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Ethnic Identity, Multiculturalism, and Their Interrelationships: Differences between Jewish and Arab Students

Abstract: The present research investigates the differences in attitudes toward multiculturalism and the level of ethnic identification among Arab and Jewish students in Israel. In addition, ethnic group effects on the relationship between the two variables were examined. Based on a sample of 142 college students, the findings indicated that Arab students showed more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism and a higher level of ethnic identity. Furthermore, the ethnic group had a significant effect on the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism. For Jewish students the effect of ethnic identity on overall multiculturalism was significantly negative, while for Arab students it was positive, but not significant. These findings stress the importance of understanding the college multicultural climate at both interpersonal and institutional levels and of assessing its impact on both dominant and non-dominant culture students.

Keywords: multiculturalism, ethnic identity, Arab students, Jewish students

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1 Introduction

Any society comprised different cultural groups is characterized by ethnic diversification, which might result in negative socio-political and economic consequences. Ways must be found to promote coexistence and mutual

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understandings between these groups (Nachatomy, 2003). The study of multiculturalism examines this phenomenon and the attitudes and perceptions of people and groups toward it (Linnehan, Chrobot-Mason, & Konrad, 2006). Multiculturalism also refers to the importance of culture for individual autonomy and the importance of recognizing ethnic and cultural diversity in a society (Taylor, 1994).

The impact of multiculturalism may differ for the dominant and the non-dominant ethnic groups. Dominant-group members may view the desire of ethnic minorities to maintain their own culture as a threat to their group identity and status. On the other hand, multiculturalism may offer non-dominant ethnic groups the possibility of maintaining their own culture and obtaining higher social status in society (Quintana, 2007).

Higher education campuses often serve as socialization agencies and, therefore, should support a climate for ethnic/racial diversity both in theory and in practice. In order to develop and maintain such a climate, each campus should engage in self-examination, learn the specific characteristics and needs of the institution, provide a policy of inclusion of various racial/ethnic groups, and institute a psychological climate for examining perceptions and attitudes between and among groups and for fostering actual relations between groups (Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, & Milem, 1998).

Israeli society presents a particularly interesting case of multicultural existence. The relations between Arabs and Jews are the most complex and sensitive among the different population groups because of the ongoing Jewish–Palestinian historical conflict (Al-Haj, 2002). Higher education campuses in Israel serve as socializing agencies, where students from the two ethnic groups share a learning environment and need to coexist in a predominantly Jewish milieu (Hager et al., 2011). This coexistence creates complex situations for both dominant and non-dominant ethnic groups interested in preserving their ethnic uniqueness, while they are expected to function as a part of the whole society (Breugelmans, Van de Vijver, & Schalk-Soekar, 2009).

The present study aims to explore the relationship between ethnic identity and attitudes toward multiculturalism in both Arab and Jewish students who study together in an academic college in Israel. Better understanding of these relationships will benefit both groups of students as well as policy makers. The structure of the paper is as follows: first, we define the term of multiculturalism and present studies which explored multiculturalism in dominant and non-dominant ethnic groups; second, we introduce ethnic identity as a concept that relates to the dialogue between these groups; third, we present the methods we used and the results of the study; fourth, we discuss our results, as well as the limitations and implications of our study.

2 Literature review

2.1 Multiculturalism

According to Morrison, Plaut, and Ybarra (2010), many important theoretical discussions of multiculturalism have appeared in recent years. The concept of multiculturalism has been defined in different ways and refers to a wide variety of variables. Dewing and Leman (2006) suggested that it relates to the following aspects: demographic facts describing the coexistence of peoples from different ethno-cultural backgrounds in a single society or organization; an ideological aspiration celebrating diversity, a set of policies aimed at managing diversity; or a process by which ethnic and racial groups leverage support to achieve their aspirations. Some authors define multiculturalism as a response – or a set of responses – to diversity that seek to articulate the social conditions under which difference can be incorporated and order achieved from diversity (Hartman & Gerteis, 2005). Other researchers treat it as a psychological concept that reflects an attitude to the political ideology which refers to the acceptance of, and support for, the culturally heterogeneous composition of the population of a society (Berry & Kalin, 1995).

