

Israeli Education Policy since 1948 and the State of Arab Education in Israel

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Abstract: This paper analyses Israeli policy towards Arab education in Israel and its consequences. Drawing upon literature on the colonial nation-state, and ethnic indigenous minorities, the study distinguishes three educational policy shifts since 1948: (1) Arab education under military administration until 1966 (2) the policy of integration 1967-1991 (3) the peace process since 1992, the quest for autonomy and Arab education's present 'on hold' status. Using the analytical framework suggested by Hodgson and Spours (2006), I first analyse political eras; then describe the state of the education system, the policy-making process and its consequences for the educational space and system outcomes. These concepts and methods are used to narrate historical developments of the Palestinian Arab education system in Israel, to critique state policy-making and identify future challenges. The findings demonstrate contingent relations between ethnicity and the state. The paper concludes by discussing existing educational policies and suggesting recommendations for the future.

Keywords: education, education policy, palestinians citizens of Israel, minority education, arabs

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Introduction

Since the establishment of the Israeli state, the Arab education system has remained at the margins of the Israeli education system, subject to continuous government control processes (Al-Haj, 1995; Mar'i, 1978; Sarsur, 1999). The Arab education system suffers from discrimination in the allocation of resources, including physical infrastructure and classrooms, teaching hours and enrichment hours. The narrative of the Palestinian Arab national minority in Israel (PAI) and its culture are not officially recognised, and its leadership is excluded from education policy-making (Abu-Asbah, 2007; Abu-Saad, 2008). Although the Arab education system has existed since 1948, no official statement of its goals has been made for more than thirty years (Al-Haj, 1995; Jiris, 1976; Mar'i, 1978). An Arab student vividly illustrates the ensuing difficulty:

Everything we study is about the Jews. We study Bialik [Jewish nationalist poet] and [the Jewish poetess] Rachel. Why do I have to study them? Why don't they teach me Mahmud Darwish [Palestinian nationalist poet]? Why don't they teach me Edward Said? Why don't they teach me about Arab philosophers and Palestinian poets? I know that my Arabic language is not that strong, because I know that if I don't speak fluent Hebrew I can't function in this country. What is the problem with teaching us Palestinian history? The problem is that they are afraid. They don't want us, the Palestinian Arabs, to develop an awareness of our national identity (quoted in Makawi, 2002, p. 50).

Many studies that have discussed the Israeli Arab education system have focused on functional and structural issues (Abu-Asbah, 2007; Sarsur, 1999) including examination of the gaps between the inputs and outputs of the system (Mazawi, 2003). Some have examined learning contents in the textbooks of this minority (Abu-Saad, 2008; Al-Haj, 2002; Levy, 2005; Nasser & Nasser, 2008). Little has been written about the changes in Israeli state policy

concerning Arab education over the years and the implications of these changes for the structure and learning programme of PAI education.

This paper employs the qualitative-phenomenological analysis suggested by Hodgson and Spours (2006) to understand the development of the Israeli state's education policy through three different shifts (1) Arab education under the military administration until 1966 (2) the integration policy between 1967 and 1991 (3) the peace process since 1992, the quest for autonomy, anomie and the present state of Arab education. The paper studies the implications of these policy sways for the goals, contents and inputs of the Arab education system. More specifically the article attempts to answer the following questions:

- Which processes influenced Israel's education policies towards the Arab education system?
- What were the implications of these policies for the practice, goals, contents and inputs of the Arab education system since 1948?

Beginning with points discussed in academic literature concerning the nation state and its ethnic minorities, the paper then describes the socio-political characteristics of the PAI minority and its education system. This background material is followed by a description of the research method and its findings. The paper concludes with a discussion concerning Israeli education policies and recommendations for the future.

The Nation-State, Ethnic Indigenous Minorities, and Education

It has been the common experience of indigenous peoples to have their histories erased and retold by colonial powers, and all too common for indigenous people to be powerless and passive participants in a process of 'de-education', or the dispossession of the knowledge regarding their own people and history (Abu-Saad, 2008, p. 17).

The predominant national ethos in colonial societies is based upon narratives that view settlers as bringers of civilisation and progress to ‘barren territories’. In Australia, despite the presence of the aborigines, the British colonizers declared it to be an empty land, not owned by anyone (Anderson, 2000). In the United States, settlers claimed the great Western frontier, as if it were empty. In the case of Israel, early Zionists proclaimed Palestine to be ‘a land without a people, for a people without a land’ (Masalha, 1997) although Zionist movement leaders were well aware that Palestine’s Arabs outnumbered Jews by more than 10 to 1 in 1917 when the British promised to establish a ‘Jewish homeland’ in Palestine (Prior, 1999). However, during and immediately after the 1948 war, the vast majority of Palestine’s indigenous Arab population fled or was expelled from the new State of Israel. Palestinian Arabs remaining in Israel were reduced to a minority; moreover the denial of their existence was perpetuated through a law that defined all those who left their places of residence even temporarily, between 1947 (the ratification of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine) and 1950 as ‘absentees’. This included over half of the Palestinians remaining in Israel, rendering their property liable to confiscation, and this law was used to greatly increase the financial, real estate and land holdings of the nascent Israeli state (Lustick, 1980). Although this policy’s active implementation is long past, the designation of the PAI as ‘present absentees’ seems still to influence government policy toward them, especially in education.

Telling the history of education is one way of elucidating the development of inter-ethnic and inter-national relations in Israel, or of constructing the Israeli ‘ethnoscape’. Education constitutes an important site where the state appears in both its unifying and segregating powers (Levy, 2005, p. 272). The state's power, to universalize and particularize social relations, is clearly demonstrated in the dynamics of education policy and ethnicity as they relate to the category of Palestinian Arabs in Israel.

