Integrating Bedouin Children into a Kibbutz Kindergarten: Maintaining Genuine Co-Existence or Preserving the Old Order?

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Abstract

Bedouin early childhood education lacks substantial resources and budgets, and so the adjacent Jewish education seems more appealing. Given the existing tensions between Arabs and Jews and the need to change the obscure future of co-existence, this paper examines the integration of Bedouin children into the early childhood education of a kibbutz, and the attitudes of the Jewish parents toward this integration. Fifteen Jewish parents whose children attend the kibbutz kindergarten were interviewed individually, and content analysis was performed on the interview transcripts. Findings show that the interviewees had positive attitudes toward the educational integration, which they expected would promote coexistence. However, there was clear evidence of a patronizing attitude toward the Bedouin children, who were perceived as the beneficiaries of the integration and not as legitimate partners. Genuine future integration should initiate programs in order to close gaps in general, and gaps in education in particular, by allocating finances and resources to developing infrastructure and services, so that choosing Jewish education will be on an ideological basis, and not for considerations of receiving a better education.

Keywords*: Cultural capital; Israeli education system; early childhood; Bedouin; kibbutz.*

Introduction

Israel is home to a variety of cultures, communities, and ethnic groups. Thus, there is great variance among its citizens in terms of language, behavioral norms and social patterns. However, different Jewish groups share a common denominator: Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people. On the other hand, there are also groups of non-Jewish citizens, most of whom belong to one of the Arab sector groups (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2012).

In Israel's deeply divided society, the Jewish-Arab division is the harshest and most complex. Their relations are characterized by prejudice, mistrust, paranoia and essential differences in concepts and values (Maor, 2012).

The relationship between the two groups is fraught with stereotypical and reciprocally negative perceptions (Zamir, 2012). Due to political events, since the early 20th century and in light of the third intifada, the relations between these two groups have been exceptionally tense and characterized by alienation, rejection and insensitivity (Salomon and Issawi, 2009) that threatens future coexistence.

A significant part of the tensions between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority derives from the very definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. On the one hand, as a democratic regime, Israel is committed to all its citizens, regardless of their national or ethnic origin. It grants Israeli Arabs individual rights and certain collective rights and allows them to fight for their rights within the law. On the other hand, Israel is defined as a Jewish state,

which is manifested in symbols, legislation and politics, and this makes Arab Israeli citizens feel excluded and alienated (Maoz et al, 2002).

To understand present rifts and, mainly, to avoid future conflict, cultural disagreements must be understood, and cultures must be recognized as well as acknowledged. Thus, similarly to Huntington's prophecy (1993) Israel, as a western nation may lose predominance if it fails to recognize the irreconcilable nature of cultural tensions.

The Bedouin of the Negev -unique population among Palestinian Arabs in Israel

The Bedouin are an indigenous people of the Negev desert in southern Israel, referred to by themselves as the Naqab. They are a semi-nomadic community that historically engaged in animal herding and grazing and agriculture. They mainly identify as Palestinian Arabs but use the term Bedouin to refer to their nomadic way of life (Minority Rights Group International, 2018). Today, some 300,000 Bedouin citizens of Israel live in the Naqab, in three types of location: government-planned townships, recognized villages, and unrecognized villages (Online database Life characteristics of Bedouin society in the Negev, 2022) accounting for approximately one third of the population in the region. Generally speaking, Negev Bedouin are part of Israel's Arab-Muslim minority and share their interests and concerns. At the same time, with a unique history and culture, they constitute a subgroup with a distinct set of challenges and changes. Today there are three major issues affecting Bedouin society which is actually considered by far Israel's most disadvantaged community (i) large economic gaps (ii) internal dilemmas around modernization and (iii) an ongoing land dispute with the state.

The Bedouins, who constitute an indigenous community and are Israeli citizens, claim land rights based on customary and formal laws, possession, and cultivation for generations. By contrast, Israel, turning to formalistic and questionable interpretations of Ottoman and British statutes. Moreover, Israel maintains that they invaded unlawfully empty and "dead" (mawat) state land (Kedar, Amara & Yiftachel, (2018).

