

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF-CATEGORIZATION OF BEDOUIN TEENAGERS IN ISRAEL AND THEIR RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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Abstract:

This study researched the Bedouin population in Israel. Its purpose is to examine the self-categorization of teenagers from the Bedouin sector, the extent of its importance and suitability for them, and to identify their frequent and significant categorizations and examine the relationship between these categorizations and the subjects' residential areas.

The study population was high school students from the Bedouin sector in Israel and the sample included 430 students.

The study hypothesis was that Bedouin teenagers will choose different categorizations which will be significant for them and they will emphasize the importance and compatibility of their chosen categorizations. Relationship will be found between these categorizations and residential areas.

The research tool was an original questionnaire that was written for the research, distributed to a small sample in pilot study and had 0.74 reliability.

The research findings confirmed the hypothesis that the subjects' significant self-definition is related to their residential areas.

Another finding shows that there is no conflict between Israeli and Palestinian identity in any place.

Key word: residential areas, self-categorization, self-identity, Bedouin population.

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Introduction

After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the Arab residents that remained within Israel's borders belonged to several different social groups. Traditionally society groups the Arab population into 3 groups: urban, rural, and Bedouin (Zarnuga, 2001; Rakaz and Al-Galel, 2005).

Pioneering studies began in an attempt to examine the identity of the minority group and the nature of its members' identification and affiliations, in part to provide the authorities with information to help them decide what actions should be taken under different circumstances. Indeed, Bedouin identity and Arab identity alike were not clear to early researchers due to the confusion caused by their being in a transition period.

The identity of the Arab minority has been influenced by the political relations between the State of Israel and the Palestinians outside the country. These relations are constantly changing, especially since the outbreak of the "Al-Aqsa Intifada (Uprising) in October 2000" (Dayan, 2000; Ozatsky-Lazar, 2001).

Perhaps in light of this difficulty the issue was not researched for two decades (Al-Haj, 2000; Ghanem, 1997).

However, when sociologists and psychologists and other researchers started to research Bedouin identity they included Bedouins together with the Muslims, those of the minority group, but later on, research were dedicated to the Bedouin population alone. Just as other member of minorities, Bedouins belong to four circles of identity: Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians and Israeli. In all studies these four identities were salient but in a different order. In all researches Bedouins stressed their significant identity. This raises the question: What causes adolescents to emphasize one particular identity and not another?

Since the individual will emphasize the identity which is most positive and significant for him, there is a basic assumption that the identity the individual respondent will emphasize is significant for him, which raises the question. Due to the stark division of land in Israel, one of the most important factors to question is: Is this identity related to the residential region of the individual

respondent? In other words: Is there a relationship between the individual's selfcategorization group and the residential region where he lives?

Thus in this study selfcategorization was also examined but unlike previous studies it was not referred to as an identity but as just one component of identity.

The objective is to identify the frequent significant selfcategorizations of Bedouins teenagers as part of the Arab minority and to be certain of the importance and compatibility of these selfcategorizations to the subjects and to examine the relation of those self-categorizations to the residential region of the Bedouin adolescents.

The Bedouins in Israel

The Bedouins in Israel are part of the Arab minority in Israel; from a religious point of view, they are Muslims, and from a numeric point of view, they are a marginal minority (Ghanem, 1998). The Bedouin group is a social group with a special history, culture, lifestyle, clan attribution and political distinction.

Bedouins in Israel have tried to enter modern Israeli society, so they are affected by its culture and its characteristics.

In the early years of the State of Israel, the Bedouin were controlled by a military regime. In 1967 the first non-nomadic, Bedouin community, Tel Sheva, was established and since then, more permanent communities have been added. Transitioning from traditional nomadic life to permanent housing in towns demanded many considerable adjustments. The process of the Bedouins' transition from spontaneous settlement to an urban lifestyle was a significant change in their lifestyle and culture. However, through the process of establishing permanent residences, the Bedouins become citizens of Israel (Ben-David, 2005).

Bedouins in Israel are divided into three groups: Bedouins in the north who live in Bedouin villages or are appendices to Arab communities. Bedouins in the south living in government-planned towns and villages as well as some of the "unrecognized villages" and in the Negev Desert (Ben-David, 1993), and Bedouins living in culturally mixed cities (Lod, Ramle, Beer-Sheva and Haifa).

The Bedouin population is about 301,600 of whom about 178,200 are southern Bedouins. In addition, 88,100 are northern Bedouins and about 35,300 live in cities such as Lod and Ramle in central Israel (CBS, 2009).

