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Educational Psychologists in the Arab and Haredi Sectors of Jerusalem:
Implications of Construction of Self and Other
for Psychological Practice

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Krista Shawn Eliot

Committee in charge:

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2013

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University of California, San Diego

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Educational Psychologists in the Arab and Haredi Sectors of Jerusalem:
Implications of Construction of Self and Other
for Psychological Practice

by

Krista Shawn Eliot

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, San Diego, 2013

Professor Esra Ozyurek, Chair

This study compares cross-cultural issues faced by educational psychologists working in the Palestinian and Haredi sectors of Jerusalem. Literature on mental health care in these sectors has characterized them as suspicious of and especially resistant to secular professional psychological treatment, pointing out how cultural categories for interpreting many forms of human distress in both sectors differ from "mainstream" Israeli society. I interviewed twelve psychologists working in schools in these sectors about how cultural issues affect their work. I found that the psychologists' narratives tended to reflect attempts to negotiate issues raised by their degree of identification with the population in which they are working, and that where the psychologist locates herself on the political map of Jerusalem is a critical factor in understanding how she handles cultural differences and ethical dilemmas. Psychologists who identified closely with the people with whom they work (generally true of the Palestinian psychologists) were generally open about their desire to use their own influence to change societal values with which they disagree. Psychologists who characterized their clients as culturally other (generally true of the Israeli psychologists) were, by contrast, insistent that their role is

not to make any changes in their clients' culture or to question their values. In both cases the political use of the concept of culture to build, or to erase, barriers between themselves and their clients can cloud the real issues of communication at hand.

Introduction

"You know, I've been talking to Yasmin, she's an Arab friend of mine working in East Jerusalem, and there's a lot of similarities between the issues they deal with there and what we're dealing with in the Haredi schools." So my Israeli roommate, then-intern for the Jerusalem municipal psychological services, told me one evening. I had already lent a sympathetic ear on several occasions to listen to the difficulties she was having working in the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) sector of Jerusalem. Thus, over a period of weeks, the idea began to take shape. I would write a paper for my medical anthropology class comparing cross-cultural issues of practicing educational psychology in the Palestinian and Haredi schools of Jerusalem.

These two groups promised to make for an interesting comparison. Among all the diverse groups which make up Israeli society, these two have, more than any other, resisted integration. Zionism, which has served as a shared identity for most Israelis, was never able to incorporate them. The Haredi and Palestinian sectors in Jerusalem also share other common characteristics. They are two of the poorest and most "traditional" communities in the city. Furthermore, utilization of secular professional mental health services is a relatively new practice in both sectors, and mental health professionals' psychological categories for understanding many forms of human distress are not shared by the people with whom they work in these contexts. Literature on mental health care in these sectors has characterized them as suspicious of and resistant to secular professional psychological treatment (Bilu and Witztum 1993; Al-Krenawi 1996; Dwairy 1998; Witztum and Goodman 1999).

I expected that conducting a series of interviews with psychologists working in these sectors on the cultural issues they deal with would reveal a wealth of information about how their psychological categories for understanding human suffering differed from their clients' religious categories of interpretation. Parents who thought their child diagnosed with ADHD was actually possessed by a *jinn*, that was the good stuff, that I as a student of medical anthropology was now equipped to analyze with the utmost cultural sensitivity. I heard very few such stories, however, and found myself perplexed by much of what my interviewees had to tell me.

Why, when I asked one of my Palestinian-Israeli interviewees about his relationship with the teachers at the schools where he works, did he go on for what became one and a half pages of single-spaced transcription about the state of Israel's attempts to separate "Arab Israelis" from other Palestinians? And why, when I asked my interviewees working with Haredim about challenges of their job, did they go on and on about the long dresses they must wear? How could I write a paper about dresses and Israeli attempts to rob Palestinians of their true identity?

What I came to realize is that talking to these psychologists about cultural issues led them to narrate the complexities of the identity issues they face. In Katherine Ewing's words, people "may struggle to integrate their experiences when in the midst of conflict when, because of the particular situation in which they find themselves, they cannot avoid the conscious juxtaposition of inconsistent, inadequate self-representations" (Ewing 1990:271). I suggest that my interviews with these psychologists represent attempts on their part to integrate conflicting self-representations. In the context of a violent political situation where all are called on to "pick a side," the struggle for integration becomes all the more vital, but at the same time, all the more difficult.

Furthermore, I argue that their struggles to manage these conflicting self-representations influence how they interpret situations with their clients at work. A crucial ingredient in understanding the interaction between therapists and their clients is identifying how therapists' cultural and professional values influence their interaction with clients and their interpretations of their clients' problems (Kleinman 1988:77ff; Luhrmann 2000). While all my interviewees deal with conflicts between their values and those of their clients, the nature of the problem depends in part upon the degree to which they identify with the group with whom they are working. That is to say, the psychologist's identity and where she locates herself on the political map of Jerusalem is a critical factor in understanding how she handles cultural differences and ethical dilemmas. Psychologists who identified closely with the people with whom they work (generally true of the Palestinian psychologists) were generally open about their desire to use their own influence to change societal values with which they disagree. Psychologists who characterized their clients as culturally other (generally true of the Israeli psychologists) were, by contrast, insistent that their role is not to make any changes in their

clients' culture or to question their values.

While the latter attitude seems somewhat self-deceiving about the extent to which the use of municipal mental health services is necessarily bringing about changes in Haredi culture, the former attitude runs the risk of overlooking indigenous, traditional methods of dealing with problems. Furthermore, in both cases the political use of the concept of culture to build, or to erase, barriers between themselves and their clients can cloud the real issues of communication at hand. Jewish psychologists working in the Haredi sector tend to employ the concept of culture to distinguish themselves from Haredi clients, while Palestinian psychologists working in East Jerusalem tend to use culture to distinguish themselves from the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem by which they are employed, emphasizing their solidarity with other Palestinians.

Historical and Political Context

I flew home to Connecticut in August of 2000 after a year of graduate study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem confident, as were all those I talked to, that a final peace agreement between Yassar Arafat, then chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and Ehud Barak, then Prime Minister of Israel, was close at hand. While I was away, however, peace talks broke down, and on September 28 an *Intifada* (Arabic for "uprising") broke out at the Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem. I returned to Israeli and Palestinian friends who were traumatized by the new outbreak of violence, all hope of a peace agreement dashed. During the course of my second year in Jerusalem, the situation continued to deteriorate. In a June 2001 report, the Israeli human rights organization, *B'tselem*, pronounced Israeli Defense Force's human rights violations in the Occupied Territories after September 2000 "unprecedented," reporting that the killing of children and other innocent civilians, extra-judicial killings of suspects, and complete blockades of Palestinian towns and villages had become "routine" (B'tselem 2001:3). The report also notes that documentation of human rights violations in this *Intifada* has become more complex than it was in the first uprising (from 1987-1993), due to the fact that in current clashes Palestinian gunmen sometimes shoot at Israeli soldiers (B'tselem 2001:2).

The reverberations of the conflict in the Occupied Territories have been felt within Israel, as well. In the wake of the breakout of the *Intifada*, protests broke out in Arab villages across Israel, and a total of thirteen unarmed Palestinian-Israeli protesters were shot dead by Israeli police. Not since protests against land confiscations in 1976 had relations between the Israeli state and its Palestinian citizens been so violent. Furthermore, within a few months of the outbreak of the *Intifada*, Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad began carrying out suicide bomb attacks against Israeli civilians. Between January 1, 2001 and August 31, 2002, roughly the same period of time during which I conducted my interviews, forty-eight such attacks were carried out, thirty-eight of them within Israel's borders (Storck 2002:27).

The political climate affects the work of my interviewees in many ways, some quite obvious, and others less so. All of my interviewees deal with not only their own anxieties related to the political situation but also those of their clients on a regular basis, and many, particularly those working in East

Jerusalem, regularly deal with crisis situations. My focus in this thesis will be specifically on how some of the issues created by such a political situation relate to construction of identity and a consideration of some potential implications for their work as educational psychologists in the Haredi and Palestinian sectors of Jerusalem. This section provides some historical and political context concerning the relations of these two minority groups to mainstream Israeli society and to the State, which is crucial to understanding some of the tensions in my interviewees' narratives as they construct their own personal and professional identities, and those of their clients, as well.

The Ultra-Orthodox in Israel

A settlement of the deepening religious-secular schism in Israel has been named as one of the most important tasks of the political and religious leadership in the next few years (Cohen 2004:89-91). Although Haredim are not a monolithic group, and Haredi groups in Israel vary in their attitudes toward the Zionist state from "reserved acceptance to total condemnation of Israel as a political entity" (Bilu and Witztum 1993:198), they tend to be viewed in an undifferentiating manner by the general public as a separatist group within Israel. They tend to live in clearly delineated neighborhoods, and they have distinctive styles of dress; men in particular are easy to pick out in a crowd due to their black suits and hats, while women dress very modestly and married women wear head coverings. They have a partially separate legal system as well as a fully separated educational system. It has been noted however, that, paradoxically, the ability of the Haredi community to close itself off from secular society has been facilitated "by the increasing political power of the ultra-Orthodox and their growing involvement in the Israeli political scene, which has enabled them to invest even more in their own institutions" (Witztum and Goodman 1999:407).

The relationship between the ultra-Orthodox on one hand and secular Israelis as well as religious Zionists on the other hand, has always been one of ambivalence and tense co-existence. Noah Efron dates the birth of ultra-Orthodox Judaism to the 19th century, a reaction to the "Jewish Enlightenment" in Europe which preached assimilation of Jews to the nations in which they lived. Thus only when "modern" Jews came into being did ultra-Orthodox Jews also come into being (Efron

2003:18-22). Having migrated to the Holy Land earlier than secular Jews (who were more interested in assimilating to their adopted European homelands until an increasingly inhospitable environment led more of them to embrace Zionism), Haredi Jews were appalled by the practices of the first wave of Zionist settlers to immigrate to Palestine in the late nineteenth century. The first crisis occurred when the new settlers dared to till the soil on a sabbatical year (during which, according to the bible, the land must lie fallow). Thus Haredi antipathy for Zionism became firmly established, and the feeling was mutual (Efron 2003:28). But it was when the second wave of settlers arrived in the beginning of the twentieth century and set up political parties, trade and labor groups, professional organizations, school systems, much of which would become the infrastructure of the state of Israel, that the rift became institutionalized. There was no place in this secular, modern infrastructure for the Haredim (Efron 2003:32).

Since the establishment of the state of Israel, the Haredi community has negotiated with the state to secure the right to continue their own way of life within a secular state. In exchange for support for establishment of the state, an agreement with the first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, in 1947, ensured them a fully autonomous educational system (mostly funded by the State), while in the following year a limited number of yeshiva students per year were exempt from army service in exchange for support of government policies (Efron 2003:44, 47). However it was not until the 1977 election in which the Labor party (which had ruled Israel since its establishment) lost its grip on the government, opening the way for Menachem Begin and the Likud party to take control, that the ultra-Orthodox began to play a more central role in politics. By promising, among other things, to greatly increase funding for their schools and the number of exemptions available to ultra-Orthodox youth studying in yeshivas, Begin made Agudah (the leading Haredi party at the time) an offer it could not refuse. They joined his coalition, enabling him to form a government. A decade later, the "meteoric" success of Shas (a Sephardic Haredi party) has further strengthened Haredi influence on the political scene. In the 1999 elections it won seventeen seats, making it the third largest party in Israel. Since 1977, the Haredim have held the deciding votes in every election (Cohen 2004:74-5).

Because their political interests are so narrowly focused on two issues, namely, money for

religious education and upholding of Jewish law whenever possible, they can form a coalition with the Left or the Right, and can support most any program. Each new election brings more concessions for Haredim. The result is that more Haredim than ever are exempt from army service in order to study the Torah. By some estimates over 60 percent of Haredi men between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four do not work because they study full-time, living off of student stipends, welfare benefits, child allowances, and meager incomes usually earned by their wives (Efron 2003:87).

