

Israel's Education Policy toward the Arab Education System from a Historical Perspective from 1948 to 2022

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Abstract

The article examines the educational policy of the Israeli governments towards the Arab education system and the implications of this policy on the status and achievements of that system. Based on a theoretical background describing the relations between Israel as a Jewish state and the indigenous Arab minority, the study focuses on four main historical eras: 1) that of the Military Administration period (1948-1966); 2) the “melting pot” period (1967-1999); 3) After “Al-Aqsa Events” 2000 through 2017; and 4) Between the years 2018 (Nationality Law) and 2022. Drawing on the analytical framework designed by Lauen & Tyson (2009). The findings of the study demonstrate the existence of understandable patterns of inequality on the basis of ethnicity and possible relationship between national ethnic affiliation in Israel and education policymaking for the education system of Arab minority. The article offers insights, conclusions, and recommendations for the future.

Keywords

Education Policy, Arab Education System in Israel, Arab Minority

1. Introduction

Israeli society is a divided society, on an ethnic, national, religious and political background. The deepest rift is between Jews and Arabs (Smuha, 2001). The balance of power between the two groups is unequal and the declaration of the State of Israel as a Jewish state has made the Arabs an ethnic national minority that is not equal to the Jewish majority group (Yaar & Shavit, 2001). Most recently, in July 2018, the Nationality Law was approved in the Knesset, which anchors Jewish national values of the State of Israel. Arabs in Israel are subject to

institutional discrimination as a group and as individuals in various areas of life, such as income inequality (Khattab, Miaari, & Stier, 2016), under-representation in management positions in government institutions.

Education is a significant milestone in the life of any human society, education for a national ethnic minority like the Arab—minority in Israel allows it to improve its human capital and realize its human potential.

The Arab educational system in Israel operates under conditions of inequality in terms of resources and infrastructure (Abu-Asbah, 2013; Balas, 2017), inspection and control of pedagogical contents taught in schools, and the choice of the teachers that the educational system employs (Al-Haj, 1995; Ehrlich & Gindi, 2017; Haddad Haj Yahya & Rudnicki, 2018; Jabareen & Agbaria, 2014). In addition, the state has withheld official recognition of the historical narrative and the cultural attributes of the Arab minority (Abu-Asbah, 2013; Haddad Haj Yahya & Rudnicki, 2018; Jabareen & Agbaria, 2014). Furthermore, it has excluded Arab educational leaders from circles in which educational decisions and policies are made. Thus, principals and teachers from the Arab educational system in Israel are unable to discuss issues related to the Palestinian national narrative and are instructed to keep this narrative out of the educational activities in their schools (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016).

This article draws on the qualitative (phenomenological) offered by Lauen & Tyson (2009) to understand the changes and developments in education policy that the Israeli governments have led towards the Arab education system during four main periods of time: 1) that of the Military Administration period (1948-1966); 2) the “melting pot” period (1967-1999); 3) After “Al-Aqsa Events” 2000 through 2017; and 4) Between the years 2018 (Nationality Law) and 2022.

Furthermore, this article provides insight into the status of the Arab education system, highlighting the developments that have occurred over the years while also addressing the challenges it faces in Israel. The article delves into the consequences of government policies concerning the Arab education system and their implications for its objectives, curriculum, resources, and outcomes.

2. Education and National Ethnic Minorities

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the leaders of the Zionist movement declared that Palestine was “a land without a people for a people without land” (Masalha, 1997), this is despite the fact that the number of Palestinians was greater than the number of Jews. In 1917, when Britain promised to establish a “national home” for the Jews in Palestine, the ratio of Arabs to Jews was 10:1 (Prior, 1999).

“Indigenous peoples share the experience of colonial forces erasing and re-writing their history, what is accepted and common for indigenous peoples as they lay helpless and passive in the process of ‘re-education’ (de-education), or denying them the right to know their history” (Abu-Saad, 2008: p. 17).

During the 1948 war and its aftermath, most of the Arabs were deported out-

side the borders of the State of Israel, which was established that year. As a result, the Arabs who remained within the country's borders became a national minority. In addition, according to law, all those who left the homeland even temporarily between 1947 and 1950 were absent, they were defined as "absentees". This definition included more than half of the Arab minority who remained in their homeland, causing their property and land to be expropriated and transferred to the state. The effects of this policy on the Arab minority as an "absent present" continue to this day in various fields, especially in the field of education (Abu-Asbah, 2007).

Since the Arab minority is perceived collectively as a security risk and as a group that cannot identify with the character of the state as a Jewish, Israeli governments have refrained from recognizing them as a national minority with collective rights in the political, educational, economic and social spheres.

The educational history of Israel demonstrates one of the paths in the development of internal ethno-national relations and the rewriting of the Israeli ethnoscape. Education is used as a tool to emphasize the power of the state by means of policies of integration and segregation of a fundamentally racial nature (Levy, 2005). That aim overtly to re-socialization of Arab citizens, in order to weaken their Palestinian identity and strengthen their Israeli identity.

3. Arab Minority in Israel: A Social, Political, and Educational Perspective

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, there has been a geographical and ethnic division between Arabs and Jews. The division stems from a variety of main issues of identity, nationalism, civil equality, control, and oppression (Landau, 2015). During the establishment of the state, a small minority of the Arab population remained within its borders, estimated at 156,000 people, who were exhausted, disappointed by the results of the war and lacked leadership. The elite, who were the social, educational, cultural and political leadership of the Arab people, were expelled or left the country (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016). Since then, the Arab minority has doubled more than eleven times, so that in 2021, the Arab minority numbered approximately 1.97 million people and reached 21% of the total population in Israel (CBS, 2021). The Arab population is religiously diverse, about 85% are Muslim, about 7% Christian, and about 8% Druze (CBS, 2021). Most of the Arab minority live in separate villages and cities, with only a small portion living in mixed cities.

Arabs in Israel have several characteristics: First, they are a national minority born in a country that is officially defined as a Jewish state, and therefore they face many challenges regarding their national identity and the struggle for official recognition (Ministry of Education, 2009; Al-Haj, 2006).

Second, A minority with a unique identity consisting mainly of four elements: civic (Israeli), the ethnic (Arab), the national (Palestinian), and the religious (Muslim, Christian, or Druze). Its identity is a combination of these four ele-

ments, with different emphases. The process of identity formation remains in an ongoing dynamic that varies according to circumstances (Diab & Mi'ari, 2007) and includes several levels related to ethnic democracy and multiculturalism (Khoury et al., 2013). Over time, the Arabs in Israel have developed an identity that simultaneously includes two main motifs: the Israeli civic motif and the Palestinian national motif. Third, The Arabs, as mentioned earlier, are citizens of a state, which is defined as a Jewish state, the attitude of the state institutions towards the Arab minority, often, is that of a hostile minority and a “fifth recruit”—a minority that suffers from deprivation, discrimination and shortages in most of the different areas of life (Abu-Hussain, 2014). This reality has turned the Arab minority into a marginal minority lacking the economic resources necessary for its development (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016).

