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Students shaping internationalisation in a conflict-ridden society: Experiences of Israeli teacher education colleges

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Abstract:	<p>This article focuses on students and graduates from two Israeli teacher education colleges serving marginalised communities, both of which participated in a European Union (EU) project aimed at fostering internationalisation in higher education institutions in Israel. The study reported on is one of the first to focus on students' agency in shaping institutional internationalisation processes, in particular during their studies but also in their teaching careers in schools following graduation.</p> <p>Employing a qualitative methodology, we followed six students' and graduates' personal and professional trajectories, revealing the nature and scope of their activities and perceptions in light of their proactive role in internationalisation related activities in their institutions. We show how life in a conflict-ridden society may trigger proactivity and agency amongst marginalised students, revealing and discussing the potential transformative nature of internationalisation processes. Our findings indicate that institutions can strive to facilitate student agency and utilise it to further develop internationalisation within their institutions.</p>

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**Students shaping internationalisation in a conflict-ridden society: Experiences of Israeli
teacher education colleges**

**FOR CONSIDERATION FOR SPECIAL ISSUE: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN
INTERNATIONALISATION** Revision 3

For Peer Review

Abstract

This article focuses on students from two Israeli teacher education colleges serving marginalised communities, both of which participated in a European Union (EU) project aimed at fostering internationalisation in higher education institutions in Israel. The study reported focuses on students' agency in shaping institutional internationalisation processes, in particular during their studies but also, as it became apparent, later in their teaching careers following graduation. Moreover, we explore how students' agency in internationalisation is shaped by the conflict and its consequences. Employing a qualitative methodology, we followed six students' personal and professional trajectories, revealing the nature and scope of their activities and perceptions in light of their proactive role in internationalisation in their institutions. We show how life in a conflict-ridden society may prompt proactivity and agency amongst marginalised students, revealing and discussing the potential transformative nature of students' agency in internationalisation processes. Our findings indicate that institutions can strive to facilitate student agency and utilise it to further develop internationalisation within their institutions.

Introduction

In most countries, both in the school system and within higher education, internationalisation has become increasingly important and continues to move from the margins to the core of the educational realm (Chankseliani, 2018), although international dimensions have always been present in higher education (de Wit, Hunter, Egron-Polak, & Howard, 2015). Directors of educational institutions and policy-makers constantly struggle to internationalise education due to economic, political, academic, and socio-cultural rationales (De Wit, 2002: 83-102; Hudzik, 2011), and governments invest substantial resources to engage in this process, despite various critiques of such investments (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011).

In conflict-ridden societies, internationalisation processes are in greater danger of being exploited for dubious purposes than they are in peaceful contexts (Authors, 2017). This problematic situation stems from the fact that conflict shapes the power relations between the involved parties, while relations with different stakeholders are framed in light of the status quo. For example, in a conflict-ridden society such as Israel, student participation in international student exchanges may be affected by Palestinian support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign; and students from Palestine might face difficulties entering Israel and other countries due to security issues (Authors, 2017). Moreover, the physical mobility that prototypes internationalisation is usually constrained in conflict-ridden societies, immediately affecting other aspects of the process as well.

Some scholars claim that assessing internationalisation's outcomes at the individual (student) level is a promising direction to develop and sustain internationalisation, particularly in conflict-ridden societies (Larsen, 2016; Maxwell, 2018). This direction will ensure an emphasis on the rationales directly related to students' learning outcomes, enabling a more proactive and meaningful role for their engagement. Students, when they are involved in decision-making, may also assist institutions in envisioning and enacting internationalisation strategies. Moreover, fostering intercultural competence, cosmopolitanism, or global citizenship may provide a pathway to actual conflict resolution and reconciliation through capabilities and consciousness developed by the students (Dill, 2013). Such developments may be led by higher education institutions and facilitated through internationalisation processes (Aktas, Pitts, Richards, & Silova, 2017).

Traditionally, students have been perceived as taking a passive role in internationalisation processes. This study aims to highlight students' agency in these processes in particular

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3 during their studies but also in their teaching careers upon graduation. Moreover, we reveal
4 the role of the conflict in Israel on students' agency, thus asserting that students' agency,
5 although transformative in the internationalisation processes within and beyond the colleges'
6 boundaries, is shaped, significantly, by the conflict and its consequences.
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9 10 **Background**

11 *Students' role in internationalisation*

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13 Internationalisation is a process shaped by several institutional and national rationales,
14 usually driven by the publicly declared need to 'create' globally competent citizens (Dewey
15 & Duff, 2009), as well as by economic, social, academic, and political motivations at
16 institutional and national levels (Knight, 2004). Indeed, institutions and governments
17 worldwide invest increasing energy and resources to internationalise in every sphere of their
18 education systems (Fischer & Green, 2018). Certainly, internationalisation, which emerged as
19 an institutional venture over thirty years ago, has become a consensual value that is pursued
20 energetically on the basis of diverse and sometimes conflicting agendas. As such,
21 internationalisation is commonly described in financial and sometimes cynical terms (Knight,
22 2015). Such cynicism has been highlighted in various studies of stakeholders' perceptions of
23 the process (see for example Green and Mertova, 2016 for analysis of academics' views and
24 Guo and Guo, 2017 for students' perceptions).
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33 Several authors suggest that overcoming the negative consequences of internationalisation
34 might be pursued through reinforcement of the link between the process at the organisational
35 level and its outcomes at students' level (Fischer & Green, 2018; Leask, 2009). Such
36 outcomes, sometimes aggregated under the term of 'global citizenship' (Larsen, 2016) might
37 allow progress in internal and external challenges if promoted by the institution.
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41 Nevertheless, myriad issues and concerns present challenges to internationalisation in many
42 contexts. Such challenges include 'ethnic and religious tensions' (Wihlborg & Robson, 2017,
43 p.7), tensions that are especially prevalent in divided societies. Yet, if we consider the
44 potential of higher education to illuminate and critique values, cultures and academic
45 traditions (Stromquist, 2013), then, in a conflicted context such as Israel, it is even more
46 crucial that students and academics are exposed to and engage with those principles of
47 internationalisation that foreground social justice and higher education's role in the public
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3 As this need for a more transformative internationalisation continues (Authors, 2016) we
4 need to attend to those such as Hawawini (2016) who disrupts more 'conventional'
5 conceptualisations of internationalisation with his plea for higher education to learn from the
6 world rather than to integrate international dimensions into the institution. By engaging
7 students in internationalisation processes that include, but are not limited to, mobility, their
8 ability to learn from the world and from views of the world that may differ from those that
9 dominate in their context is enhanced. Exposing the students to curricula that foreground
10 intercultural learning and that 'prioritise the development of a knowledge of self, through a
11 retelling of one's culture and history...in order to decide how to relate to other cultures and
12 societies, is the basic tenet of global citizenship' (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017, 1148) might
13 be the key. Similarly, Connell (2017) claims that curricula need to address the
14 marginalisation or discrediting of cultural, religious and linguistic traditions through
15 'curricular justice', encouraging dialogue and reframing learning as conversation.
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24 For many people in Israel, higher education is the first opportunity that they have to
25 encounter the 'other' since schools are usually separate, assigned and chosen by religious
26 affiliation and place of living. The words of those who participated in our research both
27 exemplify the admirable aim of learning from the world and also illustrate the inherent
28 difficulties that arise in engaging with dimensions of internationalisation and, indeed, shaping
29 it, in such a complex society.
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34 *Israeli society and the stratified Israeli education system*

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36 Israel, a state of eight million citizens, consists of a Jewish majority (roughly 79% of the
37 population), with Palestinian Arabs comprising a national minority of 21% (Central Bureau
38 of Statistics, 2017). The conflict between the Jewish majority and the predominantly Muslim
39 Palestinian minority is longstanding and severe. Although officially offered full rights,
40 Palestinian citizens of Israel have suffered chronically from discriminatory resource
41 distribution and lesser representation within the hegemonic social structures such as national
42 politics and governmental agencies (Bekerman, 2007). As a national minority, Palestinian
43 Arabs in Israel have multiple identities; on the one hand, they possess Israeli citizenship, and
44 on the other hand many feel a sense of belonging to Palestinian-Arab society and identify
45 themselves with the national aspiration of the Palestinian people. The Bedouin Arabs (later
46 Bedouins) in Israel are one of the Arab Muslim ethnic groups in Israeli society (5.5% of the
47 population) characterised by a tribal culture that in the past had a semi-nomadic lifestyle. In
48 recent decades, Bedouins have been undergoing urbanisation processes and cultural
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3 transformations including the change in the status of women, and participation in formal
4 education systems.
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6 Schools in Israel are divided into several sub-systems (i.e., the general (Hebrew)
7 education system, the Jewish religious public education system, and the Arab public
8 education system) (Abu Rabia Quader & Oplatka, 2008). . However, the higher education
9 system is common to members of all of the religious groups; Jewish, Muslim, and Christian
10 students attend Israeli universities and colleges (Arar & Mustafa, 2011). Yet despite the
11 unified higher education system, teachers' education for the Arab sector in particular is
12 partially segregated. Teacher trainees for the primary and lower secondary school level study
13 at one of the three Arab teacher-training colleges, at Jewish teacher-training colleges, or on
14 specific tracks targeted at the Arab population within Jewish colleges. We focus on two of
15 these colleges in our study.
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23 *Research aims*

24 The present study is based on a qualitative interpretive phenomenographic approach
25 (Creswell & Poth, 2017) focused on understanding people's perceptions and life experiences.
26 Specifically, the research aims to understand the experiences of teachers and future teachers
27 regarding the following research questions:
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- 32 1. How do students in these unique contexts perceive the meanings, means, and
33 challenges of internationalisation?
- 34 2. How do students involve themselves proactively in internationalisation processes?
- 35 3. How does the Israeli-Arab conflict shape and affect students' perceptions of
36 internationalisation?
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41 *Research setting*

42 This study focuses on students at two teacher education colleges serving marginalised
43 populations; a Palestinian Arab college in the centre of Israel and a mixed college in Israel's
44 southern periphery (with a student population of approximately 50% Bedouin minorities).
45 Both colleges, along with five others, participated in an EU-funded TEMPUS project aimed
46 at developing internationalisation processes on campus. TEMPUS was a European Union
47 funded programme which supported the modernisation of higher education in the EU's
48 neighbouring countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa
49 and the Middle East through bottom up developed projects in these neighbouring countries
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with the support of EU higher education institutions (Authors, 2015). Today similar projects are executed under the Erasmus plus framework (Authors 2017).