One of the main problems facing multicultural theory stems from the fact that different groups make opposing claims and have diverse aspirations and goals which need to be addressed within a common political, administrative, budgetary, educational, and judicial framework (Nachtomý, 2003). Studies show that each group attempts to gain as much power as possible and perceives the other group as competition or a threat to its goal (Berry, 2001; González, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008). The dominant group may view the non-dominant group as a threat and is, therefore, reluctant to share its resources (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Sprague-Jones, 2011). The non-dominant group, however, may support sharing of resources, even if it is not precisely equal. This occurrence is actually a pragmatic compromise on the part of the non-dominant group: gaining some resources/power, even if they are not equal to that of the dominant group, is preferable to the former situation (Sprague-Jones, 2011; Verkuyten & Brug, 2004).

Shamai and Paul-Binyamin (2004) suggested viewing attitudes toward multiculturalism as a spectrum divided into five levels that express the groups' positions (especially that of the dominant group) concerning the division of social resources: (1) non-fulfillment of multiculturalism (no effort is made to recognize, understand, or legitimize the other group); (2) declared multiculturalism (the dominant group declares multiculturalism, but only as a gesture and

with no intention to implement it); (3) folkloristic multiculturalism (the dominant group respects some cultural aspects (usually food, clothing, music, etc.) of the non-dominant group) and lends their legitimacy; (4) symbolic multiculturalism (the dominant group is willing to recognize symbols of the non-dominant group (such as language) as a significant part of the representation in the society; (5) equal multiculturalism (there is full equality between the groups, and they share equal power). They claimed that the level of acceptance of multiculturalism depends on the cost and benefits for each group. Multiculturalism may be perceived as a tool to achieve equality and progress and to change ethnic power relations in a society; or it may be used as a façade for equality, behind which the existing hierarchical relations are maintained. In that case the dominant group may adopt it more as a “multi-subculturalism” than real multiculturalism (Shamai & Paul-Binyamin, 2004).

Tajfel and Turner (1986) argued that the bias toward one’s “group of belonging” stems from the actual and fantasized threat to one’s social group identity. Social identity threats can take different forms, and responses to threat depend on the degree of group identification. Social identity is defined as “a part of the individual’s perception of himself that stems from his knowledge that he belongs to a certain social group, together with the values and the emotional significance related to that belonging” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Every person seeks positive perception-of-self, and social identity comprises a major part of this perception. Individuals in a group form their perception of their own group by comparing it to other groups; they then project the way in which their group is perceived onto themselves, the individuals that make up the group (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004).

The level of individuals’ identification with the group they belong to and the way they compare themselves to other groups are both related to their level of self-worth (Brown, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). Discrimination on the part of the mainstream represents a threat to one’s group identity because it implies that the culture as a whole devalues that group membership. Schwartzwald and Tur-Caspa-Shimoni (2003) examined the extent to which perceived threat may explain preconceptions between different groups in society. They found that the explained difference of preconceptions stems from three types of threats: (1) real threat (threat to one’s personal safety), (2) symbolic threat (sense of threat to a person’s value system and group symbols), and (3) interpersonal threat (fear of the results of a direct meeting with the other group and reciprocal relations). Research in the social identity theory tradition has demonstrated that group members frequently react to threats to their group identity with increased group identification and cohesion (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002).

2.2 Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is a multifaceted construct that is based on the study of group identity (Phinney, Horenczyk, Leibkind, & Vedder, 2001). According to Tajfel (1981) it is an aspect of a person's social identity and a part of that person's perception-of-self. According to Bernal, Knight, Ocampo, Garza, and Cota (1990), ethnic identity is the set of ideals, values, behaviors, and attitudes one holds regarding one's identity as a member of a distinguishable social group. It is a way to understand whether and to what degree individuals have explored the meaning of their ethnicity and developed a sense of commitment to that heritage (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000; Phinney, 1992).

