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Nele Cölsch
Potential and limitations of peace education in Israel

Gender and Diversity

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Band 3

Nele Cölsch

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Transcription signs

(.)	short break
and I felt kind of a// I was already prepared	sentence or word not completed, new beginning
to-to	repetition of syllables or word
(laughing)	Nonverbal expressions, other remark-able noises
be'ehmet toda	words in languages other than English
(?)	word or words not understandable at all
[word] [word]	Overlap

N: Interviewer   I: Interviewee

0   Introduction

The conflict in the Middle East is one of the most present in German media and probably elsewhere as well. Israel is in the center of it, some might say it is the center. In this region where constant violence takes place, uncountable organizations and projects try to work toward peace and coexistence with very different strategies. Since the *Al-Aksa intifada* (the uprising of Palestinians in the occupied territories starting in 2000), the concept of co-existence[i] work and encounter work is undergoing a crisis (Halabi, Sonnenschein 2004). The rift between the Palestinians and the Jewish Israelis has deepened. The concept of co-existence is questioned and mutual mistrust raised.

Still, peace work continues in this crucial political reality. Fund (2002, cited in Stephan et al. 2004, 239) estimates that about 150,000 people are currently engaged in about 300 programs, just counting those within Israel. In the formal school system, by now, four bilingual, bi-national official schools exist under the Israeli Ministry of Education. One just opened last year and the numbers of students attending these schools rises constantly. The biggest one is located in Jerusalem. This 'Hand in Hand' peace school is the subject of my final thesis. Based on interviews conducted with 20 parents who send their children to this school, I will elaborate on the challenges and limitations the Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem confronts as well as its successes.

This paper is based on a case study conducted between September and December 2008. It summarizes the opinions of parents regarding the concept of the school in Jerusalem. The interviews themselves were conducted in English. This is neither the mother tongue of the interviewers nor the mother tongue of most of the parents interviewed. The general idea of German interviewees addressing Palestinian as well as Jewish parents can be questioned even though alternatives might also show deficits. As Bekerman points out (2003) one should be aware of the influence of the researcher's background and the consequences in the results and interpretation. Even though nobody gave me the feeling that my Germanness is a problem, I'm aware that it has changed the answers of the interviews as well as it influences my interpretation.

This paper is written in English, first of all, because it is more authentic to keep the interviews in the language conducted to prevent mistakes based on translations and

to keep the original terms. The literature used mainly comes from Israel or English speaking countries. Additionally the final results will be handed over to Dr. Zvi Bekerman, the academic who conducts a long term study on the Hand in Hand schools in Israel, as he continues his research. Parents interviewed can then ask him if they would like to know what has happened with their answers as they have his contact details. On top of that, the particular German-Israeli history and relationship makes me feel uncomfortable translating the answers and ideas into German, a language used in Israel mainly in the context of the Holocaust.

The structure of this thesis is separated into two main parts, first the theoretical introduction, giving an idea of the context of the school and in the second part, the case study conducted. First, the concept of peace education will be introduced. Based on the wide spread but still vague term 'peace', different understandings of the pedagogical concept of peace education will be presented as well as the influencing factors and main objectives of peace education. Then in chapter two, I will describe the setting of the school. To understand the concept of this specific Hand in Hand school with its unique approach, it is of high value to get an idea of the population of Israel, its societal divisions, and the status of the Arab-Palestinian minority. Only in this context one can understand the obstacles and objectives of the school's specific program. In addition the school system in Israel will be explained, as the Hand in Hand school is part of that system.

In part two, the school will be described, with its concept and the central aspects emphasizing: bilingualism, identity issues and inter-group encounters. These will be the three categories used to present the results of the interviews. This is the central part of this work, that is, putting the results of the interviews into a context of academic discourse. I will not dig any deeper into a theoretical background of interviewing parents. Besides the fact that there is not much academic literature available about this issue, it would go beyond the scope of this thesis to focus on the target group as well.

1   Peace education: Different approaches

"Peace education will not achieve the changes necessary for peace. Rather it prepares learners to achieve the changes." (Cabezud, Haacelsrud 2007, 296)

1.1   What is peace?

Peace education is based on the term peace. To understand the complexity of peace education, one has to be aware of the already different interpretations of peace in order to understand the different approaches of peace education. 'Peace' is a term mostly described by its opposite, to be more precise by its absence (Webel 2007). Peace is a state of non-violence. Even though for Galtung (1990, 2003), a founder of peace and conflict studies, it is defined as much more than that. He distinguishes between positive and negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of war, violence and conflict. Positive peace though stands for the presence of positive states and desirable thoughts like justice, harmony or equality and is therefore much more than the absence of violence. Galtung (1990) also talks about structural violence manifested in inequalities such as unequal distribution of power. For him, therefore positive peace can only be established if structures are challenged and changed toward more equality among the different stakeholders. Even though, more detailed interpretations of peace, for example a distinction of inner and outer peace on a spiritual level were given, Galtung's definition serves as basic principle on peace projects as well as peace education (as in Biton, Salomon 2006). According to Webel (2007), it is important to understand that any peace project aims for a transformation on a personal and collective level from destruction toward positive values and states. It forms active members and collective self-determination and empowers toward emancipation. For Webel (2007), even though there will never be a time when absolute peace is spread throughout the world, to work toward a more peaceful, just and equal world is motivation enough to put effort in projects of peace, like peace education.

1.2   Peace education

Peace education is by definition broad. It does not combine a certain curriculum or has a certain approach but instead imparts specific values, attitudes, beliefs, skills and behavioral tendencies that correspond with the objectives (Bar-Tal 2002). It is the heading for certain aims and challenges structures and power relations through different strategies, depending on the situation it is embedded in. It can promote cultural diversity in ethnocentric societies, challenge racist structures, it can work toward nuclear disarmament, environmental protection, gender equality and other equalities.

Cabeszud and Haacelsrud (2007) argue that a basic structure of democracy and peace must exist to build upon. If the surrounding environment does not promote peace education, it cannot succeed. Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) on the other hand are persuaded that peace education can also take place in violent areas and places where it is not welcome. But they draw attention to the fact that in such situations one has to apply peace education in an indirect way and consider the outer atmosphere.

1.3   Peace education in conflict ridden areas

Peace education programs based in conflict areas face conflicts such as ethnic-national conflicts, religious-cultural conflicts and political/economic conflicts (Lenhart 2007). Of course these types are overlapping and intertwined. According to Lenhart (2007), peace education takes place during a conflict on the base of the human right of education or as a measure of reducing a conflict. It can also be used after a conflict to reconcile different parties in conflict. Just to reestablish a regular school system after it was destroyed during a conflict can be considered as peace education.

In a conflict setting peace education is preoccupied with special challenges. According to Salomon (2002, 7), they can be described as (a) the conflict going on between collectives not individuals, (b) facing a deeply rooted narrative[ii] and memories and (c) confronting great inequalities. Based on the setting and dimension of conflict, one can use different peace-building methods to target directly or indirectly the 'culture of conflict' a term used by Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009). They describe the 'culture of conflict' as the dominant societal belief of a narrative, con-

taining collective history, ethos of conflict, emotional setting and so on. According to them, the conflict in Israel/Palestine can be identified as an intractable one. This term is characterized by the length of the conflict lasting over 25 years, the fighting for goals that are assumed to be essential, being perceived as being violent and unsolvable, of a 'zero-sum nature' and being continued by the societies involved, as well as having a great impact on the population. The deeper a conflict goes and the longer it lasts, the stronger the 'culture of conflict' has developed and the more difficult it is to overcome. In such a conflict the narratives of all parties involved satisfy the social need to provide information that stabilizes the collective emotion and orientation. It fails to provide objective information. The main goal of peace education, in the sense of Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009), is trying to change the prevalent 'culture of conflict' and initiating a process of reconciliation which consists of mutual understanding, recognition and acceptance, an investment in peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes and consideration of the other parties' needs and their interests (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009).

1.4 Peace education in formal, non-formal and informal education

Education can be divided into formal, non-formal and informal education. The formal sector is the regular compulsory school sector. The non-formal sector is based on education transmitted in institutions not belonging to the compulsory school system and the informal school sector is private knowledge that is imparted outside of any institutions. According to Cabezud and Haacelsrud (2007) informal and non-formal education have great potential for peace education, taking into consideration that in conflict areas formal settings might be controlled by the party in power, though the establishment of peace education in a formal system is also convenient. The main advantage is the great number of students, who are required to attend compulsory schooling. On top of that schools are often the only social institutions that have the resources, methods, legitimacy, authority and conditions to carry out peace education (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009). In peace education embedded in formal education, educators can target the young generation that is still in the process of forming norms and ideas and has not yet completely absorbed the 'culture of conflict' surrounding them (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009). On the other hand in formal education, through teachers' instructions, school ceremonies, history, text books, and so forth the national dominant narrative is reproduced. Those practicing of peace education have to therefore be aware of the correlation between power, education and control (Cabezud, Haacelsrud 2007).

1.5   Influencing factors of peace education

Peace education, as previously described, can be set up in environments more or less open to peace. In any case the outer conditions of the setting influence immensely the climate within the school. The school's success depends on different factors (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009). The first factor is the political-societal condition that can be measured for example by the political peace process and governmental and political support. The second main factor the school relies on is the educational conditions such as the Ministerial support, the peace education policy (goals and planning), organization and so on. Depending on the political climate and support for peace education the school must decide whether to implement a direct or an indirect approach. The indirect approach does not address the conflict itself, but focuses on themes which deconstruct the 'culture of conflict'. This can be achieved through subjects like identity, violence, human rights, conflict resolution skills, security matters and empathy (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009). The direct approach on the other hand confronts the staff, the students and other stakeholders of the setting with all themes related to the conflict. This includes the history and narratives of both conflict parties. On an affective level, fear and hatred must be reduced while simultaneously hope, mutual trust and acceptance must be actively fostered. The models of direct and indirect peace education do not exclude each other but can enrich each other (Bar-Tal, Rosen 2009).

1.6   Objectives of peace education

The evaluation of the success of a peace education project can be measured by different factors, according to different academics. According to Danesh (2007) the objective of peace education in a formal school setting is defined by the addressing of four major themes:

1) reflecting their own world views and gradually developing a peace-based world view
2) creating a culture of peace in the school environment
3) creating a culture of healing, reconciliation and recovery from damages done
4) learning to prevent new conflicts and resolve them in a peaceful manner

For Danesh peace education requires an integrated approach meaning the inclusion of all parties involved in school; parents, teachers, students, administration and support staff.

For Bar-Tal (2002) an objective of peace education is that the dominant party gives up privileges, status and power to redistribute in order to strengthen weaker parties in society. According to Cabezud and Haacelsrud (2007), the concept of peace education is to uncover how direct and structural violence interact and support each other. They suggest to draw attention to the connection between the macro and the micro level. Every action on a micro level influences the macro level. Based on this model, peace education should provide options on how to change reality. Shapiro (2002) defines the objective of peace education as providing space for unheard voices, away from the center to speak out. To let everybody become self-determined subjects, rather than remain objects of whom one talks about and decides over. Salomon (2002) points out that the main objectives of peace education in intractable conflicts should be accepting the other narrative and being willing to critically analyze their own narrative and actions, being able to understand the suffering of the other group, showing empathy and trusting the other group, besides being engaged in nonviolent activities. So here, once again it becomes obvious that the understandings of peace, peace education and their objectives differ immensely.

This introduction in the rather philosophical subject of peace and peace education gives an impression on how much definitions, objectives and approaches can vary even though they all aim for a more just and harmonious world. It is also apparent that there can not only be one approach in how to implement a peace education in a curriculum. It is more than just a change of structure in an education setting, but an attitude that needs to be incorporated by the educators and stakeholders in the project. It is not a separate subject but an educational orientation. In different political settings, from democratic environments to conflict areas, it can be set in different forms of education: formal, non-formal and informal, and can target the conflict existing in a direct or an indirect way. The peace education program of the Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem is set in a formal setting, in an intractable conflict and therefore has to overcome obstacles on the most difficult level described, dealing with a very strong and deeply rooted 'culture of violence'.

2   The setting of the school: A conflict over identities

2.1   Israel – A multilingual, multicultural society

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel the country holds a popula-
tion of almost 7.5 million inhabitants in 2009.[iii] The population in Israel is a multi-
cultural and multilingual society and consists mainly of Jews, who constitute about
80 percent of all citizens. The Jews in Israel have origins all over the world. The
Ashkenasim, the hegemonic group, consists of Jews with European and American
roots. There are also *Mizrahim* Jews, who are rooted in Asia, and northern African
Arab countries. Together with about one million Jews from the former Soviet Un-
ion and a smaller number of Ethiopian Jews, they build the heterogeneous group of
the Jewish community in Israel. 'Arab Israelis', as they are known, constitute about
20 percent of the population. They are a mixture of more than one million Muslim-
Arabs, 120,000 Christian-Arabs, and 150,000 Druze. The rest, categorized as 'oth-
ers', mainly consists of Christian Armenians.

The official languages in Israel are Hebrew and Arabic although Israel does not
function as a bilingual state. Hebrew is the language of public civic life. It is the
common language of bureaucracy, the medium of instruction in higher education,
the dominant language of the media and most importantly the language of most
sectors of the labor market (Amara et al. 2009). As a result, it is extremely difficult
to function in Israel without sufficient competence in Hebrew even though the
country holds, according to the different backgrounds of its citizens, a wide variety
of languages. Russian, English, French are common languages heard in the streets,
besides other languages imported from the Diaspora. The Arab-Palestinian citizens
of Israel have Arabic as mother tongue but almost all function in Hebrew. Arabic is
spoken by some Jews rooted in Arab countries but they have assimilated into to the
Hebrew hegemony in public and only use Arabic, if at all, at home (Hajjar 2000).
So all in all, Arabic is the language of the minority, mainly spoken by Palestinian
citizens, even though in a wider context, it is the language of the majority in the
Middle East.

2.2 The strong craving for a Jewish state

The immigration of Jews in Palestine started in the late 19th century and was based on the idea that the land of Israel provides a shelter to all Jewish people worldwide who suffer from discrimination and persecution. Jewish refugees fled from anti-Semitism in Europe and Arab countries. Even though the so called 'Zionist' idea is rooted in political matters by secular Jews, it refers to the biblical homeland of the Jewish people (Rouhana 1997). The *Shoa* (Heb: Holocaust) and the persecution worldwide during World War II triggered new waves of immigration that arrived in Palestine. In 1948 the state of Israel was proclaimed after long and difficult negotiations including the Partition Plan adopted by the UN Security Council.[iv] Based on these historical matters it defines itself as a Jewish state and strengthens Jewish identities (Lowrance 2006, Rouhana 1997). This can be seen by the symbols used, the language spoken, holidays celebrated, and so forth (Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999). The idea of a Jewish country for all Jews, *Eretz Israel*, is a central aspect in the Jewish narrative all over the world. It is manifested in the Israeli '*Law of Return'* that gives the right to all Jews to settle in Israel and acquire the Israeli nationality. The interpretation of Jewishness in this law, as well as in other matters in Israeli politics[v] is based on religious terms rather than political, ideological, or even territorial terms (Rouhana 1997). The intertwined relation of religion and national understanding of Jewishness, as has been described here, gives reason for the Jewish community to strongly argue what defines a Jewish identity (Rouhana 1997). Even though alternative voices to the Zionist narrative emerged in the 1980s and increased in the 1990s, the Zionist mainstream is strongly positioned in Jewish Israeli society[vi].

A sense of 'mino-majority' goes along with the Jewish identity caused by the Jewish history and the fact, that Israel still is the only country worldwide with a Jewish majority and is located in the center of the Arab and Muslim world (Wolff-Jontofsohn 1999). This means that Jews hold the majority in terms of religion and culture in Israel whereas they are a weak minority in the wider geographical context. This is reinforced by the fact that Israel is not recognized as a legitimate state by various neighboring Arab countries (Wolff-Jontofsohn 1999). This as well as other factors give rise to the strong need for Jews to keep Israel Jewish.

The paramount concern of Israel is security. This preoccupation with security is based on four issues. First of all, different wars were fought with neighboring Arab countries. Besides these conflicts, threats by them, including their denial of the recognition of the existence of the state of Israel, give reason for a feeling of inse-

curity. Israel, since its foundation, has not experienced a warless decade. Second, the traumatic past – the perpetual discrimination, persecution and pogroms, and anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust. This experience became part of the consciousness of the Jewish population worldwide. Third, the threat of Palestinian refugees of the '48 war and their offspring claiming their property, land and homes back (Rouhana 1997). And finally, Israel is confronted with cross-border and individual attacks on civilians within Israel by Palestinians mainly from the occupied territories.

According to Wolff-Jontofsohn (1999) the collective trauma of the Holocaust and persecution tremendously influences the present understanding of the conflict with the Arab neighbors. In the consciousness of the Jewish people the patterns of interpretation repeat and therefore any political conflict with the Arab people is seen as an existential one, a fighting for survival that leaves no space for risk. Besides the constant conflict with Arab countries, this psychological omnipresent momentum and interpretation by the Jewish people builds an additional obstacle to overcome in order to solve the conflict. The Holocaust is the central occurrence in the Jewish history for every Jew in Israel and elsewhere. However, some researchers like Zuckermann (1996, cited by Wolff-Jontofsohn 1999, 87) claim that the perpetuation of the history of the Holocaust, in the dimension it is done in Israel, is instrumentalized for political matters. Human Rights organizations argue, that the security wall as well as settlements in the West Bank show how security measurements and economic interests, for example access to land, are intertwined.

The question of security determines political decisions in all areas in Israel and leads to a strongly militarized society. A permanent focus on foreign politics and a widespread fear within the Jewish population leaves little space to concentrate on internal deficits. Israel faces a number of conflicts within its society including common gender questions and party-political arguments. There are strong divisions such as between religious and secular Jews, as described over the question of a definition on Jewishness and the consequences resulting out of this question. Another one between *Ashkenazim* and *Mizrahim* Jews over the *Ashkenasim* hegemony, between immigrants and veterans mainly referring to Russians and settled Israelis on immigration politics, and racial questions mainly over the status of Ethiopian Jews, who are the most marginalized among the Jewish community in Israel. The deepest of all divisions though remains between Jews and the Arab-Palestinian minority (Yonah 2005). The Palestinian minority challenges the Zionist idea ideologically and threatens the Jewishness of the country by demographic determinants. Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) suggest that the Arab-Palestinian population forms

about 20 percent of the total population in Israel while its natural increase rate is double that of the Jewish rate.

2.3   Palestinians in Israel

While the establishment of Israel has brought independence and security to the Jewish population, it is called *Nakba* (Arb: catastrophe) in the Palestinian narrative. In the war fought by neighboring Arab countries and Jews one day after the state of Israel was proclaimed most of the Palestinians were expelled or fled while only approximately 160.000 of them stayed (see Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999). Palestinian citizens of Israel are descendants of Palestinians who remained in Israel after 1948 and received Israeli residency (Jabareen 2006). After the many wars Israel fought with its neighboring Arab countries and a variety of other reasons, the Arab neighbors are seen as the 'other' and 'enemy' (see Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005). Palestinians, as representatives of the Arab people, live as 'others' or 'enemies' within it[vii]. In times of political crisis like during the *Al-Aksa intifada*, the attitudes toward the Palestinian citizens in Israel were influenced by the happenings and the negative stereotypes about Palestinians held by Israeli Jews increased while in times of peace a more positive attitude toward them can be noted (Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005).

They formally hold the same democratic rights as Jewish citizens before the law, with significant exceptions (Rouhana 1997). Political changes provided improvement for the Palestinian population (see Amara 2003) even though the preferred status for Jewish citizens remained. In economic, educational, legal and social terms, Palestinians are far behind the Jewish community in Israel.

The Palestinian population in Israel is separated but integrated in the Jewish-Israeli society. They mainly live in separate neighborhoods, villages and towns, take part in different education systems but at the same time interface in areas like public institutions, governments, universities and so forth. While more than 80 percent of the Palestinians in Israel reside in exclusively Arab communities in the Galilee, the north, the so called "Triangle" in the center and the Negev in the south (Jabareen 2006), others also live in neighborhoods in mixed cities like Haifa, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Ramla, Lod and others (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007).

2.4   The awakening of a Palestinian identity

Living in a Jewish state, where the Jewish self-esteem is enhanced by the state especially the Palestinian Arab minority suffers of an identity confusion (Lowrance 2006, Amara et al. 2009). Through the unique situation of the Israeli Palestinians, they developed an identity with a special imprint, that distinguishes them from the identity of other Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, but also from Palestinians in exile. The great majority of Palestinians with Israeli passport would not question the existence of Israel but see their task in integration in the country and fight for equality on a political level rather than through violent protests (Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999). It can be described as a struggle between an 'Israelization' including its modern and western lifestyle and a recalling of the Palestinian identity, a rather traditional lifestyle. As stated by Yogev, Ben-Yoshua and Alper (1991), they have created a new national identity including the identification with the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and refugees in other countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, including their support for the fight for independence, but they also claim their belonging to the state of Israel (Ghanem 1998).[viii]

The awakening of an understanding of the 'Arab population' in Israel as Palestinians began in 1960s especially with the Six-Day war of Israel and Arab countries in 1967[ix]. Before, there was a time dominated by the self-definition by the Palestinians as Israelis. When the Jewish state was founded, the political elite fled and rather uneducated peasants stayed. Kimmerling (1993, cited by Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999, 119) called it a "body without head". This had major effects on the development of an identity by this group. The Palestinian minority was during the first decades after Israel's establishment strictly controlled by the Jewish apparatus and meant to be educated in order to understand the Zionist idea (see Wolf-Johntofsohn 1999). This led to an identification of many 'Arabs' as Israelis. Through the education policy the level of education among the Palestinian minority improved and a new intellectual elite generated which created a new and independent understanding of their self-identity. Over time the security measurements toward the Palestinian Israelis reduced because it became obvious that they didn't constitute a threat for the Jewish country. When in 1967 Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza as a result of the '67 war the isolation from the Arab world was dismantled and a new identification as Palestinians developed. Palestinian Israelis met their family members on the other side and showed solidarity with them, supporting their interests, but also understood their privileged situation in terms of economy and that their belonging to Israel was irreversible (Wolf-Johntofsohn 1999). According to

Ghanem (1998), the core problem of identity for Palestinians with Israeli passport is not the conflict between the two identities, Palestinians and Israeli, but the incompleteness of both of them.

Amara (2003) states, that the identity of the Arab Palestinian population in Israel develops by the influence of mainly three factors: (a) the Israeli policy on minorities; (b) regional developments such as the Oslo accords in 1993, when the government of Israel and representatives of the Palestinian authority (PLO) had the first agreement, elaborated together; and (c) internal developments among the Arab Palestinian population in Israel.