The Bedouins' urbanization process, life in Israel, abandoning their traditional lifestyle, attempting to integrate into modern society, and being part of the Arab minority greatly influenced their identity formation process.

Identity studies conducted on this social group discussed processes of Modernization, Islamization, Palestinization, and even Radicalization that affected the formulation of Bedouin identity.

Other identity studies refer to Bedouins as part of Arab society. Their chosen civil identities reflect only the realities of their daily needs (education, employment, health service and various social services etc.) without disclosing any internal truths or emotions.

Sociologists also talk about the Israelization and have dealt with the loyalty of the Bedouins to the country's laws as an Israeli identity. However, although Israeli Bedouins are by and large law abiding citizens this does not automatically mean that they primarily selfidentify as "Israeli" and this behavior is changing due to a sense of discrimination.

Previous studies have shown their prominent identity was as "Arab-Palestinian" (54.5%) and some (13.6%) defined their identity as "Muslims" while 22.1% defined themselves as "Arabs" (Hajierat, 2003).

Literary Background

Identity

Identity is defined in literature in many different ways. The differences in the definitions are related to the knowledge domain in which each was defined and by the researchers themselves who defined it as a research concept or as a phenomenon.

One of the most common definitions is Tajfel's: "The individual's recognition of his membership in certain social groups and the emotional and moral significance of this membership" (Tajfel, 1981: 292).

Identity itself is not a modern concept but the subject of identity and treating it is modern phenomenon. Modern identity relies on ancient elements but is created with modern tools by modern elites in a social struggle for power in a modern society. Identity grants importance to belonging or to attribution. Treating identity phenomenon was created after evolvement of one as an individual with selfidentity. Identity which was perceived as different from "the other", as a variation from "the other", received new meaning which is selfcategorization of the individual and the collective (David & Bar-Tal, 2009).

Many studies have been conducted on identity in general. In the research field there are already definitions for personal, social, sexual and professional identities, etc.

The studies were done on nations, ethnic groups and various minorities worldwide. As stated, they were done on the Arab minority in Israel since the period of the military regime (since 1956). The studies were conducted in different knowledge domains and examined identity from a different perspective.

Self-Definition

In previous studies the researchers used models that most of them related to identity as selfdefinition or selfcategorization which is a conversion of the individuals to groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1998; Xenia, 1996; Smith & Mackie, 1995). They were based on Miller's model according to which the relations system between the individual and various groups is an important component of the identity structure.

The labels "Arab", "Palestinian" and "Israeli" were called identities although these labels are only selfcategorizations. Also, in studies that were conducted the subjects were given data labels from an existing wide collection. The choice from this collection turns a number of individuals with the same selfcategorization into single selfcategorization group: Arab, Palestinian or Israeli – while ignoring other definitions (Sa'di, 1992). Following Tajfel selfcategorization in this current

study has been defined as the individual's perception of himself as a member of a group (Tajfel, 1982). Selfcategorization also places the individual in the group or places the group in "his head" and it is therefore a process of converting individuals into groups (Hogg, 2006; Xenia, 1996; Smith & Mackie, 1995). The categorization process groups people and sharpens the boundaries between the various categories. Under certain conditions selfcategorization can create separation by which the individual prefers his group over others. Thus the individual will not only classify himself as a member of a group but will classify "the other" as a member in other categories because the other has the same social characteristics and cultural duties of members of another group (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002; Hogg, 2006; Robinson, 1998).

Selfcategorization has been defined in previous studies as belonging to a social group (Tajfel, 1972; Smith & Mackie, 1995; Xenia, 1996; Robinson, 1998, Brewer, 1996; Hogg & Abrams, 1998). Researchers who studied the identity of the Arab minority talked about subjects belonging to many groups simultaneously. With instruments that were developed researchers asked the subjects to choose one group only and emphasized only the measure of belonging (Peres & Yuval-Davis, 1969; Mia'ari, 1992; Smootha, 1998).

In this study the definition of selfcategorization is belonging but includes the dimensions of importance and to what extent the category describes the individual in relation to more than one group simultaneously.

Study Question

How do Bedouin adolescents define themselves and is there any relationship between their selfcategorizations and the residential region where they live assuming that the selfcategorization chosen is a significant categorization for them.