Palestinian Arabs in Israel (PAI): A socio-ethnic and educational perspective

The Jewish-Arab division within the state of Israel has persisted since 1948. Disputed issues include personal and national identity, civic equality, domination and oppression within Israeli society (Ghanem & Rouhana, 2001). When the State of Israel was established in 1948, the indigenous Arab population remaining within Israel's borders became a minority, numbering a mere 156,000, weakened and depleted by war and the loss of its elite due to expulsion or flight. Sixty years later this indigenous ethnic minority has multiplied ten times and in 2009 numbered 1.7 million (excluding the population of the Golan Heights and Eastern Jerusalem), constituting 20.2 % of Israel's population. Arab communities (82.1% Muslims, 9.4% Christians and 8.4% Druze) are mostly geographically separate from Jewish communities, apart from a few multi-ethnic towns (Khamaise, 2009). The Palestinians in Israel (PAI) are a unique national minority, an indigenous minority of natives (Cohen, 2000, p. 35; Morris, 1991, p. 397-399). PAI contend with a constant identity conflict as citizens of a state that is officially defined as a Jewish state. Most PAI identify themselves as Palestinians and part of the Arab nation yet they are citizens of a country that is in conflict with members of its own people, the Palestinian people in neighbouring states and with the Arab nation (Nakhleh, 1979). This is a complex collective identity comprising several elements: citizenship (Israeli), nationality (Palestinian), ethnicity (Arab) and religion (Islamic or Christian or Druze). PAI see their identity as comprised of a mix of these four elements, or a delicate balance between them, or as one identity displacing another (Smootha, 2002). This ongoing identity crisis alters with changing circumstances (Diab & Mi'ari, 2007), evoking multi-layered discourse relating to issues such as ethnic democracy (Smootha, 2002), 'multiculturalism' (Yona & Shenhav, 2005), 'Palestinian indigenesness', and Israel as an 'ethnocracy'. Many PAI share the belief that the development of their society is not a natural development, but a product of crisis.

A third attribute is that the PAI are citizens of a state that defines itself as the state of the Jews and not as a state of all its citizens (Ghanem & Rouhana, 2001). The government and the Jewish majority in Israel often refer to the PAI minority as if it were a hostile minority (Diab & Mi'ari, 2007). Despite being the state's largest minority, the Arab population endures discriminatory government policies resulting in deprivation in almost all domains (Suleiman, 2002). Politically, they have not managed to turn their demographic proportion into political power; economically, they constitute 53% of the population remaining below the poverty line. Vocationally, PAI find it more difficult to enter the Israeli job market: only 6% of civil service and government employees are Arabs, and most security-related jobs are closed to them. These data depict a marginal minority, lacking economic resources (Reches, 2009).

Education in Israel is segregated by nationality and degree of religiosity, with separate educational sectors for religious and secular Jewish children and for Arab children, with each sector including both state and non-state schools. Non-state private schools for 'reform' (moderately religious) Jews and ultra-orthodox Jews as well as Arab church-affiliated schools receive partial government funding. The language of studies for Jewish children is Hebrew, and for Arab children is Arabic. Because of the segregation, encounters between Jewish and Arab children are rare (Golan-Agnon, 2006).

Table 1: Level of Education of the Arab Population in Israel (selected years)

Year		1961	1975	1985	1994	2000	2007
Years of study	Type of education						
0	Uneducated	49.5%	22.9%	13.4%	10.0%	6.5 %	6.2 %
1-8	Primary and Middle School	41.4%	50.9%	39.7%	31.0%	23.7%	21.3%
9-12	Secondary School	7.6 %	21.7%	38.5%	46.2%	48.7%	53.3%
13 +	Higher and Academic Education	1.5 %	4.5 %	8.4 %	12.7%	21.1%	19.3%
Median years of study		1.2	6.5	8.6	10.0	11.1	11.3

Source: Annual Statistical Abstract, Central Bureau of Statistics, Table 8.3

Table 1 above shows a steady increase in the proportions of young people studying in Arab schools since 1948. However, outputs of the Arab education system are consistently lower than outputs of the Jewish system. Arab pupils' achievements are 28.5% lower in Grade 4, and 29% lower in Grade 8. 50.5% of Jewish pupils are eligible for matriculation in comparison to a stagnant 32.4% among Arab students (2008-2009). The gap continues to grow in higher education. Only 11.8% of Arab high school graduates are accepted to higher education and their achievements in B.A. studies are 78.2% lower than those of Jewish students (Swirsky & Degan-Bouzaglo, 2009; Yogev, 2003). The only education institutions that include integrated nationalities, religions, and levels of religiosity are the seven universities, where all Israeli society sectors can meet (Abu-Rabia-Queder & Arar, 2011). Given the disparity between the school systems and the inferior socio-economic status of the PAI minority, changes in state education policy have far-reaching effects on this minority group. This is the issue explored in this paper.

Methodology

The research employed a qualitative-phenomenological approach to analyse the changes that have occurred over the years in Israel's education policies (Gibton, 2011; Lauen & Tyson, 2009), since:

History provides a sufficient, generous span of time to evaluate educational reforms. When these reforms are intended to make basic institutional changes or to eradicate deep social injustices, the appropriate period for evaluation may be a generation or more (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, 7).

I have chosen to study books and documents published by the Ministry of Education itself since the establishment of the state and have also investigated

the principal comprehensive studies dealing with the Israeli education system and Arab education, in order to identify characteristic trends in Israel's consideration of the Arab education system.