Today Palestinian citizens of Israel can be viewed as a distinct national minority (Palestinian) as well as an ethnic (Arab), religious (Muslim, Christian, and Druze) and linguistic (Arabic) minority (Jabareen 2006). Of course different subgroups have an unequal understanding and approach to their Palestinian Israeli or Arab identity. The Druze population in Israel has a particular identity that can be described as 'non-Arab Arabs' (Hajjar 2000). They are confronted with discrimination as non-Jews even though they are very loyal to the state of Israel. Their religion is a secession of the Islam. They are the only Arab sub-group that was permitted and encouraged to enlist in the military service. Through the military army their understanding of Israeliness is much stronger than any of the other Arab groups and their feeling of discrimination much less distinctive (Hajjar 2000).

The complexity of the identity of Palestinians holding an Israeli passport can easily be shown by the terms used for them. The terms Arab Israelis, Palestinians, Arab Palestinians or Palestinian citizens of Israel are utilized commonly. Depending on the situation, the terms are highly politicized. Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) claim, for example, that the term 'Arabs' used by Jewish Israelis in relation to Palestinian Israelis implies the refusal to recognize an existence of the Palestinian nation. Since 1973, there is a constant increase among Arab Palestinians in Israel to define themselves as Palestinians (Amara 2003). Only very few Arabs who are citizens of Israel define themselves only as Israelis. In the following text I will refer to them as Palestinians. When part of a quotation, I will retain the term "Arab", but refer to them in a later context as Palestinians.

The Palestinian population struggles for a super-identity of the state of Israel that would include their behalf in all belongings with an egalitarian status (Amara 2003). Until today, they abstained from almost any form of violent protest. While there is a tendency to reawaken in some (see Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999), others em-

bark on the strategy of education, knowing that only an over-talented and educated non-Jew will succeed in the Jewish hegemony.

2.5   Jerusalem

The status of Jerusalem is unclear. By Israeli law it is the capital of the state, but most countries as well as academics don't recognize it as such. Therefore, most embassies are situated in Tel Aviv. For the Palestinians it is the demanded capital of their future state. The religious, cultural and historical importance for both people adds on to Jerusalem's complicated status.

The city holds a population of about 750.000 inhabitants (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics). It is split in two parts: East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem, divided by a separating fence and in other areas a wall. Whereas West Jerusalem belongs to Israel, East Jerusalem is under Palestinian administration. Jewish citizens rarely cross the border to East Jerusalem but East Jerusalemites and some Palestinians from the West Bank visit West Jerusalem, when permitted, on a regular basis for work, education, medical care and other reasons. Aside from the conflict about the settlers in the West Bank and the Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem is one of the main unresolved problems for the settlement to the Middle East conflict (Kacowicz 2005).

This chapter is to show the highly politicized context in which the school has developed. The intractable conflict of Israel and the Palestinians is, referring to Amara (2009), not only a material conflict, but also one based on identity and narratives. Identity is a major issue in the area and therefore has to be considered in the Hand in Hand school as will be seen in further chapters. The traumatic experiences both people have lived through and their current situation has a major impact on identity issues on both sides. They all live through a constant debate over their definition of identity and experience constant threats. The political tension is much stronger in Jerusalem than it is in other parts of the country. The separating wall for example influenced the school tremendously as will be seen in the description of the interviews. Jerusalem is one of the central issues the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is built on. At the same time it is one of the few places where both people live together and where a co-existence program is needed most.

3 The Israeli school system

3.1 An overview

The Israeli school system is organized by the Israeli Ministry of Education. It is separated into four streams from preschool up to higher education: the state sector, the state-religious, the Arab and the semi-private orthodox religious one. The state sector is responsible for most of the Israeli youth's education. The education system is divided into 3 different levels: it demands six years of primary school, three years of junior high school and three years of high school. Ten years of education are required by law. Also kindergarten at the age of five years is obligatory before entering school at the age of six (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007).

A vast variety of private schools, primarily ultra-orthodox Jewish and Christian ones, are summarized as "recognized but unofficial schools" (Iram, Shemida 1998). They are also mainly funded by the Ministry of Education and in return are supposed to use the ministries' prescribed curricula. The *Haredi* (ultra-orthodox) stream nowadays holds about 25 percent of Israeli first graders and has a strong focus on religious studies, including the imparting of Yiddish. The Arab sector that includes the non Jewish minority in Israel also holds about 25 percent of Israeli students. It has a partly different curriculum from the Jewish one. It is reflecting a cultural background for Muslims, Christians and Druze in the fields of literature, religion and tradition while in other areas they are identical, for example the mathematics and geography curricula (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007). The language of instruction in the "Arab sector" is Arabic, while Hebrew is taught intensively. Hebrew is necessary for higher education and, furthermore, provides opportunities in status as well as in working options. For this the learning attitude among students toward it is positive. On the Jewish side, very little Arabic is taught, if any. After the Oslo Agreement in 1993 the Ministry of Education recommended learning Arabic, the language of its neighbors, but it was never implemented in the schools. Still only six percents of the students in the Hebrew sector take Arabic examination as part of their matriculation (Brosh 1996, cited by Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2009, 211). Palestinian Arab parents can send their children to Jewish schools, which some parents make use of. The reverse has not been documented so far (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007).

The separated primary and secondary education sections merge into a more unified higher education system, that is mainly offered in Hebrew. After having passed the matriculation *(bagrut)*, students can pass to college, institutes of technology or one of the big universities in Israel. According to Mor-Sommerfeld and others (2007) only a few teacher-training colleges for the "Arab sector" are held partly in Arabic depending on the institute.

The Israeli school system provides a functional bilingualism where the language competence is transferred in consideration of practical use. On the Jewish side, in the regular schools, the first foreign language is English, while the second foreign language is either Arabic or French. In Jewish orthodox schools, Yiddish and other languages are spoken besides Hebrew. On the non-Jewish side, the language of instruction is Arabic. However, Hebrew is always learned as second language from second or third grade on (Amara et al. 2009).

3.2   Differences of the Arab and the Jewish sector

For some teachers in the Palestinian educational system there exists a sense of conflict regarding their loyalty both toward their employer, the Ministry of Education, and their loyalty toward the Palestinian people (Bekerman 2005a). The Ministry does not allow Arab schools to freely choose their narratives concerning national history or culture. For example, the Palestinian understanding of the *Nakba,* the creation of Israel, is not taught (Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza 2007). Al Haj (2007) claims that the history curriculum presented in school reflects the power system in the wider society and reproduces the dominant ideology. It strengthens the identity of Jewish students but not the one of Palestinians.

Jabareen (2006) describes a systematic exclusion of Palestinians within Israel. He claims that the Arab school system which is excluded from many benefits the Jewish sector profits from is completely controlled by the Jewish Ministry of Education and that controls the content and the objectives of the Arab Palestinian education. This is, according to him, a major obstacle to a Palestinian self-definition and a free development of the cultural-national identity. It denies the distinct needs of Palestinians in areas such as Arab language, national identity, history and heritage. For many years, as Mor-Sommerfeld, Avid and Dunetz (2009) explain, Palestinian teachers and educators were questioned by the security services of Israel about their political attitudes before receiving permission to teach which led to an intimidation of people's willingness to express their opinion.

In general, the Jewish school stream is equipped better than the Arab stream. Arab classes, for example, were on average four students larger than Jewish schools. At kindergarten level full-time Palestinian teachers have to deal with 39,3 students while Jewish teachers take care of 19,8 students on average (Coursen-Neff 2006). Jewish students continue also more often to higher education. According to the Israeli Bureau of Statistics on the Jewish side 66,2 percent received a matriculation certificate to continue in higher education, on the Arab sector the rate was 44,6 percent in 2008. On top of that only 8 percent of students accepted to universities are Palestinian Israelis (Golan-Agnon 2006).

The Israeli school system is separated into a Jewish and an Arab stream, whereas the Jewish stream has subcategories. The curriculum, elaborated by the Ministry of Education for all schools reproduces the Zionist idea and therefore strengthens the identity of Jews but not of non-Jews. The division of the students by sending them to separate schools has a major effect on the understanding of each other. Education could be the first encounter in a setting where living areas are divided but the usual continuation for a regular Jewish youngster after secondary school is the service in the army. Only after that, in higher education or through work, is there a chance of interaction. Only four schools in all of Israel break with the mono-lingual and mono-national understanding, four of them run by Hand in Hand (one of them in cooperation with the association HAGAR) and the eldest one, established in 1984 in *Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam* (Oasis of Peace) a school set up in a village where Palestinians and Jews live together in coexistence. The biggest of the schools, the Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem, is item of the research presented in this paper.

4 "Hand in Hand" – NGO and schools

4.1 An overview

The Center for Bilingual Education (CBE) called "Hand in Hand" was founded in Israel in 1997. The main goal of this center is to provide egalitarian education for Jewish and Arab children in Israel. Bi-lingual, bi-national and multicultural education are emphasized in the schools run by this NGO. The school in Jerusalem located within the internationally recognized borders of the state of Israel was one of the first to be established according to these principles in 1998, parallel to a school in the Galilee.

Today there are four Hand in Hand schools all over Israel one in *Kfar Qara* in the Triangle of Israel, one in *Sakhnin*, a newly opened one in *Beer Sheva,* in cooperation with the association HAGAR, and the biggest one in Jerusalem. The school there holds 460 students ranging from grades one to ten, including a kindergarten. In September 2008, the first senior high program started. The school in Jerusalem is located in *Patt*, a Jewish neighborhood in Southern Jerusalem on the border of *Beit Safafa*, an Arab neighborhood. The school is recognized as a nonreligious school under the Ministry of Education. This means, it uses a standard curriculum with the difference, that both Hebrew and Arabic are used as languages of instruction and that every class has a Jewish as well as a Palestinian teacher jointly running classes.

The Center for Bilingual Education officially changed its name in 2003 to the Center of Arab Jewish Education in Israel implying a stronger focus on educational integration and multiculturalism rather than on language (Bekerman 2007a). Each school emphasizes the imparting of both narratives and understanding of history. The school's functioning can be conceptualized through a variety of existing theories including peace and coexistence education, collaborative learning, multiculturalism, bilingual education, contact hypothesis and the critical pedagogy (see Bekerman 2007a, 101). Parents are required to make two commitments when entering the school: they should agree on the school's philosophy and volunteer their time in school (Amara et al. 2009).

In the following, three of the main pedagogical strategies will be described further. These are the main subjects that will be analyzed through the interviews of the par-

ents in the following case study. The contents of each concept: bilingual pedagogy, strengthening of identity and contact hypothesis intertwine and therefore some aspects will double. Other concepts like the one of multiculturalism is partly covered by the bilingual approach as well as contact and the strong focus on identity matters.

4.2   Conceptual framework of the school

Before introducing the concept of the school, I would like to agree with Yogev and others (1991) and draw attention to the fact, that the encounters of Palestinian Israelis and Jewish Israelis in this specific school is based on a societal power-asymmetry and is therefore characterized by dominant-subordinate relations. This power-asymmetry emerges in the concept of the school.

4.2.1   Bilingual education

Bilingual education, including bi-literacy, is a complex matter and defined differently depending on the academic using it. Hornberg's (1991) model of bilingualism distinguishes between transitional, maintenance and enrichment. Whereas the transitional model is a rather pragmatic approach stating that the problem of language is solved when all people learned the necessary skills to communicate in the dominant language the maintenance model supports the idea of sustaining the original languages of the minorities while learning the dominant language. The enrichment model is based on the idea, that the acquiring of a new language is a new resource beyond practical matters. The understanding of bilingualism as it is used in this paper refers to the last interpretation of bilingualism as a two-way immersion. In this sense, bilingualism is more than just the usage of more than one language but an instrument of intergroup relations, multiculturalism and through that it serves the purpose of socio-political change through a change of perspectives (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007).

It can be useful at an individual as well as a collective level. At an individual level many studies show advantages for people having been brought up multilingually like developing a high amount of creativity and flexibility and showing positive attitudes toward others. It gives access to a wider perspective, different values and beliefs (see Gacía 1997, Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007). By creating bilingual indi-

viduals who influence and take part in society it serves the collective and has therefore more than an individual component. On the collective, social level, it helps to form a society of more tolerance, knowledge and probably more involvement, thinking and acting differently. Besides that it helps to develop empathy with 'others'. Through these different strategies it is recognized as a tool to overcome major societal and cultural tensions (Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007). It is also seen as an empowerment pedagogy for members of the minority through securing equal opportunity in education (Bekerman 2004) as well as a contribution to the self-esteem of the minority group. As Joseph (2004) describes, national, religious and ethnic identities are constructed through languages and languages are constructed through them. Languages and identity are therefore closely connected (see also Tabouret-Keller 1997) and a tool to strengthen identity.

Ecamilla (1994) found factors that encourage childhood acquisition of two languages: (a) the languages involved have to have an equal status in a community, (b) both languages are spoken by individuals who are important to that child (c) the larger environment demands the use of two languages and (d) there are ample opportunities to speak and use the language in many social contexts.

Bilingual education is seen as controversial. A criticism of bilingualism is that it can do little to reconstruct power relations, and it can not be properly understood unless it is dealt with in relation to the socio-political contexts (Amara et al. 2009). As can easily be figured out when reading Escamilla's model of language acquisition the conditions to implement a bilingual education in a conflict area already lacks major conditions which cannot be influenced by the educational institution.

In the case of Israel, where Arabic is the second official language and at the same time the language of the 'others', the usage is highly politicized. One can talk about "asymmetric bilingualism" in Israel, as non-Jews speak their own language and Hebrew whereas Hebrew speakers do not necessarily speak another language (Amara et al. 2009). A simple example for the language status in Israel can be observed in the school system. The practice of teaching Arabic and Hebrew are decisively different. Hebrew, in the Jewish sector, is used to strengthen identity and connected with national content. Arabic is treated differently in the Arab sector. Hebrew there is the central language learned in terms of hours of lessons and Arabic is also disconnected from Palestinian heritage (Jabareen 2006). Even though most Palestinian Israelis learn Hebrew from third grade on most of them have a different pronunciation of Hebrew than an Israeli Jew thereby being marked and

categorized as non-Jews. Speaking Hebrew like a mother tongue, without accent, leads to less discrimination in everyday life (Bekermann 2005b).

Former studies about the school have given us a better understanding of the bilingual, multicultural education in the context of an Israel, that is not supportive in strengthening Arabic usage, partly because it is the language of the less symbolic power (Bekerman 2005a). The documents by the Hand in Hand NGO point out (Bekerman 2005b) that the bilingual policy is instrumental in establishing mutual understanding and respect as it is for strengthening the self-esteem of the students belonging to the Arabic speaking minority in society. It is used to change reality and break down the cultural and linguistic barriers between the two groups. Other objectives are to provide equal educational opportunity and to develop a strong identity of the self and other.

Even though the CBE seems to realize the difficulties of bilingual education and is aware of the fact that the parents are on the verge of giving up on bilingual success, they stick to their idea (Bekerman 2004). Their concept on bilingualism is established according to the following principles (Bekerman 2005b, Mor Sommerfeld 2005):

- The school starts off in grade one with an equal amount of Jewish and non-Jewish students.

- On top of that each class is run by two home teachers, one Hebrew and one Arabic speaking, responsible to share the educational task.

- The teachers are supported and receive special training on bilingual education.

- They are required to speak to all students in their mother tongue. A very important factor is that no translation is done by any teacher, so the students could not just wait for the repetition of the statement in their own language which means that the students have to concentrate on the second language.

- The curriculum is subject based, what means that languages are not just taught in language classes but throughout the entire curriculum. Depending on the subject, the language use is adjusted, especially when it comes to group-specific issues as literature or history.

- The children learn to read and write in both languages from the first day on and develop a bi-literacy. Based on this bi-literacy they learn to speak both languages.

- The school consists of a roughly equal distribution of Palestinian and Jewish members.

- The head of the school is jointly run by two representatives of each group

- Arabic language courses are offered to the Jewish parents.

- The children do not need any prerequisite of the other language or a third language[x].

According to Spinner-Halev (2003) in times of globalization, bilingual education faces a new obstacle: English. It needs even more persuasion to convince the majority to learn the language of the minority within a country. English, the universal language, is more attractive for the majority to learn rather than learning the language of the minority for reconciliation matters. In the case of the Hand in Hand Bekerman (2005b) found out, that Jewish as well as Palestinian parents of the school welcome the new introduced lessons in English. Parents of this school, as has been described by Spinner-Halev (2003), on both sides, question the necessity of Arabic over this.

The question of bilingualism is a controversial one. While it is not able to change power relations it tries to overcome them through bilingualism. The approach of the school can be described by the enrichment model of Hornberg (1991). It's objective is bilingualism of all students in Arabic and Hebrew. Even though Hand in Hand is aware of the influence of the political situation on the language usage of the children and therefore accepts deficits in Arabic, it still pursues a strict agenda on bilingualism, encouraging Arabic. A worldwide supplementary provocation for bilingual schools, as this one, is the global language: English.

4.2.2 Identity matters

The question of identity is a complex one. The mere definition of it is difficult to give and in this paper impossible to provide. In the context of the school group identities on the basis of national, ethnic and religion membership are central.

In a conflict situation, such as the intractable conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians, the identities of each party are constructed as distinguished from the 'other'. This monolithic construction, as Bar-On (2008) calls it, defines the other as the enemy, as evil, whereas the own group is moral and right. The construction of identity and collective narratives as monolithic undermines a conflict resolution

and forms major challenges for peace education. As has been described previously the Jewish as well as the Palestinian population of Israel undertake a constant identity struggle. As Bar-On (2008) points out, identities are dynamic and ongoing processes in constant alteration. Besides, each group is heterogeneous, made up of different subgroups as the religious and secular Jews on the one side or the Druze and Muslims on the non-Jewish side.

According to Moaz, Bar-On and Fakhereldeen (2002), the attributions ascribed to the other group has gradually been deconstructed starting with the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in Madrid in 1990 and raised parallel to the Oslo peace accords in 1993. According to them, this can be measured by a growing support of left-wing voices of Jewish party members and activists fighting for the acknowledgement of the Palestinian rights as well as a strong agreement on the two-state solution by the Palestinian side. These new voices challenge the dominant monolithic one and enforce new arguments within each group. However outstanding political events, like the *Al-Aksa intifada,* led to a fallback on the Jewish side toward a more negative perception of the Palestinians and a strengthening of support of the Zionist ideal (Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005). Also on the Palestinian side it had effects. Some of them showed solidarity with their people from the West Bank, demonstrated in the north of Israel and recalled their Palestinian identity. This is only one example of how in this Middle East conflict, the question of identity is a central one, and tremendously influenced by politics. The Israeli society is still in the process of listening and accepting all the different voices from within and deconstructing the 'monolithic identities' (Moaz et al. 2002).

In this context, the question of identity is central for intergroup encounters as is happening in the Hand in Hand school. The goal of contact, which is a major aspect of the school, is to exchange perspectives and to meet as individuals, and through this individual encounters develop mutual understanding between the groups. "The parties then have to find a way to connect and relate to each other by creating a more complex construction of their own as well as the other's identity" (Moaz et al. 2002, 957). In this process it is difficult to achieve the change of perspective, without giving up the membership in and representation of their own group.

As for this, academics discuss controversially, whether the identity of each group should be strengthened in an intergroup encounter or not. Some advocates of post-modernism claim that strengthening identities leads to a focus on differences of the parties in conflict, while it should be on the similarities instead (for a review see Mor-Sommerfeld et al. 2007). Others like Cummins (2006) or Bekermann (2007b)

claim that strengthening identities is a major task in intergroup encounters, especially in the school setting. Bekerman (2007b) comes to this conclusion through an excursion on the understanding of identity. In his opinion the idea and the understanding of identity as it is used in the conflict in the Middle East should be questioned and in the long term be challenged and deconstructed. So, on an academic level he criticizes the concept. But these categories dominate the reality of the members of the intergroup encounter. The political and social conditions under which the encounters takes place generate and shape the idea of a national and ethnic identity and therefore it is not yet the right moment to deconstruct these exclusionary power relations. For the Jews, as Bekerman (2007b) describes, it would be considered a threat to their hegemony, whereas for the Palestinians it would be seen as an integration of the enemy into their own unity, as well as a threat to a collective sense of Palestinian identity. This could point out the consistencies of the subdivisions of Muslims/Christians and Druze as well as traditionalists versus modernists. Bekerman (2007b) concludes, that a goal should be to free identity from its tight historical and political connections and reinstate it as an enriching difference amongst people.

The schools approach to this problem is defined through the objective of strengthening the group identity of each child. "We seek to enhance the civil identity together with the personal identity of the pupils" (Hand in Hand weekly planner 2006-2007, cited by Amara et al. 2009, 20). In contrast to the bilingual concept of the school, there is no final road-map on how this should be done in the school curriculum but is considered as an interdisciplinary topic which comes up on a regular basis. It would be raised by questioning what material is used, how is a member of a certain group represented, how are history and narratives imparted, the usage of language and so forth.

The principle occasions when the questions of identity arise are, without doubt, religious and national holidays. Official holidays in particular, where the idea of group identity is in focus, create a supplementary opportunity to bring up identity matters as well as an extremely hazardous threat at the same time. The core ideas of the school – to emphasize multiculturalism and mutual respect on the one hand and to strengthen the group identities, including ethnic pride and affiliation, on the other – are almost impossible on these special days (for a close description see Bekerman 2004). They are either exclusively for one group or include elements unacceptable to one group.

The staff tries to counterbalance the effects of these holidays. This can be done through the invention of similar festivals for the other groups. For example as they take the Jewish ceremony *Kabbalat HaTorah* (Receiving the Bible-Old Testament) and concoct the same ceremony for Christians (receiving the Bible-New Testament) and Muslims (receiving the Koran). In other cases the school tries to merge holidays like the *Hannukah* (the Jewish Festival of Lights), Christmas (the commemoration of the birth of Jesus), and if feasible by the dates *Idel Fiter (*the fast breaking at the end of Ramadan). Other political ceremonies, in particular the Memorial Day for fallen Jewish soldiers, are strong moments for the Jewish sense of community. The same can be said about the *Nakba* Day for Palestinian people although this is not an official Israeli holiday. These two rather controversial commemorations by the two people are held on the same day, a day before the Israeli Independence Day. It is given extra care and done in parallel so that the children attend the ceremony of their own group. In these political ceremonies it is required, in order to respect the other, to reduce the usage of symbols like flags. As described by Bekerman (2004), the staff provided workshops for parents to include the parents' ideas and to decide together how to deal with certain ceremonies. The school understands itself as a learning project which changes the approach in order to optimize the success of such events.