The Israeli educational system is divided into sectors differentiated by national affiliation and levels of religiosity. There are two school systems for religious Jews (one for the Orthodox, another for the ultra-Orthodox), another for secular Jews, and the third is the education system for Arabs. Each sector comprises public (state) and private schools, some of the latter supported in part by the state. The Arab education system in Israel has been divided by state institutions into three sectors: Arab, Druze and Bedouin. Each sector has a curriculum that sets it apart (Haddad Haj Yahya & Rudnicki, 2018). In the Arab education system, there are public schools, alongside privatized schools run, organizationally, by churches and public associations.

In each of the education systems, a different language was adopted, in the Jewish education system the Hebrew language and in the Arab education system the Arabic language (Table 1).

From the table above, it appears that since 1948, there has been a continuous and continuous increase in the level of education among the Arab population in Israel. Nevertheless, the achievements of the Arab educational system fall short of those of the Jewish system. The disparity persists at all stages of education and on all national and international exams. In the national achievement test for eighth grade, the average score on the mother tongue test was 66.2 among Jewish students (in Hebrew) compared to 60.2 among Arab students (in Arabic). In

Table 1. Level of education among the Arab population of Israel (Selected Years).

Year		1961	1985	2000	2012	2019	2022
Years of schooling	Type of studies	%	%	%	%	%	%
0	No studies	49.5	13.4	6.5	6.2	2.3	2.2
1 - 8	Completed primary and junior high	41.4	59.7	63.7	66.3	87.3	88.2
9 - 12	Completed high school	7.6	38.5	48.7	53.3	68.8	69.4
13+	Earned academic degree	1.5	8.4	11.1	12	12.7	14.2
Avg. years of schooling		1.2	8.6	11.1	12.3	12.9	13.2

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022: (No. 73).

English, the averages were 74.1 among Jewish students and 53.9 among their Arab peers. In science and technology, the average scores were 51.4 and 45.7, respectively. In mathematics, the gap was 14 points (Jewish students 60.5, Arab students 46.6) (CBS, 2019). The disparity between the Jewish and the Arab educational systems recurred at the secondary level. In 2017, the percent of students eligible for a matriculation certificate in Jewish schools was 79.5 percent, of whom 55.1 percent met the universities' threshold requirements. In contrast, the corresponding share in Arab schools was 64.2 percent, of whom 43.7 percent satisfied the universities' threshold requirements (CBS, 2019). Additional inequalities between the systems were observed on the national psychometric exam; in 2019, the gap was estimated at around 100 points (580 vs. 488) in favor of the Jewish educational system (National Center for Testing and Evaluation, 2019). As for academic studies, 14.2 percent of those holding a university bachelor's degrees are Arabs; 85.8 percent are Jews. The gap widens at the master's level: 8.6 percent vs. 89.8 percent, respectively. And at the doctoral level, the representation of Arabs falls to 4.1 percent compared to 95.9 percent Jews (CBS, 2021).

The wide disparity between the Arab and the Jewish educational systems is a result of the discrimination and exclusion policies of state institutions, which have caused a low socio-economic status of the Arab population and government educational policy, over the years, which negatively affects the Arab minority and educational development. This topic is the focus of this study.

4. Research Method

This study uses a phenomenological qualitative methodology (Lauen & Tyson, 2009) with the aim of analyzing the changes that have taken place in the educational policies of Israeli governments for generations over the Arabs for more than seventy years. This period allows for an evaluation of the educational reforms designed to make fundamental organizational changes or to reduce the phenomenon of discrimination and social oppression.

In order to identify directions of action and main guidelines that the Israeli governments adopts in determining its policy toward Arab education, Books and documents published by the Ministry of Education in the State of Israel in 1948 were reviewed, in addition to studies on the education system in Israel. In this way, it is possible to analyze documents and data that reflect the educational policy, to diagnose and identify main trends of the stakeholders and to reveal hidden social and political messages and existing contradictions in the documents and sources.

Many documents and data were analyzed (Educational Policy Documents, Compulsory Education Law of 1953, Reports from Education Committees and Relevant Publications), First, documents from various historical periods were analyzed and presented in accordance with the education policy in effect at the time. Next, the way decisions were made about the goals and curricula devised

and applied in each period were presented from a critical perspective. This analytical strategy made it possible to monitor main trends in education policy and identify recent developments in the Arab education system in Israel. It also yielded a critical presentation of the process of making decisions and defining education policy, as well as an assessment of the future challenges that this educational system faces.

5. Findings

The analysis of the various data and documents provided a critical approach to the political-educational context, to the goals and curricula, and to the achievements of the Arab educational system in five main periods as follows:

5.1. Education during the Military Administration Period (1948-1966): Between Separation and Dependency

During and after the 1948 war, the Israeli government imposed military administration on the Arab population for eighteen years. The military administration was led by a policy of segregation and dependency that were meant to control the Arab population and its education system. The separation between the Arab minority and the Jewish majority was reflected socially, educationally, culturally, economically and politically. The state also limited the mobility of the Arab minority within the country's borders by defining the Palestinian territories as "closed" and restricting movement in them (Mar'i, 1978: p. 18). Not only did Israel divide the Arab minority into separate geographic regions and restrict movement and communication between them, but it even divided them into small groups on the basis of their way of life (Bedouin/non-Bedouin) and religion (Muslim, Christian, Druze), adopting a "divide and rule" policy and attempting to create mutually exclusive secondary identities (Abu-Saad, 2006).

The clearest revelation of the government's "divide and rule" policy toward the Arab minority in the first decade of the state's establishment appears in a document written in the Office of the Advisor for Arab Affairs and entitled: "Recommendations for the Treatment of the Arab Minority in Israel." The document was written in 1959 and summarizes government policy in the first decade. In section "The Social Political Development of the Arab Minority" Written in the document:

"Government policy for the past ten years has strived for the division of the Arab population into ethnicities and regions [...] Ethnic policy and family division in the villages have worked to prevent the formation of the Arab settlement in one division [...] There is a possibility of slowing down [the Arabs'] progress by the policies of ethnic and clan division and other artificial means [...] We must continue to exhaust all the possibilities of the ethnic division policy that has given its fruits in the past and has so far succeeded in creating a buffer—If also sometimes artificial—between certain sections of the Arab population, such as Crisis of trust between the Druze

community and other Arab communities” (protocol of the “Limited Secretariat Meeting of the Committee on Arab Affairs”, 1963: p. 2).

Against the fragile and battered Arab minority, the Israeli governments adopted the model of unequal pluralism—a model usually identified with the principle of negation. Maintaining ethnic division, but instead of compromise and sharing—the majority controls the institutions, controls its culture, allocates resources and tends to ignore the needs of the minority.