The discursive character of educational policy and reform lends itself easily to qualitative research, with its underlying assumption that this is a multi-layered, complex interdependent world (Gibton, 2011). For example: phenomenological critical interpretation can uncover the politics of supposedly linear processes such as national reforms and indicate trends of main stakeholders (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Interpretive inquiry is useful in policy analysis as it can disclose covert socio-political messages in policy documents, and links and unintended inconsistencies between them that influence the system and its members (Gibton, 2011, p. 439).

Data analysis

The policy documents (e.g. major Israeli education legislation since 1953; committee reports, and publications) were analysed using the analytical framework suggested by Hodgson and Spours (2006). Initially the political eras were analysed; then educational aims and curricula in each era are critically described indicating the policy-making and implementation processes manifested within the educational system space and its outcomes. This strategy was used to trace historical trends and recent development of the PAI education system in Israel, criticising government policy-making and identifying future challenges facing this system

Findings: Policy and counter-policy in the Arab education system in Israel

The analysis provides a critical view of the political context, educational goals, curricula and inputs of the PAI education system in three main periods:

Education under the military government (1948-1966): segmentation and dependency

During and following the 1948 War, Israel imposed strict military administration over Palestinian populated areas for 18 years. The military government imposed an extensive, two-pronged system to control the PAI community based upon segmentation and dependency.

Segmentation

'Closed areas' and travel restrictions were targeted to control PAI movement within the state boundaries (Mar'i, 1978). This physical division separated Palestinian society in Israel from Jewish society economically, socially, and politically. This had significant implications: reinforcing the image of Palestinian Arab citizens as part of the 'enemy' (Abu-Saad, 2006). Additionally, the government attempted to split the PAI community into smaller groups. Residents in different geographic areas were physically isolated from each other, and travel restrictions maintained the separation. The government also emphasized religious or life style differences (e.g. Muslim, Christians, Druze, Bedouin) dissecting them into mutually exclusive identities to 'divide and rule' the PAI community (Abu-Saad, 2008).

Dependency:

Mari (1978) describes the impact of the 1948 war and its aftermath:

The Arab who remained within the boundaries of the newly created state of Israel can best be characterized as emotionally wounded, socially rural, politically lost, economically poverty stricken and nationally hurt. They suddenly become a minority ruled by a powerful sophisticated majority against whom they fought to retain their country and land. It was an agonizing experience, for every family which remained had immediate relatives on the other side of the border. Arabs in Israel were left without political leadership and an educated elite (p. 18).

Against this fragile, traumatized community the Israeli state utilizes strategies of control and containment (Abu-Saad, 2006; Al-Haj, 1995) to increase the dependence of the Arab population (obligatory reliance upon the Jewish sector for economic and political resources), and cooperation (employing material, socio-political enticements to elicit the elites' cooperation). One such technique involved 'side payments' to PAI elites, aiming to extract resources and maintain surveillance of the community (Lustick, 1980, p. 77). From the outset, the military government employed collaborators, many of whom were assigned leadership positions within the community (e.g. mukhtars, sheikhs, religious leaders, mayors etc.) or given jobs in the separate bureaucratic apparatus that dealt with PAI (e.g. educational supervisors, school principals, teachers etc.). Throughout the military regime, no teacher or civil servant could hope to be appointed without the favour of such state agents (Abu-Saad, 2006). Remnants of this covert culture still dominate relations between Arab society and government institutes till today (Abu-Asbah & Arar, 2010).

Arab education was subjected to this administration. Concerning the question of autonomy, it was argued that since Jews had always demanded educational autonomy wherever they constituted the minority, they could not deny this right to the Arab minority. Some Zionists feared that cultural autonomy would result in irredentist claims and there was wide agreement that the state should control the curriculum of Arab education to prevent it becoming a breeding ground for nationalist sentiments. The ruling party, 'Mapai' proposed incorporating Arab education into the national educational system, and that an Arab-Palestinian would be one of three deputies to the Minister of Education (Segev, 1984, p. 58). Thus state education policy was determined by the incorporation of Arab education into the state system, but only through the mechanism of the military administration, which entailed the Arab education system's cultural (and social, and political, etc.) segregation (Al-Haj, 1995; Lustick, 1980).

Thus from the outset PAI were ‘present absentees’ in an educational system designed for a different people, based upon an ideology in which at best, they felt alienated, and at worst, were ‘the enemy’. Separate school systems were developed for Jewish and PAI pupils who lived in physically separate and, for the Palestinians, restricted spheres throughout the duration of military government. The school systems were separate, even in multi-ethnic Jewish/Arab towns (e.g. Haifa, Acre, Ramle, Jaffa), and employed different languages of instruction, curricula, facilities and budget allocations (Abu-Saad, 2006; Mar’i, 1978).

This duality was observed in the 1949 Compulsory Education Act that, beyond appropriating educational authority and extending it to all citizens, still refrained from abolishing the sector streamed system. The statute provided 8 compulsory years of schooling for both populations from age 5 to 13. The state was mandated to provide teachers, structures and learning programmes. Local authorities were responsible for buildings, equipment and structural maintenance. In the PAI community implementation was hindered by a lack of a suitable infrastructure and subjection to the military regime. The state gave priority to absorbing immense waves of Jewish immigration rather than construction of schools for the Arab population (Swirski, 1999).

The state’s school infrastructure was dilapidated; classes were overcrowded, pupils sometimes learning in shifts, sitting on crates or the floor. Many school structures had been damaged in the 1948 war (Cohen, 1951). Appointment of teachers to Arab schools was often determined by state security considerations augmenting the difficulty caused by depletion of teachers during the war. This factor detrimentally influenced the Arab education system and its image in the eyes of the Arab population, for example in the Galilee region heavily populated by Arabs there were 61 pupils per teacher compared with 35 pupils per teacher in the Jewish education system. Arab teachers received half the wages of the Jewish teachers (Cohen, 1951).