As long as the 'monolithic identities' of Jews versus Palestinians/Arabs are generated in the context of the Middle East conflict, precisely in Israel it is considered difficult though important to deconstruct identities in the sense of group identities relying on national, religious and ethnic belongings. The school's approach to the difficult question of how to deal with identity, as concluded by Bekerman (2007b), is to strengthen each child's collective belonging to a group, be it in religious, ethnic or national matters. The challenge though is to find a balance between strengthening the group identity of each child, including pride of the belonging to that group, while ensuring that this goes along with an inclusion of members of other groups or at least mutual respect toward the others. Even though the question of identity is a complex one (and might therefore by definition not be approached in a way all the stakeholders would wish it would be done) it cannot, in this context, be ignored. School children and adolescents are part of the community and the society in which they live in and are greatly influenced by the views expressed in it. The arrangement of national and religious ceremonies, in particular needs a creative and selective approach to pursue this endeavor successfully. Different thoughts are given to each specific ceremony with the objective of balance the idea of the belonging to the own group with the desire to be inclusive or at least respectful to-

ward the other side. This requires the revision of cultural identity markers and a reduction of symbols used, like flags, in order to not offend others.

4.2.3   Intergroup encounters

The Hand in Hand school is based on contact among students, teachers, parents, staff and the community. Contact is a strong pedagogical tool and used for a reduction of stereotypes. It is a widespread approach (see for example Moaz 2000, Saguy et al. 2008, Abu-Nimer 1999) in the context of peace education with members of different groups and connected to high expectations.

Intergroup encounters are mainly based on the theory of "contact hypothesis" by Allport (1954) who set up four categories essential for a positive process in intergroup contact. He refers to the intergroup contact as a continuous meeting of members belonging to different groups in order to improve the attitude toward other groups and reduce negative stereotypes ascribed to the others[xi]. Following are the four categories, founded by Allport and cited by Pettigrew (1998) under which a positive attitude can be achieved:

1) Equal status within the situation: It should be ensured that the members of the different groups experience the same status in the contact situation.

2) Common goals: Prejudice reduction through contact requires a goal-oriented effort. As can be observed in athletic or other teams with members of different groups, the common goal is a support to strengthening intergroup contact within a team. Dependency of each other in order to win intensifies this process.

3) Cooperation: The contact should be based on cooperation not competition. In the process of achieving a common goal, the setting should provide cooperation within the group.

4) Support of authorities, law, or custom: The environment of the contact situation should support the contact. The support of authority establishes norms and acceptance and for that reason – institutionally as well as politically – is considered as the last of the four conditions, necessary for a positive impact on contact situations.

It is important to understand that even if all these elements are taken care of, still the contact can proceed negatively. Aside from that, the theory does not say what

kind of process will take place, but rather that these categories can initiate a positive process.

Different studies have proven that even if some of these categories are not fulfilled, the contact can have positive impacts. This is important to remember especially when it is almost impossible to ensure them. On the other hand, numerous researcher activities built upon these categories and added more categories, under which a contact should take place. These are facilitating factors to a situation, whereas Allports factors remain essential for an optimal intergroup encounter, according to Pettigrew (1998). In their point of view of Moaz, Steinberg, Bar-On and Fakhereldeen (2002) it is essential to have facilitating leaders who are able to form a relationship between the two sides through the gradual creation of personal boundaries. Others like Wagner and Machleit (1986, cited in Pettigrew 1998, 69) argue that a common language is needed, as well as a voluntary contact and a prosperous economy. Ben-Ari and Amir (1986, cited in Pettigrew 1998, 69) are convinced that a positive intergroup encounter can only take place if the attitudes toward the other group are not too negative in the beginning. The close and if possible long contact allows a shifting of notion toward similarities rather than differences and is therefore essential according to Tal-Or, Boninger and Gleicher (2002) whereas space for informal contact is considered fundamental for Moaz (2000). Another noteworthy new category that has been proven to be essential for positive effects in intergroup contact is 'friendship possibility'. Researchers agree on the fact that affiliation toward members of the other group is tremendously important for the reduction of negative attributions toward this group (Kadushin, Livert 2002). Pettigrew (1998), for example, is convinced that if the four conditions of Allport are ensured, the 'friendship possibility' is already included.

On top of that some conditions require further consideration. The question of equal status, for example, is for Spinner-Halev (2003) inseparable to the situation outside of the school because power relations seep into the contact situation and reproduce an imbalance. He therefore claims, that prejudices and stereotypes can be sustained even though positive contact has taken place, especially when the parties in conflict still live in fear of the other party and reconciliation has not yet taken place, as is the case in Middle East Conflict. Schools face a lot of mistrust in such a setting. If a positive contact takes place, it can still be interpreted as the exception to the rule (Spinner-Halev 2003). There are other criticisms. Some researchers believe the theory concentrates too much on more tolerant members of each group who are willing to enter contact situations. Others name the problem of not having research

material on how the experience of the intergroup encounter can be transferred to a contact with different groups (for review see Pettigrew 1998).

Many researchers agree on the fact that contact itself does not lead to a reduction of stereotypes, mutual understanding and other positive impacts. Instead it is interrelated with other processes taking place in parallel, which combined, lead to a change. Recent research projects show that the process of learning about the other group, changing behavior, generating effective ties and ingroup reappraisal take place in combination (Pettigrew 1998). Ingroup reappraisal means that outgroup contact leads to a new perspective that reshapes the their own ingroup. Normally, intergroup contact is observed as a detached process from these other aspects. According to Pettigrew (1998), this is the reason why some researchers get disappointing results of intergroup encounters, meaning that positive attitudes toward members of the outgroup could not be established.

In consideration of the Hand in Hand school, the question of an equal status within the setting is questionable. It has to be asked how much the setting of the environment influences the contact itself. According to Spinner-Halev (2003) the school can only achieve contact on eye level if politics also work toward a peace agreement. The Hand in Hand school is built in the context of a conflict and no end is clearly conceivable. Aside from that, in an establishment like the school, everybody knows the individual's position in the societal hierarchy and this again leads to an unbalanced status in the encounter. Therefore, Tal-Or, Boninger and Gleicher (2002) suggest to empower members of the minority in order to guarantee them a stronger role, to counterbalance the societal status outside of school. This is partly done through the school's system of emphasizing Arabic within school.

As Bekerman (2007a) points out, intergroup contact is mainly explored in voluntary and non-formal settings. The school setting generates difficulties that other settings don't have to confront, like national and religious ceremonies, parents' participation and so forth.

Halabi and Sonnenschein (2004) call attention to the difference of the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954) and the intergroup encounter approach by Nadler (2000, cited in Halabi and Sonnenschein 2004, 375). The contact hypothesis assumes that mere contact can lead to a reduction of negative feelings toward one another. Through re- or de-categorization of the different groups, a positive encounter can take place. On the other hand, the concept of intergroup encounters, pursues a different strategy. Here an emphasis on the representation of the members belonging

to different groups is set out. No re- or decategorization takes place. For this, a generalization toward other members of same group is expected.

Contact is one of the main strategies to create a more positive attitude toward another group, especially when negative attitudes are perceived. In the context of peace education in Israel many contact situations on the base of Allport's contact hypothesis (1954) have taken place. Academics initiating these encounters have come to different results. Some say that Allport's four conditions: Equal status within the situation, common goals, cooperation, and the support by authorities are not enough and add other aspects as trained facilitators, informal space to create friendships and so on. Opposite to that, others claim that even if all these aspects are not fulfilled, the contact can still lead to a positive impact on the participants. Pettigrew (1998) draws attention to the fact, that the encounter is not an isolated process, but has to be considered in a wider context with the aspects like learning about the other group, changing behavior, generating effective ties, and ingroup reappraisal. According to him, the impact of intergroup encounters can only be measured in this holistic approach.

The school context of Hand in Hand implies particular additional challenges to the ones faced by non-formal contact situations. Regulations like ceremonies bring in aspects of representation of one group that makes it difficult to re- or de-categorize the group. The question of identity, and representation of the own group versus melting into a bigger group, is an important one to ask here.

In general the aspects of language usage, the question of identity and the encounter in the school, as described, strongly intertwine. If Arabic is strengthened to create a counterbalance of societal reality, is the equality within a contact situation still ensured? Does the separation of the group, in order to hold group-specific ceremonies lead to a stronger separation of the group instead of creating a super-identity of all students? This artificial separation of the three aspects, which will be continued in the presentation of the results, should be kept in mind when reading the opinions of the parents.

5 Methodology

5.1 'Thick description' – The method used

The description and interpretations of the case study are done in accordance to the method of „thick description", an approach introduced by Cliffort Geertz in 1973 who studied different cultures in these terms. As Geertz points out, culture is made by men and women and people living within that culture know the codes that guide their behavior in a way that is acceptable to its members. According to the research method of „thick description", the goal is to describe and interpret, knowing that the interpretation is done according to the researcher's understanding. If not interpreted, according to Geertz, it is not meaningful but coincidental. He gives the example of a 'twitch' and a 'wink' of an eye, where one is done purposely while the other one is not. This gives a different meaning to the fact that the eyelids were contracted. For him the objective of an researcher is to find the difference between a 'twitch' and a 'wink' of an eye. This understanding of interpretation concludes that even the description includes interpretations in accordance with the observer's own codes.

The analyzing, which comes after the description, means sorting out the structures of significance (Geertz 2001, 178). In terms of the contraction of the eyelids, the 'winking', is the 'thin' description, because it does not include an interpretation, whereas the 'twitching' does include an interpretation. And therefore fulfills the objective: to find out the symbolic import in society or between communicators. The interpretations of the researcher have therefore to be seen as a selection of codes, worth interpretation. „What we call our data are really our constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (Geertz 2001, 178), Geertz therefore speaks of searching for meaning instead of law. According to Geertz, one needs to understand the situation, the codes, rituals, customs, and ideas of the person's background to find out what codes could be used and how to analyze them. A good anthropological interpretation, he claims, sets the research material in the context of the culture. It consists of: tracing the curve of a social discourse and fixing it to an inspectable form (Geertz 2001, 186).

The first chapters have shown the discourse of the setting and the concept of the school in which the interviews have taken place. The next chapter will describe the results of the research as well as interpretations in light of the academic discourse about peace education in Israel.

5.2   Methodological background

Dr. Zvi Bekerman, a Jewish Israeli academic of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem has been evaluating the Hand in Hand schools and offering academic assistance to the school as well as to the NGO in conceptual matters since the foundation of the NGO. His main focus is surveying and evaluating the progress of bilingual educational facilities in Israel as well as investigating the effects these schools have on the Israeli society in general and on the participating families in particular. The interviews conducted here are part of a long term study on Hand in Hand. The main aim of the interviews with the parents, for him, was to investigate parents' attitudes regarding multiculturalism, bilingualism and peace education.

Since he did not have the capacity to conduct the interviews himself, he requested two German assistants through the framework of ASA-scholarships.[xii] Maja Scrbacic and I came for the duration of three month in fall of 2008 to conduct 20 interviews. I want to call attention to the fact that it seemed that none of the interviewees related to us as Germans. While as Germans we belonged to neither of the parties involved in the school, in the wider Israeli and Jewish context, it might have had impacts.

The questionnaire used for this study was developed by Dr. Bekerman on the basis of his previous results. The participants were recruited by the principals of the school. The only criterion was to have some basic knowledge of English, as all the interviews were held in English. A balance of Jewish and non-Jewish participants was aimed for. The sampling included parents from different ethnic backgrounds, different socio-economic classes and having varying numbers of children in school.

The semi-standardized questionnaire used for the interviews was an open manual, composed of eight main categories with several sub-questions. Its purpose was to provide an orientation for the interviewer: not all questions were explicitly asked of all interviewees, but the themes were used as incentives to come up with certain subjects. The first category deals with the interviewees' personal backgrounds and their view of the political context in Israel. Categories two, three and four focus on how the parents perceive the school itself, while category five centers on the chil-

dren and how they perform at the school. Categories six and seven deal with ceremonial issues and bilingualism at school and category eight focuses on the children's future. The questionnaire can be found as attachment to this paper.

The interviews took about one to two hours each and were fully transcribed. They took place at the location and time of convenience for the participants. Normally this was either at their homes, places of work, at the school or at a café. In general the interviews were individual sessions, even though in a few cases either children or the partner of the interviewee joined in during the interview and added some comments. Participation was voluntary. The interviewees were briefed beforehand that the meetings would be taped and that all information obtained would be kept confidential, anonymous and used for research purposes only. The interviews were held in English by non-native interviewees as well as non-native interviewers. This as well as the fact that the interviews were taped may have influenced its content and dynamics.

The interviews were interpreted according to the cross-sectional analysis (see Mayring 2002), using deductive categories according to the school's concept. These are: bilingualism, the strengthening of identities and the contact happening within school. These categories were chosen because they are essential for the school's pedagogical work. Besides, they are more concrete and easier to evaluate than other theoretical concepts like multiculturalism, coexistence education, collaborative learning or other approaches the schools relies on. Aspects of multiculturalism and other approaches are partly covered through the description of multilingualism, identity matters and contact (see Bekerman 2005a).

Because of the small number of interviewees, the results are not representative. I will not analyze according to quantitative methods, but present the results in the previously mentioned categories without providing the number of interviewees stating the same opinion. Even though the paper does not contextualize each single interviewee, but compares the answers of different parents, the reader can find small descriptions of every interviewed person below in order to associate the background of the person with the statements and connect different opinions by the same person.

5.3   Description of the interviewees as a group

The interviews were conducted with 20 parents of students in Hand in the Hand school in Jerusalem out of which thirteen were female and seven male. The age range was between 32 and 58 years. They can be considered as belonging to the upper middle class society. Most of the interviewees have at least one academic degree: nine of them have 'only' a BA, six have a MA, three have a PHD, one person holds a professorship while one person does not have an academic degree, but has studied at university and worked for several years as a teacher. Some of the interviewees are working on higher degrees at the moment. The present occupations of the interviewees can be divided into university faculty (three Jewish and one American Christian), activists in NGOs (three Jewish), lawyers (two Jewish and one Palestinian), employees in the health sector (two Jewish and one Palestinian), tourist guides (two Palestinians), teachers (two Palestinians), a Palestinian who works in the Ministry of Education, one architect and a Druze who works as engineer.
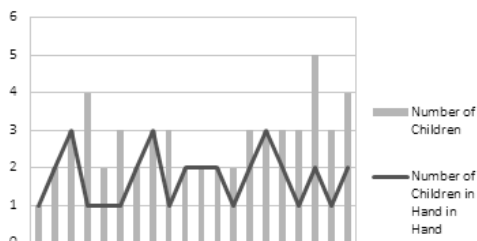
Figure 1: The amount of children by parents attending the Hand in Hand School

The parents interviewed have between one and five children, an average of 2.75 children per family. Out of the total number of 55 children that the parents have, 35 were enrolled in the Hand in Hand school. Seventeen out of the twenty parents interviewed send all their school aged children to the Hand in Hand school, if they hadn't already started in another school when Hand in Hand was founded. Out of the three parents who decided to register their kids in different schools, two were Jewish and one was Druze. The grades the children attend at school range from kindergarten to ninth grade; six children go to kindergarten, twenty-four to elementary school and five attend Junior High School. Eight out of the twenty interviewees speak Hebrew as a mother tongue, eight Arabic, three English and one parent is native in Russian.

The twenty interviewees consisted of ten Jews, six Christians, three Muslims and one Druze. Out of the total, four people would call themselves religious, five could be categorized as traditional, nine as secular and two as atheists by their own definitions. Out of the ten Jewish participants, two were not born and raised in Israel but immigrated as adults, one from New Zealand and the other one from Russia. The six Christian inter-

- Jews (10)
- Christians (6)
- Muslims (3)
- Druze (1)
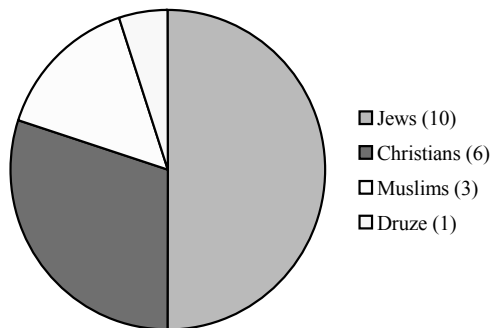
Figure 2: Religious background of parents

viewees can be subdivided into two American Christians and four Palestinian Christians. One of the American Christians is married to an Armenian Christian and was born and raised in Israel. Three of the Palestinian Christians are originally from northern Israel while the fourth one is from Bethlehem but married to a Palestinian Christian from northern Israel. Two of the Muslims are also from the north, so actually only one Palestinian was born and raised in the Jerusalem area.

5.4 Description of the interviewees as individuals

In order to contextualize comments by different interviewees, understand the consistency within each interview and emphasize the difference in background of each and every person, the following short descriptions of the individuals are provided. All names were changed and new names where given to the interviewees and their children. The names were chosen in accordance with their religious background and gender.

1) Sara: Jewish Israeli, female, immigrated from New Zealand, works in religious education and is active in a religious community, has one child who attends grade two

2) Estephania: Jewish Israeli, female, works in an NGO, has two children who both attend the school, one in grade two the other in pre-school (an extract of her interview is attached in the back of the book)

3) Rani: Palestinian Christian Israeli, male, works as tour guide, has three children who all attend the school in grades five, four and two

4) Levi: Jewish Israeli, male, worked as a teacher and with different NGOs, has four children, of whom one attends the Hand in Hand school in grade six; his wife, Aviva, also participated in the interview

5) Miri: Jewish Israeli, female, immigrated from Russia, a gyneologist, has two children of whom the younger one attends grade six

6) Liat: Jewish Israeli, female, works as lawyer, has three children of whom the oldest one attends grade six

7) Dina: Jewish Israeli, female, works as lawyer for the government, has two children, both of whom attend the school in grade four and kindergarten

8) Stefan: Christian with permanent Israeli residency, male, immigrated from the US, works as a professor of linguistics, has three children, all attending the school in grades nine, eight and four

9) Ilan: Jewish Israeli, male, PhD, works in the Middle Eastern Department of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, has three children of whom the oldest one attends the school in grade four

10) Lea: Jewish Israeli, female, PhD in English literature, just came back from a stay in the US, has two children, both attending the school in grades four and one

11) Marie: Christian American/Israeli, female, works as a primary school teacher and as author of children books, married to an Armenian Israeli, has two children both of whom attend the school in grade five and kindergarten

12) Ameera: Muslim Palestinian, female, works as a teacher for special education, has two children who both attend the school in grades six and one

13) Hannah: Jewish Israeli, female, works as an art therapist, has two children, of whom the younger one attends grade nine

14) Nadia: Muslim Palestinian, female, works as lawyer, has three children, of whom two (twins) attend the kindergarten

15) Manal: Christian Palestinian, female, works as an architect, has three children, who all attend the school in fourth and first grade and kindergarten

16) Hussein: Muslim Palestinian, male, works as a male-nurse in hospital, has three children, two of whom attend the school in grades six and five

17) Doha: Christian Palestinian, female, studied mathematics and works in the Ministry of education, has three children, of whom the youngest one attends grade ten (an extract of her interview is well attached in the end of the book)

18) Fadi: Christian Palestinian, male, grew up in Bethlehem, works as tour guide, married to a Palestinian Israeli, has five children, with two of them attending the school in grades three and one

19) Sarit: Jewish Israeli, female, PhD in Anthropology, lectures at a university, has three children, one of whom attends the school in grade six

20) Refai: Druze Israeli, male, works as a civil engineer, has four children, two of whom attend the school in grades three and two
Even though the Druze might not consider himself a Palestinian, when summarizing, I will refer to him as a Palestinian for reasons of convenience.

6 Findings of the case study

6.1 Introduction – Motivation of the parents to enter the school

The Hand in Hand school offers a setting that is bilingual and works toward the idea of co-existence. These are the main factors which attract the parents interviewed to send their children there. On the Jewish and the non-Jewish side some arguments to enter this are specific for each group while other aspects are relevant for members on both sides. On the Palestinian side, the bilingual setting reflects the everyday life in Israel.

> *"I felt this school is so much like our life actually. It's very// especially as an Arab in Israel, it's so much like how we live here. We work together, also we have no other option and we work in places with Jewish people, with Muslim people with// this is interacting with everyone." (Manal)*

Some parents state that they would want their children to be fluent in both languages. In the case of the Palestinians, while Arabic is important for their identity, Hebrew is unavoidable when it comes to higher education or white collar jobs. Besides, the Hand in Hand school has a good reputation when it comes to educational excellence. On the Jewish side the expectation of acquiring Arabic is one of the main factors to pick this school. The desire for co-existence and the fact that the children grow up with fewer prejudices toward the other group is attractive to parents of either side as well as the small classes, each of which have two teachers. Yet, some parents select the school not out of ideological motivation but for rather non-ideological reasons like connections parents have to teachers in the school or their expectation of a good educational setting. This is of special interest for parents who have children with special needs.

6.2 Bilingualism

The school's focus on bilingualism is essential for the everyday life of the children and therefore for the parents. As bilingualism is the most tangible subject for parents, some of them interrelate the success of the school and the language skills of their children. The challenges the school faces concerning the setting of the school

and the influence it has on the children's language skills and usage are presented in the following.

6.2.1 Dominance of Hebrew in the society and its impact on the school

Parents are very aware that the society has an impact on the school. Some parents identify the strong position of Hebrew in the Israeli society, in media, politics and everyday life as a major problem of the school. One parent goes as far as saying that the school is probably the only public place where Arabic and Hebrew are spoken parallel in a nonviolent context, aside from bureaucratic settings.

Some Jewish parents assume that the dominance of Hebrew in the Israeli society is the reason for their children's lack of knowledge in Arabic. One mother thinks that if her son would hear Arabic more often in the streets or in the media, he would speak it more often. Other parents also stress the point that it is not only the meager presence of Arabic in the Israeli society but also the fact that Arabic is the language of the marginalized in Israel or even the language of the enemy. All that leads to the fact, that some children are not proud of having learned anything that has to do with Arabic.

> *"[T]here is something about him that rejects Arabness [...], for instance he will never speak to me in Arabic and whenever I speak to him in Arabic, he doesn't like it [...]. I think it has to do with his idea, that Arabness is something marginalized in his society, it's not something to be proud of. (Sarit)*

One mother explains that for the same reasons as a child she refused to learn the language that she could have picked up from her father. Another mother suggests that her child might feel threatened by the language.

> *"[M]aybe we're threatened by Arabics [Arabs]. But Arabics is not something you're threatened of. Kids don't think that Arabic people are a thread, they're not afraid of it and they feel, it's part of life, you know, the Jews go to school with Arab people, so it's okay. You hear Arabic everywhere, you celebrate their-their holidays, that's great, but it's not as good as I thought. And I still think it can. There is still a lot of work to be done." (Liat)*

A Jewish mother states that she finds the emphasis on Arabic significant for the self-esteem of Palestinian children. This assumption fits a Palestinian mother's as-

sessment of the situation. She notices that people look strangely at her when she talks Arabic in public.

