

The Druse Specific Attachment to Their Settlements and Environment: An Empirical Examination in the Upper West Galilee

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Abstract

This paper discusses the attachment of people living in six Druse and mixed settlements in western Galilee to their settlements and environment. The paper focuses on description and analysis of the human, social, physical and environmental attributes of the attachment to settlement in relation to the self-determination and personal identity of the subjects. It does so by means of a sample of subjects who were asked, inter alia, to mark the intensity of their emotional attachment to their settlement and the region, the degree of their satisfaction from the development level, the population level, the quality of the atmosphere and social relations, the style and quality of life, the quality of the environment, the natural and human landscape, the level of personal security, the quality of the municipal services, the economic feasibility and readiness to remain in the settlement and the region and not emigrate to another settlement or region.

Key words: attachment to settlement, self-determination, Israeli Druse, nationality, self-identity, emotional attachment.

Introduction

In July 2003, the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed a special law to unite 28 municipalities, among them 6 Druse ones (7 settlements), 2 on Mount Carmel (Daliyat Al-karmel and Isifya) and 4 in western Galilee (Julis, Yirka, Abu-sinan and Yanouh-Jat). More than 60% of the Druse population in Israel lives in these settlements. The new law gave rise to a widespread popular resistance among the Druse population that eventually resulted in annulment of the unification of the municipalities' law in western Galilee in March 2004 and in Mount Carmel in November 2008.

Presenting their case before the Knesset, the Druse's representatives argued that their strong and stubborn resistance to the unification of their municipalities is a result of their special attachment to their settlements. That is, since the Druse people have no national territory, nor a claim for one, their settlements and regions of residence play the role of national territory (homeland). They further claimed that the Druse differ in this respect from the Muslim and Christian Arabs, and the Jewish population of Israel, Our aim in this study is to empirically test the above argument by a comparative study of attachment to settlements among the Druse, the Moslems and the Christians in the research region. Before we do so, however, let us shortly introduce the Druse in general and the Druse in Israel.

The Druse

The Druse is an ethnic-religious minority living in Syria, Lebanon, Israel and a few also in Jordan. For close to 1000 years they managed to preserve their specific religious, social and ethnic uniqueness under Muslim rule that considered them heretics and from time to time attempted to convert them to Islam.

The ability of the Druse to withstand such attempts and preserve their uniqueness is attributed to their special religion that since the year 1042 onwards became inaccessible to strangers, to the religious prohibition to marry outside the group, and to their choice to locate their settlements in remote mountainous geographical regions (Betts, 1988, p. 36; Abu-Izzeddin, 1984, p. 302).

Despite the important role the Druse played in the history of the Levant and the fact that their religion and way of life have attracted the imagination of many, there are only a few scientific studies on the Druse's history, religion and society. Even the demographic information about the Druse is far from being certain: The data about the Druse in Lebanon are based on a survey from 1932, from Syria on a survey from 1956, while in Jordan there is no data at all, as the Druse were not considered an independent group. The only reliable data come from Israel, in which the number of Druse population is about 134000 (C.B.S, 2013). It is estimated that some one million Druse live in the Middle East (figure 1), mainly in Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan as noted (Hassan, 2011, p. 11; Firro, 1992, p. 3; Betts, 1988, p. 56).

The Druse in Israel

During their long history, the Druse strived to be recognized as an independent ethnic and religious group with its own institution, similarly to the status of the Muslims, Christians and Jews. But for long periods that included the Othman period and the time of the British Mandate in Palestine, they were denied of such a status. With the establishment of the state of Israel this situation changed and the Druse were treated as independent ethno-religious group: In 1950 a Druse religious council was established, since 1957 the government started to treat the Druse as autonomous ethnic group, while in 1962 the government approved the law of the Druse religious court.