The strategy was expressed in control and inclusion (Al-Haj, 2006). Control, economic and political resources, which made the Arab minority completely dependent on the government and on Jewish society. The inclusion was expressed in attempts to establish cooperation and build relations between the state and a small number of Arab elites (village mayors, sheikhs, religious leadership, local authorities, etc.), by granting social and political privileges in order to generate conflicts and dispossess them of the remaining resources. Constant and continuous monitoring.

Some of the elites called the “cooperating elites” (Lustick, 1980: p. 77) were appointed to leadership positions or to public positions in the separate systems of government that deal with the affairs of the Arab population. During the military administration, no Arab teacher or government official was appointed without the mediation of “collaborators” with the state institutions and with the approval of a security source, to this day, this hidden policy continues to influence the perception of the Arab minority, the government institutions, and relations between them and these institutions.

This Military Administration controlled the Arab educational system in Israel and opposed self-management for fear that it would lead in the future to the demand of the Arab minority for liberation and autonomy. Hence, there was agreement among the Jewish decision-makers on the importance of continuing state institutions control in the appointment of principals, in the renovation of teachers and in the curricula and contents delivered to students in order to prevent the growth of national emotion. Thus, during this period, the ruling “Mapai” party proposed the integration of Arab education within the state education system in the country (Al-Haj, 2006).

The State Education Law in Israel, passed in August 1953, did not recognize the uniqueness of the Arab population at all. The purpose of the law as defined at the time was “to base primary education in the country on the values of Israeli culture and scientific achievements, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and people of Israel, on training in agriculture and crafts, pioneering training, and striving for a society of freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual aid. And the Love of Humanity” (State Education Law, 1953).

This is how the government’s education policy was determined for the integration of the Arab education system, Organizationally, into the state education system, while implementing the military government mechanism, which involves the separation of the Arab, cultural, social and political education system. The

integration was ostensible, with the aim of maintaining constant control and monitoring, while the policy of separation on a national background was applied, in effect, to the Arab education system. Therefore, in an education system that was run according to an educational policy intended for the Jewish population, and functioned according to an ideology that was inappropriate and/or related to the Arab minority, this minority felt alienated and excluded at best, and at worst as an “Enemy” (Al-Haj, 1995). It was a “present absentee” in all respects, especially in education.

A separate educational system for Arabs and Jews were developed. The geographical segregation of the populations during the Military Administration era helped to widen the gap between the educational systems. One of the most salient implications of this reality has been significant differences in curricula, in the allocation of budgets, and in the provision of necessary and necessary standards in Arab educational institutions (Ministry of Education, 2009; Mi’ari, 2015).

The schools suffered from heavy infrastructure, classrooms were crowded, students studied alternately in shifts at different times during the day, sitting on crates or on the ground due to shortages of classrooms and chairs (Al-Haj, 2006). In addition, teachers were appointed according to security considerations, for example, each Arab teacher served sixty pupils while each Jewish teacher had thirty-five. Moreover, Arab teachers received roughly half the pay that Jewish teachers received.

A state education law designed to ensure freedom for all and to give equal opportunity, to every child, to develop his or her potential. The law embodies the Jewish ethnicity that seeks to deny the national identity of the Arab minority in Israel, and to strengthen the perception that this is a society without special characteristics (Arar & Ibrahim, 2016).

This underscores the policy, which is expressed in a hostile approach that sees the Arab minority as a “security risk.” To this end, the Israeli government acted to eliminate this menace by imposing full control over the Arab educational system. At the same time, there have been attempts to improve the standard of living of Arab citizens (Abu-Saad, 2011), The purpose of these attempts was to exploit the manpower and economic potential inherent in the Arab population and its unequal mobilization, in order to realize the goal—the Zionist super-fortification—to strengthen the security and economy of the State of Israel, and increase, strengthen and improve the welfare of the Jewish majority Who was the only one included in the establishment discourse in the terms “Israelis” or “state population.”. Which distinguished these attempts which were inconsistent and harmonious.

The duplication of education policy is reflected in the Compulsory Education Law of 1949. Despite the state’s monopoly on the education system and the dissemination of its policies to all citizens, Arabs and Jews. The government has not abolished the system of separation between the two education systems (Abu-Saad,

2011). The government instituted a compulsory education system, which includes eight years of compulsory schooling from the age of five to thirteen in both systems, the government undertook to recruit teachers and plan curricula, while the local authorities, who had no financial resources, were responsible for the necessary building, equipment and maintenance. The lack of adequate infrastructure in Arab schools was an obstacle to the development of the Arab education system, which also suffered from the military administration, which left its negative effects on all areas of life including the education system (Arar & Abu-Asba, 2013).

Based on this trend, which stemmed from skepticism and hostility, the goal of policymakers in state institutions was to drain Arab education from the national context in the various fields. These efforts were reflected in a secret document sent by the director of the Muslim Affairs Department to the Minister of Religions at the time, Haim Hirschberg, and afterwards to the Minister of Education:

“We need to reconsider our understanding of the Arab minority. It’s preferable for us to define them as Israeli citizens who are differentiated by religion, as Muslims, Christians of various denominations, Druze, Circasians, Greeks, and Armenians, and not only as Arabs. It’s not self-evident that they’ll learn Arabic... It’s not that we have a single problem that’s the Arabs; instead, we have a problem of different ethnic and national groups. And we have to solve this problem separately by emphasizing and strengthening the contradictions among these groups in order to weaken their Arab nature and try to eliminate it. Thus, they’ll forget that they’re Arabs and begin to know that they’re Israeli citizens of different affiliations and backgrounds” (Al-Haj, 2006: p. 98).

The issue of the identity of the Arab education system led to disagreements among governments policymakers, some advocated the idea of integrating the Arab education system within the general state education system and on the other hand, others advocated segregation and total control.

The principle of “segregate and control”, according to which the decision-makers referred to the Arab education system since the establishment of the state, was reflected through several issues and domains: the goals of Arab education, education curricula and the lack of approved textbooks compared to the Jewish educational system. The contents of the books approved for Arab education have totally denied the national feelings of the Arabs and the contribution of the Arabs in general to humanity (Abu-Saad, 2011). The Palestinian Arab poet Rashid Hussein describes the educational implications of this absence of national content:

It’s a well-known fact that someone who doesn’t respect himself won’t respect others, and someone who doesn’t have national sentiments of his own won’t respect other nations. If the Arab pupil is denied the opportunity to learn about his people, nation, and homeland in school, he’ll be sure to

make up for it from [sources] at home and in the street. He'll willingly accept everything he hears or reads in the newspapers and may therefore get a warped and incorrect understanding of his nationhood. A school that denies him the right to know everything that serves others as a source of pride will become an enemy in his own eyes. Instead of learning the true meaning of a nationhood that's flush with human sentiments, he'll learn a fake and incorrect formula. What will the school give the children then? And what graduates will emerge from the school into society? (Hussein, 1957: p. 46).