> *"[S]ometimes you go in a place and you start talking in Arabic and, you know, people will look at you. 'You don't look Arab', they will tell you. How are we supposed to look?" (Manal)*

This is an experience, noted by other Palestinians as well. Discrimination challenges Palestinian parents when explaining their children that they are all the same and that they should be proud of their language and use it. Considering the dominance of Hebrew in Israeli society, some Palestinian parents assume that the use of Arabic in public places, which is rare, should be promoted as a matter of respect toward the Arabic speaking citizens of the country. For one Palestinian parent the small number of Jews speaking Arabic leads to mistrust toward the Arabic speaking population in the country. A focus on Arabic would lead to less suspicion.

> *"So, if you want to know your// the other side in this country, you should know his language and the culture and everything. And then you start, you know, treating them as people and as equal people. You know their culture and their// you know them as people" (Manal)*

In this chapter, a connection between the outside environment and the language use of the students in school is described by parents. Parents by far agree that the school is set up in a Hebrew speaking environment where Arabic is marginalized. Aside from bureaucratic settings, the use of Arabic and Hebrew simultaneously is not seen in Israeli public.

According to some parents, speaking Arabic is central for the identity and the self-esteem of the Palestinians and needs to be conserved. This can easily be seen when parents state that they convince their children to speak Arabic or when they talk about reactions to the speaking of Arabic in public. Parents connect the use of language with identity matters and social and political matters. This can be found by the statement that an emphasis on Arabic by the Israeli society would lead to less mistrust and could help to reduce suspicion.

6.2.2   Language use at home

The language use at home varies among the families. On the Jewish side, parents interviewed mainly speak Hebrew to their children. On the non-Jewish side, in

some homes Arabic is emphasized whereas in other families a mix of languages, normally Hebrew and Arabic, are spoken. One interviewee explains that it's impossible to exclude Hebrew in the household because the Israeli media is in Hebrew. Besides, working all day in a Jewish setting demands a high commitment to not fall back on Hebrew in private conversations at home.

> *"Me and my husbands. We use Hebrew all day and it's hard for us to come home and talk Arabic without using any word in Hebrew. So, we're trying, we're doing our best. And also the girls when they approach us with Hebrew language, when they're talking with us in Hebrew so I refuse to listen. I ask them to translate." (Nadia)*

Other parents don't bother switching between Hebrew and Arabic in one sentence. Some families use even a third language like English, Russian, Spanish or Armenian at home, depending on the background of the parents.

On the Palestinian side, a parent states that his child is proud of learning new words and grammar in Hebrew. The child is keen on learning Hebrew and even looks for Hebrew speaking friends in order to use the language. Some children even start to talk Hebrew to their parents. Some Palestinian parents check the level of their children in Hebrew by talking to them and helping them with their homework. One Palestinian father even admits that sometimes his daughter teaches him some Hebrew.

> *"Sometimes I talk, sometimes I speak Hebrew purposely, you know, for them just to learn and to check how they know the language. And sometimes they spoke to me Hebrew, they asked me, they spoke to me some sentences in Hebrew. But it is not the special language, or the only language in our house. We speak in Arabic in the house and sometimes, you know, we have to check." (Hussein)*

One Jewish father, who is fluent in Arabic and loves the language, would not talk in Arabic to his daughter because she has a negative attitude toward the language and therefore he talks little Arabic with her. Asides from that, he did not want to mix languages when she was too young or her siblings were too young. He is convinced, that children should first be confident in their mother tongue before getting introduced to a second language.

> *"I felt that she had a bit antagonist. And I don't want her, you know, to be antagonist, so this is also one reason, why I don't speak a lot of Arabic with her." (Ilan)*

Another Jewish parent who knows that her son's attitude toward Arabic is slightly positive, speaks a little Arabic to him. In her case, she uses Arabic to tease her son.

Children come from homes where either Hebrew, Arabic or a third language is spoken. As for the parents interviewed, they don't see a problem challenging the children with three languages at the same time. Some Palestinian parents emphasize Arabic at home, even though some of them work in a Hebrew context all day and find it therefore challenging to speak Arabic without mixing it with Hebrew. One Jewish parent would not talk Arabic at home, partly because he is convinced that the children should first be confident in one language and partly, because he feels that his child doesn't like to talk to him in Arabic.

In general, it becomes obvious that Hebrew is much more present in the households of the Palestinian children than Arabic is on the Jewish side. Palestinian children want to learn Hebrew and initiate in speaking it while this is not mentioned even once on the Jewish side. The opposite is the case, in families where one parent is enthusiastic about Arabic the children still reject the language. Therefore it is rarely used, even though the capability is there. So, beside the dominance of Hebrew in the societal context, Hebrew is more dominant and present than Arabic in the households.

6.2.3 Bilingual policy of the school

The school's bilingual policy is the reason for some parents to choose this school. Some parents even go as far as claiming that the bilingual policy is the legitimization for the school's existence. One mother mentions that the school's image as a bilingual school is less controversial than it would be if the school put political concerns first.

> *"[B]ilingualism is a wonderful way to approach the bi-national way. I think it's a// it just gives us a model to work with, that is less threatening and more cultural and less political in orientation." (Lea)*

For her, politics should not enter the children's lives. She was worried that the school would produce "little heroes", of which she disapproved regarding her daughter. She didn't want her to be part of an political experiment, but preferred to let her daughter and others remain normal students and enjoy their childhood.

> *"[A]t first we didn't think we would go to the bilingual school because it sounded too (.) how shall I say it, heroic. You know, big words I don't agree with. And we came to this school to see it and it was really a great experience. It was just living together, no heroics, no propaganda" (Liat)*

Other parents also had fears about politics seeping into the children's lives too early. They are pleased that the school is not political, in the sense that students don't notice the political motivation of the school. One mother got the impression that this school is even less political for the children than regular schools. Aside from the bilingual aspect of the school, which is considered a major feature of the school, parents also identify a less racist environment in this school compared to others.

> *"For me the main thing, or two things were, ah, to prevent her from being racist, ah, in-in the regular schools with too much, ah, it's not exactly chauvinistic approach, but it's a kind of ignoring the other and ah, you know, so this was one thing, and the other was Arabic." (Ilan)*

Especially in mixed marriages like in the case of the Armenian-American couple, to choose either a Palestinian or a Jewish school would have meant the lack of either Hebrew or Arabic. The American Christian mother states that a school on either side would also provide a one sided education with resentments toward the others. Having grown up in such "racist" schools themselves, where the other group is perceived as the enemy, parents appreciate the openness of Hand in Hand in portraying different perspectives.

> *"[F]or him the Arabic was very, very important. And to me the Hebrew was very, very important, and for him the Arab was so important, that he was willing to send the children to Palestinian schools and, ahm, both of us didn't feel comfortable with that, just because of the, ahm, of the negative, ahm, viewpoint toward Israel." (Marie)*

Even though the school aims to treat both languages the same, some parents complain that Hebrew is dominant in the school context. Parents suggest that Arabic should be emphasized more, in order to produce a counterbalance to the Hebrew dominance outside of school. One Jewish parent has an interesting approach to this question. According to him, the school creates a balance when considering the wider objective of equality of Palestinians and Jews in the school: with regard to language, Hebrew is dominant, but this is balanced by the stronger Palestinian narrative presented at school.

*"[I]f we speak about language the Hebrew is more dominant, but if we speak about-
about the national narrative [...], the Palestinian national narrative I think is stronger.
So if you take the whole there is a kind of equality." (Ilan)*

The implementation of the bilingual policy according to parents lacks consistency in oral communication. Parents claim that when it comes to general information, what the school sends out to the parents is written bilingually. One Jewish mother notes though, that she does not understand the part on the report card about the Arabic language skills because it is not translated. She wishes this would be written in Hebrew as well. When it comes to oral communication though, it is not that consistently handled. In parent-teacher meetings, for example, one mother claims that she does not understand what the Palestinian teacher says. In contrast to her opinion, other parents claim that in parent-teacher meetings the bilingual policy is not pursued and only Hebrew is used. This inattentiveness is based on the presumption that all parents understand Hebrew. Considering the background of the Palestinian parents interviewed, this is true to all but one case. One father, who grew up in Bethlehem and only later moved to Israel, is not fluent in Hebrew. He explains that he could not follow the conversation of a parent-teacher meeting, because it was held exclusively in Hebrew. He sent his wife to the following meetings, since she grew up in Israel and understands Hebrew. This monolingual strategy is accepted by some Palestinian parents. As a Jewish mother explains, they don't see the need in translating back and forth in Arabic and Hebrew. This same mother tells a story about a parent-teacher conference, where a Palestinian parent complained about the extra time and effort needed for the translation.

*"And one of the Palestinian parents said, you know, 'Could we please just do this in
Hebrew and get this done.' Cause it's just taking so long.' " (Lea)*

The dominance of Hebrew within the school is also a result of the immense challenge of finding Jewish teachers fluent in Arabic. Parents point to this as one of the school's major problem. One mother stresses that if the school would truly want to establish a bilingual policy, they could not deal with people not knowing both Arabic and Hebrew.

Some Palestinian parents insist that the school should make the parents learn Arabic. Some Jewish parents have taken part in one of the Arabic courses offered by the school but none of them continued over a long period. One Jewish father suggested an Arabic intensive course in some kind of summer school where the children would join as well. His wife, who was present at the interview, replied though

that she would not be willing to make such an effort. She, as well as others, would be too busy and sets different priorities for their leisure time. Other parents on the Jewish side admit that they are not willing to pay a price for true bilingualism, such as an Arabic course for the parents, even though they agree on the importance of it. When it comes to the Arabic knowledge of the children, one mother thinks that first of all the school is a regular state school that has to educate the children on different subjects. If they learn Arabic in addition, that is excellent but it's not necessary. One father who was very much involved in the parents committee is afraid that the introduction of Junior High School will lead to a different focus in the school. He thinks that the preparation for standardized tests that students have to pass in order to get the *bagrut*, will lead to less emphasis on language skills.

Besides the dominance in Israeli media and every day life, some parents blame the pedagogical concept of the school for the lack of Arabic by the Jewish students. Some parents acknowledge that they see the school as a young, learning project that is experimenting and improving. One mother adds that she thinks the pedagogical concept for bilingualism should be changed but she wouldn't know how. Parents appreciate the newly introduced system of dividing the students by their mother tongue when it comes to language classes. One mother describes her son's complexes regarding language skills because he is competitive and compares himself to students with Arabic as mother tongue. So for her, the division of the students by mother tongue is very helpful. She wishes they would have introduced that earlier.

> *"I think that they should have taught them totally separately. [...] He came on the first class, he felt that he's the worst kid in class. Of course, because the others are Arabs who speaks it fluently. And he is very competitive." (Dina)*

One mother suggests that the school should use Arabic in a more creative way and not just regular language education. She would want to see an extra activity in drama or some other context where the language would be connected to something that is pleasant.

> *"I would be very happy [...], if the school would do something to really, to challenge the kids to speak more Arabic, to do something more, ah, creative about it, to make it shows, to do something that will really force them to use the language more." (Hannah)*

According to another mother this would overburden the school. It can not bring about the children's active usage of the language because of time limitations and

the pressure of knowledge transfer in other subjects that are on the national curriculum. The active use of Arabic, she thinks, should be taken care of after school. She therefore took the initiative and got extra classes for her daughter. On top of that, she speaks Arabic with her Armenian father at home. Other parents also take additional Arabic classes for their children.

Arabic is divided into different dialects and Standard Arabic *(fusha)*, which is mainly used for written information. When it comes to bilingualism the parents major critique toward the school is the teaching of Standard Arabic instead of Colloquial Arabic. The school's assumption, that the children would learn automatically how to speak Arabic and therefore *fusha* needs to be emphasized in school did not come true. Parents demand to concentrate on spoken Arabic from first grade on and less on Classical Arabic.

> *"English he knows, because the teacher knew, that nobody knows English, started it from scratch. Spoken Arabic they think it will be learned from air [...] I know a bit of literary, of written Arabic, very little from school, but it's different from spoken Arabic, it's almost two different languages. So, spoken Arabic nobody teaches it, they just think that they can learn it because they hear Arabic and maybe there are kids who can do it, but he [her son]'s not." (Dina)*

One father notices that other children and friends are jealous of his knowledge of Arabic. He speaks fluent Arabic and has observed these feelings toward himself as well as toward his daughter. This goes along with the statement of a mother interviewed who admits that she is jealous of her son's Arabic skills.

The school's focus on bilingualism is appreciated by some parents because it is an uncontroversial, ostensibly barely political approach. Parents don't want their children to be in a political setting. This is interesting for two reasons: first of all the NGO changed purposely the name from "Center for Bilingual Education" (CBE) to "Centre of Arab Jewish Education" to emphasize the focus on multiculturalism and integrated education, rather than bilingualism, with the idea that bilingualism is only a tool for political change. Secondly some parents, even though they are engaged in this political project, want it to be as apolitical as possible. It would be interesting to find out why the political aspect is so unwanted. It would also be rewarding to find out if it is pure accident that it was mentioned only by Jewish parents in the interviews. If it is not accidental that Jewish parents want to keep it less political, the question arises, whether the fear of being marginalized and tagged leftist themselves influences them. This thought arises because in different contexts

which are not presented in this chapter, parents state that by being in this school they put themselves in a very marginal social stream and one mother even confesses, that "there were first fears, for example, that you will be tagged as very leftist" (Dina). For the school, the question of whether the school attracts apolitical parents because it is well financed and known for its educational approach and has a good reputation might raise.

Especially for mixed-couples the school provides an education that helps to develop two languages and an identity that does not include resentments toward the other group, something that is especially important for children carrying different roots within one identity. The regular "racist" school system, as stated by parents in a different context, needs a strong counterbalance.

Bilingualism seems to work well as long as it is limited to written information handed over from school to parents. In oral communication some parents have different perceptions. For example, the dominance of Hebrew in parent-teacher meetings is indisputable, even though, according to one parent, there are Arabic comments by Palestinian teachers which are not translated. The wide spread Hebrew knowledge by Palestinian parents leads to an inattentiveness in bilingual issues. What is interesting, is that even some Palestinian parents, according to one interview partner, don't find it necessary to translate everything into Arabic. The Palestinian father who could not follow the meeting did not mention any complaint in this situation, but sent his Hebrew speaking wife from then on. The question comes up why parents do not see the necessity of bilingualism when it comes to their own lives even though bilingualism is considered by some parents to be essential for the students and the setting in school.

Hebrew is spoken by Jewish and most non-Jewish stakeholders in the school and this seems to lead to a Hebrew dominance in class, in parent-teacher meetings, conversations among teachers and therefore in the school setting in general. Only very few of the Jewish parents have a command of Arabic while most of them have attended none or only very few of the Arabic courses provided by the school and haven't improved their Arabic skills from their own school experiences. The honest comment by a mother that she would use her leisure time for other things instead of learning Arabic is representative also for other Jewish parents, which have similar answers in other contexts of the interview.

The question over the concept on bilingualism of the school comes up. Some parents complain about the teaching of *fusha* instead of Colloquial Arabic. Others think that the children should be separated for language classes by their mother

tongue and others would want to see more creative activity with Arabic so that it gets used in different contexts thus promoting a different connotation than what comes from being an obligatory subject.

6.2.4 The fulfillment of expectations regarding language skills of children

The expectations of parents regarding the language skills imparted at school vary tremendously. Indeed, a wide range between disappointment and satisfaction on the fulfillment of those expectations can be found in the interviews. Especially on the Jewish side disappointment concerning the second language skills of their children is widespread. According to some parents the school raised the expectation that Arabic would be like a second language to their children.

> *"We were told that it would//I think second grade [...] They told us it happens. Somehow as a miracle it happens and they know Arabic. [...] And we were waiting and waiting and nope, doesn't happen. So it's// this was the really big, ah, how do you say it, a big disappointment." (Liat)*

One parent confesses that he now knows that his expectations concerning the Arabic language skills of his daughter were set too high. He therefore does not blame the school for not fulfilling his expectations. Some parents are aware that the school cannot provide fluent language skills and think that parents should be more aware of that. One mother thinks that Jewish parents are too impatient with the Arabic skills of their children. They should not compare them to Palestinian children's level of Hebrew.

For one mother, Arabic is not mainly about language skills. To her, it is the key to a different culture. Therefore, the level of Arabic is not as important to her as it is that the children get in touch with children from the non-Jewish side. For another parent who shares this assumption, the result of a lack of Arabic skills leads to a tremendous deficit.

> *"[T]he language is very important to understand the culture, to be part of it, to feel comfortable with Arabic people. When it's not there it's a big deal." (Liat)*

An American father who speaks little Arabic expresses his own experience with the language. Even though he is far from being fluent, he observes positive effects us-

ing Arabic in his working environment, the university. He thinks that his children's attendance at Hand in Hand makes Arabic present at home.

> *"And quiet frankly, with my students, a third of my students here at Hebrew University are Arabic, are Arabic speakers and that gives me connection with my own students, that I wouldn't have otherwise, because I recognize their names, I can speak to them, not a lot, but at least I know enough about their language so that I can make them feel at home, ah, it's probably for me professionally been very good that I can relate to the students more positively, than I would if my children weren't in the school" (Stefan)*

Other Hebrew speaking parents raise concerns over the sparse oral use of Arabic. According to them, the children understand and read well, but they don't speak. One reason for that as mentioned by various parents could be the early acquisition of Hebrew skills by Palestinian students. This leads to a communication in Hebrew among the children from an early stage on. According to a Jewish mother, the longer her son stayed in school the fewer Jewish children remained in his class the more her son spoke Arabic. Over and beyond these complaints, one should however not forget though that there are also Jewish parents, especially in higher classes, who are highly satisfied with the level of Arabic by their children.

> *"[The youngest one] certainly understands everything that goes on in Arabic and, ah, but the two older ones, I'd say the experiment succeeded, they really are functioning in a third language, English at home and then Hebrew and Arabic, so that for me is wonderful." (Stefan)*

On the Palestinian side, parents are predominantly satisfied with the language skills of their children in Arabic as well as in Hebrew. Only one father is concerned about the level of Arabic. He says that he found spelling mistakes on the blackboard by the teacher and this would worry him. Especially on the non-Jewish side, parents emphasize the school's determination to not mix languages. They have the problem of living bilingually and mixing languages when talking to the children. They appreciate the school's effort in strengthening Arabic as well as separating the two languages.

> *"I was afraid that they will speak more Hebrew than Arabic, I didn't want that to happen. I want them to// and I didn't want them to mix languages together." (Manal)*

It is interesting to see that some parents seem to question the level of Arabic of their children unequally to the teachers. One mother even goes as far as to claim the teacher did not understand that her daughter tricks him. In her opinion, the

teacher does not realize that her daughter replies without really understanding the statement of the teacher.

> *"I've seen it happening with teachers, who say, well Shemrit speaks good Arabic, and then I'd say, well say something and the teacher will say and Shemrit would answer and smile. The teacher was sure that she understand everything and I asked her what did she say and Shemrit said: 'I don't have a clue' " (Liat)*

Some parents interviewed are very disappointed about their child's language skills, while others are satisfied. On the Palestinian side, none of the parents complains about deficiencies in Hebrew. Palestinian children pick up Hebrew very quickly and learn it fluently within the first years in school. On the Jewish side, the satisfaction of parents varies tremendously. There seems to be a shifting point in the capability of Arabic, according to the parents. The longer the students stay in school, the more they speak Arabic. This might be partly connected to the withdrawal of Jewish children from the school in higher grades, which leads to a majority of Palestinian children in class. Even though the bilingual language policy, with a Hebrew and an Arabic teachers in each class is not kept in higher classes, the students seem to communicate more often in Arabic than in lower classes.

Especially in the first years, Palestinian children learn much better Hebrew than the Jewish children learn Arabic. This produces a comfortable situation for Jewish children in which they do not have to focus on spoken Arabic. This again adds to the domination of Hebrew in class as well as in private meetings. Palestinian parents speak of the success of the school in not mixing languages. This statement can only be understood given the fact that many Palestinian parents work in a Hebrew setting and therefore use Hebrew every day. Some of the parents admit that they have problems not mixing Hebrew and Arabic in one sentence.

Some parents understand the concept of bilingual education as a tool to get access to another culture. This is interesting in consideration of the NGO's interpretation of bilingualism, where it is seen as such as well.

It is remarkable to see that some parents seem to assess the Arabic language skills of the Jewish children differently than the teachers. Either the parents understate the Arabic language skills of their children or the teachers overstate them in order to affirm their work.

6.2.5   The question of English and special needs

Some parents think that the children should learn more English in school. The strong focus on Hebrew and Arabic leaves little room for English. One father studied English with his daughter at home before first grade. When she started school, she lost it.

> *"She was studying English even before with me, in the school, in the house. But now in the school, I don't think they do much for English, or maybe it's a new plan and they're going to start it soon, because until this moment, my Christina in the third grade she would say bad, you know, only this few words, while in the first grade she was much better." (Fadi)*

One parent who has a strong connection to the US and worked there for a period, would be very pleased if the school could offer an English speaking stream in the Hand in Hand School. For her as well for others, the school raises additional obstacles compared to a regular school when coming back from a longer stay abroad. Her children have problems catching up on missed material and little chance to get the same bilingual education in other countries.

Another mother notes that the school is not meeting her daughter's needs as a dyslexic child. The focus on another language overburdens her daughter's capability. She needs longer hours to make up the regular material. Even though the school and the parents arranged extra conditions for the student, the additional language leads to frustration and a negative attitude toward school. Another mother, on the other hand, enjoys the special conditions at Hand in Hand. She chose the school mainly because her son is hyperactive. In small classes with two staff members in each classroom, she has the impression that he is be better taken care of than in a regular school class. The ideological agenda of the school was subordinate.

For a Jewish Russian mother who migrated to Israel the fear came up that her son would lose his mother tongue Russian. He speaks it but concerning writing and reading he is much better in Arabic and Hebrew. Similar concerns are raised by the the American-Armenian couple. Attending the Hand in Hand school means paying the price of not attending the Armenian school. The older daughter attended the Armenian school to get a basic idea about the culture and the language before coming to Hand in Hand. The younger son, who was supposed to receive the same education, was not accepted by the Armenian school because the older sister was not committed enough to it. He therefore could not benefit from Armenian classes.

This chapter is interesting when it comes to different needs of individuals. It gives an idea of considerations the school could integrate in the pedagogical concept in order to please the parents and shows how difficult it is to meet all the different demands made by parents and students.

Given the context of the Israeli society, the background of the people as well as globalization, the demand for more English is unquestionably an important one. If the school is not able to fulfill the demands of parents in regard to English lessons, parents will remain disappointed. The school has to be aware that the special conditions it offers in terms of number of students in class and number of staff members in class might also attract parents who do not choose the school for political reasons but for educational ones. It offers special conditions for regular students, but is even more attractive for parents, who have children with special needs like hyperactivity. On the other hand the school might not provide an ideal setting for children with special needs like dyslexia. It might be reasonable for the school as well as for the children to think of alternatives, because an extra language might overburden the child as in the case mentioned above.

