

New Horizons
The Arab Jewish Institute for a Shared Society

**Cooperating at Work: A Study in a Bi-National
Factory**

Research Team: Dr. Zeev Degani
 Marzuq Halabi
 Tamar Gross

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New Horizon- The Arab Jewish Institute for a Shared Society
59 Kedem St., Jaffa 68176
Tel: 03-518-8799, Fax: 03-581-8773
Email: new-horizon@new-horizon.org.il
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New Horizon

New Horizon - The Arab-Jewish Institute for a Shared Society was established by the Alan B. Slifka Foundation with the aim of creating change in the social atmosphere and promoting social cohesion between Arab and Jewish citizens in the State of Israel. To achieve this goal the Institute is involved in Field Research in the areas of employment and leadership training. This research is conducted in order to facilitate change on both the society and economic policy levels. We hope to promote social cohesion and create a shared society by disseminating research based knowledge through both advanced training courses and conferences. We intend to raise awareness among public figures, senior governmental officials and the general public utilizing this knowledge base. We believe in promoting awareness of the proven advantages of creating a common society and a common future in the State of Israel.

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Dedications

We wish to thank the Alan B. Slifka Foundation for its initiative and contribution to further the conception of a cooperative, equal society in Israel.

We wish to thank Mr. Dov Lautman for inviting us to visit his factory, Delta, which was established on the basis of equality, and for his on-going struggle to promote a cooperative society.

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Executive Summary: research findings and recommendations on both organizational and policy levels.

Top management was perceived as committed to each employee-regardless of their national identity. This was experienced as an organizational policy and was implemented both in terms of company values and in terms of daily organizational practices.

Employees experienced their professional identity as being the determining factor in the process of their professional development. In contrast to this experience within this organization, Arab Israeli employees regard their nationality as a defining discriminatory factor outside the organization. Thus, "the glass ceiling", which limits the options of employees from this minority group was perceived as located in the social arena, outside the company.

The emphasis placed on professional identity rather than national identity, enabled employees to fulfill their professional aspirations in the company. This emphasis created a shared space that strengthened the social network of the employees in the organization. This strong social network benefited the company in times of crisis such as a period in which a substantial number of employees were fired. This finding demonstrates the utility in building bi-national companies.

Employees spoke of meaningful relationships with their managers: managers were experienced as facilitators of inner growth who enabled development in the organization. Employees maintained relationships with former managers throughout their careers in the company.

In terms of relationships between employees, the company functioned as an intermediary space between the individual employee level and the social – cultural level. While both of these levels were seen as fraught with conflict, **the company demanded that employees accept the cultural practices of the “other” (In this case the “other” is either Jewish or Arab).**

Employees who experienced the organization as interested in their personal welfare, credited the company with social values that went beyond the financial “bottom line”. On the other hand, employees who experienced the organization as disinterested in their personal welfare, viewed the organization as committed only to financial achievements.

Recommendations

Policy Level

- **Policy makers must promote public policies promoting equal opportunities in the economic, civil and social arenas for Arab Israelis.** This course of actions will reinstate the lost honor of this minority Arab group after years of de-humanization and de-legitimization in the public discourse. Additionally, policy changes will hopefully facilitate a gradual change in the Jewish populations’ attitude towards their Arab minority.
- **Measures should be taken to initiate a governmental policy plan supporting the establishment of companies and economic and scientific initiatives which enable equal opportunities.** Governmental offices, across the board, should perceive providing equal opportunities as both a value and an obtainable goal.
- **Governmental resources - incentives, bonuses, grants - should be allocated to economic and scientific enterprises and organizations that stress the importance of nurturing relationships based on equality between Jews and Arabs in Israel.** Government support should be directed towards the realization of equal opportunities.
- **Investors and private equity should be located and designated to promote economic initiatives that include an equal number of members of both nationalities in all capacities and positions.** In

order to expand civil participation and in order to create economic viability, private investors from Israel and overseas, Jews as well as non-Jews, should be encouraged to invest in enterprises that include members of both nationalities.

