fascination with *internationalization at home*, notably at my academic institution, received a considerable boost. The TEMPUS/IRIS initiative also coincided with our research on diversity management in medical centres and provided the necessary link to the previous study with students at the college, presented earlier.

Hence, the focus of the next project was on academic staff, which were later extended to include administrative staff. Yet, it also incorporated research addressing students' experiences and perspectives with regard to the diverse campus. The next section presents the main component of our project on engaging diversity interfacing political tensions in a complex academic environment, with reference to the academic staff's experiences.

Within the framework of the IRIS/TEMPUS international project, I established a local learning community composed of five faculty members at our college. This team sought to learn about the academic faculty members' perspectives on diversity in their work context, to hear the voices of protagonists with different disciplinary backgrounds and distinct demographic characteristics. The study was based on the work of the learning community and was reported in detail in an article published in *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017). Its main features and findings are presented below.

As in our recent research in medical organisations, the approach employed combined essentialist and critical orientations (Braedel-Kühner & Müller, 2015; Calás, Ou, & Smircich, 2013; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck et al., 2016; Knights & Omanović, 2016).

This endeavour rested on action research methodology, underscoring an appreciative inquiry approach (the research team's collaboration with local stakeholders—academic and administrative staff, the student union). We used mainly qualitative tools: recurrent participant observations, individual interviews with academic staff, and focus groups

with academic and administrative staff. In addition, we administered a structured questionnaire to the student body, later followed by semi-structured interviews with Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students.

The first phase of the study aimed to elucidate the faculty members' lived experiences of teaching diverse students (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). It sought to unravel the meaning of diversity and its manifestation in their daily educational practice at the college. We were particularly interested in the faculty's awareness concerning equality and inclusion of diverse students—granting equal treatment to all students, or possibly unintentionally favouring some while ostracising others (Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003; Holck et al., 2016; Shore et al., 2011). The research tool was a semi-structured open-question interview (Kvale, 1996). The study participants were 20 academic staff members selected out of 110 tenure-track faculty so as to form a purposive sample that represents, as much as possible, diverse disciplinary and personal backgrounds (Van Manen, 1990). The interviewees' affiliation was: 6—social sciences; 4—human services; 4—English proficiency; 2—IT; 1—economics; and 3—nursing. There were 12 women and 8 men: 15 Jews, 4 Israeli Palestinians, and 1 Druze. The participants also differed in their academic ranks: 8 were professors, 7 were senior lecturers, and 5 were lecturers. Everyone approached by the research team gave their consent to participate in the study.

The interview guide asked the academic staff members to describe their students, how diversity issues influence relations between students and between students and instructors, how they engage and manage diversity issues, and how would they propose enhancing sensitivity to diversity in their respective departments and at the college as a whole.

Internationalisation at Home? Diversity-Related Experiences of Academic Staff

Two main themes capturing the faculty's diversity experiences at the college emerged from the interviews:

Diversity awareness. This theme pertains to the complex power dynamics in relations between faculty and diverse students. It points to the level

of the academic staff members' awareness of this complexity, and their perspective on how it should be handled.

Practices. The second theme pertains to the ways whereby the faculty turn their perceptions of the above intricacies into actions in their daily practice.

The interviews showed that most of the study participants acknowledged student diversity, but ascribed different meanings to these differences. Some faculty were ignorant of their own privileged position, and that of some of the students. They advocated providing 'universal' education to all the students, while trying to raise the minority students' motivation to put more effort into their studies, thereby catching up with the other students and meeting the high standards of mainstream education (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Geiger & Jordan, 2014).

Other interviewees were aware of the social construction of power relations that grant advantages to some social groups while marginalising others. Hence, they strived to empower the students from excluded groups by adapting their educational practice to these students' needs.

The study also revealed the contribution of asymmetric power among the academic staff to the conception of diversity at the interface of political tensions in academia (Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012). The findings suggest that for Israeli-born Jewish faculty it is much easier and justifiable to contest seemingly universal educational practices than for their minority counterparts. The minority academic staff members experience less legitimacy in challenging mainstream education due to their vulnerable power status, especially in times of political tensions. Consequently, their perceptions and approaches reveal conformity with the hegemonic educational orientation and reluctance to confront the political tensions in the classroom (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Yat & Lo, 2011).

The interviews showed that power asymmetries not only affect the meaning of diversity, they also colour daily actions associated with the participants' teaching practice. The lecturers expressed a multitude of voices in recounting how they contend with the complex reality of working in academia. Drawing again on Siira (2012) and Desivilya Syna, Shamir, and Shamir-Balderman (2015), some lecturers embraced a *direct influence* approach in their encounters with diverse students. They tended to raise controversial subjects, especially complexities ingrained in

the broad social context (social divisions, the protracted conflict), in the course of their lectures, and encouraged expression of different narratives with respect to these intricate issues.

Others employed *distancing*, attempting to avoid any confrontation with sensitive and potentially explosive topics in the classroom (strict exclusion of politics). Some academic staff members dealt with the intricacies of teaching diverse students in the context of political tensions using *indirect influence* or *constrained influence*. This entailed addressing the complex social context in indirect and implicit ways, such as drawing examples from other divided societies, or touching upon cultural differences rather than the social construction of power (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017).

The strategic choice of actions was partly informed by the lecturers' individual perspective on diversity and their educational credo. However, other factors, such as the discipline and specific subject matter the lecturer taught, their power status (national minority, Jewish immigrants, Israeli-born Jew), and their personal experiences, seemed to contribute to the decision about diversity-related educational practice in the classroom.

In sum, diversity management by academic staff while interfacing persisting political tensions (the wounded and dying peace dove phases of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict) involves complex attempts to design a modus vivendi or, at the very least, a modus operandi. Drawing on the exhibition entitled 'In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation', for most lecturers this means complex manoeuvering and negotiating reality in order to maintain some sort of status quo by means of intricate choreography (clearly specifying the rules of the game), scenography (constant adaptation of the learning setting), and devising temporary in vivo solutions (Keshet, 2019).

As in the medical organisations described in the first case, academia mirrors the social divisions, political tensions, inequalities, and diversity in the broad social context, and hence presents significant challenges for the protagonists—the academic staff. The first stage of the action research on the experiences of academic staff in their real-life encounters with student diversity in times of political tensions showed different perspectives and patterns of coping, partly depending on the participant's disciplinary and departmental affiliation. Thus, the second

stage attempted to expand the previous findings by tackling the specific experiences and needs in each of the academic departments, using focus groups. We also sought to create an intra-departmental dialogue and support network among faculty members concerning diversity management in a context saturated with political tensions.

The main thrust of the second research phase was to zoom in and illuminate the interface of organisational diversity and political tensions, that is engaging diversity associated with the legacies and daily reminders of protracted political conflict. We were particularly interested in learning how the academic staff cope with the paradoxical endeavour of maintaining humane relations and constructive interactions between members of adversary groups in a context featuring protracted, active, asymmetric national conflict. Our focus was on the day-to-day encounters of academic staff with diversity interfacing political tensions, tackling the specific experiences of decision-making processes, embedded in the specific milieu of their academic departments (Desivilya Syna, Arieli, & Raz-Rotem, unpublished).

The main queries addressed in the second phase of the action research were: (1) How does the prolonged and escalating discord colour the lecturers' experiences of their educational practice (the meaning of diversity interfacing political tensions); and (2) how do they deal with diversity coinciding with political tensions (action strategies)?

As we were interested in elucidating not only the cognitive, but mainly the emotional facets of the academics' perplexing experiences in their encounters with diversity and political tensions, we embraced performative inquiry as advocated by Shotter and Tsoukas (2014, p. 379):

> …takes seriously into account the lived experience of those involved in the exercise of judgment. Such an approach helps fill in what is currently missing in current explorations of 'judgment' – the felt emotions and sensed bodily movements of organizational members when they encounter circumstances in which they, momentarily at least, do not know how to go on.

The ultimate goal of the action research is to develop (and implement) a comprehensive, systemic model(s) of practice, tailor-made to the protagonists' needs. The aim of these evidence-based frameworks of practice would be to promote employees' capacity to engage diversity: foster humane, equitable, and mutually respectful relations, affording genuine voices to different organisational members.

We employed a qualitative method, using the interpretive approach. The latter tracks social processes and conceptualisations of phenomena through empirical data (Shkedi, 2003; Van Manen, 1990). Data collection entails delving into the realm of those creating it, in lieu of direct contact with reality unfacilitated by language and preconception (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). The interpretive approach is highly applicable for this study, as its main goal was to trace and unravel the academic staff's dilemmas and decision-making experiences when teaching a diverse student population in a socially and politically complex setting (Ricoeur, 1981; Van Manen, 1990; Walsham, 1993).

The main research tool was focus groups, conducted by two facilitators (the author and a colleague) in twenty departments. The participants in the focus groups were the department chairs, student advisors, and/or members of the academic committees. We endeavoured to learn about the unique experiences and issues in each of the departments.

The participants were affiliated with all the departments at the college: Human Services; IT; Economics; Nursing; Sociology and Anthropology; Communication; Social Work; Behavioral Sciences; Psychology; Social Sciences; Education; Criminology; Political Science; Organizational Development and Consulting (MA); Health Management Systems (BA and MA); Educational Psychology (MA); Graphic Design and Visual Communication (GDVC); and pre-academic programs.

At the meeting, one of the facilitators explained the study and briefly presented previous findings on the subject. Then, the facilitators initiated and fostered open dialogue with the representatives of the various departments, focusing on the participants' unique experiences in their encounter with diverse students. We encouraged the participants to recount and share their 'lived experiences', that is emotions and contemplations reflected in dilemmas related to diversity management

through real events and incidents (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). The focus groups lasted ninety minutes to two hours, and one of the facilitators fully documented the meeting. Its content was transcribed verbatim and analysed.

The data collection procedure conformed to ethical guidelines. We explained the objective of the study to the participants, indicating that their participation was voluntary, and they were free to leave at any time. They were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

The next section presents the main findings that emerged from the focus groups in the different academic departments. To substantiate the thematic analysis, we provide several instances of each of the themes by quoting from the group interviews. All the names beside the quotes are pseudonyms.

What Can Academics Tell Us About Encountering Diversity at the Interface with Political Tensions?

The findings from the focus groups lend further support to the results of the individual interviews. The narratives of the academic staff emerging in the different departments reveal the intricate and perplexing encounters with diversity and political tensions. The lecturers experience the classrooms as largely divided, composed of subgroups with distinct characteristics, and consider managing these schisms and diversity as a substantial part of their work. The most prominent division is between Jewish and Arab students, accentuated by sociopolitical tensions in the wider context. The lecturers' accounts show permeation of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict into the classroom, particularly during episodes of escalation (e.g., clashes between the IDF and Hamas and the local population in the Gaza Strip).

We present here two main interrelated themes that characterise the lecturers' experiences and reactions to the complex challenge of managing diversity and political tensions: (1) The *living dilemma*—engaging the complexities in teaching-learning, but dreading blow-ups; and (2) *Third party intervention*—taking responsibility for solving disputes.