Indeed, these are the two most common complaints against Haredim that come up continually in the media and in conversation: the fact that they do not serve in the army and do not work, and hence, are a drain on the economy. However, Noah Efron argues, the amount of animosity toward Haredim evident in popular discourse is grossly in excess of the ostensible reasons

> Some years ago, in 1985 … a political cartoon depicted a greasy Haredi, his gut hanging in rolls over the dinner table, clutching in one chubby fist a goblet of wine, while the other hand holds to his mouth a miniature secular Jew, whose blood he is sucking daintily, pinky extended. The paper's editors may have expected to startle readers with the cartoon, but I don't think they did; the image is hackneyed, too stock to shock … Leeches are only one metaphor; other imagery is used to make the same point. A few years ago, small round stickers depicting a secular Israeli with a Haredi on his back started turning up on bus stops and lampposts … But blood-sucking remains the gold standard, easily the image most often used to describe the ultra-Orthodox in Israel. It is an ugly picture, and it recalls centuries of anti-Semitic iconography, from sixteenth century woodblocks of Jew draining the blood of Christian innocents to Nazi portrayals of Jews as vermin (Efron 2003:57-8).

Why, Efron asks, does one habitually hear such angry, even anti-Semitic, rhetoric against Haredim? It is this question he set about answering in his book, *Real Jews*. After tracing the history of relations between ultra-Orthodox and the State of Israel and then detailing the most common prejudices and complaints voiced against Haredim in the media, he concludes,

> It is my opinion … that hating Haredim … is a growth industry because Haredi-hating is a defining element of Israeli identity and is perhaps on the way to becoming the defining element of Israeli identity. Palestinian suicide bombers pose a more bloody threat to the safety of Israelis than the ultra-Orthodox ever would, but ultimately it is still the ultra-Orthodox who provides the most useful foil for Israelis trying to understand ourselves. Ultimately, the Haredi is the better "other" (Efron 2003:264).

Efron points to the testing of Israel's military excellence in the Occupied Territories and southern Lebanon which has left Israelis disenchanted with the army and the government, as well as the work of

revisionist historians to "demythologize" earlier accounts of Zionist accomplishments and question whether Israel can truly be considered a democratic state, given the millions of disenfranchised Palestinians it controls. Israelis are tired and demoralized, he says, and now more than ever need to hate Haredim, as representatives of the "old" Jew that the rest of Israeli society has superseded (Efron 2003:267-8).

The interviews I conducted with psychologists working in the Haredi sector must be understood in light of the atmosphere of demoralization following the break down of peace talks and subsequent outbreak of violence in September 2001. They characterize their relationships with Haredim in a much more positive light than popular discourse tends to portray religious-secular relations. However, many of the cultural barriers which my interviewees cited as problematic in their work with Haredim echo popular public discourse. They effectively define themselves, in contrast to their clients, as loyal Israeli citizens—unlike Haredim who generally do not serve in the army, yet reap the benefits of hard-working Israelis who provide for them even in difficult financial times, and even more important, defend the country which shelters them from their enemies. I further develop this argument in section four, where I analyze how my interviewees construct their identity, in the case of the psychologists working in the Haredi sector, in contrast to their clients.

Palestinians in Israel

All of the psychologists working in East Jerusalem are Palestinians themselves. Four of the six, however, are citizens of Israel, originally from Arab villages in other parts of Israel. The other two, Omar and Shadia, carry identity cards identifying them as residents of Jerusalem, but do not have full rights as citizens, although as Jerusalem residents they also have more rights than Palestinians in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza, including the freedom to travel back and forth across the Green Line separating Israel from the Occupied Territories. Like many Palestinians in the West Bank, Omar and Shadia carry Jordanian passports.

Palestinian citizens in Israel, commonly called "Arab Israelis," have received considerable attention from social scientists due to their unique positioning as both "Arab" or "Palestinian" and

"Israeli." The 156,000 Arabs who remained in the part of Palestine that became the state of Israel in 1948 (mostly villagers living in rural areas, the urban Arab population having, for the most part, fled or been expelled before or during the war) and their descendents now form the majority of the 1.2 Palestinians residing in Israel with Israeli citizenship, a significant minority whose proportion of the total population of the state has consistently remained close to twenty per cent (Goldsheider 1996; Schulz 2003; Al-Haj 2004:110). There is far from a consensus about what to call them, whether Palestinian, Palestinian-Israeli, Arab Israeli, or any of a number of other possibilities. Because my four interviewees consider themselves "Palestinian," that is how I will refer to them, sometimes also referring to them as Palestinian-Israeli for the sake of clarification of the difference in citizenship between them and their clients.

Studies of "Arab Israeli" identity in Israel differ on whether this population is moving towards greater accentuation of Palestinian or Israeli identity. Scholars generally agree that one significant turning point in the identity of Palestinians in Israel was the reestablishment of ties with other Palestinians after the Six Day War in 1967, in which Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. This event ended twenty years of effective isolation from the rest of the Arab world, inspiring a shift toward a more Palestinian sense of collective identity (Schiff 2002:275). However, it is also important to keep in mind that this population has developed a different strategy for relating to Israeli society, working within the structure of Israeli law for equality (Smooha 1999) in contrast to military action and resistance as the dominant symbolism used in defining Palestinian relations with Israel in the Occupied Territories since the 1960's (Schulz 2003:118, 119, 123). Furthermore, the Oslo accords make no mention of Palestinian accords in Israel; according to Majid Al-Haj, "the message for the Palestinian population of Israel has been that they are not on the agenda of the Palestinian national movement; their problems are their own and should be solved within the framework of the Israeli context" (Al-Haj 2004:119). Al-Haj argues that the status of Palestinians in Israel is that of a "double periphery" at the margins of both Israeli society and the Palestinian national movement, a crisis which has only deepened since the events of September 2000.

Scholars who study identity of Palestinians in Israel differ in their conclusions about how they

resolve their doubly peripheral position. Sammy Smooha has argued that the Arabs in Israel are becoming increasingly integrated in the Israeli system, 63 percent considering "Israeli" an appropriate self-description in a 1995 survey, and points to such results as evidence of Israelization (Smooha 1999:19). However, other scholars have questioned his interpretation. Nadim Rouhana's data from 1989 indicate that Arab youth preferred the identity label of "Palestinian in Israel," the choice of which is a way to distinguish their cultural and civic identities. Thus they can separate their Palestinian cultural and national identity from their Israeli civic identity (Rouhana 1997).

Brian Schiff observes that differences in scholars' conclusions may be connected to the political climate at the time their study was conducted. Rouhana's conclusion that this population is accentuating the Palestinian "pole" of their identity may reflect a response to the *Intifada* of the late eighties, while Smooha's (1999) conclusion that this population was becoming increasingly "Israelized," based on data collected up through 1995, may reflect the optimism of the years of Rabin's administration (Schiff 2002:276).

If Schiff is correct, it would reasonably follow that since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa *Intifada*, Arabs in Israel have again shifted towards emphasizing the Palestinian elements of their identity. Certainly the February 6, 2001 prime ministerial elections seem to indicate this. One of the most striking aspects of this election was the massive abstention of Arab voters—only 18 per cent cast valid ballots. The turnout was particularly low—under ten percent--in most of the large Arab towns which constitute the center of Arab political activity in Israel (Al-Haj 2004:121). Al-Haj writes of this election,

> Although it may be too early to draw conclusions regarding the expected impact of the Arab voting pattern in these elections, we may say that this phenomenon constitutes a turning point in Arab political organization and Jewish-Arab relations in Israel. The Arabs' unprecedented political behavior was certainly affected by the alienation that resulted from the treatment of the Arabs by the Barak government during the October 2000 events and especially the killing of thirteen Arab citizens by Israeli security forces (Al-Haj 2004:121).

One may expect that the alienation which resulted in such a low voter turnout would also have an impact on how Palestinians in Israel express their identity. Such were my own unscientific observations. I heard Palestinian-Israeli friends use the word "Palestinian" more often to describe

themselves, whereas I remembered them previously preferring "Arab." Many of them began participating in protests against the Occupation—protest, rather than voting, seemed to be their new method of making their voices heard.

The Palestinian-Israeli psychologists I interviewed certainly seemed to be grappling with how to resolve these two elements of their identity, while the two Palestinian residents of Jerusalem similarly had to resolve the contradictory position they found themselves in as employees of the Israeli municipal government. I will return to the question of how they negotiate these different "identity streams" (Schiff 2002) in their narratives and elaborate on how they construct their identities in relation to their clients and to the Israeli municipal psychological services in section four.

The Practice of Educational Psychology

I remember watching an interview with a Palestinian psychiatrist on CNN back in Spring 2002, just after another suicide bomber from Gaza had killed both himself and a number of Israeli civilians. This young man, the psychiatrist explained, had suffered greatly under Israeli occupation. He had undoubtedly lost family members in clashes with Israeli forces and suffered from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) which led him to such a destructive act. Of course members of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or other Palestinian organizations which organize such attacks would vehemently disagree with such an interpretation. This young man was not ill. He is a *shahid*, a martyr, who has died to defend his homeland and how lives eternally in Paradise. His act was not only brave, but the sanest reaction he could have to such oppression as he endured. On the other hand, many outsiders would not only condemn just an act in the harshest of terms, but also would call him a monster—to attribute such an act to illness would be to try to give an explanation for the inexplicable.

I recount this memory as just one illustration that psychological diagnoses are interpretations, which have moral implications (it is not the suicide bomber who is to be blamed for the attack, but rather the social situation which brought on his illness) and which suggest certain solutions (the political crisis must be resolved and traumatized children given psychological treatment in order to stop suicide bombings). The work of the educational psychologist, like that of any healer, is a work of interpretation. Therefore, it is worthwhile to consider the factors which influence psychologists' interpretations of their clients' problems, how their interpretations differ from those of their clients, and how (and if) they succeed in negotiating agreed-upon interpretations with their clients. One factor which is essential to keep in mind is how the psychologist constructs her identity in relation to her clients. The psychologist's identity influences not only her relationship with her clients, but her interpretation of the client's problem itself. The psychiatrist from Gaza who diagnosed the suicide bomber with PTSD did so using a taxonomy which he learned in his professional training. However, he also argued his point on CNN strategically, as a Palestinian invested in inspiring understanding, not condemnation, of his people in the foreign viewers he addressed that day.

Psychological practice as a work of interpretation is a concept which I will return to and further

develop. First, though, let me introduce my interviewees and provide a short description of the work they do.

The Cast of Characters

From January to June of 2001 and February to July of 2002, I conducted interviews with twelve educational psychologists working in Jerusalem. Six of my interviewees are Palestinian-Israelis or Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, who work in the Arab schools, and six are secular or religious Jewish Israelis working in the Haredi schools.   At the time of the second round of interviews, in the Haredi sector, Natalie, Esther, and Dorit had been working in the field from 6 to 12 years, while Tali, Rachel and Danna, still interns, had been working two and four years, respectively. In the Arab sector, Omar, Shadia, Anwar and Hassan had been working from six to ten years, while Reyad and Yasmin were interns, who had worked in East Jerusalem for two years each.

With one notable exception, the psychologists I interviewed characterized their job as complicated by 'cultural' barriers and voiced varying degrees of difficulty in surmounting those barriers. None of the psychologists working in the Haredi sector are Haredi themselves; Danna and Esther identified themselves as religious, Natalie characterized herself as moderately observant, while Tali and Dorit identified themselves as secular. All agreed that for them, Haredi society is a 'different world.' In the Palestinian sector, Yasmin, Reyad, Anwar and Hassan are Palestinian-Israelis (Muslims), from the Galilee and central Israel, and Shadia and Omar are from Jerusalem, Shadia a Christian and Omar a Muslim. The four from inside Israel characterized themselves as culturally somewhat different from residents of East Jerusalem, while Shadia characterized herself as an outsider in the strongest terms of any of them, as a Christian working in a Muslim environment. For all of them, especially for Omar, crossing over from the context in which they work, in East Jerusalem, to the Israeli municipality, presents difficulties.

A Job Description

Educational psychologists who work for the municipality of Jerusalem are placed in some

combination of kindergartens, elementary schools, and special education schools (through age 18 or 21). Their job involves psychological and intellectual assessment of children (in the regular schools, in order to place them in the appropriate program the next year), diagnosis and treatment of students who are referred to them, and consultation with teachers, principals, and parents. Diagnosis involves meeting with the parents and teacher, observation in the classroom, and whatever testing is deemed appropriate. Treatment sessions with young children typically involve play therapy, with the purpose of making a connection with the child and gaining the child's trust so they can talk together about his or her problems, and drawing, a nonverbal way for children to express themselves. Consultation with principals and teachers may be individual or as a group, to talk about issues dealing with individual students, as well as larger issues affecting the class or school atmosphere, and also personal issues of the teachers that affect their ability to work with the children. The psychologists are continually working with parents as well, who are involved in both the diagnosis and treatment of their children. In certain cases, depending on the situation, they conduct family therapy.