Organizational Level

- **An organizational culture must be developed based on the basic premise that every individual is entitled to equal opportunities and self-realization without any relationship to his/her race, sex, age or religion.** This premise must be articulated by top management and established as an organizational value and backed up operationally by daily procedures.
- **Corporate vision should carry concrete organizational implications.** If for example, the vision includes an emphasis on social values, the significance of these values for the employees should be considered. It is essential to encourage employees to take part in the discussion of the practical implications of the corporate vision.
- **Social corporate responsibility is a vital component of the corporate vision.** This promotes a message that the organization is willing to operate based on socially oriented as well as economic initiatives.. The assumption is that this will yield additional benefits for the organization, and for a socially cohesive atmosphere. This conveys a message to the employees that the organization does not exist for the sole purpose of generating profit. This message contributes to the well-being amongst the employees and stimulates broader thinking of the potential embodied in the organization.
- **Affirmative action should be implemented as a strategy in the organization.** In order to create and maintain equal opportunities it is sometimes necessary to choose a member of a minority group who

possesses the necessary abilities, instead of a comparable candidate from the majority group.

- **Different cultural practices should be permitted.** In the daily life of the organization, practice of customs, use of language, expressions of identity (personal and national) that promote a sense of well-being should be permitted.
- **A program should be developed for managers holding senior positions in public and private sectors, which promotes a managerial perspective in which equal opportunities for employees is seen as an obtainable goal.** The world-outlook of the manager is a determining factor of the organizational culture and its daily implications. As such, there is importance in facilitating the development of a socially responsible outlook in which managers recognize their influence both inside and outside the organization.

Introduction

“New Horizons” was established to create a climate, language and platform, which will serve as a basis for civil and social change. The realization of the benefits of a shared society of one society in a country with a cooperative citizenry, based on equal rights and opportunities will hopefully stimulate policy changes to achieve this goal. A glance at the existing state of affairs over a period of decades exposes a different picture in which tension and power relations are maintained. This leads to a situation where feelings of alienation, fear and open animosity exist between groups of Arabs and Jews in Israel. These emotions do not permit the realization of a society based on equal opportunities. Our commitment to the future has made us responsible for the decisions we make in the present.

It is essential to understand the conditions and climate which will foster civic and social changes. Though Israeli law declares that all the citizens are equal, daily encounters tell a story of deeply embedded discrimination against the Arab citizens. We strive to bring about cooperation between the Jews and Arabs based on mutual respect, recognition of the "other" both as individuals and as a group. We hope to facilitate change of the power relationship between these peoples. The premise of our work is that there is an underlying network of connections including family, community life, and the business arena which connect people. Civic and social change based on cooperation and equality, can shine forth and grow from any one of these zones of interaction between networks.

Movements and fluctuations in the promotion of these goals are both embedded in the depths of culture and in everyday practicalities. In order to target both layers we chose to study the way people experience reality and utilize these insights to develop practical recommendations.

In this research, which is the first in a series of studies that will focus on cooperative enterprises, we chose to focus on Delta since this is a factory

in which Jewish and Arab employees are brought together on the basis of equality. In general, the work place is one of the most prominent and significant structures in our lives: it holds possibilities for cooperation and equality between human beings. However, the work place also carries potential to promote inequality and maintain social and economic gaps between people.

The workplace makes it possible for us to define our identity - both as individuals and as members of a group. From this point of view, a work place is a place which we choose to identify with (or not) and as such provides us with a group identity. Our professional affiliation is one of the central representations of our identity, and thus the work place is of central importance.

However, when one's personal abilities and talents are not respected for what they are and one's national or ethnic identity determines whether a certain job or promotion is offered, this will effect our sense of self.

Our research on work places focuses on the structure of the relationships between Arab and Jewish employees. As such, we chose a number of work places, in the heart of the mixed population in the Galilee:

1. The private sector: A clothing factory
2. The public sector: A local hospital
3. A joint government and private initiative: the technological incubator at Nazareth.

The Delta factory which manufactures clothing and which is privately owned, was chosen as the first case study since this is a factory which values equality between employees of different nationalities. It should also be noted that the owners of the factory and managers on different levels displayed openness and interest in this study.

