



Gender and Sex-Based Stereotypes in Palestinian Jewish Track III Peace Dialogue Encounters

Abstract

The objective of this research has been to demonstrate and analyze unequal gender relations between men and women in dialogue encounters between Palestinian and Jewish Israelis, and to map gender inequality in peace education projects of dialogue encounters. The paper will use gender analysis to examine the experiences of Palestinian and Jewish men and women, group facilitators and participants in track iii dialogue encounters which have taken place during the last 10 years. The qualitative research addresses two main themes that were raised by the 22 facilitators and 12 participants who were interviewed for this paper; the deconstruction of national stereotypes and their transformation into gender based stereotypes .

Keyword

Gender, Sex-Based Stereotypes, peace dialogue, Israel, palestine, gender analyses, 1325, gender group facilitators, de-radicalisation, gender trainings, unequal gender relations

The text of the article

In order to illustrate and give clear view on the process of breaking stereotypes in Jewish Palestinian dialogue encounters, an exercise will be describe that were used by different dialog encounters organizations during 10 different sessions. We would like to present the different perspectives on these exercises as described by facilitators, participants, and project management in their interviews and add our own observations from watching the sessions .

During the exercise the Jewish and Palestinian uni-lateral groups are asked to paint or draw a Palestinian and a Jew. By doing so they often expose not only the stereotypes they have on the 'other' group but more importantly the stereotypes they carry and hold on themselves.

Self-stereotypes are more common within subordinated or marginalized groups but also can be found in dominant privileged groups. However, marginalized groups hold much more negative stereotypes on themselves while hegemonic groups often hold positive stereotypes about their own ethnic, religious or national group.

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.The Palestinian unilateral groups often select a religious rural person to describe the Palestinians even though most of them are secular and urban youth. In ten out of the ten sessions that I have observed the image of Palestinian was a male. Thus, in these 10 sessions the Palestinian image either religious or very traditional. The traditional aspects that symbolized their image were marked by depicting traditional items such as kafia - a traditional head scarf - and Masbacha - prayer beads .

The groups also chose to depict the Palestinian image with a nationalistic character. They signified it by using the image of waving the Palestinian flag or by depicting Palestinian symbols of national pride. In half of the cases, they used the image of the Handala - a cartoon made by the Palestinian political cartoonist, Naji Ali. The Handala is the most famous of Naji al-Ali's characters and it shows a 10-years-old Palestinian refugee boy with his hands clasped behind his back. The artist explains that the 10-years-old boy's drawing represented his own age when he was forced to leave Palestine and symbolizes his inability to grow up here until he could return to his homeland.

The Handala's position turned back and having his hands clasped symbolizes the character's rejection and exclusion in addition to the lack of ability to overcome the oppression. It portrays a feeling of helplessness to changing the situation of the Palestinian people. Handala wears ragged clothes and is barefoot, symbolizing the Palestinian refugees' poverty. It should be mentioned here that most of the participants carry with them the Handala image printed on their shirts, key holders and scarfs.

The choice of a male persona for the image of a Palestinian by mix gender groups represents the gender role of masculine protection assigned to the presenter of Palestinians. In addition, the reference to a male character can be read as the hidden group's reflection of the outside society, where Palestinian women are not often shown in the public sphere and male politicians and leaders are leading the community. A traditional male symbolizes to the Palestinian participants an image that is more representative, important and unpretentious.

When depicting an Israeli Jew's image most of the time the Palestinian group chooses to depict a male as well. By eight out of the ten sessions the group drew the image of a male persona. The image of the Israeli Jew was young and in eight cases it was depicted as male soldier carrying a weapon. In half of the cases he was covered with blood to symbolize his recent killings.

By drawing the Israeli soldier with the Palestinian people's blood over his uniform the Palestinian group is non-verbally telling the Jewish group that they think the Jews are murdering their people. It is a representation, or an echo of De Saussure's analysis of visual language as operating as a complete system at a given time and as systems signifying the stereotypes and political views the Palestinian hold on the Jewish group at a given time. The signifier here is blood on the soldier's uniform - blood that can be read by the Jewish group as if a Palestinian injures the soldier, but the actual signified meaning is that the soldier has just finished killing a Palestinian.

In two other cases the drawn image was an Israeli Jewish woman. She was depicted as a highly attractive (sexy) and almost naked soldier. She also carried a weapon and was ridi-



culed by wearing a very short skirt and smoking a cigarette, which can be interpreted as symbolizing promiscuity. In both cases the image of the stereotypical Jewish female had blond hair.