This process is a complex task of integrating values and beliefs of the larger culture with the beliefs and traditions of one's ethnic group. The process of ethnic identity formation involves the construction over time of one's sense of self as a group member and of one's attitudes and understanding associated with that group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It passes through an exploration stage that most people do undergo, whether they belong to the majority group or a minority group, though the process is more obvious and intensive in minority groups (Linnehan et al., 2006).

Ethnic identity is based on two elements – the first refers to the level to which the individual is aware of his/her belonging to a group and his/her recognition of the group's values and customs. The second relates to an emotional aspect of acceptance or rejection of belonging to a certain group (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Ethnic identity has primarily been studied in relation to self-efficacy, self-worth, academic achievement, and quality of life and found to be positively related, especially for minority groups. It has also been studied in relation to nationality, racism, prejudice, acculturation, and attitudes toward multiculturalism, especially among adolescents in Europe and the United States (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Breugelmans, Van de Vijver, & Schalk-Soekar, 2009; Operario & Fiske, 2001; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002; Worell, 2007).

Both the “group threat” and the “social identity” theories relate to strategies that an individual adopts in accordance with their status within their own ethnic group. Studies show that the likelihood of individuals choosing a strategy suited to their group correlates with the strength of their identity with the group. In dominant groups, a higher level of ethnic identity corresponds to more negative attitudes toward multiculturalism; in minority groups, a higher level of ethnic identity corresponds to a more positive attitude toward multiculturalism (Deuax, Reid, Martin, & Bikmen, 2006; Verkuyten & Brug,

2004; Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006; Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2006).

Hurtado et al. (1998) demonstrated that higher education campuses often serve as socialization agencies and, therefore, should institute a policy promoting a climate of ethnic/racial diversity. Dominant and non-dominant groups at the same institution often experience different attitudes toward diversity (Chavous, 2005). Research by Helm, Sedlacek, and Prieto (1998) suggests that the way diversity and race are discussed and perceived on campus has implications for the social and academic adjustment of both dominant- and non-dominant-group members. Hurtado et al. (1998) concluded that in order to develop and maintain a diverse climate, each campus should engage in self-examination, learn more about the specific characteristics and needs of the institution, provide a current policy of inclusion of various racial/ethnic groups, and foster a psychological climate conducive to examining perceptions and attitudes between and among groups as well as promoting actual relations between groups.

Higher education agencies in Israel serve as a unique case of multicultural existence where both Arab and Jewish students share a mutual learning environment and need to cooperate in a predominantly Jewish milieu. Israeli society comprises many different communities and identities, with very different purposes and hopes for the future and diverse forms of social organization and modes of living (Smootha, 2002). The relations between Arabs and Jews are the most complex and sensitive among the different groups in Israel because of the ongoing historical Jewish–Palestinian conflict (Al-Haj, 2002).

Though the Israel Bureau of Statistics shows that, in 2009, Arabs comprised 20% of the population, most of the power is concentrated in the Jewish population. The Jewish population controls the military – the country’s central physical force – and the language and cultural and societal symbols (Saban, 2002). Economically, most of the Arab communities are at the bottom 50% in income, and Arab children’s academic achievement is lower than that of their Jewish counterparts (Frisch, 2006).

On the other hand, Israel’s Jews are a small minority in the Middle East, surrounded by many Arab countries that identify with the Arabs living in Israel and in the West Bank. This situation naturally creates a sense of threat among Israeli Jews, so that each group feels threatened by the other: Israeli Jews feel threatened by Israeli Arabs who belong to the Arab world that threatens their existence, while Israeli Arabs feel threatened by Israeli Jews who hold the power in Israel (Jamal, 2007; Karayanni, 2007).