The Work of Interpretation

> Interpretation … is a core task of healing cross-culturally. The practitioner must reconfigure the patient's illness narrative, within his therapeutic system's taxonomy, as a disease with a particular cause, understandable pathophysiology, and expectable course" (Kleinman 1988:119).

Drawing upon numerous accounts of healing practices in non-Western societies, Arthur Kleinman argues that psychiatric care, as well as healing systems cross-culturally, are characterized by a universal tri-partite process, in which the healer leads the client in identifying a causal agent of the client's suffering, ritually manipulating that causal agent, and finally, affirming that the client is healed (Kleinman 1988:121-2). Thus, a central task of the educational psychologist, as of healers of all kinds, is that of reinterpretation of the client's narrative of distress using the taxonomy of a given therapeutic system, in this case, in psychological terms. This reinterpretation is accomplished in consultation with the child's teachers and parents; however, the authority to diagnose a problem and initiate a plan of action, such as special education for a child determined to have a learning disability, or therapy for a

child suffering from depression, rests with the psychologist.

My interviewees see themselves as specialists in the language of children, interpreters who understand both the world of children and the world of adults, and can thereby act as mediators who help adults to better understand the idioms by which children communicate. Yasmin explained her job thus: 'if there is a problem in the classroom, I see my job as to offer another perspective on the problem, and to help [teachers] see the whole child, not just the behavior problem.' Said Natalie, 'I try to help teachers understand why children act as they do, to see the child behind the problem, to understand the interior life of the child.'

Dorit went into some detail about a specific case in which her reinterpretation of a child's behavior enabled the teacher and parents to handle the situation differently and resolve the situation. She explained that she helped the teacher and parents look at the problem differently, and the behavioral problems disappeared: '…as soon as the way she was treated changed, things changed… the way they looked at her problem, from a terrible, crazy child, she became a child who needs attention.' Other interviewees used similar language as well, explaining the importance of working with adults to increase awareness of and sensitivity to the interior lives of children.

However, educational psychologists not only interpret the problems of children—they interpret how classroom and family dynamics affect children. Therefore they often find themselves counseling parents and teachers about their problems, too. They interpret the ways that teachers' and parents' problems affect children, as well as the sources of those problems. Tali explained to me that she spends much more time counseling teachers than children about how to deal with their fears surrounding the violent political situation in Israel. 'Children are mostly indirectly affected by the situation,' she explained. 'It's when they sense the fear of adults that they are really influenced. I work with teachers to help them control their own fears, so they can be there for the kids.' Omar talked about the pervasive problem of parental abuse, and explained that he cannot simply report abuse to the authorities. 'You cannot help anyone individually if you create a conflict in the community,' he told me. 'To separate a child from his family is to kill him.' Instead, he tries to work on the family level to solve problems of abuse. Other interviewees echoed Omar's and Tali's concerns as well, and stressed the importance of

family therapy and teacher consultation to solve problems.

Obstacles

My interviewees cited various obstacles they face when working with Haredi and Palestinian populations. The first, common to both groups, was resistance to treatment due to fear and/or ignorance of psychology. Thus in both cases, their professional role is in some ways foreign to their clients, and they need to work to help them understand what the work of a psychologist entails.

However, the two groups tended to describe their relations with their clients quite differently. The psychologists in the Haredi sector emphasized the frustrations they feel having to conform to Haredi norms when they go to work in their schools, emphasizing the 'otherness' of Haredim in comparison to themselves. The psychologists in the Palestinian sector, however, acknowledged differences between themselves and their clients, but downplayed their importance and did not elaborate on them. On the other hand, they emphasized difficulties working with Israeli colleagues in the municipality.

Fear and Ignorance of Psychology

> Medical care, and even more so mental health care, are among those few contact zones in which the ultra-Orthodox reluctantly face and interact with specialists pertaining to the "world out there" …The challenge posed to mental health practitioners by the ultra-Orthodox patient is more unsettling than that inherent in 'ordinary' transcultural therapy … From the ultra-Orthodox perspective, the fact that the secular unabashedly breach the religious commandments viewed by the observer as the *sine qua non* of Jewish life makes contact with them in many spheres of life (let alone marriage) entirely impossible. Moreover, it situates them in a condemnable position, part of the impure world of sin' (Bilu and Witztum 1993:199-201).

Psychologist-client relationships among Haredim have been characterized as particularly problematic, in part due to the prejudices that Haredim are said to have against the secular professionals who treat them. In response to this problem, some psychologists have stressed the importance of creating a familiar setting, which enhances the image of the psychologist in the eyes of Haredi clients (Bilu and Witztum 1993; Witztum and Goodman 1999). The psychologists I interviewed also stressed the importance of conveying an acceptable image when working with Haredim, and maintaining a tolerant attitude towards Haredi beliefs. They were very articulate about the personal difficulties they experience, as well as the ways they adapt not only their style of dress but also their communication strategies to

bridge the cultural divide they see between themselves and the Haredim.

These psychologists echoed the literature on practicing psychotherapy among Haredim in their portrayal of them as resistant to cooperating with non-Haredi psychologists. They cited various factors to which they attribute this reluctance. When I asked Tali to tell me about the social context in which she works, one of her first reactions was to point to a flier (posted on her wall) which had been sent to all the psychologists at the municipality working with Haredim, entitled *Sakanat Psikologim* – 'Danger of Psychologists.' She went on to explain to me, 'Yes, they [Haredim] have really, a lot of obstacles, and uh, thoughts against psychologists in some way, because they are afraid that people, if they see a psychologist, will become more secular, will leave the religion, that it is something against the religion, or it's talking too much about sex, or things like that.' When I asked her if there was any basis for this fear, she paused briefly, and then went on to identify two problems. The first one, she said, is that because most psychologists come from secular or religious, but not ultra-Orthodox communities, Haredim naturally are suspicious that psychologists will come and try to change their ways, since secular Jews usually look down upon their way of life. 'They [secular Jews] are usually looking at the Haredi society with disrespect,' said Tali, 'and as if they are upper and the Haredi are lower, so they are threatened and they are afraid, and so there is some kind of justification to that.' But the second, that 'psychology is something against the religion or talking about sex too much' is, Tali concluded, 'without basis.' Esther agreed that psychologists from the municipality often come to work with them without enough knowledge of Haredi culture and language, which can be alienating for the clients.

Danna emphasized ignorance of or lack of familiarity with psychology, more than religious conviction, as the root cause of reluctance on the part of Haredim to use psychological services. She pointed out that most of the people she works with are open and cooperative, since they are the ones who sought her help in the first place. However, she knows that some families, especially in certain Haredi communities, do not seek help from the municipality, or do so with reluctance, although she sees this problem as only partly related to their religious identity. "It's related to the Haredi issue and it's not related, because I think it's always true [that people everywhere have resistance to seeking psychological help] and it's related, because I think that it's- it's not someone who knows what

psychology is, who you know, who's familiar with it, so I think that it's something that takes time, and I don't think you can push, you know." She stressed the importance of building trusting relationships, gradually, to bridge this difficulty.

Natalie also talked about resistance of clients to her help, specifically with regard to teachers. However, she did not simply attribute this resistance to the fact that they are Haredi. She pointed out 'You have to have a lot of self-assurance to admit that you need help with something – this is true for anyone, this is true for me. Some teachers see it more positively than others … I try to approach consultations as a partnership, not just a criticism of what they're doing.' Natalie did agree with her colleagues that in general, Haredim fear psychology more than many other populations. However, she, like Danna, emphasized at the same time variations in individual attitudes, and also pointed out that seeking help is difficult for everyone, not just Haredim.

In the Palestinian sector, the psychologists I interviewed feel that one of the greatest challenges is to promote understanding of psychology in the communities where they work. According to Anwar, 'They [teachers and principals] perceive the psychologist as the diagnostic worker, they don't understand that this is not- it's part of my work, and I think that I and all of my colleagues in the Arabic schools, we all have this challenge… We don't only diagnose. This is only a small part of the work.' This problem came up in my conversations with all of the psychologists working in this sector. They believe that it is important to offer consultation to teachers and therapy for children and parents when they see the need for it, but the teachers and principals are most concerned that they diagnose learning disabilities in order to receive more funding for special education.

Some of these interviewees also attributed the limited receptivity of their clients to the full range of their services to suspicion of psychologists, and lack of legitimacy for psychological approaches to problem solving. Yasmin told me,

> It's, it's not easy because, most of our schools, they don't have an experience working with psychologists. It's new. And also in our society, it's something new, suspicious sometimes, you know, they look at you like, mmm, psychologists, mmm. You work with crazy people, uh-huh, you know, something like that… you have to work hard to get through – their trust, I guess it's everywhere, but… we're not used to talk about our emotions. Although we're a very emotional people, but… there's no legitimacy for that…

In one of the schools where Yasmin works, she is the first psychologist working there on a permanent basis. She finds herself frequently having to work with the principal and teachers in order to reach a common understanding. She told me that there is no actual word for psychologist in Arabic, so when she first arrived, they called her the 'psychological tester.' Now they call her the 'psychological specialist,' and she is getting more children referred to her for help.

Nevertheless, at the time of our interview Yasmin still felt that she had a long way to go. She told me about one particularly tough battle in which she insisted on meeting with the teachers at one of the schools where she works to talk about their emotions surrounding the conflict, despite formidable opposition, to help prepare them to handle the children's emotional responses.

> I made for them some—not group therapy, but some group working about the situation and the… the things that happened in October and stuff, so eh, the school didn't want to make anything about that, they just, they said " Oh, no, no, nothing is happening," and eh, and why to open eh… things that might eh be I don't know, eh, why to create things that are not actually there, something like- I guess that they were very confused and very afraid, um, so, but in spite of that, um, I was very insistent and I wanted to work with these kids, because I thought if I wouldn't do something with them it would be unprofessional and even dangerous because they *are* going through things, um… and eh, its again you know how I told you in the first that eh we're not used to talk about what, what we're going through and about our difficult emotions, and I think it was very threatening or frightening to open it, because, they- them- the teachers themselves felt very confused, and even maybe threatened, I'm not sure.

Throughout Yasmin's interview, she shared stories of success as well as failure, charting the progress she has made in developing more effective working relationships, as well as outlining the areas where she wants to make more progress.

Omar attributed the lack of receptivity to psychotherapy in part to the severity of the social and economic problems with which many people in East Jerusalem are faced.

> People do not feel the importance of therapy – it's just part of a package with other services. People are concerned with basic survival. Are you familiar with Maslow's pyramid? You can't talk about self-actualization when the basic things are not there… many families are living in one room, and it's hard to keep things hygienic. So I work with people on basic things like cleanliness, I'm not a social worker but I find myself doing the work of a social worker whether I like it or not…'

Reyad also made comments in a similar vein, saying 'I think that- one of the, the problems of working in these schools, is that it's a- the parents are very concerned with basic issues like providing food for

their family. So finding cooperation with the parents can be difficult, when they have so many other worries, they don't need to start with family therapy to find more problems.' Omar and Reyad's comments raise the question of whether resistance to psychology in East Jerusalem is more due to fear of something new, or whether it is because the concerns of their profession are of limited relevance to people's lives.

Hassan suggested in his interview that reluctance to participate in therapy is also due to fear, on the part of Palestinians, to say what they really feel due to a "climate of terror." Fearing that what they say could be heard by the wrong person, he suggests, leads people not to talk about the political situation at all.