The Jewish Israeli group image of a Jewish person is a strong male in 100 percent of the cases. In 40 percent of the cases the man is wearing a traditional kibbutz hat from the 40's and 50's and carrying agriculture tools. In 40 percent of the cases the male image is in possession of a high-tech technology such as a computer. In 30 percent of the cases the ideal male Jewish image - in the eyes of the Jewish group - is drawn signifying a male image as protecting his family. The family - girlfriend, parents and siblings - are shown at home and in the background. When the home is drawn it is a classic, ideal European style home with red roofing tile and a small garden.

The message the Jewish group is sending to the Palestinian group by representing the image as protector is that the Israeli soldiers are not cold blooded killers as they (the Palestinians) might think but in fact they are actual protectors of real threats. The signifier is a home that is hosting civilians and the signified is the protection, perceived by the Jewish group as a necessity.

In some groups the participants were mostly from a Mizrahi (North Africa and Arabia) or Ethiopian descendant but still, they chose to draw an Ashkenazi to depict the image of Jews.

Jones argues that it is a common practice for subordinated groups in society - to present themselves as more progressive (choosing an image that is at least considered as progressive in their society) than they feel they actually are. In this chapter's wordings - they are trying to hide the stereotypes they hold on themselves and portray themselves as more -what they perceive as modern .

When drawing the image of a Palestinian in 70 percent of the cases the Jewish participants drew a low class labor employee - dirty, working hard cleaning a shopping mall, serving food or washing a car and wearing western baggy and dirty cloth. The image of the Palestinian as a poor dirty person is deeply rooted in the Israeli Jewish youth discourse. Bar describes her surprise when she encountered Palestinians for the first time:

They were different then I thought they would be. Up until this point of this encounter I only met Palestinians who are cleaning and serving. But the participants resembled me - the boys at least and some of the girls. The others - the majority of the girls were wearing hi-jab which was what I thought they would wear but hey the boys could pass easily like us, like Jewish Israelis.

Interestingly, in 100 percent of the cases the groups drew their own image as a male both in Palestinian and Jewish groups. Even when the majority of the group's members were female their 'self' was represented by a male image.

If we compare and connect this choice with the language choices in the previous chapter we can state that the group as a whole and particularly the minority group is choosing to converse in the majority's hegemonic language and represent itself in a majority's hege-



monic image. The groups from both nations chose to represent themselves as masculine, which is perceived culturally and socially as a strong image. Even when the masculine image was that of a refugee and a victim (Handala) it represented a strong image of struggle for freedom.

Only when they depicted their 'enemy's' image did the groups sometimes choose to depict a feminine image, and have used it negatively, to refer to the other group as weak and ridiculing them. This is a well-known researched and discussed phenomenon as echoed in Amany's next analysis:

The girls and women are ridiculed in the sessions, but the stereotypes about them are completely ignored. This happened between girls and boys, when the boys role-play and dress up like girls they really dress up like prostitutes. It is happening in every gender workshop, when a boy is asked to describe a girl's situation he then chooses a sexualized context .

We had a workshop that demonstrated masculinity and femininity in cross-gender groups. The girls' simulation, presented by the boys, was that of a few girls going to the shopping mall, one of them is getting her first period, she's bleeding all over the place, screaming in pain, and in the end taken in an ambulance to the hospital.

The boys did a short piece - took balloons and put them inside their shirt for breasts, and all 3 walked by like prostitutes, and said 'O, there are so many things to buy at the shopping mall.' The boy who played the girl who got her period said 'My breasts are so big and sour,' and then he blew up the balloons, saying 'now I feel much better.'

The original story by the girls was about someone who felt pains in her breasts and got a period in the shopping mall, and that she was extremely embarrassed and panicked. Her friends called her mother, who explained her and her friends what is a first period.

This is a universal story about embarrassment, pain and concern, not only among Jews and Arabs, but the boys concentrated in blowing up the balloon as their boobs. A really misogynic situation but completely ignored by the male facilitator in the room.