The Living Dilemma

> My dilemma as an instructor… is whether to touch the heart of the issue, the essence of the conflict, or to soften the edges, but be less than true to oneself. And if we do touch on difficult content, like the national schism… do we take on the hard stuff? And then… how can we not? I have constant palpitations every year… Where do I set the boundary in order to effect change in awareness? And on the other hand, do so without the classroom 'blowing up'? (Ruth, Human Services)

In many departments at the college, the curriculum includes courses associated with the sociology of Israeli society. These courses are particularly challenging for many lecturers, as exemplified by Ruth. On the one hand, she wishes to help students develop awareness and 'touch' the difficult conflict-related issues, but on the other, she feels responsible for preserving a calm atmosphere and is therefore reluctant to introduce a topic that might lead to a 'blow-up'. The quote reveals that this dilemma touches her profoundly on an existential level of staying 'true to oneself' and taking the risk entailed in such deep involvement. Moreover, it reveals the strong bodily, physiological sensations, indicating the personification of this dilemma, thus constituting a living experience (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). According to this lecturer, the dilemma has become an inherent component of her teaching practice in the context of diversity interfacing political tensions. It recurs every year, yet remains unresolved.

A slightly different formulation of a similar dilemma emerged while recounting a contradiction between the lecturers' intention to develop critical thinking and their description of students' motivation as reflected in the actual classroom interactions: 'There was this period of tension [countrywide]… and discussions arose. We encourage critical thinking, and friction ensued between Jewish and Arab students, as well as among Jewish students. Most of the students want to avoid talking about it' (Oren, GDVC).

Oren views the students' tendency to avoid discussion as opposed to the important aim of developing critical thinking. Similar descriptions

reveal the lecturers' sense of disappointment and criticism regarding the students' lack of motivation to engage in deep and critical discussions.

Another lecturer described a situation wherein students resisted hearing the other side's narrative, manifesting unwillingness to take part in the classroom discussion:

> This course…touched the core of the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict… and the experience was bad, really bad… They didn't have any intentions of getting to know the other… some were just looking for an easy grade, and you tell them that we've got a conflict, we've got bigotry, and they don't want to talk about it… and since then I've had this fear… (Maya, Behavioral Sciences)

Maya's description of the students as interested only in getting an 'easy grade' reveals her criticism of the students, as well as her frustration. When she described her teaching experience as 'very bad' and talked about her fear, it was evident that this frustration was affecting her in a deeply painful way. This quote reflects the fundamental dilemma of many lecturers: the aspiration to meaningful teaching/learning in the context of diversity and protracted asymmetric political conflict on the one hand, and fear of losing student participation or, worse, facing a frightening reaction when engaging conflictual issues, on the other.

Third Party Intervention

The fear of a serious 'blow-up' pertains to the second theme—lecturers' reactions to the challenge of coping with diversity and political tensions: intervening as a third party in the students' conflict, as illustrated by Yonatan's description of a 'blow-up' in a Graphic Design course:

> [During a class] An Arab student who defined herself as a Palestinian activist presented graphs that showed abuse and oppression of Arabs by the Jewish establishment… a Jewish student argued with her and it escalated from there… It led to a quarrel that continued outside the classroom, which included cursing and incitement… I called both of them in for a meeting, and realized that we'd hit a wall.

This incident occurred in a course focusing on artistic matters, not social issues. The lecturer did not initiate the 'explosive' discussion, rather a student decided to challenge the class by presenting a graph exposing the asymmetric power relations between the majority and minority. The lecturer was dragged into this situation. His reaction was to attempt to mediate between the adversaries by inviting both students to a meeting. While recounting the story in the focus group, it was obvious that his peer faculty members in the group were all familiar with the incident. They described the story in great detail and with considerable excitement. Seemingly, this incident was a manifestation of the faculty members' greatest fear—to be caught in the middle of an Israeli–Palestinian conflict between students.

It is worthy of note that both the narrator and his peers did not express their own thoughts and emotions regarding the topic of the quarrel, or even regarding the students' behaviour during the incident. They seemed to put aside their personal opinions and emotions, and focused on the mediation role with the aim of achieving a 'ceasefire' between the two students. Conceivably, the lecturer's attempt reflects his belief in the possibility of an open dialogue. He opted to act in line with humane values and communication rather than punishing the students or ignoring the incident. Nevertheless, his attempts to facilitate a dialogue failed.

Several accounts expressed the lecturers' attempts to adopt a one-sided stance, advocating the minority's point of view, as recounted by Leon from the Sociology Department:

> In the course I taught, students gave presentations in which they [the Arab students] occasionally mispronounced Hebrew, for example, saying 'Naboleon' instead of 'Napoleon'.[1] Everyone laughed. No sensitivity to the other. Of course, the Arab students are weaker language-wise than the Jews. I got mad… Another example… we had a student who wore a hijab. Another student photographed her and posted it on Facebook with a racist caption. I found the perpetrator and he took it down. Sometimes there's no sensitivity.

[1]Arabs have difficulty pronouncing the 'p' consonant, as it does not appear in Arabic.

This quote describes incidents in which faculty members undertook the role of protecting the Arab students' emotions and privacy against acts of violation by Jewish students. Such stories indicate that at least some of the lecturers are motivated by values of equality and humanity, and attempt to defend the rights of the underprivileged—the Arab students who are not part of the hegemonic culture of the Israeli (secular Jewish) college. They use their advantaged position to promote these values, but these attempts are largely episodic and negligible.

In sum, the focus groups revealed that the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict seeps into the classrooms and poses challenges for the lecturers' educational practice. It is particularly salient in courses that touch on related topics and during periods of escalation and crisis. However, it also sneaks into the classrooms in courses that are supposedly unrelated to the national discord. The academic staff face the challenge of navigating this complexity in their daily teaching. The predominantly Jewish lecturers (the hegemonic protagonists) display fear, a sense of threat and discomfort, and a great deal of uncertainty regarding which course of action can alleviate the paradoxical endeavour of engaging diversity and political tensions. Some lecturers display intentions and occasional attempts to act in a way that engenders humanity, equality, social justice, and dialogue, but they are mostly sporadic and often fail, leaving the faculty even more frustrated. The protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict manifests as the 'elephant in the room', a ubiquitous issue that profoundly affects the classrooms, and is emotionally challenging to the extent of becoming undiscussable and even paralysing (Desivilya, Rottman, & Raz, 2012; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Friedman et al., 2018; Maoz, 2011).

The academic staff's attempts to engage diversity and political tensions clearly evince their living dilemmas, apprehension, and discomfort when facing the erupting tensions in the classroom. Their main quandary surrounds which course of action facilitates engaging the paradoxical venture of creating humane, respectful, just, and equitable relations on campus despite the adverse legacies of protracted conflict (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck et al., 2016; Maoz, 2011).

It appears that the prevailing tendency among the lecturers is to drive the elephant out of the room, or at best to tame it. Most of the academic staff are reluctant to and incapable of transforming the precarious encounters into engaged judgement (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). Occasionally, they attempt to intervene in the Jewish and Arab students' clashes with the aim of resolving these conflicts, but these efforts are rare and often unfruitful.

What mechanisms block transformation of the lecturers into engaged practitioners who can meaningfully deal with the interface of diversity and political tensions?

We refer to Boxenbaum and Rouleau's (2011) 'Bricolage' approach in order to explain these barriers, pooling together two streams of literature: legacies of protracted conflict and diversity management in organisations. Drawing on the legacies of protracted discords, our findings reveal the potency of social construction by the dominant political elites that discredits and delegitimises the national minorities. These, in turn, nurture bounded capacities at individual level and thereby impede engagement with diversity (Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya Syna, 2015).

As in our findings in medical centres, the academic staff mainly employ conflict avoidance (distancing) in the public sphere, reluctant to mix politics with work. The academics' predicaments remain 'behind the scenes', largely silenced and unaddressed (Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Kolb, 2008; Kolb & Bartunek, 1992; Mikkelsen & Clegg, 2018).

Drawing on the critical perspectives on diversity, the academic staff's stumbling blocks on the way to engaged judgement also result from their blindness concerning their privileged position and consequently their lack of motivation to challenge it (Dhanani, Beus, & Joseph, 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Zanoni et al., 2010). The academics' reluctance to engage diversity and political tensions, adopting avoidance instead, and revealing smoothing and levelling tendencies, also stems from their survival needs, as posited by institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Facing a competitive academic world, they are mainly concerned with maintaining professional and social legitimacy, namely sustaining normative and cognitive isomorphism. At best, this means acting for the 'business case' of diversity rather than challenging the construction of

power relations by the dominant social institutions (Janssens & Zanoni, 2014; Zanoni et al., 2010).

As we have seen so far, the academics face a considerable challenge in managing diversity at the interface of political tensions. The status quo appears extremely fragile.

How do the faculty's predicaments resonate the perspectives of diverse students at the college?

After the individual interviews with the academic staff were concluded, we examined this query by means of a survey administered to the student body at the college. Following the departmental focus groups with the faculty, we concluded the survey by conducting individual interviews with students.

Students' Perspectives on Diversity in the Context of Political Tensions

The student survey examined the perceptions of national minority (Muslim and Christians) and majority (Jews) students regarding the diversity climate at an academic campus in a divided society engulfed by a protracted national conflict.

Participants were 638 students (596 undergraduates, 42 graduate students), representing all the B.A. departments and two M.A. programs at the college. Seventy-five per cent of the participants were women. Eighty-four per cent of the students were born in Israel, 14% in the former Soviet Union, and the remaining 3% in Argentina, Ethiopia, Holland, Morocco, South Africa, and Switzerland. Nearly 79% (78.8%, 498) of the participants are Jewish, 14.6% (92) are Muslims, and 6.6% (42) are Christians. The mean age of the students was 27 (SD = 5.18; range 19–59).

The structured questionnaire was an adapted version of the Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ) developed by Helm, Sedlacek, and Prieto (1998). It gauged students' perceptions of the racial and ethnic climate at an academic institution. Most of the questionnaire items used a Likert-type scale. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with 70 statements regarding the climate on

campus. Six factors were extracted using principal axis factor analysis and VARIMAX rotation, accounting for 69% of the total variance. The six factors are: supportive diversity climate ($\alpha = .813$), college-wide atmosphere of support and respect for diverse social groups; intergroup tensions ($\alpha = .761$), perceptions and experience of ethnic tensions on campus; racism ($\alpha = .837$), experience of racist atmosphere propagated by faculty and students; diversity comfort ($\alpha = .777$), experience of comfort with faculty and students of ethnically similar and dissimilar origin; diversity awareness ($\alpha = .781$), sensitivity to ethnic and other differences among groups; and faculty and student support ($\alpha = .856$), experience of help and support from faculty and students.

The survey was administered in December 2015–January 2016. This period was characterised by mounting escalation (the dying peace dove phase) of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, reflected in an ongoing series of violent incidents within the Green Line, the occupied territories, and the Palestinian Authority.

In line with ethical guidelines, the purpose of the study was briefly explained, and the students were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and could be discontinued at any time. The students were assured of confidentiality and thanked for their cooperation. The response rate was very high (nearly 100%) in most of the departments.

The findings presented below compare three ethnic groups—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—in the six factors identified by factor analysis. One-way ANOVA was performed on each of the indices, and Scheffé's method was used to estimate possible contrasts between the three groups' factor means. Table 5.1 summarises the main results.

Overall Diversity Climate. No significant differences were found between the three groups in diversity supportive climate and intergroup tensions. As Table 5.1 shows, the means of diversity supportive climate were not particularly high (around 3.6 on a 5-point scale) and approaching the middle range of the scale on intergroup tensions (around 2.6).