> Now, in these days, in crisis times, eh, you know the last 2 years, it's a natural thing to work on how do children and how do teachers, how do they deal with the crisis times. Teachers most, don't like to engage or deal with this. One reason is they don't know how to deal with it, what to do, what to ask. And the other thing, that's important, they are afraid. If I open my mouth, if I say something, people can, you know, the authorities, the municipality of Jerusalem, the education ministry – especially today … So there's eh, how do you call it? A climate of terror. A climate of terror, in the air. Teachers are afraid to deal, to open their mouth. … I have, I had to encourage them. To speak to them you know, how do you say it, professionally. We don't deal with you as politicians, we don't suppose eh, that you, you know, make political discussions with the students, but professional discussions. And this matter, to work professionally, you know its some kind of defense. Yes. A mask of defense. So no one can come to you and set claims. What have you done, what did you say to these children, you can say that professionally and educationally you know we have to work on the psychological welfare of the children and so on.

Hassan's words seem to imply, without saying so explicitly, that reticence on the part of his clients has to do with distrusting him, and that he has had to work to earn their trust. He also suggests that the professional language of psychology offers a way to talk about politically sensitive issues in an ostensibly "neutral" way. This potential of psychological language, is his view, offers a great resource to Palestinian teachers that they are beginning to understand and take advantage of.

The psychologists in both sectors agreed that their clients are hesitant about making use of their services, but gave widely varying suggestions about why this is the case. Their perceptions of their clients' reasons undoubtedly influence how they try to establish rapport with them.

When in Rome…Adapting to Haredi Norms

When I asked about how the social environment influences their work, or about challenges of their job, Tali, Danna and Rachel began talking about the clothes they must wear, as a point of departure for a more lengthy discussion of various ways that they feel unaccepted or out of place.

> Well first it influences my life, because I have to dress differently … I mean, it's very interesting and at the same time difficult. Because you have to change the whole perception of what you're used to, uh and just um accommodate to another society … like, when I interview parents, I interview the mother only because the father doesn't look at me and doesn't want to enter the room, or usually, because they are Orthodox, and they shouldn't be looking at women, and especially, if I'm not- even though I'm dressing properly, I'm still not in their standards …
> I sometimes feel that there is a lot of disrespect to my world. In their view. I'm trouble – you can't live with it, you can't live without it, in some way. I'm something, like they have to get help, and its really… sometimes when I have to get dressed up in these dresses it really gets me mad, you know, because I can't be myself, and why can't they accept me that way I am, but uh, I've worked in different jobs and had to wear different costumes… (Tali)

> I don't know exactly what you mean, because what I find difficult is, okay, the fact that I have to dress up. I don't know if that's what you mean, 'cause its not professional stuff, its like, I feel like I can't be myself. Because there's things that I won't say, or I'll be careful not to say, or talk about my private life … I mean I live with my boyfriend, something which no one knows about, because that's really terrible. (Danna)

> Well, at work I have to dress more conservatively than I'm used to. I am religious, but I'm not- I'm not dressing you know, with skirts to the floor, or something like that. At home or university, I'll wear pants, but I wouldn't want them to see me in pants, and I don't wear a head covering, even though I'm married … there are gaps, and sometimes I'm embarrassed, there was a reading from the torah about sacrifices, and one of the teachers asked me if I found it interesting – I didn't know what to say… (Rachel)

Esther also mentioned the issue of clothing, but stressed that she does not alter her style of dress very much. A religious woman herself, she wears modest clothes, close to Haredi standards – but she made a point of the fact that she does not go so far as to wear stockings, or make other modifications in her dress in order to conform more closely.

In the three quotes above, the interviewees associated their frustrations about the clothes they must wear with other ways they feel that they are unaccepted, or can't be themselves. Tali feels unaccepted by fathers who refuse to look at her when discussing their children, and feels that her attempts to respect their norms are not reciprocated. Danna feels resentment that she must hide significant aspects of her personal life, and Rachel feels anxious about being seen dressed immodestly

outside of work, connecting that anxiety to her inability to admit she found a torah reading uninteresting. Tali considers the fact that she has had many jobs which required her to wear a uniform. But clearly, wearing these clothes present much more of a conflict than wearing a uniform for these women. Unlike a uniform which signifies one's profession, the Haredi style of dress they must adopt is a signifier of personal identity, of sharing a set of beliefs which they do not in fact share.

Esther, one of the psychologists who identified herself as Orthodox (whose own style of dress might, to an outsider, look quite like what Haredim wear) emphasized that she does not alter her style of dress in any way, pointing out what seemed to me like small differences between her own clothing and theirs. For example, she does not wear stockings in the summer (going bare-legged, even under long skirts, is not allowed for Haredim). She used differences such as these to demonstrate that when she goes to work in the Haredi schools, she comes as she is, and expects them to accept her. For Esther, as well as for the less religious women who resent wearing long dresses to work, the clothing they must wear is a subject of great concern, and a focal point of their resentment. Although they are supposedly just work clothes, they find it difficult to wear them and still be themselves. Wearing the clothing feels false. Rachel, who is more religious than Tali and Danna, seems to feel less resentment about wearing the dresses, but fears that her clients might see her outside of work wearing pants. She feels uncomfortable with them finding out that these are just her work clothes. Esther, by contrast, proudly points out the subtle differences between her clothes and those of her clients, in order to emphasize that while she is religious, she is not one of them.

Difference of political ideology was another significant theme in my interviews with Tali, Dorit, Danna, Esther and Rachel, which they used to further dramatize the personal difficulties they face when working with Haredim. Danna described a tense situation in which, again, she feels restricted in her ability to express herself.

> It's difficult, because I hear things and I just shut up. You know, the way they talk about Arabs, or… *goyim*, people who aren't Jewish, anybody who's different from them … I don't think I've ever spoken even, there's been so many elections, and there's been so many things that have happened, and obviously I'd talk about it anywhere else, but there it's like – taboo. And I come to class and there's something up on the board, like it's a sign or a joke, like a political … or they say Meretz, it's for

them it's like something- like if they knew what I vote … and also like when they say, yeah we'll go back into the territories - you? I mean they're not the ones- so there's – it does have an effect. But usually it's … something more general, I don't think it happens in a *kesher* [relationship]-

However, Danna went on to explain that when she has a working relationship with a teacher, the politics do not affect the relationship, and she does not feel anger towards specific people. Frustrations like these, she explains, don't directly affect her work, but they are 'in the background.'

Tali, Danna, Dorit and Esther all had very similar things to say about the lack of nationalist sentiment among Haredim. All three talked about the anger they feel when the Haredim do not stand on Remembrance Day or Independence Day, as well as when Haredim remain oblivious of national tragedies, such as a suicide bombing (because they do not watch television). Esther told me, "once three soldiers were killed in a helicopter accident, and everyone in the country was waiting to hear who they were, and I was waiting- at first I was afraid that, that it could be my own son… and they just went on with life as usual, it's another world, it's not my world, and it angers me.'

About Independence Day and Remembrance Day, Tali had this to say,

I think that what I'm trying to do is, looking for- I mean, we are all human beings, we are all created the same way, and try to see what is connecting us, not what is splitting us, because for me, like for *Yom HaAtsma'ut*, or *Yom HaZikaron*, you know we remember the soldiers, and they don't stand, and I do stand, and it makes me really angry that they usually don't stand, so usually I don't go to work at this time of the day … and I do try to see a person as an individual, not as belonging to this or that group, and I guess when you know people, with time, you don't see the differences as much.

All four interviewees expressed complaints against Haredim commonly heard in Israeli society; they are closed-minded towards people different from them, they do not serve in the army, although they have an influence when it comes to decisions about deployment of troops, they lack patriotism, and in spite of all the support they receive from the government, they fail to stand with the rest of the nation when it comes to national holidays or crises. The issue of Independence Day (*Yom HaAtsma'ut*) came up in three interviews, not only Tali's, but also Rachel's and Esther's. When I asked Rachel if there were any "cultural obstacles" that she had been unable to overcome, she told me about an argument she'd had with a kindergarten teacher over the fact that they do not stand on this day. "I can't accept that they

don't stand and show their respect" she said.

I found it interesting that the issue that Haredim will not stand on Independence Day to commemorate Israel's soldiers who have died in war came up so frequently. It is, after all, only one day out of the whole year, and as such would not seem to interfere significantly with their work as an educational psychologist. However, this refusal to stand on this particular day is symbolic of a general refusal in the part of Haredim to acknowledge the legitimacy of the state of Israel. Given that Israel's right to exist is not universally recognized, this issue is likely to be particularly sensitive. While their motivations are religious, not political, lack of support for the state becomes a de facto support for Palestinian groups as well as Arab neighbors who deny Israel's right to exist. Haredi identity is thus strongly associated with both conservative dress and lack of patriotism. In light of these equations, it becomes even clearer why these psychologists find it problematic to dress in a way that identifies them as Haredim.

On the other hand, such frustrations seemed to be general in nature, rather than directed at individuals. Few examples were given of politics interfering in specific work relationships. Tali told me about teachers who call her night and day because they find her help indispensable. Rachel described the teachers, principals and parents with whom she works as appreciative of her help, or sometimes fearful of her judgments of them, but never condemning of her for political or any other reasons. Danna told me that the first time she worked for an extended period with a Haredi couple and their daughter, they brought the child downtown to her office, stepping out of their world into hers. 'I was quite amazed,' said Dorit, 'the way they--even though I came in my own clothes, you know, dressed like I am, they knew who I was and they were willing to, to use me.' Of course, in spite of the clothes she wears to work in the schools, the Haredim still know 'who she is' – that is, they know she is not Haredi, and they also are probably quite aware of the prejudices that many non-Haredi Israelis have against them. The openness of this couple, which so surprised Dorit, may very well be the rule, rather than the exception, when one considers the numerous examples of positive interaction with clients given by the interviewees. The Haredim who handed out those fliers warning against the dangers of psychologists are mostly likely not the ones who are calling Tali day and night, peppering her with

questions and eager for her help.

Natalie's interview offered an interesting contrast to her colleagues' viewpoints, in that she seemed unperturbed by the clothes she wears and the political views of her clients. When I asked her whether there are special challenges that she must deal with in the Haredi sector, she replied: "The work is the same, I don't see much difference between Haredi or Arabic or any other group… it's true I have to dress a certain way, in order not to shock anybody… the main difference is that there is much less presence of fathers, and the public is less habituated to psychologists, but it's very individual--and the ones I work with in the schools are the ones who have sought my help. They have taken a step toward me."

In contrast to her colleagues, Natalie does not see the clothes she must wear as a significant challenge. She mentions the clothing issue (perhaps because she is familiar with her colleagues' complaints on this matter?) but emphasizes that the challenges she faces are not much different from those in any other context.

I also asked Natalie specifically about certain issues which had come up in previous interviews. Regarding the fact that Haredim do not stand on Independence Day, she replied,

> Yes, that would bother me. But I don't go to school at that time. Those are my personal limits. It's not for that- and one can have other things in a kindergarten, also non-Haredi, that can bother me. I don't think it's just a story of Haredi, non-Haredi. It can also be a secular kindergarten – me, I'm *shomer shabbat* [observes the Sabbath] so that can be – a secular kindergarten that teaches something to children that is… not part of my world view, that also presents a problem.

I found it interesting that Natalie, the one interviewee in the Haredi sector who grew up outside Israel and only immigrated later in life, offered such a contrasting viewpoint. Perhaps the problem is not so much a huge cultural gap between Haredim and non-Haredim, but rather too much familiarity. The other five have lived their whole lives in a tense co-existence with Haredim, hearing all the political rhetoric against them replayed again and again. Natalie, on the other hand, grew up in Europe, far removed from the dynamic between Haredi and non-Haredi Israelis, who each define themselves in contrast to the other. She more readily makes comparisons between issues of working with Haredim and issues of working in other contexts where she may not share the world view of her clients.

Esther herself indicated that some of her difficulties with Haredim are an issue of being too close for comfort. I asked her whether her religious beliefs help her to understand and communicate more effectively with Haredim, to which she replied: "Because I'm religious? There are some ways that I feel I know their world better and that I can help them better, but because we are similar, I am more angry about the things they do, and they are more angry with me because when I talk and I know about the religion--like why don't I do as they do—it's easier for me and there are times where, where it puts me more in conflict with them."

Esther explicitly states here that the similarities between her and her clients actually causes more conflict. When they do things in the name of religion which contradict her beliefs, she has greater difficulty accepting their viewpoints, and as she sees it, the inverse is also true. From Esther's perspective, at least, their closeness does breed tension.