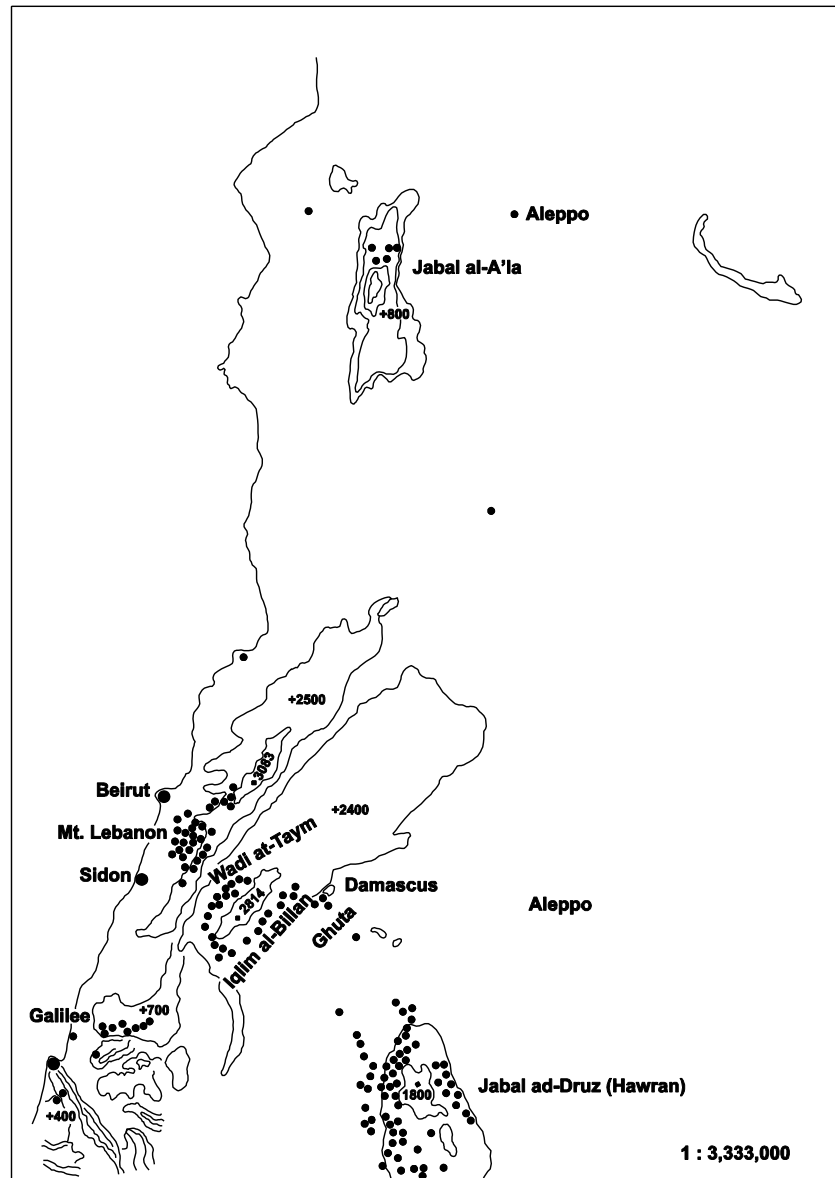


Figure 1: The Druze settlements in Syria, Lebanon and Israel (Source: Firro, 1992, p. 30).

The vast majority of studies on the Druze approach the issue from an historical point of view; few study the Druze from sociological or anthropological perspectives and usually ignore the geographical aspects. On the other hand, in the geographical studies of minorities and their settlements in Israel, it is hard to find specific reference to the Druze minority and its settlements. The geographers who researched the minorities in Israel and their settlements (for bibliography see Hassan, 1998, p. 2) did not refer to the Druze population and its settlements as a distinct and separate category, but considered them as an integral part of the Arabs minority; this, despite the obvious religious, ethnic, political and geographical differences between them.

Research aim, area and subjects

The Druze people in Israel form a distinct social, ethnic and religion group, different from both the Jewish and the Arab sectors (Oppenheimer, 1985, p. 264; Hassan, 1992, p. 118-121): Unlike Israeli Arabs, who regard themselves as part of the Palestinian and pan-Arabian national entities, and unlike the Jewish population in Israel, most of which defines itself as Zionist, that is, belonging to Jewish national movement, the Druze have no claims to national self-determination, national territory or their own government and state (Hassan, 2011, p.126). Our aim in this study is to empirically test the argument that the Druze attachment to their settlements and environment is distinct from that of the Muslim and Christian Arabs residing in Israel, is that their personal identity is connected to the place (the settlement) they live in and not to a national territory.

We test this argument in a research area that includes four Druse settlements and two mixed (Druse, Christian, Muslim) settlements in western upper Galilee (figure 2) with population of about 45,500 people (Central Bureau of Statistics 2009). In four settlements the population is entirely Druse: Julis (5600) Yirka (13400), Yanuh (3600), and Jat (2000), and in two settlements the population is mixed: Abu-Sinan (12100: 55.3% Moslems, 27.3% Druse, 17.4% Christians) and Kafar-Yasif (8800: 55.7% Christian, 41.3% Moslems, 3% Druse). From this population we chose two samples, one for a quantitative study and one for a qualitative study.