Study Objective

To examine the selfcategorization of Bedouin adolescents, its importance to them and compatibility of their choice while taking into account the definition's subjectivity, the distinction between the anchor definitions and combination of definitions and also the matter of the selected

definition (others rejected) according to which the identity of the minority was measured in previous studies. After pointing out the frequent and significant definitions the intention is to examine the possibility that there is a relationship between selfcategorizations that were chosen and residential region where the subjects live.

Study population

The studied population was Bedouin high school students. The Bedouin population in Israel is about 301,000 persons who live in permanent settlements in the northern Israel, southern Israel and cities in central Israel.

They live in special settlements called "Planned Communities for Bedouins" and in other Arab communities. Bedouins used to live in the outlying areas near Arab towns and villages.

Moreover, much of the Bedouin population lives in southern Israel. They live in permanent settlements, makeshift settlements in the Negev desert and in the huge Diaspora (the unrecognized Bedouin settlements in the Negev).

Study Sample

The study sample was 430 adolescents 15-17 years old in grades 11 and 12.

Choice of the sample is based on the assumption that adolescence is a crucial stage in the lives of individuals when physical, mental and social changes occur. Many questions distress the adolescent at this time and the important question is how he perceives himself and how others perceive him concerning his integration into adulthood (Erikson, 1968). The decision on these issues is the personal and collective identity formation process of the individual, which, according to Erikson, is the positive result of this stage. That being the case, adolescence is important and crucial in the formation of the identity and especially the ethnic identity of adolescents from ethnic minorities.

Thus because of the importance of the identity issue during adolescence, there is justification to check the identity of the Bedouins in Israel among adolescents and their selfcategorization and its

relationship to residential areas. Previous studies also chose samples from adolescent populations and for the same reasons (for example: Mia'ari, Hoffman and Peres).

Study Hypotheses

As Bedouin adolescents can choose a selfcategorization but at the same time determine the extent of compatibility of other identities and their importance, it is possible that some Bedouin adolescents will choose a specific selfcategorization but there will be differences in the importance of the definition for them and the extent of compatibility.

A Bedouin adolescent's choice of various definitions does not indicate different identities but one complex identity or identity profile that includes several definitions but with different dimensions of prominence. Relationship will be found between these categorizations and residential areas.

The hypothesis that there is a relationship between two variables will be considered as a contribution to the question of the relationship between membership in a group and residential areas.

Study Tools

An original questionnaire, which included the following categories: "Arab", "Arab-Israeli", "Israeli", "Arab-Palestinian", "Palestinian-Israeli", "Palestinian" and "Muslim", was designed to test the selected identity. The questionnaire included three questions:

1. How do you define yourself? Each subject was asked to choose one of seven categorizations given: "Arab", "Arab-Israeli", "Israeli", "Arab-Palestinian", "Israeli-Palestinian", "Palestinian" and "Muslim".
2. What is the extent of compatibility of the four frequent categorizations: "Muslim", "Arab", "Palestinian" and "Israeli" to your identity? The answers are rated on a Likert scale from one to five, one being very compatible and five not compatible at all.
3. What is the extent of importance of belonging to the following groups: Muslim, Arab, Palestinian and Israeli? The answers are rated on a Likert scale from one to five, one being very important and five not important at all.

The first question is common in studies of Arab minority identity in general and most researchers use it with frequent categorizations. The second and third questions are innovations in this study. The questionnaire was distributed to about 60 subjects in a pilot study in order to check its validity and reliability. In light of comments from the field and those of independent researchers, some changes were made to the questionnaire. Its reliability was 0.74.

Study Procedure and Processing the Data

The study questionnaires were distributed to 430 adolescents from various high schools in the Bedouin sector representing three residential areas: northern Israel especially the Galilee, the towns of Lod and Ramle in central Israel and the southern part of Israel: the Negev Desert. The schools chosen for the sample had teachers whom the research assistants knew personally or knew their relatives or friends who helped distribute the questionnaires. The researcher instructed the assistants about the distribution and how to handle questions that might be asked. The teachers distributed the questionnaires to students during one regular class and all present completed the questionnaires. The questionnaires were anonymous and the students were promised that they would not be used elsewhere, especially at school. At the end of class, teachers collected the questionnaires and sent them to the researcher who entered the data. Questions with missing values received an average score. The number of missing values was less than 10%. The data was processed on SPSS software and various variance analysis tests were made, including a chi-square test and different correlations.