Research Questions

- 1. How is an “equal opportunity” environment described and experienced?**
- 2. What are the organizational dynamics that facilitate an equal opportunity environment?**
- 3. What are the applications of these dynamics for organizations looking to promote an equal opportunity environment in a discriminatory social environment?**

Methodology

Research approach:

In order to study the experiences of employees of different nationalities and the organizational mechanisms which facilitate cooperative culture, we employed a qualitative research method. Our assumption is that experiences of employees and organizational mechanisms are embedded in the realm of conversation and organizational culture. A qualitative research method is especially relevant as a tool to explore conversational dynamics and organizational culture (Philips and Hardy, 2002). The present research is a case study which will provide a base from which to continue our work in further detail. Our emphasis on action research implies that the insights presented are grounded in the empirical data we collected (Tellis, 1997; Yin and Stake, 1989, Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

A case study according to Yin (1989) is empirical research of a contemporary phenomenon in the context of a real life situation where it occurs. The goal of the analysis is the presentation of voices of the interviewees, interested parties, relevant groups and the mutual relationships between them (Tellis, 1997). As such, action research can provide a platform for weaker groups to express their voice.

Research Field: The Delta factories are located in the city of Carmiel which is in the Galilee. It is important to note that the demographic balance in the Galilee is different from other areas of the country in that the Arab and Jewish populations are equal in size. The factory was founded in 1975 by Dov Lautman and employs close to 900 people including Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Delta Textile is the first company in a traditional industrial field which has established manufacturing centers outside Israel, and it has trade and manufacturing relations with Jordan and Egypt.

Research Tools: Findings are built on a series of interviews, observations, tours of the factory, and newspaper articles. It is important to note that the interviews were conducted at a time of crisis. The interviewees related to the fact that the manufacturing operations were about to be closed down and their future was unclear. All the interviews were conducted in collaboration with the organization. The interviews were structured around two central issues: an account of the work experience and a description of the organizational culture. We asked the employees to describe and elaborate on their relationships with their managers and colleagues (Fletcher, 1999). In addition, we asked questions targeted at understanding the organizational culture. (Interview questions appear in Appendix 1).

Research Population: The interviewees included nine employees: managers at various levels, men and women- of which five were Arab and four were Jews. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Ethics: Entrance to the factory was gained with the approval of the owners. The employees agreed to be interviewed. They knew they could end the interview at any time. Finally, all of the names which appear in the text are pseudonyms.

Analysis of research findings:

Interviews were read a number of times for the purpose of formulating content based categories (Lieblich, 1998). At first we pinpointed specific categories which appeared in all of the interviews after which we attempted to formulate and ground the categories in broader terms. For example, what we initially categorized as maternal relationships between female managers and employees was later seen as a sub-category of a more general issue regarding

the quality of manager-employee relationships. Through this methodology, a number of general themes emerged.

The Writing Process:

While reading the interviews we met in order to exchange ideas and insights. During these meetings, there were instances in which we disagreed about the interpretation of the experience described. In these instances, we returned to the interview in question and read it together in order to verify the credibility of each interpretation. These conversations broadened our perspective, adding multiple layers of understanding to the research material. Finally, this report is a joint composition in which we each took part as researchers and writers.

Findings

Relationships between employees and managers:

I. Managers and employees: "being a professional" as the central guideline of this relationship.

In almost every interview the topic of professional identity emerged as central to the work experience. Employees utilized this aspect of their identity in order to facilitate professional freedom and job mobility. **Employees relied on their professional identity when they had to deal with problematic issues, and described the experience that mobility in the organization was dictated by professional criteria.** This emphasis on their professional identity can be understood as an attempt to retreat from the more challenging national identity. However, we found that employees experience their professional identity as a viable source of freedom. For example, one of the managers described his employee as a "guru" in their field: "When I wanted to do my final project at university one of my instructors suggested I go to Delta because there was an expert there called Michael". This quotation illustrates the unique significance of a professional identity in a hierarchal, bi-national environment. In this case, the professional respect was an essential bonding factor between this Arab manager and Jewish employee.

On the organizational level, the broad reliance on professional identities provided a common ground for cooperation. The professional arena functions as a common ground in which managers and employees can converse, argue and deliberate together without focusing on the broader-society level conflict. The support of the board and the top management level in constructing an environment based on equality, maintains this common space. This common ground offers a broad understanding of the differences between employees and it is based on the principle of equality among them.