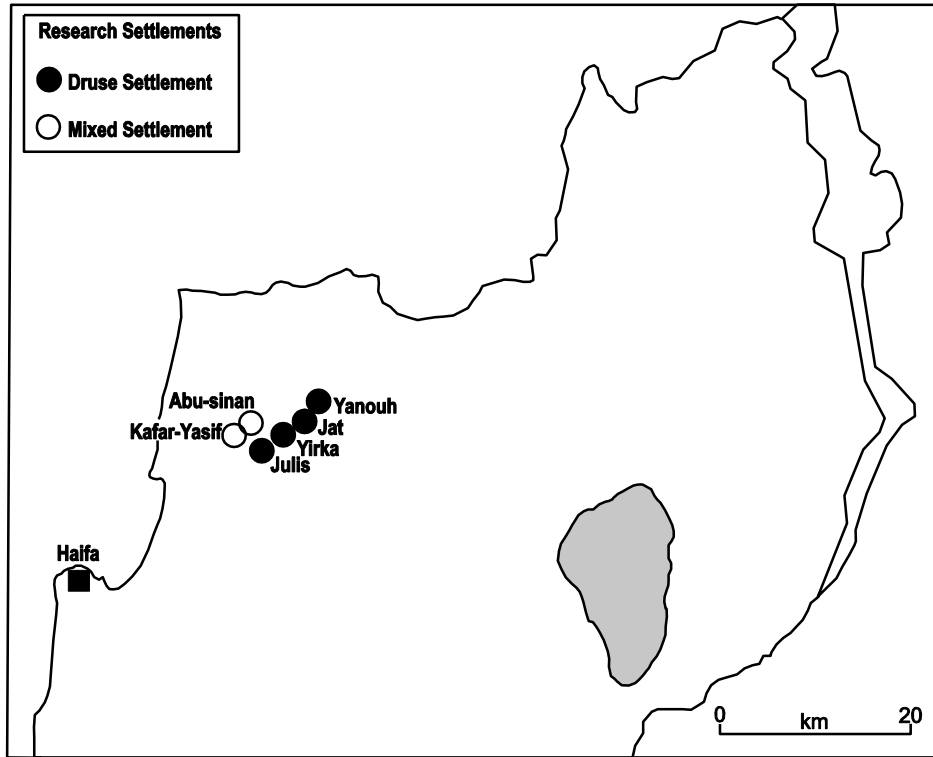


Figure 2: The Research Settlements

The first, quantitative, sample was based on questionnaires distributed among 757 young and married older subjects of both genders in the six research settlements: 522 Druse, 130 Christians and 105 Moslems according to the following distribution (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of subjects according to settlement in absolute numbers and percentages.

Settlement	Druse	Christian	Moslem	Absolute numbers	Percentages
Yirka	184	0	0	184	1.37
Abu-Sinan	70	38	64	172	1.24
Kafar-Yasif	0	92	41	133	1.51
Julis	111	0	0	111	1.98
Yanuh	101	0	0	101	2.8
Jat	56	0	0	56	2.8
Sum	522	130	105	757	1.68

Age-wise the research population is divided into two age groups: one including 408 youths 17-18 years old of both genders (158 males, 250 females), students in 11th-12th grades in high schools in the research settlements, the second group includes 349 adults, 25-50 years old (196 males, 153 females) who are parents or relatives of the students. Since in a study of this nature it is possible to find negative feelings towards the place, we used a one-dimensional scale comprising one component of scale which includes positive and negative attitudes between (+3) and (-3): (+3)= very positive; (0)= neutral (no attitude); (-3)= very negative.

The second sample, the purpose of which was a qualitative examination, included 24 face-to-face interviews with youths and adults from the six research settlements: 4 interviewees from Abu-Sinan, 3 from Julis, 4 from Jat, 4 from Yanuh, 5 from Yirka and 4 from Kafar-Yasif. The total number of subjects and interviewees was 791, comprising 1.74% of the research settlements population.

Our discussion below is thus based on processing the answers of subjects in an anonymous questionnaire distributed among 757 sampled subjects from the above six settlements as well as on interviews and comprehensive conversation with 24 married adults and young bachelors. These two samples enabled to examine the research hypothesis from the quantitative outsider's view on the one hand, and from the qualitative insider view on the other hand.

Attitude towards the place of residence

Five major issues were examined in this study as indicators:

- The quality or intensity of the subjects' emotional attachment to their place of residence.
- The subjects' degree of satisfaction from the following features of the population and the settlements: the level of development, the level of population, the quality of the atmosphere and the social relations, the style and quality of life, the quality of the environment and of the natural and human landscape, the level of personal security and the quality of the municipal services.
- The subjects' degree of feasibility and readiness to raise children in the place.
- The subjects' degree of readiness to continue living in their settlements and region [against the possibility to emigrate to another settlement or region].
- The extent to which the subjects define themselves according to the settlement's or region's name. For example, to what extent does a resident of Yanuh define himself/herself as "Yanuhee".

The Emotional Attachment to the settlement

The first indicator to be discussed here is the subjects' emotional attachment to their settlement. Table 2 sums the intensity of the attachment according to three categories: negative emotional attachment (-1 to -3), absence of emotional attachment (0), and positive emotional attachment (+1 to +3). The findings in table 2 show that a decisive majority of the subjects (88.9%) has a positive emotional attachment to their settlements whereas 6% did not express any emotional attachment (neutral=0) and only 1% of the subjects expressed a negative attachment to their settlements.

The strongest positive emotional attachment was found among the Druse subjects. This intensity was expressed in very high average of positive emotional attachment (+2.21), a low rate of neutral subjects who did not express a positive or a negative attachment (4.6%), and a very low rate of subjects who expressed a negative emotional attachment to their settlements (3.6%). In contrast, among the Moslems as well as the Christians the findings show lower averages of positive emotional attachment and higher averages of the neutral subjects and/or those who expressed a negative emotional attachment to their settlement (table 2).

Table 2: Distributions of subjects by the quality of the emotional attachment to their settlement [by religion, in percentages].

Religious group	Average emotional attachment			The emotional attachment average
	Positive emotional Attachment +1 to +3	Lack of emotional attachment Neutral=0	Negative emotional attachment -1 to -3	
Druse n=522	91.8	4.6	3.6	2.21
Christian n=130	78.5	12.3	9.2	1.57
Moslem n=105	87.5	5.4	7.1	1.90
Sum n=757	88.9	6.0	5.1	2.08

At the settlement level the findings show high rates of subjects in each settlement who expressed a positive emotional attachment to their settlement. In the four Druse settlements the rate of subjects who expressed such a positive emotional attachment to their settlement was more than 90% of all the subjects, whereas in mixed settlements with a Moslem and Christian majority the rates found were lower, and of course the reverse was found in the rate of subjects who expressed a neutral or negative attachment to their settlement. The lowest rate of subjects who expressed a negative emotional attachment was found in Jat, and the highest in Abu-Sinan, where the average of emotional attachment was the lowest (table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of subjects according to the emotional attachment to their settlement [by the research settlements]