Gender and Sex-Based Stereotypes

When national stereotypes break down they are transformed into gender stereotypes which in a way serve as a common ground for both groups. Pnina, a 35-years-old female Jewish facilitator testifies:

The same colonialist stereotypes the Jewish group held on Palestinian were transformed into gender based stereotypes on women - mainly Palestinian women. Instead of a Palestinian who likes to work hard, serve and satisfy the colonizers' needs and wants, it is now transformed into the image of women in general who are perceived this way.

The stereotypes were a bit different for the Palestinian and Jewish women but the mechanisms behind them were the same. For example, they drew the Palestinian women as cooking, cleaning, taking care of everybody and the Jewish women as serving food in sexy



cloths, hinting towards sexual services. Maybe this is what they wanted. No. this IS what they wanted.

We have observed earlier that only when depicting a Jew's image the Palestinian participants chose to depict it as a female (in 20 percent of the cases) and in a manner meant to ridicule the image of the Jews. Let us now observe the Jewish group's attitude.

In 50 percent of the cases the Jewish participants chose to depict the image of a Palestinian as a male and the other half as a female. In three cases they drew an image of a suicide bomber twice depicted as a female and once as a male. They explained that they drew the female suicide bomber according to an image they had in their minds of the young Palestinian female suicide bomber Hanadi Tayseer Jaradat, a 29 year old attorney from the Palestinian West Bank city of Jenin who detonated a bomb in a restaurant in Haifa, Israel in 2003, killing herself and 19 Israelis and injuring 50 others.

The choice of Hanadi Tayseer Jaradat is interesting to our analysis. First of all, almost all suicide bombers were males. And, out of the ten female suicide bombers Jaradat is the only one who is considered attractive according to the pictures that were published after her death. She is wearing heavy makeup and a bright red lipstick. She is looking directly into the camera, like in a school picture snapshot. Her image was used for political and artistic purposes in Israel and it is publicly well known. Her picture on the news web sites has received a wide variety of comments about her beauty and sexy looks. The Jewish group itself made efforts to highlight the image's lips with red-maroon markers.

Boys, Girls

Gender or sex based stereotypes are crude generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of persons and groups. Gender stereotypes can be positive or negative, but they rarely convey accurate information about the person or group or people. When the society or a group a-priori applies gender assumptions regardless of actual confirmation, they are perpetuating gender stereotyping. Sex and gender stereotypes are the assumptions that a person from a particular gender is acting in a particular way due to their gender and that he or she should have a specific social role due to their sex or gender. For example a common stereotype about the Jewish female participants in dialog encounters, held mainly by Palestinian male participants but also by Palestinian female participant, is that they are very easy to seduce and that they are coming to the encounter for sex. These stereotypes exist among the Jewish girls, as well, as Yafit, an 18-years-old female Jewish participant explains:

We were talking about how the Palestinian girls are in danger even if they just look at boys while we were all over them. It was very interesting. Some (Palestinian girls) said that it is true and that they will be killed if they look at boys, but others said that it is a stereotype, that it is not true and that they can choose their boyfriend more or less like us.

However cultural differences do exist, without having to withdraw to stereotypes. Dina, a 19-years-old female Palestinian participant comments:

We were talking about boys and girls issues in each society, there are many differences ...



And Yael, a 22-years old female Jewish participant adds:

They were telling us over the break that they don't even hold hands between girls and boys, I didn't know it.

Cultural difference caused gender misunderstandings and stereotypes due to different interpretations of the same situations. Rose a-21-years-old female Jewish participant shares:

When we, the Jewish girls, arrived to the venue we were talking among ourselves about the Palestinian boys. We said that we have reservations about them but not out of racism...We agreed unanimously that the Palestinian boys are meticulously dressed using perfume and taking care of their hair and even that some of them are handsome. We thought therefore that they are nice.

And Tawfik, a-21-years-old male Palestinian participant adds his perspective:

The Jewish girls looked very open... they didn't wear a lot of cloths... we saw it as an invitation for partying with them

Some of the Jewish girls were really beautiful. We started talking to them and they talked back. They were laughing and we kind of hit it on with them right from the beginning. They behaved like they want us which we were very happy about. Maybe now I can say that we took advantage of it, of them.

This stereotype of the Jewish females' so called 'disposition' for sex, much like all the other gender-based stereotypes that arise at the encounters, is reinforced due to the fact that although one of the main topics of dialog encounters is addressing the issue of stereotypes and prejudices still gender-based stereotypes are not only not dealt with, they are also treated as irrelevant and pushed aside when raised by both facilitators and other participants.