Since the Six-Day War in 1967 between Israel and all the surrounding Arab countries, a Palestinian-Arab nationalistic identity has blossomed and gained

strength among Israel's Arabs. This occurred because of a renewed relationship with Arabs living on the other side of the "green line" (i.e. the West Bank area), annulment of the military government in 1966 and an increase in level of education (Haider, 2011). This process came to a head during the riots of October 2000, in which 13 Arab citizens and one Jewish citizen were killed. The level of violence both sides used against each other raised the intensity of threat both sides feel (Haider, 2011). At the same time, two factors have brought about the strengthening of the identity of Israeli Arabs as Israeli citizens: First, the Palestinian leaders in the West Bank openly declared that Arabs who are Israeli citizens are not part of a future Palestinian state. Second, Israeli Arabs have undergone a process of adaptation as citizens of the State of Israel (Lavie, 2011; Steinberg, 2011).

In a survey conducted in 2010 (Lavie, 2011) among Arab teenagers, 72% reported that they feel themselves a part of the State of Israel, thus supporting the theory of adaptation. This process has created a situation in which the Arabs seek to express their Palestinian-Arab identity and culture in the arena in which they feel a belonging – the civilian Israeli arena. Perhaps this is why, as their ethnic identity becomes stronger, Israeli Arabs display more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism. In a 1995 survey, 86.1% of Israeli Arabs in contrast to 28.2% of Israeli Jews favored Arab control of State radio and television channels in the Arabic language, 84.4% of Israeli Arabs and 31.5% of Israeli Jews supported establishing an Arab university in Israel, and Arabs expressed a desire to elect a supreme group that would represent them while the Jews opposed this step (Smootha, 2001). In addition it was found in this survey that almost all the Jews questioned felt it necessary for Israel to continue to exist as a Jewish state, describe themselves as Zionists, want to preserve the Jewish demographic majority and the State's Hebrew language and Jewish symbols, and oppose both change in the country's symbols and the "right of return" to Israel for Arabs who currently live in Arab countries (Smootha, 2001).

2.3 Hypotheses

Based on the above literature review, the hypotheses of the present study are:

1. There are differences between Jewish and Arab attitudes toward multiculturalism: Arabs have more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism than Jews.
2. There are differences between Jewish and Arab levels of ethnic identity: Arabs have stronger ethnic identity than Jews.

3. Ethnic group serves as a moderating variable in the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism in such a way that among the Jews ethnic identity predicts multiculturalism negatively, while among the Arabs – positively.

3 Methods

3.1 Participants and procedure

This research is based on a convenience sample of 142 undergraduate students from a college located at Northern Israel (68% females and 32% males, 54% Jews and 46% Arabs,¹ mean age 24.3, SD = 4.1). Sixty-seven percent of the students studied at the faculty of liberal arts and social sciences, while 33% studied at the faculty of exact sciences and technology. Fifty-four percent of students defined themselves as secular, 42% as traditional,² and 4% claimed that they are religious.

Questionnaires were administered during regular class time. Students from two obligatory introductory courses (with ~80 participants each) and from one special course for Arab students who needed to improve their Hebrew languages skills participated in the study. Once participants accessed the survey, they were instructed to read the consent form and sign it. In this form, it was made clear to participants that their participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous. It was also explained that the participants have the right not to take part or to stop participating in the study at any time and for any reason. In order not to disturb the regular dynamics of the lectures, the students were asked to fill the questionnaires at the end of the lectures, and students who decided not to take part in the study were allowed to leave the room. The refusal rate was about 20%.

¹ The population of Northern Israel is ~40% Arab and 60% Jewish.

² Traditional Jews and Arabs may be defined as “mildly religious” i.e. adhering to certain religious traditions, such as attending synagogue/mosque though not on a regular basis, probably adhering to religious dietary laws, following holiday traditions (Arian, 2009)

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Ethnic identity

To measure ethnic identity we used *Multigroup ethnic identity measure – Revised (MEIM-R)* (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This measure consists of six Likert-scale items (from 1 – *Strongly disagree* to 5 – *Strongly agree*) and relates to the individual's identification with his/her ethnic group (e.g. “*I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group*”). In order to adjust the measure to national identity, references to ethnicity in the questionnaire were substituted by references to nationality. The internal reliability of this scale in our research was $\alpha = 0.78$.