Researchers' analysis of the goals that the state wished to achieve through Arab education leads to one clear conclusion: the Israel state wanted to raise a submissive generation that accepts its inferiority to the Jews (Nasser & Nasser, 2008). The Arab education system was defined as an "education for Arabs," a definition that reflects the state's attitude toward the Arab education system (Mi'ari, 2015).

The textbooks used in Jewish schools described Arabs in a symbolic manner, as did Amos Oz in his story "Nomads and Vipers" as "Bedouin vagabonds" in 1972 depicting them as causing damage and destruction and harming human civilization. The central idea of Oz's story rests on the Holocaust that the Jews had experienced in Europe, leading them to totally deny the existence of the Palestinian people in Israel, as Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) describe:

"Most textbooks in Jewish schools disregarded the existence of the Palestinian Arab people and denied the desires of the Palestinian national movement. The Palestinians' resistance to Zionism was presented without commentary as destructive and hostile to the Jews, who, as victims of persecution, sought peace upon returning to their land" (p. 162).

Ethnic inequality has seeped deep into governments policy in all areas including the formulation of educational policy, a policy that has been determined according to security, political, economic and industrial needs. Thus, Arab children's needs were unimportant and not taken into account when education policy was made (Ghanem & Mustafa, 2009).

5.2. Education Policy in the Period of the Post-Military Administration Period (1967-1999): The "Melting Pot" Policy between Integration, Segregation and Pending Education

In 1966, when the Military Administration was dismantled, the government began to implement new strategies and use new tools to control the country's Arab minority. The socioeconomic gap between Arabs and Jews had solidified and widened during the Military Administration era. This ensured the continuation of the policy of separation and segregation by national background, because the Arab minority was economically dependent on the Jewish majority. After the Military Administration concluded its work, the integration policy underwent a minor change that had no perceptible impact. To this day, even in the mixed cities, full integration of the populations is very hard to find (Abu-Saad, 2011).

A new discourse about integration reform began after the 1967 war and the occupation of the West Bank. Reflecting the melting pot idea and policy, it sought to mitigate differences and diasporic characteristics among the Jewish immigrant groups that had reached Israel in the country's first two decades. The social and cultural differences among these groups led to a fierce public discourse that demanded an end to the separation of weak schoolchildren from strong ones (Al-Haj, 2006). As a first step toward effecting this integration, the Knesset decided to establish junior high schools and do away with comprehensive schools (grades 7 - 12). Essentially, this was a social reform that took no account of the needs of the Arab minority. Therefore, neither the Brauer Committee in 1963 nor the Rimalt Committee in 1966 addressed this minority's needs and offered no recommendations concerning it (Iuval, 2006).

The integration reform was implemented in full during the 1960s. A reorganization of the school system was carried out, so the set went from two transitional stages into three: from eight years of primary school and four years of high school to six years at the primary level, three in junior high school, and three in high school, in an attempt to require youngsters to stay in school after finishing their primary education.

The integration reform was designed for nation-building purposes and was defined, in terms of its liberal functional content, as comprising an ideology that reflected Zionist values. It viewed the state as an agent of modernization and a representative of middle-class interests.

The integration reform was far from the developments in the Arab education system. Despite the implementation of the structural change in the education system in Arab schools, they were not included in the planning of this reform (Abu-Asbah, 2007). It turned out that the process of defining educational policy is an internal Jewish matter, in which the Arab officials have no right to intervene. The integration reform, apart from the structural change in the Arab education system, has led to a minimal change in the curricula.

In the early 1970s, after the 1967 war, Zalman Aran the Minister of Education requested to undertake a review of policy toward Arab education (Al-Haj, 1995). In February 1972, an advisory committee headed by the Deputy Minister of Education, Aharon Yadlin, released a report on "Basic Trends in Arab Education," which concluded with a recommendation that the Minister agreed to implement. The report spoke of identifying new directions of action and recommended a curricular overhaul that would allow these changes to incentivize the strengthening of the Arab minority's identification with the state.

Yadlin's document was a milestone in the history of Israeli education policy towards the Arab education system. As Al-Haj explained, "The Yadlin document was important because it marked the first time public attention was directed at the singularity of Arab education and the urgent need to rephrase educational goals in a way that would be suited to Arab students" (Al-Haj, 1995: p. 140).

Nevertheless, some of the Arab leadership criticized the recommendations

proposed in the document, arguing that they strove to create “an Israeli Arab all by himself, divorced from the national and cultural roots that ineluctably tie him to the Arab and Palestinian world (Mar’i, 1978: p. 53). Following the criticism, another committee was established in 1975, to determine the needs of the Arab educational system and to formulate policy for the 1980s. This panel was headed by Matityahu Peled, a retired general and a professor of Arabic literature.

Elad Peled, former Director-General of the Ministry of Education, offered an explanation for the policy that would be adopted for the Arab educational system in the 1980s. As a co-author of this document, he stated, “The goal of state education in Israel’s Arab society is to base education on foundations of Arab culture... to love the homeland that all citizens of the state share and the allegiance of this society to the State of Israel—to emphasize everyone’s common interests while promoting excellence among Arabs in Israel” (Peled, 1992: p. 432).

Accordingly, the policy set forth in this document was based on “Arab cultural fundamentals” and “promoting excellence among Arabs in Israel.” This dichotomy re-emphasized the distancing of the Arab minority from every attempt of integration. The pairing of integration and discrimination shows that the Arab minority, as defined in state policy, is not only composed of multiple “minorities” but is also, and simply, voided of both its national and its civic identities, rendering it into a collective of Israeli citizens and Arab indigenes (Al-Haj, 2006). This duality was supported by setting different goals for each of the two educational systems, the Arab and the Jewish. The idea behind these goals was to strengthen the Jewish character of the state while solidifying the liberal perception of citizenship, without any reference to the unique character of the Arab minority (Peled, 1992).

In the 1980s, the topic of education among the Arab minority rose to a high priority, and an intense struggle began to improve the conduct of the education system and bridge the gap between Arab and Jewish schools in terms of scholastic and education services. As a result, pressure from the Arab minority to improve has increased (Al-Haj, 1994).

In 1984, the National Committee of Arab Local Authority established a Monitoring Committee on Education, whose role is to address the Arab education system, examine what is happening in it and work to compare Arab education to Hebrew education in terms of both infrastructure and quality of curricula, Educational and national. The pressure of the Arab Education Monitoring Committee on the Ministry of Education led him to adopt a strategy of establishing committees to examine the state of the Arab education system (Sarsur, 1999: p. 1064).

To changing conditions in the field of teaching and in the way of life of Arab society (Ministry of Education and Culture, Report of the Conference of Directors, 1985: p. 35). The report of the Executive Committee was welcomed by the Arab minority because it was an official recognition of the Arab minority’s struggle for equality with the Jewish majority. However, several meetings be-

tween Arab representatives and officials in the Ministry of Education did not yield a real plan of action for translating the recommendations into the language of action (Al-Haj, 1994).

