CHAPTER 12

Increasing Understanding or Undermining National Heritage

Studying Single and Multiple Perspectives of a Formative Historical Conflict

TSAFRIR GOLDBERG

Identity, Multiple Perspectives and Critical Inquiry in History Teaching

Fostering identification with the nation, understanding the other's perspective, and critical analysis of information are all goals of the Israeli history curriculum.[1] However, these goals may conflict when teaching controversial aspects of topics which are central to national heritage. Teaching episodes from national history in which the nation played a questionable or contested role is a great opportunity for practicing critical skills[2] and encountering conflicting perspectives.[3] When studying controversies dealing with intergroup conflict, students can encounter the out-group perspective and attempt to understand it.[4]

Still, it is feared that focusing a critical lens on one's collective may reduce identification with the nation[5] or in-group.[6] The teaching of controversial aspects of national history may therefore pose an obstacle to identity goals of history teaching or raise charged emotional reactions, causing many educators to evade it.[7] National identification is conceptualized in social identity theory as consisting both of feeling attached to the national group and of glorifying it as better than others.[8] National heritage usually attempts to foster both facets of identification and challenging it may be assumed to reduce glorification or attachment. Conservatives would claim therefore that topics which are at the heart of national heritage, such as the birth

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of the nation, should only be approached through the official authorized perspective.[9]

A pessimistic outlook on the feasibility of teaching national heritage in a multiple-perspective approach may also come from an opposite line of thought, which points to identification with the nation as a possible obstacle to learning rather than its goal. Social cognition research points to identification with one's group as a biasing influence on individuals' processing of in-group threatening perspectives.[10] Minorities and groups in conflict situations may be especially threatened by a derogative out-group perspective and employ various defence mechanism against their impact.[11] This outlook is also borne out by analysis of collective narratives and history teaching in the context of the Jewish-Arab conflict. Analyses of history textbooks and official narratives of the conflict shows that each party to the conflict fosters one-sided, self-justifying accounts of the conflict while delegitimizing and dehumanizing the out-group.[12]

Multiple-Perspective History and Intergroup Relations

Exposure to one-sided collective narratives is assumed to harm intergroup relations and hinder conflict resolution.[13] In similar vein, proponents of multiple-perspective history teaching claim that an affirmative encounter with the out-group's historical narrative would promote intergroup empathy.[14] Intergroup empathy and even just motivation for perspective taking are considered to be predictors of improved relations and conflict resolution.[15] Critical disciplinary inquiry into the competing historical perspectives of groups in conflict should furnish students of both groups with the necessary dispositions and capacities to resolve it.[16] However, these assumptions have only rarely been empirically examined and some of the attempts to test them produced findings to the contrary.[17]

Furthermore, since in many cases (as is definitely the case in Israel) historical conflicts are formative of national identity, they constitute focal points of national heritage.[18] Wouldn't competing collective narratives challenge cherished national heritage, serving as 'dangerous memories' raising antagonism toward the out-group members' perspective?[19] In Israel, two attempts were made to teach multiple-perspective history of the Jewish-Arab conflict, one through a critical inquiry approach,[20] the other in an empathetic-narrative approach.[21] The presentation of the Palestinian perspective in Israeli history teaching indeed raised considerable antagonism (among publicists and policy makers), to the degree that they were banned or censored.[22]

Public debate and the banning of Palestinian perspectives by Jewish policy makers could be seen as a reaction to encounter with out-group challenges to the cherished in-group heritage and collective memory. Thus, the

answer to the above question could be that out-group perspective which challenges heritage to raise intergroup antagonism. However, it would be more instructive to monitor the impact through reports of learners on their attitudes towards in-group out-group perspectives.[23] Another informative way to gauge the impact of an encounter with a perspective challenging your heritage is to track learners' actual discourse when discussing a historical controversy with an out-group member.[24]

To explore the impact of single- and multiple-perspective teaching of a historical conflict on students' identity and on intergroup relations, we have formulated the following study.

Description of Research Design and Method

Individual Learning Study

One hundred Jewish-Israeli and seventy-eight Arab-Israeli high school students studied the controversial historical topic of the Israeli war of independence and the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem. This topic is part of the mandatory Israeli high school history curriculum. As in other nation states, the War of Independence is a focal point of national heritage, commemorated as the heroic and righteous 'birth of the nation'. Israeli Arabs are members of an ethnic minority, most of whom identify with the Palestinian people.[25] For the Palestinians the same events are the symbol of defeat, deportation and exile, the 'Naqba', which is a cornerstone of Palestinian heritage. The Palestinian refugee problem is a contested issue which is conventionally taught in Israel from a self-legitimizing Israeli perspective,[26] which rejects the Palestinian narrative of Naqba. The Palestinian perspective may shed an unfavourable light on the Jewish national heritage of the War of Independence.