In addition to the internal reliability reported above, the psychometric properties of the *MEIM-R* scale include face and content validity (Phinney & Ong, 2007), which was tested across different nations and racial groups (Brown et al., 2014), and a good internal reliability (Arbona & Jimenez, 2014; Ashdown, Homa, & Brown, 2014).

3.2.2 Attitudes toward multiculturalism

To assess attitudes toward multiculturalism, we used an instrument developed by Shamai and Paul-Binyamin (2004). The original questionnaire comprised 88 items on 5-point Likert-scale (from 1 – *Do not agree at all* to 5 – *Very much agree*), divided into eight subscales. In the current research we used the first five subscales : (1) Presence of two nations and different cultures on campus (e.g. “*Arabs’ Remembrance days should be celebrated, such as Nakba Day, Land Day*”) ($\alpha = 0.93$), (2) “Relationships between Arab and Jewish students at the college – (e.g. “*I am willing to live with an Arab/Jewish roommate in the dorms*”) ($\alpha = 0.77$), (3) “The State’s attitude toward its citizens” – the Arabs (e.g. “*Israel’s Arabs constitute a threat to the State’s existence*”) ($\alpha = 0.83$), (4) “The reality of studying in a mixed classroom of Arabs and Jews” (e.g. “*Usually, Arab students cause the lecturer to slow his progress in teaching the academic material*”) ($\alpha = 0.74$), (5) “The need to lend assistance to non-native Hebrew speakers” (e.g. “*It is a good idea to have an Arab librarian in the library to help the Arab students*”) ($\alpha = 0.90$).

In addition to the internal reliability reported above, the psychometric properties of the *Attitudes toward multiculturalism* scale include a content validity (Shamai & Paul-Binyamin, 2004) and an acceptable internal reliability (Hager et al., 2011; Shamai & Paul-Binyamin, 2004).

For each construct (ethnic identity and multiculturalism and its subscales) we computed a mean score. Prior to creating index, we assured that all the items are coded in the same direction: from 1 – *Do not agree at all* to 5 – *Very much agree*. Accordingly, high mean scores of ethnic identity would suggest that the subjects have strong ethnic identities, while high mean scores of multiculturalism and its subscales indicate that the subjects have positive attitudes toward multiculturalism.

4 Results

4.1 The differences between Jews’ and Arabs’ attitudes toward multiculturalism and ethnic identity

To test our first and second hypotheses regarding the differences between Arabs’ and Jews’ attitudes toward multiculturalism and levels of ethnic identity, we ran a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The results indicated the following: the overall model of the effect of ethnic group on ethnic identity and multiculturalism and its subscales is significant ($F_{(6,135)} = 14.39$; $p < 0.001$). Estimation of the differences between Jews and Arabs

Table 1: Ethnic identity and multiculturalism by ethnic group: means, standard deviations, F - and p -values, and effect sizes

	Ethnic group						
	Jews ($n = 77$)		Arabs ($n = 65$)		$F_{(1,142)}$	p	η^2
	M	SD	M	SD			
Ethnic identity	3.59	0.67	3.89	0.52	8.91	0.00	0.06
Multiculturalism	3.42	0.65	4.17	0.33	71.71	0.00	0.34
Two nations on campus	3.40	0.98	4.47	0.53	62.51	0.00	0.31
Relationships	3.25	0.56	3.83	0.46	45.48	0.00	0.25
The State’s attitudes toward its citizens	3.51	0.73	4.15	0.46	37.31	0.00	0.21
Mixed classroom	3.39	0.72	4.11	0.49	46.42	0.00	0.25
Assistance	3.55	0.73	4.29	0.49	47.48	0.00	0.25

Notes: Multiculturalism – general score of multiculturalism; Two nations on campus – presence of two nations and different cultures on campus; Relationships – relationships between Arab and Jewish students at the college; State’s attitudes – the State’s attitudes toward its citizens; Mixed classroom – the reality of studying in a mixed classroom of Arabs and Jews; Assistance – the need to lend assistance to non-native Hebrew speakers.