Prior to the TEMPUS project, students in the partner colleges were not at all familiar with internationalisation. During the four years of the project, staff and students were introduced to the different dimensions of internationalisation, introducing internationalised curricula into study programmes, participating in exchange programmes with international higher education institutions, and developing offices for International Affairs—thus expanding their international horizons. As authors of this article, we were involved in the project in various ways including teaching, research, mentoring and curricula development.

Methodology

Participants

The students that were interviewed were identified by the college staff and authors as being proactive, agentic, and unique in their activities on campus (two of the authors teach at the colleges; hence, had first-hand acquaintance with students there). To follow the call of the Special Issue, we deliberately aimed our inquiry to explore students' agency in the specific educational context. The respondents from the Palestinian Arab college were involved in the activities of the International Office; they had participated in exchange programmes with institutions abroad and hosted delegations from international organisations. The respondents from the mixed college studied on (and graduated) from its M.Ed. programme, which, through the TEMPUS project, implemented an internationalised curriculum.

The first, second, and third authors conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the selected students from October 2017 to December 2017. Six students (five females and one male¹) were interviewed through Skype and in person. Participants are introduced in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	General Description
Esti (Student at the mixed	Female	A Jewish special education teacher and an instructor at the Ministry of Education. Esti specialises in implementing technology to assist disabled children. She currently works with blind and visually

¹ This ratio broadly reflects the actual gender distribution at teacher-training institutions.

college)		impaired children. She participated in the study trip to a European University organised by the college for internationalisation purposes.
Shirley (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Shirley is a Jewish teacher. She is very active in the social life of her community. She works as a special education teacher with visually impaired children. She participated in the study trip to a European University organised by the college for internationalisation purposes.
Fatima (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Fatima is a Bedouin special education teacher and the director of the Centre for Special Education. She was actively involved in the activities aimed at internationalisation and initiated social events during her study. She also implemented the ideas of internationalisation in her working group at the Centre.
Sofi (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Sofi is a Jewish elementary school teacher and the deputy principal of a school in the south of Israel. She initiated an international project in which her students interact with students in North America. She participated in the college's study trip to a European University.
Jamilla (Student at the Palestinian Arab college)	Female	Jamilla is a Palestinian Arab Muslim pre-service teacher, a third-year student of early childhood education. She is an active participant in internationalisation activities at the college, having participated in an exchange group in Austria. She recently received a prestigious scholarship from the U.S. Embassy to study for one semester at an American university.
Mahmud (Student at the Palestinian Arab college)	Male	Mahmud is a Palestinian Arab Muslim pre-service teacher enrolled in his fourth year of Arabic and Islamic studies who was actively involved in internationalisation activities with Muslim participants from a Muslim country.

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3 In the recruitment phase, each interviewee was contacted by email and asked to
4 participate. All those approached agreed, and the interviews were scheduled by Skype or in
5 person. The interviews lasted between 60 to 120 minutes. Some participants were interviewed
6 twice to refine points that arose during the interviews or afterwards. Interview questions
7 focused on participants' descriptions and perceptions of internationalisation, their experiences
8 in international education, and the extent to which they perceive internationalisation as
9 important to students and to their campus. Participants were asked to reflect on their own
10 experiences as students and the relevance of internationalisation in their lives following
11 graduation. With the interviewees' informed consent all interviews were audiotaped using a
12 digital voice recorder and transcribed. Esti, Shirley and Fatima were interviewed in Hebrew,
13 Sofi and Jamilla in English, and Mahmud in Arabic. All transcripts were translated to English
14 for analysis. Data analysis took place following each interview, and additions and additional
15 questions were added between interview rounds based on the responses. Ethical approval was
16 obtained from the institutional ethics committees of both institutions.

25 26 *Data Analysis*

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28 The data analysis followed the four stages that Marshall and Rossman (2014) suggested.²
29 This analysis identifies themes in the data by searching for recurrent experiences, feelings,
30 and attitudes, so as to codify, reduce, and connect different categories into central themes.
31 The coding was guided by the principles of comparative analysis, including the comparison
32 of any coded element in terms of emergent categories and sub-categories leading to the
33 identification of patterns. In analysing the interviews, we looked specifically for convergence
34 and differences across participants' reports (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The emerging issues
35 were then assembled as several major themes regarding the participants' motivation and
36 views. Verbatim quotes are used throughout the findings section in order to provide a more
37 accurate account and representation of students' own perceptions and voice. The quotes were
38 translated to English (when necessary) and back to Hebrew/Arabic to ensure that the intended
39 and accurate meaning was maintained in the translation process. Thus, we aim to maintain the
40 students' authentic voices throughout the article to the best of our ability, mindful of the
41 potential danger of speaking for others or asserting our own opinions and perceptions over
42 those expressed directly by the students. The constitution of the research team aided access
43 and the critical engagement with the data, we would suggest. The authors are a Palestinian-

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56 ²Namely, "organising the data," "generating categories, themes, and patterns," "testing any emergent
57 hypotheses," and "searching for alternative explanations."
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3 Arab scholar and a Jewish scholar, working at the colleges, a Jewish scholar working at a
4 research intensive institution in Israel, thus possessing knowledge about the higher education
5 system in Israel, but being an outsider for the research setting and an EU scholar, who had a
6 leading role in the EU project. The last two authors thus served as critical outsiders
7 throughout the data analysis process, suggesting alternative explanations to the data and
8 facilitating a process of sharpening the final interpretations presented here. The
9 trustworthiness of findings derived from multiple iterations between the authors, repeated
10 readings of theory and interview transcripts, and continuous dialogue between the authors,
11 the data and the literature. As suggested by Bourke (2014), during the stages of data
12 collection and analysis we constantly addressed our own positionalities in the field,
13 reflexively engaging with the data and each other, acting in a constant “self-scrutiny, and
14 self-conscious awareness of the relationship between the researcher and an ‘other’” (p. 2).
15 Our relationship with each other, developed through our engagement in the TEMPUS project,
16 is robust. We are each positioned differently in the context with one of us being a total
17 outsider. We argue that the robustness of our relationship supported us to challenge each
18 other when necessary, in particular when one or other of us considered that another might be
19 engaging in stereotypical interpretations of data.
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31 The main limitations are a small sample and the process of selection of the participants. The
32 participants from both colleges were identified as proactive in internationalisation by the
33 authors who teach in these colleges and were open to being interviewed regarding issues
34 related to internationalisation and identity. Students are frequently pictured as passive
35 recipients of internationalisation (Waters and Brooks, 2010) but, in this case, despite its small
36 size, the group is presenting an agentic outlier to the common discourse in the literature. In
37 our purposeful sample, the students perceive their role as not limited to their role as learners,
38 but rather permeating their professional life. We hope that future research in the area will
39 benefit from our findings, in particular in studies of students’ agencies in other non-western
40 societies as well as in research into the effects of students’ agency on the implementation and
41 policymaking of this process at organisational and national levels.
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49 Findings