The argument that the Israeli polity is governed not by a democratic regime, but rather by an "ethnocracy," which denotes a non-democratic rule for and by a dominant ethnic group, beyond its borders and within the state especially towards the Bedouin, is vastly expressed by Yiftachel, (2006). Ethnicity rather than citizenship constitutes the main criterion for distributing power and resources. The recent Jewish Nation-State' Law passed in July 2018 further enshrines and reinforces that dialectical that core contradiction between democracy and ethnocracy.

The regime subtype "settling ethnocracy" stresses the ethnic settlement project as a constitutive element of the regime and its meta-project of seizing and controlling a contested territory. Israeli geography textbooks further enhance this "settling ethnocracy". Peled-Elhanan (2012) determines that the basis of geography schoolbooks is based on Zionist ideology, which denotes as a given that Israel is the land of the Jewish people who have rightfully resettled it. The term multimodal is used in this book to demonstrate the various ways in which geography transmits meaning to children such as through maps, diagrams, text, images and photographs. Peled-Elhanan's analysis argues that manipulation of maps and their subsequent power is well noted by through the depiction of land size as well as place names. The recurring use of the terms Samaria and Judea instead of the actual 'West Bank' on maps in Israeli school books further emphasises the underlying aim (p123). The Chapter concludes that through the

use of these multimodal tools, 'Geography school books teach Jewish Israeli students to see themselves as masters of the Land of Israel/Palestine, to control its population, its landscape and its space, and to do whatever necessary to increase Jewish domination and its 'development' which really means its expansion' (p136).

Through the years, Israel has been committed, in planning and practice, to the urbanization of the Bedouins into a small number of satellite towns. Since this runs counter to the wish of many Bedouins for a rural lifestyle and control over lands, growing mobilization and resistance among the Bedouins have produced alternative planning, thus creating a planning deadlock. This has caused the emergence of widespread urban informality and growing ethnic conflicts in the northern Negev. Dozens of spontaneous Arab localities evolved, characterized by tin shacks, cabins, or tents maintaining the practice "Sumud" (Attachment to land). Most of these spontaneous localities are denied basic infrastructure and services such as electricity, running water, constituting Israel's largest marginal and deprived community (Yiftachel, 2006). Because of the low social status of most urbanizing Arabs, and despite their promise of modernization, the planned towns quickly evolved into pockets of deprivation, unemployment, dependency, crime, and social tensions (Abu Saad 2007). The Bedouin spatial isolation with little opportunities for local mobility or development, are driven towards creative solutions as seeking better education and hence, prospects for their children.

The Israeli education system: Separate paths for Jews and Arabs
The cultural-geographic separation between Arabs and Jews in Israel is also reflected in the education system, and, except in rare cases, Jewish and Arab students attend separate K-12 institutions. In fact, the only commonly shared

framework for Jewish and Arab students is found in higher education (Majid, 1998).

Israel's Arab-Palestinian minority is morally and legally entitled to comprehensive collective rights in general, and to collective educational rights in particular, due to its status as a native minority group and a distinct natural, cultural, religious and linguistic community (Abu-Asbah, 2007). One of the social systems dealing with the complexity of the cultural variance is education. In fact, the separation between the Jewish and the Arab education tracks already existed during the British mandate over Palestine, in terms of structures, supervision over teacher training, etc. and this has continued to exist since the establishment of the State of Israel.

The Israeli education system has dealt with the dilemma of whether education policy should strive for unity, regardless of the differences between the population groups in the country, or whether it should allow full expression of the differences between them (Bar-Tal and Zoltek, 1989). When the State of Israel was established, a conflict arose between the expectations of the Palestinian population in Israel and those of the Israeli establishment regarding the Arab education system. The Palestinians sought to use education as a catalyst for social empowerment and change, whereas the Israeli establishment used it as a means of controlling the Arab population. According to Al-Haj (2003), he Israeli establishment upheld a policy of expanding Arab education while making 'security considerations' a top priority, thereby draining Arab education of any national Arab content and inserting contents which legitimize the ideology of the state. Arab teachers suffered greatly from the 'long arm' of the establishment and its oppressive policies and security clearance requirements, which afforded it strict supervision and full control over them (Miari and Diab, 2005).