Figure 1: Mean scores of ethnic identity and multiculturalism by ethnic group

regarding each variable separately reveals that Arabs have significantly higher means on the ethnic identity scale and the general score of multiculturalism and its subscales. These findings support our first and second hypotheses.

4.2 The moderating role of ethnic group in the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism

To test our third hypotheses on the prediction of multiculturalism by ethnic identity and the moderating role that ethnic group plays in this prediction, we ran a series of linear regressions with multiculturalism as a dependent variable and ethnic identity and ethnic group as independent variables. To capture the moderating effect of ethnic group, we estimated the interaction effect between ethnic group and ethnic identity. Table 2 shows the results of regression analyses, and Figure 2 graphically presents the differences in the effects of ethnic identity on multiculturalism and its subscales, conditionally to categories of ethnic group (Jews versus Arabs).

Regression results showed that, when only the main effects are taken into account, ethnic group has significant effect on multiculturalism: Arabs have higher means on multiculturalism rather Jews, as we already showed in MANOVA results. This holds for The General score of multiculturalism, as well

Table 2: Results of two-step linear regressions of ethnic identity, ethnic group, and interaction between them on multiculturalism and its subscales

Dependent variable	Step 1–Main effects						Step 2–Main and interaction effects					
	Ethnic identity			Ethnic group			Ethnic identity			Ethnic group		
	<i>b</i> (SE)	β	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	β	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	β	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i> (SE)	β	<i>p</i>
Multiculturalism ^a	–0.05 (0.07)	–0.05	0.48	–0.77 (0.09)	–0.59	<.001	0.17 (0.12)	0.17	0.17	0.50 (0.58)	0.39	0.39
Two nations on campus ^b	–0.09 (0.11)	–0.06	0.45	–1.10 (0.14)	–0.57	<.001	0.41 (0.19)	0.27	0.03	1.75 (0.87)	0.91	0.04
Relationships ^c	–0.16 (0.07)	–0.17	0.03	–0.64 (0.09)	–0.54	<.001	–0.04 (0.12)	–0.04	0.76	0.06 (0.57)	0.05	0.91
State’s attitudes ^d	–0.19 (0.09)	–0.17	0.03	–0.70 (0.11)	–0.50	<.001	–0.02 (0.15)	–0.02	0.89	0.28 (0.69)	0.20	0.69
Mixed classroom ^e	–0.00 (0.09)	–0.00	0.97	–0.72 (0.11)	–0.50	<.001	0.08 (0.15)	0.07	0.59	–0.24 (0.71)	–0.16	0.74
Assistance ^f	0.18 (0.09)	0.16	0.04	–0.68 (0.11)	–0.47	<.001	0.42 (0.15)	0.36	0.01	0.66 (0.70)	0.45	0.34

Notes: Ethnic group coding: 1 – Jews, 0 – Arabs. Multiculturalism – general score of multiculturalism; Two nations on campus – presence of two nations and different cultures on campus; Relationships – relationships between Arab and Jewish students at the college; State’s attitudes – the State’s attitudes toward its citizens; Mixed classroom – the reality of studying in a mixed classroom of Arabs and Jews; Assistance – the need to lend assistance to non-native Hebrew speakers. ^aFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.34$, $F = 35.97$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.36$, F -change = 4.83, $p < 0.05$. ^bFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.31$, $F = 31.45$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.36$, F -change = 10.87, $p < 0.01$. ^cFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.27$, $F = 25.97$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.28$, F -change = 2.05, $p > 0.05$. ^dFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.24$, $F = 21.69$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.25$, F -change = 1.53, $p > 0.05$. ^eFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.25$, $F = 23.04$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.25$, F -change = 0.48, $p > 0.05$. ^fFor Step 1: $R^2 = 0.28$, $F = 26.52$; $p < 0.001$; for Step 2: $R^2 = 0.30$, F -change = 3.81, $p < 0.05$.