50 Professional, social, and political dimensions emerged from the interviews as playing a major
51 role both in students’ agency in the process of internationalisation and, more broadly, in the
52 application of internationalisation within a conflict-ridden society. We describe below each of
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3 the dimensions, providing a glimpse into complex, multidimensional perceptions of
4 internationalisation processes through the eyes of the students and graduates.
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6 *Professional dimensions: Implementing internationalisation and multicultural activities in*
7 *their studies and professional lives*
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10 All respondents rationalised their proactivity in internationalisation processes mainly
11 through a professional lens, stressing the importance of being involved in the global
12 community, being updated regarding educational systems in other countries, sharing
13 professional knowledge, and life-long learning in order to secure their professional
14 prosperity. Since all of them were teachers or training to be teachers, the students envisioned
15 internationalisation as an essential dimension of their learning, which could and should be
16 intrinsic to their classrooms. Esti stated that “the more communication takes place, the more
17 we use technology, the more we will succeed in crossing national borders; knowledge
18 developed in one place will move to another. We need to spread and receive knowledge, not
19 to remain in a bubble.”
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27 This quote addresses internationalisation from a pragmatic perspective, stressing the
28 capabilities needed and the means to achieve these, by participation in internationalisation
29 processes. Such words resonate with the ‘capabilities approach’ of global citizenship (Dill,
30 2013), which may be fostered through internationalisation. Interviewees claimed that student
31 and staff exchanges, as well as online and face-to-face conversations with international
32 colleagues can promote internationalisation in higher education and also transform the
33 political situation in Israel. In Jamilla’s words, “exchanges, conversing, and talking to others
34 [lead to] accepting diversity.” Here, Jamilla focuses on the possible contribution of
35 internationalisation beyond practical means, as a way to “accept diversity”, implying that
36 pragmatic and ideological motivations to internationalisation may intervene.
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43 Foreign language skills were mentioned specifically as a necessary condition for
44 communication and desired skills that students aimed to acquire through their proactiveness.
45 “We live in a global world. It is important to know more about education in other countries,
46 to learn more strategies and more skills, for example, languages,” Fatima explained. She
47 noted, “I’m very successful in my career but because I’m not good at English, I feel I miss a
48 lot. [Mastery of a] language allows us to understand a culture and read articles.” Lack of
49 fluency in English had hindered Jamilla’s earlier experiences with internationalisation . She
50 told us that her first application to the student exchange programme was rejected, with a
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3 recommendation to improve her spoken English and essay-writing skills. After additional
4 language training, she was accepted on the programme. Later, her ability to converse in
5 English qualified her for a management position in the college's Social Involvement Unit and
6 a scholarship through a prestigious programme sponsored by the U.S. Embassy to study for
7 one semester in the US. She stated:
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11 My participation in the exchange programme prepared me for the scholarship.
12 Professionally, it opened many doors for me. Currently, I even consider the possibility
13 of teaching in another country. I urge all students and friends to participate in
14 international activities at the college and to actively travel and learn in order to
15 become a better teacher.
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22 In this example, Jamilla demonstrates the personal advantages of internationalisation
23 and the possible advantages of internationalisation for her own students as a reason for
24 agentic investment in internationalisation.
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27 It is important to highlight here the double disadvantage that Palestinian-Arab
28 students face in their professional lives. With Arabic as their mother tongue, living in a
29 country with Hebrew as a dominant language, these students are encountering even more
30 challenging situations when engaging with other countries, usually using English (their third
31 language). We can see that pursuing professional success is more challenging for these
32 Palestinian Arab students than for their Jewish peers, echoing the exclusive nature of
33 internationalisation (Guo & Guo, 2017). All respondents related to their responsibility as
34 teachers to educate their pupils to live in a global world, which extends their own experiences
35 in internationalisation as higher education students. They mentioned various skills their
36 pupils needed: willingness to learn and change, language skills, open-mindedness,
37 communication, socialisation, technological literacy, openness to cultural differences, respect
38 for others, and appreciation of universal humanistic values. In Esti's words,
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47 It is essential to develop language skills—reading, and writing—since children will
48 need to communicate with people from other countries. Children have to know how to
49 use technology such as special keyboards, mobile equipment, software ... They need
50 socialisation skills to integrate into work teams ... We have to keep universal values,
51 no matter which religion we belong to.
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3 The interviewees shared their proactive experiences relating to the internationalisation
4 process; these included communication with delegations from abroad, study trips to other
5 countries, and implementing internationalisation in their teaching and professional practices.
6 Sofi, Esti and Shirley participated voluntarily in visits to universities in European countries
7 organised by their college, aimed at familiarising students with those countries' educational
8 systems. Jamilla also participated in the exchange programme with a European university.
9 They saw their visits as a meaningful turning point in the perception of internationalisation.
10 Shirley commented: "visiting a European University (name of the country omitted to
11 maintain anonymity) contributed to me a lot. Even in occasional conversations, I tell about
12 their educational system, especially about teacher education. It made me think about my work
13 and what I'd like to adopt from there and what not."
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21 Jamilla became more active in workshops sponsored by the International Relations
22 Office (IRO) at her college, in which she presented newly learned techniques, methods, and
23 class structures. She noted: "We have exchange students visiting our college, and we meet
24 foreign groups from embassies and other institutions. We, the students, arrange and manage
25 orientations of incoming groups, and show them around. Through internationalisation, we can
26 promote multiculturalism." During her study trip, she encountered some international
27 students at the European university she visited. Some were Arabs but were afraid or ashamed
28 to speak their language; she helped them use the language through songs and music. Jamilla
29 reflected on her experiences:
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36 Being exposed to internationalisation and multiculturalism allowed us to focus on
37 issues other than disciplinary teaching. We learned the value of collaboration, the
38 importance of teaching skills of coping with difficulties, and how to teach our pupils
39 how to make connections. [These are] things we don't teach in our schools.
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43 Shirley likewise integrated intercultural dimensions into her own teaching, in leading
44 a project whereby her school children participate in an inter-school activity communicating
45 online with children from different schools in Israel. Also Sofi, after graduation, initiated an
46 international project whereby her pupils communicate and work collaboratively on robotics
47 with children in North America . Throughout the interview, Sofi stressed how much her
48 teaching approach had become more collaborative and inclusive, following her exposure to
49 principles of internationalisation and of internationalisation of the curriculum during her
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Social dimensions

The social dimensions that emerged from the interviews concerned issues of gender, equality, social constraints, and the role of religion in students' roles in the internationalisation processes. Palestinian Arab society in Israel is mostly traditional and patriarchal; it is often described as a society in transition (Abbas & Mesch, 2015). As such, it is neither fully traditional nor fully liberal. The family still plays a major role in setting guidelines for women's behaviour, dictating what is allowed and what is forbidden, especially when women participate in activities from which they were traditionally excluded (Abu Rabia Quader & Oplatka, 2008). Such attitudes towards women may present specific challenges to students' involvement in internationalisation. Indeed, Jamilla had the consent of her mother but not her father to attend the Masters' programme, and she tried very hard to convince her father "that also women can do it."

Family resistance to female students' study trips abroad, in particular, was an obstacle that Palestinian Arab interviewees had to overcome. Bedouin women are more confined in their mobility, although according to our data some progress has been made in this regard; as Jamilla put it, "women are not free to move around at night without their husband or brother. Travelling abroad alone was a taboo and impossible, although some trends of freedom are starting to emerge recently and women can travel to study or stay away overnight to study." Notably, even the male Palestinian Arab Muslim interviewee, Mahmud, who himself participated in an educational visit abroad, expressed concerns about allowing women to travel alone, citing a saying of the Prophet and verses from the Qur'an. Moreover, according to him, one of the female lecturers at the Arab college also asked that her husband be included on an overseas trip on religious grounds. As researchers, we held different views on these responses and discussed them at some length. What was important to us, however, was that the participants' original voices and perspectives were foregrounded.

Another theme regarding social challenges concerned the lack of sensitivity to national identity and religious traditions of Jews and Palestinian Arabs. In Israel, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is customary for people to stand for a moment's silence to honour the victims when a siren is sounded nation-wide. At the mixed college, this day marks tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish students because Bedouins do not tend to participate, and prefer to leave the class during the siren call. Some Jews accept this practice and others consider it disrespectful. Esti stated:

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3 I remember Holocaust Remembrance Day, when some Bedouin students exited a
4 classroom when the siren was sounded. Then somebody [a Jewish teacher, whose
5 relatives were Holocaust victims] reprimanded one of the students. She [the Bedouin
6 student] was very hurt. All Jewish students supported her. But later we [the Jewish
7 students] discussed this case, and some students said that Bedouins have to stand up
8 and give respect to the Holocaust. I disagreed—they do not have to give respect. It's
9 not theirs—they gave respect by exiting the classroom. They did not whistle, did not
10 sneer. In their prayers, they do not require me to kneel. It was wrong to require from
11 them to stand still. It was right to discuss [this incident], since it allowed us to learn
12 how to act and respond in such situations.
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19 Religious issues, moreover, were mentioned as substantially impacting attainment of
20 the goals of internationalisation and thus were challenging to the students, somehow limiting
21 their capability for agency. Esti related a story told by her son, reflecting that religious
22 traditions of different cultures were not respected equally in one higher education institution
23 because of the pressure of extremely religious Jewish students:
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28 Last year on the holiday of Hannukah, near the *menorah* [the traditional
29 candlesticks], the student association put a Christmas tree ... Then religious students
30 asked to remove the tree, arguing that it does not belong to the Jewish tradition. My
31 son was surprised and objected since he believes in respecting all cultures. Religious
32 students were angry about that. I was proud of my boy for fighting for this. But
33 ultimately the tree was removed. A religious majority won.
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38 Esti shared another example of a lack of sensitivity among some Jewish students towards
39 Muslim religious traditions: “During Ramadan, the local cafeteria decided to close the part
40 where hot food was served. Some Jewish students [outside Esti's study group] were angry
41 about that; they even complained on the college Facebook ... But it is a part of coexistence.”
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45 The commonly cited definition of internationalisation (Knight, 2004) addresses global,
46 international and intercultural dimensions of the process. Here, we show how students'
47 agency reflected upon the intercultural dimension, expressing their wishes and worries within
48 their agentic role in the process. We wrote earlier (Authors, 2015) how in conflicted societies,
49 internationalisation is largely perceived as an engagement between the groups in conflict,
50 groups who are not necessarily from different countries. In other words, in Israel, students
51 often refer to the “Other” as a member of the conflicting groups Jewish/Palestinian-Arab.
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3 Participating in and even leading internationalisation activities was described by students as a
4 means to foster intercultural understanding with the internal “Other” (Authors, 2016).
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6 The interviewees from the mixed college noted a cultural gap between Jews and
7 Palestinian Arabs. Fatima, the Bedouin teacher, shared the following anecdote:
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10 One of the activities [in the international module] was devoted to becoming familiar
11 with the cultures in our group. For example, Mina [pseudonym], a Jewish student,
12 shared that when her daughter saw the Bedouin teacher (a member of the group) in
13 traditional dress in a picture on the computer screen she panicked. [The traditional
14 Arabic dress] was threatening in her imagination. We laughed, but then we
15 recognised that it’s not funny. It is also possible that if a Bedouin child sees a
16 religious Jew, then perhaps s/he too would be frightened. And those are people who
17 live next to each other, a few metres away. This shed light for us on how important
18 is it to talk to each other and to know each other. If we don’t, we all lose.
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25 In her opinion, intercultural activities aimed at promoting relationships between different
26 groups within Israeli society on a personal and systemic level should be implemented in
27 schools and be an integral part of internationalisation processes; moreover Fatima’s agency
28 did not end with graduation but continued into her professional role as a school teacher.
29 Issues of social importance such as gender, cultural sensitivity and intercultural interactions
30 were discussed by our participants as direct occurrences of and in internationalisation.
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35 *Political dimensions and the Arab-Israeli conflict*