The State Education Law legislated in 1953 promised: “To base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the

homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance mutual assistance and love of mankind” (quoted in Sarsur, 1999, p. 114).

The law promised emancipation for each and every individual and vowed to provide an equal opportunity for each child to develop their inborn potential. This law and its practice embody an ethno-republican ethos that attempted to deny the national identity of the PAI minority in Israel and to define it as a community without any national uniqueness. This is clearly expressed in Israel’s education policy towards Arabs that seems to be based on a hostile approach that see the PAI as a security risk and source of social instability (Al Haj, 1996). Efforts to reduce this risk have included control and supervision and also improvement of the Arab population’s standard of living. However these efforts have been inconsistent as expressed by S. Dabon, the Prime Minister’s Consultant on Arab Affairs in a discussion concerning Arab education on 22nd October 1957:

The axis around which bilateral activities and effort have revolved, that sometimes seems self-contradictory, has been to prevent the translation of (Arab) feelings of hatred into the language of anti-Israel social activity and to encourage processes of conciliation and integration; security provisions as opposed to development processes (cited in Al Haj, 1996, p. 97).

On the foundation of this approach Dabon suggests:

What is the goal of Arab education? It can be assumed: education of its citizens benefits both the state and themselves, and so that they should not constitute a fifth column or active potential for surrounding enemies, whether on the borders or at greater distances ... the Arab community, that over thirty years of settlement was aggressive and hostile to our

evolving state, must compensate it and prove that it does not identify with the enemy (cited in Al Haj, 1996, p. 97).

This approach that stemmed from suspicion and hostility aimed to empty PAI education of any nationalist content (Al Haj, 1996). Government policy-makers wanted to reinforce the cultural-religious component and Israeli citizenship component of PAI identity. Denial of the national uniqueness of the Palestinian minority was expressed in a secret document sent by the Manager of the Department for Muslims, attached to the Minister of Religions, Dr. Hirschberg to the then Minister of Education:

We should reconsider the concept of an Arab minority; we should look at them as if they were Israeli citizens of different religions and ethnicities, such as Muslims or Christians and their different sects, Druze, Circassians, Greeks, Armenians and not just as Arabs. It is not entirely obvious that they should be taught Arabic ... we do not have a single problem of Arabs, but a problem of different ethnic and national groups, we have to solve it separately and to emphasise and develop the contradictions between the different types and to minimize their Arab nature. In this way they will forget that they are Arabs and will know that they are Israelis of different kinds (cited in Al Haj, 1996, p. 98).

In the controversy concerning the identity of Arab education, some policy-makers supported the assimilation of Arab schools within the general education system while others supported separation, accompanied by strong establishment control. In practice there was partial separation and despite the segregation policy, there were also those who advocated integration. Blum, the superintendent of Arab schools supported assimilation of Arabs in a general education system as opposed to emphasis on Arab culture's uniqueness. In a letter then marked confidential to the Minister of Education on 20.4.1949, Blum sketched his vision:

I have already briefly expressed my viewpoint concerning the Arab problem and the approach to it in the field of education. In my opinion it is possible to hope that by removing differences between them and us or reducing them to a minimum, we can reduce the contradictions stemming from different world views, and thus achieve a tranquil life (*ibid.*, p. 98)

The ‘controlled separation’ approach that has prevailed since the state’s inauguration, is expressed in several issues: the goals of Arab education, learning programmes and the lack of approved text books in comparison to those published in the Jewish sector, and whose content ignores Arab national sentiment, and Arabs’ contribution to humanity. Rashid Hussein, the Palestinian poet described the socio-political implications that might result from the lack of Arab national content in education:

It is a well-known fact that those who have no self-respect do not respect others, and whoever does not have national feelings will not respect members of other nations. If the Arab pupil is prevented from learning about his people and the nationality of his homeland in school, he will compensate his people for this deficit in his home and in the street; He will willingly accept everything heard from others or read in the newspaper that will engender a warped and incorrect understanding of nationalism. The school, that denied him everything that everyone is proud of, will be considered as the enemy. Instead of learning the meaning of nationalism imbued with humanism, he will only absorb a deviant version. What will the school gain then? What generation of Arab youth will leave its gates? (Hussein, 1957, p. 46).

Many scholars add that analysis of the Israeli government goals for Arab education and its learning programmes leads to the conclusion that they aim to create a submissive Arab willing to accept his inferiority in the face of the Jewish superiority (Lustick, 1980; Mari, 1978; Nasser & Nasser, 2008). The lack of symmetry between government goals for Arab education and those for

Jewish education is reflected in the specific goals of different humanities' disciplines, especially those intended to form the pupils' identity and orientation.

Table 2. Percentage of school hours devoted to general history, Jewish history and Arab History in Jewish and Arab secondary schools (the old learning programme)

Subject	Arab schools (%)	Jewish schools (%)
General History	60.7	59.8
Jewish History	20.2	38.8
Arab History	19.1	1.4
Total	100	100

Source: Al Haj, 1995, p. 106.

The Arab described in Jewish school studies resembled the nomads in the metaphorical book by Amos Oz, "*Nomads and the Viper*", a people whose very presence harmed human civilization, causing destruction so that the construction of Israeli national identity was based mainly on the denial of the presence of an 'other' (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). The composition of these books was guided by the trauma of the Holocaust in Europe and completely ignored the existence of the Palestinian population in Israel as Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) describe:

Most of these books did not even mention the existence of a Palestinian people, and completely ignored the aspirations of the Palestinian national movement, so that the resistance of the Arabs to the Zionists was presented without explanation, rather as a destructive and hostile activity paralleled by the repetitive demand for peace of the Jews (presented as the victims) who had returned to their land (p. 162).