Students were randomly placed in one of three history learning activities based on different teaching approaches. The first was a conventional teaching approach: a teacher's presentation based on an authorized textbook, oriented to success in exams, the common approach in the world and in the Israeli state school system. The second was a critical-disciplinary approach, in which the teacher coached students in evaluating contrasting Jewish and Palestinian sources,[27] an activity explicitly oriented at acquiring the historian's practices and developing critical thinking. The third was an empathetic-narrative approach, wherein the teacher coached students in non-judgmental empathetic reading of narratives, which they later applied to excerpts from a dual (Israeli-Palestinian) narrative textbook,[28] oriented to conflict resolution. Both the critical-disciplinary and the empathetic-narrative approaches were adapted from curricula initiated in the Israeli educational system, and

banned on account of their supposed subversive stance to national heritage and identity.

Texts in all three approaches were of the same length and presented essentially the same basic items of information, although with very different emphases and nuances. All materials were translated and participants received texts in their mother tongue. Teaching duration was also the same for all approaches and was equivalent to a full school lesson, with about twenty-five minutes devoted to instruction and twenty minutes to individual engagement with reading and writing tasks.

It should be noted these experimental conditions did not pose fully identical situations for Jewish and Arab students. While the two multiple-perspective approaches exposed students from both groups to a threatening out-group perspective, the conventional approach stressing the Jewish narrative posed more challenge for the Arab students (who commonly identify with the Palestinian people). This imbalance is representative of the wider Israeli educational scene where the concerns of the Jewish majority overrule those of the Arab minority.

Two weeks prior to the learning activity and immediately following it, all students filled a closed questionnaire tapping national identification in its two facets or modes, attachment and glorification (see endnote 8) with the Jewish and Palestinian people serving as the nation for Jewish and Arab students respectively. Interest in learning about the other side's historical perspective on the Jewish-Arab conflict (see endnote 12) was also measured. Participants also answered open questions tapping their knowledge and opinions as to the causes of the 1948 (Israeli independence) war and the Palestinian refugee problem. These supplied the basis for tracking change in participants' identification with the nation, and change in participants' understanding of the controversial historical issue.

Findings

Impact on National Identification

What can we say about the impact of the encounter with an out-group perspective on participants' national identification? Repeated measures ANOVAS (Analysis of variance) were performed over the attachment mode of national identification and over the glorification mode of national identification with the national group and teaching approach as between subjects' factors and time (pre- and post-intervention) as within subjects' factor. That is, we tested whether a significant change occurred in national identification, and whether teaching approach or membership in a national group affected this change. No significant main or interaction effects were found. We may

Table 12.1 Main and interaction effects for national group, condition and time over interest in the other's perspective.

Dependent variable	Factor	*df*	*F*	η^2	p
Interest in the Other's perspective	National group	1	10.07	.06	<.001
	Experimental condition X time	2	6.33	.072	.002
	National group X experimental condition X time	2	4.79	.055	.01
	Error	163			

therefore conclude that an encounter with multiple perspectives on central heritage topics does not undermine national identification, nor does the conventional approach promote it.

Impact on Interest in the Other's Perspective

A Repeated measures ANOVA was performed over interest in the other's perspective, with national group and teaching approach as between subjects' factors and time (pre- and post-intervention) as within subjects' factor. That is, we tested whether a significant change occurred in interest in the other's perspective, and whether teaching approach or membership in a national group affected this change. Participants' interest in the other's perspective was significantly affected by teaching approaches and identity, as we can see in Table 12.1.

Participants from the two national groups differed in the effect that learning interventions had on their interest in the others' perspective. Table 12.2 shows that a decrease of interest in the others' perspective in the conventional condition and increase of it in the empathetic condition appeared as significant only among Arab participants. Jewish participants demonstrated minute, insignificant changes in similar directions.

It seems that an encounter (solely) with the out-group perspective caused minority students to disengage from it, as it lowered their interest in the troubling history 'forced' upon them. On the other hand, exposure both to the out-group's and to their own perspectives (carried out in an empathetic approach) increased minority members' interest in the majority's perspective.