Rachel, who is also religious, also said she thinks it is more difficult for her, as a religious person, to work with Haredim than it is for a secular person, because of her own internal conflicts about whether she is religious or secular. "I am religious, but I wear pants, and I don't wear a hat, even though I'm married—my in-laws are more religious than I am. This tends to cause conflicts in the family, they have these expectations of me and want me to do these things… and I have a tendency to project these family conflicts onto them (Haredim). I have stereotypes in my head, I really had to work on this in the beginning, but also still now."

Again we see the use of clothing as a signifier of identity. Rachel's partial conformity to orthodox standards of dress in a way to express her belonging to both religious and secular worlds. Her anxieties about being seen by her clients in secular dress, discussed earlier, reflect the inner conflict she feels about her identity, and unresolved concern about how to integrate secular and religious aspects of who she is.

The psychologists in this sector clearly articulate the personal obstacles that they must deal with in order to establish collaborative, empathetic relationships with their clients. The conservative clothing they must wear and standing (or not) on Independence Day are two common issues which

cause personal conflicts for them—with the exception of Natalie, all feel the need to distinguish themselves from Haredim, to define themselves as different from their clients in their religious and political beliefs. They talk about the difficulties of "cultural barriers" to clearly demarcate these distinctions between themselves and their clients, which tend to become uncomfortably blurred in their efforts to offer culturally sensitive services. Tali's posting of the "Danger of Psychologists" flier on her wall serves for her as a continual reminder that although she works with Haredim and dresses as they do, that she is not, herself, Haredi. Their ability to articulate how they feel about these issues, in their own estimation, helps them to be aware of their prejudices and deal with them, so that they will not interfere with the quality of services they offer and prevent them from being empathetic.

They also acknowledge, to a lesser extent, that their clients are making their own compromises in order to seek professional psychological help. Seeing a psychologist is a controversial issue in the Haredi community, and according my interviewees, they are not as familiar with psychology as other sectors of the Israeli population. Furthermore, despite all the efforts of these psychologists to speak and dress appropriately, their clients are certainly well aware that they are Haredim and have different values —yet they trust them enough to let them work with their children. This trust must have at least as much to do with their own ability to be open-minded as it does with the efforts of these psychologists to be culturally sensitive.

East Versus West

Unlike the psychologists working in the Haredi sector, these psychologists did not clearly define themselves as outsiders in East Jerusalem, although they acknowledged some cultural differences. Four of the six also have Israeli citizenship, unlike their clients, and all six of them are psychologists (educated in Israeli, European or American institutions), a profession which, as discussed above, is considered culturally foreign. I asked each interviewee how they thought their identity influenced their interactions with clients. The majority of them presented their identity as an unproblematic factor in their relations with their East Jerusalem clients. Reyad told me,

I don't feel that I have an ethnic identity, personal identity. I think that I got to a point

that I know exactly who I am, what I believe in … and I don't find any problem, any identity problem in East Jerusalem. And I don't face people who find a problem with me. Sometimes- they asked me once, because I am Israeli, Arab Palestinian, this is the first problem, the second problem is that I am not from here, I am from the North, and culturally we are very different from the people who live in Jerusalem. It's like we look different, we are dressed different, we talk different, we are more educated … I hear from my colleagues that they do feel this problem. But I think… more related to the type of communication, the type of relationship that I have with them … I give them all the feeling that I'm one of them.

On one hand, Reyad makes a strong statement about differences between his home culture and the Palestinian sector in Jerusalem. He also claims not to identify himself ethnically with Palestinians or any other group, thereby side-stepping any complicated questions about whether he is 'Israeli' or 'Palestinian.' He says that he must adapt his behavior to the ways of the people with whom he works, although he does not seem to think that he had any problems doing this. When I asked him for examples of ways that he adapts his behavior, his main concern centered around issues of working with women in a society which he considers much more sex-segregated than his own. He cannot meet with female teachers to discuss issues anywhere except his office, for example. He also finds that cultural constraints on what is acceptable for a female to say to him can be a block to effective therapy, when sexual issues are involved.

Anwar and Hassan, also Palestinian-Israelis, also conveyed that they considered their Israeli citizenship unproblematic. Anwar told me, 'When I'm working with Palestinians in East Jerusalem there are cultural differences of which I have to be aware, coming from a more Western perspective, living in Israel and studying at Hebrew University and in Europe. The society is much more traditional and I have to respect their norms. But no, this does not pose a problem for me in my work.'

Yasmin, also a Palestinian-Israeli, presented a somewhat different picture of her relationship to the people with whom she works from that expressed by Reyad, Anwar and Hassan. She stressed more strongly her common bond with residents of East Jerusalem as a fellow Palestinian. When talking about general attitudes of her clients, such as expression of emotions, she frequently used phrases like 'in our society,' indicating this solidarity. On the other hand, she also indicated some feelings of strangeness, and a conflict of identity which Reyad and Anwar seem to feel less troubled by. I asked her the

question: 'What's it like to be working in East Jerusalem, when you're coming from another area, when you're coming from, like you said before, from the inside, from Israel?' She replied,

> Well, first of all it's interesting … well I think it's confusing because, you know, I define myself as an Arab, a Palestinian Arab, but when I go there, em, I experience some eh, other being of Palestinian … I'm not always feeling like I belong to this being, and at the beginning, I felt somehow a stranger, but with time the feeling of strangeness went … but it's still there, you know? …you know the thing that helped me get more in touch with them, I think it's eh, first of all my professionality … they see that I know things and can help them in things … but another thing is em, contacting them through personal – not personal but eh, human relations .. it's getting them to trust you and um, to see that you are there to help them…

Later I asked her directly about the cultural differences she sees between herself and the people with whom she works, and she said that basically it is the same culture, but characterized it as more traditional and conservative than her 'home culture.' She also mentioned her choice of clothing, saying that she has a separate set of clothes for work, which need to be 'appropriate.' She talked about how she has been socialized to what she calls a 'Western' way of thinking, which can give her a 'multidimensional' view of things, but can also sometimes get in the way of understanding her Palestinian clients.

Shadia and Omar, both residents of Jerusalem, are clearly not 'outsiders' in the communities where they work, in the sense that Reyad and Anwar described. In both cases, however, they did make distinctions according to religious belief. Both characterized society in East Jerusalem as quite religious, and social norms governed by religious law. Omar characterized himself as secular in contrast to most of the population, although he did not stress this distinction very strongly. Shadia, however, made a sharper distinction between herself and the population of East Jerusalem than any of the other interviewees, as a Christian in an almost entirely Muslim environment. She talked about issues of conformity and non-conformity in this religious environment, giving the example of the Ramadan fast: "During Ramadan, the whole school is expected to fast. So here, me as a Christian, I definitely don't fast on Ramadan, uh, it's not that I don't fast – you know, our fasting is different, in Lent, it is considered a personal ritual between the person and God, and here it is more a social ritual … a conformity is expected in the school, for every person even working in the school, is expected to

conform."

In contrast to the other interviewees, however, Shadia talks about being a deviant, not about conforming. A religious woman, who wears a gold cross around her neck as a visible sign of her difference, she does not consider it necessary to blend in to the Muslim context either in her physical appearance or her social behavior.

For some of the psychologists in the Palestinian sector, crossing the border from East Jerusalem to the municipality's psychological services, where they are assigned supervisors and attend training seminars along with psychologists from all the other sectors of Jerusalem, is the most problematic barrier to cross. Some of them described themselves as mediators between the school system and the municipality, and judged the supervision to be inadequate, while others characterized the situation as less problematic.

Shadia characterized the situation as the least problematic of all the interviewees in this sector. When I asked Shadia if she experiences any difficulties working in the current political situation, she responded by talking about the contradictions of working for the government of Israel, but serving a Palestinian population.

> Well it's difficult because on one level we are part of the public school system… So your pay check is paid by the Israeli government. On the other hand, you're dealing with a Palestinian population- Arab population--uh, where, where they experience and they feel, a lot of hostility to the Israeli government. Especially after this latest *Intifada*. So on one level you are--I don't feel it so much as a psychologist--I never felt I am representing you know, the system, the Israeli system in any way … Although I myself, I don't feel hostility, to Israel … there should probably be more integration of the two cultures in the long run, the two nationalities. But this is a minor- a very minor problem, you know. On the other hand, I feel I'm my own boss, you know, whether my work in the schools, my approach to the teachers, to the parents, so there is no conflict in that. Uh, I uh, pretty much conduct a psychological approach to the, to the uh, understanding of the psychological emotions, of the of these events, what they are seeing or hearing or experiencing, and try to take it from the… (trails off)

Although I asked her how the political situation affects her work, not for her political views, she responded by emphasizing her neutrality. Although she works for the municipality, she is her 'own boss,' and does not see herself as 'representing the system.' At the same time, she does not side with the Palestinians (to whom she refers as 'they' in this quote, as well as throughout the interview),

emphasizing that she does not share their hostility to Israel, and that she takes a 'psychological approach' to dealing with the emotions of her clients surrounding these political events. She characterizes her professional role as a neutral space in which she can function, apart from the political tensions which surround her.

After a brief pause, Shadia continued her answer, but on a slightly different topic, describing her relationships with other psychologists in the municipality.

> …on the other hand, we are also a part of the Israeli psychological services, and this is- everything is pretty much conducted in Hebrew, whether it is you know, the continuing education that we take, or the seminars, and we also take supervision from an Israeli supervisor, you know, and this is mostly in Hebrew, so, uh, sometimes this creates a barrier for me, because I don't know Hebrew very well. But sometimes, uh, but you know, I also see the group of psychologists as people who are more understanding, whether Israeli or Arab, and there is more uh, the confrontation of emotions are not so difficult … So I think as fellow psychologists, I don't feel you know, that there is a barrier or something like that. I feel like, as psychologists, it's easier for us to talk you know, about emotions, you know--it's not so hard to um, express what you're thinking. Maybe as psychologists it's easier.

Shadia brings up the issue of her relations with Israeli colleagues in the municipal psychological services, an issue presented as quite problematic by some of the other interviewees. She, however, depicts her relationships in the municipality as easier than with her clients in East Jerusalem, finding more common ground with fellow psychologists than other Palestinians, and feeling that it is easier to express herself. The principal barrier she sees is the language issue (her Hebrew is much more limited than the other five Palestinian psychologists; she and Omar, unlike the other four interviewees were not educated in the Israeli school system).

Omar's experience working with Israeli colleagues in the municipal psychological services contrasts sharply with Shadia's. He told me that it was difficult for him to adapt to working for the municipality due to ""psychological barriers." "It helped me, to have control of the language – I learned Hebrew, when I spent four years in jail, that was 12 years ago. So, having control of the language has helped me to overcome the barriers, and money-wise, it is, it's certainly a better opportunity. And I am serving my own people… I try to work as a professional – professionality helps, I know my limits…"

Although like Shadia he did not have the benefit of learning Hebrew in school, he has mastered the language later in life. However, he learned most of his Hebrew from being imprisoned in an Israeli

jail for four years during the first *Intifada*. Although mastery of the language is presumably helpful in communicating with Israeli colleagues, the association of learning Hebrew with his time in jail is clearly not a positive one. In contrast to Shadia, Omar feels solidarity with other Palestinians, and knowing that he is serving his 'own people' helps him to deal with the somewhat contradictory position in which he finds himself.

However, he too relies on the neutrality of his professional role to deal with difficult political tensions. Characterizing his relationship with his supervisor, he told me,

> We can work together, but there is a struggle. The supervisors are not aware of the culture, the methods do not match the needs of our culture. My supervisor told me about the center where she works, in Gilo, being shot at, I listened and showed sympathy. On the other hand, I could understand why the Palestinians were shooting… she told me about her two sons in the army, and I said, maybe they are some of the soldiers shooting Palestinians in Gaza.

On the opposite side of a bloody conflict, as Omar mentioned previously, his professionalism helps him to function in a tense environment. By staying within this role, he can put aside personal opinions. It is also interesting that he connects differences in political loyalty with the inability of his supervisor to understand Palestinian culture.