Findings and Discussion

The findings show that the frequency of respondents choosing "anchor" definitions (one definition only: "Muslim", "Arab", "Palestinian" or "Israeli") is relatively low compared with combination definitions: "Arab-Palestinian", "Arab-Israeli", or "Israeli-Palestinian". At the same time, the frequency of the definition "Israeli-Palestinian" was very small although it is a combination of two definitions. The low percentage of those defining themselves according to this combination supports the claim of some researchers that there is a conflict between the two identities (Hoffman, 1982). It appears that a combination of selfcategorizations is more suitable for respondents than "anchor" definitions: most of the participants (72%) chose combinations.

The subjects' choice of combinations of categorizations, which is in fact a choice of more than one categorization, confirms the second study hypothesis that the Bedouin adolescents group will choose more than one categorization and therefore it will be possible to discuss identity profiles or complex identities. The issue of complex identity will be discussed in the research literature and therefore confirmation of this hypothesis is important and contributing to the general understanding of Identity in previous studies (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Indirectly, the matter of selected categorization is a weak tool to test the identity of minority teenagers.

Classification of selfcategorizations in descending percentage order is "Arab-Palestinian", "Arab-Israeli", "Arab", "Palestinian", "Muslim", "Israeli" and "Israeli-Palestinian". Thus, the top two are classifications of combination definitions that include the categorization "Arab". In anchor definitions, the classification of selfcategorization (in descending percentage order) is Arab, Palestinian, Muslim and Israeli.

This step is the continuation of theses in previous studies in that the subjects are given a collection of selfcategorizations and they have to choose one that will seem important to them.

This study added the dimension of the importance of the definition and the dimension of compatibility to the subjects to the classification of definitions in order to appreciate the significance of the definition. As in previous studies, the frequent categorizations are Muslim, Arab, Palestinian and Israeli but in a different order. The researcher then passed to the next step of the study—checking if there is any relationship with subjects' residential area.

Table 1 describes cross-checking the results of the request to selfcategorization ("Categorization" column) and the response to the question what is the dimension of compatibility of the categorization to the four categories (under "Compatibility") and how important it is to the respondent to belong to a particular category (under "Group Affiliation"). For example, in the first line of the table we see the division of the responses in relation to compatibility and affiliation of subjects who defined themselves as "Arab-Palestinian". It was found that those who defined themselves as "Arab-Palestinian" also thought that the definition "Muslim" suited them, meaning that in order to get a complete picture of selfcategorization, the selfcategorization profile should be cross-checked and one selected definition alone should not be relied on.

Table 1 Bedouin Teenagers' Selfcategorization by Compatability and Group Affiliation

Category	Compatability				Group Affiliation			
	Muslim	Arab	Plstnian	Israeli	Muslim world	Arab world	Plstnian people	Israel
Arab-Plstnian	78.8	94.0	88.7	17.5	86.1	84.2	89.5	21.9
Arab-Israeli	83.5	87.1	68.7	74.1	83.8	83.0	89.5	78.6
Muslim	84.1	81.4	79.9	13.6	83.4	75.1	80.0	28.9
Arab	87.1	82.1	79.8	41.7	83.8	84.4	84.4	38.9
Plstnian	73.3	80.3	75.3	21.3	80.9	78.2	85.5	28.4
Israeli	77.8	32.3	35.4	77.9	64.4	38.4	38.4	68.8
Israeli-Plstnian	77.3	88.0	93.0	11.1	94.0	88.0	89.7	23.3

*Plstnian is an abbreviation for Palestinian.

*The subjects were asked to point out one categorization and to grade (from 1 to 5) the importance of the chosen categorization and its suitability.

*The marks given by the subjects were divided into two categories: suitable and non-suitable. The percentage was then calculated, as shown in Table 1.

From a quick glance at anchor categorizations ("Muslim", "Arab", "Palestinian" and "Israeli") it can be concluded that those who defined themselves as "Muslim" (84.1%) thought that this categorization suited them and it was important to them to belong to the Muslim world (83.4%). So even those who defined themselves as "Arab" (82.1%) thought that this categorization suited them and that it was important to belong to the Arab world (84.4%), and those who defined themselves as "Palestinian" (75.3%) thought that this categorization suited them and that it was important to belong to the Palestinian people (85.5%). Finally those who defined themselves as "Israeli" (77.9%) thought that this categorization suited them and that it was important to be part of the State of Israel (68.8%).

Examining the distribution of the findings according to residential area, it was found that among the Bedouins in northern Israel 61.2% defined themselves as "Arab-Israeli" and of those 18.2% defined themselves as "Arabs" and the rest used different categorizations to define themselves including "Israeli".