On the assumption that the management of the factory aspires to create equal opportunities, the employees are free to turn their attention from questions of national identity to matters dealing with professional abilities; from a political mindset to a professional mindset- as exemplified in the quote above.

The professional common ground offers a wide range of opportunities for both individuals and groups. In the coming sections we detail the potential embedded in the professional field on the individual as well as the group level- as indicated in the interviews.

On the employee level:

Professionalism loosens the grip of nationality, where there is a clear advantage for Jewish employees, and offers **equal opportunities** if not always from a uniform starting point. An Arab employee comes from a different background that can be characterized as disadvantaged compared to the opportunities provided to his Jewish colleagues. Professional identities allow all employees, regardless of their background to realize their knowledge and abilities. Professional realization provided employees with a freedom to move beyond their affinity to a group, a class, or the “other”. At Delta, employees preferred cultivating and establishing their professional identities as opposed to other plausible identities. This provided them with a greater sense of mobility.

Employees spoke of a sense of self value. They experienced themselves as worthy, and as important contributors to the factory. Below is a quote from our interview with Mustafa who spoke of his experiences in preparing a factory in Sri Lanka for the visit of a very important customer:

*I came to prepare for the visit of a very important customer...
You simply arrive...You get depressed on the first day, but little
by little you begin, I don't know, to gather energy and to say,
“O.K. let's see, what have we here. What's happening here?
You have to make yourself a work plan and proceed according
to that plan, you begin to say, O.K. I want to take a tour of the
factory and see every work station; I want – you who manage
the factory- I want you to tell me who you want to accompany
me at this station, and remain responsible for the activities
afterwards, after we make our decisions this week. And this is*

exactly what I did; and we started to go from station to station and I always asked that same question and made sure someone was writing things down.

This quotation exemplifies how Mustafa relied on his professional identity when he found himself in a novel situation which required leadership skills. Moreover, it contains a description of the manner in which he transferred this emphasis on professionalism to the employees in the factory, by demanding that they take responsibility for the implementation of changes they set out to make.

Professionalism makes it possible for the Arab employees to see themselves as equals- as opposed to the way they experience themselves outside the factory. While outside the factory Arab employees may experience themselves as threatening, menacing and discriminated against, inside the factory employees spoke of a sense of equality. The sense of equality provides the Jewish employees with a challenge since for the first time they are forced to recognize their colleagues as equals. We found that the Jewish employees were able to handle this challenge with relative ease.

Professionalism removes the "glass ceiling" and provides the Arab employees with a space in which they can formulate their personal dreams. This stands in stark contrast to the external-social reality, where dreaming about future possibilities is experienced as indulgence for the Arab employees. One of the managers- an Arab woman testified to her commitment to the organization up to the point where she said: *"I forgot about myself and still haven't found a husband"* (Fatma). She explained that this is due to the fact that the organization provided her with opportunities to develop professionally and realize her unfulfilled potential as a professional. She spoke of the responsibilities the organization provided her which included management and training assignments all over the world (including India, Turkey and Eastern Europe). In general, the organization gives people access to key positions and grants them freedom of action in Israel and abroad: *"at Delta - you can go far"* (Fatma).

On the organizational level:

We found that the professional field created an alternative hierarchy defined by knowledge and skills.

Managers who belong to a certain hierarchy share a similar organizational status regardless of their nationality.

In order to maintain the professional field in the organization, a professional dialogue is essential. Though Hebrew is the language in which this dialogue occurs, it is accessible to the employees at many different levels. This professional dialogue functions as an organizational language which is composed of codes and inner agreements. This language is an organizational text that provides an accepted network of communication for the employees.

The professional field facilitates mobility both for the employees who take part in the field and employees who would like to enter the field. This implies that employees were able to acquire professional status while working at Delta through courses and experience. As such, it is possible to gain access to this professional circle. Once employees gained expertise, they were able to promote themselves in the organization and represent the factory abroad.

This professional field goes beyond the time limits and the boundaries of the organization. We heard many testimonies of the social contacts and the time employees of the same status spent together outside the workplace.

II. The relationship between employees and managers: the manager as a figure who plays an active role in the personal development of the employee.