The Muslim students evinced significantly higher perceptions of bigotry, seen as propagated by faculty as well as students, in comparison with their Jewish and Christian counterparts [$F(2, 620) = 14.96$, $p < .001$]. However, the mean rating of racism by the Muslim students

Table 5.1 Perceptions of diversity climate: Comparison between ethnic groups

Factor	Jews		Muslims		Christians		Significant differences
	M	SD	*M*	SD	*M*	SD	
1. Supportive climate	3.59	.73	3.47	.76	3.74	.56	
2. Intergroup tensions	2.5	.78	2.61	.70	2.44	.67	
3. Racism	1.86	.86	2.42	.97	1.94	.84	***J < M; *M > C
4. Diversity comfort	3.93	.82	3.56	.89	3.85	.91	***J > M
5. Diversity awareness	2.87	.92	3.14	.92	3.39	1.03	*J < M; **J < C
6. Faculty and student support	2.03	1	2.07	.95	1.95	.95	

Note J = Jews ($n = 498$); M = Muslims ($n = 92$); C = Christians ($n = 42$)
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

was below the middle of the scale (2.42), with the ratings of the two other groups significantly lower (below 2).

The Arab students (Muslim and Christians) were significantly more aware of social diversity on campus in comparison with the Jewish students [$F(2, 611) = 8.08$, $p < .001$]. The findings seem to suggest that the overall diversity atmosphere is not particularly salient, especially in the eyes of the national majority students. The Muslim students appear more concerned with racist attitudes in comparison with their Christian and Jewish peers, and the national minority (Muslims and Christians) seems to reveal more sensitivity to diversity on campus in contrast to the Jewish students.

Personal Experiences Related to Diversity on Campus. Jewish students feel significantly more comfortable with faculty and students of ethnically similar and dissimilar origin in comparison with their Muslim peers [$F(2, 625) = 7.65$, $p < .001$]. Christian students' views resemble Jewish students' perceptions, both groups providing relatively high ratings with respect to diversity comfort (around 4).

No differences were found between the three groups concerning their experience of support and fair treatment by the faculty and other students. It is worth noting that the ratings in this domain provided by the study participants are rather low (mean = 2).

The findings indicate positive experiences of Jewish and Christian students concerning their relations with ingroup and outgroup faculty and students. The Muslim students appear somewhat more reserved in this regard. All the participants appear to have a relatively negative perspective of the faculty and other students' support.

Several participants (mostly Jewish) added narrative comments to their structured questionnaires. These revolved around a sense of discrimination in the majority group, arguing that the college provides additional educational assistance to Arab students and displays one-sided cultural sensitivity by establishing a setting only for Muslims' prayer, but not providing appropriate facilities for religious Jewish students. Some of the participants criticised the college management for not engaging diversity issues on campus and accused the left-wing faculty of inflaming the national conflict.

Overall, the findings lend support to the contention that students from different social groups distinctly construe and experience diversity climate at an academic campus. Thus, Jewish and Christian students reported more positive experiences with both ingroup and outgroup faculty and peers compared to their Muslim counterparts (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). Conceivably, such differences stem from a combination of contextual factors (including the broad sociopolitical context), the group's formal status (majority vs. minority), the nature of their actual intergroup contact experiences, and organisational policies and actions (Desivilya Syna, Rottman, & Raz, 2014; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Ramarajan & Thomas, 2010).

The findings suggest that by and large the overall diversity climate remains marginal for the majority of students. Diversity becomes more pronounced for Jewish students when confronted with affirmative actions by the college directed at minority students, breeding perceptions of discrimination and competition over victimhood, as evidenced by the narrative comments (Noor et al., 2012).

Presumably, the specific circumstances of mounting escalation and polarisation of internal divisions in Israel become a priming device of intergroup tensions, intensifying faultlines by elevating the salience of categorisation (Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Desivilya Syna,

2015; Schaap, 2006; van Knippenberg et al., 2011). In addition, the persistent, escalating tensions exacerbate the perceptions and experiences of power asymmetries between the different groups of students (Desivilya Syna, 2015).

In order to delve deeper into the students' perspectives on diversity coinciding with political tensions, we conducted individual open interviews with 28 students (14 Jews and 14 Arab/Palestinians: 6 Muslim and 8 Christian). To allow choice of the interview language, a native Hebrew speaker interviewed the Jewish students, and a native Arabic speaker interviewed the Arab/Palestinian students. All the Arab students were interviewed in Arabic. They grounded this choice in better and more comfortable verbal expression in Arabic. Others indicated no preference, but actually conversed with the interviewer in Arabic, occasionally interspersing Hebrew.

Most of the interviewees were third-year students in various departments (Sociology and Anthropology, Human Services, Economics, Health Management Systems, Political Science, Organizational Development and Consulting, Education, Psychology, and Communication).

We were particularly interested in understanding the different students' perceptions of diversity climate and diversity-related sense of comfort on campus, intergroup tensions, and experiences of racism by faculty and students. Hence, in the course of the interview, the interviewees viewed a graphic presentation of the main results of the student survey on these issues and were asked for their interpretations of these

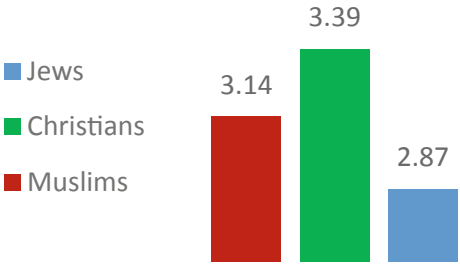

Fig. 5.1 Diversity awareness: exposure to the history, culture, or social issues of groups other than the national majority in the course of studies (*Source* The author)

findings, as demonstrated below. Figure 5.1 provides the graphic presentation of one of the main results as presented to the interviewees.

Excerpts from the interviews, encapsulating the interviewees' interpretations of the survey findings and shedding light on their perspectives on diversity on campus, are presented below, comparing the voices of the national minority and majority.

Arab Students' Perspectives on Diversity

Overall, the Arab interviewees were not surprised by the survey results. They provided explanations for the differences in diversity perspectives between Muslim and Christian students, and between Arab and Jewish students. In their view, the Jews usually prefer to approach Christians rather than Muslims. Some explained this preference in greater similarity in norms, behaviour, and better proficiency in Hebrew, as demonstrated below.

> The Jews don't know the Arab culture, especially Muslim culture, they see a woman in head cover and think she's married. This is not true. The Muslims are similar in their lifestyle to the Palestinians. By contrast, the Christians are closer to Jews. This helps them build mutual relations.

> The Muslims are conspicuous. Our [the Christians] language is better than theirs [the Muslims]. This causes their sense of inferiority, vulnerability, and shyness.

The Arab students maintained that stereotypes and prejudice constitute a barrier for initiating intergroup contact, notably Arab-Jewish interaction. They underscored the Jewish students' ignorance and prejudice towards Arabs: 'Jews don't really know Arabs […] They only know the negative and illogical things like terror'.

Several interviewees indicated that Jews do not seem to be interested in contact with Arabs: 'The Jews don't see us, they don't want to get acquainted with us, they are the ruling majority'.

The Arab students also indicated discomfort in expressing their genuine voices, which they attributed to their inferior minority status, their

otherness—being the outsiders—but also to their fear of sanctions by the hegemonic Jewish authorities at the college, as demonstrated by the following quotes.

> Jews are the ruling majority. You feel it. Whatever you say is always wrong. So it often turned out that it's better to shut up.

> For the Jews it's their home, for us it's not. For them everything looks strange, our dress, our food.

> It is important not to express political opinions, this always brings about disagreements. Those who expressed radical opinions were summoned to the disciplinary committee.

The Arab students, especially Muslims, reported some experiences of racism at the college, indicated intergroup tensions, and intolerance to Arab culture, once again especially towards the Muslims:

> A student in one class said that Palestinians don't deserve good attitude/treatment. I don't accept it, but I knew that if I began to argue, it would not end well. So I kept silent.

> There are tensions, insecurity, distrust, feelings of inferiority that cause the Muslims to be defensive.

> I felt that the Jews are afraid of Muslims.

> Arabs feel less comfortable. I remember there was Arabic music in one of the breaks, and suddenly there were problems with the loudspeakers. Some Arab students said that the Jewish students did it on purpose.

In engaging these tensions between the ethnic groups, the Arab students emphasised the important role of the faculty as a socially sensitive third party, particularly in classes related to the social divisions and the protracted conflict: 'Once there was a quarrel between Jews and Arabs in the Israeli Society course. The lecturer managed to tone it down in a very smart way. In another section of the same course there was a war'.

Jewish Students' Perspectives on Diversity

Most of the Jewish respondents tended to concur with the survey result whereby Jews are less aware of and attuned to diversity. Several students attributed it to ignorance and argued that this is a global phenomenon. Others ascribed it to the hegemonic Jewish position in the State of Israel.

> It starts with ignorance. We don't know them. If they don't wear a hijab and start speaking Arabic, you're surprised, I think there is racism in Israel, and we should be ashamed of it. It's all over the Western world. Luckily, I'm not the one who condones it.

> The majority in Israel are Jewish, so the Christians and Muslims want to know about us more than vice versa. Maybe it's because they wish to be assimilated in our society, to advance, to attain their goals. We [the Jews] don't know enough about them. The college is a sort of a representative sample of what's going on outside. Possibly, most of the Jewish students come to get a degree and aren't interested in other cultures.

Some argued that the protracted conflict amplifies fear of the other, especially the Arab students who are the majority in some departments. This feeds the lack of motivation to become acquainted with the Arab students.

> Not everyone wants to have contact… with our situation here in Israel, the Jews simply don't want to deal with it. Also, in the department [Health Management Systems] the Arab students are the majority, so it has an effect. In the classroom we [Jews] are much less.

Jewish students also maintained that escalation of the protracted conflict exacerbates intergroup tensions, as put by one interviewee:

> It really depends on the security situation in the country. If there's a war or some military operation… I've seen confrontation between Jewish and Arab students on the main road close to the college, the Arab students carried PLO flags… They also caused disturbances on Holocaust

> Memorial Day and the memorial for [Yitzhak] Rabin's assassination. The security situation impinges on the entire campus.

Some of the Jewish participants expressed their sense of discrimination due to the college's policies and actions with regard to the Arab students (endorsing the verbal remarks mentioned in the survey):

> They take the Jews for granted. The Christians and the Muslims are automatically considered inferior in Israel, so they put emphasis on them. More explanations, more attention than we get. For example, private lessons in economics. The Christians and Muslims paid five shekels and the Jews paid twenty-five. Why the gap? We're in the same class, we have the same knowledge…

In sum, the diversity perspectives of Jewish and Arab students (Muslim and Christian) that emerged from the survey and individual interviews echo both the students' experiences in the workshop conducted by the author, and the individual interviews and focus groups with the faculty. The findings underscore the permeation of escalating tensions in the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict into the campus, heightening intergroup tensions between the students, and exacerbating faculty-student relations (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

The action research (including the faculty's and students' perspectives) also reveals the potency of the social construction of power relations, accentuating the asymmetric position of the hegemonic Jewish majority vis-à-vis the Arab/Palestinian minority's stance (Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Holck et al., 2016; Siira, 2012; Zanoni et al., 2010). While the former enjoy privileged status and are thus reluctant to challenge the mainstream and dominant position (often blind to their advantage), the latter experience inferiority, delegitimisation, and silencing (Ali, 2019; Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Knight & Omanović, 2016).

The findings also resonate my own perplexing experiences as a former immigrant, yet a privileged Jewish researcher and educator in an intricate work setting. Reflecting on my actual engagement in action research in my academic home highlighted the importance of diversity-sensitive

skills in interviewing and facilitating focus groups. Dialogic capabilities such as active listening and being attuned to the participants' needs appear indispensable, yet quite intricate in the process of their implementation due to the researcher's own diversity-related 'baggage'.