In view of the above, the state policy toward Arab education was based on administrative and sectorial separation, with Jewish control over administration, personnel recruitment, resources, and teaching content. The Arab education system became the channel through which the ideology of the dominant Jewish majority was very often transmitted (Al-Haj, 2003; Shilon et al, 2021). In Arab schools, the medium of instruction is Arabic, most of the teachers and some of the principals are Arab. Arab education is supervised by a special department in the Israeli Ministry of Education and is therefore organized by way of separation and subordination; although a separate Arab education system exists, it is subordinate to an organizational unit mostly directed by Jews (Peres and Yuval-Davis, 1970).

An examination of the statistical data for the Arab and the Jewish education systems reveals great educational gaps between them. There are two major reasons for this: a. the starting points of both systems are not equal, and educational policies do not actually aim to reduce any gaps. An obvious example of this are the meager resources allocated to the Arab education system; b. Arab teachers, parents and students have low expectations for themselves. According to Swirski (1991), "low communal expectations apparently derive from a negative estimation of the chances of achieving social promotion through education, due to the Arabs' low socio-economic status and the lack of government education and employment policies which might lead to higher expectations" (Swirski, 1991, p. 68).

Since Israel was established, Arab education has gradually expanded. The number of schools in Arab settlements has grown, and the growing population fills them. However, despite the impressive growth of the number of Arab students, the rate of those who refrain from going to school, especially among

the girls, is still distinctively higher than the equivalent rate in the Jewish population. The level of the education in both systems is also unequal; not only do fewer Arab students attend high school, but also only few of them pass the matriculation exams. Most Arab students attend schools located in Arab towns and villages. The schools are closed on the various religions' weekly days of rest and on their holidays. Nevertheless, the state education system responsible for the Arab sector plays a major role in shaping Arab students' identities (Abu-Asba et al, 2011; Peres and Yuval-Davis, 1970).

The differences between the Jewish and Arab sectors lie in the participation rates at the various levels, in the resources allocated to them, and in the students' achievements. Kindergarten attendance rates for ages 3-4 in the Jewish sector in 1994 and 1998 were 95% and 99% respectively, compared to 44% and 71% respectively for those same years in the Arab sector. Regarding resources, since the founding of the state, Arab classrooms have been even more overcrowded than in the Jewish sector. To conclude, it is safe to say that alongside certain achievements in gap reduction in terms of inputs and attendance rates in primary and secondary education, there are still significant gaps in the rates of matriculation certificate eligibility and of participation in higher education (Kopp, 2000).

The tension between social and national unification and preserving the cultural ethos of various groups has been part of the system for many years. In the early decades of the state, the tendency leaned towards unification, but in recent decades the policy has been shifting towards pluralism, while still preserving and nurturing common denominators held by the education hegemony (Yogev, 2001). Even though we see a positive trend in that the Israeli education system has been undergoing some innovative changes in terms of acknowledging the

various cultures composing it, Israeli society still has not given up all the oppressive practices.

Early childhood education

There is considerable evidence among child development experts that the years from birth to age 5 are viewed as a vital phase for developing the foundations for thinking, behaving, and emotional well-being. Child development experts indicate it is during these years that children develop linguistic, cognitive, emotive, and skills that predict their later functioning as adults (Trawick-Smith, 2014). Early childhood constitutes the impressionable years for future socialization. It is one of the important keys to a successful life, and when it comes to a minority population such as Arab society in Israel, it is even more important, because education paves the way to social and economic mobility, perceptual autonomy, personal satisfaction, and civic awareness (Almog, 2010).

Both the Jewish and the Arab education systems reflect the heterogeneous nature of Israeli society. This division gives the state education system the semblance of adapting to cultural variance and pluralism in education. However, despite Israeli society's heterogeneity, its education system is still mono-cultural rather than multicultural. The curriculum developed for Arab schools tends to blur and dull the creation of an Arab identity, rather than strengthen it, (Abu-Sa'ad, 2007). While there is no legally instituted segregation in the education system – Arabs can attend Jewish schools and vice versa — the vast majority of Arabs attend Arabic schools, as Jews attend Jewish schools. This dual system is not forced upon anyone, but rather reflects the divergent needs and characteristics of two segments of the Israeli population who have little in common (Schwartz, 2016).