Settlements	Emotional attachment degree							emotional attachment average
	+3 Very Positive	+2 positive	+1 Week Positive	0 neutral	-1 Week negative	-2 negative	-3 Very negative	
Julis N=111	55.9	27.9	8.1	2.7	2.7	1.8	0.9	2.33
Jat N=56	67.9	17.9	10.7	1.8	1.8	0	0	2.48
Yanuh N=101	55.4	28.7	9.9	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.26
Yirka N=184	56.5	25.5	8.2	6.5	1.1	1.6	0.5	2.23
Abu-Sinan N=174	39.7	24.1	14.4	10.4	5.8	1.6	4.0	1.56
Kafar-Ysif N=133	46.4	30.7	11.4	7.2	0.7	1.4	2.2	2.02

Differences in the intensity of the emotional attachment to the research settlements were found between single youths and married adults, between man and women. Significant differences were also found between the Druse subjects from the various research settlements and also between the Moslems and the Christians. The highest average of emotional attachment was found among married adult men and women, and the lowest among single youths of both genders.

In the face-to-face in-depth interviews it was found that most subjects have a positive emotional attachment to their settlements. The Druse interviewees particularly emphasized the strong emotional attachment to their settlements, much more than the Christian and the Moslem interviewees. This positive emotional attachment was evident in the expressions and references of the interviewees. The saying "I was born here and this is a good enough reason to love my settlement" was repeated by 18 interviewees. Following are some examples from interviews with subjects from different settlements:

Samir (Christian married man from Kafar-Yasif): "It does not matter how my settlement looks, I love this place even if others don't like it; for me Kafar-Yasif is the most beautiful and best place in the world".

Rami (a male Christian student from Kafar-Yasif): "I feel that my settlement is my country, my world, here I feel I am a true Christian, and despite all our problems I am proud of my settlement and I'll continue to live here all my life".

Huda (a female Druse student from Julis): "I was born in Julis and I love my settlement. For me the word 'Julis' symbolizes my life. Although I have many complaints against the municipality and its functioning, I love the atmosphere and the air I breathe here. This is the only place which I feel belongs to me and I belong and am attached to".

Amir (a male student from Yirka): "This is the largest, the best, the richest place and it is fun to live here".

Nadia (a Druse married woman from Jat): "This is the safest place in the world. It is fun to live here. Here and only here you feel at home and therefore there is no chance to love another place more or to feel a strong attachment to. I love the people, all of them are my brothers; I love the roads, the new and old houses, and most of all, the neighborhood where I grew up".

On the other hand, a few interviewees expressed dissatisfaction from their settlements. For example:

Yousef (a married Christian man from Abu-Sinan): "I don't like my settlement, or more precisely, I can't stand the people here, they are all racists and evil. We are terrified and threatened all the time. If you want to understand what I am talking about, come visit before the elections to the local authority, and if you come after the elections the situation will perhaps be worse. You too will not tolerate the murky, bad and tense atmosphere. You will breathe the tension, the fear, the racism and violence hovering everywhere in the air, in every place, in every house, in every corner".

Many of the interviewees from Abu-Sinan referred to and emphasized the murky atmosphere and the unstable relationships between the various ethnic groups, mainly on the background of the local political rivalries which complicated and destroyed the social relationships between clans and ethnic groups: on the other hand they strengthened the sense of belonging and clannish "nationality", while on the other strengthened the inter-settlement "racist" feeling between Druses, Christians and Moslems.

The upsetting of the demographic balance in favor of the Moslem "immigrants" compared to the "local" Druse and Christians changed the electoral balance and contributed to the intensification of the political tension. The result was that the conflict and the competition for the post of head of the local authority and for key and power positions and ultimately for dominance over the settlement intensified. Occasionally this tension gave rise to verbal and physical violence and to severe vandalism that threatened the delicate and fragile relationships between the three groups. This exceptional situation explains the large number of subjects who expressed negative and neutral emotions towards their settlement - Abu-Sinan.

The subjects' positive and emotional descriptions of their settlements do not coincide with their attitude towards other qualities and attributes of the population and of their settlements. The display of positive and very strong emotional attachment to their settlements is not in keeping with the negative reactions, the bad feelings, the dissatisfaction of the subjects and the interviewees from the quality of life, the level of development and the municipal services in their settlements (see below).

The Quality of the Settlements and Their Population

The purpose of the following discussion is to describe the subjects' perception of various qualities and characteristics of the population and settlement and their attitude towards them. The subjects were asked to note their personal perception, understanding and degree of satisfaction from the following qualities and attributes of their settlements:

- The general development and the quality of the municipal services (education, garbage disposal, road maintenance, water and sewage system).
- The quality of the environment (peacefulness, cleanliness, air pollution) and the natural and human landscape (natural vegetation, the cartography and topography, architectural style, layout of the houses, design of the streets, the agricultural style).
- The quality of the atmosphere and the social relations and the level of personal security (fear from violent outbursts between people, clans and ethnic groups).
- The feasibility and readiness of the subjects to raise children in their settlements.
- The readiness of the subjects to emigrate from their settlements to another settlement in the research region or outside it.

Level of Development and Quality of Services

The question presented to the subjects in the questionnaire did not specify the settlement's "general level of development". Each subject referred to the question according to his/her personal definition and understanding of the concept "general level of development". It appears from the findings that the subjects in all the settlements expressed positive, if low, satisfaction from the general level of development of their settlement.