Intergroup Interaction Study

The above findings referred to the effects of teaching approaches and of learning a contested difficult historical topic on the individual learner. An

Table 12.2 Pre- and post-intervention scores for IO by condition and national group. Note. *=p<.05, **=p<.01. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Condition	National group	IO pre	IO post	Simple effect t
Conventional-Authoritative	Jewish	3.18 (1.22)	3.15 (1.31)	t(32)=.36
	Arab	3.87 (.81)	3.36 (1.00)	t(24)=3.22**
Empathetic-Narrative	Jewish	3.42 (1.04)	3.45 (1.02)	t(34)=–.24
	Arab	3.77 (1.00)	4.21 (.76)	t(22)=–2.34*
Critical-Disciplinary	Jewish	3.53 (1.16)	3.58 (1.27)	t(32)=–.35
	Arab	4.00 (.70)	4.05 (.77)	t(19)=–.26

encounter with the other's perspective can be conceptualized as a vicarious experience of an encounter with the other. But beyond its effects on the individual, it is worth ascertaining its effect on actual intergroup interaction. As mentioned above, individual traits such as motivation for perspective taking or national identification predict behaviour in intergroup negotiation.[29] Thus the lowered motivation for perspective taking in the conventional approach would lead us to expect a more confrontational interaction among students who studied in this approach. Higher motivation for perspective taking in the alternative teaching approaches could predict collaborative discussions. On the other hand, exposure to unflattering out-group perspectives on one's in-group (inherent in the multiple-perspective approaches) is assumed to raise defensive reactions and disrupt interaction.[30]

To explore the effects of learning out-group perspectives on the interactions between learners, the second study was initiated.

Description of Research

Most participants (120) also joined a follow-up study in which, some two weeks later, they were matched according to teaching approach into small Jewish-Arab discussion groups. Participants re-read the texts used in their respective teaching to reinforce the effect of teaching. At this phase a group of Jewish and Arab students who filled in the pre-intervention questionnaires but did not go through a learning intervention joined in to serve as a control group. Students engaged in self-facilitated discussions aimed at resolving two controversial questions: who is responsible for the Palestinian refugee

problem, and how should it be solved? Discussions were recorded, transcribed and analysed using a shortened version of Bales' interaction process analysis to assess discussion style.[31] We coded each discussant's utterance in relation to the other discussant's previous utterance as rejection, opposition, compliance or active agreement. Discussion outcome was assessed on the basis of their agreement (or impasse) on a joint answer as to each of the two questions they discussed.[32]

To illustrate the effect of teaching approaches on intergroup discussions of the topic, both quantitative and qualitative findings are presented.

Findings

Effects of History Teaching on Intergroup Discussion

A significant difference between teaching conditions appeared in the frequency of agreement on the responsibility for the refugee problem (Pearson Chi-Square (3)=10.03, p=0.018). As we can see in Table 12.3, groups discussing the topic following learning in the conventional approach reached agreement less frequently than groups whose participants studied in the alternative approaches.

Kruskal-Wallis' non-parametric test for independent samples has shown that the Critical-Disciplinary approach condition featured a significantly different and higher frequency of agreement on responsibility than the Control (t=2.93, p=0.02). We interpret this finding as pointing to the significant

Table 12.3 Frequency of agreement on the question of historical responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem by condition.

	Condition			
	Control	Conventional-Authoritative	Empathetic-Narrative	Critical-Disciplinary
Number of discussions ending in agreement	4	5	8	12
Expected number	8.1	6.2	7.1	7.6
Total number of discussion groups	17	13	15	16
Proportion out of the total number of discussions within condition	23.5%	38.5%	53.3%	75.0%

effect of the Critical-Disciplinary approach on agreement about the origins of intergroup conflict.

Final agreement (or lack of) should be seen as an outcome of intergroup discussion. Another measure that can give us some insight into the process of discussion and its atmosphere is the proportion of agreement utterances out of the total utterances in discussion. Comparing the percentage of agreement utterances in discussions across the competing teaching approaches shows a distinct pattern with the lower proportion of agreement utterances in the control and conventional condition and a higher proportion in the alternative approaches (Figure 12.1).