Ethnic inequality even permeated educational policy reforms formulated to reflect the needs of the new political economy of industrialization, so that the

interests of Arab children remained a marginal consideration in these reforms (Al-Haj, 1995; Smilansky, 1957).

1967-1991 the Post -Military Government and the Policy of Integration

The Military Administration terminated in 1966. The state opened a new era of control strategies towards PAI. The socio-economic gap that had widened between the Palestinians and Jews during the Military Administration ensured the continuation of segregation and dependence. Only a slight alteration appeared in the policy of separation so that even today in multi-ethnic cities it is difficult to see full integration between the two populations.

Discourse concerning reform for integration followed the war of 1967 and the conquest of the West Bank of the Jordan, reflected the ethos of the 'melting pot' of Jewish diaspora elements that prevailed during the state's first two decades. Social and educational gaps were discovered that initiated public debate (Dror, 2006; Gaziel, 1999) and demands for the annulment of separation between weak and strong pupils. As the foundation for reform the Knesset established middle schools and abolished comprehensive schools. This was mainly a social reform that did not consider the Palestinian minority's concerns as an issue for reform so that neither the Praver committee of 1963 nor the Ramlet committee of 1966 nor the implementation of their recommendations related to the PAI (Gaziel, 1999).

The concept of integration matured during the 1960s, and the Ministry of Education reorganized the school system, moving from a structure of 8 + 4 (primary and secondary schools) to 6 + 3 + 3 (including middle school), and attempting to universalize post-elementary education, merging this structural plan with a new policy of desegregation. According to Levi (1987) the integration plan, based on egalitarian ideals could ease the problems of creating different paths for different children. In 1968, the Knesset approved the integration plan reform, seen as the state's effort to overcome the 'ethnic gap'

through educational policy. Nevertheless when education policy-makers talked about 'ethnic' integration their conception of it remained vague and confusing (Swirski, 1999). This lack of clarity contrasted sharply with the elaborate preparations for the school system re-structuring (Eshel & Klein, 1984, p. 137).

The integration reform stemmed from a nation-building ethos. It was seen as an ideological construct, either in its functionalist-liberal meaning (expressing Zionist ideals) or personifying the role of the state as a just agent of modernization representing middle class interests (Levi, 1987; Swirski, 1999). The implications of the reform for Arab pupils challenge this conceptualization, but nevertheless, may reveal the elusive meaning of 'integration' in this case.

At first sight, the reform seemed to be totally divorced from developments in Arab education. Although the restructuring applied to the Arab schools (Al-Haj, 1995, p. 81; Swirski, 1999, p. 196), they were excluded from the integration plan. Once more it was made clear that educational policy-making, as well as the public debate on education, were an intra-Jewish matter, evaluated solely by its contribution to the nation-building effort. Although, reform in Arab education engendered structural and curricular changes, there was no mention of cross-national integration. By that time, educational policy made no pretensions to be universal, least of all inclusive. Yet, the proximity of the two reforms (structure and integration) suggests otherwise. To understand the elusiveness of integration for Arab schools, the developments that led to the Arab reform need to be described.

In the early 1970s-following the dismantling of the military administration and the 1967 War, increasing alienation of Arab pupils from the state led the Ministry of Education to reconsider its policy towards Arab education (Al-Haj, 1995, p. 139). In February 1972, an advisory committee, headed by Deputy Minister of Education, Yadlin published a short report on "basic trends in Arab education". Following the committee's recommendations, the Minister approved new guidelines and curricula for educational policy that it was hoped would strengthen PAI's identification with the state. "The importance of the

Yadlin Document”, writes Al-Haj (1995, p. 140), “lies in the fact that for the first time wide public attention was given to the uniqueness of Arab education and the need to formulate particular aims for the Arab pupils”.

Nonetheless, the reform was severely criticized by Arab leaders, claiming that it sought to create a “unique Israeli Arab divorced from his genuine national and cultural roots” (Mar’i, 1978, p. 53). Another committee set up on 1.7.1993 to problematize educational needs and determine policy for the 1980s (Peled, 1976) was headed by Dr Matityahu (Matti) Peled, a retired army general and a professor of Arabic literature, who later became renowned for his political activism for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation.

Elad Peled, a former General-Manager of the Ministry of Education, who took part in the planning of Arab education for the 1980s explained:

The goal of government education in the Arab sector in Israel is to ground the education on foundations of Arab culture ... on love for the common homeland for all the state’s citizens and loyalty to the State of Israel – emphasising the common interest of them all while fostering the uniqueness of the Arabs of Israel (Peled, 1976, p. 421).

Accordingly, Arab education was to be based on “foundations of Arab culture”, and on “encouraging the uniqueness of Israeli Arabs”, while it equally demanded the Arab pupils’ ‘loyalty’ as citizens of the state. In contrast, Jewish children were to ground their sense of belonging on the national heritage of the Jewish people (Al-Haj, 1995, p. 143). While reaffirming the exclusion of the Arab minority from the ‘projects’ of assimilation and integration, this distinction signified a change in their definition. Under this new conception, PAI were no longer just ‘minorities’, a term that had left them devoid of both civic and national identities. Instead they were seen as Israeli citizens and Arab nationals, a duality substantiated by different goals for Arab and Jewish education. These goals conformed to the tendency to strengthen both the Jewish national character of the state and a liberal conception of citizenship

(Peled, 1992). In this sense, these educational reforms continued to serve the goals of nation-building and state-formation.