Another special committee to examine the Arab educational system was established under the Committee of Directors General, the main conclusion in the report of the Committee of Directors General was that Jewish and Arab citizens should be equal in the field of education and that the gap between Arab and Jewish schools is somewhere between 20 - 25 years (Al-Haj, 1994). "To changing conditions in the field of teaching and in the way of life of Arab society" (Ministry of Education and Culture, Report of the Committee of Directors General, 1985: p. 35). The report of the Executive Committee was welcomed by the Arab minority because it was an official recognition of the Arab minority's struggle for equality with the Jewish majority. However, several meetings between Arab representatives and officials in the Ministry of Education did not yield a real action plan for translating the recommendations into action (Al-Haj, 1994).

During the Rabin-Peres government (1992-1996), there was a real turning point in the government's treatment of the Arab minority. The change stemmed not only from the more liberal approach taken by this government but from a political constraint, which stemmed from Rabin's inability to form a coalition without the support of Arab Knesset members.

In 1992, with the beginning of peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel, contradictions began to appear in the state's attitude toward the Arab minority living within it. Israel's recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, along with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, bolstered the civic side of the identity of the Arab minority in Israel and weakened its bond with the Palestinians in the territories. For the first time, the Ministry of Education changed the order of priorities in its budget in favor of affirmative budgetary preference for the Arab education system.

Instead of the peace process playing a crucial role in securing fully equal rights for the Arab minority in Israel, subsequent years saw the emergence of a phenomenon of "dual marginality" (Al-Haj, 2005). Parties on the Israeli Right began to delegitimize the existence of the Arab minority in the state, which reinforced the sense of frustration and emphasized the contradiction and inherent tension in the state's character between its definition as a Jewish people and a democratic state.

In light of these conflicts, Jewish and Arab academics began probing contradictions in the very definition of the state, and raised proposals that would redefine Israel as "the state of all its citizens" (Ghanem & Mustafa, 2009). This encouraged the Arab minority to demand cultural, educational, institutional, and national autonomy (Arar & Abu-Asbe, 2013). These demands had effects in various domains, particularly in the quest to achieve full autonomy of the Arab education system in order to strengthen the identity of the Arab minority in terms of their national culture (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2010).

The unequal, accelerating integration of Arabs into the labor market after the dismantlement of the Military Administration (1966), and the self-connection of the Arab minority in Israel with the Palestinians in the West Bank after 1967 influenced the new methods of accommodation and exclusion that were adopted. The strengthening of national sentiments among the Arab minority further underscored the difference between Arabs and Jews in the labor market. As the power of the civic aspect of the Arabs' identity grew, Arabs became increasingly cognizant of Jewish society and concurrently learned to distinguish themselves, in terms of perception and looking, from the Palestinians in the occupied territories. More important, daily interaction with the Jewish population showed the Arab minority how different its level of education was relative to that of the Jews. Here the blurring of borders between Arab nationhood and Israeli citizenship came into clearer view.

5.3. Education Policy after the “Al-Aqsa Events” in the Period 2000-2017 from a Policy of Exclusion and Segregation to a Policy of Recognition and Integration

In 2000, as part of the “Al-Aqsa events”, the Israeli police killed 13 Arab civilians, the gap in relations between Arabs and Jews widened and government's policies of exclusion and discrimination toward the Arab minority worsened. With this background, a group of Arab intellectuals convened and wrote a “future vision” document. The paper proposed a binational solution based on four underlying principles: establishment of a broad coalition of political representatives of different nationalities; both sides sharing the power of veto; increasing the relative representation of the Arab minority in political institutions and economic and social self-administration; and each group enjoying full independence and autonomy in managing its internal institutions and affairs. The Government—only after these events—started a development program meant to narrow the disparities between Arabs and Jews in all areas of life. Several initiatives took shape in this context, such as establishing bilingual schools that accelerate educational encounters between the populations. In 2003, however, due to a cut-back in the investment part of the state budget, the process of improving and developing the infrastructure of the Arab educational system sustained a serious blow.

The Orr Commission, investigating the “Al-Aqsa events” noted the years of discrimination against the Arab minority, foremost in land allocation, municipal budgeting, and the Arab educational system (infrastructure and employment). In this context, the panel found that the Arab educational system was short of 1,500 classrooms and reported that the proportion of Arabs holding matriculation certificates in 2005 was 38.8 percent as against 58.4 percent among Jews, even though the rate had been rising. The Arab dropout rate was more than twice as high as the Jewish one and Arabs accounted for only 9 percent of higher education enrollment despite upward movement. The Government took action to thwart the establishment of a separate university for the Arab minority, re-

sulting in the rejection of Arab candidates for Israeli universities and colleges. The universities' rejection rate of Arab candidates was 45 percent as against 15 percent of Jewish candidates (Arar & Mustafa, 2011). This forced Arab students, to attend universities abroad (Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2016).

The Orr Committee noted that the lack of collective rights for the Arab minority and the lack of recognition of the minority leadership are a source of tension between the minority and the majority, but the committee did not propose to promote such rights other than representing the Arabs' cultural identity in public space. In what was arguably a positive outcome of the "Orr Commission report", the role and involvement of the General Security Service in the educational system, which had fomented resentment and distrust in the educational system among the Arab minority, was reduced.

In February 2000, there was a positive development in the state's official attitude to Arab education through a redefinition of the goals of education (section 2 of the State Education Law). The roots of the amendment lie in trying to adapt the old educational goals to today's reality and reach common goals for all three streams in the state education system: general state education, state-religious education and Arab education, taking into account the needs of each sector. This bill has undergone a long process of formulation and was finally approved by the 13th Knesset. In 2000, Amendment No. 6 was added, this section included an amendment to Subsection 11 which stated that "the unique language, culture, history, heritage and tradition of the Arab population and other population groups in the State of Israel must be recognized, and the equal rights of all Israeli citizens recognized" (Amendment in subsection 11 of the *State Education Law, 1953*).

Despite the change in the state education law, no deliberate and significant effort has been made to change the curricula for Arab schools so that they reflect the cultural, historical and status of the Arabic language. Reference to this can be found in a report submitted to the Knesset on the situation of Arab children in Israel in 2004 as well as in a document from the Ministry of Education summarizing three years of activity of the educational vision between the years 2001-2004 (Abu-Saad, 2006).