The Informality of the Gender Discourse

While the dialog encounter sessions are difficult emotionally for the participants the social evenings function as an opportunity to get together in an informal way. The process of breaking down national and racist stereotypes is difficult. The Jewish participants have to take a long clear look at themselves and their racist prejudices. The Palestinian participants are often confronted with the stereotypes they have on themselves. It is a long and painful process. In difficult days when the sessions are emotional and the Palestinian-Jewish conflict is open on the table, the social evenings are a time to relax.

The program in the social evenings is usually a talent show, a line of skits or a dancing party where the Jewish male and female participants are dancing with the male Palestinian participants. The Palestinian female participants are sitting on the side and converse among themselves or with a few of the Jewish female participants. The informality of the social evenings exposes the delicate and complex interrelations between gender and nationality while reinforcing the hierarchy of the national aspect over gender, although both are conceived as interrelated. Shiri, a 32-years-old female Jewish facilitator explains:



For me it is easier that they are laughing at women in the social evening. Yes they are laughing at women in a not very nice way - in a sexist way - but it is still easier for me. I feel that I can handle it and break it with them, maybe because of the different settings. (In the sessions) The goal of the encounter is nationality, breaking national and racial stereotypes.

And Ragada, a 30-years-old female Palestinian facilitator, comments :

The national stereotypes are slowly breaking and becoming less and less hard and then-boom! Social night and they role play the greatest sexist stereotypes. No one says a word. The feminist facilitators are talking about it but only within their group. Challenge that would challenge the issue that seem factual- we came to break national stereotypes on Palestinian. The aim is to change their political views not make them aware to gender. It is very sad for me.

The fact that gender dilemmas, which are strongly linked to the sessions' topic of stereotypes appear only during breaks has been repeatedly discussed in the interviews and observations of encounters, which were conducted for this research. The phenomenon of the gender 'talk' appearing mainly during breaks demonstrates the invisibility of gender-based stereotypes in the dialog encounter sessions. Furthermore, the experiences of gender dialog and the work around gender-based stereotypes are described in the interviews as a discourse that has a place only in informal settings. More so, it was regarded as an unappropriate discussion topic for the formal sessions, as Maayan, a 22-years-old female Jewish participant testifies:

I said in the group that the Palestinian male participants are looking at me as if I am a piece of meat. The Palestinian female facilitator started to say something about it; I felt that she wanted to talk about it. I felt good. Then the Jewish male facilitator stopped her and said that we need to finish what we started and that we are behind schedule.

And Rose, a 21-years-old female Jewish participant adds her experience and analysis:

In the session we each had to say an axiom that we might share with other people in the bi-national group. The Palestinian boys 'felt comfortable' and one of them made a statement about sexual experience. If I remember correctly he even explicitly said 'anyone who already slept with someone.'

Two of the Jewish girls were moving in their chairs in discomfort and the rest of the group, Jews and Palestinians girls, were quiet. Some of the Jewish boys were laughing together with him.

Everybody felt that this participant was not part of the group, and that he made this statement as his way to show that he is not a 'good boy' but a real man. The Jewish boys also felt that they needed to support and 'respect' the Palestinian's boy...

The facilitators, both women, said that we don't have to answer his statement. After that, they regained their calmness and said that no one will answer and that we will continue to the next axiom since this is disrespectful. So, we continued the introduction session.



They couldn't bring themselves to process this incident with the group since it was too strong and because there were many other things planned to talk about.

The last 2 quotes demonstrate how sex and gender based stereotypes are deepened and strengthened by the facilitators' act of ignoring and disregarding these stereotypes even if they were revealed in the dialog group's discussion. This would have never happened should a national stereotype have been raised in this manner due to the deep professional understanding that ignoring stereotypes, generally leads to their reinforcement.

Four different stereotypes feature in these quotes: The first, which we have open this subchapter with, is the prejudice about Jewish women's promiscuity. There is a strong stereotype that Jewish women are easy to have sex with, that Jewish women participate in the dialog encounters with the expectation of having sex and that their liberal modern clothing is interpreted as a symbol and a proof for to their promiscuity.

The second stereotype is that of Palestinian males as being only interested in having sex with white Jewish women. This stereotype is well known to be applied against men from non-white, minority groups and, as we have shown already, is adopted by them, as well. The stereotype rests primarily on the assumption that having sex and/or sexual and friendly attention of white women will make them feel more socially accepted and honored by the white majority. This is mixed and reinforced by the prejudice in the Israeli society that Palestinian men would like to take advantage of Jewish women sexually, either by raping them or by seduction, and would attack them physically if and whenever they are able to do so.