To conclude, the second case lends further support to the tenet that managing diversity in a divided society, especially one overshadowed by protracted national conflict, is an enormously complex and puzzling endeavour, yet a pertinent task, especially in the increasingly diverse educational institutions plagued by political tensions, as succinctly phrased by Kristeva (1991, p. 195):

> The fundamental question […] belongs to a more psychological or even metaphysical realm […] The multinational society would thus be the consequence of an extreme individualism, but conscious of its discontents and limits, knowing only indomitable people ready-to-help-themselves in their weakness, a weakness whose other name is our radical strangeness.

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6

Case 3: Living in a Mixed City in Times of Political Tension

Abstract The chapter portrays a case focusing on Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of a mixed city. It explores their life experiences in diverse contexts in times of political tensions. The chapter captures the findings of individual semi-structured interviews with residents, some of them owners and/or employees of real estate agencies. The research shows that the historical process that reversed the structure of power relations between Jews and Arab/Palestinians in Haifa and the persistent political tensions in the broader context of the Israeli society, all constrict the scope and quality of shared life in the city. Notwithstanding the limitations of shared life, Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents maintain the fragile status quo in the city, despite the escalating phase of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Future research will further explicate the modes of coping with diversity in the mixed city.

Keywords Jews-Arabs/palestinians power relations · Mixed, divided, or ethnically fractured city · Shared living · Social distance · Status quo

Following a journey that explored engaging diversity and political tensions in work organisations in my home country and in my professional academic home, we now move to my home city. I have been enchanted

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by this beautiful city with its picturesque views of the sea, green landscapes, and topography since moving here from the Tel Aviv region over thirty years ago. Over the years, I have also been intrigued by the variety of people living side by side in Haifa. I definitely feel at home in Haifa, not a minor achievement for a wandering Jew such as myself. Do other people share my enchantment and 'local patriotism' towards Haifa? How do Haifa's diverse residents construe the city's diversity, particularly in the light of persistent political tensions in the country?

The third case focuses on Israeli Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of the 'mixed' City of Haifa, unravelling their perceptions and lived experiences of diversity interfacing protracted political conflict. It captures not only the diverse residents' current experiences of engaging diversity in a mixed city, but also their future expectations and preferences regarding co-residence with the 'other' in the city: shared living, live and let live, living separately, and other possible modes of dwelling within the same municipal area.

The Historical Context of Jewish–Arab/Palestinian Relations in the City of Haifa

Haifa is Israel's third largest city and the largest in the northern region. It is one of seven mixed cities in Israel (Akko/Acre, Jaffa—part of the Tel Aviv municipality—Ramla, Lod, Ma'alot-Tarshiha, and Nazareth Illit). According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2018), Haifa's total population comprises 283,640 residents: 250,943 are Jewish and other (mostly non-Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, but also Druze and Bahá'i); 217,360 are Jewish, and 32,697 are Arabs. Thus, Jews constitute the vast majority (82%) of Haifa's residents, with Arabs constituting about 10%. The latter are mostly Christians (about 70%), and the rest are Muslims (including Ahmadi Muslims).

Jews and Arabs/Palestinians resided under the same municipal jurisdiction prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The term 'mixed city' was coined during the British Mandate for Palestine,

and after 1948 pertained to Jews and Arabs/Palestinians dwelling under the same metropolitan authority.

During the British Mandate (prior to 1948), Jews constituted a minority under the authority of the Arab/Palestinian majority in Haifa (as was the case in all the other mixed cities). Each of the three communities—Christian Arabs, Muslim Arabs, and Jews—lived by and large in distinct neighbourhoods. The Christians resided to the west of the Old City, Muslims to the east, and the new Jewish community to the south, on the lower slopes of Mount Carmel (Goren, 2006; Kallus & Kolodney, 2010).

Prior to and in the course of 1948, over half of Haifa's Arab/Palestinian population (65,000) left the city. The Israeli authorities issued a decree in July 1948, requiring the remaining Christian and Muslim Arabs to move into the houses abandoned by the refugees in the Wadi Nisnas neighbourhood (Morris, 2000; Segev, 1984). Wadi Nisnas has gradually become the centre of the Arab/Palestinian community, providing religious, educational, and cultural services to Haifa's entire Arab/Palestinian population (Kallus & Kolodney, 2010).

Currently, most of the Arabs/Palestinians live in downtown Haifa, around Wadi Nisnas, and constitute about 69% of that district's residents (Christian Arabs exceeding Muslims). The other neighbourhood, with about 23% Arab/Palestinian residents, is Hadar (above downtown Haifa and below the Carmel slopes, with almost equal numbers of Christians and Muslims). In west Haifa and the Carmel districts, Arabs/Palestinians constitute about 13% (Christian Arabs exceeding Muslims) and 8.6% (mostly Ahmadi Muslims) of the district's residents, respectively. The percentage of Arabs/Palestinians in the remaining neighbourhoods in negligible. Thus, contemporary Haifa presents, by and large, separate Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residential districts, casting doubt regarding the term 'mixed city'.

Indeed, this label has dramatically changed both structurally as well as symbolically since pre-state Israel (Rabinowitz & Monterescu, 2008). Following the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab/Palestinian residents became a marginalised minority in primarily hegemonic Jewish cities (Monterescu & Rabinowitz, 2016). Due to this power reversal, some scholars have suggested amending the term to 'divided cities' or

'ethnically fractured cities' (Khamaisi, 2008; Kolodney & Kallus, 2008; Leibovitz, 2007; Yiftachel & Yacobi, 2003).

Kallus and Kolodney (2010, p. 407) maintain that the City of Haifa is no exception: '…divided, "mixed" or ethnically fractured Haifa is the result of a historical process of Judaization'. And despite the process of their marginalisation, '…for many of Haifa's Palestinian residents, the history of the city is a lived daily experience, an important aspect of their identity'.

Jewish–Arab relations in mixed cities seem to mirror fluctuations in the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The adverse implications of mutual fear and distrust manifest in public opinion surveys (iataskforce.org, 2014).

Moreover, as reported by the Haifa-based Mossawa Center, the Advocacy Center for Arab/Palestinian Citizens in Israel, recent years have evinced an increase in racist acts against Arab/Palestinian residents, mainly in Akko, Haifa, and Nazareth Illit, which peaked in 2011 and then decreased somewhat (iataskforce.org, 2014).

Notwithstanding these negative findings, some surveys revealed positive trends, such as increasing economic integration and growing mutual acceptance by the two communities in mixed cities (iataskforce.org, 2014).

The City of Haifa has often been publicised as an example of Jewish–Arab coexistence. Of a variety of joint activities, since 1993 the hallmark has been the annual Holiday of Holidays Winter Festival, which marks the Jewish Festival of Hanukkah, the Christian Christmas, and sometimes the Muslim Eid al-Adha—Festival of the Sacrifice (iataskforce.org, 2014).

According to Kallus and Kolodney (2010, p. 405), the apparent model of coexistence in the City of Haifa disguises complex asymmetric relations and hidden conflicts between the Jewish and Arab residents, as put by the authors: '…the diversities of power relations as embodied in the urban space are far more highly nuanced than their representation'.

The social construction of power relations makes Haifa far more divided than implied in the marketing declarations as a city of coexistence, reflecting not only conflicts over interests, but, first and foremost,

deep-seated schisms entrenched in the wider sociopolitical context (Kallus & Kolodney, 2010, p. 406):

> This problem is even more complex in ethno-nationally contested cities where conflicts over urban resources extend far beyond issues of use and entitlement. In such contexts the public space is inevitably linked to construction of power relations and thus becomes a highly contested arena.

In the light of the intricate composition of the City of Haifa, especially the subtle power construction processes (Van Laer & Janssens, 2010), we seek to explore how these complexities echo the everyday experiences of real people—Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents. How do they interpret the meaning of diversity in the city, their relations with the 'other', and a sense of togetherness in the context of persistent escalating political tensions?

Haifa in the Eyes of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian Beholders

This chapter reports findings from individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with residents of Haifa, some of them real estate agency owners and/or employees. This enables us to tap not only their personal perceptions as residents of the city, but also their professional interpretations as third parties mediating between property owners and buyers or renters with reference to managing diversity in a place and time of political tensions. The interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 2018, that is in the dying phase of the peace dove, a period punctuated by frequent violent incidents, especially in the Gaza Strip area.

The interviews with Haifa residents followed an attempt at international research collaboration with scholars from Poland, notably Professor Maria Lewicka and her doctoral student Anna Wnuk, on the effects of various psychological elements on place-related ingroup bias with respect to space in divided and contested cities. This research adopted an essentialist definition of a 'divided city' as a community or

society with a salient split between the groups composing it. The separation between the groups is determined on the basis of ethnic, religious, cultural, social, and political identities. A myriad of opposing identities makes them highly contested and fosters attempts by some groups to impose the dominant identity on others, while suppressing rival identities (Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003; Schaap, 2006). Owing to the historical processes described earlier, Haifa can be considered a contested city (Kallus & Kolodney, 2010).

Place-related ingroup bias with regard to a contested space pertains to a belief that one's group has sole entitlement to reside in a given place, and that this location should retain its demographic (ethnic, religious) homogeneity (Lewicka, 2008, 2011). The main research question focused on the relationships between the ingroup bias towards the city and place-related memories, sense of place/community towards the city, local and national identity, and intergroup relations (Lewicka, 2008, 2011; Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006; Russell, 1988)

The research initially targeted Jerusalem (East and West) and was later adapted for the City of Haifa. In both cities, a snowball technique was used to recruit participants, which yielded a very small sample size, especially of Arab/Palestinian respondents, which precluded examination of differences between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of Haifa. Consequently, we opted to embark on a qualitative methodology path in order to learn about the experiences of diversity of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of Haifa.

The qualitative point of departure coincided with our research on diversity at the interface of political tensions in medical organisations and in academia, thus extension to the municipal arena of Haifa was a timely next step. We used personal and professional networks to recruit Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of Haifa to participate in the study. The participants were 21 Haifa residents: 12 Jews (8 women and 4 men) and 9 Arabs/Palestinians (4 women and 5 men). The interviewees were aged 24–65.

To facilitate an open dialogue, including the option of conversing in the participants' native language, an Arab/Palestinian researcher

conducted interviews with the Arab/Palestinian residents and a Jewish researcher with the Jewish residents.

The interview was designed to learn about the protagonists' experiences in the mixed/contested/ethnically fractured City of Haifa (Kallus & Kolodney, 2010). Specifically, it tapped the overall image of Haifa in the eyes of the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian participants and their evaluation of the city's strengths and weaknesses.

In addition, the interview aimed to reveal how diverse residents portray the city's residents, how they perceive relations between different people in Haifa, and how they construe shared life in the city, namely spaces where diverse residents encounter and maintain contact with others. Moreover, the interview endeavoured to elucidate how the participants personally experience togetherness (and/or separation) with other Haifa residents.

The interview also examined the reflections of social distance among the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian participants in their preferred neighbourhood (homogeneous or heterogeneous neighbourhoods and interacting with similar others, or with different people as well) in Haifa if given a choice (Bogardus, 1926; Karakayali, 2009).

Another way of tapping social distance was achieved through questions regarding target group preferences for renting or selling real estate property: students, families, immigrants, and people of similar ethnic origin.