Many reports that focused on the two educational systems, the Arab and the Jewish, shed light on the disparities between them, the Arab system's poor achievements on international exams, total administrative failure at all levels, inefficient and unequal utilization of allocated education resources, and rising violence in Arab schools (Dovrat, 2005). These reports led to a comprehensive study that tested the path between integrating the two educational systems and giving the Arab system administrative autonomy. Many saw the new liberal discourse as speaking in contradictory voices (Khoury et al., 2013). In its report, the Dovrat Commission recommended *de jure* recognition of a specific educational "stream" for the Arab minority because "there is a nation, a language and, a unique and different way of life." Concurrently, however, "Despite the contrast between the two, both the separate Arab heritage and the imperative of full

loyalty to the State of Israel should find expression” (Dovrat, 2005: p. 218). The commission deferred discussion of the question of the kind of administrative autonomy for the Arab educational system. The report issued a clear warning on this topic, headed “The Status of Arab Education within State Education.”

According to the Dovrat report, there was no incompatibility between the goals of Arab education and those of general public education as long as certain additions would be incorporated into the law, including “the advancement and consolidation of the Arabs’ personal and collective identity as an educational, spiritual, and social foundation for their full integration into Israeli society and the Jewish and democratic state, [and] recognition of the Arab culture, the Arabic language, and the history of the Arab people” (Dovrat, 2005: p. 218).

The duality was clear: the right of the Arab minority to emphasize its attributes and strengthen its identity in the educational system would be recognized, but it would have to attain the state’s general educational objectives, intended for Jews. The reference to administrative autonomy was essentially symbolic. The recommendation in this regard—naming Arab representatives and advisors to the Minister of Education’s advisory board—did not amount, in practice, to turning a new leaf in relations between the state and the Arab minority; instead, it concerned institutional arrangements that were meant to continue applying the principle of control.

The Dovrat Commission proposed two reforms that had a reorganizational effect on the Israeli educational system at large—“New Horizon,” proposed by the Ministry of Education, and “Courage to Change,” advanced by the National Teachers Organization (Mi’ari, 2015). These reforms were the outcomes of the work of several committees composed of education policymakers and researchers who sought to define the goals of Arab education in Israel (Abu-Saad, 2006).

Likewise, the report did not address the implications of the policy of discrimination suffered by the Arab education system for decades in terms of low investment and content far removed from the cultural and national context of the Arab minority. The Monitoring Committee’s announcement presented three basic points that reflect difficulties related to the goals of the Arab educational system: 1) the ongoing controversy about formulating education policy about the Arab educational system in light of the view of the Arabs as a hostile minority that must constantly demonstrate its loyalty; 2) linkage of the matter of the Arab public’s “absolute loyalty” to the universal right to education, with the demand for loyalty evoked as a parallel to this right; and 3) as stated in reference to the goals of Arab education and the requirements expressed in the Dovrat report, “The Arab population should participate in improving the status of its education by assuming responsibility for their education” (Abu-Asbah, 2007: p. 4).

The new liberal discourse reflected in the Dovrat report portrayed the State of Israel in two contrasting forms: a strong country that imposes its control on the Arab educational system and is responsible for their achievements and for the low economic status of the Arab minority, and that has the task of studying the

trends, perceptions, and national tendencies of the Arab students; and then, as a weak country that privatizes public services and evades its responsibility for social welfare. The Arab minority shouldered the burden of both forms of this policy.

The Dovrat report was greeted with various and clashing voices among the Arab leadership. Some saw the privatization trend as an opportunity to be rid of state control; others construed it as the abdication of state responsibility for social welfare, aggravating a larger crisis—the dire condition of the local authorities, verging on collapse—that was reflected foremost in education (Arar & Abu-Asbe, 2013).

In the midst of this reality, the Arab minority in Israel tried to put forward alternative proposals and programs that might relieve it of the state's absolute domination. For example, the Supreme Monitoring Committee for Arab Education Affairs proposed recommendations aimed at advancing Arab students' cultural and national identity. In this context, in 2007, before announcing a strike designed to raise consciousness about the declining state of Arab education, representatives of the committee met with the Minister of Education, Professor Yuli Tamir, and expressed their displeasure with the neglect, exclusion, and ongoing discrimination that they were facing (Kashti, 2013). The meeting led, for the first time, to the formation of several committees composed jointly of representatives of the Monitoring Committee and the Ministry of Education for the purpose of reviewing the status of Arab education and recommending improvements. One of these the committees, the building committee, proposed the construction of 8600 classrooms by 2012 as a crucial step toward mitigating the deficiencies in the Arab educational system and narrowing its gaps relative to the Jewish system. Another panel looked into Arab students' achievements on national and international exams and found them only half as high as those of their Jewish peers; what is more, the percent entitled to matriculation certificates or graduation diplomas from quality high schools was much lower among Arab than among Jewish students, creating a hurdle to university enrollment (see Table 2). Accordingly, the committee recommended improving the quality of teaching of the Arabic language, Arabic literature, and mathematics, and the creation of a mechanism that would assure the provision of more competent and effective education. Another committee, tasked with examining learning disorders in the Arab educational system and finding ways to cope with them, found a shortage of educational counselors, psychologists, and didactic evaluators. The only committee that refused to submit a joint document and recommendations was the one that examined the educational contents of the Arab schools' curricula.

The Ministry of Education was adopted the recommendation calling for improvements in teaching Arabic language and literature the highest priority, along with improving math teaching and Arab students' achievements generally. It absolved itself of responsibility for the Monitoring Committee's other recommendations, realizing that they amounted to explicit recognition of the Arab minority's historical and cultural narrative and its full and meaningful participation. In this spirit, the Monitoring Committee announced the establishment of a

professional educational council that would tackle the problems of the Arab educational system, including the content of the curricular materials and the need to reorganize the system, formulate a specific education policy, and tailor curricula to the Arab minority's aspirations—all of which was based on The histories mentioned, the moral, and legal right of the Arab minority in Israel to collective rights both in all areas and in the field of education in particular, which include equal participation in the hegemony as well as the right to political and material compensation for the suffering and injustice caused to them. This is because it is a native minority, a distinct national, cultural, religious and linguistic group (Abu-Asbah, 2007). The Minister of Education, now Gideon Saar, disavowed these recommendations, thus leaving Arab education “on hold” (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2010).

In August 2008, the Minister of Education at the time, Yuli Tamir, appointed “a public committee for the formulation of state policy on education for a shared life between Arabs and Jews” chaired by Gabriel Salomon and Muhammad Issawi. The committee was tasked with proposing an educational policy on this issue for the entire education system in Israel. After reviewing the situation of relations between Arabs and Jews, the committee determined in a January 2009 report that the reality emerging from it “threatens to disintegrate the fragile fabric of life between Jews and Arabs...” and [threatens the stability of Israeli society”. Therefore, the committee determined that the education system is obligated to be a central partner in leading a turnaround in relations between the two populations in order to put them on a path of partnership. For the implementation of the policy and its goals, the Salomon-Issawi Committee recommended, among other things, that the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the local authorities, third sector and business organizations and other government ministries, be responsible for promoting education for a shared life between Jews and Arabs. Education for this subject will take place throughout the educational continuum in three circles: knowledge, school culture and personal and group experiential experience. The subject should be included in subjects such as homeland, society and citizenship and conveyed through meetings between Jews and Arabs and the study of the Arab language and culture in all schools. Although the management of the Ministry of Education received the report, it was shelved. An action that can strengthen the assumption that the policy of separation and exclusion still characterizes the policy of the Ministry of Education towards the Arab education system.