6.2.6   Language skills and visions for the future

When it comes to visions for the future, concerning the value of languages it becomes obvious that Palestinian parents need Hebrew while in the opposite case it is nice to have but not necessary. Palestinian parents are very aware of the fact that Hebrew is important for the future of the children. Higher education as well as white collar jobs require fluency in Hebrew. A Jewish mother wants her son to follow her footprints and serve in the Israeli Military Intelligence. For her, this is a unit of the army where smart and intelligent people meet and she would want him to be one of them. Besides that, she wouldn't want to see him as a combat soldier, even though she doesn't exactly say why, but only refers to service in the Military Intelligence as a preferred position. She says that having Arabic language skills provides a strong advantage to getting accepted in the Intelligence and hopes that the fact that her son has Arab friends does not have a negative influence on his career.

> *"I want him very much to go to Intelligence and I have some doubts, maybe he will be excluded on security grounds, because he knows too many Arabs or something like this" (Dina)*

Another Jewish mother has different visions for her son. For her, Arabic gives her son employment options outside the Jewish apparatus. For example, he could use his Arabic skills in building relationships with neighboring countries. A Jewish father thinks that his daughter has a good language baseline to build up on, if she wants. Her language skills could provide options in work as well as in private contact with people. Other parents also speak of language skills as a base for contact with the other group. One Palestinian parent provides initial evidence of first positive results of this. She likes that her Jewish babysitter comes and speaks Arabic to her children. For her this is a matter of respect.

> *"I have a babysitter for the kids, he's from this school, he's older, about 14 years old. What's nice// he's Jewish and he comes, he speaks Arabic also to the kids. So, I'm happy to see that it's working also for the other side. That's very important for me. It's a respect" (Manal)*

Some parents regard the Arabic language skills as an enrichment of the children's future. On the Palestinian side, parents are very aware of the necessity of Hebrew for professional as well as educational reasons. On the Jewish side, three options are listed. First, Arabic could be used for career reasons outside of the Jewish apparatus, secondly it can help to build private relationships. And lastly, as one mother explains, it could be used to work within the military service. While the first and second idea might be suggestions the school would agree with, the third proposal might be seen critically by the school as well as the staff and other parents. Coming back to the hypothesis that parents might not share the political idea the school offers, to learn Arabic skills in order to use them for the military apparatus against Palestinians is surely not the intension of the school. If the school becomes an institution that is only accepted by parents because of the possibility to learn Arabic, for whatever purpose, its legitimization might be called into question sooner or later. On the other hand, it is challenging for the school to prevent parents like this from sending their children to Hand in Hand, especially when it is growing as fast as it is.

6.2.7 Final conclusions on bilingualism in consideration of academic studies

According to Spinner-Halev (2003) the demand of parents to concentrate more on English reflects the spirit of the time. This is not only a demand in this school, but challenges bilingual schools worldwide. In times of globalization it is not mere

personal preference. Especially for the group in the majority, it requires a strong argument why the students should invest more in the language of the minority than in English, the global language (Spinner-Halev 2003). In consideration of the relationship Israel has with its neighboring Arab countries the orientation toward Europe and the United States becomes even more relevant. Knowing English also provides options for Palestinian citizens working abroad. They are aware that their children pick up Hebrew quickly and speak it fluently after a short amount of time, so their demand for another language is understandable.

The fact that written information given out by the school is bilingual while oral information, as in parent-teacher meetings, is not translated is a widespread problem in bilingual education. Amara, Azaiza, Hertz-Lazarowitz and Mor-Sommerfeld (2009) have found in their longterm analysis on the Hand in Hand schools that Hebrew dominates in all fields, but in the area of information given out in writing it is the most symmetric. Even when the school changed the strategy and emphasized Arabic in order to produce a counterbalance to the Hebrew dominance outside of school, the school never achieved true bilingualism (Bekerman 2005b).

Whereas Amara (2005 quoted in Amara et al. 2009, 31) found that Jewish parents don't have high expectations for their children's level of bilingualism, the interviews presented here show that some parents are very disappointed by the language skills of their children.

As seen here, only a few Jewish parents speak Arabic. This result corresponds to the other previous studies on this school (Bekerman 2005a, Amara et al. 2009). This is not surprising when taking into consideration the Israeli school system and the marginalization of the non-Jewish citizens in Israel. As seen here as well as in other studies (Amara et al. 2009) the Jewish teachers are also not bilingual.

Especially when teachers translate conversations within or outside of the classrooms to make themselves understood, they create a very comfortable situation for the students who can just wait for a translation (Amara et al. 2009). In the last years, as Amara, Azaiza, Hertz-Lazarowitz and Mor-Sommerfeld state, Arab teachers of Hand in Hand emphasize the usage of Arabic and try to not switch to Hebrew in conversations with pupils, co-teachers or staff. In this context, the research of Escamilla (1994) also helps to understand the situation. She found that the focus on a bilingual setting should not only reach out to classrooms but include the entire school setting. According to Escamilla (1994) the parents as well as the staff and the teachers of the school serve as role models to the students. In the case of the bilingual school, only very few Jewish parents speak Arabic as well as very few

Jewish teachers. The philosophy of a truly bilingual setting is reduced to the classrooms. This has a strong impact on the children since they only experience of Arabic is reduced to an "obligatory" setting whereas the more comfortable communication, maybe even on more intimate issues, takes place mostly in Hebrew mostly (Ecamilla 1994). This is one of the factors, besides the little bilingual role models on the Jewish side and the external setting, that influences the language use of the children on the Jewish as well as the non-Jewish side in the school.

According to Raham (2001, cited by Amara et al. 2009, 29) the language teaching in Hand in Hand is ideologically based. The reality in Israel does not offer a true need to learn Arabic. This could be one reason why Jewish children do not use Arabic. They make little use of it outside of school, because equal status of Arabic and Hebrew in the community is not present. In this context, one gets the impression that some of the students in Hand in Hand have internalized the concept that Arabic is an inferior language already at an early age.

6.3   Identity

This chapter describes parents' opinions on the school's objective to strengthen identities. It becomes apparent that the general idea of strengthening identity is considered controversial by parents before it even comes to the question of application or evaluation. The wide spectrum of parents the school deals with including their expectations, opinions and demands, will be presented in the following.

6.3.1   The question of self-definition

The question of self-definition in terms of religion and nationality provides information that is useful for the school's pedagogical concept, because it shows the complexity the school has to confront. In general Jewish interview partners had little difficulties to answer this question. It was mainly answered by the terms "Israeli" and "Jewish". Jewishness is named in both contexts: religion and nationality. Some parents would define themselves more in terms of Israeliness rather than Jewishness, while for others it's the opposite characterization.

> *"I would describe myself as a Israeli, as an Israeli Jew, probably. Yes, I would put Israeli first." (Estephania)*

Some parents also stated in this or other contexts that they define themselves as Zionists. On the Palestinian side, one can find a wider variety of answers. Some parents start to explain their identity in complex constructions or by political circumstances.

> *"I am Arab, you know I speak the Arabic language. My// I'm from a Palestinian origin, because my grandparents were Palestinians before Israel came. I have theIsraeli passport and I// so I live in this country and I have the passport. And I'm from Christian background, I'm not religious" (Manal)*

A Christian Palestinian father replies to this question by describing how he is seen by others and how he would define himself in comparison to that.

> *"Let's say this. They call us Arabs; I wanna meet that person who could prove that we're Arabs. We might be Byzantines, who become Arabs, because they learn how to speak Arabic. And, ah, but in the identification card and ah, in the papers we're Arabs." (Fadi)*

This father does not care if he is called "Arab" by others. On the contrary he describes himself as such as well. This becomes clear when he notes in a different context that his personality is Arab.

> *"[W]e're Arabs, we are Arabs. This is my personality." (Fadi)*

On the Jewish as well as the non-Jewish side, parents talk about Arabs less often about Palestinians. This is important when it comes to the school. A Palestinian parent highlights the carelessness of the Palestinian parents in school being called Arabs. He considers this as a noteworthy disparity to Palestinian people outside of school.

Another Palestinian parent mentions that he is not a fundamentalist, when he describes himself.

> *"I am Hussein, I am an Arabic (.) Israeli. I have citizenship of Israel and Israeli passport. [...] I'm Muslim, but I'm not a religious, I'm not fundamentalist." (Hussein)*

This small extract of interviews demonstrates that the Jewish parents interviewed find it easier to define themselves in simple words in comparison to the non-Jewish parents. Some parents separate Israeliness and Jewishness and identify more with one of the two terms, while for others Jewishness is synonymous for nationality

and religion. This shows how broad these terms are used and defined, depending on the user.

It becomes obvious that for some parents the question of self-definition is more complex and more difficult to put in words on the Palestinian side. The fact that parents start to explain their "Israeliness" or their "Arabness", might be an indicator for that. Politics and history enter the definition. To emphasize that one is not a fundamentalist might be the result of public perception on Islam in Israel.

On both sides the parents use the term "Arabs", less often the term "Palestinians". This is significant considering the school's strong focus on strengthening the Palestinian identity.

6.3.2   Critique about Application of strengthening identity in school

The interviewed parents don't agree over the question of whether or not the children are more in need of a strengthened group identity in this school compared to a regular school with only Jews or only Palestinians. Some parents think that in a bi-national school the belonging to a group is not as evident as in a regular school and for that they find the emphasis significant.

> *"I think if you are in a only Jewish school your identity is clear, I mean, and you don't deal with it. You don't deal with it explicitly, but it is part of all the system. And when you are in a bi-national school, I think yeah, you have to be more careful about it." (Ilan)*

For some Palestinian parents it is of value to see that the children would learn about the Palestinian identity but also understand the distinctions of the various parties and the conflict. For one parent it is fundamental that the child perceives this school as part of the solution to the conflict by learning with the other group and living together while knowing about the existing problems. Parents admit that the question of strengthening identities was something they had not thought about before sending their children to this school. One mother acknowledges that she found the idea of it strange in the beginning. Now she is happy about this conceptual focus.

Other parents discuss the question of identity in general. They ask what is identity and what does identity imply in the Israeli context. Some of them conclude that it is too broad to teach. One parent notes that when it comes to religion, parents have

very different interpretation. Since the school is not very specific in interpreting Jewishness and Palestinianess, there is little legitimization to teach the children something that the parents do not agree on. In a private school like the Lutheran Christian one, this same parent would give approval to educating his children in the religious way the school offers. In this state supported school though, there can only be a very broad education in religious and national narratives. This parent also notes that he knows parents who would declare their wish to not strengthen identities. He knows a family with a Holocaust history who came to Israel to not feel Jewish, to not be confronted the Jewishness. According to him, in Israel this is a widespread opinion that should be considered in the school.

> *"I don't think I'm alone in that, I mean, how a person is a Jew these days is very much of a family thing, there are lots of different ways of being Jewish and so for the school to take on the job, the strengthening of the Jewish identity, ah, I don't think the school is in a position to do that.[...] I have a colleague whose father is a Holocaust survivor and he said he came to Israel so he didn't have to be Jewish. I mean he wanted to be Israeli, but he didn't want to be Jewish" (Stefan)*

One mother refers to this question by analyzing her background and identity and draws conclusions from that. She has roots in different religions and cultures and wants to integrate them all into her identity. At the same time, she strongly defines herself as a Jew and is seen as a Jew by society. This is why she thinks the school should focus on identity questions, on considering the history of both peoples living there and them being denied of their identity. But, at the same time, they should be aware of the 'otherness' around and within oneself. Therefore, it is important to her that her children are not raised in a Jewish box. Her statement is a strong evidence for the complexity of identity questions in the Israeli context.

> *"[I]t's something that you carry on yourself, even if you want it or not. And you're being, ah, judged by that a little bit, ah, it's a very-very ahm not understandable field for me. I'm very confused about. Not that I// I think I'm a Jew. If I have to identify myself, I'm a Jew, I have, ah, different roots, ah I don't feel that it's, ah, disturbing or, ah, making me, ah confused about what-what I am, but it's part of who I am, also my-my roots and my background, ah, my kids are Jews, but I always, always remind them that they have the other roots as well, and it's part of who they are" (Hannah)*

Some other parents agree that the identity of a child is not built in a closed setting and that the bare fact that the children go to school with children of different backgrounds already builds the identity of each child. This goes along with the opinion

that the school succeeds in teaching the students the irrelevance of a background for a friendship.

Other parents consider this school as an institution that strengthens personalities instead of memberships to collectives. They are happy that every child can keep his or her own identity. A parent who does not consider himself an integral part of any of the three big religious groups in the school, Jews, Muslims or Christians, describes the situation as if each child has to belong to either group. He considers the great concentration on these categories as false.

> "[I]n school, you really only have three choices, you're Christian, Muslim or-or Jewish" (Stefan)

An unexpected aspect that came up in some interviews is that it seems easier and more realistic to strengthen the already existing collective identities than to form a new, common one.

> "I guess it's ah, it's a good thing, because it encourages each one in who he is, not try to create him in something different, into a mold that everybody would fit into. Ahm, each person comes from somewhere and it's important to strengthen that, so he feels confident in it. So he feels confident also in what other people are, ahm, for themselves, not trying to make them different or something like that." (Marie)

For some parents this opinion accompanies the fear that the school creates a reality that the children will not find outside of school. One Palestinian father notices that he thinks the school should not introduce a system in which everything is turned upside down compared to the reality outside. Another parent completes this thought by suggesting to first concentrate on the common ground and then afterward introducing distinctions that some parents on both sides believe exist.

One mother is convinced that the school is not very good at imparting knowledge on Judaism. In combination with the unsatisfied expectations regarding her daughter's Arabic language skills, she thinks that her child is missing out on something in this school. In comparison to a regular Jewish school: her daughter receives little knowledge on Judaism. According to her, this is the price for being in the Hand in Hand school. Another mother notes, that she would like the Jewishness of her child to be strengthened. She adds to it though, that if the identities of the Palestinians were strengthened as well, her child would be scared.

Another mother notes that she can't identify a pedagogical concept of the school in terms of bilingualism and strengthening identity. She considers the school's image

campaign as too much of a priority underrating the internal needs of the school's organization. She would want to see a guideline on explicit objectives by the school, which could be the base of evaluation concerning the achievements in bilingualism and identity matters.

> *"They invested in raising money, building a new building, in relations with diplomats and so on, but, or even in the relationship with the Ministry of Education. But there wasn't a sense of clear ideology or clear line of reason within the school and I think that's the reason for chaos. There wasn't a sense that whoever is leading it has an educational vision and is implementing this vision." (Sarit)*

This same mother blames the lack of concept for the demand of the parents to strengthen identities. In her opinion, the fact that other parents want the students to be separated for special occasions or lessons, claim for a focus on ceremonies and so on, is because of the deficient agenda of the school. She thinks parents with such intentions have not understood or do not agree with the idea of the school. According to her, the strengthening of identities is taken care of outside of school, therefore she does not see any problem in the children losing it.

> *"I think we got enough of that outside of school; really that's what we get here for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's all about your nationality. I wish we could have had less of that. I don't think being, belonging to a nationality is so constructive under the current circumstances. It should be played down, not amplified." (Sarit)*

In this chapter the wide variety of opinions on strengthening identities is presented. It becomes apparent what challenge the school bears in satisfying all parents. The wish of parents for their children to be aware of their collective identities collides with the liberal approach of creating a common ground of all children without making a difference between the different backgrounds. This leads to the question of whether the students should be separated for certain events to be strengthened in their own identities or whether they should focus on common interests rather than differences. Aside from that, some parents argue that the school is not transparent enough regarding the agenda, for example, the school's understanding of the terms "Jewish" or "Palestinian" identity. Others state that the school has no legitimization to strengthen identities because it's not a private school with a focus on religious studies. In general the question over the strengthening of identity is seen very controversial.

The assessment that Jewish Israelis came to Israel to not feel Jewish helps to understand the self-definitions by parents. Some parents define themselves as more

Israeli than Jewish where as others use the term Jewish in a religious rather than a national sense. In consideration of the Jewish majority in Israel, Jews don't need to define themselves as Jews. Due to the long history of anti-Semitism, it has been difficult to not be aware of one's Jewish identity. However, If there is a place where this is possible, it is Israel. The self-definitions give a good example of the wide variety of interpretations on Jewishness, Palestinianess as well as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As one mother states, to include different roots of one person makes the question of strengthening group identities even more complex.

6.3.3   Special needs of identities on the Jewish and non-Jewish side

6.3.3.1 The Question of identity on the Jewish side

On the Jewish side, some parents note that they want their children to be "proud" of their Jewishness. They want to cultivate their Jewish background which, in their opinion, is essential for their identity.

A Jewish mother wishes that her child learns to live its Jewish identity in Israel. For her it's challenging to accomplish this in light of history and present political circumstances. Other parents agree on this point and declare that they hope to see their children express their appreciation for their identity as Jews despite their surroundings.

> *"I want them, you know, in-in the more particular Israeli sense, I want them to-to find ways to live in peace with, you know, with the very conflicting identities we have here. It's very difficult[...] It's a-it's a complicated situation to-to feel good in, to have that// to build your life in and// because there is so much bad around you." (Lea)*

According to the expectations of parents, one mother confirms the school's success in creating a strong Jewish identity, while raising awareness in actual political matters as well as historical conflicts.

> *"[Her daughter] still understands, that it's, the process was very hard for the Palestinians and it was very painful and there is the Nakba there. And to be, the fact that the school allows her to-to stay proud, a Jewish Israeli proud, a proud Jewish Israeli and to understand the conflict and to live through it, I think it's very, it's very fascinating thing to live through." (Liat)*

Some Jewish parents find it significant to see a "proud" Jew in their child. In consideration of Jewish history and present political situation this does not seem to be easy to achieve.

6.3.3.2 The question of identity on the non-Jewish side

The teaching of the Palestinian narrative in school, as well as Islam is a contributing factor when choosing a school for some parents interviewed. Reactions parents got when announcing their attendance in this school included questions on identity. One Palestinian parent mentions for example that her own parents expressed fear that the children could lose Arabic language skills as well as their Palestinian identity. They were scared that the children would want to be like Jews due to the constant contact with Jews. Another interviewee had the same thoughts.

> *"I was fear about one thing, you know, that's making my daughter grow up there and I'm afraid about the traditions, about the society in our village, to get in deeply in the Israeli society and to forget the Arabic tradition. I'm not religious, but maybe if I was religious I didn't send my daughters there" (Hussein)*

Some parents express their fear of having to deal with behavior, their children might learn from Jewish students, like drinking and hanging out late as well as their concerns about their children comparing themselves with Jewish students and losing their Arab identity over that. One Palestinian father finds it very fundamental to strengthen the identity of the "Arab" pupils because in his opinion they want to be Jewish and deny their Arab background.

> *"[E]very time [I wish] for my daughters not to be afraid to say that they are Arab, to be proud about their identity, even in their mixed school, because if you respect yourself the other respect <u>you</u>. You know, if you look sometimes you can see Arabs like this, boys most of the time, you know they cut their hair like to be like Jewish, because they are afraid to say they're Arab, or they're ashamed to be." (Hussein)*

The mother of Armenian children is very happy that the school ensures that their Armenian identity is strengthened in school. She highlights positively that not only Palestinian and Jewish collectives are strengthened but also the Armenian background of her children. However a Christian father senses a lack of emphasis on Christianity, in order to strengthen Judaism and Islam. He thinks that Christianity receives too little attention in school and would want to see his children get stronger in their Christian identity. He claims that they know more about Mohamed than about Jesus.

On the Palestinian side, parents are concerned about the equality that is aimed for in school. One parent wonders if the children might get used to a reality that they will not find outside of school. This interviewee wonders if children might be disappointed later. A Palestinian mother regards the discrimination outside of school as a major reason for the importance of equality within school. According to her, her children will be confronted with discrimination in the future and therefore she wants her children to experience equality in school. A Palestinian father thinks that the school provides the children with tools to fight this discrimination.

> *"[T]he Jewish, they all ask, are you one of us? If you are not one of us, well, we might show you respect, but deep inside we already put a barrier, a border between me and you. So, yes, that's gonna// not gonna be easy (.) on our kids, but I mean when-when they gain the experience and they handle a normal life, when they get to these points, I know, I'm sure, confident, they will know how to-how to behave and what to say, and, ah, how to overcome. We are giving them the tools. Th-This school is the tool to overcome these obstacles." (Rani)*

On the Palestinian side some parents want their children to be proud of their Palestinian identities. Living as a minority in Israel, they want their children to conserve Palestinian traditions. Some parents stress that their children feel ashamed admitting their "Arabness". They behave and dress like Jewish children. Palestinian parents demand a strong focus on the Palestinian narrative to prevail cultural assimilation.

On the Jewish as well as the Palestinian side, parents assert the value of strong identities, even though they give different reasons for that. On the Jewish side, parents name the strong political conflict that makes it hard for children to feel proud of their Jewishness as a major reason besides others. On the Palestinian side, parents name the Jewish majority that enters their lives and creates fears about keeping the own identity and language as a strong element for identity. Those who are not members of the two dominant groups want to see their children's identities strengthened as well. While for some, like the mother of an Armenian child, this is already taken care of, a Christian parent wishes that Christianity would not loose out to Islam and Judaism in school.

6.3.4 Ceremonies in school

How national as well as religious ceremonies of different groups within school should be dealt with is considered diversely by parents. What they agree on is the

importance of children finding a way to celebrate their own festivities while demonstrating respect to others when they have their holidays. One parent states that the school succeeds in this aspect. Students understand why the other group has different feelings about a holiday than the own group and still celebrate the festivities with the own group without bad feelings.

While some parents would not want their children to be separated during festivities because this draws a clear line between the different groups, other parents think that celebrating ceremonies like the Independence Day and the *Nakba* are essential for the identities of children and should therefore be celebrated separately or at least should be very evidently marked in the belonging to one group.

> *"I think the idea of celebrating separately holidays but celebrating by everybody, each holiday, belonging to a different religion is more of a// is more of sense because then you learn the customs of the other, you know that you are not the other, but the customs are related to the other and you know it's your holiday or it's not your holiday. I think that's important questions of identity" (Estephania)*

A Jewish mother considers ceremonies in Israel as commemoration to the Jewish history, especially to the Holocaust. She appreciates that the plurality in this school helps to find different perspectives to these holidays.

> *"[T]here is this thing where you look at the// especially at the-at the mainstream school system as the series of things of stories of persecution and lucky escapes. And there's a political message in there, unintentional or unarticulated but it's in there. And I don't want my kids getting that message. I want them to get a more complicated view of reality" (Lea)*

One parent stresses that the school has improved in its way of dealing with ceremonies. According to him, one year they made a big mistake when they required all children to come on *Nakba*/Independence Day dressed in either black or white, the color depending on whether the child belonged to the Jewish or to the Palestinian side, the white dress symbolizing delight for the establishment of the state of Israel, the black dress to commemorate the destruction that went along the establishment of the state. This parent did not force his children to make that choice and for that reason kept them at home on that day. He does not consider himself belonging to either of the main national or religious groups and considers the decision of the children to decide to which side they belong to, when it comes to religious or national concerns as a complication.

