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RESTRUCTURING TEACHERS' LABOUR PROCESS: THE CASE OF GREECE

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Abstract – *This paper focuses on teachers' labour process in upper secondary education in Greece in the 1980s, as this was restructured by the introduction of prescribed curricula. The adopted theoretical approach is critical to the labour process theory approach and its development of the proletarianisation thesis. The labour process theory, we argue, studies teachers' labour process by focusing on the introduction of standardised curricula which, as is argued, result in teachers' proletarianisation, that is to say teachers' autonomy is restricted and they are not able to exercise any control on their labour process. We argue that labour process theory does not conceive teachers' labour process as a production process and consequently does not take into consideration the relations in production. Hence, we argue, that teachers' labour process is shaped, apart from the curriculum, by the parameter 'students' and, more specifically, by 'students' cultural capital' and habitus towards knowledge.*

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to critically discuss the labour process theory in education. More specifically, this paper focuses on teachers' labour processes in Greek upper secondary education (Lyceum). It theorises teachers' labour process as shaped and restructured after the introduction in the 1980s, by the Socialist party (PA.SO.K¹) in government, of a system of selection for entrance to higher education known as *Desmes*². The introduction of that system, we argue, resulted in restricting teachers' autonomy and increasing control by the educational authorities over their labour process.

Labour process theory: a critique

The reasons for adopting the labour process theory in studying teachers' work has to do with the way teachers' work is defined and contextualised here. The labour process theory, by approaching 'work' in capitalist social formations as a labour process³ which needs to be controlled by the capital, provides us with an appropriate conceptual matrix within which teachers' work, as this is organised in the classroom, can be located, grasped and understood. Thus, teachers are viewed as workers and

the tendencies towards proletarianisation are explored (Acker, 1995/6, p. 107). What distinguishes this⁴ from the other⁵ approaches is that it focuses on the broader socio-historical context within which teachers' work takes place, namely, the capitalistic one. The general argument which dominates this research perspective stems from Braverman's (1974) theory which claims that the imperative of accumulation in capitalism has been responsible for the continual restructuring of jobs, whether blue or white collar, so as to separate the principle of conception from that of execution (Tipton, 1985, p. 48). This process is called 'deskilling'. Apple (see Apple & Teitelbaum, 1986; Apple & Jungck, 1992) develops a version of this approach in which he argues that the reality of many teachers' daily lives in classrooms is becoming controlled and subject to administrative control.

This approach to teachers' work takes capitalism as its main concern. Capitalism is conceptualised as a structural framework within which teachers' work is carried out. Specifically, the imperative for accumulation of capital is considered as the driving force of the restructuring of teachers' work. In short, the scholars of the labour process theory in education focus mainly on factors of economic production that could determine and shape teachers' work. There is no argumentation on other factors such as the political ones and, more specifically, the state which plays a role of integrating the unity of a social formation; this total role is a political one (Poulantzas, 1968, p. 65).

However, by focusing exclusively on capitalism and, more specifically, on its economic demands – the law of accumulation – economy becomes the instrument for analysing every social phenomenon and the whole society is reduced to the laws of economy. Yet society is not only economy. There are also political institutions, such as the state, which intervene and shape a social order. Therefore, by overemphasising the structural limitations caused by the capitalistic imperative of accumulation, this form of the 'critical' perspective leaves no room for possible resistances by the social subjects. This approach fails to conceive and conceptualise human agency. This criticism does not in any case imply that human agency can always make the difference, but simply that social reality is much more complex and that it is simplistic to reduce it to the needs of economy.

Our focus on the way teachers' work is performed in the classroom is contextualised within the capitalist state, where the concept of 'control'⁶ of education and teachers' work is of central importance for the reproduction of the dominant social order. Teachers' work has to be supervised and controlled, since the school has to 'produce' concrete outcomes – just like products for the market in the case of commodity production. In other words, 'control'⁷ is a vital part of teachers' work. Control is exercised either by teachers on students as part of their work (discipline and surveillance) or by the state on teachers (control of their labour process).