The mean percentage of agreement utterances in the two multiple-perspective conditions appeared to differ from their percentage in the control and conventional conditions. This may result from the fact that students in the control group were mainly exposed to the dominant Israeli narrative of the independence war, making it to some degree also

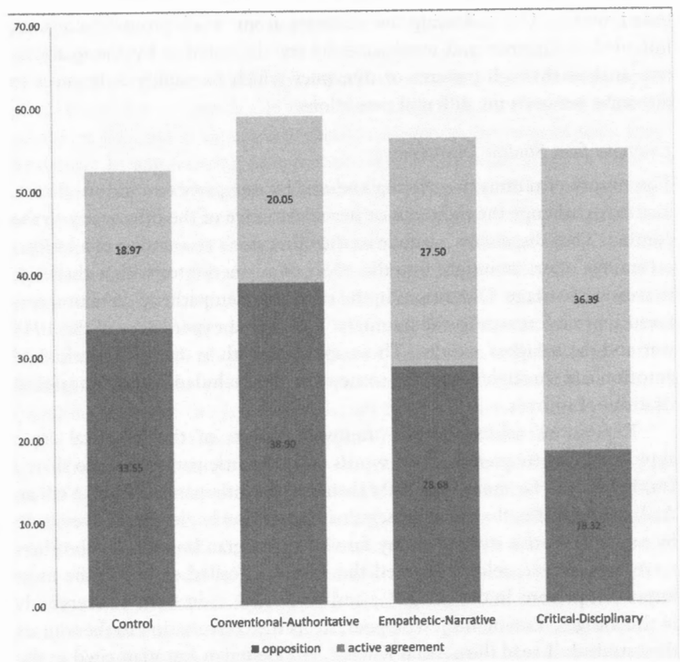

Figure 12.1 Percentage of agreement and opposition utterances by condition.

Table 12.4 Binary regression coefficients for agreement on historical responsibility as dependent. ($\chi^2(1)=21.38$, $p<.001$)

	β(S.E.)	Wald	df	p	Estimate(B)
Agree:Oppose	1.17(.42)	7.76	1	.005	3.228

a single-perspective condition. A t-test comparing two pairs of conditions yielded a significant result ($t(124)=2.26$, $p=0.026$). The mean percentage of participant agreement utterances in the multiple-perspective conditions (M(SD)=29.83(23.55)) was significantly higher than in the single-perspective conditions (M(SD)=20.53(22.27)). Thus we may tentatively conclude that the encounter with multiple perspectives on a focal point of national heritage has affected intergroup discussion of shared histories and its outcomes in a more collaborative direction than did the encounter with a single perspective.

Let us now turn to some examples of students' discussions of the contested topics. The following are excerpts from small group discussions, intended to illustrate and emphasize the trends hinted at by the quantitative analysis through patterns or dynamics which exemplify differences in discourse between the different conditions.

Examples from Student Discussions

The history of trauma or suffering endured by one party to a historical conflict may challenge the righteous or heroic narrative of the other party to the conflict. Thus discussants' attitude to the other side's recounting of a historical trauma offers an insight into the effect of an encounter with a challenge to national heritage. Discussions in the critical and empathetic condition featured more references to the traumatic aspects and experiences of the 1948 war and the refugees' exodus. These appeared both as direct expressions of emotion and through narratives, some of which included family histories or citations of sources.

Expressions relating to the traumatic aspects of the historical topic appeared more frequently in the words of Arab participants who also shared family histories far more frequently than Jewish participants. Thus Ra'ed, an Arab participant in the critical-disciplinary condition begins the conversation by saying 'I've this story with my family … my grandma and her brothers were deported … soldiers entered the village … called eleven of the most important persons in the village … and shot them … in front of everybody in the village'. Yoram, his Jewish peer, steers the conversation to the sources they studied: 'I read this … and Khalidi [A Palestinian historian cited in the sources] also says there weren't many forces from Arab states … could be this is another reason why they had no leadership … so they fled'. This move is both an acknowledgement of his peer's story ('I read this') and an attempt to weave in the Jewish account of Palestinians fleeing the war zones due to lack of leadership.

Relating to traumatic events may also include reference to the learner's position and emotions. Barak, a Jewish participant in the Empathetic-narrative condition, reacts to his Arab partner Samir's mention of Palestinians' fear and deportation by empathizing with the Palestinians' feelings 'I understand … it would anger me if they would deport me…'. It is worth noting that Barak immediately goes on to suggesting a solution to the historical problem 'But, to make it short, what we should do is compensate them with land or money'. While the Jewish discussant does not try to counter the story of Palestinian suffering with the Jewish perspective, it seems that he is focused on moving away from the uneasy moment of relating to the other side's trauma. However, this uneasiness prompted a reconciliatory tone and propositions.