The findings show differences between the research settlements. The lowest averages were found in the two mixed settlements Abu-Sinan and Kafar-Yasif and the highest in the Druse settlements, especially Yirka, which was considered a developed settlement in terms of business and commerce. However, almost no differences were found between men and women or between young and old, that is, all categories in the research population see their settlements as generally developed.

Despite the strong positive correlation between the intensity of the emotional attachment and the degree of satisfaction from the development level ($r=0.85$), statistically and quantitatively the positive correlation does not reflect the disappointment from the development level expressed by most of the interviewees in in-depth conversations and face-to-face interviews. For example, Anat (a female Druse high school student from Jat) said: "This place is very small and this is good, but there is nothing here, everything stays the same for years and years, there is no development, no factories, no jobs, my settlement looks poorly developed and will probably stay so for a long time".

Comparing the subjects' answers according to religious affiliation shows that in line with the strong emotional attachment of the Druse population to its settlements the degree of their satisfaction from the general level of development of their settlements was found to be higher than that of Moslems and Christians respectively. The dissatisfaction of the Christians from the development level is probably affected by the westernization and urbanization this population is undergoing, a process which raises the level of expectations and the standard the Christian set for themselves with regard to the quality of life and the development level of their settlements.

The second feature the subjects were asked to address in this category was the degree of their satisfaction from the quality of the municipal services in their settlement (schools, garbage disposal, road maintenance, water and sewage system). The research findings indicate relatively low values in all research settlements. The dissatisfaction of the subjects from Yirka and Jat is especially outstanding. Among subjects from Kafa-Yasif, Yanuh and Abu-Sinan the satisfaction degree found was also low (less than 0.5). Compared to these, subjects from Julis expressed higher satisfaction, although in personal interviews they expressed deep disappointment and frustration from the local authority's functioning, and particularly from the quality of services it provides to the residents, much like the disappointment found in the other settlements. For example: Suhad (a married Druse woman from Yanuh): "Here we feel sometimes like Palestinians living in the refugee camps in Gaza. The roads are bumpy, the garbage piles everywhere, the garbage dumps increase along the dirt roads leading to the olive groves, the water pipes network is rusty, old and worn out, and in fact the local authority is not functioning".

Ahmed (a married Moslem man from Kafar-Yasif): "We are in a terrible state, the roads are bumpy and not fit for traffic for a long time already, there are almost no traffic signs, and if they are, nobody obeys them. Public institutes are neglected and not properly maintained".

Similar to the differences between the three ethnic groups with regard to the attitude towards the level of development was the difference found in the degree of satisfaction from the municipal services. The highest values were found among the Moslem subjects (0.58) and lower than that among the Druse (0.18). The Christian subjects on the other hand expressed dissatisfaction (- 0.008) from the quality of the municipal services. The subjects who were interviewed face-to-face also emphasized their disappointment from the local authorities functioning. They pointed out that the local authorities do not fulfill their basic duty and in particular they don't provide minimal services like street cleaning, street lighting, maintenance of public institutes and schools in particular, garbage disposal and road maintenance.

The Environment and Landscape Quality

Similar to the general level of development and the quality of the municipal services the assumption is that the quality of the natural and human landscape is a feature connected to the attachment to a place. In the questionnaire the subjects were asked to note the degree of their satisfaction from the peacefulness, the cleanliness and quality of the environment of their settlements (question 17).

The findings show differences between the research settlements. The lowest and negative averages were found in Yirka (-0.48) and in the two mixed settlements Kafar-Yasif (-0.26) and Abu-Sinan (-0.09). The negative values indicate disappointment and clear dissatisfaction from the quality of the environment in these settlements. On the other hand, positive, not particularly high values were found in Julis, in Jat and in Yanuh. The common most positive answer was found in Yanuh (2), in Julis, in Kafar-Yasif (1), in Abu-Sinan and in Yirka (-3).

In face-to-face interviews the subjects sounded very disappointed from the quality of their environment. For example: Naim (a married Druse male from Yirka): "What kind of environment quality do we have here in Yirka when cars congest the highway all the time. The noise of the cars and the horns is deafening day and night long. On Saturdays we are sieged, the whole country is here. Some say it is a blessing, I say it is a curse".

Sloa (a married Druse woman from Julis): "You can't talk about the quality of the environment in Julis or in other Druse villages. The piles of garbage at the side of the roads and trails, the landfills in the industrial area, the broken street lamps, the detached curbstones, the broken banisters, the stolen iron covers of the sewage holes, all this comprises the quality of the environment and in our culture this concept does not exist and many people don't care".

Comparing the subjects' answers by religious affiliation reveals that similar to their satisfaction from the general level of development, the satisfaction of the Druse from the peacefulness, the cleanliness and quality of their settlements' environment is higher (0.27) than that of the Moslems (0.6) and Christians (-0.6) respectively. The common answer among the Druse and Moslem subjects was (1), compared to the negative common answer (-3) among the Christians.

The second feature in this category the subjects were asked to address was the degree of their satisfaction from the natural landscape (the relief, the topography and the natural vegetation), from the human landscape (architectural style, the layout of the houses, the streets design, the agriculture landscape (question 19). The findings show that average satisfaction of all the subjects from the quality of the human and natural environment (0.62) is higher than their satisfaction from the quality of the environment (0.07). The findings also show differences between the three ethnic groups. The highest and most positive average of satisfaction from the quality of the natural and human landscape was found among the Druse (0.98), compared to a low positive average among the Moslems (0.17) and a negative average among the Christians (-0.4).