Although teachers' work takes place in the narrow setting of the classroom, there are also external social structures, such as the state, which creep into the classroom and shape teachers' work perceptions. For example, a prescribed and standardised curriculum shapes a structural context of limitations which, in turn, shapes teachers' perceptions and work experiences.

We argue that although this line of reasoning might be true in general, it nevertheless seems to focus exclusively on the concrete structural constraints imposed on teachers' daily lives in a deterministic way which undermines the role teachers themselves play in shaping their daily lives. Possible variations in the way teachers perceive and make sense of the control exercised on their work do not seem to be taken into consideration. If the pressures and controls of the state are to be understood, they should be contextualised within concrete social and historical contexts, otherwise there is the danger of the term 'control' becoming an omnipresent – a *passe partout* – category with no reference to or grounding, in this case, on the specific social conditions of teachers' work. In other words, we need to locate 'control' within two social frameworks: (i) a general one, such as, for example, a particular form of 'capitalism'; and (ii) a specific, concrete one, such as teachers' work within a specific educational site, the classroom.

The labour process theory⁸ does not seem to take into consideration features which have to do with teachers' labour power, such as, for instance, gender, specialisation and seniority, or with students' social-cultural background – the teachers' 'object' of work. Since differentiations among teachers are not considered, then it follows that it is impossible to develop any theorisation of possible forms of teachers' resistance to the structural constraints. It is assumed that they are all subject to exactly the same process of 'degradation' of their work due to the pressures and controls exercised by the capitalist state. Instead of assuming this, we need to conceptualise teachers as a body of working people, mediated by variations⁹ in the way they perceive pressures and controls by the state.

Teaching as a labour process

According to the *Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, the term 'labour process' means:

'... at its simplest labour process is the process whereby labour is materialized or objectified in USE VALUES. Labour is here an interaction between the person who works and the natural world such that elements of the latter are consciously altered in a purposive manner.' (Bottomore, 1983, p. 267)

Thus, the labour process is concerned with the qualitative movement in production, a process with a definite purpose and content, producing a particular kind of product (i.e., a commodity for the capitalist) (Bottomore, 1983, p. 267)¹⁰.

The above definitions point to the fact that there is something a little mysterious at the heart of the business of teaching as a productive activity within a labour process framework. In more formal terms, as characteristically described by Connell (1985):

‘Teaching is a labour process without an object. At best, it has an object so intangible – the minds of the kids, or their capacity to learn – that it cannot be specified in any but vague and metaphorical ways. A great deal of work is done in schools, day in and day out, but this work does not produce any *things*.’ (p. 70)

Hence, if we wanted to outline the pattern of teaching as a labour process, this could be described as follows: Teaching consists of a process of transformation of students from a given condition of recognised knowing to a new one. The labour of teaching is an interaction between teacher and student, in order for the latter to be altered in a purposive manner. This leads us to Connell’s (1985) recognition that ‘Teachers are workers, teaching is work, and the school is a workplace’ (p. 69).

The first element of teaching as a labour process is teachers’ labour power: Labour power is a general term and it refers to the teachers’ capacity to work which is bought and employed by the state, local authorities or owners of private schools. In short, labour power can be defined as teachers’ capacity to perform educational activities. The general term of labour power is specified and concretised through the notion of ‘skill’. Skill defines the specific aspects of teachers’ labour power needed in order to perform the purposive productive activity, which constitutes one of the three elements of labour process¹¹. Hence, in the teachers’ case, an example of skill could be their ability to plan and organise their daily teaching with regards to issues of pace and sequence.

However, skill should not only be described in ‘technicist’ terms. It is also a social term. This means that its content is not given and static, but is defined and determined within the concrete socio-historical context within which it operates. Within the conceptual context of the labour process theory, ‘skill’ refers to the unity of conception and execution in the labour process. Consequently, deskilling essentially means the loss of conceptual mastery, and not task simplification or fragmentation of the tasks. These tend to follow as consequences of deskilling (Armstrong, 1992; cited in Watkins, 1992, p. 118).