A similar uneasiness with the encounter with Palestinian suffering appears to have spurred not reconciliatory but defensive reactions among Jewish participants who didn't study the other side's perspective.

Jewish participants rarely referred to the emotional or traumatic aspects of the events for the Jewish side at the time of the war. Incidentally, what few references they made appeared in the control group, by students who didn't participate in any learning intervention. These references seem to occur as reaction to the Arab participants' demand for empathy. While recounting a wartime story of her great grandfather, whose brothers 'wanted to get to their land, and someone beat them and harassed them … you know, the soldiers', Riham turns to her Jewish peers and challenges them to take the Palestinian perspective. 'If I came and told you like, "buzz off or I kill you!", would you stay? No.' In response to this, Mazal, the Jewish participant, resonates with the classical Jewish heritage of fear of destruction in her account of the feelings of the Jewish people during the war: 'Cool. We threatened you, no question … us too, the Jewish people, we felt fear like since forever … why didn't they [the Palestinians] stand up and fight? We feared too'.

The reference to the traumatic emotional aspects of the events is generalized and abstract (the whole 'Jewish people' fearing 'since forever'). The speaker relates neither to her feelings nor to specific historical agents. Furthermore, it seems that Mazal mentions the Jewish people's fears only to counterbalance the effect of reference to the Palestinians' victimization and to turn Palestinians' fears to their disadvantage. This competitive reference to traumatic emotions is characteristic of the confrontational discussion style which abounded among discussion groups in the control and the conventional condition.

Discussion Styles

Abed: the Hagana [Jewish militia] … performed massacres on the Palestinians … leaving two or three alive from each village to go tell the next village … to frighten the Palestinians.
Orit: In two villages there were really cases that they deported Palestinians forcefully. In many cases, like in Haifa, the Jewish mayor told them to stay and not to flee. That is, in most cases they fled of [their own] fear.
Abed: like we learnt … in your textbooks … you learn differently, they teach, it's written here … that Israelis didn't deport Palestinians and Palestinians left of their own … that the Palestinian upper class left and the simple folk saw their big people had left so we wanted to leave too.
Orit: don't you think it had impact?
Abed: No. I don't think … let's talk about why the people in, Don't know what you called the land before 'Israel' … they killed; the Haganah militia killed so many Palestinians.
Orit: Our militia fought your militia, like … and captured places left unguarded.
Abed: Yes, but let's talk about it. You were … excuse me, like foreign invaders … would you agree for foreign invaders to get your land.
Orit: But that wasn't their intention to drive them out of the country, we were meant to live together … that part of the country would be ours and part of the country would be yours … and they [the Palestinians] didn't agree … and they started riots. Now the Jewish side had to defend itself.
Abed: But they [the Palestinians] didn't agree because … they [the Israelis] like didn't give the Arabs … their normal rights.

The above excerpt, from a discussion conducted after studying the authorized textbook, exemplifies some aspects of the more confrontational discussion style characterizing the conventional condition. Orit, the Jewish discussant and Abed, her Arab peer, tend either to explicitly oppose each other or to ignore the peer's claim and pass to a new line of argument. Each discussant follows his or her own line of argument with little consent, basically repeating it in the rest of the conversation. Indeed, to the end of their quite prolonged discussion of the question (over fifty turns), they do not resolve conflict. The fact the two participants are referring to the same authorized source does not seem to facilitate mutual understanding. In fact, it is worth noting that when Abed, the Arab participant, refers to the textbook he distances himself from it, stressing 'in *your* textbooks … you learn differently'.

The discussant belonging to the minority group is capable of reproducing the majority's perspective quite accurately. However, he does not seem interested in that perspective, nor does he want to discuss it. This attitude is clearly implied by his repeated attempts to switch the focus of discussion to his own perspective ('lets talk about why … the Hagana killed so many'; 'Lets talk about … you were foreign invaders').