The most reasonable explanation of these findings might be connected to the geographical location of the Druse settlements near nature reserves and areas of natural Mediterranean thickets, unlike the mixed settlements Abu-Sinan and Kafar-Yasif. In face-to-face interviews the interviewees emphasized their satisfaction from the natural and human landscape. For example: Suhad (a Druse married woman from Yanuh): "Wherever you look you can see green, in the natural vegetation, the trees and the hornbeam and the oak shrubs. In winter and in spring our area looks like Europe, green and beautiful. The visibility is excellent and you can see from the balcony the whole surrounding region, the western Galilee and the coastal plain to the west, and the sea decorates the horizon".

Nadia (a Druse married woman from Jat): "The most beautiful landscape of my childhood, which I love very much, is that of the olive groves. I love the shape and color of the trees, the terraces where the olive trees are planted, the dirt paths leading to the groves. During the olive harvest the groves are lively with people, all the families, the old, the adults, the children, are at the harvest. People enjoy the festive atmosphere and the harvest becomes a local carnival in the bosom of nature. That is why I love this place and am emotionally attached to it."

Social Relations and Security Level

The discussion in this part focuses on the quality of the atmosphere and social relations (question 13), and on the level of security – the fear from violence, from thefts and vandalism (question 21).

The high and positive values in reference to the quality of the atmosphere and social relations found in the Druse settlements are not particularly surprising. The strong social interaction networks of kinship and friendships in the Druse settlements affect the quality of the atmosphere and social relations. The strong sense of solidarity, expressed, *inters alia*, in help and mutual support and in mass participation in wedding ceremonies and in consolation of mourners, strengthens the sense of good social atmosphere.

The average satisfaction of the Druse subjects from the quality of the atmosphere and the social relations (1.2) is higher than that of the Christians (0.42) and the Moslems (0.35) respectively. The highest average was found in the village of Jat and the lowest in Abu-Sinan.

As in the case of other features, differences between the research settlements were found with regard to the feeling of personal security (the fear from verbal and physical violence, from thefts and vandalism). Relatively high positive values were found in Julis and Jat, that is, subjects there feel safer in their settlements, in contrast to the negative and low values found in Yirka and Yanuh and the more negative values found among subjects from Kafar-Yasif and Abu-Sinan. Differences were also found between subjects of the three ethnic groups. The only positive, though relatively low average (+0.32) was found among the Druse, compared to the negative average among the Moslems (-0.08) and the Christians (-1).

The low satisfaction from the security level in the research settlements is a result of the hidden and open tension between the clans on the one hand and of the ethnic and religious tension in the mixed settlements on the other hand. Most of the inter-clan and inter-ethnic tensions are mainly a result of the local political contests.

The feeling of threat and the dissatisfaction from the security level was evident in-depth face-to-face interviews. Most of the interviewees, and the Moslems and the Christians in particular, expressed dissatisfaction from the security level and in some cases noted that they always feel personally threatened. For example, Badia (a Christian male student from Abu-Sinan): "During the election period I really fear so strongly that I minimize my outings. In fact, everyone is afraid and feels that the political and racial tension between the Druse, the Moslems and the Christians is threatening everybody. They are here violent, uncivilized and scaring people, and it is therefore better to have nothing to do with them, otherwise you might get hurt somehow".

Ibtisam (a married Druse woman from Yirka): "The security situation here is very bad; there is much verbal and physical violence between people. There is also violence between the clans in the period of elections to the local authority. In the last period of elections a few years ago I witnessed a mass brawl. Since then I have nightmares. Although everybody here is Druse and there are many friendship and kinship relations, there is nevertheless violence and sometimes very severe violence. The violence and intolerance between people is the worst thing here and all this adversely affects the personal security of us all".

The very weak positive correlation coefficient ($r=0.13-0.35$) found between the degree of the subjects emotional attachment and their satisfaction from the quality of the municipal services, from the security level, from the general development level, from the quality of the human, physical and natural landscape of the settlements, and the stronger correlation ($r=0.39-0.49$) with other features like the atmosphere and social relations, the style and quality of life, means that these qualities of the research settlements and their population have no strong effect on the intensity of the emotional attachment of the residents to their settlements. The weak correlation between various qualities and features of the population and the settlements and the intensity of the emotional attachment of residents to their settlements is characteristic of rural underdeveloped and traditional societies, like the research population, that are usually more attached than urban developed and western societies to their place of residence.

The Readiness to Raise Children in the Research Settlements

This part focuses on the subjects' readiness to raise children in their settlements. We consider this feature to be an important element in the overall attachment of the research population to its settlements.

The other findings discussed above indicate average, low or negative satisfaction of the subjects from most of the qualities and features of their settlements. Despite this, the quality of their emotional attachment to their settlements was found to be high and strong compared to the other features. In other words, despite the reservation of most subjects of all religions and from all the settlements from various qualities and features related to the quality of life in their settlements and affecting it, the findings indicate a positive attitude on their part regarding the feasibility and their readiness to raise children in their settlements.

As in the case of satisfaction from other qualities and features, so in the case of the feasibility and the readiness to raise children in these settlements it was found that the Druse subjects prefer their settlements more than the other ethnic groups. The average among the Druse is very high, up to 1.71, among the Moslems 0.96 and among the Christians 0.62.