Amran spoke of his relationship with his manager:

”After encountering my manager- I felt bold...I was able to feel courageous since I recognized and understood who he was. This facilitated my development. I invested in myself- I studied and pushed myself forward. The most important thing is that a person should be able to think of new horizons in the future- that is the secret of success.

This quote demonstrates the meaningful roles that managers played for their employees. Amran's encounter with his manager facilitated a process in which he was able to recognize his own abilities and set new goals for himself. His sense of self was enhanced through his encounter with his manager. This process of self realization includes two dimensions. The first involves a realistic awareness of existing self boundaries while the second demands blurring of these boundaries in order to move beyond current capabilities. Moving beyond existing boundaries and exploring new capabilities is only possible in an environment that is encouraging and feels safe. In this case, the environment was experienced as safe due to the encouragement and support provided by the manager. In general, it is essential that work places respond to employees' needs in a respectful way. This implies that work places should recognize their potential contribution to this process of self realization.

Organizations position themselves as dedicated to this process of self realization by creating corresponding policies. At Delta, the fact that there was no distinction between employees of different nationalities, allowed Arab employees to recognize their capabilities. Being able to move beyond current capabilities was facilitated through an organizational culture which values and rewards employees based on their professional contributions.

On a broader level, managers can be seen as educators. Buber (1958), views the ideal teacher as one that is prepared to function as an "other" in order to facilitate the emergence of the student's self. A teacher functioning as an "other" will invite his student to explore the multiplicity of his "self". A relationship of this kind is the opposite of one based on a vision of the student as an object, to whom knowledge is transmitted. Following Buber, the

relationship between managers and employees should ideally be constructed based on a vision of the employee as a multi-dimensional person and not as an object that produces organizational value. **This perspective proposes that the manager take part in the realization of the multi dimensional identities of his employees as opposed to a utilitarian vision of the manager-employee relationship.** Investing time and recourses in developing these relationships contributed to Delta's resilience at times of crisis. We encourage the organization to recognize this contribution and invest in the maintenance of these relationships.

The unique relationships between managers and employees are maintained by broader organizational structures which facilitate ongoing interactions between management and employees. On the formal level, top management maintained an open door policy and held company gatherings before the holidays. On the informal level, interviewees used the term "one family" to describe the atmosphere in the company.

The unity and solidarity remained during times of crisis when attempts to increase efficiency led to cut-backs. Employees accepted these dismissals and maintained relationships with the organization even after leaving. The organization helped employees find other jobs and provided generous compensation packages.

Relationships between colleagues: how cooperation between colleagues is encouraged and maintained.

The findings until this point have been limited to the employee-manager relationship. We described two central organizational mechanisms which enable joint work: an emphasis on professional identity and the investment in meaningful relationships between managers and employees. We turn now to characterize the relationships between colleagues and the mechanisms which maintain these characteristics.

Employees spoke of tension and conflicts due to the different nationalities they represent, however, these differences were not amplified. The reason for this is an ongoing attempt to encourage employees to work with their colleagues even when their different national identities provide a source of tension. The story quoted below demonstrates a conflict between employees and the manager's intervention. The conflict emerges in reference to a coffee break. It is important to note that coffee in a bi-national organization has a political status due to the different kinds of coffee associated with each national group. Fatma told us this story:

So I had this neighbor from the quality assurance department called Miri Karasin. She was crazy like ...so she complained because, every morning, I invited two employees from my group for coffee. These two work with me, and we drink coffee together every day for a quarter of an hour. While drinking we talk about work, about what happened, for instance, yesterday. So one day she goes and complains to the manager. So he asked me 'What's with the coffee' and I said, listen, every day I make myself a cup of coffee in the morning. Whether you like it or not, that's what I do. I'm not lying, I'm not saying something that is not true, and so we drink coffee from 7 to 7:15 and sometimes to 7:20 and then he says to me, 'Fatma, why don't you invite me to join? So I said please, come tomorrow at 7'. So he came the next day at 7. Now he comes every day, and then she got annoyed so he said to her: 'Miri why does this bother you?''.

At first, Miri went to her manager in order to complain about Fatma's coffee habits. But this complaint seems ridiculous when the manager himself asked to join the morning coffee ritual. At the beginning of the story it seemed as if Miri was in a position of power due to her complaint, but her power is exposed as a weakness towards the end of the story when her manager asks her why she cannot accept the ritual.

