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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.

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.

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

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[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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