Some parents approve the system which allows their children to choose if they want to join the ceremonies of the other group. They find this a successful approach, especially when it comes to sensitive, politicized ceremonies like the Independence Day and the *Nakba*. However, the Druze parent also notices the problem in decision making by his children.

> "The teacher asked them to decide "You want to go to the hatzmaut or to the Nakba" and they were have to decide. So, we told them to decide what they want. We told them "you decide". And it was a problem. I wanted them to decide to go the hatzmaut and the girl decided// have more friends, Jewish friends, so she decided that she goes celebrate the hatzmaut. But the little one have more Muslim friends, Arab friends, and he decided to go to the Nakba." (Refai)

He suggests celebrating a common holiday instead that is based neither on national nor religious events by any group. For him this is especially significant when it comes to the *Nakba* and Independence Day. In his opinion it is destructive to celebrate the *Nabka*, because this leads to a negative attitude toward the majority of Jews in the country.

Parents agree that the school still experiments in how to handle ceremonies. One mother notes that one year they celebrated *Hannukah* and Christmas at the same time. This led to a confusion among the children about what rituals belonge to which religion.

> "[W]e went to a party that all the, two or three, ah, holidays of different religions were celebrated together. I think that for example caused some of a mess. I mean you get your presents for Christmas and you lit the Hannukah candles and I'm not sure what the kids get of all of this. They might have an idea, that we// and they did have this idea because they-they got kind of a small symbol of each holiday. So they thought that at Hannukah we get the presents in the stock from Father Christmas" (Estephania)

This part shows that the holidays and ceremonies in school are seen by many parents interviewed as major stabilizers for identities. Some parents of children belonging to major groups appreciate the separation in order to set clear lines between what belongs to whom. Non-Jewish and non-Muslim parents have different perspectives to these holidays. Some of them claim that it is difficult to choose which group they belong to, others complain that their children lack knowledge in their own religion and wish their children's identities to be strengthened in terms of ceremonies as well. Independence Day and *Nakba* are central ceremonies for par-

ents as well as society. As for this parents appreciate the attendance by students to be voluntarily.

6.3.5 Intermarriage and the question of identity

The parents interviewed are ambivalent concerning the idea of their children getting married to a person of another group. One reason mentioned in this context is the problem of identity for a child by a mixed couple. Besides, they relate to the intolerant society that creates difficulties for intermarriages. This is not what parents wish for their children. Still some would accept the decision of the children and would feel happy for them.

> *"[M]y big girl she was asking me "Can we marry a Muslim guy, can we marry a Jewish guy?". I said, you know, you can marry whoever you want, but it's easier if you marry the same religion." (Manal)*

Other interviewees are not willing to accept an intermarriage at all. Another similar category is the fear concerning friendships. Some parents are afraid of their breaking after they finished school. A major concern here is military service fulfilled by the Jewish population and its impacts on friendships.

This short chapter shows that the interviewees are aware of difficulties when it comes to intermarriages. At first sight this is not connected to the school, but the question of intermarriage is present from an early stage on, because the obstacles the future brings after the finishing of the school are tremendous. Society will demand separation, for example through military service. This is not fulfilled by most Palestinians. It is remarkable to see how much this group agrees that it would be unhealthy for their children to get a partner from the other side because of societal structures and widespread discrimination. Some worry of enhanced chances of intermarriage because of contact with the other group on a regular base in school. Through this question it becomes obvious how deeply influenced parents are by the societal structures, even though they are willing to take up with this very special school.

6.3.6 Identity and educational excellence

Parents call attention to the fact that even though the school tries to provide equality among the students, the minority group in this school is very aware of its status in society. Some Palestinian parents proclaim their intention to work harder than the Jewish population to succeed in the Israeli system. This leads to different expectations toward the school. On the Jewish side, some parents want to take it easy on their children and focus on joint activities. On the non-Jewish side educational excellence is much more demanded. This becomes a problem for both sides, because the expectations toward the school don't match. One Jewish parent demonstrates appreciation for the Palestinian's request on the school.

> *"[T]he Arab parents want their children have more homework have a more rigorous academic program whereas the Israeli parents, you know, want their kids to be kids and just to grow up like every body else, [...] they're not sort of under the pressure that I think many of the Arab parents feel for their children to excel." (Stefan)*

If Palestinian children leave the school, one factor is educational excellence, which might partly connect to their status as a minority. One Jewish parent compares the situation with the Jewish minority in the United States.

> *"[B]ecause they know that if they are not the best, also the Jewish in United States and also the Arabs in Israel, if they are not the best, they can not be equal. To feel that they are equal they have to be much more." (Levi)*

A Palestinian mother declares the chance to get the Israeli *bagrut*, as the reason for her daughter to attend this school. Besides a good knowledge of Hebrew the *bagrut,* the final examination, that is needed to acquire a higher education in Israel, is the key to a further educational and professional future in Israel. Private schools in East Jerusalem offer a strong perspective abroad by international standards and a focus on foreign languages but they offer little when it comes to further education in Israel.

> *"[I]f I will be very honest with you I will tell you that I-I took this school only because of the, ah, final exams. Because as I told you that we have Israeli system and this is the only school that, ah, will fed my daughter, to have, ah, the Israelis system." (Doha)*

This mother explains that within the Triangle, a region in Israel where proportionally many Israeli Palestinians live, she would have better options in Palestinian

education. In East Jerusalem the education is either international and private or public with lower standard. So this school offers a reasonable alternative.

As a matter of fact, as stated by parents, in higher grades more and more Jewish parents pull out their children to enroll them in different schools. A Palestinian father assumes that one reason why Jewish people leave school in higher grades is connected to identity matters. This parent concludes that the approaching service in the army is a major factor of why identity becomes more important the older the children grow.

> *"[T]he Jewish wanna push in the brain of their kids, or national elements. So, we find that the Jewish are leaving, and we-we are, who don't have any other choices." (Rani)*

Another mother alleges that a lack of connection and obligation toward the school eases the decision of parents to withdraw their children from school. For her, if the parents were more committed, they would not just leave.

> *"[I]t's very easy to this people to leave the school at a certain time and to move to a Jewish school. Ah, so, it-it// they don't need this connections for, to participate in this, ah, school, but I think, if they had this connections more, it would put them in a position, that they won't leave, they be more, ah, they won't leave after a few years to another school." (Hannah)*

In this part it becomes evident that the background of a student and the question of school career, especially when it comes to High School, are connected. For Jewish students more options are provided when it comes to alternative schools. Some of the Palestinian parents state that they would not send their children to public schools. The alternate private schools are mainly internationally oriented and do not provide the education and exams that students need for higher education in Israel. Whereas Jewish parents sympathize with a less arrogating education in lower classes in higher grades, according to parents, many Jewish students withdraw for other schools in higher grades. The question arises whether or not educational excellence becomes more important the older the Jewish children get especially when it comes to standardized tests. The approaching military service needs strong national identification and this might also influence the decision to change schools. Furthermore if parents are not willing to accept intermarriage for societal or personal reasons, it might be easy to reduce chances by taking the children out of the bi-national school and enlist them in a regular school.

Some Palestinian parents are very aware of the fact, that their children need to work hard to succeed in the Jewish society. They have experienced for themselves that as non-Jews they had to stand out academically as well as professionally to reach a high standard in Israel. Because of the obstacles they overcame they want to provide the best basis possible for their children by ensuring a high academic level from the very beginning of their schooling. The question arises whether parents of this school, with high academic backgrounds and strong professional careers, consider the question of early academic promotion more acutely than other Palestinian parents from different schools.

6.3.7 Final conclusions in consideration of academic studies

It is astonishing to note that a parent notes that on the Palestinian side parents do not care about being called Arabs. Some even call themselves "Arabs". A study by Yogev Ben-Yoshua and Alper (1991) demonstrates that the stronger the identification with the term "Arab" on the Palestinian side, the higher the probability of readiness for contact with Jews. This leads to the question of whether it is coincidental or if the interviewed parents represent a fraction of the Palestinian society living in Israel, that is enormously open to Jews and contact with them. That study done by Yogev, Ben-Yoshua and Alper (1991) showed that 15.3 percent of the respondents define themselves as Arabs, 21.1 percent as Israeli Arabs and 63.6 percent as Palestinian Arabs. So the parents here rather belong to a distinct minority when it comes to their self-definition as Arabs. This also leads to the question whether there are similar indicators on the Jewish side as well concerning the self-definition of Jewish and accordingly Israeli. Another research by Lowrence (2006) shows that the higher the self-identification with the term Palestinian in the Israeli context, the higher the perception of discrimination by the person. The stronger the identification with the term Arab, the less the person feels unprivileged. Parents interviewed state that the Palestinian parents in the Hand in Hand school are well-off and of high academic background. Determining if these factors correlate could be a subject for further research.

In general, the parents interviewed do not agree on whether or not identities should be strengthened at school. Some parents are eager to see clearly defined and strong identities of their children, while others would like to put a stronger focus on finding common ground. In the context of the theory by Wolff-Jontofsohn (1999) who states that the Israeli Jews can be considered as a "mino-majority", it would be in-

teresting to find out in a further research project, how much the wish of Jewish parents to see their children's identity strengthened results from international anti-Semitism, discrimination and the Jewish Holocaust history. In this context it might be questionable whether the school should treat the Jewish majority also as a minority, especially when it comes to the stated wish of the parents promoting their children to "be proud of the Jewishness".

While some parents claim the school should strengthen the children's identity, others would like to concentrate on common aspects. What is known as a molding of "us" and "them" is termed after Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachmann and Rust (1993), a re-categorization. This re-categorization in Pettigrew's concept (1998) of contact hypothesis, is the final stage of intergroup contact after contact has been built and friendships established. This final stage, according to Bekerman (2007a) can only take place when the self-identity is strengthened and the maximum reduction of prejudices is achieved. Only very few groups reach this point. Still the question of how much the school should focus on distinctions instead of commonalities, for example, through the celebration of ceremonies.

6.4   Intergroup encounters

The school provides a platform to get in touch with the other group. This should not only happen amongst students but also include parents and staff members. The following chapter will capture the parents opinions on the school's success in connecting people. It will also summarize deficits the school has to work on.

6.4.1   Contact of parents

The school constitutes one of the few public institutions that brings families together, which is appreciated a lot by parents. One parent names this as the main advantage of the school. Another parent reinforces this statement by adding that the school has been a good experience so far, even if only for the nice people he made contact with there. This is matched by the opinion of a mother who thinks that there is something connecting in this school, something all the parents share. They all had to overcome something in order to join the school.

> *"[T]here is something about looking around you and saying everybody in this courtyard has been// was willing to overcome something to be here. And that in this very*

hostile// or not hostile, but tense, reality. That is very precious, just to look around and say 'nice people, really good people, good hearts.' " (Lea)

A mother adds, that she enjoys getting to interact with people, who really care about their children. Some parents appreciate the extra activities the school offers, like a visit to destroyed Arab villages, which had to be deserted in '48. For this very event, a Palestinian mother points out, that the high amount of Jewish parents attending this trip was a pleasant surprise.

A Palestinian parent describes the community built around the school as a big family.

"[W]e never feel that this is Jewish, this is Christian, this is// we have from all religions and they friends together, that we feel family" (Ameera)

That this is not usual in the Israeli context is noted by parents on both sides. Only rarely do friendships among Jewish and Palestinian adults develop. If they exist, they were often built through work. Some Jewish interviewees reply, when asked about friendships with Palestinians, that their contacts are acquaintances rather than friends. Others state that they do not have any contact with the other side at all. By contrast, some Jewish parents are very actively involved in political engagement in the West Bank and through that have close contact to Palestinians within Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories. A mother who does not consider any of her contacts with Palestinians "friendships", feels unfortunate about the system minimizing the chances to meet a Palestinian who belongs to the same peer group as her. She refers to the societal hierarchy that often leads to contact, in which she would be in a higher position, which makes it difficult to build relationships.

"[T]he odds of meeting somebody who is out my peer, you know, somebody, that I would have a lot of-of in common with, who's a Palestinian are pretty small. I have much better chances of meeting people who are, you know, who will do some kind of labour for me." (Lea)

A Palestinian who has lived abroad, has similar thoughts. He remembers that outside of the country it was much easier to get in touch with the other group.

"Like you know, we lived in Canada and we had Jewish friends and we have Christian friends and we have Muslim friends and it's the same feeling. It's just here that the politics ruins everything." (Manal)

Another Palestinian mother stresses, that she does not have much contact with Jews. For her separated neighborhoods, her working place in an Arab school in her Arab village are structural reasons for that. She remembers, that back in her college years, she was closer to Jews than today. Nowadays she only gets in contact with them through her husband who works in an office with mainly Jews and she cultivates her friendships from college time. Other Palestinians have direct relationships to Jews. Some of them, even though they have joint activities or go on holidays with Jewish friends, mention, that they would never talk about politics.

> *"[I]f you talk about politics there's no way that you can get to an understanding withmost of the Jews. And I'm saying most of them.[...] Like when you're talking about a person coming and exploding in here, ok?[...] You wanna talk about background of that person[...] People in here don't wanna hear about the background, they don't wanna listen. From their point of view this person is a terrorist and that's it, period." (Nadia)*

Some Palestinian parents talk about the difficulties to invite their friends over. Living in East Jerusalem, it would be too dangerous for friends to visit. A Palestinian mother, for example, can not welcome her Jewish friends, because the wall was built behind her house. On top of that the new construction of a checkpoint on the other side of her home forces Palestinian friends to pass the checkpoint to arrive at her home.

The contact built among parents of the school was even stronger some years ago, a mother remembers. In the beginning, when parents were still more committed to the school, they met more often in private and discussed school issues. In the class of her daughter, which is one of the founding classes, the relationship among parents is still very strong. But for her, the school in general seems to have become anonymous to some degree. This observation is confirmed by another founding parent of the school, but also by a mother of a child in a lower class who does not want to be part of the community the school offers her. She does not see herself in a community of the school.

> *"We're sending our kids there, we take them back home, that's it." (Liat)*

Even though some Jewish parents would want to see the school promoting the contact among parents, a Jewish mother argues that the school cannot offer a community. It can facilitate it, but the basic idea and effort has to come from the parents themselves.

This chapter provides the information that for Palestinians it seems much easier to get in touch with Jewish people than the other way around. While all Palestinians state, that they have relationships with Jews, many of them friendships, only a few Jews mention friendships with Palestinians. For some parents, the structural setting of Israel seems to prevent meetings at eye level. Housing and divided living areas are tremendous problems when it comes to close contact among parents as well as students.

Higher education and work were named as environments where relationships among the groups develop. Therefore, the school is a real alternative for making friends to the other side and has succeeded in building a community among the parents. Contact is built through children or common activities. Aside from that, the school helps to break the hierarchy among Israeli citizens, as in the school the Palestinian parents are not the minority, don't earn less than Jewish parents and have similar professional careers.

Palestinian parents mention that they cannot get into political discussions with their Jewish friends. This is a relevant statement. The school tries to overcome this exact problem. The students learn in this school to have arguments over political matters, tolerate the others person's opinion and still be friends. Hopefully they will not have to avoid some subjects as their parents do.

6.4.2   Perception of representation of the parents in school

The question about whether the population inside the school is representative for the group outside of the school is not answered consistently. Some parents agree that the parents in school do not represent the society outside school while one parent does not agree. Besides their ideological mindset, they consider the parenthood of the school in general rather "left wing", "more committed" or "open minded".

> "*I think it represents a very small fraction of the world outside. I think it's a// the kind of people who send their kids to this kind of school are// it narrows down the groups on both sides. In some ways, I keep explaining this to people, that it feels like you're going outside your comfort zone, socially, but in some ways it is more heterogeneous// ah homogeneous than it would be if we send our kid to a regular public school*" (Lea)

A father wishes that also more religious parents would attend the school. The scout in school is very homogeneous in terms of their open minded opinions. In his opin-

ion, if the school would really want to make a difference, it should not only attract the open minded people. Other parents note that many Palestinian families in school come from the north and are therefore more tolerant, open minded and educated than the Palestinians from Jerusalem. One mother believes that the Palestinian parents are a mix of families who have moved from the north and people who live in the neighborhood of the school.

> *"[F]rom the Palestinians you get both, you get educated people, who have moved to Jerusalem, but you get also people from Beit Safafa, who simply live nearby. And those would not necessarily be as educated as Palestinians who came from Nazareth and so on. It is heterogeneous." (Sarit)*

It is noteworthy, that the Palestinian group in this school is considered to not incorporate much of its Palestinianess into the Hand in Hand school. According to a Jewish father, the Palestinians in school are very assimilated to the Jewish environment and it lacks a strong Palestinian spirit in school. The Palestinian parents, according to him, want to study in a Jewish framework with all the advantages inherent, including being among the decision makers and being able to influence the system. The power of decision making given to the Palestinians in the Hand in Hand school has the effect, one Jewish mother explains, that Palestinian parents there do not feel like second best citizens. To her, the main difference between the Palestinians inside and outside of school is that they are not afraid of expressing their opinion.

> *"I see at school a lot of people that they have an opinion and they know how to explain it, and they know how to, ah, ah, how to-to create, ah, dialogue, and around I see people, that are, ahm, being afraid to-to do so, or, ah, feel like second best citizens." (Hannah)*

Another Jewish parent describes the school as "upside down". He refers to the income of Palestinian parents that is higher than the income of the Jewish parents in school, as well as the demand of Palestinians to tighten up the curriculum. On the Palestinian side only one mother distinguishes the Palestinian parents in school from the Jewish ones. She assumes, that Jewish parents are more politically motivated to attend the school than the Palestinian ones. She explains, that for Jews more school alternatives exist, which requires a stronger ideological commitment to take up with the Hand in Hand school.

According to the answers of the interviews presented in this section, the Palestinian families in school are considered integrated into the Jewish society. Some of the interviewees draw this conclusion from the background of many families in the northern part of Israel. Here the parents reproduce a common stereotype, stating that Palestinians from the north are more tolerant and open minded than Palestinians from Jerusalem. The question arises, as to whether the school should not focus on these "more difficult" cases in the direct neighborhood.

In combination with the chapter 'identity and educational excellence' some arguments double. The Palestinians are a minority and know about it. The Palestinian parents want their children to succeed in the Israeli society and know that they need extra effort for that, according to some parents. The school provides a setting, where they don't feel like a minority and therefore express their opinions freely.

6.4.3   Expectations about the contact in school

On both sides parents express the expectation that they want their children to be open to the other group. Some parents also express a limit to this open-mindedness, though. On the Palestinian side, a mother mentions, that the children should stay a bit traditional so that she can protect them. She wants to keep control over them.

> " '[B]ut my Jewish friends, you know, her parents let her go at night.' So, I don't want// I don't know, this is I don't want. I want them to be also a little bit traditional, not a lot but a little bit so I can protect them, cause it gives you more control when you know." (Manal)

A Jewish parent wishes the same. His daughter should be open minded, but not too much. He describes himself as traditional and would like his daughter to be such as well. Another Jewish mother explains that contact is okay as long as the child does not start to practice Ramadan. She would want him to stay Jewish. A Palestinian parent has a very different idea about the impact of contact in the school. He explains that he would want the children to not forget the unjust situation while living peacefully together.

> "[T]o try to make peace with-with the others, but in the same time, not to forget their rights and to get their rights." (Rami)

Parents also wish, that they want their children to grow up together and not get accustomed to the widespread negative perspective of the other group. Some parents on the Jewish side expect that, as a result of the contact, prejudices will reduce and the children will get a deeper understanding of the culture of the others, as well as language skills. A mother has the image of the school as an institution that does not teach the children what to think about the other group but rather helps to ignore the existence of these categories.

> "*[I]t's about getting to know one another and it's not even to know one another cause it's, you know, at the age children don't think of, in terms of other. We're all kids and we play together and these are my friends and this is how, this is what we do. It's-it's sort of a given. And that's exactly what we were looking for"* (Sara)

Parents want their children to become open-minded, even though, for some parents, there is a limit to that. Some can name this limit, like not taking up Islamic holidays and ceremonies, others can't. Fear, attached to strong contact, came up on both sides. For a Palestinian parent it is essential that the Palestinian children would not forget what has happened historically and politically, while they are becoming friends with Jewish children. One the Jewish side, parents want to reduce prejudices. An interesting aspect is the comment by a mother stating, that she does not want her child to learn the widespread stereotypes about the other group.

6.4.4 Impact on children

6.4.4.1 The school's impact on friendships

The school's goal to strengthen contact among students has not completely succeeded, when asking parents. Some parents are very happy about their child's contacts. In school they practice how to build friendships and learn soft skills like handling conflicts, which for some parents is part of the reason why their child succeeds in building stable relationships. Some parents argue that the children make good friends in school, on both sides, without referring to the backgrounds.

> "*She didn't say I love my Arab friends or Jewish friends, she said "I love my friends". And, ah, all my kids do."*(Rami)

Others are deeply disappointed, because there is little or no contact with the other group. Jewish mother observed a tremendous change in the way her child would

deal with friendships. In the first years at school, her child would not know who is Jewish and who is not and would not be interested in that question either. But over the years she became well aware of the differences of the groups and started to distinguish.

> *"At first we were asking// we would ask: 'Is she Jewish, is she Arabic?' and she said: 'I don't know.' And we said, well we won't ask any more, because it shows that, ah, it's important, while it isn't, it's not important at all for a kid that is six years old. Now she knows exactly and she// under, she knows that it's important, or she thinks that it's important, which is a change I think, she grew up, she understand, she reads news, she reads the newspaper, so she knows it's important if you're an Arabic or a Jew." (Liat)*

This phenomenon of getting aware of differences and based on that, treating Palestinians and Jewish students differently seems to be a widespread phenomenon. Jewish parents interviewed notice that the older children get, the closer their children grow with other Jewish children or that the number of friends is no longer balanced.

> *"I can't put a finger on it. But I can see, that the way she, when she meets with them [Palestinian friends] even, it's different, it's not as intimate as it is with her Jewish friends." (Liat)*

This goes along with the statement of a mother observing that there is no constant interaction in the class of her daughter among Jews and Palestinians. She notices that in previous classes it wasn't as divided as it is lately. Another mother who notices that her daughter has few friendships in class traces this back to the constellation of the class of her daughter. She demonstrates by a calculation that if twenty children are in one class, half boys, half girls and half Jews and half non-Jews, this means, that her daughter has little chance of finding good friends.

> *"So it's means that my daughter's only four friends in the class and naturally she is not a friend of all the girls in the class, so it means that she has between two and three friends in the class." (Aviva- wife of Levi)*

For her as well as for others, it is not astonishing that her daughter has less contact with Palestinians. In accordance with others, she believes that it's normal to be friends with people who have a similar background. To speak the same language, to have the same rules of behavior and so on are some of the connecting aspects among children of the same group, according to parents. Unfortunately the gender division which can be noticed in certain grades adds on to the national division in

class and leads to even less social contact in class for some students. One mother wonders if the separation in her daughter's class in national and gender categories is coincidental or if this is a general problem of the school's system. If the separation in classes is something systematic, the school should change something about it in order to ensure a more pleasant childhood for the children.