In July 2010, the Supreme Monitoring Committee for Arab Education Affairs announced the formation of the Arab Pedagogical Council. In its statement, it expressed the entitlement of the Arab minority, as an indigenous one, to preserve its heritage and its national identity and to determine its education policy and its contents on its own (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2010). Further justification for the creation of the Council was the demand that the Arab educational system be granted equal status as the state religious system and the haredi system, both of which enjoyed curricular autonomy. The Monitoring Committee stressed that

setting up an autonomous Arab educational system was not a manifestation of separatism but the opposite: it reflected integration and expressed the collective identity of the Arab minority in an ongoing relationship with the State, emphasizing commonality and aspiring to create an inclusive civic culture in Israel.

In October 2011, the Supreme Monitoring Committee published the goals of the Arab Pedagogical Council in a document titled “Goals of Education and Teaching of the Arab Minority in Israel.” The principal aims enumerated in this document included enhancing Arab students’ proficiency in Arabic as a language that expresses identity and belonging and as a vehicle for the creation of communication, culture and research; strengthening national identity among Arab students such that it would be based on “cohesion among members of the Palestinian people, reinforcement of the Palestinian memory and narrative, adherence to the historical and political rights of the Palestinian people, and cultural, religious, and social pluralism;” and encouraging Arab students to maintain a constructive dialogue with the other—the Israeli Jew—from the perspective of shared life in one homeland, cooperation, equality, and mutual respect (Rudnitzky, 2015: p. 96).

The approach adopted by the Ministry of Education is unequal integration of the Arab minority, and not given educational autonomy. In the case of the Arab Pedagogical Council, although the initiators of its establishment stressed that it would operate within the Ministry of Education, the state did not cooperate and did not recognize the Monitoring Committee for Arab Education Affairs.

In the “Future Vision” documents published in 2016 by a group of Arab intellectuals in Israel under the auspices of a committee of heads of local Arab authorities in which it is claimed that Israel is an ethnocracy that guarantees the hegemony of the majority and the marginalization of the minority, by placing democracy at the service of the Jewish character of the state. The first and central chapter of the document, which dealt with the relations of the Arab citizens with the state, made an explicit claim to recognize the Arab population as a national minority entitled to collective rights, including the right to establish representative national institutions. It also included the proposal to change the regime in the State of Israel to a regime of “Consociational Democracy”, which is a type of bi-national regime (Rekhess, 2008).

Since the publication of the document “Future Vision”, the worsening of the tension between the State of Israel and the Arab minority living within it is evident. In light of this situation, the various Israeli governments have adopted a dialectical policy towards the Arab minority, which is based on two main principles, seemingly opposite, but in fact, which complement each other and create a uniform strategic logic: In one axis, the various governments worked, both actively and with silent backing, to exclude the Arab minority from the political and cultural field in Israel; In the second axis, the governments took a series of actions to integrate the Arab population into the Israeli economy. However, the strategic purpose remains the same: the establishment of the public-civil space in Israel as a space of absolute Jewish dominance. Moreover, the place of the effort

to integrate educated Arabs into the Israeli establishment and bureaucracy, which characterized the seventies of the last century, was replaced in the last decade by the effort to integrate the Arab minority into the Israeli economy. This time, too, the strategic purpose remained the same—creating a space through which the Arab population could develop, while dimming the main meaning derived from the course of its political exclusion.

The protest events that befell Arab society in 2015 raised a question mark about the connection between the protest undertaken by the young Arabs and the policy pattern adopted since 2009 by the Israeli governments towards the Arab minority. More specifically, the question that arose is to what extent can the protest of the Arab minority be seen as an expression of explicit displeasure with the government policy adopted towards it in the last decade?

The disparities between the Arab and the Jewish educational systems continued to exist, and were reflected in significant gaps in the shortage of buildings, classrooms, laboratories and sports halls. In a report published in 2017 on the basis of Ministry of Education data, the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies noted the persistence of very large budget disparities between the systems. According to a study prepared by the Knesset Research and Information Center in 2015, in the most disadvantaged group at the primary level of education—the one in which most Arab pupils are placed (62 percent), compared to only 6 percent of Jewish pupils—a Jewish pupil receives 24 percent more in annual budgeting than does an Arab pupil (Weininger, 2015: pp. 5-6).

In conclusion, it can be seen that the professional literature, which discusses the education policy in relation to the Arab minority in Israel, starts from an approach of patterns of control of the majority over the minority. This approach centers on the limited ability of the Arabs to use tools for united political action to protect their interests, and to develop autonomous centers of power in various fields, as well as in education. The state's control over Arab education has created, according to Arab academics and educators, the emptying of Arab education of any Arab national content, emphasizing the message that Arabs must obey the rules established by the Jewish majority and which are in line with the basic national ideology of the state. The education system served as a channel for transmitting this ideology, while Jewish control of the administration, personnel, resources and content of the Arab education system.

5.4. Education Policy after the “Nationality Law” in the Period between 2018-2022 Policy of Strengthening Segregation and Discrimination on Ethnic Grounds

In 2018, the “Nationality Law” passed in the Knesset. This is a nationalist and racist law that marks anyone who is not Jewish as a second-class citizen in the State of Israel. The general message that emerges from the law is that the state belongs to Jews only, with a blatant violation of the rights of minorities. The law is not at all about democracy or commitment to human rights, and in fact, it grossly violates the balance established in the definition of the state as Jewish and

democratic. Although the Arabs make up more than 21% of the citizens in Israel and are a native minority, the law does not recognize their most basic right to language. In this, there is a violation not only of the rights of the Arabs to language and culture, but also the possibility of managing their lives and exercising their rights.

In the near term, the effect of the law is more declarative, but the law will have long-term consequences on the status of the Arabs in Israel and will lead to the strengthening of segregation and discrimination on an ethno-national basis.

In 2021, against the backdrop of the tensions at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, severe clashes developed between the police and young Arabs in Israel who demonstrated in identification with Al-Aqsa, the demonstrations intensified and reached high levels of violence between Jews and Arabs in the cities involved. These events flooded the Arabs' feelings of rage and indignation at the long-standing discriminatory policies of the Israeli governments. Strengthen and deepen the state's policy of security control over the Arabs and especially over the Arab education system that is an important tool of control (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Jewish-Arab disparities in education, preschool through university, caused by Israel government Policies, 2020-2021.