The third prejudice that was deepened is the stereotype on Palestinian women as shy and as being in great shock and embarrassment when the issue of sexual or romantic relationships is raised in the group. The stereotypical perception of Palestinian women is that of naïve, pure, innocent little girls who know little about the relationship between the sexes.

The fourth stereotype that was reinforced by this statement and process is that Jewish males will sale out 'their' (another stereotype) women in order to create a male bond with other males, in this case the Palestinian male participants.

By disregarding the issue of gender in the group the facilitators are making a statement that this encounter is dealing with national stereotypes, identity and national challenges only. Anything that happens beyond the national level inside the group, even if it is stereotypical and harmful to sub-groups or individual participants who are part of the process, remains invisible. By ignoring the gender issue the facilitators are further legitimizing sexist behaviors and encouraging them to take place in the dialog group. The message sent back to the group by the facilitators when making gender stereotypes invisible is that non-nationality related forms of sexism and prejudices are less important and less harmful.

Feminist pedagogy and multicultural education explicate the need for social change as a quest for change beyond political correctness, beyond "tolerance," and beyond cultural sensitivity workshops. In critical feminist and multicultural educational settings, the focus is



put on studying and discussing experiences and narratives of the subordinated - or marginalized - groups of students, with comparison to hegemony.

In the dialog encounters, however, the focus remains on the national and tolerance discourse rather than on the breaking, or at least dealing and conversing about the subordination of sub groups such as women, or the differences between stereotypical ideas about Jewish and Palestinian women. Mia, a 29-years-old female Jewish facilitator explains:

We were talking in the group about the post-colonialist term 'historical amnesia' and I wanted to yell, 'hey women were forgotten in history - hello... It is so relevant to talk about gender'. I think I even said something but it didn't fly in the group - they talked about it a bit and then it was neglected, hey, you know what - forgotten- like women...

The facilitators' act of ignoring gender tensions and gender-based stereotypes when they are already raised has several different reasons. The first alludes the sensitive connection between gender and nationality, as raising the gender issue is perceived as harming, or 'hurting' the Palestinian cause, as it focuses the discussion around flows mainly in the Palestinian society, as if trying to weaken the Palestinian empowerment process. Mia's comment about her role as a facilitator in such a case demonstrates this dilemma:

I felt that they are 'eating' the Palestinian participants in the group. It was a weak Palestinian group, they didn't voice their side and needs so much and the Jewish female participants wanted to talk about gender and how gender is played in the Palestinian society.

They returned from the break with stories about how women are being sold and how girls are being killed by men because they are not covered enough and because someone thinks they have a boyfriend. I was concerned that it will be degrading for the entire Palestinian group and stopped it.

In a way what Mia did is very similar to what we have discussed about Palestinian female participants' choice of act and language in the chapter about language - she saw the act of taking responsibility over the Palestinian participants as an act of protecting the weak - she, in a way, took on herself a masculine role and voice and put her own voice second .

The choice not to make the connection between sexist stereotypes and national stereotypes signals the group that gender stereotypes are legitimate. Ignoring gender stereotypes in order to struggle against racist or national- racist stereotypes is a very well-known and researched phenomenon in Black studies. It happens when the educational methodology in general - or specific facilitators in particular - are bound to prefer anti-racist education over anti-sexism education and lack the tools and/or ability to link the two together. This inability to understand the link is echoed in the comment of Tawfiq, a 35-years-old male Palestinian facilitator:

It was just not the right time to talk about gender. The group came from the break in a stormy mood to talk about honor killings. I wanted them to see that they are running away from hard topics and prevented this conversation. I reflected over and over that it is not the issue. It was hard but I felt they were talking about gender because it was easy and they do not have to challenge themselves there.



In black studies it is argued that the subordinated group feels that the dominant sub-group is looking for means and ways to deepen the stereotypes against them by shading a negative image of the marginalized sub-group ability to deal with contemporary, progressive issues.

Describing it as 'Running away' or avoiding the 'difficult' topic is a statement that repeats itself when gender stereotypes were raised both in the encounter group sessions and during the interviews. It is part of the educational phenomenon of disregarding the subordination of different sub groups in the dialog group and concentrating on the national-racial tolerance rather than tolerance and multiculturalism in general.