Finally, we asked the participants to rate the level of shared life in Haifa on a scale ranging from 1 to 100 and to elaborate on their evaluation. The last part of the interview focused on the participants' personal future expectations: What kind of city should Haifa be in the future? 'What', 'Why', and 'How' should the city invest in shared life in Haifa? What are the participant's personal plans: Does she/he plan to continue living in Haifa?

The next section presents the main findings from interviews with Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of Haifa.

The Image of Haifa: Picturesque! Beautiful! Enjoyable! a Model of Coexistence? People Dancing Together, Shopping and Eating in the Wadi, but Actually Living Separately

Both the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian participants consider Haifa a beautiful city, combining different landscapes and topography, such as sea, mountains, and forests. Most respondents indicated that they enjoy living in Haifa.

> Haifa is an amazing city, one of the most beautiful cities in the country, and Mount Carmel with its breathtaking views. Haifa residents have a special character, suited to living in the city. (Jewish woman)

> Haifa is one of the most beautiful cities. I lived in Tel Aviv for many years, but I'm very strongly attached to Haifa, I don't know whether it's because I was born here, and my family is here, or perhaps because of something special in Haifa that you can't ignore. People who don't live here and don't visit, let them come. Not only that, Haifa is perfect because it's between modern and old-style. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

Beyond Haifa's aesthetic aspects, the second participant quoted above accentuates her family roots, that is her place/community attachment and the city's bridging quality between different lifestyles.

Many of the interviewees view the element of coexistence as an emblem of Haifa, as demonstrated by the following quotes:

> A mixed city that allows people to live in coexistence. (Jewish woman)

> The city is special, and people are special, because it provides a home for them due to its mix of cultures. (Jewish man)

> A city of coexistence, where many different ethnic groups, sectors, religions, manage to live in peace. (Jewish woman)

> The fact that the city is mixed gives it an advantage over other places because the culture and society are oriented in a way that accommodates everyone, like everybody can find what they like… Others see the city like me, as a pretty city with liberalism and openness. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I would note the uniqueness of the city's diverse residents, and the relative peace they live in given the odds… due to different religions and views. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I promise those who do not live or visit here that they'll find all the diversity of cultures that allows everyone to express themselves and find their corner. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

Notwithstanding the similarity between the perceptions of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents concerning Haifa's image as a city of coexistence, the Jewish participants' statements are by and large general and distanced, whereas the Arab/Palestinians' verbalisations reflect more personalised expressions, presumably based on positive experiences.

Effective coexistence was not only indicated as the city's symbol, but also construed as one of its strengths, mainly due to the possibility for diverse people to live side by side, and experiencing comfort and well-being despite the disparities and differences:

> The fact that it's mixed and encourages diversity. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> The city's strength is its coexistence. I lived most of my life in Jewish neighborhoods, and when I grew up and became familiar with people who are different from me, it contributed to the way I think in general, and how I relate to people who are different from me in terms religion and race. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> You can say that downtown Haifa is a strength in favor of Haifa… Bars, joint entertainment places for Jews and Arabs. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I think that the diversity of the population constitutes a strength, and also the joint fabric [of life] is Haifa's greatest strength, that different kinds of people live together. (Jewish man)

Indeed, Haifa residents share a general view of the city as a model of coexistence in a mixed city, yet this appears to reflect a rather superficial meaning of diversity, of shared life and togetherness. This conception is largely confined to surface markings of diversity, such as religious and ethnic/national categories, manifestations of intergroup contact in episodic encounters at street food stands and restaurants in Arab areas in downtown Haifa, and construal of coexistence as mainly 'live and let live', rather than shared life and joint experiences.

The superficial and limited experiences of coexistence, revealing a little disenchantment, loomed somewhat larger among the Arab/Palestinian participants in comparison with the Jewish interviewees, with the latter awarding higher ratings to shared life in Haifa. The following quotes demonstrate the Arab/Palestinian participants' qualified evaluations:

> If I'm with others who are different from me, I'll try to find common ground… People who are incapable of doing that don't approach the common area, and there are people like that, so you could say there's no coexistence in Haifa and, like, fully shared life, but it's better than elsewhere. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

> The level of shared life is about 60… even that's exaggerated… There are still fears and stigma, mainly on the Jewish side. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> It depends on the area… I feel it's comfortable between Arabs and Jews. Still, I experienced some instances of discrimination, like when we went to a restaurant and they didn't let us in because we're Arabs. But we can say that the situation is moderate. I'll give 80… The Jews like our food and come to us, and I go to theirs… (Arab/Palestinian man)

> There is shared life, but not on a very high level, because there are still neighborhoods that belong to a certain population, and that's legitimate, but it shouldn't be like this. There needs to be diversity in the neighborhoods, and in all the entertainment areas, but you don't see it fully… 75,

> a higher than average score because there is shared life, but there's still separation between populations, and you don't see growth in coexistence… (Arab/Palestinian man)

> As to weakness, there need to be more activities and plans for bridging between Arabs and Jews, things that make the two sides closer, more equal, and promise genuine coexistence. Currently, coexistence is not really coexistence, it only appears to be, but from the inside you can feel the gaps. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I'd expect relations between Jews and Arabs to be at 'eye level' much more than over a plate of humus. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

> Indeed, all consume and are influenced by the same things, so what hurts him presumably hurts the neighbor or somebody who gets the same services. Therefore, you can see that all are 'screwed', so that's an awesome partnership… Shared life, I would say 50. You need a lot of investment in this. It's difficult to assign a number, so I was very flattering… I think that what happens in Haifa is terrible, because people live in a bubble that this is coexistence, but it isn't really. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

Importantly, some of the Jewish participants also viewed shared life in Haifa through a rather dark and sceptic lens:

> I'd give around 25, we live next to each other, but it's like me and my neighbor, we say hello and that's it. They don't know who I am, and I don't know anything about them. Nobody really wants to get closer to the other. (Jewish woman)

> I think we still have to get better at shared life. I think there are still prejudices and stereotypes that slow down the coexistence. (Jewish woman)

The interview questions focusing on preferences with respect to renting or selling real estate property indicated that the Jewish participants exhibit social distance tendencies, namely they prefer to live in homogeneous spaces and interact with similar others—ingroup residents (Bogardus, 1926; Karakayali, 2009).

Most of the Jewish interviewees stated that they prefer to rent their property to Jews, some explicitly noting that they would refrain from renting to Arabs. The respondents grounded this inclination in the importance of preserving the neighbourhood's composition, distrust towards Arabs, and renting to members of the ingroup (Jews).

The considerations with regard to selling a property included the latter, but involved primarily financial elements. The following quotations demonstrate the Jewish participants' inclinations.

> I think I'd prefer to rent to Jewish families. This is my nation, and a home is a very personal matter. (Jewish woman)

> Rent to residents that won't fracture the existing character and harmony between the neighbors in the building. To Jews, not to Arabs. Wouldn't like to disturb the calmness in the neighborhood. Would prefer not to rent to Arabs… It would cause discomfort in the neighbors' eyes. As to selling, it's strictly business, will sell to those who make the best offer. (Jewish woman)

Some of the Jewish respondents evinced subtle discrimination in their renting preferences (Van Laer & Janssens, 2011):

> Yes, I would refrain from renting to Arabs, specifically Muslim Arabs. Of course, I'm generalizing, and there are good Arabs and Christian Arabs who earn money. In my father's company there's a Christian Arab employee who's like family to him, and he is an amazing person, but I take him as an exception. They have a different mentality to ours in my view. Of course, it depends who the person is. If it's a Christian Arab who's a doctor in a hospital, perhaps I wouldn't think that way. (Jewish man)

In contrast with the Jewish participants, the Arab/Palestinian interviewees do not indicate any preference for renting or selling property to a particular ethnic group. Their main concern focuses on trust that is renting a property to a responsible and reliable person in terms of economic stability. Similar matters were noted with regard to selling a property;

however, as with the Jewish respondents, business interests were prominent, namely getting the best possible offer. The following quotes substantiate the Arab/Palestinian participants' views.

> It doesn't matter. The most important thing is that they would be good people. Good people can be in either population. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I rent to serious people that have a steady income and are capable of keeping the property intact. The first to meet this criterion, I'll disregard their background. (Arab/Palestinian woman)

An Arab/Palestinian real estate agent recounted his consternation as a result of a Jewish client's attempted discrimination concerning the sale of a property:

> There was somebody who wanted to buy our services, and said he doesn't want to sell to Arabs… I refused to provide him with service.

The disparities in narratives regarding real estate transactions between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents reflect subtle discrimination of the national minority in the city by the national majority, accentuating the deep-seated power asymmetries resulting from structural inequality, social construction, and historical processes (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Raz-Rotem, Desivilya Syna, & Maoz, 2019; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011). These appear to be nourished by the escalating persistent conflict.

Escalation episodes related to the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict tend to impede the delicate balance of Jewish–Arab relations in Haifa. The mounting tensions penetrate the fragile fabric of seeming coexistence in the city, as put by the participants:

> Everything's good until the security situation becomes sensitive. (Arab/Palestinian man)

> I think that during military operations and wars we're below 50, but during routine periods there's a so-called status quo, so it's 60, above half… It seems that it's convenient for everyone… (Jewish woman)

> There were some less pleasant incidents, such as during the war. In one of the Arab coffee shops they put up a sign and didn't let a soldier in. Since then I don't go there. (Jewish woman)

> During the war it was very difficult for the small businesses, especially in the downtown area. (Jewish woman)

What are the future expectations of Haifa residents concerning shared life in the city?

These expectations seem to resonate both the overt and latent power asymmetries between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents. The former seem quite satisfied to retain the 'live and let live' modus vivendi and modus operandi, as exemplified in the following quote:

> There's no shared life, namely everyone deals with their inner circle, the ultra-Orthodox with themselves, the Arabs in the downtown area with themselves, and the Jews in the upper part with themselves. Of course, there is some mixing, they buy here, they visit there. But it is not imposing. In my view it should continue this way. (Jewish man)

By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian residents' aspirations seem to reflect going beyond merely keeping up appearances of coexistence, namely developing strategies and investing resources in building shared life in the city on the basis of the existing positive foundations.

The third case of managing diversity in times and places of political tensions, embedded in the context of the mixed City of Haifa, indicates once again the complexity of Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations engulfed by historical processes, notably the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, the findings indicate a shared image of Haifa as a beautiful, scenic city, local patriotism of Jews and Arabs/Palestinians, and declared coexistence—mutual tolerance and cultural sensitivity between its diverse residents. On the other hand, the interviews reveal the Jewish residents' social distance proclivities and some experiences of subtle discrimination of Arab/Palestinian residents by Jewish residents (Clair, Humbred, Caruso, & Morgan Roberts, 2012; Karakayali, 2009; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011).

The historical process that reversed the structure of power relations between Jews and Arabs/Palestinians in Haifa, and the persistent political tensions in the broader context of Israeli society, all constrict the scope and quality of shared life in the city (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Kallus & Kolodney, 2010; Raz-Rotem et al., 2019). The Arabs/Palestinians became a marginalised minority, in a sense losing their 'autochthon' status (of the land itself) and being treated as 'allechthon' (from another land) by the Jews. Thus, the societal and discursive forces have granted a privileged status to the Jewish residents of Haifa, while somewhat disempowering the Arab/Palestinian residents (Van Laer & Janssens, 2011).