In higher grades, due to the low number of Jewish students in class, some Jewish parents note that their children have more Palestinian friends than before. In one case, the interviewee's child is the only Jewish male in class. For another Jewish mother, whose child is in a similar position of being in a strong minority of Jewish students in class, this is a problem because she does not want her child to be in such a position. Her son started looking for other Jewish students in parallel classes because he has little contact in his own class.

For the Palestinian side, parents also express their wish to have more Jewish students in class, but not as urgently as Jewish parents. One parent mentions that, during the first years, her child would have had more contact with other Palestinian people, whereas lately, it became more balanced.

> "[A]t the beginning when they come, they connect more to the Arabic children, you know, Arabic speaking children, maybe because it's there." (Manal)

Another Palestinian mother explains that the family moved to a mixed neighborhood from a Jewish one because their children had too many Jewish friends. She wanted them to be more in contact with Palestinian children as well.

The low amount of contact after school is problematic for the Palestinian as well as Jewish parents. One major factor is the distance that the children have to overcome to visit each other. The school is not a neighborhood-school, students come from all over Jerusalem. A father's explanation is that they do not visit each other on a regular base because of the effort required. Another obstacle to overcome is listed by a Jewish mother admitting that she would have to, herself, overcome picking up her child in a Palestinian neighborhood.

> "I wasn't sure about myself, about how I would feel if I had to drive into a Palestinian neighborhood to pick up my child from a play date. It hasn't happened. I mean I think I would find a// I would figure out how to do it." (Lea)

For some students social isolation is a tremendous problem which is why parents consider taking out their children.

> *"I must say that as the years went by he was rather isolated socially, because we lived far from school, none of the children from school lived nearby, he didn't strike many friendships, so I was a bit sorry for him for having such a childhood" (Sarit)*

One Jewish mother found a turning point in her daughter's lack of contact. She was concerned about the social life of her daughter, but now her daughter is organized in a youth movement and connects to children who are older and younger than her. Others observe, that soccer is a connecting game which helps especially the boys to make friends inside and outside of class.

A Palestinian father who is pleased by the quantity and quality of his daughter's friendships explains that for him this is connected to the deep relationships of the parents. If parents trust each other, chances are high to allow their children to have contact with this family. A Jewish mother understands, at the end of the interview, how the contact of herself with Palestinians could be linked to the contact behavior of her daughter. She claims that she cannot expect her daughter to have Palestinian friends if she does not have close contact to the other side herself.

> *"I told you, oh my daughter doesn't have Arab girl friend and this is problem and then you ask do you have Arab friends and we tell you no, we don't have, so how do you want your daughter to have friends, Arab friends, if you don't have Arab friends? So, this, I think is one of the problems. It's not only school. It's the whole, it should be changed in all society." (Aviva-wife of Levi)*

In general this chapter points out two aspects of friendships of the children in school. The first one is contact among students outside of school, the other aspect is the change of perception toward the other group coming up in higher grades and the resulting lack of contact to members of the other group. Especially the contact after school worries some parents, because they see their children in social isolation. This, for some parents, is reason to withdraw their children from school.

Jewish parents point out that their children have more intimate friendships with other Jewish children. Jewish parents of students in the higher grades describe different handling of their children with the status of minority in class. Either the children look for other Jews outside of school or in parallel classes or they get stronger friendships with Palestinian classmates. On the Palestinian side, parents complain much less on the contact situation. None of the parents names a problem of their children not having Jewish friends.

An interesting aspect in this chapter is the comment by a Jewish mother stating, that she would feel uncomfortable picking up her children in an Arab neighbor-

hood. The entering of Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem is a common fear by Jews. This mother explains in a different context, that she is worried about getting into "trouble catching up with her children's lives". This is an aspect worth further investigation: In which situations do the children of Hand in Hand challenge their parents by their open minded point of view and where is the limit for parents?

The fact that some Palestinian parents want their children to have more contact with Palestinian children and for that move from an Israeli neighborhood to a mixed neighborhood shows the high amount of integration of the Palestinian parents in the Jewish society.

The contact of parents is connected to the contact of children. In different ways they influence each other. While a parent states that the trust built among parents helps to encourage friendships among the children, a mother understands that if she does not have contact to the other side, she is a deficient role model to her daughter. Parents also state that through the contact of the children the parents get to know each other and some even built close relationships.

6.4.4.2 The school's ideological impact on children

Some parents find exact words for the impacts the school has on their children, or at least ensure that the school has a strong impact on them. Others find it hard to distinguish what comes from school and what comes from their liberal family background or other factors such as the attendance from a very early age on in a bilingual and bi-national setting, for instance the YMCA kindergarten. This kindergarten works closely with Hand in Hand and for one parent, the school even owes its existence to the kindergarten because it was there that the idea of an ongoing bi-national school developed. Finally, parents state that there is no comparison as for how the child would have developed in a different school.

Some parents are convinced that the children have developed a different mindset than in a different school. What is obvious to some parents is the openness of the students to handle subjects like politics, conflict but also discussions on issues like sexuality, which is imparted in school. One mother is sure that her daughter has been taught soft skills like discussing, being tolerant, conflict resolution and so forth. For her, this is the main advantage compared to other schools. Other parents describe a balance that the school is able to create, through imparting knowledge on history and its implications and at the same time establishing friendships

amongst students with different background. Parents also name the outstanding awareness for political happenings.

A Palestinian parent describes closely what other parents confirm in interviews: the children's demand to discuss things. He as well as others trace this attitude back to the school's concept, as the students learn in school to think critically and doubt before accepting. His daughter would not be willing to just take an order or statement without argument. For some parents, as one father observed, this is disturbing.

> *"I've noticed Christina, she'll stand and negotiate everything why this, why not that, I like this side, you don't want me to take this. You know, press this not that, ah, for me no problem, for others, other Arab friends it's a problem" (Fadi)*

For another Palestinian parent who withdrew his children from a school in East-Jerusalem to send them to Hand in Hand, the disparity between the two school systems is immense. For him this becomes visible for example in the way his children's personalities developed. They are less introvert than before. Besides their knowledge of Hebrew enlarged immediately and they get taught different content through different methods.

A mother describes the impact the school has on her child by telling a story. Her main expectation about the school was the reduction of prejudices toward Palestinians. She detects that this took place when comparing to other children the age of her daughter.

> *"[W]e went with friends to a kind of a picnic a few years ago and there was an, ah, an Arab shepherd who went through and a girl her age was really afraid, was really frightened because he's an aravi, he's an Arab, but you know, nearly cried, just because, just he passed through you know, and I saw that my daughter does not understand what-what, I mean, (?) I assume that's, there is a different atmosphere, thanks to the school." (Estephania)*

Other Jewish parents observed as well that their children's attitude toward Palestinians changed. This has two reasons. The first one is the Palestinian narrative taught in the school, including the usage of the Arabic language. For one father, the Palestinian narrative is even too strong. He thinks that his daughter feels sorry for what the Jews have done to the Palestinians, for example in the war of '48, when Israel was founded. According to him, it was terrible that this war took place, but still she should appreciate that she was on the winning side. He explains that he has to counterbalance his daughter's sympathy with the Palestinians because for him it

is too strong. Still, he prefers this over a regular Jewish school where he would have to balance racist thoughts toward the Palestinians.

> *"To balance racism is more difficult than to balance empathy." (Ilan)*

The second reason is the contact among the children. According to some parents the Palestinians in school present a different picture than the one you confront outside of school. So the picture of Palestinians changed. One mother tells a nice story portraying the skills of her daughter who attends sixth grade to differentiate and consider a variety of perspectives. Even though her father is a soldier, she understands that soldiers can be seen as positive or not, depending which side you're on.

> *"[W]e opened the TV and there was soldiers there and my-my middle son said: "I don't understand, soldiers are they good or are they bad?", it was Israeli soldiers. He-he's never seen soldiers as a group, you know. He's seen my husband, but he hasn't seen, so Shemrit told him, my daughter, she told him: 'Yoan it depends on whose side you're on. For us they're good, for the Lebanon people they're bad.' And I thought wow" (Liat)*

A Jewish mother illustrates difficult situations her son got involved in because he was accompanied by a Palestinian girl. The girl who was with him got into an expanded security check at Ben Gurion Airport. She is worried that her son might be feel as member of a minority, get into an uncomfortable position and therefore feel uncomfortable in this country.

Some non-Palestinian parents point out that because of the close contact with Palestinians their children would never talk about the Palestinians in terms of others because they would not refer to the Palestinians as a group. And they would never be able to think of them in terms of "Arab terrorists", even though they hear and know about suicide bombings.

> *"I don't know how it would be if they were in a regular Israeli school, but I think it would be much harder for them to-to relate to the Palestinians as people as individuals, rather than as the enemy. And I don't think they relate in any way to the Palestinian as the enemy." (Stefan)*

But there are also other experiences about the perception of the other group in school. A Jewish mother believes that the school is responsible for even stronger stereotypes her daughter gained about the Palestinians, even though she recognized that the school assures the daughter to see a variety of behaviors by Palestinians.

Still, the daughter learned through school that there are distinctions, and sometimes they are presented in a more radical way than in a regular school, according to this mother.

> *"[F]or example we say, the Arabs are also people and we should be equal to them, but if my daughter comes and say, mother, the Arabs children make a lot of noise at school. It's some// it's a (resival?) if the Arabs are the noisy and the Jews are the good, if you close their eyes, that what happen [...] the fact that she is in a divided school sometimes make sharper the differences." (Aviva-wife of Levi)*

An American father observes his son behaving negatively toward his sisters sometimes. He wonders if he has learned that in school or if this is the result of being the only boy besides two sisters. Even though he knows that this is a problem in some classes in school, he wouldn't blame the school for his son's attitude.

This chapter presents vividly, that even though all the students were exposed to extensive contact, the outcome is very different. While some parents realize that their children's picture of the other side, especially on the Jewish side toward the Palestinians, developed into a positive attitude, one mother mentions that she has the impression that the negative stereotypes of her daughter were amplified.

For many other parents the school succeeds in imparting different viewpoints. This does not only include the perception of the other narrative. Parents state that children learn soft skills, which go far beyond political matters. The children learned skills in communication, openness toward themes like sexuality and so on. This shows that the school's concept of peace education has an effect on a broad scale.

6.4.5 Worries about the impact of school in the future

The question whether the children might pay a price in the future for having attended the school or if parents have any fears or doubts about the future in consideration of the impact the school has on their children, is partly answered differently by parents of different groups. A specific fear of parents belonging to the majority in society is that their children might not fit into the mainstream. A Jewish father stresses that it would depend on the societal circles his daughter will move in. She might become a minority.

Another fear is typical for parents who belong to neither side. A father with an Is-raeli residency, thinks that it will be hard for his children to decide whether or not they want to fulfill the military service. This decision making process might have been easier, having grown up mainly on one side.

> *"[W]here the conflict is gonna come up for them is when they decide whether or not to serve in the army. I think that's gonna be not such an easy decision for them and that's a price" (Stefan)*

A major group specific worry for the Palestinians is the setting inside of school versus the reality outside. They wonder how their children will deal with the dis-crimination they might face in the future.

> *"[T]hey grew up in balance, equality, how they are gonna deal with the society, that in the future if I wanna study somewhere I will require to fill papers if I served in the army or not? Which means, I am Jewish or not? How they are gonna feel when they will be stopped at the airport because their names are not Jewish? That gonna hurt them very very much." (Rami)*

This is a widespread opinion among the Palestinians interviewed, who have been quoted in different contexts before. For this it will not be closely described here.

A common concern on both sides is the the upcoming army. Some parents wonder how the school will deal with this subject. They're also interested in knowing how this influences the friendships of their children. Some of them even ask themselves if the friendships are strong enough to overcome the army.

> *"When they come to tenth grade, Jewish, you know, ah, they would start preparing them for the army. What they would tell them about Arabs, they got Arab friends from this land, you know. What are they going to tell them, I don't know. And, ah, are they going to keep friendship with my kids, no. I don't know. I'm very sure that my kids would keep friendship with them, what are they going to learn in the army, I don't know. That's a very big question." (Fadi)*

A Palestinian father talks metaphorically about a situation at the checkpoint and questions how much, in such a situation, the fact that they grew up in balance still has an impact on them.

> *"So, they meet at the checkpoint, one carrying a gun and the other one does not have a gun. How they are gonna feel?" (Rami)*

A Jewish mother describes the situation at a checkpoint as a common one in which Palestinians meet Israeli soldiers fulfilling their military service. For her, this is a meeting between suspected terrorists and inhumane soldiers and that disturbs the perception of the other group they have learned at school. Another mother wonders how the school will approach this issue. She thinks that the school, which just opened up for Junior High, has to help the students to deal with the complex situation they're living in including friendships.

> *"I wouldn't worry then about the friendship, I would worry about helping them deal with the complexity of forming friendships in this reality." (Lea)*

The future brings up worries and fears for the parents considering the impact the school has on their children. On the Jewish side, some parents could imagine that their children might be marginalized in the Jewish society. The Palestinian parents are mainly worried about the discrepancy of the climate inside school, in comparison with the reality outside of school. This might bring a surprising moment for the children.

A worrying factor on both sides is the army. Knowing that the military service provides an opposite agenda than the school, parents wonder what effect this might have on the children and their friendships. The army, as a very present institution in Israeli life, already concerns the parents as early as having children in primary school.

6.4.6   Final conclusions in consideration of academic studies

It is stated, in a study by Saguy, Dovidio and Pratto (2008), that the contact, in a setting of a power hierarchy, is more effective for the members of the majority. They conclude this because minority members have contact with members of the majority on a more regular basis besides the set up encounter. Considering the contact Palestinians in the school have with Jewish people this thesis is verified. Some of them live in Jewish neighborhoods, they work in Jewish settings and so forth. Also their children have far more contact with the Jewish side than, the other way around.

Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) found that the perception of Jewish Israelis toward the Palestinians and Arabs in general is negative and changes with the political situation of the country. The Second *intifada* for example led toward a more nega-

tive attitude of Palestinians in the the Jewish Israeli society. They also found that religious people tend to have a more negative attitude to Palestinians than secular Jews and that there is a correlation between the educational background and the attitude. The higher the educational background, the more positive the attitudes toward Palestinians tend to be. Clearly, the background of the interviewees plays a central role. Whereas Jewish Israelis with an European or 'Western' background have a more positive opinion, Jews with African or Asian background hold more resentments (see Bar-Tal, Teichman 2005). Transferring these results to the interviews presented in this paper, this could be the reason why only a certain group of Jewish parents, mainly with *Ashkenasi* background, were addressed. In this context, the demand of a parent to focus more on parents and students who do not arise from a liberal background gets a different dimension. This comment also reflects the criticism of the contact hypothesis, namely that the theory decisively concentrates on participants willing to enter a contact situation. The question of how to introduce a concept for less motivated participants remains.

6.5   Excursion – The impact of the school on its surrounding

The school's concept does not only target students and the staff but also the larger environment. This chapter summarizes how parents see the impact of the school on the homes and the society in general.

6.5.1   Impact on homes

Parents were asked if they think the school has an impact on their homes. Similar to the question of the impact of the school on the children, parents had difficulties to answer. This is partly drawn back to the little comparison they have to the development of their children in other schools. But parents also claim, that the liberal homes have strong impacts on the children and that they find it difficult to tell what comes from school and what from home. Other parents answer the question by exchanging the direction of the impacts. For one mother the school doesn't have an influence on the homes, but the liberal attitude of the parents is the reason for as why they send their children to this school.

> *"I don't feel it, because [...] our house is very open to these ideas. So, I don't think that the fact, that she goes to this school influence our house. [...] It's the opposite, the fact that our house is like what it is, influence the children to go there"* (Aviva)

A mother stresses the point that the younger siblings of the student in Hand in Hand are little frightened about Arabs. She is not able to distinguish if it's due to the attitude of her and her husband or because of the influence of their oldest daughter. Either way, the fact that the older sister brings a certain world view back home has a strong impact on the younger siblings. Also other parents experience a change of attitude, like a reduction of fear concerning members of the other group by younger siblings, since elder ones learn in the Hand in Hand school. Parents also speak about their own changed attitudes that were formed through the contact with the school. A father declares that through the engagement in school and the child's world view, he became more optimistic. A mother points out that being part of a community, that is working toward co-existence and changing the society in a way she likes it, has a positive impact on her. Another mother adds that being part of this project makes her proud. Parents tell that they learn new things through their children, for example about feasts of other groups or at least are more aware and better informed about them. A Jewish mother is glad to practice Arabic with her son. Different parents explain that Arabic is more present at home through literature, material of the children spread in the house and mainly through friends who visit. An interesting aspect, opposite to the statement just named is mentioned by a Jewish mother. She explains that through school she became aware of problems in this country. Through her son, she got to experience grievances of the democratic system of Israel that she has only heard of by media.

> *"I feel many problems in our country, from, ah, from the// not from newspaper, not from television, from usual day"* (Miri)

Through contact in school and through students, the school had an indirect impact on the parents, as some parents explain. Some of them speak about their direct contact with the school and other parents and students while others emphasize their children's friendships, and their influence on the homes. Some parents found friends on the other side through school, even Jewish parents, who have not had any contact with Palestinians at all. Others stress the high variety of the friendships of their children, and on the Jewish side, the amplified frequency of Palestinians visiting their homes.

"I'm almost certain that it would have been much more difficult for us on a regular basis to have Arab kids at, in home that we now do. So yes, but positively, I mean positively, I'm happy for that." (Stefan)

Parents who have not been long attached to this school think that chances are very high to get in touch with people and are very pleased about this. One parent replies to this question by referring to her expectations. She assumes that the school would have had an impact on his home if her child had gotten Palestinian friends, which has not yet taken place. Another parent replies to this question by alluding his satisfaction that the child would go 'the right direction'.

Other parents answer this question very pragmatically. A few parents bring up that through the attendance of the eldest child in family in this school the decision of whether or not to send the younger ones to the same school is almost already decided. So the school had an impact on the school career on the younger children by sending the eldest one there. Besides the fact that they like the school, the fact that the school celebrates holidays of different religions and through that has different days off than a regular school makes it easier to organize if the younger siblings join in the same school.

"For family reasons, it makes sense to send all the children to this school because they have different schedules. "they observe all three religions holidays, so having schools – children in different schools in different times, but also I just felt that the school was something maybe we wanted to be part of." (Stefan)

Others state that it is too early to conclude what impact the school has on the homes because the children are still too young. But if the children get older and will tell more when they get home after school, parrents assume, it will have a stronger impact on their homes.

This chapter shows how differently parents get influenced by their children's attendance of the school. Whereas some learn about different feasts, languages and materials, others get aware of "problems in the country". The mother who answered with this statement is the same mother who talked about the problems her son got into at Ben Gurion Airport because he was with a Palestinian friend.

In general, parents stress that contact amongst students and amongst parents is one of the strongest impacts on the homes. These built acquaintances and friendships result in a wider variety of languages, topics of conversation, besides the stronger presence of otherness in the house through school. Parents describe this openness as very positive and enriching.

Some parents find it convincing to send all children to this school if the eldest child attends it for practical reasons like holidays. This could be important information for the school. If more than one child attends Hand in Hand, the households might be more strongly influenced by the students. Jewish children could include Arabic more easily into their everyday life even if parents don't speak Arabic and the school could also consider multi-class projects to have siblings join common projects.

6.5.2   Impact on society

The impact this school has on society is seen as rather limited by the parents. While some would say that there is no impact at all, others see it as limited and even others have trust in their children and the future.

One mother is sure, that the existence is having an impact on the society, at least people who get in touch with it in a direct or indirect way. She gives the example of two teachers from school who talk on the bus, one Jewish and one Palestinian. They make plans on common activities. For her, the passengers of the bus get influenced by this conversation by the rather unusual normalcy of it. So she hopes that the school can change some mindsets here and there but does not see a stronger impact so far. Others see the pure existence of the school as a success. Parents see its character as a demonstration, a symbol of togetherness that has gained international support and recognition. One mother figures that the international prestige of the school is much stronger than the actual impact on Israel.

> *"[F]or the image of Israeli society it does much, but for Israelis society in practice it does very little." (Sarit)*

She as well as others think that unfortunately neither the Israeli nor the Palestinian society is open for the impact it could have on either society.

> *"Israeli society is rather resistant to such impact." (Sarit)*

Even though the societies are not as influenced as they wish, she as well as others see it as a success that it is run under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has to concern itself with this school because it is fully recognized and needs extra attention. Just the fact, that this option with an enlarged curriculum is registered, challenges the system.

"[T]he Jerusalem Education Authority and the Ministry of Education gave permission to open this school, like this school, give money to this school, for me this by itself is important. But unless there will be much more schools, so it's not//its impact is very marginal, if it all." (Dina)

Parents think that the impact of the Hand in Hand school would be bigger, if more people knew about it, as stated by the same mother.

"[A]s long it's in one, two, three schools, I think the impact will be very marginal. If there will be much more schools like this, yes" (Dina)

Some parents can name a positive impact on their close environment, proving that the school has an impact beyond families and staff directly engaged in school. A mother mentions that through the long commitment in school the closer surrounding of her changed. The reactions of friends and family who were rather skeptical when they first heard about the school changed toward more positive comments. One Palestinian mother can name a clear prove for that. In her village more and more parents decide to send their children to Hand in Hand, since her son goes there.

"[A]t the beginning it was just my son from the village and now it's eleven pupils from the village." (Ameera)

Some parents trust in the future and the skilled children who will then be leaders, and change society. Even though they don't see a strong influence these times, they hope for the next generation being educated in school.

"I think it's raising a generation of children, that have grown up in a mindset of, ahm, we can live together, you know, we can, we don't have to fight all the time, we can work through our problems [...] they are the next generation of leaders in this country and if we can give them that mindset, I think it will be [...] something very good to have in society, in the leadership of tomorrow" (Marie)

A parent points out, that the impact of the school would be bigger if more Jewish children would stay.

In this part, one can see, that parents sending their children to the Hand in Hand school have a wide range of understanding on how much the school influenced the Israeli and Palestinians society. While some parents can list first results in their

close environment, others don't see results yet. One parent's assumption that the international recognition of the school is stronger than the local image is important to keep in mind. The school just got a new building by the European Union and two parents name the visit by Laura Bush, the wife of former US president George W. Bush, as an example. However, some parents find it very important to concentrate on the close environment rather than international support.

Quite a few parents have developed trust in the future and the children's influence on the country. To evaluate the impact the school has on the Israeli society, it might be very useful to conduct a research in the future finding out what the children will have done with their education and how much and in which contexts they use their skills learned in the Hand in Hand school.