Report explains that subjects from the north Bedouins choosing significant selfcategorizations with Arab national aspect. They highlight their national identity because of their proximity to the Jewish population.

Perhaps because of the attitude of the members of the Jewish majority group they strictly define their group boundaries and because it is a closed group with a political relationship with the minority in general the Bedouins prefer their in-group and emphasize their relationship with the State of Israel.

Of the subjects questioned in Lod and Ramle 62.7% defined themselves as "Arab-Palestinian", 17.3% defined themselves as "Palestinian" and the rest defined themselves using different categories included Israeli

One possible interpretation of these findings is the closeness to the Jewish majority, as Bedouins and Jews live together in the same towns and their children attend the same schools.

The national issue is sensitive, so it is difficult to highlight the national emotion. Thus, the subjects in Lod and Ramle might emphasize belonging to the Palestinian ethnic groups as reaction to the solidarity and strong cultural identity of the Jewish majority.

In the south 60.4% of the Bedouins defined themselves as "Muslims", 19.3% as "Arab-Palestinian" and the rest defined themselves using different categories included Israeli. The southern Bedouin group chose selfcategorization that expressed objection to the hard conditions in which they live. The attitude of the majority group to the Bedouins is expressed by the state's institutions. Life for the southern Bedouin is very difficult (high unemployment, few educational opportunities, defective health services, etc.) and can explain the group's tendency to choose selfcategorization that expresses dissatisfaction with their status in society and discrimination which they face.

Another factor possibly affecting the southern Bedouin teenagers' choice of categories and their emphasis on the importance of religious feeling could be the intensive activity of the Islamic Movement in the region.

The findings show differences amongst the choices of participants from the Galilee, those from the central towns of Lod and Ramle, and those living in southern Israel.

In the Galilee where Jewish Israelis and minority Bedouin live close together and the local Bedouin are undergoing a modernization of their traditions, Israeli identity was highlighted. There is also a natural attempt to imitate the majority group which could explain the northern subjects' choices. The subjects perceive Israel's Jewish majority as culturally Western and not necessarily Middle Eastern.

In Lod and Ramle ethnic sentiment is more pronounced, especially concerning cultural aspects because the minority group live in close proximity to members of the majority and are exposed to their behavior and because the Jewish group is a closed society which is very vocal in its cultural pride which creates feelings of it being a preferred group. Thus the subjects in central Israel chose selfcategorization that were more ethnic than national and emphasized the importance of their own distinct cultural group, which matches Tajfel's findings (1982).

The selfcategorizations southern Bedouin chose ("Muslim" and "Palestinian") express both their objection to their marginalization and the influence of the local Islamic movement.

Table 2

Selfcategorization of Bedouin Teenagers by Residential Area

Selfcategorization	Bedouins in Northern Israel	Bedouins in Lod and Ramle	Bedouins in Southern Israel	Diaspora Bedouins
Arab-Palestinian	15	62.7	19.3	32
Arab-Israeli	61.2	9.5	11	28.5
Muslim	1.6	6.1	60.4	23.3
Arab	18.2	3.6	4.1	9.4
Palestinian	2.7	17.3	23	7.9

Israeli	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.8
Israeli-Palestinian	-	0.1	-	0.1
Total	100	100	100	100

The highest percentage of Diaspora Bedouins chose the selfcategorization "Arab-Israeli". This outcome matches the widely accepted belief that the Bedouin as a population want to integrate with the majority but do not want to assimilate completely. Yet they also maintain strong feelings of national identity so they combine both the terms "Israeli" and "Arab" in their selfcategorization.

Summary:

This study clearly shows that the approach of previous studies to Bedouin teenagers' identity has not been complete or accurate. These studies assumed that selfcategorization fully described identity and in this study other dimensions were added: the importance of the chosen categorization and the subjects' perception of its suitability. Moreover, this study checked the relationship between common selfcategorizations that are significant to the subjects and their residential area as well as the hypothesis that there is a relationship.

The study's findings answered the study question and confirmed the hypothesis that the subjects' significant selfcategorization is related to their residential area.

Another finding shows that there is no conflict between Israeli and Palestinian identities in any place.

Thus, the study opens new ground in the subject area of identity and has disproven the concept that selfcategorization is identity. Selfcategorization can obviously be considered a subjective categorization of the subject and therefore the categorization dimensions of importance and compatibility have to be added, and the relationship between them and residential areas has to be taken into account.

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