Most of the male facilitators felt that talking about gender is a defense mechanism and a deviation move used by the group in order not to talk about the real issues - the national racist stereotypes. Bar testifies:

He said it is not the right time to talk about it. He said that it is a deviation of the group from looking at their stereotypes. I felt that these are also their stereotypes. For me it is not different if someone thinks that a Palestinian is stupid and a slave or if someone thinks that about women. We had big arguments about it. He won.

As explained earlier the picture is complex as appears in Tamir's interview:

Every time they talked about gender it was to show how the Palestinians are backwards and don't know how to behave. It was for highlighting how not modern or progressive they are. I felt it is causing damage to our group and tried to protect them from it. We came here to talk about something else.

The facilitators often feel that it is neither the right time nor the place to open up discussions on gender stereotypes. The Jewish facilitator would not want the Palestinians to feel attacked by the group as they feel that gender is a topic which will allow Jews to be seen even more progressive than the Palestinians and that opening up issues of gender will portray the Palestinian as uneducated and backwards.

When the complexity of gender and nationality arise, the facilitators tend to differentiate between sexist and racist stereotypes. Subsequently the facilitators tend to give more importance to the national ones and therefore ignore and make invisible gender based-stereotypes. What we argue and highlight here is that this act, with its well explained reasoning, is legitimizing, affirming, enhancing, and aggravating the most sexist stereotypes, and thus harming the intended process of stereotype-breaking for one of the sub-groups. Accommodating sexist/racist behavior, language remarks and not dealing with stereotypes is actually reinforcing such behavior rather than questioning, checking, or opposing it.

National Stereotypes Turn into Gender Stereotypes

Classical multicultural education theories, as much as veteran feminist theories are single-issue oriented, and deem it important that one issue, gender or race or nationality etc., is prioritized and challenged, arguing that addressing other issues harm the main topic of discussion or social change.



Contemporary feminist theories have emerged from the critiques of traditional feminist theories. The Black feminist school, also known as 'womanism', argue that racial and class issues must also be at the center, along with gender issues, while uncovering the interrelations between the three. Both critical theories indicate that we cannot combine oppressions, still we should consider overarching systems of oppression.

In critical pedagogy theory the consciousness represents the ability and capacity to critically reflect and act upon one's sociopolitical environment. Hopper describes this critical reflection as:

(...)learning to think critically about accepted ways of thinking and feelings, discerning the hidden interests in underlying assumptions and framing notions (whether these are class, gender, or race/ethnicity based). It means learning to see, in the mundane particulars of ordinary lives, how history works, how received ways of thinking and feeling serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality.

Let us now examine what happens when the need for this act of reflection and reaching is not met.

Joyappa argues that by disregarding the sexist remarks at the dialog encounter as stereotypical the group is indirectly encouraged to transform the national stereotypes into gender prejudices. This argument coincides with Dina's, a 27-years-old female Jewish facilitator, observation:

In one of the encounters one Jewish girl participant has told the whole group that when she was not yet born and her mom still pregnant with her, they were stuck on road while on their way to a medical check. The car was broken so her father stayed with the car while her mother hitchhiked to the hospital.

And so, while the mother and the man who stopped to take her were driving to the hospital the mother realized that she is driving with an Arab-Palestinian man. The girl told us that once her mother realized that she asked him to stop and let her out - in the middle of the way, on the side of the road.

Five months later she gave birth and the doctor in the hospital was the man who drove her. The man she got off his car because he was an Arab was her doctor and helped her to give birth...

And she continues:

This story led to a very fruitful conversation in the group about stereotypes but no one said that she got off his ride because she was afraid that he is going to rape her. They all said that she thought he is going to kill her because of nationalist reasons. They completely disregarded they gender aspect - that she was a woman who was afraid of a man - an Arab man.

The discourse is how any Palestinian man is scary and seems a threat to any Jewish woman. The prejudice is that 'The Arab man' is dangerous for 'The Jewish woman'. The stereotype is justified through the fact that 'The Palestinian man' would like to revenge or struggle via violence in order to fulfill a national sentiment. And so, the fear of the Palestin-



ian man as a terrorist who will kidnap and harm a Jewish person as a result of a nationalist-Islamic ideology is dealt with as a stereotype.