Yasmin expressed ambivalent feelings about the helpfulness of the municipal supervision and continuing education programs. First, she told me the story of a time when she had difficulty counseling a grieving mother who had just lost a son in a car accident. She encouraged the woman to express her feelings of grief, but Yasmin felt that her efforts were ineffectual. It was Yasmin's Jewish Israeli supervisor, however, who pointed out that the woman was using socially sanctioned methods to process her grief, such as prayer and reading of the Quran. But when I encouraged her to talk further about this issue, she gave a surprising (to me) response:

> Me and Omar wanted to make an issue about the um, cultural differences, um, we have, and like psychologists and the school, on one side, and from the other side, us, Arab psychologists, and our supervisors … They're all Jews and all the programs are in Hebrew, you know. And I had lots and lots of conversations with my supervisor about that. You know, I'm an Arab, I'm working in an Arabic school, and you're giving me something that comes from your background and from your world of concepts … and you know when I talk about these kids … those supervisors don't have an idea, or enough idea about their world…

Yasmin's statement above directly contradicted her previous admission of being out of touch with the

experience of a Palestinian woman, and being aided by her supervisor. Now her supervisor is the one whose 'world of concepts' is not compatible with the reality that children are living in East Jerusalem. She then gave an example to illustrate, about some children in her schools whose homes are in Beit Hanina or Raam, and because of the security situation, are sometimes prevented from going home, so they stay overnight in other homes in East Jerusalem.

> So it's like an unstable world for these kids … sometimes I work like, like um, … a mediator maybe, between this side, the supervisors, and the schools, and eh, you know, it's not easy for me because sometimes I feel more close to this side, sometimes to this, and making this contact successfully between the two, it's really you know, how we said in the beginning of this meeting, a challenge. You know, it's not easy for me also as a person, not just as a professional. Because sometimes you wonder where you really are, you know.

In Yasmin's own words, the heart of the matter is her personal identity conflict, more than her supervisor's incompatible world of concepts. The experience of the children she told me about, who don't have a single home, or a stable world to live in, resonates with her own experience of not knowing where she belongs. In the beginning of her interview, she stated that she identifies herself as Arab Palestinian. Yet, when she goes to work in East Jerusalem, perhaps she discovers that she is much more 'Western' and perhaps 'Israeli' than she feels allowed to admit.

> Looking at the conclusion of her speech, her situation becomes still more complex, and the issue of having to 'pick a side' more pronounced:

> There's some of our staff [the other psychologists working in the Arab schools in Jerusalem, all Palestinians] who say, okay, we have this reality in the school and we have the things that they say in the supervision, I, I don't have to do everything the way they say in the supervision, I do it how I feel or how I believe that it would be better for this reality, but sometimes I feel even that not much of eh, for me, it's not a solution, because now I'm like eh, learning this field, you know, educational psychology, so I really want to hear from the supervisors, and I really want to do it the way they say, because this is the way I'm going to learn it you know because I don't have this background so sometimes I really feel somewhere, I don't know where, in the middle, but its good that we talk about it, in the staff and with the supervisors.

Here, Yasmin alludes to an on-going debate among her Palestinian colleagues about the usefulness of the Israeli supervision, which also came up in some of my other interviews. Concerning this debate, Yasmin describes herself as somewhere 'in the middle.' While she has apparently been told by some

colleagues that she should find her own solution to problems without the advice of her supervisors, she is a second-year intern who wants as much help as possible from those with more experience. Furthermore, she has found again and again that the advice from her supervisor was helpful, and in at least one case, even reflected an insight into a Palestinian woman's life that Yasmin herself could not see.

When discussing cultural differences between themselves and their clients, or the gap between the needs of their sector and the supervision offered in the municipality, it became clear that these issues raise complicated questions about their personal identities. Although they are all Arabs, they demonstrated diverse ways of dealing with the contradictory positions in which they find themselves. Reyad denied having an ethnic identity, but emphasized that his clients feel he is 'one of them.' Yasmin asserted her solidarity with other Palestinians, defining herself as Palestinian, and claimed that the supervision in the municipality is inadequate, while simultaneously giving examples which attest to her admiration of the superior insight of her supervisor. Shadia emphasized her identity as a Christian and a psychologist rather than as a Palestinian, depicting her relationships with Israelis in the municipality as much closer than those with Palestinians, in spite of the language barrier. The 'cultural barriers' which we discussed, and the degree to which they are presented as problematic or unproblematic, appear to be intimately tied to the way each interviewee attempted to resolve questions of identity. As in the Haredi sector, professional roles were cited as neutral space in which to function.

Providing "Culturally Sensitive" Care

I talked with each of my interviewees about their views on how to provide culturally sensitive care. The two groups tend to differ in the way they use the concept of culture. The psychologists in the Haredi sector emphasize acceptance of and deferral to Haredi cultural norms as their chief method of dealing with cultural barriers. They do not recognize the practice of educational psychology as itself a cultural practice. In response to moral dilemmas concerning the welfare of the child, they consistently emphasize that their job is not to introduce any changes in Haredi culture, so they must never voice opinions which contradict Haredi norms. The psychologists in the Palestinian sector also emphasize cultural sensitivity, but see the practice of psychology as cultural, and claim that Western psychological theories of development and of the self are fundamentally incompatible with Palestinian and other non-Western societies. As Arabs who also have Western psychological training, they see themselves as uniquely positioned to work with a Palestinian population because they can see and understand these biases. On the other hand, unlike their colleagues in the Haredi sector, they see part of their role as to initiate changes in Palestinian society and culture, to be a modernizing influence.

Culturally Sensitive Care

When asked about cultural differences, all the interviewees in the Haredi sector asserted that they do need to adapt their methods and language to bridge a cultural divide. One common example they gave was the use of Haredi language, especially learning to use their euphemisms for sex. Esther claimed to feel the most free to be herself among Haredi adults, but contrasted this freedom with the great care she takes when interacting with children. 'I am careful of every word I say, I even try to use his language and his words … because I need to help him grow up in his own family, and not introduce any conflicts,' she explained. She is careful not to use certain words that Haredi parents would not want their children to hear, such as '*pee-pee*' or '*tusik*' (bottom). She uses stories and metaphors from their cultural world, drawing from sources such as the *tanach* and the *midrash*, rather than television or popular children's stories in the secular world, like Pinocchio. Esther is also careful not to do anything that could be confusing to the child, or negating of the parents' values. For example, she stated that she

would stand on Remembrance Day when in a meeting with adults, but would not do so when meeting with a child.

Beyond using appropriate language, the main thing psychologists in the Haredi sector emphasized was respecting Haredi norms. A common example given was the large number of children Haredi families tend to have. Tali told me: "Definitely, we have to use- to develop strategies to work with what we have, what I'm trying to do is… not to be judgmental. Not to judge the families- I had a family that all the seven kids have the same kind of problem and the mother is pregnant again. And so, common sense would say, of my society would say, why don't they use birth control? You have to understand their concept of life, that everything is from God…"

Rachel brought up a very similar example of a mother who she described as "broken." She had ten children and could barely manage to keep things together, and she was pregnant again. Rachel's first thought was, she's crazy. But then she thought about it and realized that giving birth was the most fulfilling thing for her in life. So she got over this initial obstacle to understanding, as Tali also described, by trying to see things from the mother's viewpoint and accepting that her values are different.

When I asked Dorit if she uses culture-specific methods, she answered with a 'Yes' before I even had the question out of my mouth.

> For sure. You know like I said, if someone has 17 children I can't expect them to do the same kind of- to be the same kind of parent as someone with two children, and what they expect of the children is different- you know, if a non-Haredi mother said to me, I have a terrible problem with my six-year-old, she doesn't help me at all with the little ones, I'd say, she's crazy. But if a Haredi mother says that to me, then I say okay, that maybe there is a problem.

She went on to explain that she has a case of a mother-daughter relationship that is very tense, where the whole relationship revolves around the mother telling the daughter what to do. So Dorit thought it would help if she encouraged the mother to spend time, one-on-one, just playing with her daughter. However, the mother, who has many other children and household duties to care for, has not been able to find time. Dorit was clearly frustrated, wanting to help this little girl to develop a closer relationship with her mother, and expected more cooperation than she received. She begins with an example of

different cultural ideals concerning family size, and by extension, different expectations of children, stating that she needs to take these cultural models into account. But she ends the story in frustration, unable to implement the changes she feels are necessary to meet the girl's needs, namely, to have the mother spend one-on-one time with her.

The psychologists working in this sector tend to emphasize their own efforts to conform to Haredi cultural norms, seeing it as their duty to perform their tasks without forcing their clients to make any changes in their culture. When talking about culture, they brought up differences of language and dress as well as values, such as cultural ideals about how many children to have. However, they consistently did not recognize their professional services—diagnostic testing, therapy, consultations—as cultural practices. Nor did they see that their diagnoses of clients' problems are interpretations according to a certain taxonomy which is also cultural. Their work has intrinsic cultural and moral implications, but this is a dimension of their work of which they seem to be largely incognizant.

"I mean there is the clothing and the very, very religious and the different backgrounds and, um, sometimes there are differences of opinion which are really hard, but you are a psychologist, you are not supposed to input your own opinion, and I- really what I'm doing especially is staying in my profession, I'm not moving out of it, I mean, I'm not expressing my opinion." Here Tali expresses a common sentiment among her co-workers.   They describe their role as psychologists as neutral, and one of the keys to performing their work professionally is to keep their opinions to themselves. Thus professional diagnoses are distinguished from personal values and beliefs. They do not share their belief that it would be better for children to live in smaller families, so that children can have more time to be children according to their model of childhood—a time of being free of responsibility, and of being cared for by one's parents. Yet this model influences the conclusions they draw about why deviant children behave as they do, and the methods of treatment they recommend. Their diagnoses are not neutral or objective. They are shaped by the psychologists' own cultural models.

Western-centric Theories, Sociocentric Selves

The psychologists in the Palestinian sector tended not to talk in terms of setting aside their own

values, instead emphasizing the degree to which they share a common culture with Palestinians in East

Jerusalem (Shadia is an exception to this tendency, which I will discuss in the following section). One

way that they emphasized their solidarity with Palestinians was to emphasize the bias of Western

psychological theory, which is applicable to Western cultures but not to Palestinian or other Eastern

cultures. Reyad told me,

> You know, a big issue in the States and I think in Europe, is independence. It's in the adolescence, for example, one of the- Erikson talks about the need to get an achieved identity. And in order to get an achieved identity, the family and the society must, eh, give the adolescent an opportunity to experience lots of things, to experience a lot of alternatives, to let him go to try things. But here in the Arabic society if you want to treat an adolescent who has an identity problem, and you just go according to the Erikson theory … he will get resistance from the society, and from his family, and so you create a conflict, because he cannot experience everything, he will not get the opportunity.

Omar, Anwar and Hassan echoed these concerns. 'You can't encourage an adolescent to go against the

cultural codes of the society,' said Anwar. 'You will not help him to live in an acceptable way in the

society, you will create a conflict.'

Prior to the second round of interviews I conducted, the psychologists in this sector participated

in a seminar about the problems of applying Western psychological theories in an Eastern context. The

speaker was a psychologist by the name of Marwan Dwairy, a Palestinian-Israeli psychologist who

heads the Center for Psychological Services in Nazareth. He argues in a number of publications

(Dwairy 1998; Dwairy 1999; Dwairy 2003) that Western theories of development, personality,

psychopathology and therapy are not universal, and generally not applicable in Eastern cultures.

Concerning developmental theory, he argues,

> …all share the idea of individuation. Acceptance of the notion that these theories are universal leads to the belief that all children develop along an individuation track that conveys them to adulthood—a track in which each individual has an identity that is differentiated and independent of his/her family. Adults in the eastern and southern parts of the world (South/Easterners) adopt a collective identity. Children are encouraged through a process of strict and consistent socialization to obey and submit to their families' will and to relinquish their needs, feelings, and thoughts. Developing independent thoughts and ideas is discouraged, and disregarding the norms is punished. Hence, the "self" is not differentiated from the family. One's needs, manners, style of thinking, attitudes, beliefs, and values in these societies are not distinct from those of the family or the larger collective group. The individual in these societies is not considered a legitimate independent entity. Self is associated with selfishness, and ego with egoism." (Dwairy 1999:909-10).