Formal early childhood education for the ages of 3-6, is very important. It is meant to prepare the children for school learning and develop the variety of intellectual, emotional, cognitive and physical skills needed for that purpose. It also imparts various social skills and helps develop the children's own identity as well as their cultural and national one. This is also the age when children develop their learning ability, language skills and self-control (Almog, 2010). Early childhood policies cover a wide range of areas, including health, welfare, family matters and, of course, education. Some people object to having a public policy which may affect children's socialization in early childhood on moral grounds, because the education of these children is viewed as belonging to the parents' home and therefore lies outside the realm of public policy. However, a national early childhood policy in Israel has always been of crucial importance, and the lack of such a policy poses a serious problem (Greenbaum, 1997).

Early childhood education in the Arab sector

There is a distinct education gap among minority group children. The Arab and Druze minorities receive a relatively smaller portion of the social and educational services. The need to improve this situation is all the more evident in early childhood, which may provide the basis for later cognitive development and ensure success at school (Greenbaum, 1997).

One troubling fact about early childhood in the Arab sector is the low number of children attending kindergarten. In spite the efforts of the Israeli Ministry of Education to reduce the number of Bedouin children who do not attend to preschool, the rate of attendance is still very low (Kadary-Ovadia, 2020). Preschool attendance rates are tied to both a shortage of preschools in unrecognized Bedouin committees as well as the prevailing belief of some traditional families that children under five should remain at home.

Proper education in early childhood is most important. At this age children develop their language skills, learning abilities, social skills, self-control, and self-regulation, etc. This development takes place in a social context, with the child's significant others (Abu-Asbah, 2007).

Early childhood education on the kibbutzim

The kibbutz kindergarten network functions on kibbutzim throughout Israel. The network was founded within the kibbutz movement when the first kibbutz was established in 1919. The kibbutz movement was the first to implement two-centered education for early childhood. The movement did not view common upbringing in 'children's houses' merely as a temporary practical aid for parents, but rather as a permanent and original educational method. Parents all around the world are used to the fact that starting with kindergarten or school they have professional partners in the fulfillment of their educational role. On the kibbutz, this partnership began at birth, and most of the responsibility for the children was given to the early childhood caregivers (Gerson and Schnabel, 1973).

Since then, many changes have taken place within the kibbutz movement and its education system, such as moving the children from communal sleeping arrangements to sleeping in the parents' home (Lieblich, 2010), but the nature and quality of the curriculum has not changed. The unique curriculum of the kibbutz kindergarten reflects the community's values and everyday work. It particularly emphasizes the interactions between all areas of life, including the children's and the parents' needs, while constantly cultivating the educational staff.

Nevertheless, even though the kibbutz system openly advocates socialist democratic solutions in terms of spreading social ideologies and distribution of existing resources, being the "host" of a particular Bedouin community places the kibbutz in a position of supremacy, authority, and power.

The research aim was to examine attitudes of the Jewish parents toward integrating Bedouin Arab children into the early childhood education system of a kibbutz in the Negev.

Research question: What are the attitudes of Jewish parents towards the integration of Bedouin Arab children into the early childhood education system of a kibbutz in the Negev? What can one learn from those perceptions about future ethnic integration between Arabs and Jews in Israel?

Method

For this study, a qualitative research method was selected in order to understand the essence of the interviewees' experience and the meaning they attach to that experience.

Research population

The research population included secular 15 Jewish parents (5 fathers and 10 mothers) whose children attend two kindergarten classes on a southern kibbutz. The parents participating in the study had academic degrees in various subjects. Some parents are kibbutz members and live on the kibbutz (10), while others do not live on the kibbutz but have their children attend the kibbutz kindergarten due to their liberal point of view. The kibbutz founded by Zionist left socialists, the youth movement Hashomer Hatzair linked with the political party MAPAM, characterized by Marxist-Zionist ideology. During the last two decades, the kibbutz has undergone privatization and today all the members and residents of

the kibbutz live in full economic independence and enjoy a cohesive community life culturally and socially.

Research tools

The research was based on semi-structured in-depth interviews comprising six questions. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewees are allowed to tell their stories without interruption and are not asked to reply according to certain points. We made sure to ask the questions and allow them to answer as fully as they could (Baker, 2002).