On the employee level this story describes a conflict which is played out through a complaint about a coffee ritual. **On the organizational level**, this conflict is reduced to a petty argument between employees and as such is not amplified. **On a socio-cultural level**, Fatma's coffee has political connotations. Fatma mentioned that the coffee she was preparing was "Turkish coffee"- which is associated with the Arab culture. Organizational literature has noted that coffee rituals at work carry political meaning and as such may lead to conflict. The Jewish-Palestinian conflict may be represented through the different coffee rituals (Halabi, 2007). To sum, both on an individual and cultural level coffee rituals represent the Jewish-Palestinian conflict, however, the manager's clear cut reaction did not allow further development of this potential source of strife.

This particular manager's reaction to the potential conflict reflects the organization's general position which demands respect of different cultures and rituals. Another example of this can be seen in the following quote regarding the relationship between a top manager and his co-worker: "*We have a good relationship but it is not totally symmetrical; I am aware of this but in order to get the needed results, I allow the lack of symmetry to exist*" (Boaz).

This quotation reflects the complex relationship which Boaz described with this particular Arab colleague. He noted that his investment in the relationship was met by the efforts of his colleague. His choice to accept this lack of symmetry in the relationship is not a trivial one and it reflects a broader

organizational culture which values cooperation. This culture is evident in the types of meetings held in the organization, as can be seen in the following:

A year and a half ago we had group meetings in which we developed a competency assessment profile for managers. He (in reference to the Arab manager mentioned above, T.G.) chose loyalty as the most important quality for managers and I had a very interesting discussion with him, well- actually it developed into a very interesting discussion- it started off differently. Loyalty is, in my eyes, often the opposite of integrity; it conflicts with integrity. If personal loyalty stands at the top of the ladder- I think the organization will be hurt. And if this is the perspective through which he operates- complicated discussions and even tensions will arise (Boaz).

The scene above describes a conflict between value systems of two top managers. This discussion takes place in the context of a meeting in which managers attempt to develop a joint value system. The goal of the meeting was to create a joint, agreed upon language. During the interview with Boaz, the value of loyalty was referred to in connection with honor and the demand not to criticize one's manager. Though was not explicitly expressed in the interview, "integrity" reflects an alternative perspective in which employees remain loyal to themselves and not to their managers. Thus, integrity and loyalty reflect two different value systems. While loyalty is closer to a collectivist culture, integrity is a value that resonates with an individualistic culture. The implication here is that the conflict between these managers carries greater political and social meaning. However, this discussion took place as part of an organizational attempt to formulate a joint language. The goal of the meeting functions as an organizational mechanism which encourages cooperation and facilitates "complicated" dialogues.

To summarize, in a factory where employees belong to two national groups which are in conflict, there is potential for the employees to transfer the power relationship from the social sphere to the organizational sphere. In order to

create a different structure, we found that the organization operated on a number of levels including the culture, the language and clear cut actions which did not tolerate rejection of the "other".

Relationships with business world: How do employees perceive the work relations with different countries in the Middle East?

The employees related to the organization's connections with different countries in the world including the Middle East. The business connections with the Middle Eastern countries were seen as significant but there were differences in the interpretations they gave to the decision to expand to the global market. In the following, two such contradicting interpretations are voiced. Both voices belong to Arab managers.

Amran, described this expansion in the Middle East in the context of the company's mission. According to his view, the organization is committed to having an playing an role in the peace process. By developing the textile industry in Egypt, Delta is realizing its' mission as an active participant in the peace process:

And the operations in Egypt, for example, we moved – we were among the first who moved to Egypt – and by doing so we really upgraded the textile industry in Egypt...Anyone who wanted to consider himself an exporter in Egypt, knew that creating a relationship with us- either as a supplier, a sub-contractor or some other form of connection- was essential. And people came to learn- how we do the work.

As can be seen from these statements, the operations in Egypt positioned Delta as a central player in the textile industry. This central position is described in educational terms: Delta is seen as an organization that others come and learn from and as a player that succeeded in upgrading the industry.