Although the lived experiences of Haifa residents (Jewish and Arab/Palestinian alike) presented in this chapter portray a relatively bright picture of living in a diverse city with very few reported incidents of blatant discrimination, Jews and Arabs/Palestinians frame the meaning of diversity in the city differently. The former by and large embrace the 'live and let live' form of dwelling, willing to mix with their Arab/Palestinian counterparts on their terms—interacting in public spaces of their choosing, while retaining separate neighbourhoods. By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian residents seem to frame diversity in the city as shared life, at least as the aspired mode of their relations with the Jews. They reveal higher motivation for deeper contact and interactions in their encounters with the Jewish residents (Desivilya Syna, 2015).

Thus, the third case resembles the two other cases presented in this book, pointing to the paradoxical reality of managing diversity at the interface of persistent political conflict (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Raz-Rotem et al., 2019). Yet, it appears that the local Haifa communities are more resilient and resistant to the adverse legacies of escalating political tensions in comparison with the work and academic context, as demonstrated by the previous cases (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

So, is Haifa a city of coexistence, a contested city, or an ethnically fractured city (Kallus & Kolodney, 2010)? In attempting to respond to this query, I draw on Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff's writings concerning coexistence. The present findings seem to suggest that Jews and Arabs/Palestinians can each sing their own songs in Haifa, but still have

a long way to go to understand one another's song, with the Jews having a greater distance to cover.

Notwithstanding the limitations of shared life, it appears that both parties do maintain the fragile status quo in the city, despite the escalating phase (the dying peace dove) of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. They do so by using a variety of strategies: mild coordination, approach-avoidance (direct influence/enabled influence—distancing), manoeuvering of sharing, and division and indirect influence—searching for arrangements that allow joint living despite tensions and differences (Keshet, 2019; Siira, 2012).

This chapter presented the initial findings of a study in progress. The next steps will concentrate on dialogues with the city's leadership (Jewish and Arab/Palestinian), and with directors of joint projects designed to open spaces for mutual encounters and real-life collaboration between diverse residents of Haifa. This will allow more light to be shed on the relative success of managing diversity at the interface of political tensions in the City of Haifa.

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7

The Last Act: A Guide for the Perplexed—Concluding Insights on Managing Diversity in Places and Times of Political Tensions

Abstract The final chapter combines insights emerging from the three cases on managing diversity in places and times of political tensions. It draws on interfaced social psychological and critical perspectives and a real-life praxis-based approach. The integrated framework suggests that the capacity of rival groups to engage with the paradox of managing diversity and political tensions ensues from a complex web of relations at three levels: macro (social constructions of power, global migration trends, and the rise of populist leaders); meso (diversity culture and nature of intergroup contacts); and individual levels (motivation, affect, cognition, and behaviour). Promoting meaningful constructive transformation of relations between 'adversaries' in the light of the complex legacies of active and accumulative intergroup political tensions requires combined and joint efforts of all the protagonists and stakeholders directed at multiple levels and modalities of human experience.

Keywords Intergroup conflict transformation · Joint spaces of encounter · Multilevel system · Paradox of diversity and political tensions · Praxis-based approaches

H. Desivilya Syna, *Diversity Management in Places and Times of Tensions*,
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My personal professional voyage on managing diversity in times and places of political tensions has reached the last act. Hence, it is time to collect thoughts, insights, and queries and look to future horizons. What have we learned about managing diversity in times and places of political tensions?

This final chapter combines the insights arising from examination of the three cases with regard to managing diversity in places and times of tensions. It pools together the interfaced social psychological and critical sociological perspectives and the real-life praxis-based approach, attempting to sketch models of practice in such perplexing periods and contexts. These tentative outlines attempt to fit the forum to the fuss, namely, to spot the unique faint light of a particular setting, rather than merely provide an apparent panacea—one size fits all—theory of practice.

The chapter also addresses the question of how the findings and insights resonate with the work of scholars, academics, practitioners, and social activists, highlighting educational attempts to build constructive relations between conflicting and diverse parties, despite the divisions and legacies of a protracted conflict. Hence, we explore how the in vivo approach can not only enrich our understanding of the elements impeding relations between diverse groups, but also its potential to illuminate ways of promoting constructive integration between groups whose relations are marked by persistent tensions. Beyond academic and professional literature, this chapter draws inspiration from the work of writers, photographers, choreographers, and musicians.

What Do the Three Cases Tell Us About the Perplexing Encounters of Israelis with Diversity at the Interface of Political Tensions?

The **first case** portrayed a series of studies conducted in Israeli medical facilities on diverse medical teams, predominantly nurses, pursuing their professional practice in different periods of active protracted national conflict. It sought to elucidate how changing local circumstances—the

political climate—inform engagement with the paradoxical endeavour of diversity management in joint spaces of encounter in the course of daily real-life interactions in the workplace.

This research demonstrated the roles of manifold mechanisms, such as the social construction of power, contextual factors—escalation episodes—organisational characteristics, and individual-level features (motivational, cognitive, and behavioural inclinations), in orchestrating the protagonists' capacity to manage diversity in times and places of political tensions. The dying peace dove poses the main barrier to engaging with this predicament and even to maintaining the status quo. The apparent promoting forces at organisational and team level, such as professional likeness, equal opportunity regulations, common goals, and task interdependence, do not offset the social construction of power asymmetries and delegitimisation by power elites (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969, 1976; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Jabareen, 2013; Putnam, 2007; Raz-Rotem, Desivilya Syna, & Maoz, 2019; Tyler, 2012; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010).

Despite the intricacies, the diverse medical staff members maintain a reasonable modus operandi and continue performing their work, providing their patients with high-quality care. In other words, they seem to at least partially manage the paradoxical task of engaging diversity at the interface of persistent and escalating political tensions. However, the medical staff pay a price at the relational level, missing the opportunity to synchronise their differences, as is pertinent in today's complex reality. The dying peace dove appears to exact a heavy toll from the diverse, divided society at large (Follett, 1918; Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2016; Kristeva, 1991).

The first case further corroborates previous understandings that fostering meaningful constructive transformation of the cognitive frames, and interactional framing of relations between 'adversaries' in the light of the complex residues of the active and accumulative intergroup political tensions, requires combined efforts. These joint avenues should be directed at multiple levels and modalities of human experience, accompanied by grass-roots and civil society efforts (Bekerman, 2018; Dewulf et al., 2009; Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012; Jones & Dovidio, 2018; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

The **second case** revolved around academic staff in a public college located in the north of Israel and the diverse students at this institution. The first study in the series, focusing on Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students in a sociology/anthropology workshop, evinced the fundamental contribution of power relations to the participants' subjective construal and behaviour concerning diversity at the interface of political tensions. The asymmetrical relations profoundly affected the workshop dynamics, and the national majority and minority each played their 'prescribed' roles (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Maoz, 2011).

Ironically, despite their formal dominant national majority status and patronising attitudes towards the Arab/Palestinian students, the Jewish participants also displayed a victim identity, presumably internalised through the socialisation and indoctrination processes of the national security ethos (Bar-Tal, 2007; Muhlbauer, 2001). The interaction dynamics at times reflected rivalry between the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students over victimhood (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012).

The second study employed an action research approach and focused on academic staff with the aim of elucidating the faculty members' lived experiences of teaching diverse students (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014). It sought to unravel the meaning of diversity and its manifestation in their daily educational practice at the college, in particular examining the faculty's awareness concerning equality and inclusion of diverse students—granting equal treatment to all students or, possibly unintentionally, favouring some while ostracising others (Hargie, Dickson, & Nelson, 2003; Holck, Muhr, & Villesèche, 2016; Shore et al., 2011). The study also sought to illuminate how the academic staff cope with the paradoxical endeavour of maintaining humane relations and constructive interactions between members of adversary groups in a context featuring protracted, active, asymmetric national conflict.

This action research demonstrated that diversity management by academic staff while interfacing persisting political tensions (the wounded and dying peace dove phases of the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict) involved complex attempts to design a modus vivendi or, at the very least, a modus operandi. Using the terms coined at an exhibition entitled

'In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation', for most lecturers this entailed complex manoeuvering and negotiating reality in order to maintain some sort of status quo by means of intricate choreography (clearly specifying the rules of the game), scenography (constant adaptation of the learning setting), and crafting temporary in vivo solutions (Keshet, 2019). The academic staff's attempts to engage diversity and political tensions manifested their living dilemmas, apprehension, and discomfort when facing the tensions erupting in the classroom. Their main perplexity revolved around the course of action that would facilitate engagement with the paradoxical endeavour of creating humane, respectful, just, and equitable relations on campus despite the adverse legacies of protracted conflict (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck et al., 2016; Maoz, 2011). The faculty's main approach was to 'drive the elephant out of the room', or at best to tame it. Most of the lecturers refrained from transforming the precarious encounters into engaged judgement due to their limited capacities in that regard (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014).

The third research component, conducted in the course of the dying phase of the peace dove, focused on the students' construal of diversity on campus. The diversity perspectives of Jewish and Arab students (Muslim and Christian), which emerged from the survey and individual interviews, echo both the students' experiences in the workshop conducted by the author, and the individual interviews and focus groups with the faculty. The findings underscore the permeation of escalating tensions in the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict into the campus, heightening intergroup tensions between the students, and exacerbating faculty–student relations (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

The **third case** focused on Israeli Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of the 'mixed' City of Haifa, elucidating their perceptions of diversity intersecting protracted political conflict.

We were interested to explore how the intricate composition of the City of Haifa, particularly the subtle power construction processes (Van Laer & Janssens, 2010), echo the everyday experiences of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents. How do diverse residents interpret the meaning of diversity in the city, their relations with the 'other', and a sense of togetherness in the context of persistent escalating political tensions?

The findings revealed a shared image of Haifa as a beautiful, scenic city, local patriotism of Jews and Arabs/Palestinians, and declared coexistence—mutual tolerance and cultural sensitivity between its diverse residents. However, the study also showed the social distance tendencies of Jewish residents and some experiences of subtle discrimination of Arab/Palestinian residents by Jewish residents (Clair, Humbred, Caruso, & Morgan Roberts, 2012; Karakayali, 2009; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011).

Overall, the lived experiences of Haifa residents (Jewish and Arab/Palestinian alike) conveyed in the third case portray a relatively bright picture of living in a diverse city with very few reported incidents of blatant discrimination. However, Jews and Arabs/Palestinians frame the meaning of diversity in the city differently. The former tend to favour the 'live and let live' approach, willing to mix with their Arab/Palestinian counterparts on their terms—interacting in public spaces of their choosing, while retaining separate neighbourhoods. By contrast, the Arab/Palestinian residents seemed to frame diversity in the city as shared life, at least as the aspired mode of their relations with the Jews. They revealed higher motivation for deeper contact and interactions in their encounters with the Jewish residents (Desivilya Syna, 2015).

Juxtaposing the three cases provides overarching comprehension regarding the complexity of Jewish–Arab/Palestinian relations engulfed by local historical processes, notably the protracted Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The historical process that reversed the structure of power relations between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens after the establishment of the State of Israel and the persistent political tensions has hindered the capacity of both parties to constructively engage with diversity in daily real-life encounters (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Kallus & Kolodney, 2010; Raz-Rotem et al., 2019). The Arabs/Palestinians became a marginalised minority, thereby losing their 'autochthon' status (of the land itself), and are instead treated as 'allechthon' (from another land) by the Jews. By contrast, the structural change coupled with societal and discursive forces have granted a privileged status to Jewish citizens (Jabareen, 2013; Van Laer & Janssens, 2011).

The local social construction by the political elites has been nourished by the recent rise of populist leaders around the world. Their ideas and leadership pose threats to core democratic principles, restricting freedom of speech and pluralism. Contrary to their proclamations of representing and protecting the interests of all, the populists continue to build up their own power, precipitating increasingly authoritarian regimes and delegitimising 'other' citizens and residents (Müller, 2016; Ozacky-Lazar & Jabareen, 2016).