Now, let us look at a discussion in the critical disciplinary approach, conducted following the discussants' study and evaluation of conflicting sources. It stands in quite a sharp contrast to Abed and Orit's dialogue presented

above. As in quite a few of the discussions in the multiple-perspective conditions, the dialogue begins with the Arab participant sharing a family history (a phenomenon discussed above). The Jewish participant then refers to the sources studied. In essence, the components of this discussion are similar. Each participant refers to a different perspective, the Arab participant relying on private knowledge while the Jewish participant relates to text. Still, the whole ambience is profoundly different:

Amani: I'll tell you a story that's real close … My grandpa and grandma were in village up north, and they told them to leave for two weeks
Nira: What, like the Israeli Army told them?
Amani: Yes, for two weeks, and they did, and they never returned to this very day, for 62 years. They still have their key … I've lots of relatives with the same story, they promised them they'll return but didn't, so in my opinion
Nira: Those responsible … are like …
Amani: The army that …
Nira: Actually, I quite agree.
Amani: Really?
Nira: Yeah, like, maybe not them alone but.
Amani: Yeah.
Nira: Like, it's written here, don't know how true it is, about the Arab League states persuading Palestinians to leave … but I think most of the responsibility is, er, on the military … I don't know if it was already … like on us that really deported, like … you could put it nicely and you can say 'they didn't say this, they said that and it didn't happen and so', but if you look at it seriously … they were driven from their homes.
Amani: I never saw someone, like a Jewish person say it.
Nira: Really?
Amani: Yeah, they always say, no, it's you who fled.
Nira: I … some of them fled.
Amani: Right … sure there were some who fled, but they say all the Arabs fled of their own….
Nira: No, they didn't flee on their own, I'm sure of that.
Amani: We didn't say [write] the causes
Nira: Well, in my view there are several causes, there's the Arab League
Amani: Right, and the [Israeli] army
Nira: The army, and there's the small percentage who simply fled because they fled
Amani: right

The collaborative atmosphere of the discussion can be sensed in the fact the two girls continue each other's sentences. Nira, the Jewish participant, completes her Arab peer Amani's 'in my opinion' with 'those responsible are…' and Amani ends with 'the army'. Agreement is also explicit in Nira's declared consent, which, against the background of the controversy between Jews and Arabs on the topic, clearly surprises Amani. Nira begins her argument with a reference to the Jewish perspective, which conventionally places the responsibility on the Arab side. However, she expresses quite

an impartial critical approach to the text ('it's written here, don't know how true it is'). This is followed by self-critical views on the conventional rhetoric ('you could put it nicely … but if you look at it seriously … they were driven…').

This attitude is apparently reciprocated by Amani, which readily agrees to attribute some of the refugees' exodus to voluntary emigration. By the end of their discussion of the topic, the two discussants manage to reach agreement on the causes of the Palestinian exodus. It is worth noting that at this final point Nira in fact integrates the classical Jewish claim ('Arab League' responsibility, 'those who simply fled') with the Palestinian perspective ('the army' as a cause). Thus we should note that collaboration is not dependent on the Jewish participant's total self-denial. The Jewish participant may have seemed to demonstrate a wholesale surrender of the Israeli stand. However, she in fact maintains much of it, even including the evidence she seemed to discredit earlier (she first referred to the claim of Arab league responsibility as 'don't know how true it is'). Amani, her Arab partner, accepts this integration of perspectives in a matter of fact manner.

We see that the discussion performed in the critical-disciplinary condition contains a few characteristics which may account for final agreement. Participants maintained a collaborative style throughout their discussion. Stories relating to the personal and emotional aspects of the historical topic were shared (by the Arab participant). At the same time the Jewish participant's critical stance toward the Jewish sources rhetoric facilitated trust and reciprocity on behalf of the Arab participant.

It may be that the combination of emotional and critical stances explains the features of this discussion. We should note that participants did not demonstrate parallel stances to historical information. The use of and stance towards historical evidence was quite different between the Jewish and Arab participants. The Arab participant presents family history as a self-evidently and unquestionably reliable evidence while the Jewish participant relys on written sources and refers to them critically.

A discussion performed in the empathetic dual-narrative condition can illustrate some of its features. Here too the discussion style is quite collaborative and participants reach agreement on the topic. However, little attention is paid to evidence or the sources. Yakov, the Jewish participant, does ask questions of his Arab peer Miyada, and she too tries to tap information. But information is sought not from the text but rather from each other's mind:

Yakov: I think the causes for the Palestinians' leaving the state of Israel are both the UN's decision to divide the country and the Israeli army which assaulted and frightened them and then they fled. Responsible? The Israeli army
Miyada: The Israeli army?