The notion of integration signified inclusion of different social strata: not only the ‘outsiders’ (Mizrahim- Oriental Jews) and the ‘insiders’ (Ashkenazim- Western Jews) (Levy, 2002, p. 205), but now also the Arabs in a new meritocratic order. Premised on the (liberal) ideal of ‘equal opportunities’, meritocracy provided new legitimation for the state that was making its first steps towards liberalization. The transformation to a market-oriented society that began with these educational reforms did not come to fruition until the 1980s, when the liberal discourse of ‘citizenship’ recognised the PAI for the first time as a national minority (Shafir & Peled, 2002).

The growing incorporation of PAI in the labour market (since 1959), the end of military administration (1966), and the re-union of the Palestinians (in Israel and the West Bank) after 1967 all influenced the new practices of inclusion-exclusion. The reinforcement of PAI’s Arab consciousness served to distinguish them from their Jewish co-citizens, and primarily from their Oriental Jewish counterparts in the labour market. Yet increased Arab nationalist sentiments caused anxiety for the government. However, strengthening their sense of civic identity not only helped them become better acquainted with Israeli (Jewish) society, but more importantly, distinguished them, in their own minds, from the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. On the other hand, familiarity with Jewish society aroused concern amongst the PAI as they realised that their level of education was far lower than that of their Jewish co-nationals (Mar’i, 1978). In this respect, both (Arab) ethnicity and citizenship shaped the boundary that cut through the Palestinian collective and Israeli citizenry (Levy, 2002).

1992-2010 Separation, Autonomy, Anomie and Education ‘on Hold’²

Beginning in 1992 the peace process had conflicting effects on the PAI and on government policies regarding this population. Israel’s recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people together with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the occupied territories in 1994 gave partial expression to the Palestinian narrative, diminishing tensions. Paradoxically, this weakened the affinity between the PAI and the population under the Palestinian Authority, while the Israeli element of their identity grew. The prospect of peace was envisaged as an end to discrimination against Arabs and providing full rights as citizens of the State of Israel (Reches, 2009). However the reality of the following years indicated that the Palestinian Authority would not constitute a solution to the PAI minority’s national dilemma since it remained difficult to realise true equality and integration within the Israeli life systems. In the words of Al-Haj (2005, 49) they now lived in a ‘dual periphery’.

The PAIs’ sense of alienation and rejection was re-affirmed in the political arena, when Jewish right wing leaders voiced de-legitimisation of the Arabs. PAIs’ frustration was exacerbated by the realisation that equality remained a distant prospect and the inbuilt tension and contradiction between the concept of the State of Israel as a state for the Jewish people and its democratic liberal character that demanded true equality for all citizens was verified.

Academics and politicians began to question this ethno-nationalist construct, identifying the contradictions in the state’s character and suggesting other solutions such as ‘the state of all its citizens’, and the demand for cultural, educational, institutional and national autonomy strengthened (Abu-Asbah, 2007). To meet these needs an independent Arab education administration was required within the Ministry of Education that would have complete independence concerning educational issues. Autonomy was seen as

² Adopted from Jabareen and Agbaria (2011).

a tool for the construction of the PAI's national-cultural identity (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2011).

Tragically, in October 2000, 13 Arab citizens were killed in violent encounters with the police, engendering a deep rift in Jewish-Arab relations and the government policy of neglect continued. Arab intellectuals composed a document entitled 'Future Vision' that suggested different models for a bi-national solution based on four guiding principles: (a) a broad-based coalition combining political representatives from both nationalities (b) a joint right of veto concerning substantive issues (c) proportionate representation in political institutions and in social and economic bodies (d) autonomy for each group in the management of its institutions and internal matters (Reches, 2009). It was only after the events of October 2000 that the government began to promote a comprehensive programme for the development of the Arab population, known as the 'Four Billion Shekel Plan' to reduce gaps between Arabs and Jews in all life domains. Several private initiatives established bi-lingual schools that provided hothouses for educational encounters between Jewish and Arab pupils. However, as a result of reduction of the development budget in 2003 the Arab public education system's infrastructure and construction was seriously weakened (Greenbaum, 2003).

The Or Committee that investigated the events of October 2000, considered the long term discrimination against Arab citizens in areas such as the allocation of land, education (infrastructure and staffing) and budgets for local Arab authorities. It noted the inequality of budgets for Arab education, observing that the Arab education system lacked 1500 classes, and although the number of Arabs eligible for matriculation certificates had grown, in 2004, only 38.8% of Arab pupils matriculated in contrast to 58.4% of Jewish pupils; dropout from Arab schools was double that of the Jewish schools; the number of students in higher education had grown, (reaching 9% but remained lower than their proportion in the general population. An active government policy prevented the establishment of a separate PAI university that might advance PAI higher education. A bottleneck of Arab students formed due to the

rejection of PAI students by Israeli universities (45% of applicants contrasting with 15% rejections of Jewish applicants) (Arar & Mustafa, 2011) leading to a growing stream of PAI students to foreign universities especially for prestigious disciplines with high entrance requirements in Israel such as medicine, engineering and law that would qualify students for professions independent of public service appointments (Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2010).

More positively, the Or Report led to the annulment of the General Security Services post in the Ministry of Education, an imposition that had for many years caused complaints by Arab citizens (Reches, 2009, p. 25).