What are the mechanisms blocking the transformation of the protagonists into engaged practitioners (Shotter & Tsoukas, 2014) who can meaningfully deal with the interface of diversity and political tensions?

In an attempt to explain these barriers, we embrace Boxenbaum and Rouleau's (2011) 'Bricolage' approach and pool together two knowledge domains: legacies of protracted conflict and diversity management in organisations. Drawing on the legacies of protracted discords and a critical perspective of diversity, our findings underscore the potency of social construction by the dominant political elites, accentuating power asymmetries that grant advantages to the hegemonic Jewish majority, while discrediting and delegitimising the national minorities (Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Holck et al., 2016; Siira, 2012; Zanoni et al., 2010). The social construction of power asymmetry nurtures bounded capacities at individual level, notably heightening stereotype threat, and the resulting fear that mitigates the positive effects of intergroup contact, thus impeding constructive engagement with diversity (Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya, 2015; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017), which manifests in the protagonists' action strategies.

Jewish members of the medical teams and academic staff (which are predominantly Jewish) mainly employ conflict avoidance (distancing) in the public sphere, unwilling to mix politics with work. The Arab/Palestinian employees and students follow suit and opt to avoid confrontation with their Jewish counterparts. Thus, the fallacies of engaging diversity at the interface of political tensions remain 'behind the scenes', largely silenced and unaddressed (Desivilya & Raz, 2015; Kolb, 2008; Kolb & Bartunek, 1992; Mikkelsen & Clegg, 2018).

Moreover, for Jewish employees in medical centres and academia, and for Jewish Haifa residents, the stumbling blocks on the way to

engaged judgment also result from their blindness concerning their privileged position, and consequently their lack of motivation to challenge it (Dhanani, Beus, & Joseph, 2018; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Zanoni et al., 2010). Oblivious to their advantage, the Jewish citizens enjoy their privileged status and are consequently reluctant to resist the mainstream, while the Arab/Palestinian citizens experience inferiority, delegitimisation, and silencing (Ali, 2019; Bar-Tal, 2011; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Knight & Omanović, 2016).

Notwithstanding the similarities between the three cases at the macro and individual levels, as indicated above, they exhibit some variations and distinctions at the meso level—organisational/community. The disparities mainly entail differences in the nature of contact: structural interdependence of the diverse parties' relations, the purpose of contact—professional, learning, and leisure—voluntariness of contact, frequency, actual scope and depth of contact, and perceived valence of contact experiences.

Previous studies showed that the nature of contact between diverse and rival groups markedly affects their capacity to manage diversity vis-à-vis social and political intergroup tensions (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017). Direct or indirect experiences of positive as well as negative contact with the other make a difference. Thus, witnessing other ingroup members having positive contact with adversaries potentially encourages one to approach rather than avoid members of rival groups. Conversely, negative contact experiences of individuals from marginalised and excluded groups tend to mobilise them to exercise their agency against blatant and subtle discrimination by the dominant groups and institutions (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Dixon et al., 2012).

In the first case, diverse employees' contacts and daily interactions are unavoidable, bounded by professional goal and task interdependence, and the encounters are non-voluntary. In the second case, the Jewish and Arab/Palestinian students meet by coincidence, and their relations in most learning situations are not structurally interdependent; that is, they can determine, at least superficially, the nature of their interactions with the other party. The third case presents a similar situation where, in most circumstances, Jewish and Arab/Palestinian residents of Haifa can decide on the scope, level, and depth of their encounters and contacts.

These differences have implications for both the hindering and fostering mechanisms of engaging diversity at the interface of political tensions.

In medical centres, professional likeness, equal opportunity regulations, common goals, and task interdependence can presumably promote constructive diversity management. Even though the findings show that such fostering forces are limited, as they fall short of counteracting the social construction of power asymmetries and delegitimisation by power elites, especially during escalation phases of the political conflict, they enable a modus operandi to be maintained, ensuring effective professional and organisational performance (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969, 1976; Desivilya Syna, 2015; Tyler, 2012). These promoting factors lend support to the 'business case of diversity', but do not necessarily advance diversity in the sense of maintaining respectful, humane, and equal relations between Jewish and Arab/Palestinian citizens in real-life joint spaces of encounter (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Zanoni et al., 2010).

In academia, the lack of structurally induced interdependence considerably limits the potential mechanisms for fostering constructive diversity management at the interface of persistent and escalating political tensions. Promotion of constructive engagement with diversity would largely depend on local and external initiatives designed to engender intergroup encounters and organisational support for such endeavours, alongside the actual subjective experiences (positive and negative) of such interventions (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Syna Desivilya, 1998, 2004; Tyler, 2012).

In a similar vein, the 'mixed city' setting provides hardly any inherent incentives for fostering constructive engagement with diversity intersecting political tensions. However, promoting mechanisms can emerge from a benevolent, liberal, open city climate, and voluntary positive contact, including the diverse residents' vicarious, indirect experiences (Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017).

The findings of the third case suggest that in comparison with the workplace and academic contexts, the local Haifa communities are more resilient and resistant to the adverse legacies of escalating political tensions. Conceivably, such resilience stems from the liberal attitudes espoused and propagated by the city's leadership, and the positive joint

experiences of Haifa's diverse residents (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Pettigrew & Hewstone, 2017; Syna Desivilya, 1998).

Figure 7.1 schematically portrays the conceptual framework incorporating the emerging insights from the three case studies.

According to the proposed framework, the protagonists' capacity to engage the paradoxical endeavour of managing diversity and political tensions ensues from a complex web of relations at three levels: macro, meso, and individual. The macro level encompasses both local historical processes and global influences that together increase power asymmetries between the dominant elites and the marginalised, excluded groups, and heighten intergroup divisions and separation.

The meso level subsumes the specific organisational/community context, including the organisational/community climate, and the actual nature of contact between diverse organisation members and community residents. These components are affected by the macro-level elements that mostly hinder constructive engagement with diversity. However, macro-level influences may fluctuate in accordance with global and local changes (for instance, in the intensity of the protracted political conflict and the rise or fall of populist regimes). The meso-level factors can simultaneously foster and impede diversity management, depending on the organisational or community culture and the nature of intergroup contacts.

The individual-level aspects comprise the universal human experiences encapsulated in the various modalities of organisation members/community residents: motivational (the need to belong to a group or groups while maintaining a unique identity), emotional (fear, antagonism, hatred), cognitive (cognitive limitations and biases), and behavioural (communication difficulties, contentious conflict management patterns, avoidance mode). The macro- and meso-level dynamic processes nourish individual-level tendencies. Hence, macro- and meso-level elements often impede constructive engagement with diversity interfacing political tensions, unless moderated by positive contact experiences and a benevolent organisational/community culture. Thus, the meso level constitutes the primary target for interventions designed to effect change not only at this level, but also at individual level.

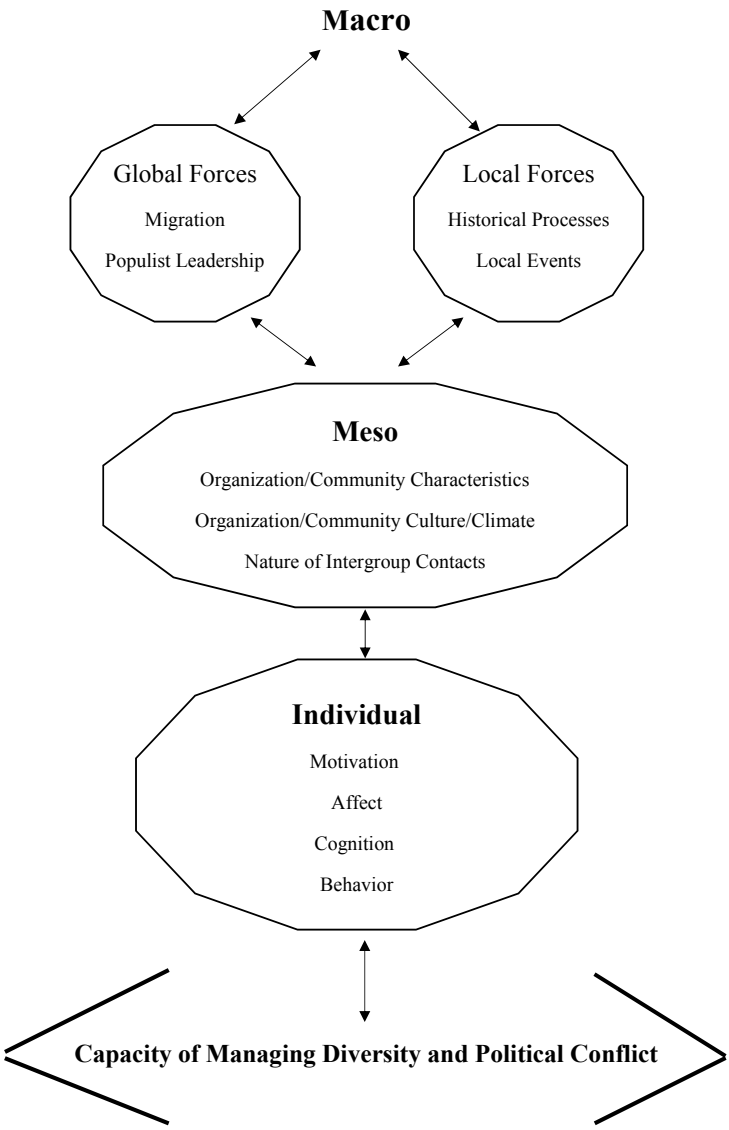

Fig. 7.1 Mechanisms underlying the capacity of managing the paradox of diversity with/and political tensions

Kristeva's words eloquently express the complex duality embedded in the need to manage diversity at the interface of political conflicts in contemporary societies (Kristeva, 1991, p. 209):

> The fundamental question […] belongs to a more psychological or even metaphysical realm […] The multinational society would thus be the consequence of an extreme individualism, but conscious of its discontents and limits, knowing only indomitable people ready-to-help-themselves in their weakness, a weakness whose other name is our radical strangeness.

Expanding Joint Spaces of Encounter: Engaging with Diversity in Times and Places of Political Tensions

Broadening and improving the ways whereby people in contemporary complex societies cope with diversity in the face of political tensions requires acknowledgement of the intricacy, notably the paradoxical features, of such real-life intergroup encounters, and searching for ways to creatively engage them, as put by Kristeva (1991, p. 154):

> There must be an ethics, the fulfilment of which shall depend upon education and psychoanalysis. Such an ethics should reveal, discuss, and spread a concept of human dignity, wrested from the euphoria of classic humanists and laden with the alienations, dramas, and dead ends of our condition as speaking beings. Individual particularistic tendencies, the desire to set oneself up as a private value, the attack against the other, identification with or rejection of the group are inherent in human dignity, if one acknowledges that such dignity includes strangeness. That being the case, as social as that strangeness might be, it can be modulated – with the possibility of achieving a polytopic and supple society, neither locked into the nation or its religion, nor anarchically exposed to all of its explosions. The interbreeding of nations is accompanied by the liberation of their political institutions and social structures – which goes from emancipated competition to self-management and always presupposes respect for one's 'own distinctive features' taking into consideration the 'different'.