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37 The last dimension that emerged from the interviews was the complex political
38 situation in Israel; namely, political tension stemming from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
39 and its role in the agency expressed by the students in the internationalisation processes. On
40 the most basic level, interviewees noted discrimination in state budgets and inadequate
41 resources in Palestinian Arab Israeli communities as impeding internationalisation prospects
42 for students from this sector. Students addressed this profound inequality in a much wider
43 sense, not necessarily restricting it to their role in higher education. Fatima stressed that
44 Bedouin secondary schools have very limited resources and children have less opportunity to
45 learn and be prepared for advanced studies, which can diminish their chances of being
46 involved in internationalisation.
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54 Beyond discrimination in funding, however, Palestinian-Arab interviewees considered
55 the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to be a major challenge to internationalisation in Israeli higher
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3 education. While respondents from the mixed college viewed political aspects of
4 internationalisation as connected to the conflict and complicating the issues of co-existence,
5 students at the Palestinian Arab college perceived internationalisation as an opportunity to be
6 ambassadors for their community and Islam, especially in the face of rising Islamophobia in
7 the West. Jamilla noted: "the Arab-Jewish conflict makes things extreme; during the visits
8 abroad, the word 'conflict' was mentioned a lot. Our job is to present our culture and religion
9 and explain ourselves to others. The conflict was positive in the sense that it allowed us to
10 explain it and engage with others." As Mahmud put it,
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16 we need to explain ourselves to others; ... thus, internationalisation at our college is
17 satisfactory in my view and it ought to continue ... Furthermore, internationalisation
18 at Arab college carries a specific importance, and it is different than in other colleges
19 in Israel due to religious, political, and cultural restraints and limitations.
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23 Both Bedouin and Jewish respondents from the mixed college perceived the conflict as
24 challenging the intercultural relations between people in Israel.
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27 Our interviews revealed that the period of escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
28 during the war between Israel and Hamas in 2014 was equally traumatic for Jewish and
29 Bedouin interviewees at the mixed college, as they live in the region that was under rocket
30 attacks. Fatima recalled:
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34 We all—Bedouins and Jews—live in the same region that was under rocket attacks
35 by Hamas. We were all equally fearful and we constantly shared our feelings...
36 During the rocket attacks from Gaza, my daughter panicked. Every time we heard a
37 boom, she hid under a desk. Last year we went to Antalya to rest, and at the hotel,
38 music that sounded like the bomb-warning siren was playing at the pool. She ran out
39 of the pool, terrified. Other children felt no fear. So, nobody wants a war.
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44 The war challenged the relationships in the mixed college's study group, but through
45 open communication, the students managed to maintain their relationships by condemning
46 any kind of violence and expressing empathy to each other. Fatima emphasised the
47 importance of good personal relations for improving understanding and diminishing mutual
48 fears, even during critical events such as a war:
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52 Even during the Arab-Israeli conflict's escalation, we [the study group at the mixed
53 college] were empathetic each to other. We all condemned the killing of innocent
54 people. During the summer semester of 2014, classes on campus were cancelled and
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3 we had to study online due to the war. We all supported each other. We are all
4 responsible adults. We conversed frequently using WhatsApp and supported each
5 other academically and emotionally. We felt belongingness and cohesion within the
6 group.
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10 All respondents expressed their desire to live in peace with mutual respect between
11 people belonging to different nationalities and cultures. Shirley suggested that to accomplish
12 such coexistence, “we have to know other’s cultures.” Esti blamed religious extremism as the
13 main cause of wars and conflicts:
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17 I think you can hate a person but not a nation or community. Most wars and conflicts
18 in the world happen because of religious extremism. They think, ‘If you believe in
19 something different than what I believe, I’ll hate you.’ We have to keep universal
20 values no matter which religion we belong to.
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24 Here again, students adopt the notion of ‘global citizenship’ (Green & Mertova, 2016)
25 as a desired outcome of internationalisation. Pursuing universal values thus help to shape
26 inter group relations in Israel. In Fatima's opinion, Palestinians and Jews should recognise
27 each other and return to the peace process:
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31 Today we, Palestinians and Jews alike, know that there are two nations here, and no
32 one will leave here. This is the best place to live—we’ll go neither to Syria nor to
33 Jordan ... I think it is important to recognise the other side in her/his right to be here
34 in peace. I think we have already started the peace process and it's a pity that it's
35 frozen. People understand that the life is short, everyone wants to live. It's not worth
36 fighting. Better to live in peace, to be secure. It's important to sit around a table: one
37 gives up on something, the other gives up on something and peace will come. If both
38 sides recognise each other, they will both win.
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44 **Discussion and conclusion**

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46 In our interviews, three major dimensions that shaped how students expressed agency
47 in internationalisation processes emerged: professional, social, and political. These
48 dimensions were detailed in the findings section, revealing the specific domains where
49 internationalisation was engaged with, and also students’ agency that was transferred from
50 their colleges to their professional worlds.
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54 This Special Issue is aimed at drawing on new ways of thinking about students’
55 engagement, which positions the students as agentic contributors to university life. By
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3 focusing on marginalised populations situated in conflict ridden societies we reveal some of
4 the dimensions that play a critical role in the students' agency and their unique
5 considerations, rationales and actions. In addition, we were surprised by the extent that
6 students' agency was not limited to their activities in their institutions, but rather followed
7 them in their professional lives. It might be that the teaching profession provides them with
8 unique opportunities to exploit their knowledge and skills by preparing the future generation
9 of students. This notion should be further explored by administrators of teacher education
10 programmes as a potential field of action.
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16 Theoretically, internationalisation is assumed to lead to an understanding of the
17 'other' alongside developing a sense of empathy on the one hand and agency to change the
18 existing situation on the other (Authors, 2017; Green & Mertova, 2016). Thus, promoting
19 integration of the international, global, and intercultural dimensions into the aims, activities,
20 and delivery of education to promote intercultural competence/cosmopolitanism or global
21 citizenship, might contribute to conflict resolution, given the skills and attitudes that students
22 acquire through the process. We claim that global citizenship, although the term was not used
23 directly by the students, is indeed a suitable analytical construct, for the understanding of
24 these students' agency. In our case, students expressed non-compliance with the social and
25 political constraints of their lives, and thus were urged to act. Our participants, who were not
26 familiar with internationalisation prior to the TEMPUS project, became proactive in
27 promoting internationalisation in order to achieve professional advantage (as per pragmatic
28 meanings of global citizenship) and they seek peace and mutual understanding (as per the
29 ideological meaning of this construct) (Authors, 2017a; Leask, 2008).
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39 Our conclusions thus anchor students' agency in the institutional and national
40 contexts. We claim that proactiveness is being exercised when some pragmatic value is being
41 offered to the students and this value is clear and tangible (students mention English
42 language, computer skills, working with the 'other' etc). Moreover, students in our study
43 showed some incompliance with many of the dominant social norms in their institutions and
44 home environments, but this incompliance was possible, due to the 'high gain' that students
45 had from expressing their agency. In addition, students' agency was not universal and neutral,
46 but rather context specific, anchored to the intercultural relations between the minority and
47 majority in Israel and to the conflict at large. Thus, to promote students' agency, institutions
48 must not only provide opportunities and training (where appropriate), but more importantly
49 deliberately show the students the value that can be gained from such engagements.
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3 In terms of practical recommendations, we suggest that when developing and
4 implementing internationalisation strategies, institutional stakeholders must pay particular
5 attention to students' potential agency and thus develop various support mechanisms to
6 promote such agency. Moreover, specific attention should be paid to the various differences
7 in the local student population, in particular where these differences lead to tension, as in
8 Israeli higher education.
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3 **Students shaping internationalisation in a conflict-ridden society: Experiences of Israeli**
4 **teacher education colleges**
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7 **FOR CONSIDERATION FOR SPECIAL ISSUE: ENGAGING STUDENTS IN**

8 **INTERNATIONALISATION** Revision 3
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For Peer Review

Abstract

This article focuses on students ~~and graduates~~ from two Israeli teacher education colleges serving marginalised communities, both of which participated in a European Union (EU) project aimed at fostering internationalisation in higher education institutions in Israel. The study reported focuses on students' agency in shaping institutional internationalisation processes, in particular during their studies but also, as it became apparent, later in their teaching careers ~~in schools~~ following graduation. Moreover, we explore how students' agency in internationalisation is shaped by the conflict and its consequences. Employing a qualitative methodology, we followed six students' ~~and graduates'~~ personal and professional trajectories, revealing the nature and scope of their activities and perceptions in light of their proactive role in internationalisation ~~related activities~~ in their institutions. We show how life in a conflict-ridden society may prompt proactivity and agency amongst marginalised students, revealing and discussing the potential transformative nature of students' agency in internationalisation processes. Our findings indicate that institutions can strive to facilitate student agency and utilise it to further develop internationalisation within their institutions.

