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Title: **Reflections about intergroup conflict, social divisions and diversity in organizations**

Abstract:

The presentation explores the repercussions of social divisions and protracted conflicts on engaging diversity in organizations. Understanding the ramifications of social divisions on diversity-related dynamics and performance in organizations has become vital in the current era, characterized by a mounting socio-political and cultural complexities, competition and concomitant growing interdependencies among individuals, groups and organizations, hence the need for collaboration. Research on such intricate contemporary reality, has been scarce. The current work sheds light on these issues on the basis of Israeli case studies in various contexts: nationally and ethnically mixed nurses' teams, minority-majority students' relations in a college, Jewish-Arab environmental partnership and gender dynamics in boardrooms. It is based on action-science approach, interfacing research with praxis. We embrace an integrated social-psychological and constructivist conceptual perspective. Multidimensional definition of diversity is used: surface versus deep, its potentially benevolent aspects such as variety in contrast with disruptive elements such as separation and disparity. A divided society is construed as split by deep schisms among its social groups, each having distinct cultural, religious and political identities. Protracted national conflict pertains to lengthy, intense, identity-based disputes, coupled with uncompromising parties' goals. The insights from the case studies point at the centrality of hidden issues underlying the relationship dynamics among diverse individuals and groups in organizations. These entail prevalence of elusive stereotypes, repressed fears of the adversary group, implicitly imbalanced minority-majority power relations. The latter impede the parties' capability to negotiate their terms of engagement and express genuine voices. In some instances the latent pitfalls obscure intergroup collaboration. Policy implications are discussed.

Keywords: Divided Society, Protracted Conflict, Diversity, Voice and Collaboration