Reyad, Anwar, Omar and Hassan each presented to me roughly the same argument that Dwairy makes here. Having this understanding of the problems of applying Western theory in a Palestinian conflict makes them uniquely qualified, beyond simply having the language proficiency, to work as psychologists in this sector. Their "Western" Israeli colleagues lack this cultural competence, which further justifies the fact that only Palestinian psychologists are employed to work in this sector (despite the fact that there are very few Palestinian psychologists, and as a result they are understaffed, even though they have the funding to hire additional psychologists).

This distinction drawn by my interviewees between "individuated" Western identities and "collective" Eastern identities echoes arguments which have been made many times by Western anthropologists and comparative social psychologists. Clifford Geertz, for example, has argued that a conception of the person as a "bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe … organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background" (Geertz 1975) is unique to Western culture. Researchers have made similar observations in a variety of contexts, arguing that in contrast to Western society, relational, sociocentric selves prevail everywhere from Papua New Guinea, to India, to Japan and Africa (Dumont 1970; Geertz 1975; Riesman 1986; Roland 1988; Marcus and Kitayama 1991).

Based on the observation that Palestinian society discourages children from being independent and going out into the world to experiment and "discover who they are," my interviewees conclude that Palestinian selves are not differentiated from their collective family identity. One problem with this conclusion is that, like many discussions of the self of non-Western peoples, the term "self" is not defined. Melford Spiro argues that in most such discussions an "isomorphic relationship [is presumed] among cultural conceptions of the self, the self conceptions of social actors, and the actors' self-representations" (Spiro 1993:143). Failure to distinguish between cultural models and individual conceptions and experiences of the self is problematic because the notion of a single culturally constituted concept of self rests on the assumption that "cultures" are themselves coherent systems (Ewing 1990:257).

Some recent studies of self in non-Western cultures have pointed out that a strong emphasis on relationality in cultural and individual conceptions of the self does not mean that individuals have no concept or experience of the self as an individual (Ewing 1990; Lamb 1997). Writing about the Newars of Nepal, Steven Parish argues, "Newars have cultural ways of knowing themselves as individual selves, ways of expressing and developing personal autonomy … ways of managing and subverting the cultural ideology that disowns the individual" (Parish 1994:128). If one does not separate cultural concepts of self analytically from individual experiences of self, one is left with an understanding of individuals' actions as entirely determined by culture, without agency and without the possibility of challenging hegemonic ideologies. By contrast, characterizing Western cultural concepts of the self as "autonomous" and "self-contained" denies the extent to which people in Western cultures are also interdependent and relational. Melford Spiro argues that such a characterization of the Western self is a folk model (not representative of the way Western theorists including William James, Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson have understood the self) which does not hold up to empirical findings that Westerners are much more interdependent than the folk model would indicate (Spiro 1993).

My Palestinian interviewees, in deciding to become psychologists (by their own admission, a foreign occupation to most Palestinians) must have had to do some of their own exploration and some independent thinking to end up in their profession. Reyad, for example, told me that his parents were initially quite unhappy with his decision to become a psychologist, having hoped that he would instead become a doctor. Even if one were to explain his choice by the influence of his "Western" education at an Israeli university, it seems clear that my interviewees implicitly must recognize, based on their own experience if nothing else, that an unindividuated cultural model of the self is not uniformly shared by all Palestinians.

A second difficulty of my interviewees' argument is that it suggests that there are essentially two possible types of self concept: a Western one and an Eastern one. Rather than describing particular characteristics of a uniquely Palestinian concept of self, my interviewees argue that Palestinians share a vaguely defined "relational" concept of self with other "Eastern" peoples. Strangely, my interviewees re-inscribe the Orientalist distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident" in order to justify their

competence to work in East Jerusalem (and demonstrate their Israeli colleagues' incompetence). The use of this Orientalist dichotomy may be understood as a reaction to Western attempts to authoritatively describe Eastern concepts of self. As Edward Said has noted, Western representations of the Orient presuppose that the Orient cannot represent itself, and so the West must do the job for it (Said 1978:21). The argument made by my interviewees involves a redeployment of hegemonic discourse which affirms the East/West distinction, but which uses that distinction to say not only that the Orient can indeed represent itself after all, but moreover that the West is incapable of accurately representing the Orient because it has never really understood the Orient.

While it is ironic that, in this case, resistance to Western discourse also partially re-inscribes that discourse, this may be better understood if one considers how critiques of cultural discourses are formed. Steven Parish argues that "what we need to explore is precisely the way men and women may develop critical stands 'from the inside,' as cultural beings, in dialogue with culture" (Parish 1996:13). Thus my interviewees' use of the East/West distinction to reclaim the authority to interpret their clients and to assert their unique cultural competence to do so may be seen as such a critical stand. They use an existing cultural discourse about Eastern versus Western concepts of the self to draw a new conclusion: Western psychology and psychologists are ill-equipped to handle the problems they deal with in East Jerusalem. Only they can understand and respond to the needs of their clients.

Despite their overly dichotomized representation of Eastern and Western selfhood, at other points in their interviews the Palestinian psychologists talked about culture very differently. They described Palestinian culture as complex and changing, and emphasized the importance of their own role in bringing about social and cultural change. In contrast to the psychologists in the Haredi sector, they are very aware that that their professional practices are cultural. Not only are they aware of this, but they also acknowledge that part of their job, as they see it, is to bring about cultural change—an attitude which contrasts sharply with the psychologists in the Haredi sector, who consistently say that it is unprofessional to try to influence their clients to change their culture in any way. I asked Anwar whether he ever challenges the social norms of Palestinian society, and he answered almost incredulously, as though up to now I had really been missing the point, "My purpose is to bring

change." When I asked him what norms he challenges, he elaborated: "Psychology is not just technique. There are some central values that cannot be challenged. But psychology is also politics, we are bringing Western norms, it is values … This is not just a traditional society, it's a society moving toward modernization, and it's a society in crisis, and so we are greatly needed at this time." His justification for the need to bring about cultural change, therefore, is that changes are already happening, and Palestinian society needs to adapt to them. As psychologists, they can help them to make that adaptation, through modern models of education and mental health treatment.

Ethical Dilemmas

Some of the implications of whether the psychologist sees his work as a neutral practice which ought not to introduce cultural change or a cultural practice designed to bring about change can be seen in the way he deals with ethical dilemmas.

The psychologists working in the Haredi sector were quite clear that they ought not to introduce change in to Haredi society. It may be for this reason they did not actually recount many instances of facing ethical dilemmas. They did share plenty of examples of ways that their clients' values differed from their own that led to frustration, but rarely did they indicate any feelings of uncertainty about the course of action they ought to take. They seem to operate on the principle that "the customer is always right." The formula for success is not to argue or disagree, and only offer one's opinion if it is asked for and uncontroversial.

However one of my interviewees did tell me about a time when she experienced a great deal of conflict about how to handle a situation. Tali once had to evaluate a 12-year-old girl to see if she had a learning disability, but the girl turned out to be extremely intelligent, scoring very high on a cognitive assessment test. Normally Tali would have had her placed in a program for gifted students, but no such programs were available in the Haredi education system for this girl at that time.

> …actually what I found out was that there was no learning disability, she had a small problem but it was solvable, mostly emotional, and by working with her, she really— she was telling me things like about how she was so unhappy in her own culture, and I had to absorb it—without leading her. And it was very hard for me, and I had to work

very hard with my adviser regarding this situation, because I cannot influence her to make any change.

Ultimately, the girl did decide that she wanted to enter a prestigious Haredi program for girls, which, Tali told me, required that she keep her 'secular ideas' to herself. The psychologist's room became the place where she could let out such ideas, and by having this opportunity to vent her feelings, she was able to go on and integrate into her society. Tali said it was very hard for her to see the girl make this decision, because she believed this girl was capable of great intellectual achievement that she would never be allowed to achieve in Haredi society. She had imagined the girl going on to become a university professor one day. Yet she had to put aside her own feminist values, she told me, and do what she thought was best for the girl. Ultimately, she still followed the general pattern of keeping her opinion to herself and silencing her emotional response.

One of the psychologists in the Palestinian sector described following this same formula to deal with ethical conflicts. Unlike her colleagues, Shadia did not identify with other Palestinians and contrasted herself, as a Christian, with her Muslim clients, and her approach to facing a conflict in values was to silence her own. She told me about a case she was working on at the time in which what she considers a crime took place in a family. She was working with two young girls whose unmarried older sister (in her teens) got pregnant, and was killed by her parents as a consequence. Shadia explain the difficult position in which she found herself thus:

> So, so this- this was considered, you know, uh, fornication or adultery, you know, according to the Quran or the Sharia, the consequence for such an act is that ... so here I should put my personal values on one side, and deal with a social context, you know, in addition to a psychological context of the problem. … the crime in this case, you know, legally it's considered a crime, but maybe, in the social context it's considered a punishment. So here, I have to help them [the two young girls] accept and understand you know, this new reality, and try to integrate it into the day to day life situation…

Shadia went on to explain that she had to dissociate herself from the situation in order not to let her own feelings get in the way. Her approach struck me as quite different from her colleagues in East Jerusalem, who are invested in bringing about social change and talk about their decision-making in terms of implementing what they believe to be right. Palestinian women do not always respond by accepting honor killings; Elizabeth Faier chronicles one case of an honor killing in a Druze village

which Palestinian women in Israel protested quite publicly, despite misgivings about how to modernize their traditional society without becoming "like the Jews" who are too "Western" (Faier 2002:178). Yet this was not Shadia's response. Her way of dealing with this ethical dilemma follows the pattern of the psychologists working in the Haredi sector, and suggests that unlike her Palestinian colleagues, she does not identify with her clients. She defines herself, like the psychologists in the Haredi sector, as an outsider.

In contrast to Shadia, Hassan talks about an ethical dilemma in terms of his own feelings, his ability to identify with Palestinians' rage and desire for revenge on one hand, and his responsibility to help them cope with that rage and discourage political violence on the other. He does not want to sound like a traitor to his own people, as though he were on the side of the Israelis. He describes his professional identity as a means to deal with the complicated situation, a way to listen sympathetically to the children's feelings without expressly taking one side or the other.

> A psychologist has… a lot of identities. It's a very complex situation we have to deal. The other identities, come out. They're pushing. Uh, as a psychologist, I'm an Arab, I'm a Palestinian, I'm a Muslim, I'm a psychologist, I work with children, or Arabs, the same as me, eh, with identity as Arab, Muslim, eh, okay? – I identify with their feelings, with what they are going through. But on the other side, I'm working eh, the municipality of Jerusalem, yes? Now, if I speak as an ordinary person, as an Arab, I can make conversation with the children, but you know as a psychologist, I feel identification with contents that the children will say. All the rage. The rage. Yes, the rage. Anxiety, or the desire to revenge. I feel it's eh, close to me. Now, children can ask teachers or psychologists, what do you think of the suicide martyrs – how do to call it? Yes? Or the bombing or to go and make a bomb to the Israelis and so on. They can ask direct questions, and the teacher has a problem. If he says, no no no it's wrong, he is you know, how do you call it, eh, he's not from our own men and he's how do you call it a traitor? And if he says ok, they deserve – they are bombing us we should, we, we have to do the same, we have to, to kill them as they kill, they are killing us and so on, so it's a problem. Maybe someone in the ministry of education will hear, will know, will eh, so it's a problem. Now if you work professionally. Work professionally, is to be eh, to have a commitment to your profession … I work like a psychologist. And I speak in psychological eh, and professional terms. Now to speak in psychological and professional terms, there is a defense.

Rather than dissociating himself from the situation, with which he is faced, Hassan uses his own identification with children who express their anger to him as a tool to create an empathetic relationship. The danger he finds himself in as a result of this, however, is that he runs the risk of implicitly condoning political violence. While he sees his ability to identify with his clients as a strength, he finds

that it leads him into uncharted waters, where it is not always clear what the right thing is to say. Painting his professional role as a "neutral" one provides him with a way out—or so he claims. Nevertheless, he knows that the way he chooses to respond to children who express a desire for revenge against Israel could have a crucial impact on how they channel their rage.