Introduction

In most countries, both in the school system and within higher education, internationalisation has become increasingly important and continues to move from the margins to the core of the educational realm (Chankseliani, 2018), although international ~~aspects-dimensions of higher education~~ have always been present in higher education (de Wit, Hunter, Egron-Polak, & Howard, 2015). Directors of educational institutions and policy-makers constantly struggle to internationalise education due to economic, political, academic, and socio-cultural rationales (De Wit, 2002: 83-102; Hudzik, 2011), and governments invest substantial resources to engage in this process, despite various critiques of such investments (Brandenburg & De Wit, 2011).

In conflict-ridden societies, internationalisation processes are in greater danger of being exploited for dubious purposes ~~more~~ than they are in peaceful contexts (Authors, 2017). This problematic situation stems from the fact that conflict ~~is actually shaping~~ shapes the power relations between the involved parties, while relations with different stakeholders are framed in light of the status quo. For example, in a conflict-ridden society such as Israel, student participation in international student exchanges may be affected by Palestinian support of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign; and students from Palestine might face difficulties entering Israel and other countries due to security issues (Authors, 2017). Moreover, the physical mobility that prototypes internationalisation is usually constrained in conflict-ridden societies, immediately affecting other aspects of the process as well.

Some scholars claim that assessing internationalisation's outcomes at the individual (student) level is a promising direction to develop and sustain internationalisation, particularly in conflict-ridden societies (Larsen, 2016; Maxwell, 2018). This direction will ensure an emphasis on the rationales directly related to students' learning outcomes, enabling a more proactive and meaningful role for their engagement. Students, when they are involved ~~in— decision-making—~~, may also assist institutions in envisioning and enacting internationalisation strategies. Moreover, fostering intercultural competence, cosmopolitanism, or global citizenship may provide a pathway to actual conflict resolution and reconciliation through capabilities and consciousness developed by the students (Dill, 2013). Such developments may be led by higher education institutions and facilitated through internationalisation processes (Aktas, Pitts, Richards, & Silova, 2017).

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3 Traditionally, students have been perceived as taking a passive role in internationalisation
4 processes. This study aims to highlight students' agency in ~~shaping the institutional~~
5 ~~internationalisation process~~ these is process-es in particular during their studies but also in
6 their ~~own~~ teaching careers upon graduation. Moreover, we reveal the role of the conflict in
7 Israel on students' agency, thus asserting that students' agency, although transformative in
8 the internationalisation processes within and beyond the colleges' boundaries, is shaped,
9 significantly, - by the conflict and its consequences.
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14 **Background**

15 *Students' role in internationalisation*

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17 Internationalisation is a process shaped by several institutional and national rationales,
18 usually driven by the publicly declared need to 'create' globally competent citizens (Dewey
19 & Duff, 2009), as well as by economic, social, academic, and political motivations at
20 institutional and national levels (Knight, 2004). Indeed, institutions and governments
21 worldwide invest increasing energy and resources to internationalise in every sphere of their
22 education systems (Fischer & Green, 2018). Certainly, internationalisation, which emerged as
23 an institutional venture over thirty years ago, has become a consensual value that is pursued
24 energetically on the basis of diverse and sometimes conflicting agendas. As such,
25 internationalisation is commonly described in financial and sometimes cynical terms (Knight,
26 2015). Such cynicism has been highlighted in various studies of stakeholders' perceptions of
27 the process (see for example Green and Mertova, 2016 for analysis of academics' views and
28 Guo and Guo, 2017 for students' perceptions).
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38 Several authors suggested that overcoming the negative consequences of internationalisation
39 might be pursued through reinforcement of the link between the process at the organisational
40 level and its outcomes at students' level (Fischer & Green, 2018; Leask, 2009). Such
41 outcomes, sometimes aggregated under the term of 'global citizenship' (Larsen, 2016) might
42 allow progress in internal and external challenges if promoted by the institution.
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46 Nevertheless, myriad issues and concerns present challenges to internationalisation in many
47 contexts. Such challenges include 'ethnic and religious tensions' (Wihlborg & Robson, 2017,
48 p.7), tensions that are especially prevalent in divided societies. Yet, if we consider the
49 potential of higher education to illuminate and critique values, cultures and academic
50 traditions (Stromquist, 2013), then, in a conflicted context such as Israel, it is even more
51 crucial that students and academics are exposed to and engage with those principles of
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3 internationalisation that foreground social justice and higher education's role in the public
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7 As this need for a more transformative internationalisation continues (Authors, 2016) we
8 need to attend to those such as Hawawini (2016) who disrupts more 'conventional'
9 conceptualisations of internationalisation with his plea for higher education to learn from the
10 world rather than to integrate international dimensions into the institution. By engaging
11 students in internationalisation processes that include, but are not limited to, mobility, their
12 ability to learn from the world and from views of the world that may differ from those that
13 dominate in their context is enhanced. Exposing the students to curricula that foreground
14 intercultural learning and that 'prioritise the development of a knowledge of self, through a
15 retelling of one's culture and history...in order to decide how to relate to other cultures and
16 societies, is the basic tenet of global citizenship' (Clifford & Montgomery, 2017, 1148) might
17 be the key. Similarly, Connell (2017) claims that curricula need to address the
18 marginalisation or discrediting of cultural, religious and linguistic traditions through
19 'curricular justice', encouraging dialogue and reframing learning as conversation.
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28 For many people in Israel, higher education is the first opportunity that they have to
29 encounter the 'other' since schools are usually separate, assigned and chosen by religious
30 affiliation and place of living, ~~as articulated in the next section~~. The words of those who
31 participated in our research both exemplify the admirable aim of learning from the world and
32 also illustrate the inherent difficulties that arise in engaging with dimensions of
33 internationalisation and, indeed, shaping it, in such a complex society.
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38 *Israeli society and the stratified Israeli education system*

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40 Israel, a state of eight million citizens, consists of a Jewish majority (roughly 79% of the
41 population), with Palestinian Arabs comprising a national minority of 21% (Central Bureau
42 of Statistics, 2017). The conflict between the Jewish majority and the predominantly Muslim
43 Palestinian minority is longstanding and severe. Although officially offered full rights,
44 Palestinian citizens of Israel have suffered chronically from discriminatory resource
45 distribution and lesser representation within the hegemonic social structures such as national
46 politics and governmental agencies (Bekerman, 2007). As a national minority, Palestinian
47 Arabs in Israel have multiple identities; on the one hand, they possess Israeli citizenship, and
48 on the other hand many feel a sense of belonging to ~~Arab-Palestinian-Arab~~ society and
49 identify themselves with the national aspiration of the Palestinian people. The Bedouin Arabs
50 (later Bedouins) in Israel are one of the Arab Muslim ethnic groups in Israeli society (5.5% of
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the population) characterised by a tribal culture that in the past had a semi-nomadic lifestyle. In recent decades, Bedouins have been undergoing urbanisation processes and essential cultural changes cultural transformations including the change in the status of women, and participation in formal education systems.

Schools in Israel are divided into several sub-systems (i.e., the general (Hebrew) education system, the Jewish religious public education system, and the Arab public education system) (Abu Rabia Quader & Oplatka, 2008). ~~While each sector maintains its own schools with a certain level of autonomy, many of the Arab schools are more tightly regulated by the state. Notably, however, all parents have the right to select whichever school system they want to register their children to; hence, Palestinian Arab citizens can choose to study in the general (Hebrew) public education system, for example. In most cases, however, parents prefer to send their children to schools in their own communities, thus maintaining *de facto* isolation. Conversely~~ However, the higher education system is common to members of all of the religious groups; Jewish, Muslim, and Christian students attend Israeli universities and colleges (Arar & Mustafa, 2011). Yet despite the unified higher education system, teachers' education for the Arab sector in particular is partially segregated. Teacher trainees for the primary and lower secondary school level study at one of the three Arab teacher-training colleges, at Jewish teacher-training colleges, or on specific tracks targeted at the Arab population within Jewish colleges. ~~Since no Arab-Israeli university exists, teacher trainees for Arab secondary schools usually enrol in the schools of education of Israeli universities (Authors, 2014).~~ We focus on two of these colleges in our study.

Research aims

The present study is based on a qualitative interpretive phenomenographic approach (Creswell & Poth, 2017) focused on understanding people's perceptions and life experiences. Specifically, the research aims to understand the experiences of teachers and future teachers regarding the following research questions:

1. How do students in these unique contexts perceive the meanings, means, and challenges of internationalisation?
2. How do students involve themselves proactively in internationalisation processes?
3. How does the Israeli-Arab conflict shape and affect students' perceptions of internationalisation?