Yakov: Yes
Miyada: I think so too but … it also seems to me that fear of the army and the lack of power of the Palestinians also caused them to leave the country
[…]
Miyada: What would you think if you were one of the 'Big People' in the country or Israel? What do you think you would have done?
Yakov: Got you … I'd try to compromise on one decision
Miyada: which is? Like? Speak
Yakov: Like the UN said, divide the land in two so there'll be peace
[…]
Yakov: Just a question off the top of my head … how do you think the Palestinians felt after they were deported?
Miyada: Fear. No mother, no land, no one to turn to … that's how I imagine myself if was in their place at the time. Nothing to do, they no power, no army, no chiefs to supervise them and to lead them, nothing, just themselves walking wherever the Arab states or the UN tell them
Yakov: No one to lead them
Miyada: That's frightening.

Interest in the other's perspective is quite explicit in this excerpt, the 'other' in question being literally the other discussant. However, beyond that, discussants ask each other to take up the other group's historical perspective. Miyada, the Arab participant, asks her Jewish partner to reconstruct a Jewish leader's decision making while Yakov asks Miyada to take the perspective of a Palestinian refugee. Each of the participants indeed seems to supply his partner's explicit and implicit demands. Yakov reconstructs a collaborative and fair Jewish leader ('I'd, like compromise … live in peace'), while Miyada brings the essence of emotional distress, helplessness and fear into the room. Both participants also implicitly present themselves as worthwhile partners, dependable, compromising and respecting international obligations; Yakov's 'like the UN said' aligns with Miyada's 'walking wherever … the UN tells them'). Still, it is as though in spite of both participants' motivation to take the other's perspective, they are not sure of their ability to fathom it. They rely instead on their peers' assumed accessibility to his or her in-group members' minds, apparently based on the implicit assumption that shared identity allows for identification and empathy.

However, as the conversation proceeds, Miyada and Yakov raise more challenging demands for taking the perspective of the other and for metacognitive reflection on perspective taking, as we can see below. Miyada challenges Yakov to empathize with a Palestinian resident as the Israeli forces approach. Yakov stands up to the task, managing both to candidly admit what would be his own inclination and to contextualize his perspective taking based on the texts he studied. In the context he reconstructs escape as a sensible choice for a civilian. It is even more interesting to see that his Arab

peer's probes help Yakov to progress from a simple rational choice model of perspective taking into a more complex empathy:

> Miyada: I've a question: if you were a Palestinian, among the Palestinians who were then what would you do? Like what would you do with such a huge force standing against you?
> Yakov: …Truth is I'd run … if just like it's written the Palestinians had no army and no leader then I'd run, try to save my life
> Miyada: But that's your land … like how do flee from it? What are you going to do?
> Yakov: Right. On the one hand you flee, on the other hand want to stay.

As we can see, Yakov's attempt at perspective taking relies on analysing the text ('if … like it's written here'). In addition, it seems his relation to the events is mainly cognitive, as is his assessment of his probable choice in place of the Palestinians at the time. Escape is the rational choice for the defenceless, leaderless civilian who wants 'to save my life'. This may also reflect the Jewish secular sector's current rational instrumental attitude towards land and territory. However, Miyada seems to stress the unique relation of the Palestinian villagers to the land and its emotional meaning ('Your land … how do you flee from it?'). In response to this probe, Yakov integrates the cognitive and the emotional and empathizes with the historical agent's dilemma. He reconstructs the mental state of being torn between conflicting priorities, between rational survivalist instincts and personal and collective attachments ('On the one hand you flee, on the other hand want to stay'). This progress in intergroup empathy is achieved through the interaction between discussants from both groups and the texts they learned.

However, it is worth noting that our discussants progress even further, to the realm of meta-cognition, reflecting on the purpose and utility of intergroup perspective taking. Both participants appear very interested in (the somewhat cyclical notion of) the other's perspective on the outcome of learning the other's perspective. As we may see, their answers to this identical question are somewhat different:

> Yakov: Let's see … ah, I've a question. D'you think listening to our version … the Israelis', it helps? It helps the Palestinian people?
> Miyada: Yes, sure, very much, because we can know what's your strength and weakness, can use it according to what we want to live in, also to live in peace with you we need to know what you're thinking, how you think on your history, on our joint history … and you?
> Yakov: If I … if it helps to know what you think? Er … yes, because if I hear … as many opinions I hear … I can know more things about the story … I can know what really happened

Miyada's explanation of the purpose of perspective taking is relational and utilitarian. She sees its main virtue of understanding the other's historical perspective in allowing the minority better adaptation to the majority. Beyond

improving adaptability, she assumes knowledge of the other's perspective would promote better intergroup relations and perhaps even some shared identity ('our history'). Yakov's view of the topic is quite different. For him the purpose of encountering the other's perspective is intellectual: getting closer to the historical truth. Knowledge for him has a cumulative quality. The more opinions he hears, the more he'll know what really happened. Both these views on the values of perspective taking can account for the non-confrontational discussion style. Opinions need hardly be refuted when they are assumed to furnish a window into the other's mentality or to accumulate into a larger truth.