Figure 2: The moderating effects of ethnic group on the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism and its subscales

Notes: To present interaction effects graphically, we used the Effects package for R (Fox & Hong, 2009).

*Significant interaction effect.

as for its subscales. In addition, ethnic identity has significant effects on three subscales of multiculturalism – Relationships, State's attitudes, and Assistance: the higher the ethnic identity, the more negative the subjects' attitudes according to the first two subscales and the more positive according to the third one. For The General score of multiculturalism and The Reality of studying in mixed classroom, there were no significant effects of ethnic identity, controlling for ethnic group.

However, when we enter the interaction effect between ethnic group and ethnic identity, we see that the patterns of relationships between the variables are changing. For The General score of multiculturalism, Two nations on campus, and Assistance scales, the interaction effect is significant. This means that ethnic identity predicts these variables in different ways for Jews and Arabs. The analysis of simple slopes reveals that ethnic identity predicts positively The General score of multiculturalism ($b = 0.17$; $p > 0.05$), Two nations on campus ($b = 0.41$; $p < 0.05$), and Assistance ($b = 0.41$; $p < 0.01$) among the Arabs, but negatively ($b = -0.16$; $p < 0.05$ for The General score of multiculturalism and $b = -0.34$; $p < 0.05$ for Two nations on campus) or does not predict ($b = 0.06$; $p > 0.05$ for Assistance) among the Jews (See Figure 2).

For the three other scales, the interaction effects of ethnic identity and ethnic group were not significant, but we can see in Figure 2 that the patterns of relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism subscale are different for Jewish and Arab students: ethnic identity predicts negatively State's attitudes and Relationships subscales among the Jews, but among the Arabs these variables are not correlated. These results partially support our hypothesis according the moderating role of ethnic group in the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism.

4.2.1 Summary of results

The main findings of the current study revealed the following: (1) Jewish students have lower mean scores of ethnic identity scale and general multiculturalism scale and its subscales, in comparison to Arab students; (2) controlling for ethnic group, ethnic identity has significant effects on attitudes toward relationships between Jewish and Arab students, the perception of the States' attitudes toward its citizens (the higher the mean score of ethnic identity the more negative are the participants' attitudes), and the attitudes about the needs for assistance to non-native Hebrew speakers (the higher the mean score of ethnic identity the more positive are the participants' attitudes); (3) controlling for ethnic identity, ethnic group has a significant effect on multiculturalism and

its subscales (Arab students showed more positive attitudes rather Jewish students); and (4) ethnic group plays a role of moderating variable and changes the effect of ethnic identity on multiculturalism.

5 Discussion

5.1 General discussion

In most predominantly Jewish higher education campuses in Israel, Jewish and Arab students study together and share the same rights and obligations. On some of the campuses there is an active dialogue concerning diversity, while on other campuses multiculturalism exists, but is not discussed and dealt with (Hager et al., 2011). Following Hurtado et al.'s (1998) conclusions regarding the importance of a clear, diverse climate on campus, the current study strived to deepen the understanding of the relationship between group/ethnic identification and attitudes toward multiculturalism among Arab and Jewish students learning together in the same academic college. Based on previous findings from research conducted in other countries (Verkuyten, 2005; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002), differences between Arab and Jewish students in attitudes toward multiculturalism and sense of ethnic identity were hypothesized. In addition, we hypothesized that ethnic group will moderate the relationships between ethnic identity and multiculturalism, so the effect of ethnic identity on multiculturalism among Jewish students will be different from Arab students.