The questions addressed to the parents during the interview were as follows:

- Tell me about the nature of your relationships with your Bedouin neighbors from the nearby settlement?
- How do you feel about integrating a Bedouin child into your children's kindergarten?
- How do you feel about the presence of Bedouin parents at events taking place on the kibbutz?
- What are the advantages of integrating Bedouin children into the kibbutz education system?
- What are the disadvantages of integrating Bedouin children into the kibbutz education system?
- What is the impact of stressful situations and fighting between Israelis and Palestinians on the shared life on the kibbutz?

Research procedure and limitations

The interviews were conducted with each parent individually, with no outside interference of any kind and when the parent was free and relaxed. Each interview lasted about 20-25 minutes. With each interviewee's consent, we

recorded the interviews and transcribed them accurately, with no personal interpretations.

As to the research limitations, the study included only parents whose children were attending the kindergarten on a specific kibbutz in the Negev, since this integration is the unique initiative of that specific kibbutz. Moreover, the research was conducted at a stressful time in Israel (Security tensions). Perhaps if it had been conducted in a (rare) more peaceful time, its findings might have been somewhat different.

Ethics

All participants in the study gave their informed consent to participate in the study after being assured that their names and identities would remain anonymous and there was no need to reveal any identifying details.

Results

The findings and the interview contents are presented below in tables and figures showing the participants' responses to the questions they were asked in the interviews.

Table 1. The nature of the relationship with Bedouin neighbors from the nearby settlement

Category	Frequency	Example statements
Friendly	4	"Friendship and reciprocal hospitality" "Friendly with people from the nearby Arab settlement" "Reciprocal visits" "Mutual respect"
Good	8	"Good neighborly relations" "Good friends" "Good relations" "Usually good" "Simply good relations" "Pleasant attitude" "Positive attitude and connection" "Good attitude"
Moderate	1	"The relationship is very moderate, with trust and understanding"
Social integration	2	"I go shopping in Rahat several times a week" "Health services in the nearby Arab settlement"

The table shows that among the answers given by parents the most frequent ones described "good relations" between Jews and Arabs.

Table 2. Opinion about integrating an Arab child with the participant's child in kindergarten

Category	Frequency	Examples of statements
Highly positive	7	1. "It's important to integrate the kids, to promote their openness to other cultures" 2. "Excellent, the kids learn from each other and are exposed to a different culture than ours" 3. "I consider integration an important value in the children's education" 4. "Integration is a window of opportunities to open and expand cultures in our children's world" 5. "I believe this is the way to learn to accept others as our equals" 6. "It's important to integrate the kids, to promote openness to other cultures, acceptance ability, shared life, unity and awareness" 7. "Integrating Arab children with Jewish children at kindergarten helps establish better relations between the two nations: it's a successful coexistence"
Positive	6	1. "There are no problems or difficulties; on the contrary, every kid is a blessing" 2. "Getting to know the neighbors and the other" 3. "I'm glad about it" 4. "I'm glad the Arab kids are teaching the kindergarten kids about their customs and holidays" 5. "It helps bring up the kids to accept children from other nations and religions" 6. "To see and get to know the people, not their labels"
Indifferent	2	1. "I think it's up to the parents" 2. "It doesn't bother me"

The table shows that most opinions about integrating Bedouin children into a Jewish kindergarten are highly positive.

Table 3: Attitude toward Bedouin parents' presence at events taking place on the kibbutz

Category	Frequency	Examples of statements
Positive	12	1. "The way I see it, parents whose children attend our kindergarten are full partners to whatever is happening on the kibbutz and are most welcome" 2. "I think it's important and very nice of the parents to attend events taking place on the kibbutz, and they're an integral part like the Jewish parents" 3. "Including the Arab parents in events inspires a feeling of peace and mutual cooperation" 4. "Their presence is a way of exposing the kids and the parents to our holidays. "We are all living with in this country" 5. "Glad to see their presence at joint activities" 6. "I'm very glad of it, I think it's important especially for the kids to have their parents take part in the joint events" 7. "I am very much in favor of including them and inviting them to participate, and would be happy to be invited myself to Arab events as well" 8. "Positive. It's a complementary part of good neighborly relations" 9. "They're always invited to participate in every event, including holidays. Their presence reminds us to accept and acknowledge different religions and the presence of different people among us" 10. "I'm glad of it and enjoy having all the parents participate" 11. "Always happy, always present at every event, participating and showing interest, and even trying to contribute to the event when needed" 12. "I praise the coexistence"

Positive to a point	1	"Sometimes I feel: 'what's he doing in events that don't concern him', like the Jewish holidays. But on the other hand it's good that the kids learn about Jewish culture, since they live in the State of Israel"
Ambivalent	1	"I have no problem with it as long as the parents don't mind"
Indifferent	1	"As long as the events have to do with the education system, it's natural that they take part in them"

The table shows that the attitudes toward having Bedouin parents present at Jewish events are mostly positive.