Discussion

We should first note that the implicit fear of undermining students' national identification through an encounter with out-group perspectives seems unfounded. The lack of effect on national identification may be due to the strength of preconceptions and bias or to the limited nature of the intervention. However, it should be noted the while the intervention did not affect attitudes towards the in-group, it did impact the stance towards the out-group's perspective. We have seen that interest in the other's perspective in the conventional approach decreased, as compared with the empathetic-dual-narrative and critical-disciplinary approaches. This may show that engaging with 'official history' may reduce motivation for perspective taking. An encounter with the other's perspective, on the other hand, fosters or at least maintains motivation for perspective taking, in line with the claims of history educators and peace educators.

Arab minority members seem to be more affected by an encounter with difficult history and by the differences between the methods of teaching. This may exemplify the effect of the forced exposure to the majority's perspective.[33] Dominant groups' historical perspective may indeed challenge minority members' positive social identity more strongly. Thus it may be that a defensive attempt at disengagement may be more pronounced, aligning with the stronger need to counter the majority's image of the minority.[34] Decreased interest in the other's perspective may express such disengagement in defence of positive identity. Defensive reactions could apparently be reduced when studying in an affirmative context, which appears to be supplied by the empathetic dual-narrative approach.

The follow-up study showed that discussions performed in multiple-perspective teaching approaches featured higher frequency of joint solutions to the historical controversy. This outcome is notable as we may have expected more agreement among students who studied one authoritative narrative (as in the conventional approach) than among students using

conflicting sources. These findings align with the assumption that exposure to the other's narrative would promote intergroup empathy and lead to better intergroup interaction.[35]

We should qualify our interpretation of findings as evidence of the effects of the educational intervention, noting its limited scope and duration. Agreement may have also been facilitated by other factors such as the wish to not end a rare intergroup encounter in a sour tone or the wish to impress peers and researchers. However, these factors should have affected all conditions uniformly. The fact that differences did arise appears to stem at least in part from an encounter with learning materials and procedures which resonate in their discussions. Even if agreement may not always have been profound – and it is of course unclear to what extent participants would carry it on with them – it is definitely not a forgone outcome of discussing conflicting narratives.

Student accounts in the empathetic and critical conditions were more charged, underscoring traumatic events and unflattering perspectives (on Jewish Israeli history mainly). Still, these 'dangerous memories'[36] seem to have led to less confrontational discourse. This may be due, in part, to the more frequent and willing acknowledgment of the Palestinian perspective by Jewish participants in these conditions. This acknowledgement may have served as a precondition for mutual trust by minority members who appear to have been threatened by the majority narrative. The apparent stronger impact of Palestinian narratives may also stem from the fact that these students relate to 'living' collective memory[37] still communicable in the family.

Of course, neither agreement on historical questions nor non-confrontational discussion styles are prescribed here as educational goals. A teacher may (and to some degree should) celebrate debate as a fertile learning opportunity, and acknowledge conflicting answers to historical questions. From this perspective it may even be seen as reassuring news that even minority and majority students studying the same authoritative narrative reach diverse conclusions and maintain diverse views of a historical topic.

To sum up, this study implies that educators should not shy away from approaching focal aspects of national heritage from multiple and even critical perspectives. Furthermore, exposure to the perspectives of diverse communities may in fact promote better intergroup dialogue and mutual understanding. Such outcomes are of growing importance as our societies become more diverse and conflicting perspectives on national history abound. While teaching multiple perspectives may be time consuming, it seems the motivational and attitudinal benefits arising from them justify teaching this way. To substantiate Levstik's claim, it seems that 'articulating the silences' that teachers and students maintain on contested topics allows for emotional, interpersonal and cognitive involvement that is more than worth the effort.[38]

Notes

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Tsafrir Goldberg is a lecturer at the University of Haifa (Israel). He specializes in history education, the relations of learning and identity and the impact of collective narratives on intergroup relations. He published various (co-authored) articles in journals such as *Narrative Inquiry*, *Learning and Instruction*, *Cognition and Instruction* and *Journal of Peace Education*.