7   Conclusion

"[I]n the middle of the madness there is so much normalcy" (Lea)

Bekerman and others (for example Amara, Mor-Sommerfeld) already evaluated the Hand in Hand school as well as other peace programs in accordance to certain aspects. Still, aside from an analysis on the parents' choice of school and their perceptions of multiculturalism and peace education (Bekerman, Tatar 2009), there has not yet been a study that presents the parents' opinions in a peace education setting to the extent it is done here. Therefore, this paper gives a first insight in subjects like fears and doubts about the future of the children.

Issues such as bilingualism have been the content of many studies before and therefore the results can be compared. The interviews fit into a wider context of results on this school as well as other bilingual schools or other peace education programs. It is, for example, a common problem to keep true bilingualism in bilingual settings (see Escamilla 1994). A previous study by Bekerman (2005b), where bilingualism was the subject, lists similar shortcomings as identified here. After the first three years of the school's existence, for example, the insufficient knowledge of Arabic by most of the Jewish teachers was already a problem.

Some of the answers provided by parents reflect an academic discourse and verify or falsify a theory like the contact hypothesis. Of more value, though, are the thoughts of parents which cannot be found in academic papers. The question of the impact the school has on the homes of the children is an example for that. Since parents are responsible for the enrollment of the students, this study provides important information for further consideration for the Hand in Hand school as well as for other peace education schools. It helps to understand certain parent specific aspects like their worries about friendships made at school.

Referring to the three categories used to present the results, bilingualism, identity and contact, the following can be said:

Concerning bilingualism, the dissatisfaction stated mainly by Jewish parents in this paper is based on three major factors: The high expectations by parents, the school's concept, and the impacts of the political situation on the school. The school states on its official homepage:

> By the end of first grade, pupils have mastered both the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets and are reading at a first grade level on a par with the Israeli national average. Ultimately, pupils become completely proficient at speaking, reading, and writing both languages.

The question arises why parents have such high expectations. What does the school tell the parent when they enroll their children? As some parents state, reducing the expectations of the parents would help to prevent disappointment. Aside from that, the aim of the school to use bilingualism as a tool for political change should be more emphasized in the presentation of the school to avoid expectations by parents which can not be fulfilled.

The second factor is the concept of the school that still does not succeed in creating bilingual students even though very specific measurements have been installed. In the third year of the program, according to Bekerman (2005b) the school tried to counterbalance the predominance of Hebrew outside of school through a dominance of Arabic within school. However, this concept failed. According to the parents interviewed, the school still needs to find an effective approach. Therefore some parents welcome the new concept of separating the classes in Hebrew native speakers and Arabic native speakers for language classes.

As opposed to the internal factors, the third factor is an external one and therefore difficult to influence. The political situation outside of school impacts on the happening in school, in this case, the willingness of the students to learn and practice Arabic. Amin Khalf, a co-director of Hand in Hand explains:

> There is a clash between reality and the Hand in Hand vision. We must accept many intermediate solutions to keep the schools open. The schools are, are not bilingual at the same time. They are bilingual from a perspective of the vision, but we accept middle solutions because of the outside world. (Amara 2005, quoted by Amara et al. 2009, 28)

Even though Amara, Azaiza, Hertz-Lazarowitz and Mor-Sommerfeld (2009) point out that the parents have to agree to the philosophy of the school, which includes democracy as a cross-sectional task, some parents argue that they want the school to be as apolitical as possible. They describe their focus on optimal classroom settings and special offers for their children with special needs. True commitment to co-existence is lacking by some parents interviewed.

When it comes to identity matters some parents claim correctly that the school does not provide definitions for the terms 'Jews' or 'Palestinians'. So for some parents the

question arises which identities does the school aim to strengthen. Generally, the school concentrates on two main groups, the Palestinians and the Jews, in terms of national narratives; and Jews, Muslims and Christians in terms of religion. The school should consider the parent's recommendation for a clearer definition of the different groups and include it in its concept. Another issue raised by parents is the question of identity for children who don't belong to either of these groups or children of mixed couples. This also applies to the minorities of the dominant groups in school like Christian Palestinians, Druze Israelis or Christian Israelis. For them, it becomes an obstacle to decide which side they belong to, for example during certain ceremonies. Children of mixed couples need special attention.

As stated on the homepage of Hand in Hand, the contact among groups goes beyond the stakeholders of the school.

> The education at a Hand in Hand school extends well beyond the walls of the classroom – it is a family and community venture. School steering committees include representatives from local volunteer organizations and municipal governments assuring a constant flow of ideas and activity from the school to the wider community and vice versa.

While some parents consider this goal achieved, others feel that the school mainly focuses on its international image rather than concentrating on the direct surroundings of the school. The school should be aware of the fact that not all parents would want to be part of a school community.

By now, the school attracts a certain parenthood who agrees on the philosophy of the school but some parents choose this school for educational rather than political reasons. This has disadvantages and advantages. Having fewer parents who truly promote co-existence, the political ideal of the school might get lost. But the fact that the school becomes a regular school, a 'normative' one, has also advantages because it might attract a new target group. The school would then have an impact on milieus which so far have been left out like religious families.

To conclude, the long term effects and impacts the school has on its students, stakeholders and the Israeli society can only be measured when the students finish school and take responsibilities in their country. For now, it can only be said that the survival of the two Hand in Hand schools during the *intifada* and the fact that more schools opened afterwards constitutes a success story. The interviews show that the Hand in Hand does have an influence on the reality of the families and the

surroundings of the families involved. It presents a counterbalance to the violent political reality in the Middle East. It starts with the youngest generation and helps to avoid thinking in categories of Palestinians and Jews. As parents state, the school does not help to lose these categories, but to not develop them. Now that students of the first generation have entered Junior High School, it would be a good next step to address the students themselves in the evaluation of the school. In a setting where critical thinking is promoted, very enriching results can be expected which illustrate the longterm effects of the Hand in Hand schools.

[i] According to Stephan, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Zelniker and Stephan (2004) coexistence is the term used to describe the peaceful existence of two people -Jews and Arab-Palestinians-, side by side

[ii] Narratives are interpretations of experiences and a tool for constructing realities (Kacowicz 2005); Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) call it collective memory

[iii] These numbers include residents of the internationally declared illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

[iv] For further and more detailed information on the foundation of the state of Israel see Bergman (2002)

[vv] Israel does not have a constitution, that separates the state and the religion and for that refers to the *halacha*, the Jewish law in many contexts as for defining who is Jewish in affairs of immigration. The intensive connection to religion is a major aspect in defining Jewish identity, because it puts the common cultural heritage in perspective (Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999).

[vi] With the murdering of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an religious Jew in 1995 the tension among religious and secular Jews climaxed (Wolff-Johntofsohn 1999).

[vii] According to Wolff-Jontofsohn (1999) the anti-Arabic attitude also results out of the self-defined objective to keep Israel Jewish. Inevitably, a racial consciousness develops toward the non-Jewish citizens. So the fact that they are not Jewish is as significant as the fact, that they belong to the Arab people.

[viii] The First and Second *intifada* impacted on the identity of Palestinians living in Israel. The problem is they don't fully belong to the Israeli society nor the Palestinian one in the occupied territories.

[ix] In the 1960s identity issues became a matter of concern for many people all over the world. Political happenings like the independence of many African countries, dynamic migration throughout the world, the growth of civil rights in the United States and so on fueled this debate (García 1997).

[x] The main principals were elaborated by Mor-Sommerfeld (2005) for another Hand in Hand school. However, all Hand in Hand schools hold a similar concept. Since each school considers itself as a learning project, the staff experiments in order to achieve a more elaborated setting for biligualism (Bekerman 2005b).

[xi] In the context of intergroup encounters, members of the same group form an ingroup, whereas in confrontation with another group academics talk about outgroups.

[xii] ASA is part of InWEnt and is mostly financed by the German Ministry of Development and Economic Cooperation (BMZ). Each year, ASA enables 240 young people from Europe to take part in a learning and qualification program dedicated to to development education.

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Internet resources

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Official homepage of Israel Ministry of Foreign affairs (March 6th, 2010):
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+and+Secondary.htm

Israeli Bureau of Statistics (March 6th, 2010):
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Official homepage of ASA (March 6th, 2010):
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Official homepage of Hagar (March 6th, 2010)
http://www.hagar.org.il/

Attachments

Questionnaire for the Interviews with the Parents of the Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem

The parents

To begin with, it would be nice if you could tell us a little bit about yourself, about how/where you grew up, and what is it you do today, things like that.

- Where were you born? What was it like to grow up there and then?
- Could you tell me a little bit more about the way you were raised?
- What about school? Could you describe your own school career for me? What kind of school did you go to, what was it like there? Did you receive any vocational training? Did you go to university?
- And what is it you do today? What is your job, your profession?

How about your religious and cultural background? How would you describe it?

- Was religion important in your family when you were a child?
- And today, is it important to you today?
- Do you think of yourself as a member of a certain religious or cultural group or community?
- How about your relationship with other communities in Israel? Do you know any Jewish/Palestinian Israelis?
- Can you give us some idea about the way you would characterize the Jewish/Palestinian society/culture? And/or Could you tell us something about what are the main differences and similarities you see between the Palestinian and the Jewish culture/society?

And in more political terms, could you explain how you see the political context here in Israel?

- What is your view of the conflict between Arabs/Palestinians and Jews?

- How do you perceive the definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish democratic state? Do you agree the state should be so defined? Would you like it to be otherwise? And if so how?
- How would you prefer to define your self: Jewish, Jewish Israeli, Israeli, Arab, Palestinian, Arab Israeli, Palestinian Israeli, Palestinian living in Israel, etc.

The decision making process

If we turn now to the school, could you tell me first how many children of yours are attending this school? Do you have children in other schools? Why?

If yes. Could you say a little bit more about how you arrived to the decision to send your child/children to the school? How would you describe the way you reached this decision?

- How you did learn about the school? What made you consider sending your child/children there?
- Can you remember at what point in the life of your child/children and of your family the decision was taken?
- Was your decision to send your child/ children to school based on political / cultural / religious / educational reasons?
- Could you describe what you expected from sending your child/children to the school when you took the decision? What were the advantages you hope your child/children will get from attending the school? And did you see there any advantages for you as a parent, too?
- What is it that you knew about the schools that really beought you to decide to send them there?
- And how about any fears or doubts you might have or might have had, could you describe them, too, please?
- When you decided your child/children would attend the bilingual school, what were the reactions you got from other people/family members/friends?
- In terms of fees, do you sometimes feel it is difficult for you to send your child/children at this particular school?

Appreciation of the school

If you think about the school today, how would you say you see it now?
- Could you explain in what way your expectations have been met, or have not been met? Have these expectations changed over time?
- What do you think are the expectations of those (or the school direction/principals) who started the school?
- What do you personally think about these goals? Do you feel their expectations converge with what you want from the school?
- Could you describe how you perceive the school in terms of educational excellence? How would you evaluate the quality of the education your child/children receives/receive at the school? Can you describe how you perceive the teachers?

Information and involvement

Some parents are very much involved in their children's life at school, some are much less so. How would you describe your personal involvement with the school?

- Which side initiates the information transfer the school/teacher or you (the parent)
- When thinking of the school, do you feel you know a lot about what is going on there?
- In what language do you get the information and who do you get it from?
- Could you describe your participation in the school life?
- Do you sometimes visit the school? What is it like when you are going there?
- Are you involved in the school's PTA? Are you a representative?
- Do you think that the Palestinian/Jewish population in the school is representative of the regular population of the grout outside of the school?

The child/children at school as perceived by the parents

Could you describe how you see your child/your children at the school?

- Does/do she/he/they like it there? Does/do she/he/they get along well with the teachers and the other children? Could you give an example of what your child's/children's life is like at school? (or an example of what you believe to be

a good experience your child had in school ? or an example of what you believe to be a bad experience your child had in school ?)

- Does/do she/he/they have friends at school?
- Do you think that the participation of your child in the school has changed the ways in which she talks/thinks about the other group? If yes can you give us some examples?

Could you explain in more detail what kind of relationships you have established at the school?

- Do you have any friends from the Jewish/Arab community?
- What does "being friends" mean, could you maybe give an example?
- Do you sometimes meet with other parents outside school? Do you invite them over to your house; do you go and visit them at their place?

What about your child/children? Could you describe the relationships she/he/they has/have with other kids from school?

- How do you feel about these relationships?
- Do you actively encourage them? Has your child visited children (Palestinian/Jewish) and or slept over at their house? Have Palestinian Jewish children come to visit/sleep over your house?
- Is there anything that worries you about these friendships/relations
- How do feel about the possibility of intermarriage, for example?
- Could you give any more examples maybe of how your children enjoy (or dislike) school friendships or activities ?
- Is there anything you would like your child to learn from the other group's culture/traditions?
- Is there anything you would NOT like your child to learn from the other group's culture/traditions

Ceremonial issues

When you think about the way the school goes about ceremonies, about cultural and historical issues, how do you feel about that? (e.g. Memorial Day and or the *Nakbe*)

- Would you say they are going the right way about it?

- Is there anything you would like to change about the way those issues are dealt with?
- What do you think about the school's explicit goal of strengthening the two communities' group identities?
- Do you think that because your child participates in the bilingual school it is important to strengthen his ethnic identity? (if yes tell us why)
- Has your point of view changed since your child/children attend the school?

Bilingualism

Could you describe, please, how you feel about the bilingual aspect of the school?

- If at all, why is it important to have a bilingual school
- Is it important to you that your child/children learn Hebrew/Arabic? Why?
- To what extent do you think it is important?
- Do you think your child will be successful in learning the two languages?
- Do you think the school should give up on its bilingual policy or change it?

The future

If you think about the future, when your child/children will be leaving school, what do you expect him/her/them to be? In terms of personality, values, capabilities, I mean.

- Do you think they will be different than if they had gone to another school? How and why?
- Why do you make the effort of sending your child/children to this school? In your point of view, what do children gain at this school that an ordinary school could not offer them? Could you give an example, maybe?
- Do you think your children pay any price for going to the bilingual school? If yes, what price you think they pay?
- In what way do you hope the school will have an impact on Israeli society? Did your hopes and expectations in this respect change over time?
- If you could change one (1) thing about the school, as it is right now, what is it you would change?
- If you would have only one thing to keep from the school as is right now what is it you would like to keep?

- Has the participation of your child in the bilingual school influenced in any way your house? If yes how?

Interview 2 – Extract

N: Could you give and example of what you believe to be a good experience your child your children had at school?

I: A good experience?

N: An example of a good experience.

I: There're kind of many small things, every day things, but ah, I don't know something that is kind of symbolic is the, is the-the celebration of the Independence Day. Ahm, and I don't know if it was that important for her, but the teacher told me, she was happy that Yerad, the older daughter, ah demonstrated her// she really looked at her Jewish identity instead of, instead of, it's not instead of, but ah// school is not that simple because you, you know, the Arabs go to have one ceremony, the Jews go to have another ceremony// they do it separately, and, ah, the fact that she was able to-to speak about her proudly of her own iden-identity as a Jew is something which is important for <u>me</u>, because there is a question of identities there, in this bi-bilingual, there is a question of where does your identity go? Does it interfere with a different identity, does it collide with a separate identity? Or is it kept? Does it get stronger? Or weaker? What else? I was happy, that she. But that was me. I don't know if it's (?) for her to have.

N: So you know one goal of the school is to strengthen the two communities' group identities. So you think that is right?

I: Yeah, yeah. (..)

N: Do you think that it's because your child participates in a bilingual school, that it's important to strengthen identity or just in general?

I: That it is important to strengthen identity?

N: Yeah.

I: I think, I think this question is raised more sharply, more (.) because you go to this school and I think, I think it is an important question for everybody. People who go to this school or don't but when you go to a kind of a regular state, ah, Jewish school, so you-you can not really kind of define your identity in relation to a different one, because you really don't have the opportunity to see, to imagine, to see, to view a different type of identity and how it is being// what's a different narrative, what are different stories, what is the identity of

the Palestinian, ah, (..) the Palestinian. What is my identity? How is it different? I think this kind of school makes its' possibility more, ah, more realistic to-to define our identity. And I think that is important.

N: When you think about the way the school goes about ceremonies, about cultural and historical issues, how do you feel about that?

I: It's different. In some cases I think the school dealt with it, ah, well, in some cases it doesn't. I mean. For example once we had a party where both Hanukah, the Jewish holiday, and-and it was, ah, *Hag ha molad* Christmas and the New Years, ah, celebrated. Maybe there was, I don't remember *(laughing)* if we had also *Eid al-Adha*// we mentioned *Eid al-Adha* which is a Muslim holiday that was near that time. So, for example we went to a party that all the, two or three, ah, holidays of different religions were celebrated together. I think that for example caused some of a mess. I mean you get your presents for Christmas and you lit the Hanukah candles and I'm not sure what the kids get of all of this. They might have an idea, that we// and they did have this idea because they-they got kind of a small symbol of each holiday. So they thought t*hat at* Hanukah we get the presents in the sock from Father Christmas and// where is the Father Christ*mas of Ha*nukah// and something was, ah (laughing), kind of, ah, you know kind of a jam, or, ah, a bit of a mess. I think the idea of celebrating separately holidays but celebrating by everybody, each holiday, belonging to a different religion is more of a// is more of sense because then you learn the customs of the other, you know that you are not the other, but the customs are related to the other and you know it's your holiday or it's not your holiday. I think that's important questions of identity, as we mentioned beforehand. Ahm, and I think, and as I said, the most important thing that// I think the school went through a few phases here. I'm not (equated?) to the details of history but it's// the Independence Day, the *Nakba*// and I think the school does-do the right things today, the way, it deals with the dates. Ahm, and, ah, I hope it to stay (laughing) that way.

N: Okay. Do you think that the participation of your child at school has changed the ways in which she talks about the other group?

I: I'm sure. I mean I don't have a child to compare it to, but, ah, just I don't know// we went with friends to a kind of a picnic a few years ago and there was an, ah, an Arab shepherd who went through and a girl her age was really afraid, was really frightened because he's an aravi, he's an Arab, but you know, nearly cried, just because, just he passed through you know, and I saw that my daughter does not understand what-what, I mean, (?) I assume that's, there is a different atmosphere, thanks to the school.

Interview 17 – Extract

N: Is there anything// it's a bit difficult, because you're not one group or the other group. But is there anything you would like your daughter to learn from the other group?

I: What-what do you mean, I don't understand what you mean *(Nele laughing)*. Which group?

N: Yeah, that's the problem. Like saying you're Palestinian.

I: Aha.

N: Would you like your daughter to learn something from the Jewish people?

I: Ah, of course yes. There's no, ahm, she can learn anything good from any society and any group.

N: What is good from the Jewish society?

I: Ah, there is a lot *(laughing)*. For example there is a, you know, they, ah, love of the country and the love of the society, that they belong to, for example. There is a lot, I don't have it in my mind, but I-I all the time, all the time, telling my children that there is no good group, no good society, no good nationality, no good religions people, there is everywhere and in everything, there is good and bad. And if they want to learn something, they have to take the good from here and the good from here. We can't say all the Christians are very nice and all the Muslims are very bad, for example. I said from our, you know, society. When there is, ah, say that, I can't, you know, shut up on the, if I hear somebody say that. I all the time say no, of course no. I have friends from here and I have friends from here and I like my friends here and I like my friends here, there is a lot of people, very good people from here and very good people from here and there is very bad from here and very bad from here. And also in the Jews society also, American society, let us say, not only from Arab, between Arabs and Jews, you know? For example they said all the time for me, all the time they told me, when my children was in the, were in the, ah, in the American schools, you want your children to be like Americans? I don't want my children to be not Americans, not Jews, not Arabs. No, I want my children to be good and that's it.

N: Okay, then the opposite. Is there anything that you'd say in general there is a tendency in Jewish society that you would not like your children to learn from?

I: Ah, I forgot the word, it's, ahm, racism?

N: Racism?

I: Racis, yes.

N: Can you explain that a bit more?

I: Yeah, because I think especially now the-the Jews here become more racism than before.

N: Here you mean Jerusalem?

I: No, no, no, in Israel. If you, if you imagine, I don't think that you know, or I don't know if you are from Israel before, or, ah, I don't know. But if I can look after, for example twenty years ago, you could see that a lot of friends, Jews and Arabs they come here and they come here. Maybe it's not the problem of Jews, you know, I don't say it's the problem from only the Jews, but it's, ah, also from the Arabs, of course, but before they, it was a lot of friends from here and here and now they are separated more and more and more.

N: So you think it's because they're just physically more separated or what do mean by separated?

I: No, mentally.

N: Mentally.

I: Yeah, of course. Because everything is, you know, again I told you it's very big (3)

N: Question?

I: Subject *(Nele laughing)*. It's, if you, if you, if you can see all the, ah, changes that was in the wars, you know, in its influence the society here and all the problems and all the, everything. There is a lot of circumstances, that, ah, help to do this and I think that both the Arabs and the Jews are, ah, they have part of this thing. Not one of them.

N: Could you give maybe one example?

I: For example there is a lot, ah, of Jews, that they believe of, ah, for example, ah, that, this country for both, Arabs and Jews and, ah, that we, the Arabs had, have the rights in everything, but they do nothing. We set in a lot of, you know, societies with a lot of Jews, friends, and we are very friends and very friendly and we-we laughed and you know, each other and we sit and we speak, but when-when we spoke about politics, they all said yes and we see this and we feel that, and we see that and nobody can do anything. Nobody try to do anything. To have another party, to have, ah, like committees, to have, to do something for this. They said, yes, yes, we have to do something and that's it. And we meet after one year and we speak about the same thing. And they said yes, yes, we have to do something. All the time like this and nobody do anything.

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Fußball und der die das Andere
Ergebnisse aus einem Lehrforschungsprojekt

König Fußball regiert die Welt!

Und Deutschland im Besonderen. Die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung des Fußballsports kann hier kaum überbetont werden. Die Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft 2006, das viel zitierte »Sommermärchen«, ist das augenfälligste Beispiel dafür, wie die »schönste Nebensache der Welt« in die Gesellschaft hineinwirkt und diese beeinflusst. Doch welche Inhalte werden durch den Sport vermittelt? Gerade 2011, im Jahr der Frauenfußball-WM in Deutschland wird es zu grundlegenden Debatten über das Selbstverständnis des Spiels kommen.

In diesem Sammelband wird folgenden Fragen nachgegangen: Wie wird im Fußball der, die oder das Fremde konstruiert? Und welche Auswirkungen hat diese Konstruktion, im Hinblick auf Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Frauenbilder für den sozialen und pädagogischen Auftrag des lokalen Vereinsfußballs. Welche Rolle spielt die Homophobie im (Männer-)Fußball? Und wie haben sich die Geschlechterrollen in der bislang stark männlich geprägten Domäne des Fußballsports durch die zunehmende Popularität des Frauenfußballs verändert?

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