Area of Comparison	Jewish population	Arab population	
Population under age 17	2,173,000	735,000	
Percent of children registered before preschool at age 2	61.3	13.7	
Percent of children enrolled in preschool at age 4	93.3	82.8	
Percent of children enrolled in preschool at age 5	97.5	94.5	
Average class size, primary schools (represented by the number closest to the true figure)	26.5	26.7	
Percent of special needs children who do not receive appropriate medical care	39	71	
School dropout rate, age 9 - 18	1.9	4.2	
School dropout rate, age 6 - 12	2.1	3.5	
Percent eligible for matriculation certificate that satisfies minimum university admission requirements	73.1	63.9	
Percent of undergraduate students in higher education institutions	81.7	18.3	
Percent of master's degree students in higher education institutions	85.4	14.6	
Percent of Ph.D students in higher education institutions	96.1	3.9	
Percent applying for first-year university studies and rejected	23.4	40.9	
Percent of population aged 18 - 34 attending all higher education institutes and studying for bachelor's degree	9.6	7.3	
Percent of population aged 18 - 34 attending university and studying for master's degree	2.1	1.4	
	Bachelor's	88.0	12.0
Percent of degree holders from all higher-education institutes	Master's	89.8	10.2
	Ph.D.	95.9	4.1

Source: CBS, 2020/2021 (No. 60).

The data in the **Table 2** show the results of Israeli government policies toward the Arab educational system and demonstrate that the system is “on hold.” On the one hand, the Arab system has been waiting for equal attention to that of the Jewish system ever since the state was established in 1948. On the other hand, it is waiting for Arab local authorities and the “third sector” (nongovernmental organizations) to intervene by providing programs and initiatives that would improve matters. Thus, the Arab educational system remains in a situation of accepting the disparities in its affiliation with and inferiority to the Jewish system.

It should be noted that the consequences of the nationality law and events in 2021 are manifested at the beginning of a process characterized by the strengthening of control, separation, alienation, hostility and the phenomena of institutionalized racism, especially this is clear in the change in the state’s security attitude towards the Arab population, an attitude that will strengthen the policy of discrimination and control in the Arab education system.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study looked into main and basic areas of change in the education policy adopted toward the Arab educational system in Israel from 1948 to 2022. Although favorable developments and major and basic focal points of change were described, the Arab educational system has remained under full state control for decades and its situation has not improved. This policy reflects hostility, discrimination, skepticism, and suspicion toward the Arab minority in Israel—a policy that has restricted the minority’s role in making its own education policy.

The above discussion and the various studies and documents written on the education policies of Israeli governments over the years indicate a basic assumption that, over the years, the government and state institutions have not had a cohesive and declared educational policy toward Arabs in Israel. Contrary to this view, the article showed that even if there was no cohesive educational policy formulated in an orderly manner, from a historical perspective one can identify an educational policy different from that of the educational policy towards the Jews. This historical perspective makes it possible to identify several practical, clear and consistent policies that the various establishment bodies have adopted towards the Arab education system, and which are reflected in the various documents and studies written mainly by Arab researchers and which state that the State of Israel had ambitions for the re-socialization of the Arab citizens, in order to weaken their Palestinian identity and strengthen their Israeli identity. This is most significantly evident in the contents of the curricula. Its goals and emphases do not reflect the national-cultural identity of the Arab minority and do not adequately express its unique needs and characteristics. In addition, the education system for Arabs in Israel is indeed conducted in the Arabic language, but as mentioned, it has never been treated as an independent system or as having legitimacy in participating in the design of the public education system in Israel.

Arabs in Israel do not have control over their education both structurally and administratively and in terms of content, and they do not hold key positions among the decision-makers in public education in Israel. Therefore, similar to other indigenous minorities in the world, they strive for control and independence in their education system and for expression of their unique characteristics in the various curricula.

The Arab minority in Israel has not been given administrative autonomy, control, or even participation in defining its educational goals and the curricula that its schools are to implement. The curricula used in the Arab educational system remain separate and different from those in the Jewish system. Despite this divide, the Pedagogical Secretariat at the Ministry of Education continues to dictate the Arab system's contents and curricula, making scanty reference to the Palestinian narrative and preferring the selective and precise choice of a narrative determined by Jewish educators and researchers. This narrative is often presented in such a way that its goal is to blur the Palestinian identity of the Arab minority and replace it with a general, inchoate, and non-specific international identity.

As stated, the Israeli policy toward the Arab educational system originates in fear, skepticism, distrust, and the underlying assumption that the Arab minority is fundamentally hostile to the State. The primary goal of this policy to strengthen its Jewishness from the national standpoint, a goal that clashes with its consent to give the Arab minority national and cultural representation, a cause that evokes concern among decision-makers. The result is a policy of marginalization, isolation, and control, reflected in budgetary inequality, representational inequality in the supervision and management of the education system and inequality in the educational content and curricula.

As a consequence of the above, government policies and the value of civic equality—the cornerstone of any democratic system—have been clashing and inconsistent. In addition, there has been no attempt whatsoever to take affirmative action that would compensate society's vulnerable sectors for some of the injustices that they have faced over the years. By emphasizing positive developments in the Arab educational system, one merely presents an optimistic view of the real picture, which reflects the gaps between the two systems.

Despite the auspicious developments and trends that it has seen, the Arab educational system in Israel, especially in the past ten years, still faces many challenges and disparities that need to be narrowed, both relative to the Jewish educational system and relative to the needs of the changing and evolving Arab population as reflected in the exigencies of the Israeli economy.

The policy that was introduced to mitigate inequality between the Arab and the Jewish educational systems came about in response to, or as the inevitable result of, the existing situation. The effects of this policy have been short-term and confined to limited fields, such as building classrooms and technical changes in the curriculum. These actions are inadequate.

Although over the years there has been, among the Arab minority in Israel, a positive trend towards integration into Israeli society, a phenomenon that requires in-depth research. There is an urgent need to draw up a comprehensive government policy over the years, from the perspective of civic equality as a basis for integration in all areas, while understanding that it will lead to beneficial outcomes for society as a whole and the State of Israel. A policy based on a full understanding of the singularity of the Arab minority in Israel in terms of values, culture and social problems.

Seventy years after the State of Israel was established, the challenge that it and the Arab educational system face involve not only ensuring larger budgets but also in the realm of substantive equality of opportunity and leading real changes in the substantive and content field. The better the curricula in the Arab system are adapted to the students' culture, the more Arab society will be able to realize the full potential of its human resources, for the benefit not only of the Arab population but to the Israeli economy and society at large.

The main problems that exist in the Arab education system are the issue of the identity and status of the Arab minority in the country and the ignoring of the historical narrative of this minority that leads to emptiness and meaninglessness in the education system. In order to bring about an optimal integration of the Arab minority in society, employment and the economy in Israel, there is an urgent need to give adequate representation to the Arab minority in the management of the Ministry of Education, so that they may be partners in defining the educational goals and the academic content that will be taught in the Arab schools, to establish an autonomous administrative department that will allow this minority to manage itself, and maintain full budget equality.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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