The above statistical findings are also manifested in the interviewees' attitude towards and explanations of their preference to raise children in their settlements. For example:

Rafa (a married Druse man from Yanuh): "Of course I am for raising my children here and only here. This is the best and safest place; here I can raise my children according to our values, the Druse values. There is nothing here I am satisfied with, and everything is not all right here, but I love Yanuh and I prefer and want all my children to be educated and continue to live here".

Karim (a married Druse man from Jat): "I want my daughter to go to school here, to grow up here, to live here, and most important, to marry here with a Druse young man I know. We the Druse have nowhere to go; we must raise our children in our settlement because we are not allowed to marry others".

Unlike them Miriam (a married Christian woman from Kafar-Yasif): "Although I was born here, although I love my settlement, I prefer to raise my children elsewhere, perhaps abroad, where I'll have no fears, where I'll be safe, where my children will go to excellent schools and not be afraid or threatened".

The descriptions, the explanations and the attitude of the interviewees with regard to raising children in their settlements correspond to the empirical and quantitative data of the subjects on the settlement and ethnic group level. The correlation coefficient between the quality of the emotional attachment of the subjects and their readiness to raise children in their settlement is ($r=0.5$), that is, there is a medium positive correlation between the two variables. The subjects' preference and readiness to raise children in their settlements is somewhat connected to the intensity of their emotional attachment to their settlements and less to other variables discussed above.

The Readiness to Emigrate From the Settlement

For social, religious, ethnic, traditional and other reasons the rate of emigration from Druse settlements is very low. In this study it was found that the rate of subjects ready to emigrate to another settlement in the research region was no more than 9%, and the rate of those ready to emigrate to a settlement outside the research region was more than 14%, more than two thirds of whom were young and single.

The readiness among the Druse to emigrate to another settlement in the research region or outside it was less than that found among the Christians and the Moslems: 7% among the Druse compared to 13% among the Christians and 13.4% among the Moslems.

The subjects who expressed willingness to emigrate to another settlement outside their region preferred to move to Jewish towns, with Haifa, Naharia, Tel-Aviv and Eylat in order of preference. The explanation of the preference to Haifa and Naharia as urban emigration destinations is their geographic proximity to the research region and to the subjects' settlements. Tel-Aviv and Eylat, on the other hand, are considered good destinations with many and various job opportunities as well as recreation and vacation facilities.

The face-to-face interviews reveal that the strong emotional attachment to the settlement is a decisive factor in the subjects' unwillingness to emigrate. For example:

Maha (a Druse female student from Abu-Sinan): "Maybe there are no good things in Abu-Sinan, and it's true that there is a lot of tension between people, that the settlement is underdeveloped and the municipal services suck, but I cannot think about emigrating to anywhere, to any settlement. I was born here and here I want to live until my last day".

Eyhab (a Druse male high school student from Yanuh): "Druse do not emigrate and do not leave their birthplace, that is where they are born and where they die. There is no place as suitable to me as Yanuh. What can I do, I love my settlement and therefore I am not ready to leave it ever".

The empirical and quantitative research findings, the in-depth conversations and face-to-face interviews provide an additional explanation to the lack of emigration. It seems that the quality and intensity of the Druse subjects' emotional attachment to their settlements is a hindering factor which prevents emigration.

The identity and self-determination of the research population

Table 4 summarized the subjects' answers to two questions concerning their self-determination. The first question (33) referred to the subjects' affiliation to the Arab nationality, the Druse, Christian or the Moslem religion, and was phrased as follows: 'How do you define yourself: An Arab, a Druse, a Christian, a Moslem, other?' The second question (3) referred to the territorial nationality the subjects affiliate themselves to, and was phrased as follow: "How do you define yourself: an Israeli, a Palestinian, other?"

From the data in the table it is evident that the most meaningful, prominent and significant identity among the Druse is that of "an Israeli Druse". More than 94% of the Druse subjects noted that their personal identity is connected to the Druse religion – "Druse", and to the Israeliness – "Israeli". None of the subjects defined him/herself in a religious context only, that is, as "Druse", "Christian" or "Moslem". The religious identity of subjects of the three religions had always at least another national territorial aspect, Israeli, Arab or Palestinian.

The findings in table 4 show no connection in the identity of most Druse subjects to the Arab or Palestinian nationality. Unlike the Christian and the Moslem subjects, the Druse who defined themselves Palestinian Druse or Arab Druse were few, less than 6% of the Druse research population.

As opposed to the Druse, table 4 clearly indicates that the Arab and Palestinian nationality is a central, prominent and important element in the identity of most Moslem and Christian subjects. More than three thirds of the Christian subjects define themselves also as Arabs, Palestinians, or Palestinian Arabs. Among the Moslems the Arabic and the Palestinian element is dominant, and ascription to the two nationalities or at least to one of them was found among more than 94% of the subjects.

Table 4: Distribution of the Research Population Identity by religion (in absolute numbers and in percentages)

	Israeli Druse/ Christian/ Moslem	Palestinian Druse/ Christian/ Moslem	Israeli Druse/ Christian/ Moslem Arabian	Palestinian Druse/ Christian/ Moslem Arabian	Israeli Arabian	Palestinian Arabian	sum
Druse	(493) 94.4%	(4) 0.8%	(15) 2.9%	0	(8) 1.5%	(2) 0.4%	(522) 100%
Christians	(31) 23.8%	(13) 10%	(8) 6.2%	(6) 4.6%	(33) 25.4%	(39) 30%	(130) 100%
Moslems	(4) 3.8%	(24) 22.9%	(9) 8.6%	(7) 6.6%	(17) 16.2%	(44) 41.9%	(105) 100%
Sum	(528) 69.8%	(41) 5.4%	(32) 4.2%	(13) 1.7%	(58) 7.7%	(85) 11.2%	757 100%

Unlike the Druse subjects, the element of religion in the identity of the Christians and Moslems was less important. The "Druse" religious element was found in the identity of more than 97% of the Druse subjects, while less than half of the Christian and Moslem subjects noted the religious element in their identity.

