

The background of the slide features a soft-focus photograph of three people walking away from the viewer on a grassy hillside. The figures are rendered as dark silhouettes against a bright, hazy sky. The person on the left is the largest and most prominent, followed by a smaller figure in the middle, and a third, even smaller figure on the right. The overall mood is contemplative and forward-looking.

*Exiting Zionism:
A former Israeli's awakening
Avigail Abarbanel*

Kairos Puget Sound Coalition Seattle 7th Fall Conference (Sat., Oct. 23rd 2021)

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I was raised in Bat Yam, an ugly, urban desert satellite town, south of Tel Aviv and Yaffa



Flat 12,
3 Hashikma
Street, Bat-Yam



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Survivors of the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camp massacre



Bodies of Palestinians killed in Sabra refugee camp in September 1982

A. Abarbanel. (2021). *Exiting Zionism - a former Israeli's awakening*. Kairos Puget Sound Coalition Seattle. 7th Fall Conference.

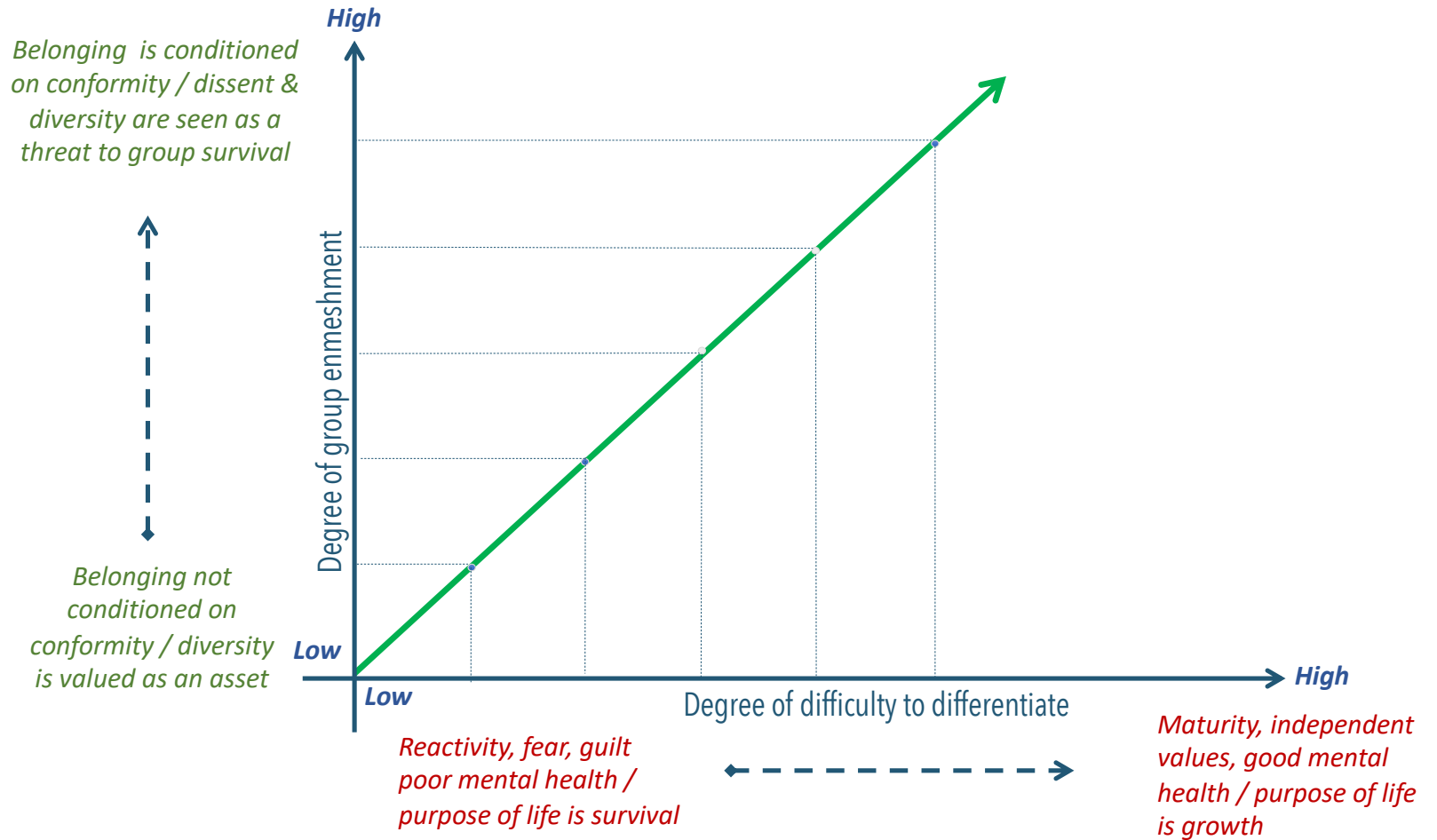
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The more enmeshed the group, the harder the differentiation