Table 3. Median Years of Study according to Population Group

Nationality	1961	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2007
Arabs	1.2	5.0	6.5	7.5	8.6	9.1	10.2	11.1	11.3
Jews	8.4	9.3	10.3	11.1	11.5	11.9	12.2	12.5	12.8

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Annual Statistical Abstracts: 2002 (No. 53) 2007 (No. 58)

Reports regarding gaps between the Jewish and Arab education systems, disappointment due to poor Israeli pupils' achievements in international exams, administrative failure at all levels, ineffective unequal exploitation of resources and increasing violence in schools (The Dovrat Report, 2005, pp. 46-52) instigated a search for a path between integration and autonomy for the two education systems. The Dovrat Report revealed that many thought an embodied neo-liberalist discourse (Dahan & Yona, 2005) expressed conflicting voices. In the context of Arab education it suggested statutory recognition of a separate education stream for PAI because of "the existence of a separate nationality and language, or a distinctive and separate lifestyle" (Dovrat Report, 2005, p. 215). The report determined that "despite the conflict, expression will be given both to the separate Arab heritage and also to full loyalty to the State of Israel" (*ibid.*, p. 218). Nevertheless, the report negated consideration of an autonomous administration for Arab education which might enable independent collective

control of the schools, and a clear statement was made: the place of Arab education is within state education.

According to the Dovrat report, Arab public education goals were identical to the general state education goals with certain additions to be included in the law:

The goals of Arab education will include in addition to the general goals of education: (a) the development and fostering of a personal and collective Arab identity as an educational spiritual and social anchor for full integration in Israeli society and in the State of Israel as the Jewish and Democratic state; recognition of Arab culture, the Arabic language and the history of the Palestinian people (Dovrat Report, 2005, p. 219).

This duality expresses recognition of the Arab minority and also demands that Arab education will be committed to the state's general education goals. Institutional expression of autonomy for the Arab public is mainly symbolic: "a recommendation to appoint Arab representatives and advisers to the Ministry and regular operation of a consultant council. In practice these institutional arrangements do not open a 'new page' in the relations between the state and its Arab population; rather they continue the underlying principle of control." (Dahan & Yona, 2005, p. 32).

An opposite viewpoint was presented by the PAI's Follow-up Committee on Arab Education established in the 1980s in their *Statement Paper, Reactions and Remarks to the Dovrat Committee* (2004). The committee welcomed the recognition of gaps and willingness to reduce them but noted that the report offered no clear programme to reduce existing gaps in inputs and achievements between Arab and Jewish schools, nor did it address effects of long-time discrimination to the Arab education due to low resources investment and contents far from its national ethos (Abu-Asbah, 2006). This *Statement Paper* listed three difficulties concerning the goals for Arab education (1) the conflict continues to shape the Ministry of Education policy towards Arab education,

considering the PAI as a hostile national minority that must continually prove its loyalty to the state. (2) The substance of the ‘full loyalty’ required of the Arab public is such that basic universal rights such as the right to education are linked to the issue of ‘loyalty’. (3) relates to the goals of Arab education and the demand of the Dovrat Report that the Arab population “should participate in the improvement of the state of Arab education by taking responsibility for their education” (p. 4).

The neo-liberal policy strongly expressed in the Dovrat Report, acted in two dialectic manners – as a strong state and a weak state. As a strong state it demonstrates increased supervision, imposing accountability on the school within a discourse of achievements and grades economy. It tightly supervises pupils and the educational core thrusts the national ethos out of Arab school studies. As a weak state it privatizes public services, retreating from its responsibility for welfare, yet allowing significant cultural-political recognition (Yona & Dahan, 2005). Arab education suffers from both these policies; the weak state fails to fulfill its responsibility towards it, and the strong state tightens its control over it (Agbaria & Mahajne, 2009).

PAIs voiced mixed reactions to this statement, identifying opportunities to avoid state control, through privatization, yet witnessing the retreat of the welfare state and separation from state funds and responsibility. This situation was compounded by weakened Arab local authorities, which in recent decades are close to collapse (Haider, 2010). Yet it has been the haven offered by the state’s control during a period of socio-political development, especially in education that has brought Arab society to its present inferior status.

To escape the state’s centralized control of their education, the PAI suggested alternative programmes, i.e. recommendations of the Follow-up Committee, which could foster PAI pupils’ cultural and national identity. In 2007, the Follow-up Committee met with the then Minister of Education, Prof. Yulia Tamir (on the eve of a strike planned by the committee to raise consciousness concerning the dilapidated state of Arab education). The Arab representatives protested against the neglect of the Arab education system and

continuous government discrimination (Kashti, 2008; Khouri, 2009). Several joint committees, established between the Follow-up Committee and the Ministry, presented recommendations to the Minister during 2008. The construction committee recommended building 8,600 classrooms by 2012 to remedy the Arab education system's deficit. The committee investigating Arab pupils' achievements found that they were approximately half those of Jewish pupils in national and international exams, and eligibility for matriculation and the quality of Arab pupils' matriculation certificates were seriously lower than those of Jewish pupils, often preventing university acceptance (see Table 4 below). The report recommended increasing and improving teaching in Arabic and mathematics and constructing a more effective learning organisation. The committee examining learning disabilities in the Arab sector discovered a lack of counsellors, didactic diagnostics and psychologists in Arab schools. The committee examining learning contents could not agree on a joint document.

The Ministry satisfied itself with a recommendation to "set the improvement of achievements in the Arabic language as a first priority goal and to act to improve learning achievements in mathematics" while the summation of the Follow-up Committee on Arab Education (2004, p. 6) recommended: 'significant recognition' for the 'historical-cultural narrative of the Arab population' and proposed "allowing a full and meaningful partnership".

The Follow-up Committee also announced the initiation of a professional pedagogic council for the Arab education system to supervise Arab education, determine learning contents and reshape the system, forming an exclusive pedagogic policy and curricula including the desirable legal foundation for Arab education in Israel (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2010, p. 22).

The present Minister of Education, Gideon Saar, has not acknowledged the importance of these joint committees, and the implementation of their recommendations remains 'on hold'.