However, the referred narrative demonstrates how dealing with only one layer of stereotypes about Palestinian is lacking another layer of the stereotypes of the 'other man'. Thus, while the Palestinian man in this story 'loses' his role as a threatening terrorist, he is still 'kept' in his stereotyped role as rapist.

The stereotype of a scary Palestinian male has two parts or layers of the same notion of danger. If we are looking at the above example: is the Jewish woman only afraid of Palestinians? If the Palestinian who is driving the car was a woman, would she ask her to stop the car?

The theme and narrative of the 'other man' stereotyped as a rapist and the fear of the black rapist or the Palestinian rapist within the majority of Jewish society is repeated in most of the interviews with the Jewish facilitators. This narrative is a representation of the general reality of Women in Israel as Jewish women are socially constructed and taught to be afraid of Arab or Palestinian men as the enemy. Strangers, especially those with an Arab appearance (but also black males) are considered to embody evil. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a Palestinian man symbolizes, for many young Jewish women, the scary, evil terrorist who will rape them and hurt them if only he had a chance to do so. This notion is reinforced by the media that usually reports only the rapes committed by another - immigrant workers, non-normative citizens and mentally ill persons and the like, and Palestinian men, the number one enemy - all outsiders, all considered a threat not only to women, but to the Israeli society and nation as a whole.

Women in Israel are also being educated to take on the role of being defended and protected by Israeli men, as they are considered to be the representatives of the whole collective and of the nation's pride and honor. Symbolic part of manhood is protecting the nation, thus also protecting women. The equation is women = the nation's pride and honor, both are in constant need for protection. Therefore, rape by an outside enemy represents a violation of the nation's honor together with women's dignity and pride, and men and women alike are raised to fear such an outsider who would hurt Israeli Jewish women as a means of hurting the Jewish Israeli society and state similarly to the phenomenon in former Yugoslavia. Women's virginity and sexuality needs to be protected from the enemy by all means.

The Jewish Israeli society's protectiveness of 'its own women' is a sign for ownership expressed in people's behavior in addition to being signified in language.

In the Hebrew language, the word for husband is *Baa'al*, meaning *owner*, referring to men's role during sexual intercourse as through this act they own, or get possession of, the woman. Women in Israel are thus culturally considered as the *property* of men, through sex, and when protecting women from an outside threat like a rape, men, besides protecting the nation's honor, are protecting their, sexual, *property* and their own pride - protecting their own home from the outside threats.



Yet, interestingly in reality women are more likely to be sexually violated by the very men who are supposed to take care of and protect them. The real threat is the one from within. Out of the total of sexual assaults in Israel, 94 percent are committed by an acquaintance. Women are much more likely to be raped or assaulted by their boyfriend, a family member, neighbor, or a peer or someone in high command in their army base. Jewish Women in Israel are hardly ever sexually assaulted or raped by Palestinian men. Respectively, Palestinian women are mostly at risk for sexual assaults by Palestinian men and not by Jewish soldiers as at times presented in the Palestinian media. However, very little has been done around the knot of gender and nationality prejudices and the deconstruction of gender based stereotypes of Palestinian men - in dialog encounters and elsewhere.

CONCLUTIONS - Beyond National Racial Stereotypes to Sexist Gender Stereotypes

The research deals with national racial stereotypes in contrast to gender stereotypes. The interviews and the workshop observation classically indicate that the stereotypes with which participants depict their own image and that of the other nation, deal superficially with the security-national area .

In addition to drawing, and raising national stereotypes to the surface, analyzing and deconstructing them, during the workshop on stereotypes, racial and national prejudices are constantly challenged. The way the participants view themselves as Jews and what Jewish representation is, in contrast to how Palestinians see themselves, what Palestinian representation is, and how Jews comprehend what "Palestinian" is, are all challenged, discussed and in most cases stereotypes are successfully broken down and changed. The perception of what Jewish is and what Palestinian is becomes more complex after dialogue encounters.

During the encounter, complex identity is constructed and many national stereotypes are broken. The participants understand that the Palestinian, like the Jew, is not only one thing and the superficial racial stereotypes which participants held at the beginning are completely changed. During this change, gender and sexist stereotypes rise to the surface. From the interviews, it becomes clear that there is disregard for gender stereotypes. They are completely transparent and if they are raised either in the group or by the facilitators, the general atmosphere is that gender discourse is not legitimate and does not belong in an encounter dealing with prejudices .

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