Research setting

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3 This study focuses on students at two teacher education colleges serving marginalised
4 populations; a Palestinian Arab college in the centre of Israel and a mixed college in Israel's
5 southern periphery (with a student population of approximately 50% Bedouin minorities).
6 Both colleges, along with five others, participated in an EU-funded TEMPUS project aimed
7 at developing internationalisation processes on campus. TEMPUS was a European Union
8 funded programme which supported the modernisation of higher education in the EU's
9 neighbouring countries in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa
10 and the Middle East through bottom up developed projects in these neighbouring countries
11 with the support of EU higher education institutions (Authors, 2015). Today similar projects
12 are executed under the Erasmus plus framework (Authors 2017).
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19 Prior to the TEMPUS project, students in the partner colleges were not at all familiar with
20 internationalisation. During the four years of the project, staff and students were introduced
21 to the different dimensions of internationalisation, introducing internationalised curricula into
22 study programmes, participating in exchange programmes with international higher education
23 institutions, and developing offices for International Affairs—thus expanding their
24 international horizons. As authors of this article, we were involved in the project in various
25 ways including teaching, research, mentoring and curricula development.
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33 **Methodology**

34 *Participants*

35 The students that were interviewed were identified by the college staff and authors as being
36 proactive, agentic, and unique in their activities on campus (two of the authors teach at the
37 colleges; hence, had first-hand acquaintance with students there). To follow the call of the
38 Special Issue, we deliberately aimed our inquiry to explore students' agency in the specific
39 educational context. The respondents from the Palestinian Arab college were involved in the
40 activities of the International Office; they had participated in exchange programmes with
41 institutions abroad and hosted delegations from international organisations. The respondents
42 from the mixed college studied on (and graduated) from its M.Ed. programme, which,
43 through the TEMPUS project, implemented an internationalised curriculum. ~~The M.Ed.
44 included a course dealing with multiculturalism, internationalisation, and globalisation; visits
45 to Jewish and Palestinian Arab schools; online collaboration with students from institutions
46 abroad; online sessions with international lecturers; social activities aimed at knowing
47 different cultures; and study trips to other countries to learn about their educational systems.~~
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The first, second, and third authors conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the selected students from October 2017 to December 2017. Six students (five females and one male¹) were interviewed through Skype and in person. Participants are introduced in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	General Description
Esti (Student at the mixed college)	Female	A Jewish special education teacher and an instructor at the Ministry of Education. Esti specialises in implementing technology to assist disabled children. She currently works with blind and visually impaired children. She participated in the study trip to a European University organised by the college for internationalisation purposes.
Shirley (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Shirley is a Jewish teacher. She is very active in the social life of her community. She works as a special education teacher with visually impaired children. She participated in the study trip to a European University organised by the college for internationalisation purposes.
Fatima (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Fatima is a Bedouin special education teacher and the director of the Centre for Special Education. She was actively involved in the activities aimed at internationalisation and initiated social events during her study. She also implemented the ideas of internationalisation in her working group at the Centre.
Sofi (Student at the mixed college)	Female	Sofi is a Jewish elementary school teacher and the deputy principal of a school in the south of Israel. She initiated an international project in which her students interact with students in North America. She participated in the college's study trip to a European University.
Jamilla (Student at the	Female	Jamilla is a Palestinian Arab Muslim pre-service teacher, a third-year student of early childhood education. She is an active participant in internationalisation activities at the college, having

¹ This ratio broadly reflects the actual gender distribution at teacher-training institutions.

Palestinian Arab college)		participated in an exchange group in Austria. She recently received a prestigious scholarship from the U.S. Embassy to study for one semester at an American university.
Mahmud (Student at the Palestinian Arab college)	Male	Mahmud is a Palestinian Arab Muslim pre-service teacher enrolled in his fourth year of Arabic and Islamic studies who was actively involved in internationalisation activities with Muslim participants from a Muslim country.

In the recruitment phase, each interviewee was contacted by email and asked to participate. All those approached agreed, and the interviews were scheduled by Skype or in person. The interviews lasted between 60 to 120 minutes. Some participants were interviewed twice to refine points that arose during the interviews or afterwards. Interview questions focused on participants' descriptions and perceptions of internationalisation, their experiences in international education, and the extent to which they perceive internationalisation as important to students and to their campus. Participants were asked to reflect on their own experiences as students and ~~how they perceive these experiences to relate to~~ the relevance of internationalisation in their lives following graduation. With the interviewees' informed consent all interviews were audiotaped using a digital voice recorder and transcribed. Esti, Shirley and Fatima were interviewed in Hebrew, Sofi and Jamilla in English, and Mahmud in Arabic. All transcripts were translated to English for analysis. Data analysis took place following each interview, and additions and additional questions were added between interview rounds based on the responses. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional ethics committees of both institutions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the four stages that Marshall and Rossman (2014) suggested.² This analysis identifies themes in the data by searching for recurrent experiences, feelings, and attitudes, so as to codify, reduce, and connect different categories into central themes. The coding was guided by the principles of comparative analysis, including the comparison

²Namely, "organising the data," "generating categories, themes, and patterns," "testing any emergent hypotheses," and "searching for alternative explanations."

of any coded element in terms of emergent categories and sub-categories leading to the identification of patterns. In analysing the interviews, we looked specifically for convergence and differences across participants' reports (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The emerging issues were then assembled as several major themes regarding the participants' motivation and views. Verbatim quotes are used throughout the findings section in order to provide a more accurate account and representation of students' own perceptions and voice. The quotes were translated to English (when necessary) and back to Hebrew/Arabic to ensure that the intended and accurate meaning was maintained in the translation process. Thus, we aim to maintain the students' authentic voices throughout the article to the best of our ability, mindful of the potential danger of speaking for others or asserting our own opinions and perceptions over those expressed directly by the students. The constitution of the research team aided access and the critical engagement with the data, we would suggest. The authors are a Palestinian-Arab scholar and a Jewish scholar, working at the colleges, a Jewish scholar working at a research intensive institution in Israel, thus possessing knowledge about the higher education system in Israel, but being an outsider for the research setting and an EU scholar, who had a leading role in the EU project. The last two authors thus served as critical outsiders throughout the data analysis process, suggesting alternative explanations to the data and facilitating a process of sharpening the final interpretations presented here. The trustworthiness of findings derived from multiple iterations between the authors, repeated readings of theory and interview transcripts, and continuous dialogue between the authors, the data and the literature.— As suggested by Bourke (2014), during the stages of data collection and analysis we constantly addressed our own positionalities in the field, reflexively engaging with the data and each other, acting in a constant “self-scrutiny, and self-conscious awareness of the relationship between the researcher and an ‘other’” (p. 2). Our relationship with each other, developed through our engagement in the TEMPUS project, is robust.— We are each positioned differently in the context with one of us being a total outsider.— We argue that the robustness of our relationship supported us to challenge each other when necessary, in particular when one or other of us considered that another might be engaging in stereotypical interpretations of data. ~~Before we move into the findings section, it is important to outline the study's limitations.~~

The main limitations are a small sample and the process of selection of the participants. The participants from both colleges were identified as proactive in internationalisation by the authors who teach in these colleges and were open to being interviewed regarding issues

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3 related to internationalisation and identity. ~~The participants from the Palestinian Arab sector~~
4 ~~noted that they did not think most students from their sector would agree to participate and~~
5 ~~assisted us in locating more interviewees who were open to having this discussion. This~~
6 ~~means that although our participants displayed a wide array of opinions and perceptions, they~~
7 ~~cannot be said to be representative of their populations and nor do we seek to claim this,~~
8 ~~given the qualitative nature of the study. Nevertheless, focusing on the unique phenomenon,~~
9 ~~in this case, students who exercised agency in internationalisation, provides us with valuable~~
10 ~~knowledge on this process and the role of students within it.~~ Students are frequently pictured
11 as passive recipients of internationalisation (Waters and Brooks, 2010) but, in this case,
12 despite its small size, the group is presenting an agentic outlier to the common discourse in
13 the literature. In our purposeful sample, the students perceive their role as- not limited to
14 their role as learners, but rather permeating their professional life. We hope that future
15 research in the area will benefit from our findings, in particular in studies of students'
16 agencies in other non-western societies as well as in research into the effects of students'
17 agency on the implementation and policymaking of this process at organisational and national
18 levels.

29 Findings

30 Professional, social, and political dimensions emerged from the interviews as playing a major
31 role both in students' agency in the process of internationalisation and, more broadly, in the
32 application of internationalisation within a conflict-ridden society. We describe below each of
33 the dimensions, providing a glimpse into complex, multidimensional perceptions of
34 internationalisation processes through the eyes of the students and graduates.

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39 *Professional dimensions: Implementing internationalisation and multicultural activities in*
40 *their studies and professional lives*