A different voice regarding the expansion to the Middle East was articulated by Joseph:

Today, Jordan has also implemented a policy of minimum wages, which does not exist, say, in Egypt and other places. The minimum wage is rising in Jordan. In turn, Jordan will

become more expensive, compared to other countries. Eventually, having a factory in Jordan won't be worthwhile economically. I noticed an article written by the CEO- hanging in the hallway. I don't know if he said this but he is quoted saying that it is not worthwhile to have a production line in a country (with minimum wages, T.G) over \$150 and that means that Jordan which is 220\$ on average- is not worthwhile economically.

The emphasis here is on economic profitability. While Amran sees social value in the move to the Middle East, Joseph views this process in economic, bottom line terms which characterize decisions made in many companies which expand globally. One of the prominent differences between the speakers is the extent to which they identify with the organizational vision. While Amran describes the vision as a partner, Joseph quotes the voice of the CEO from an article he saw hanging in the hallway. In a broader sense, while Amran identifies deeply with the organization and does not differentiate between himself and the company, Joseph quotes the CEO as a reference for what he imagines is organizational policy.

This difference between the degree of identification with the organization's mission indicates the importance of creating an organizational dialogue with all levels of management. It is worthwhile to invest resources in an open dialogue, as broad ranging as possible, in order to promote identification and familiarity with all aspects of the organizational mission.

The differences between the speakers in terms of the organizational mission are expressed on a personal level as well. As noted above, Amran experiences the organization as a fertile ground for professional development. Joseph, on the other hand, experiences his professional development in the organization as dictated by company needs:

So they saw that I'm OK and then they asked me to take on another project. So I took on something else. They said O.K.,

alright, take on another something there and little by little- and it didn't take a lot of time. Then I became a production manager in my division. I was deputy manager of the department and after three-four years became manager (Joseph).

Joseph describes his advancement in terms of organizational needs that he filled. Yet, it is important to note that even in this context mobility in the company is attributed to talent and not to national identity.

It seems that **the employees' experience of their personal advancement reflects their standpoint regarding strategic organizational processes.** When employees experience the organization as a place concerned with their individual professional development, they are more likely to experience the organization as a place that operates in the world not only in order to promote economic needs. On the other hand, when employees experience the organization as opportunistic on a personal, individual level, they are more likely to experience the organization as opportunistic in reference to strategic decisions and mission statements.

It seems that the formation of a vision which includes social values is beneficial to the organization. This promotes a sense that the organization sees beyond the financial bottom line on the employee level as well- which may contribute to a higher levels of identification and commitment towards the organization.

Outside the Gates of the Factory

One Family

The relationships between employees existed outside the work place as well. People established close friendships- visiting each other during the holidays and on special occasions. One of the Jewish managers told us how she helped a couple overcome fertility problems. An Arab manager told us how her supervisor functioned as a mentor throughout years of work at the company. In turn, her goal was to manage her employees with the same dedication.

The mutual interest in friendship between employees of different nationalities testifies to the possibility of overcoming prejudices when equality is a core value.

The Manager and his Vision

The story of the factory is essentially the vision of a man, who established the factory: Dov Lautman. The literature on the impact of leadership in organizations has often pointed to the significant role founders have in determining organizational culture, goals and the underlying assumptions which dictate strategic decisions. Through interviews with Lautman, articles in the press, and the way Dov was represented in the interviews, it became evident to us that the guiding spirit of the factory is a personification of his personal world view. He combines being an industrialist whose interest it is to make a profit with a political view which recognizes the need for peace as a crucial living condition. In an interview for "The Marker" in March 2007, Dov is quoted saying: "I am proud...of how we manage our business on the basis of co-existence, where Arabs and Jews, Druze and Christians have been working together for 31 years. A person comes to his job by virtue of his talents. We have senior managers who are Arabs and there has never been a single argument within the walls of the factory between Arabs and Jews. This testifies to the idea that it is possible to live in the State of Israel in harmony and under terms of co-existence". He claims that prejudice towards Arab citizens of Israel constitutes an existential risk to the country, since they do not feel that they belong. He expressed the opinion that "at Delta we do not pay

attention to whether an employee is Arab or Jewish and through work connections are made which blur the distinctions and lighten the load...we have a lot in common in day-to-day living, in work, in education, in shopping, in the really important business of living".