Table 4. Gaps produced by Israeli government policies between Jewish and Arab education from nursery to university, 2008-2009

Aspect compared	Jewish population	Arab population
No of persons under the age of 17 (Statistics for 2009)	1,699, 273	678, 000
Percentage of infants registered in pre-school at age 2	61.3 %	13.7 %
Percentage of infants registered in nursery at age 4	93.9%	82.8%
Percentage of infants registered in nursery at age 5	97.5 %	94.5%
Average number of pupils in primary school class (represented as nearest whole number)	24	29
Percentage of children with special needs who do not receive appropriate medical treatment	39%	71%
Percentage of school dropout from Year 9 to Year 12	13.5%	21.3%
Percentage of pupils eligible for matriculation certificates (suitable for university entrance threshold requirements)	75.9%	30.8%
Average score for Psychometric Test: also needed for University entrance (maximum score = 800)		
Males	585	479
Females	548	445
Percentage of applicants for university, rejected for first year of academic studies for a first degree	21.9%	38%
Percentage of population aged 18-39 studying for first academic degree (university)	3.6%	1.8%
Percentage of population aged 18-39 studying for first academic degree (all higher education institutes: university, academic colleges, teacher training colleges)	7.9%	3.9%
Percentage of population aged 18-39 studying for second academic degree (university)	1.9%	0.5%
Percentage of those graduating with a degree (all higher education institutes: university, academic colleges, teacher training colleges)		
1 st degree	87.6%	10.3%
2 nd degree	93.5%	4.9%
3 rd degree	94.5%	2.8%

Source: Jabareen and Agbariah (2011, p. 12).

Recent statistics shown in Table 4 above depict the results of Israeli state policy reaffirming that Arab education remains doubly ‘on hold’. Since the establishment of the state it remains in waiting for the Ministry of Education to advance the system to a state of equality with Jewish education, with harsh consequences for its status quo, waiting also for the Arab local authorities and

civil society organisations to introduce programmes and initiatives that have the power to improve this situation.

Conclusions

This paper investigated principal turning-points in Israel's education policy for its PAI citizens since 1948. The research revealed that since the state's establishment and despite three turning-points in government policy Arab education is still controlled by the state. State education policies reflect a state of conflict, characterised by suspicion, so that Arab involvement in these policies is minimised.

In the 1970s and 1980s the general education goals were defined in the Compulsory Education Act and later the Dovrat Committee (Dovrat Report, 2005) led to two structural reforms: 'New Horizons' proposed by the Ministry of Education and 'Courage to Reform' proposed by the Teachers Organisation for the administration of teaching and learning. These reforms were the result of different committees composed of policy-makers and education researchers who determined the education goals for Israel's Arabs (Abu-Saad, 2008; Al-Haj, 1995, 2002; Dovrat Report, 2005). The PAI were not granted the autonomy, control or involvement to determine their own education goals or learning programmes (Al-Haj, 2005; Nasser & Nasser, 2008; Yona, 2005). Learning programmes in Arab schools continue to be separate from those of Jewish schools and the Ministry's pedagogic secretariat dictates learning contents for Arab education with little consideration for the Palestinian minority's national narrative, guided by Jewish educators and researchers (Abu-Saad, 2006; Levy, 2005), often aiming to blur the PAIs' national identity replacing it with an amorphous universal identity (Bar-tal & Teichman, 2005; Nasser & Nasser, 2008). Golan-Agnon (2006) Head of the Committee for Equal Opportunities in Education in the Ministry of Education from 1999-2001 claimed that "the heads of the Arab education system not only lack authority

and funds, but also have no presence in the [Pedagogic] Secretariat's meetings responsible for Arab education and known to us as 'the plant' since appointments to this body are subject to security authorisation" (p. 1080).

As noted, Israeli policy towards Arab education stems from a hostile and suspicious assumption concerning its Arab population (Al-Haj, 1996; Reches, 2009), aiming primarily to reinforce the Jewish national state (Dror, 2006). A fear appears to be present that the establishment of a national-cultural identity for PAI pupils could contradict this goal (Al-Haj, 1995). The resultant policy of alienation, separation and control is expressed in the differential allocation of resources to the two education systems (Abu-Asbah, 2007) so that the Arab education system has suffered from a concentration of disadvantages since the establishment of the state (Mazawi, 2003). Government policies do not comply with the civil equality that constitutes a cornerstone of any democratic regime, nor is there any attempt at corrective discrimination for weaker elements of the society (Abu-Saad, 2008; Jabareen & Agbaria, 2011; Levy, 2002). Identifying the positive developments in the Arab education system merely constitutes an optimistic view of the true picture that overlooks the dimension of comparison between the Jewish and Arab systems.

Reactive or consequential policies have short term and particular effects on closing specific gaps such as the construction of deficit classrooms. These measures are insufficient and a comprehensive multi-annual policy is needed that will recognise the distinctiveness of the PAI minority as a national minority with its own special values, culture and sociological problems. PAI need to be central participants in the determination of education goals and learning contents for Arab schools. A policy of partnership and recognition would grant an autonomous Arab education structure such as exists for Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel. It is also proposed that a policy of corrective long-term positive discrimination is needed to close gaps between the Jewish and Arab education systems in achievements, learning contents and in teaching and learning administration. The Arab education system that has been 'on hold' for such changes for many years, still waits for systematic long-term state

education policies and deeper involvement of local Arab authorities and civil society.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Prof. David Chen, Dean of the Centre for Academic Studies in Or Yehuda and Dr. Dan Gibton of Tel Aviv University with whom I discussed the studied issues, whose erudite remarks helped me to comprehend the depths of Israel's evolving education policies.

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