Table 4: Advantages of integrating Bedouin children into the kibbutz education system

Category	Frequency	Examples of statements
Social education	4	1. "Getting to know the kids and their families and creating social bonds between nations, which will help our kids realize that in the Arab sector (like in any other) there are all kinds of people, and when they grow up they'll be emissaries against various racist statements" 2. "Education toward having friendships and relationships" 3. "Education toward accepting the other who is different" 4. "Education toward getting to know your neighbors"
Learning a language	3	1. "The Arab kid learns Hebrew better" 2. "Acquiring an additional language at an early age" 3. "Learning Hebrew"
Getting to know Jewish society	4	1. "They should get to know Jewish customs" 2. "The Arab kid gets to know the Jewish culture"

		3. "The Arab kid learns about the Jewish culture and gets to know Jewish kids"
		4. "Getting to know another culture"
Mutual acquaintance	7	1. "The Jewish kid gets to know Arab culture and Arabic"
		2. "Through the Arab kid, the Jewish kid is also exposed to a new culture"
		3. "Education toward partnership, peace and accepting the other in practice"
		4. "A coexistence that will last for generations to come"
		5. "Kids from both sectors will get to know each other's customs"
		6. "Getting to know a different sector and a different culture"
		7. "A message that coexistence, living beside one another and having mutual esteem are the real key to integration"

The table shows that the parents see the main advantage of integrating Arab children into a Jewish education system on the kibbutz is the reciprocal familiarity.

Table 5: Disadvantages of integrating Bedouin children into the kibbutz education system

Category	Frequency	Examples of statements
None	4	1. "None" 2. "No disadvantages at all, as far as I'm concerned" 3. "None" 4. "Can't see any"
Integration problems	5	1. "The disadvantage can be only for the kids, when they come home and have to cope and make friends with kids in their own neighborhoods, too" 2. "They don't always manage to integrate" 3. "Some of the kids develop a dissonance, due to the great difference between living in the Arab settlement and living on the kibbutz" 4. "It creates a situation where the kids are alienated from their own culture, since they spend most of the day with people from another culture" 5. "When the kids refuse to play with kids from their own society and prefer their friends from the kibbutz"
Difficulty with Hebrew	2	1. "It will create a confusion between the two languages for them" 2. "Language delay"
Losing their Arab culture	2	1. "The disadvantage is our holidays; the Arab kids don't celebrate their own holidays within our education system" 2. "The Arab kids miss the chance of learning about their own culture"
Discontinuity	1	1. "At a certain point the kids will complete their education with us and continue their education within their own sector. The parents are not always available to stay with them in the afternoon when they play with their friends. There

		is no continuity at home to what they learned at kindergarten about the holidays"
They don't learn Arabic	1	1. "A disadvantage for language acquisition. Integrating Arab children into a Hebrew-speaking kindergarten hinders their acquisition of their own mother tongue, since they hear Hebrew spoken all day in the kindergarten"

The table shows that the parents see the major disadvantage of integrating Bedouin children into a Jewish education system as being their integration back into their own sector.

Table 6: Effect of stressful situations and fighting between Israelis and Palestinians on the shared life on the kibbutz

Category	Frequency	Examples of statements
No tension	5	1. "I don't feel any tension"" 2. "I don't personally feel any tension or threat" 3. "I don't personally feel any tension" 4. "None" 5. "There's no tension-causing element on the kibbutz"
Mild effect	7	1. "Sometimes when we have big events it has an impact, but the way I see it we should act normally, because they, too, are Israeli citizens" 2. "It's mostly the parents who are affected by the tension" 3. "As far as we're concerned, parents and kids who were accepted by the kibbutz are part of us" 4. "An impact on the full picture from the outside" 5. "I suppose there's an impact, although I personally don't experience it"

		6. "I think of the Arab settlement people as people who seek peace, so to me the impact is insignificant" 7. "We try not to let the situation affect our attitude"
Uneasiness	1	"No doubt it creates a state of uneasiness, but it's important to distinguish between our life together in this country and what happens on the other side"
Tension	1	"Sometimes there is tension, but not on a personal basis. A mature person can understand that there are two sides to every situation, and when there is tension it's hard and stressful for both sides"

The table indicates that there is a mild impact of stressful situations and fighting between Israelis and Palestinians on the nature of coexistence between them in the kibbutz.