Delta is an organization committed to financial success and to social values. The organization stands on these pillars both in terms of the formal and informal organizational structures. Lautman expressed his regrets that other Jewish industrialists have chosen to nurture their prejudices over employment of equally capable and talented Arab Israelis

Discussion and conclusion

Our attempt to examine the present company leads us to a wider perspective of organizations. **Our insights can be summarized by stating that it is possible to generate change through the creation of common ground between Jewish and Arab Israelis.** This common ground must disrupt the dichotomy which structures the relationship between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. In this case study, the nationalistic dichotomy was disrupted by various organizational mechanisms including an emphasis on professionalism, meaningful relationships between managers and employees, structuring cooperation between employees and the ongoing opportunity for development including representing the organization abroad. These mechanisms strengthened the social network of the organization, which benefited the organization at times of crisis.

These organizational mechanisms require on-going maintenance. In order to implement these mechanisms further group work with managers on different levels is essential. Group sessions could include analysis of case studies regarding the relational challenges of management. This would stimulate thinking regarding the role managers have been playing for their employees and as colleagues. Facilitating a greater awareness of their role and different leadership strategies could contribute to a greater flexibility in their responses to changes and novel situations. Additionally, an inclusive

discussion of the organization's mission and goals is essential in facilitating identification and promoting social commitment.

In general, the work place is one of the most well defined structures in our lives. For some, this structure provides an opportunity to realize their potential, and develop professionally while for others this structure remains empty. To paraphrase, for some employees there is a direction and a goal at work, while for others the goal is simply to get through another day of work.

The workplace is a central arena for the development and facilitation of change regarding the right for equal opportunities in Israel. The notion of equal opportunities relates to a broad spectrum of dimensions including: self realization, self respect, professions and positions. By facilitating change in terms of the organizational culture it is possible to reconstruct the relationship between production systems, trade, capital, profit and the working man.

Albert Camus writes that "Without work life become meaningless but if work is not inspired, life is strangled and killed". The right to inspired work belongs to us all.

Though "Delta" does not provide us with an ideal and tensions were described between employees, this is an organization that succeeded in creating an equal opportunity environment. As such, it is worthwhile duplicating and learning from the positive mechanisms utilized in order to create this environment. This is not a perfect model of relations between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. However, the Arab employees were able to realize themselves professionally without fighting discrimination. This was sufficient to create friendly personal relations beyond the protected organizational space. Management policies were translated into practical and visible organizational dimensions.

To summarize, the story of cooperation at Delta, which has existed for many years and continues even though employees come and go and the economic situation changes, is a story about the existence of different identities functioning on a common network. This is not simple in the context of the

Israeli reality where two different narratives are violently reinforced in the social arena. What has been accomplished at Delta indicates that a cooperative environment can be facilitated despite these deeply embedded differences.

Recommendations for Further Research.

This was a first study and it is essential to broaden the research in order to further substantiate the findings with the final goal of formulating recommendations for policy makers and industrialists.

- In this research project we studied a work place in which Jewish and Arab citizens work together. In order to formulate a deeper understanding it may be worthwhile to delve further into the perceptions and ideas of individual employees, working in different organizations, regarding notions of equal opportunities. It may be insightful to learn how employees attribute meaning to the current situation and hear about their ideas to facilitate change.
- Additionally, a broad spectrum of organizations should be researched including organizations where employees are all of the same nationality yet services are provided to the other nationality. In this way, we could learn how the "other" is portrayed and provide recommendations to broaden the concept and image of the "other".

Our N was small (9), which makes generalization of the findings difficult. The findings, however should stimulate further large scale research projects. The workplace as a delivery system of social cohesion examples for the reasons we discussed above is of great importance and can serve as rationale for policy makers to create inclusive and equal opportunity policies for Arabs and Jews in the state of Israel

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Appendix 1. Interview Questions:

- Tell me about your work (what do you do; can you describe a typical day?)
- If you had to describe your network of contacts at work, how would it look? (Begin with yourself and describe the first circle of people with whom you work).
- Can you give me an example of a story in which you provided help or received help at work (who did you turn to, can you describe the interaction?)
- Who is the ideal employee in the organization?
- How does the organization reward its employees?
- Tell me about an event/or a day that you would define as successful?