Findings of this study support our hypotheses, indicating that Arab students, who are the non-dominant group in Israel, report more positive attitudes toward multiculturalism. Israeli Arabs support multiculturalism, wanting their culture and symbols to be recognized as equal in the public sphere (Shamai & Paul-Binyamin, 2004). Israeli Jews favor multiculturalism, but only up to the point where it begins to challenge their hegemony as the dominant group (Hager et al., 2011). Further findings in the present study revealed that ethnic group has significant effects on the relationships between ethnic identity and: The General score of multiculturalism, *Presence of two nations and different cultures on campus* subscale and *Need to lend assistance to non-native Hebrew speakers* subscale. For the first two scales, the relationship between ethnic identity and multiculturalism were positive for Arabs and negative for Jews. For the third scale, the relationship between ethnic identity and multiculturalism was positive for Arabs, but close to zero for Jews. These findings may suggest that the

dominant group's ethnic identity dominates resulting in negative attitudes toward multiculturalism, especially in those specific areas that may affect them in some ways (Verkuyten, 2009; Wolsko et al., 2006). Other studies that examined these variables in dominant and non-dominant groups in other countries found a similar pattern (Deuax et al., 2006; Verkuyten & Brug, 2004; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006). These findings support the predictors of the "group threat" theory and the minority group's embracing of the "social change" theory predicted by the "social identity" theory when group identity level is high (Berry, 2001). These findings are also consistent with Schwartzwald and Tur-Caspa-Shimoni's (2003) theory regarding the three types of threats that stem from the perception of the other. The "real threat" in their theory is parallel to *The State's attitude toward its Arab citizens* in our study; "symbolic threat" is parallel to *The Presence of two nationalities on campus*; and "interpersonal threat" is parallel to *Relationships between Jewish and Arab students at the college*.

During the last decade many developments have contributed to the blossoming of Arab nationalistic identity (Haider, 2011). Many Arabs have strengthened their identity as Israeli citizens and have undergone a process of adaptation as citizens of the State of Israel (Steinberg, 2011). This has created a situation in which the Arabs seek to express their Palestinian-Arab identity and culture in the arena in which they feel a belonging – the civil Israeli arena (Lavie, 2011).

This developing reality demands action in every social domain in Israel, in order to ensure a multicultural climate of autonomy and dialogue (Taylor, 1994). Specifically, this social environment challenges academic campuses that serve as socialization agencies for many young people from both groups (Hurtado et al., 1998). The results of this study contribute to the growing body of literature around the world, and in Israel, in order to maintain a vital and dynamic multicultural climate, society needs to deeply understand the needs of different ethnic groups and find ways to accommodate and encourage an ongoing dialogue concerning those often conflicting needs (Nachatomy, 2003) specifically in educational settings (Chavous, 2005).

5.2 Limitations

The current research study had several limitations, mainly related to methodology. All respondents were students who chose to study in a small Northern college and may not represent students from both groups who learn in the larger universities in central Israel. In addition, in this college there is an active

support unit for Arab students, as well as an active peace center that contributes to the ongoing dialogue between the groups. However, the topics discussed in this research were sensitive and might cause socially desirable response biases. Finally, the questionnaire used in the study was in Hebrew, which is not the native language of Arab students. This may have weakened the structural validity of the measures, as well as the external validity of the results.

5.3 Implications

The main implications of this study are the understanding that in order to maintain an ongoing dialogue between Arab and Jewish students on campus, both groups, but especially the dominant group (Jewish students), have to explore and strengthen their inner group identities, as well as inter-group relationships. While Arab students have their special cultural/ethnic/national activities on campus in order to enhance their unique identity, Jewish students who study in a predominantly Jewish milieu celebrate and practice the Jewish traditions, but do not have any specific academic setting where their needs as an ethnic group are discussed. The dearth of such settings may prevent the multicultural alliance and weaken the dialogue between the groups (Taylor, 1994). In addition, these findings suggest that further research is needed in order to develop a clear and comprehensive diversity policy for colleges which includes specific considerations for students from groups in conflict.

Future studies may, based upon the finding of our study, examine the interaction between a sense of threat and group identification and their relationship to attitudes toward multiculturalism on other higher education campuses. Finally, future studies are encouraged to extend the analysis by taking into account variables such as political views and level of religiosity, which may contribute to the understanding of the complex link between ethnic identity and multiculturalism (both in dominant and in non-dominant groups).

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