Discussion

Theoretical objectives and practical pilots concerning partnership between Jews and Arabs are not new for the State of Israel. The aims of the Committee for Education toward Shared Life are well anchored in statements, beliefs and recommendations publicized over the years in Israel and around the world. It was already stated in Israel's Declaration of Independence that all citizens of Israel were to have equal social and political rights, regardless of their religion, race and gender. An educational policy putting the shared life between Jews and Arabs at top priority began to form already in the 1980s (Salomon and Issawi, 2009), yet the education system crawls behind that policy.

In this research, which examined the attitudes of Jewish parents toward integrating Bedouin children into the education system attended by their own children, no significant differences between the attitudes of mothers and fathers were found.

The interviewees' references to their relations with the inhabitants of the nearby Arab settlement indicated their having good relations with them and their making use of the services offered by their Bedouin neighbors. However, although they emphasized the reciprocal relations, friendship, mutual respect and so forth, the Bedouin neighbors were designated very definite and specific roles. For example, some statements revealed that part of these relations were based on the fact that the Bedouin residents provided services such as care, laundry, cooking, gardening, etc. One could see these symbiotic relations as an outcome of the geographical proximity. There was no mention of higher social status professions, including teaching. No education professionals or any other leading professionals from among the Bedouin neighbors were mentioned. Thus, it seems that in spite of the tendency toward closeness, sharing and living together, it is not about social or class equality, and the interviewees displayed a rather patronizing attitude towards their Bedouin neighbors. This patronizing mindset can be revealed in utterances as "We (The Jews) "contribute", " teach" and "explain" to "them".

Many studies have dealt with the question of the Arab image in the eyes of the Jewish public. Abu-Hasin et al (2008) claimed that the Arab image is usually viewed as negative and as less preferable to that of the Jew. The inferiority of this image for the Jews is mainly in the realm of intellect but also that of physical appearance (ibid.). The findings of their study are more in line with the findings of the current study; in general, the parents manifested a positive attitude toward integrating Bedouin children into the kindergarten education program. Moreover, the parents pointed out that this could be a chance for coexistence, and education toward living together. The research findings concur with other findings, indicating that social relations between the Arab-Israeli minority and Jewish Israeli citizens have developed over the years. This kind of

contact takes place either directly (by working together in the same workplace) or indirectly (by being the citizens of the same country) (Abu-Asba et al, 2011).

Although the parents saw the Bedouin parents' presence at events taking place in the Kibbutz favorably, they did not see any problem with the lack of symmetry in that context. That is to say, including the Arab children in events having to do with Jewish holidays and other Jewish special days seemed normal, but they did not express any desire to have the Jewish children invited to Arab events. So instead of collaboration, mutual acquaintance and integration between equals, we seem to be witnessing yet again a patronizing attitude of the majority group. In that sense, the 'Preserving the Old Order' rather than any kind of social justice and genuine inclusivity, strengthen the idea of the ruling of ethnocracy (Peled-Elhanan, 2012; Yiftachel, 2006).

According to the interviewees, it seems that the main advantage of integrating Bedouin children into Jewish education on the kibbutz is getting to know each other. On the one hand, some of the answers were about the advantage to the Bedouin child as well as to the Jewish child, such as the advantages of getting to know each other, promoting shared life, living alongside one another, cultivating mutual respect, partnership, peace and acceptance of the 'other'. According to the contact hypothesis, having an intensive and continuous contact between two groups, however distant and hostile they may be, may lead to a change in the attitudes of the individuals composing them and improve the relations between them; the ongoing contact may help change the individuals' attitudes toward certain individuals in the other group and this way lead to a change in their attitudes toward all the individuals in the other group (Allport, 1954; Paolini et al, 2014).