These findings thus highlight the contrast between the Druse and the Israeli Arabs who regard themselves as part of the Palestinian and pan-Arabic entity.

Summary

This study focuses on examination of the Druse attachment to their environment, and on the differences between them and the Christians and Moslems in the six research settlements in upper Galilee.

The first most dominant and prominent finding is that a decisive majority of the research population has a positive emotional attachment to its settlements. The significantly strongest positive emotional attachment was found among the Druse subjects. This attachment was manifested in a high positive average of emotional attachment, in a low rate of subjects who did not express any emotional attachment, and in even lower rate of subjects who expressed a negative emotional attachment to their settlements and area of residence. On the other hand, much lower averages of positive emotional attachment and higher averages of the rates of subjects who expressed a neutral attitude towards or negative emotional attachment to their settlements or area of residence were found among the Moslems and the Christians.

Congruence was also found between the quantitative-empirical data and the qualitative face-to-face interviews with regard to the differences between the Druse and the mixed settlements. The interviewees in the Druse settlements spoke passionately about their emotional attachment to their settlements, compared to the Moslem and Christian subjects in the mixed settlements.

The interviewees' positive and emotional description of their settlements does not correspond to their attitude towards other qualities and features of the population and their settlements. The manifestation of a positive and very strong emotional attachment to their settlements is incongruent with the disappointment and dissatisfaction from the quality of the environment, the quality of life, the level of development of the settlements and the quality of the municipal services.

The interviewees noted that the local authorities in the research settlements do not perform their basic function and do not provide minimal essential services like garbage disposal, street cleaning and lighting, schools and public buildings maintenance. On the other hand, the subjects, especially the Druse expressed satisfaction from the quality of the natural and human landscape of their settlements, particularly because of their geographic location near nature reserves and natural Mediterranean groves.

The positive and high values referring to the quality of the atmosphere and the social relations, particularly in the Druse settlements and less in the mixed ones, reflect the quality of the strong social interaction systems of kinship and friendships in the Druse settlements. These relations affect the quality of the atmosphere and social relations. The strong solidarity, which finds expression in mutual help and support and mass participation in marriage ceremonies and in consolation of mourners, strengthens the sense of the good atmosphere. The findings show average low or negative satisfaction from most qualities and features of the research settlements. Nonetheless, the quality of the subjects' emotional attachment to their settlements was found to be high and strong compared to the other features. Despite most of the subjects' reservation from various qualities and features of the settlements that affect the quality of life in them, the strong emotional attachment to them is a decisive and important factor in the subjects' reluctance to emigrate from their settlements and their preference and readiness to raise children in their settlements.

The personal identity of the research population is important to understanding the subjects' attitude towards the small place they live in and their close vicinity. The self-determination of the subjects indicates how they see themselves personally, religious, ethnic and spatial wise.

As in the case of the settlements, a positive emotional attachment was found to the region of western Galilee where the settlements are located. The most intense emotional attachment to the region was found among the Druse, while higher averages of rates of subjects who expressed neutral or negative emotional attachment to their region were found among the Moslems and the Christians.

The interviewees' attachment to their region is less intense than that to their settlements. Unlike the enthusiasm and high intensity of the emotional attachment to their settlements that were very prominent in personal conversations with interviewees, their reference to the intensity of their attachment to the region was minor and devoid of enthusiasm.

Finally, the most meaningful and evident self-determination among the Druse is "an Israeli Druse". More than 94% of the Druse subjects noted that their identity is connected to the Druse religion and to Israeli society. Unlike them, the Arab and Palestinian nationality is a central and important element in the identity of most of the Christian and Moslem subjects.

Concluding notes

Following the establishment of the state of Israel the Druse chose a unique way, different from the ways the Jews and Arabs, to define their self-identity. In Israel the Druse feels part of the governing national-geographical entity, although they do not belong to the majority's nationality. At the same time they have not neglected their cultural heritage and in this sense they have not been assimilated in the new social entity but continue to preserve their ethnic, cultural and religious independence. Despite the fact that they are living in a region dominated by nationalism, they are not suffering from an identity crisis, for they continue to be true to their cultural heritage while being loyal to the new nation-state in which they found themselves, as the research findings show unequivocally.

The research findings further highlight the differences between the Druse and the Israeli Arabs who consider themselves part of the Palestinian and pan-Arabic entity. The integration of the Druse in the Israeli society strengthened their unique identity, the identity of a religious, ethnic and "national" minority. The Druse nationality has no irredentist inclination and no aspiration for national self-determination and in this respect it differs from both Jews and Arabs for whom nationalism (that is Zionism and Palestinianism) is the main determinant of their self-identity.

In a world and socio-political environment dominated by nationalism, the Druse show that there is another way: having no national territory, no nation-state and no self-government the Druse in Israel, as in other countries, have made their settlements the basis for their self-identity – a cultural Druse entity in a "sea" of nationalism.

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