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43 All respondents rationalised their proactivity in internationalisation processes mainly
44 through a professional lens, stressing the importance of being involved in the global
45 community, being updated regarding educational systems in other countries, sharing
46 professional knowledge, and life-long learning in order to secure their professional
47 prosperity. Since all of them were teachers or training to be teachers, the students envisioned
48 internationalisation as an essential dimension of their learning, which could and should be
49 intrinsic to their classrooms. Esti stated that "the more communication takes place, the more
50 we use technology, the more we will succeed in crossing national borders; knowledge
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3 developed in one place will move to another. We need to spread and receive knowledge, not
4 to remain in a bubble.”
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6 This quote addresses internationalisation from a pragmatic perspective, stressing the
7 capabilities needed and the means to achieve these, by participation in internationalisation
8 processes. Such words resonate with the ‘capabilities approach’ of global citizenship (Dill,
9 2013), which may be fostered through internationalisation. Interviewees claimed that student
10 and staff exchanges, as well as online and face-to-face conversations with international
11 colleagues can promote internationalisation in higher education and also transform the
12 political situation in Israel. In Jamilla’s words, “exchanges, conversing, and talking to others
13 [lead to] accepting diversity.” Here, Jamilla focuses on the possible contribution of
14 internationalisation beyond practical means, as a way to “accept diversity”, implying that
15 pragmatic and ideological motivations to internationalisation may intervene.
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25 Foreign language skills were mentioned specifically as a necessary condition for
26 communication and desired skills that students aimed to acquire through their proactiveness.
27 “We live in a global world. It is important to know more about education in other countries,
28 to learn more strategies and more skills, for example, languages,” Fatima explained. She
29 noted, “I’m very successful in my career but because I’m not good at English, I feel I miss a
30 lot. [Mastery of a] language allows us to understand a culture and read articles.” [Lack of](#)
31 [fluency in English had hindered](#) Jamilla’s ~~also noted that English competency had hindered~~
32 ~~her earlier~~ experiences with internationalisation ~~tremendously~~. She told us that her first
33 application to the student exchange programme was rejected, with a recommendation to
34 improve her spoken English and essay-writing skills. After additional language training, she
35 was accepted on the programme. Later, her ability to converse in English qualified her for a
36 management position in the college’s Social Involvement Unit and a scholarship through a
37 prestigious programme sponsored by the U.S. Embassy to study for one semester in the US.
38 She stated:
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48 My participation in the exchange programme prepared me for the scholarship.
49 Professionally, it opened many doors for me. Currently, I even consider the possibility
50 of teaching in another country. I urge all students and friends to participate in
51 international activities at the college and to actively travel and learn in order to
52 become a better teacher.
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5 In this example, Jamilla ~~demonstrates moved from~~ the ~~professional personal~~
6 advantages of internationalisation ~~for her personally, to her experience as teacher later in her~~
7 ~~career (and the possible advantages of internationalisation to for her own students)~~, as a
8 ~~means to reason for~~ agentic investment in internationalisation.
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12 It is important to highlight here the double disadvantage that Palestinian-Arab
13 students face in their professional lives. With Arabic as their mother tongue, living in a
14 country with Hebrew as a dominant language, these students are encountering even more
15 challenging situations when engaging with other countries, usually using English (their third
16 language). We can see that ~~pursuing~~ professional success ~~pursued by these students from the~~
17 ~~Palestinian Arab community~~ is more challenging for ~~them these Palestinian Arab students~~
18 than for their Jewish peers, echoing the exclusive nature of internationalisation (Guo & Guo,
19 2017). All respondents related to their responsibility as teachers to educate their pupils to
20 live in a global world, which ~~goes beyond extends~~ their own experiences in
21 internationalisation as higher education students. They mentioned various skills their pupils
22 needed: willingness to learn and change, language skills, open-mindedness, communication,
23 socialisation, technological literacy, openness to cultural differences, respect for others, and
24 appreciation of universal humanistic values. In Esti's words,
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33 It is essential to develop language skills—reading, and writing—since children will
34 need to communicate with people from other countries. Children have to know how to
35 use technology such as special keyboards, mobile equipment, software ... They need
36 socialisation skills to integrate into work teams ... We have to keep universal values,
37 no matter which religion we belong to.
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42 The interviewees shared their proactive experiences relating to the internationalisation
43 process; these included communication with delegations from abroad, study trips to other
44 countries, and implementing internationalisation in their teaching and professional practices.
45 Sofi, Esti and Shirley participated voluntarily in visits to universities in European countries
46 organised by their college, aimed at familiarising students with those countries' educational
47 systems. Jamilla also participated in the exchange programme with a European university.
48 They saw their visits as a meaningful turning point in the perception of internationalisation.
49 Shirley commented: "visiting a European University (name of the country omitted to
50 maintain anonymity) contributed to me a lot. Even in occasional conversations, I tell about
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3 their educational system, especially about teacher education. It made me think about my work
4 and what I'd like to adopt from there and what not.”
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6 Jamilla became more active in workshops sponsored by the International Relations
7 Office (IRO) at her college, in which she presented newly learned techniques, methods, and
8 class structures. She noted: “We have exchange students visiting our college, and we meet
9 foreign groups from embassies and other institutions. We, the students, arrange and manage
10 orientations of incoming groups, and show them around. Through internationalisation, we can
11 promote multiculturalism.” During her study trip, she encountered some international
12 students at the European university she visited. Some were Arabs but were afraid or ashamed
13 to speak their language; she helped them use the language through songs and music. Jamilla
14 reflected on her experiences:
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21 Being exposed to internationalisation and multiculturalism allowed us to focus on
22 issues other than disciplinary teaching. We learned the value of collaboration, the
23 importance of teaching skills of coping with difficulties, and how to teach our pupils
24 how to make connections. [These are] things we don't teach in our schools.
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28 Shirley likewise integrated intercultural dimensions into her own teaching, in leading
29 a project whereby her school children participate in an inter-school activity communicating
30 online with children from different schools in Israel. Also Sofi, after graduation, initiated an
31 international project whereby her ~~school~~ pupils communicate and work collaboratively on
32 robotics with children in North America ~~on robotics~~. Throughout the interview, Sofi stressed
33 how much her teaching approach had become more collaborative and inclusive, following her
34 exposure to principles of internationalisation and of internationalisation of the curriculum
35 during her MEd.
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41 *Social dimensions*

42 The social dimensions that emerged from the interviews concerned issues of gender, equality,
43 social constraints, and the role of religion in students' roles in the internationalisation
44 processes. Palestinian Arab society in Israel is mostly traditional and patriarchal; it is often
45 described as a society in transition (Abbas & Mesch, 2015). As such, it is neither fully
46 traditional nor fully liberal. The family still plays a major role in setting guidelines for
47 women's behaviour, dictating what is allowed and what is forbidden, especially when women
48 participate in activities from which they were traditionally excluded (Abu Rabia Quader &
49 Oplatka, 2008). Such attitudes towards women may present specific challenges to students'
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3 involvement in internationalisation. Indeed, Jamilla had the consent of her mother but not her
4 father to attend the Masters' programme, and she tried very hard to convince her father "that
5 also women can do it."
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8 Family resistance to female students' study trips abroad, in particular, was an obstacle
9 that Palestinian Arab interviewees had to overcome. Bedouin women are more confined in
10 their mobility, although according to our data some progress has been made in this regard; as
11 Jamilla put it, "women are not free to move around at night without their husband or brother.
12 Travelling abroad alone was a taboo and impossible, although some trends of freedom are
13 starting to emerge recently and women can travel to study or stay away overnight to study."
14 Notably, even the male Palestinian Arab Muslim interviewee, Mahmud, who himself
15 participated in an educational visit abroad, expressed concerns about allowing women to
16 travel alone, citing a saying of the Prophet and verses from the Qur'an. Moreover, according
17 to him, ~~even~~ one of the female lecturers at the Arab college ~~requested to include~~ also asked
18 that her husband be included ~~in on an overseas~~ trip ~~overseas~~ on religious grounds. As
19 researchers, we held different views on these responses and discussed them at some length.
20 What was important to us, however, was that the participants' original voices and
21 perspectives were foregrounded.
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31 Another theme regarding social challenges concerned the lack of sensitivity to
32 national identity and religious traditions of Jews and Palestinian Arabs. In Israel, on
33 Holocaust Remembrance Day, it is customary for people to stand for a moment ~~'s of~~ s of silence to
34 honour the victims when a siren is sounded nation-wide. At the mixed college, this day marks
35 tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish students because Bedouins do not tend to
36 participate, and prefer to leave the class during the siren call. Some Jews accept this practice
37 and others consider it disrespectful. Esti stated:
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43 I remember Holocaust Remembrance Day, when some Bedouin students exited a
44 classroom when the siren was sounded. Then somebody [a Jewish teacher, whose
45 relatives were Holocaust victims] reprimanded one of the students. She [the Bedouin
46 student] was very hurt. All Jewish students supported her. But later we [the Jewish
47 students] discussed this case, and some students said that Bedouins have to stand up
48 and give respect to the Holocaust. I disagreed—they do not have to give respect. It's
49 not theirs—they gave respect by exiting the classroom. They did not whistle, did not
50 sneer. In their prayers, they do not require me to kneel. It was wrong to require from
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3 them to stand still. It was right to discuss [this incident], since it allowed us to learn
4 how to act and respond in such situations.
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6 Religious issues, moreover, were mentioned as substantially impacting attainment of
7 the goals of internationalisation and thus were challenging to the students, somehow limiting
8 their capability for agency. Esti related a story told by her son, reflecting that religious
9 traditions of different cultures were not respected equally in one higher education institution
10 because of the pressure of extremely religious Jewish students:
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15 Last year on the holiday of Hannukah, near the *menorah* [the traditional
16 candlesticks], the student association put a Christmas tree ... Then religious students
17 asked to remove the tree, arguing that it does not belong to the Jewish tradition. My
18 son was surprised and objected since he believes in respecting all cultures. Religious
19 students were angry about that. I was proud of my boy for fighting for this. But
20 ultimately the tree was removed. A religious majority won.
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25 Esti shared another example of a lack of sensitivity among some Jewish students towards
26 Muslim religious traditions: “During Ramadan, the local cafeteria decided to close the part
27 where hot food was served. Some Jewish students [outside Esti's study group] were angry
28 about that; they even complained on the college Facebook ... But it is a part of coexistence.”
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32 The commonly cited definition of internationalisation (Knight, 2004) addresses global,
33 international and intercultural dimensions of the process. Here, we show how students’
34 agency reflected upon the intercultural dimension, expressing their wishes and worries within
35 their agentic role in the process. We wrote earlier (Authors, 2015) how in conflicted societies,
36 internationalisation is largely perceived as an engagement between the groups in conflict,
37 groups who are not necessarily ~~of foreign origin~~ [from different countries](#). In other words, [here](#)
38 [as well in Israel](#), students [many times often](#) refer to the “Other” as a member of the conflicting
39 groups Jewish/Palestinian-Arab. Participating in and even leading internationalisation
40 activities was described by students as a means to foster intercultural understanding with the
41 internal “Other” (Authors, 2016).
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49 The interviewees from the mixed college noted a cultural gap between Jews and
50 Palestinian Arabs. Fatima, the Bedouin teacher, shared the following anecdote:
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52 One of the activities [in the international module] was devoted to becoming familiar
53 with the cultures in our group. For example, Mina [pseudonym], a Jewish student,
54 shared that when her daughter saw the Bedouin teacher (a member of the group) in
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3 traditional dress in a picture on the computer screen she panicked. [The traditional
4 Arabic dress] was threatening in her imagination. We laughed, but then we
5 recognised that it's not funny. It is also possible that if a Bedouin child sees a
6 religious Jew, then perhaps s/he too would be frightened. And those are people who
7 live next to each other, a few metres away. This shed light for us on how important
8 is it to talk to each other and to know each other. If we don't, we all lose.
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13 In her opinion, intercultural activities aimed at promoting relationships between different
14 groups within Israeli society on a personal and systemic level should be implemented in
15 schools and be an integral part of internationalisation processes; moreover Fatima's agency
16 did not ~~stop at the college end with graduation but, but rather was transferred~~ continued into
17 her professional role as a school teacher. Issues of social importance such as gender, cultural
18 sensitivity and intercultural interactions were discussed by our participants as direct
19 occurrences of and in internationalisation.
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24 *Political dimensions and the Arab-Israeli conflict*