Omar also talked about ethical dilemmas in terms of identifying with his clients, rather than dissociating himself. He told me several stories about children and mothers being abused by fathers, and unlike Tali and Shadia, did not seem to have a clear set of criteria for how to deal with these situations. He explained that he cannot follow his supervisor's advice to report these incidents to the police, because it will only cause the family more strife. To do so, he explained would lead to the victims of abuse being blamed. I asked him whether he had found other ways of solving such problems, and (after a long pause) he told me about one child who was molested by his father. Omar knew that if he reported this to the authorities, the child would be ostracized by society, and blamed by his family (if the father was imprisoned) for the loss of their only breadwinner. So he and a social worker made a deal with the father, agreeing not to call the authorities if he would sign a paper promising not to abuse his child anymore.

In this example, Omar is confident about confronting what he judges to be an immoral action, deciding to face the child's father himself and use his position to have a positive an influence. He also appears confident that to follow his supervisor's instructions would be a mistake. Nevertheless, he seemed to me much less sure of his decision than Tali and Shadia did of theirs. Unlike Tali, he subverts the instructions of his advisor and follows his own instincts. But his account of the signing of the agreement left me unconvinced that the problem has really been solved. Perhaps it is just my own skepticism, but I think my reaction also reflects Omar's own lack of conviction as he told me the story.

Hassan and Omar talk about resolving ethical dilemmas in terms of identification with their clients, and decide how to handle the situation based on their own intuitive feelings about what they feel is the best thing to do. As I have shown in section three, the psychologists in the Palestinian sector (with the exception of Shadia) identify with their clients and deemphasize differences between them. And as I discussed earlier in this section, these psychologists see their work as cultural practice, and see

themselves as instruments of social change. I believe it is for this reason that they approach ethical dilemmas by identifying with their clients and deciding for themselves what they think is the best course of action.

Psychologists in the Haredi sector (as well as Shadia in the Palestinian sector) approach ethical dilemmas in a more formulaic manner. They do not identify with their clients, and construct their identity in opposition to them. They do not see their work as a cultural practice, and consider neutrality an important component of professionalism. When they face conflicts of values, they see their job as to remain neutral and dissociate themselves.

Conclusion: Implications of the Practitioner's Identity for the

Practice of Educational Psychology

In a study of Arab-Israeli university students, Brian Schiff argues that the roots of what he calls their "identity-talk" come from a large stock of possible meanings drawn from diverse sources, including Palestinianism, Israelism, and Islamic thought, to name a few. This "complex mix of streams does not disappear on the identity-talk of Arab students but remains as part of a lived-with tension that is tolerated rather than resolved" (Schiff 2002:280). Schiff is trying to make sense of one instantiation of a widespread phenomenon wherein cultural identities "are not fixed, but poised, in transition, between different positions; which draw on different cultural traditions at the same time; and which are the product of those complicated cross-overs and cultural mixes which are increasingly common in a globalized world" (Hall 1996:629). Yet, Schiff observes that unlike Stuart Hall's description of how people manage such complicated cultural mixes, there is no synthesis, no "culture of hybridity" that emerges. Instead, the cultural identities remain separate, existing in tension side by side.

I also found that my interviewees gave voice to multiple identity streams in their narratives. However, the source of tension in their narratives, I argue, is not simply a function of the diverse sources from which they derive cultural discourses, as Schiff suggests. My interviewees struggle to manage contradiction, but the contradiction is not inherent in the diverse elements of their identity. Rather, it is the political situation in which they find themselves, the context of a violent ethnic conflict, which stretches their ability to make sense of who they are to its limit. They do not integrate these streams of identity because to do so is disallowed. Zionist Jews cannot have anything in common with Haredim. Palestinians cannot also be Israeli. Because the complexity of their identity and experience is denied by powerful cultural discourses, they cannot simply tolerate the coexistence of all the streams of their identity. Rather, the complexity must be simplified, essentialized, in order to fit in to acceptable cultural categories. It is this process of essentializing who they are that leads them into contradiction.

The psychologists in the Haredi sector echo popular discourses which contrast modern Israelis with a backwards, traditional Haredi "other." Experiences of empathy and cooperation are occasionally

mentioned, but these experiences are downplayed and overpowered by the characterization of Haredi culture as everything that secular Israeli culture is not. The majority of my interviewees practice some degree of religious observance, two are even Orthodox, but still the emphasis is on how different their religious observance is from the Haredim. Esther, who dresses very much like Haredim, focused on the differences in her style of dress, namely that she does not wear stockings in the summer underneath her long dresses. Politically, Haredim are depicted as disloyal to the State. They live within Israel, but do not stand in solidarity with Israelis, and therefore are not true Israelis. For the most part, any degree of commonality that my interviewees may share with Haredim is denied.

Israelis find themselves in a demoralizing situation in which the integrity of the cause for which they fight is constantly questioned, not only by the international community, but also within their own country. The fight to defend their country has involved them in an occupation in which Palestinians' rights are denied; even the Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are no longer participating in the democratic process. Following Noah Efron, I suggest that without assurance of the justice of their cause, the need for an "other" becomes all the more acute, and the Haredim, who benefit from Zionist protection and funds while contributing disproportionately little to the Zionist cause, offer the perfect foil.

The psychologists in the Palestinian sector are trying to negotiate multiple identities that they experience as contradictory due to the fact that in a tense political climate, they are forced to "pick a side," even though the facets of their identity come from different a variety of sources, not all Palestinian. They are struggling with how to be psychologists and also Palestinians, and in some cases, also how to be both Israeli and Palestinian. Elements of their identity that may be considered "modern," including education at a Western university and their professional identity as psychologists, are problematic because the line between becoming "modern" and becoming "Israeli" is a fine one, not easy to walk (Faier 2002; Kanaaneh 2002). Furthermore, as employees of the Israel municipal mental health services, as professionals who collaborate with Israeli colleagues, as fluent speakers of Hebrew, and in four cases, also as carriers of Israeli passports, they are likely to be regarded with some suspicion.

With the notable exception of Shadia, they downplay all these factors and emphasize their

solidarity with other Palestinians. They emphasize the notion that Western psychological theory is incompatible with the situation they face in East Jerusalem and that their Israeli colleagues cannot understand it. Their education has not made them Western, they are still Palestinian, and although their clients do not even have a word for "psychologist" in their language, they argue that they are practicing psychology in a way that is fundamentally Palestinian, not Western, not Israeli. None of the interviewees admit outright to feeling confusion about their identity, with the exception of Yasmin, one of the interns. Her insightful observation, when narrating a story of children's inability to get home from school due to military checkpoints, suggests that she does not feel "Palestinian" is an adequate label to describe who she is: "You know it's not easy for me also as a person, not just as a professional, because sometimes you wonder where you really are, you know." Yet she is constrained to tow the party line, which is that the Israeli municipality has no resources to offer Palestinian psychologists, and they must organize their own workshops, with other Palestinian psychologists, to meet their needs.

These psychologists fall into two general patterns of identity construction vis à vis their clients, and the pattern they follow influences how they understand their role as psychologists in the communities where they work. The psychologists in the Haredi sector, as well as Shadia in the Palestinian sector, tend to construct their identity in opposition to their clients. For them, being a professional means not making value judgments about their clients' ways of life. Any changes they make are to help them live more functionally in their own culture, not to change the culture in any way. Of course, this point of view loses sight of the fact that the practice of psychology, like that of any profession or any system of healing, is a cultural one. Diagnoses are cultural categories, and plans of treatment presuppose cultural conceptions of what it means to be a child, what it means to be a parent, what it means to educate and raise a child. For example, the repeated complaints about the large size of Haredi families reflect popular discourses depicting Haredim as an ever growing drain on the economy, but more than that, they also reflect a common belief among my interviewees, that it is better to have few children and invest a great deal in them, than to have too many. As Dorit put it, "if someone has 17 children I can't expect them to be the same kind of parent as someone with two children, and what they expect of the children is different." Finding workable solutions has proved difficult for her in such

situations, because her own ideas about how to be a good parent presuppose having a small family.

Yet my interviewees relayed relatively few stories of inability to collaborate with Haredim due to cultural differences, which may suggest that their cultural categories are not so alien to each other after all. Several of them also mentioned that there is a considerable difference of opinion about whether or not it is alright to consult a psychologist (particularly a non-Haredi one), between as well as within different Haredi groups. The flier entitled "Danger of Psychologists" on Tali's wall certainly suggests that this is issue is a subject of intense debate. Yet my interviewees did not elaborate much on this theme. While it seems that their presence in the Haredi communities is a divisive issue, whose proponents among the Haredim are advocating a critical change in the way mental health is understood and dealt with, my interviewees persist in claiming that their work is not cultural.

How can they be so seemingly unaware of the cultural impact of their presence in the Haredi schools? I suggest that they persist in seeing their work as acultural because to recognize their role in the Haredi community would also involve recognition of their collaboration with Haredim to bring about social change—a collaboration which threatens the strict self/other distinction they have made between themselves and Haredim. Furthermore, accusations that Israeli is an "ethnic democracy" have been even stronger in the face of increased human rights abuses since the most recent outbreak of violence. It may be that my interviewees are particularly concerned to maintain a "politically correct" and tolerant attitude toward different peoples' value systems, rather than coming across as psychological proselytizers.

Most of the psychologists in the Palestinian sector, by contrast, were quite straightforward in admitting that the purpose of their work is to bring about cultural change. For them, being professional involves making appropriate interventions, even if their clients are resistant. Yasmin's insistence on meeting with a group of teachers to talk about the conflict, despite great opposition, came from the conviction that to do nothing would be unprofessional: "I thought if I wouldn't do something with them it would be unprofessional and even dangerous because they *are* going through things," she said. Even though her clients insisted that there was no need, she relied on her own intuition that, whether they thought there was a problem or not, she needed to work with the teachers in order to prepare them to

deal with the issues that would inevitably arise in the classroom as a result of the conflict. Yasmin, like the other Palestinian psychologists, feels free to make her own judgment calls, and does not consider her clients' opinion to be the last word.

These psychologists also emphasize their solidarity with other Palestinians, minimizing any differences between themselves and their clients, despite the fact that the profession of psychologist is itself a foreign concept to most of them. They contrast themselves instead to their Israeli colleagues at the municipal mental health services, and to Western psychologists in general, claiming that Western psychological theory does not apply in a non-Western context. Their solidarity with other Palestinians seems to translate into a personal investment in changing aspects of Palestinian society with which they disagree, such as replacing a hierarchical model of education with a model that encourages teachers to listen to children, and allows children to deal with their emotions by talking about them.

The way that the psychologist conceptualizes her role has important implications for how she interprets her clients' problems and how she makes professional decisions. The Palestinian psychologists who identify with their clients tend to make difficult decisions through identification with their clients, and trust their own authority and intuition to make judgment calls. They are aware that their diagnoses involve value judgments, and that their judgments are not always the same as the judgments of their clients, but they are not necessarily dissuaded from their positions for that reason. They may concede on some points with their clients more pragmatic reasons, but continue to work towards acceptance of their point of view on issues of great importance to them. They try to "sell" themselves to their clients in a way that the psychologists in the Haredi sector do not; though often the teachers just want them to come and administer tests, these psychologists go to great lengths to explain to them all the other services they offer. They see themselves, in short, as agents of social change. They focus on big picture issues that they are trying to change, such as child abuse, and how Palestinian children are taught to deal with anger and fear concerning the conflict with Israel.

When psychologists in the Haredi sector face difficult decisions, as a rule they defer to the point of view of their clients. They do not see their diagnoses as cultural concepts, or their treatments as cultural practices. They do not try to "sell" their services; they only offer services when they are

actively sought. They have no long-term agenda for social change in the Haredi community. While it seems likely that they are playing a part in the agendas of some members of the Haredi communities, they do not see themselves as playing a political role.

It is clear that the way these psychologists construct their identity vis à vis their clients affects how they understand their roles in the communities where they work. What is left unanswered is the actual impact of their conceptions of their roles on how they do their job. How much of a difference does the psychologist's intention to change or not to change actually make? Does she have more of an impact if she sees herself as an agent of social change? How well do her clients' perceptions of her identity in relation to them match her own perceptions, and what difference does her identification with her clients really make in terms of how she does her job? Such questions can only be answered by observation of the psychologist in action and interviews with their clients. However, this study demonstrates that in order to understand how the psychologist understands his professional role, it is necessary to understand how he constructs his personal identity in relation to his clients. In a situation of violent ethnic conflict, the wider historical and political context may be particularly crucial in making sense of the social pressures which lead people to construct their identity in the ways that they do.

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