On the other hand, some of the parents only mentioned the advantages to the Bedouin child. It seems that they believe that the integration of Bedouin

children into the kibbutz kindergarten was only beneficial to the Bedouin children, not to the Jewish children. The benefits for the Bedouin child that the parents stressed were: learning Hebrew, getting to know Jewish customs and integrating into Israeli society. In other words, the Arab child is the main 'beneficiary' of the integration, being given the chance to integrate more easily into the hegemonic society. In Bourdieu's concepts (1976; Hill, 2017), the Jewish parents realize the value of the cultural capital that the kibbutz' educational system may "bestow upon" the few Bedouin children but at the same time maintain and legitimize a class-divided society.

Regarding the disadvantages of integration, the parents mainly referred only to the Bedouin children. They made no mention of any disadvantage to their own children learning with the Bedouin children. The disadvantage they mentioned for the Bedouin children was having a confused identity and difficulties integrating into their own society. This notion was already described by Human Rights Watch Report (2001);

kindergartens tend to teach mainly in Hebrew with an emphasis on Jewish culture. Moreover, contrary to Arab kindergartens where the emphasis is mainly on Bedouin tradition, customs, and heritage, Bedouin parents of children in integrated kindergarten have to make it up at home.

Their way of thinking concurs with a study conducted on integrating Arab children into a Jewish school. Arab high school students preferred attending an Arab school because of the sense of belonging it inspired in them, of not feeling like outsiders, different or exceptional, even though they acknowledged that the Jewish school was better than the Arab school in terms of infrastructure, building, atmosphere and academic level (Abu-Asba et al, 2011).

In times of war and existential threat to Israel, there are feelings of mistrust, alienation, rejection and blame against Arabs (Salomon and Issawi, 2009). However, the answers to this research question showed only a mild effect of stressful situations and fighting between Israelis and Palestinians on their shared life on the kibbutz, considering the level of security tension at the time the research was conducted.

Shared life has been a popular topic in social sciences for many years, and quite intensively since the mid-1970s. Research literature indicates that the minority is usually interested in systemic and consistent shared life. Approximately 80% of the Arab-Israeli citizens answered affirmatively to questions regarding shared life, such as being willing to make friends with Jews, live in shared neighborhoods and have shared education and schools (Kirmayer et al, 2001).

Starting from the mid-1990s, shared life between Jews and Arabs has been in an intermediate state. On the one hand, there is only partial infrastructure for major moves that have been implemented into the education system. On the other hand, extensive local initiatives (such as the kibbutz kindergarten in the Negev) have been developing, their main purpose being to initiate and carry out activities of educating toward shared life, for students and teaching staff, with no definite policy on the part of the Israeli Ministry of Education (Salomon and Issawi, 2009).

Nevertheless, one should bear in mind how the result of this "school choice", or in this case "kindergarten choice" actually effects the Bedouin education system; According to Hill (2004), this choice may only facilitate inequalities because in many cases the 'parental choice' of schools has become the 'school's choice' of the most advantageous children, and consequently, the rejection of others.

In order to decrease the present tensions and promote an egalitarian, non-patronizing shared life throughout the education system in the future, one should act on both the cognitive and operative levels. Cognitively one should aspire for better citizenship, tolerance and acceptance of the other. Operatively, one should remove all barriers that prevent Arab citizens from having equal rights and the same obligations as Jewish citizens. Control of the state apparatuses schools goes beyond the power of the privileged ones to the realm of critical transformative socialist education (Hill, 2017)

As critical pedagogy meets people's local needs and reflects the significance of social context, as is often the case with postmodern identity politics, there should be programs to close gaps in general, and gaps in education in particular; One outstanding example is the project of Jamal Alkirnawi 'New Dawn' which its main aim is to bring together the desirable change in the Bedouin-Jewish relations, not one sided, from a benevolent well-established side but from both sides (Hendelman Ariel, 2017). . Another radical project, is 'Hand in Hand' schools in most mixed Jewish-Arab regions throughout Israel, leveraging a shift from conflict to cooperation for all of Israeli society (Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel, 2022).

All of the above can be achieved only by allocating finances and resources to developing infrastructure and services, so that choosing Jewish or common education will be on an ideological basis, and not merely for considerations of receiving a better education.

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