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27 The last dimension that emerged from the interviews was the complex political
28 situation in Israel; namely, political tension stemming from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
29 and its role in the agency expressed by the students in the internationalisation processes. On
30 the most basic level, interviewees noted discrimination in state budgets and inadequate
31 resources in Palestinian Arab Israeli communities as impeding internationalisation prospects
32 for students from this sector. Students addressed this profound inequality in a much wider
33 sense, not necessarily restricting it to their role in higher education. Fatima stressed that
34 Bedouin secondary schools have very limited resources and children have less opportunity to
35 learn and be prepared for advanced studies, which can diminish their chances of being
36 involved in internationalisation.
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44 Beyond discrimination in funding, however, Palestinian-Arab interviewees considered
45 the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to be a major challenge to internationalisation in Israeli higher
46 education. While respondents from the mixed college viewed political aspects of
47 internationalisation as connected to the conflict and complicating the issues of co-existence,
48 students at the Palestinian Arab college perceived internationalisation as an opportunity to be
49 ambassadors for their community and Islam, especially in the face of rising Islamophobia in
50 the West. Jamilla noted: "the Arab-Jewish conflict makes things extreme; during the visits
51 abroad, the word 'conflict' was mentioned a lot. Our job is to present our culture and religion
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3 and explain ourselves to others. The conflict was positive in the sense that it allowed us to
4 explain it and engage with others." As Mahmud put it,
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6 we need to explain ourselves to others; ... thus, internationalisation at our college is
7 satisfactory in my view and it ought to continue ... Furthermore, internationalisation
8 at Arab college carries a specific importance, and it is different than in other colleges
9 in Israel due to religious, political, and cultural restraints and limitations.
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13 Both Bedouin and Jewish respondents from the mixed college perceived the conflict as
14 challenging the intercultural relations between people in Israel.
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17 Our interviews revealed that the period of escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
18 during the war between Israel and Hamas in 2014 was equally traumatic for Jewish and
19 Bedouin interviewees at the mixed college, as they live in the region that was under rocket
20 attacks. Fatima recalled:
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24 We all—Bedouins and Jews—live in the same region that was under rocket attacks
25 by Hamas. We were all equally fearful and we constantly shared our feelings...
26 During the rocket attacks from Gaza, my daughter panicked. Every time we heard a
27 boom, she hid under a desk. Last year we went to Antalya to rest, and at the hotel,
28 music that sounded like the bomb-warning siren was playing at the pool. She ran out
29 of the pool, terrified. Other children felt no fear. So, nobody wants a war.
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34 The war challenged the relationships in the mixed college's study group, but through
35 open communication, the students managed to maintain their relationships by condemning
36 any kind of violence and expressing empathy to each other. Fatima emphasised the
37 importance of good personal relations for improving understanding and diminishing mutual
38 fears, even during critical events such as a war:
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43 Even during the Arab-Israeli conflict's escalation, we [the study group at the mixed
44 college] were empathetic each to other. We all condemned the killing of innocent
45 people. During the summer semester of 2014, classes on campus were cancelled and
46 we had to study online due to the war. We all supported each other. We are all
47 responsible adults. We conversed frequently using WhatsApp and supported each
48 other academically and emotionally. We felt belongingness and cohesion within the
49 group.
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54 All respondents expressed their desire to live in peace with mutual respect between
55 people belonging to different nationalities and cultures. Shirley suggested that to accomplish
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3 such coexistence, “we have to know other’s cultures.” Esti blamed religious extremism as the
4 main cause of wars and conflicts:
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6 I think you can hate a person but not a nation or community. Most wars and conflicts
7 in the world happen because of religious extremism. They think, ‘If you believe in
8 something different than what I believe, I’ll hate you.’ We have to keep universal
9 values no matter which religion we belong to.
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13 Here again, students adopt the notion of ‘global citizenship’ (Green & Mertova, 2016)
14 as a desired outcome of internationalisation. Pursuing universal values thus help to shape
15 inter group relations in Israel. In Fatima's opinion, Palestinians and Jews should recognise
16 each other and return to the peace process:
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20 Today we, Palestinians and Jews alike, know that there are two nations here, and no
21 one will leave here. This is the best place to live—we’ll go neither to Syria nor to
22 Jordan ... I think it is important to recognise the other side in her/his right to be here
23 in peace. I think we have already started the peace process and it's a pity that it's
24 frozen. People understand that the life is short, everyone wants to live. It’s not worth
25 fighting. Better to live in peace, to be secure. It's important to sit around a table: one
26 gives up on something, the other gives up on something and peace will come. If both
27 sides recognise each other, they will both win.
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34 Discussion and conclusion

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36 ~~The aim of this study was to examine students’ agency in shaping institutional~~
37 ~~internationalisation processes, in particular during their studies but also, as was revealed~~
38 ~~through the interviews, in their own teaching careers upon graduation.~~ In our interviews,
39 three major dimensions that shaped how students ~~encountered difficulties to express~~
40 agency in internationalisation processes emerged: professional, social, and political. These
41 dimensions were detailed in the findings section, revealing the specific domains where
42 internationalisation was engaged with, and also students’ agency that was transferred from
43 their colleges to their professional worlds.
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49 ~~In this exploratory study, students enacted internationalisation for pragmatic and~~
50 ~~ideological reasons. We also found that internationalisation in a conflict ridden society~~
51 ~~influences individuals’ careers and societies, but perhaps can also be employed politically.~~
52 ~~Institutions’ internationalisation policies are often motivated by economic gain, status, and~~
53 ~~self promotion. For students, however, internationalisation may overcome the gulf between~~
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3 ~~their own culture and in-group and the other side of the conflict, thereby serving the purpose~~
4 ~~of promoting mutual understanding.~~ This Special Issue is aimed at drawing on new ways of
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6 thinking about students' engagement, which positions the students as agentic contributors to
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8 university life. By focusing on marginalised populations situated in conflict ridden societies
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10 we reveal some of the dimensions that play a critical role in the students' agency and their
11
12 unique considerations, rationales and actions. In addition, we were surprised by the extent
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14 that students' agency was not limited to their activities in their institutions, but rather
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16 followed them in their professional lives. It might be that the teaching profession provides
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18 them with unique opportunities to exploit their knowledge and skills by preparing the future
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20 generation of students. This notion should be further explored by administrators of teacher
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22 education programmes as a potential field of action.

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22 Theoretically, internationalisation is assumed to lead to an understanding of the
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24 'other' alongside developing a sense of empathy on the one hand and agency to change the
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26 existing situation on the other (Authors, 2017; Green & Mertova, 2016). Thus, promoting
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28 integration of the international, global, and intercultural dimensions into the aims, activities,
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30 and delivery of education to promote intercultural competence/cosmopolitanism or global
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32 citizenship, might contribute to conflict resolution, given the skills and attitudes that students
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34 acquire through the process. We claim that global citizenship, although the term was not used
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36 directly by the students, is indeed a suitable analytical construct, for the understanding of
37
38 these students' agency. In our case, students expressed non-compliance with the social and
39
40 political constraints of their lives, and thus were urged to act. Our participants, who were not
41
42 familiar with internationalisation prior to the TEMPUS project, became proactive in
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44 promoting internationalisation in order to achieve professional advantage (as per pragmatic
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46 meanings of global citizenship) and they seek peace and mutual understanding (as per the
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48 ideological meaning of this construct) (Authors, 2017a; Leask, 2008).

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45 Our conclusions thus anchor students' agency in the institutional and national
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47 contexts. We claim that proactiveness is being exercised when some pragmatic value is being
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49 offered to the students and this value is clear and tangible (students mention English
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51 language, computer skills, working with the 'other' etc). Moreover, students in our study
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53 showed some incompliance with many of the dominant social norms in their institutions and
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55 home environments, but this incompliance was possible, due to the 'high gain' that students
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57 had from expressing their agency. In addition, students' agency was not universal and neutral,
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59 but rather context specific, anchored to the intercultural relations between the minority and
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3 | majority in Israel and to the conflict at large. Thus, to promote students' ~~ageneies~~agency, agency,
4 institutions must not only provide opportunities and training (where appropriate), but more
5 importantly deliberately show the students the value that can be gained from such
6 engagements.
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10 In terms of practical recommendations, we suggest that when developing and
11 implementing internationalisation strategies, institutional stakeholders must pay particular
12 attention to students' potential agency and thus develop various support mechanisms to
13 promote such agency. Moreover, specific attention should be paid to the various differences
14 in the local student population, in particular where these differences lead to tension, as in
15 Israeli higher education.
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