Promoting meaningful constructive transformation of relations between 'adversaries' in the light of the complex legacies of the active and accumulative intergroup political tensions, requires combined and joint efforts of all the protagonists, aimed at multiple levels and modalities of human experience (Bekerman, 2018; Dewulf et al., 2009; Dixon et al., 2012; Jones & Dovidio, 2018; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

One widespread approach focuses on intergroup dynamics in meetings held under controlled conditions, while taking into account the political context, diverse identities, and power relations between the groups (Maoz, 2011; Maoz, Steinberg, Bar-On, & Fakhereldeen, 2002). Projects embracing this approach strive to promote change in the participants' views with respect to intergroup relations. They place special emphasis on developing awareness and understanding of the protracted conflict dynamics, and their effects on the participants. These projects aim to facilitate legitimisation and acceptance of the 'opponent' and alleviate mutually averse emotions (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Syna Desivilya, 2004; White-Stephan, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker, & Stephan, 2004). They also attempt to revive hopes for the joint and constructive existence of Jewish and Arab/Palestinian Israeli citizens by creating dialogue (stressing active listening and formulating a joint agenda) between the two groups of participants.

Another approach, adopted by the author, concentrates on attempts to promote constructive interactions and cooperative relations between groups in real-life settings (workplace, academia, community), whose relations are characterised by power asymmetries and marked by persistent political tensions. These efforts target post-conflict societies, as well as societies engulfed by active protracted conflicts (Desivilya Syna, 2015; Friedman, Arieli, & Aboud-Armali, 2018; Friedman et al., 2019; Syna Desivilya, 2004).

Social and educational ventures based on the real-life approach are designed to promote a system-wide transformation of relations in joint spaces of encounter in the workplace, academia, and the community, namely developing constructive and meaningful interactions between diverse employees, students, and community residents (Friedman et al., 2018). Beyond promoting constructive engagement with

diversity at the interface of political tensions, the interventions in natural spaces of encounter attempt to develop reflective practice among diverse employees, academic and administrative staff in academia, and social activists and professionals in community settings (Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012; Friedman et al., 2019). Furthermore, building a genuine partnership, based on constant dialogue between a wide variety of stakeholders—project initiators, facilitators, potential participants, local management, and leaders—constitutes an essential ingredient of such real-life approaches (Desivilya & Palgi, 2011; Desivilya Syna & Rottman, 2012).

Our experiences in using the latter approach reveal many challenges, such as partnership building, and grappling with the complex role and multiple identities of the third party embodied in the project initiators, leaders, and facilitators (Desivilya Syna, Friedman, Arieli, Aboud-Armali, & Raz-Rotem, 2019). Our experiences also underscore the difficulty of challenging the mainstream, as reflected in the complex negotiation with formal authorities, while attempting to obtain their consent and support for the project (Clair et al., 2012; Geiger & Jordan, 2014; Kristeva, 1991; Siira, 2012).

An active third-party role becomes essential in confronting the participants' hidden difficulties in addressing 'otherness' in organisations and communities overshadowed by deep schisms, such as protracted conflicts. Such activities involve calling attention to subtle traces of exclusion, delegitimisation, silencing of voices, and discrimination, developing critical consciousness, and learning how to negotiate the terms of engagement, especially training in 'shadow negotiation'—negotiating power relations (Clair et al., 2012; Desivilya, Rottman, & Raz, 2012; Eden & Huxham, 2001; Foucault, 1994; Hansen, 2008; Kolb, 2004). These concerted efforts are even more important in organisations with weak incentives for cooperation, such as in our second case—academic institutions.

Figure 7.2 summarises the core dimensions, impetus, actions, and expected outcomes of the real-life programs enacted in natural spaces of encounter between diverse protagonists, as discussed above.

The intricacy of the real-life approaches also lies in the prevailing tendencies of scholars and practitioners in the fields of conflict and diversity

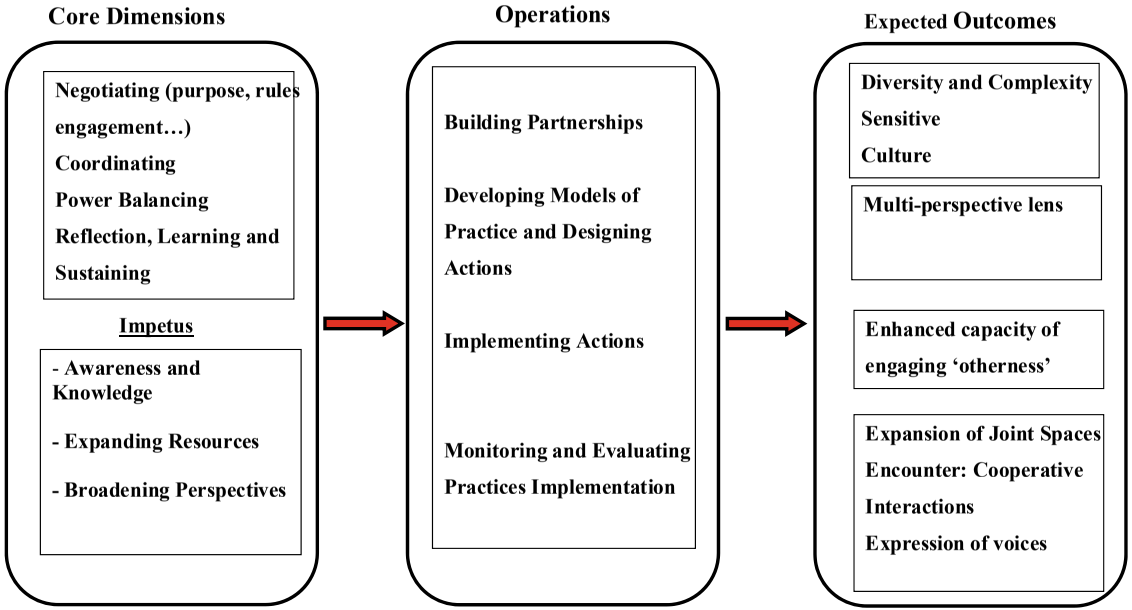

Fig. 7.2 Action model—managing diversity in paradoxical reality

management to provide clear-cut solutions, notably resolving the conflicts rather than helping the protagonists to express their unique voices and engage with the multifaceted and dual characteristics of their relations, as succinctly articulated by Siira (2012, p. 201):

> […] highlights the intrinsic value of polyphony and diversity […]; that is, there is no need to resolve conflicts; instead they should be managed to balance opposing tendencies and preserve diversity. First, managers should pay special attention to the conflict parties' opportunity to voice their perspectives instead of aiming at quick resolution of the issue, no matter how clear the case may seem.

Artists in various fields join conflict and diversity professionals and other prominent scholars in their attempts to engage social injustice and inequalities, reduce social gaps, and open spaces for constructive joint encounters. Some do so in creative yet blatant ways, drawing attention to these pertinent issues, as exemplified by the French photographer JR.

One of JR's bold endeavours took place at the West Bank and in Israel after the Second Intifada. As he relayed in the interview conducted by a CBS correspondent Anderson Cooper, aired on '60 Minutes', he decided to paste large photographs of Israelis and Palestinians holding the same profession or job such as hairdresser, taxi driver, security guard, and teacher on both sides of the wall separating the Palestinians and Israelis on the West Bank (*60 Minutes*, https://tinyurl.com/yx8wewmd). While attempting to realise his project, he was arrested by the Israeli authorities, denying the possibility to materialise his plan on the Israeli side. Hence, he did so first on the Palestinian side and eventually after getting the permission on the Israeli side. In both cases, onlookers gathered around and could not differentiate between Palestinians and Israelis holding the same profession or job. This endeavour exposed the possibility not only of alleviating intergroup tensions, but of forming an initial bridge for joint encounter in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Do JR's, professionals' in social and behavioural sciences and social activists' efforts to meaningfully manage diversity at the interface of political tensions achieve any results? No clear-cut responses can be provided at this time or in the near future, but as we have already learned,

social change begins with initiating processes aimed to counteract social injustice (Clair et al., 2012; Desivilya et al., 2012; Kristeva, 1991; Siira, 2012; Van Laer & Janssen, 2011).

Clearly, expanding joint spaces for encounters based on dignity, equality, and inclusion—expression of a variety of voices—despite animosities and political tensions, calls for creative, bold, vanguard approaches, as illustrated by another artist, namely dancer and choreographer Pina Bausch, as can be seen in numerous documentaries about her work (e.g. Arts.21/Dance Theatre, https://youtu.be/3kZ8zui9x0c). Such steps require taking risks, constant reflection, learning, and openness to change in order to fit the forum to the fuss in engaging with diversity at the interface of political tensions, rather than forcing one-size-fits-all proposals.

Concluding Notes on My Personal Voyage

I will conclude this book project voyage with some personal contemplations. I draw on Marcel Proust's well-known quote from the fifth volume of *Remembrance of Things Past* (1923).

> The only true voyage of discovery, the only fountain of Eternal Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to behold the hundred universes that each of them beholds, that each of them is.

This book has been an opportunity for an embodied professional voyage in different homes—homelands, communities, and academic and professional/disciplinary homes. In each of these homes, I have experienced perplexing situations and events, confronting me with identity-related questions, notably my own strangeness and otherness, and arousing reflections on how these personal experiences resonate with my work. Have I come to terms with my manifold and dynamic identities in the different homes? Here are some tentative responses, but also some questions awaiting future journeys.

This work has opened avenues for searching and learning how others—scholars in different fields, visual artists, musicians, and cinematographers—engage with the topic of this book. I have been inspired, among others, by the work of Mary Parker Follett, Julia Kristeva, Michelangelo, photographers like JR, projects in the field of architecture, such as 'In Statu Quo', and the work of musicians such as Herbie Hancock. They all addressed, and some still engage with, the paradoxes, dualities, and complexity of 'otherness', and do so creatively and humanely. They have markedly contributed to my capacity to acquire and view reality from different perspectives.

Thus, in the course of this voyage, I have reflected on our work from both an outsider's and insider's perspectives. It sharpened for me the elementary role of the social construction of power relations, of which individuals affiliated with hegemonic groups (like myself) are notoriously oblivious. Perhaps due to my biography as a wandering Jew and personal experiences of 'strangeness', my professional experience in social conflict, as well as my political inclinations, I have not been utterly blind to the effects of social construction. Yet, the disparate experiences of Arab/Palestinian students vis-à-vis their Jewish counterparts accentuated the privileged status of the Jewish faculty (myself) and students, especially in times of mounting political tensions (Desivilya Syna et al., 2017; Holck et al., 2016).

Reflecting on my actual engagement in action research in my academic home highlighted the importance of diversity-sensitive skills in interviewing and facilitating focus groups. Dialogic capabilities such as active listening and being attuned to the participants' needs appear indispensable, yet quite intricate in the process of their implementation due to the researcher's own diversity-related 'baggage'.

Where should we go from here to further advance our understanding of building cooperative encounters and interactions between groups whose relations are marked by persistent tensions?

Let us continue searching for new eyes, and looking at reality through others' eyes by building partnerships with others (scholars, professionals, social activists, students, artists in various fields, community residents), learning, reflecting, and developing together joint spaces of encounter.

…And the epilogue goes to Herbie Hancock's retrospection on composing 'Watermelon Man' and working with Latin jazz musicians, reflecting the challenge of one's own 'otherness' and giving it a voice, alongside the need to collaborate with the other music genre, as he portrayed on YouTube (Herbie Hancock, https://youtu.be/2t-9nGwzID8).

Hancock's experience of engaging with diversity echoes the necessary paths that we should traverse while developing and improving the scholarship and praxis on managing diversity in times and places of political tensions.

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