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Cost of Differentiation from Enmeshed Groups

Internal

- Loss of identity, role, purpose
- Fear of betraying group & of retribution
- Fear of isolation
- Guilt
- Loneliness/aloneness
- Self-doubt
- Grief

External

- Loss of group/family/friends
- Loss of belonging
- Loss of history/place
- Retribution – can affect people's work, livelihood, well-being, even life.

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Enmeshed Groups

- High anxiety (group & individuals) -> survival is experienced as precarious and not guaranteed (equivalent in individuals is PTSD)
- the world outside the group is not safe. Only the group provides protection from annihilation.
- Conditional belonging.
- Conformity is the price of belonging.
- Highest value = loyalty to group.
- Individuals are important in as much as they contribute to group survival.
- Individual identity is perceived as a threat to group.

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Zionism/Israeli Society As An Enmeshed Group

- Victimhood is at the centre of Jewish identity.
- In a nationalist / colonial 19th century Europe, Zionism replaces god as the saviour of the Jewish people.
- Zionism created a new group identity independent from religion and Israel became the centre of it (just as the Temple was the centre of Jewish religion).
- When the belief system is directly linked to survival, the stakes are felt as especially high. Staying or leaving are a matter of life or death
- Individual survival is dependent on group survival. Individuals are taught they can't survive 'outside' on their own. The world is dangerous to members of the group.

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The psychology behind the accusation of antisemitism flung against critics of Israel

- Note that there is no such thing as 'Israeli' nationality, there is only *Jewish* nationality!
- **Israel sees itself as a nation of all Jewish people everywhere.**
- The Israeli state sees itself as *indistinguishable* from Jewishness.
- The accusation of antisemitism is a way to direct attention away from Israel's human rights record.
- But it is also based on a real and deep trauma-based belief that if you criticise Israel, you are expressing hatred towards the Jewish people.

A scanned image of an Israeli birth certificate. The document is titled 'תעודת לידה' (Birth Certificate) and 'BIRTH CERTIFICATE'. It contains the following information:
- Surname: BAR LEV
- Given name: AVIGAIL
- Given name of father: YOSEF
- Given name of mother: BRACHA
- Surname of mother's father: ZISER
- Identity no.: [REDACTED]
- Sex: FEMALE
- Nationality: JEWISH
- Religion: JEWISH
- Place of birth: TEL AVIV - YAFO
- Hospital's name: BET HAYOLDOT
- Date of birth: [REDACTED] 1964
- Date: 13 July 2008
The certificate also includes Hebrew text and a seal of the Ministry of the Interior. At the bottom, there are fields for 'אבר בנאל' (Abraham), 'אביגיל' (Avigail), 'יחידה נשיא' (Unit 18), and 'רמת גן' (Ramat Gan).

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The psychology behind the accusation of antisemitism flung against critics of Israel

- Just for interest, please note that the 'nationality' of a Palestinian born in Israel in Jerusalem in this case, is listed in her birth certificate as 'Arab'.
- Israel uses the word 'nationality' differently to the rest of the world. Nationality in Israel means something more like 'race' or 'ethnicity' rather than a citizenship of a country. You can have Israeli citizenship but not Israeli nationality!

Identity no.	20
Sex	FEMALE
Nationality	ARAB
Religion	CHRISTIAN
Place of birth	JERUSALEM
Hospital's name	HADASSAH EIN-CAREM
Date of birth	21 October 1993
I hereby certify that the above newborn is listed in the Births Register.	