Another element of teaching as a labour process is the purposive productive activity of teachers. This can be seen as the *process of transformation* of students

from a given stage of knowledge, values and attitudes to a new one. The second element comprises the 'objects' on which the work is performed. This refers to the *students* – the active human agents that come from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds¹² – that are 'owned' by their parents and the state or the local authorities, in the sense that they are the future citizens.

The third element relates to the instruments which facilitate the process of work/teaching. As instruments, we may identify several components: firstly, the indirectly involved elements such as infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, equipment and teaching resources) which are owned by the state; secondly, the *curriculum* can be seen as an instrument of teachers' work. According to Bernstein (1975, p. 85), the curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge. The 'object' of teaching – namely, the students' minds and behaviours – together with what is described above as 'instruments' of teaching, comprise the 'means of production'. The relationships developed between teachers and students constitute the 'relations in production'¹³.

In the teachers' case, the term production signifies a process of transformation of students into 'new social subjects', capable 'for social practice' which is realised through the transmission and transformation of knowledge (curriculum). The form of transmission of knowledge is determined by the structure of the context – what Bernstein calls the 'frame' – in which knowledge is transmitted and received. Thus, the 'frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (Bernstein, 1975, p. 89). By 'relations in production' we mean who controls what is to be transmitted. Is it the teachers, the students, the state or others?

As far as the issues of the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of knowledge are concerned, the above signification of the context within which the transmission of knowledge takes place might be translated into the following three types of control. In the first case, the issues of selection, organisation, pacing and timing of knowledge could be controlled by teachers. In the second case, these could be controlled by pupils. There could also be a third case where neither the teachers nor the pupils control these issues. In this third and last case, the control could be exercised by the state or by local authorities, essentially by any agent other than teachers and pupils. These three types of control describe three types of relations in production.

The third type of control could refer to the case of the introduction by the state of predetermined and standardised curricula where the control of selection, organisation, pacing and timing is mainly exercised by the state. In this case, the state/educational authorities could be seen as performing the function of the 'conception' of the way knowledge is going to be selected, organised and

‘delivered’ to students. Teachers could be seen as accomplishing the function of ‘execution’. Students, in turn, could be seen as acting as the ‘executors’ of their teachers’ directions and guidelines. Thus, teachers here seem unable to exercise control over their labour process in the classroom, as a consequence of the separation – in Braverman’s terminology – of the processes of ‘conception’ from ‘execution’.

This type of control of teachers’ labour process is the focus of the labour process theory in education. To be more specific, the theory conceives teachers’ labour process as a terrain where pressures and controls are exercised by the state and indirectly by the capital, which, under the spirit of a rationalisation process, will contribute to the ensuring of concrete outcomes and the fulfilment of specific education targets. However, although the labour process theory locates teachers’ work within the capitalist state, it does not contextualise this within the classroom. To approach teachers’ work within the capitalist state is a necessary condition in order to analyse and study it. Yet, we argue, it is not a sufficient one, because it is exactly within the classroom that this labour process is specified and realised. Failure to contextualise teachers’ work within classrooms, where production takes place and the relationships between teachers and students (relations in production) are developed, means that the labour process theory fails to see teachers’ labour process as a relationship which needs two aspects in order to be developed. Teachers’ labour process and the education production process are not separated processes; they constitute an entity. The production process is realised through the concrete shaping of the labour process.

In other words, the labour process theory typically fails to conceptualise students as vital participants in teachers’ labour process. More specifically, the means of production – the ‘object’ (students’ cultural capital) and *habitus* towards knowledge and the ‘instrument’ (curriculum) – could be seen, each one separately, as structural determinants which are characterised by a duality. This means that the ‘object’ (students) can be seen as a disabling and, at the same time, as an enabling structure¹⁴. The same can be said of the ‘curriculum’; it can be seen as an enabling and disabling structural context. Thus structures should not be seen *a priori* as only restrictive to human action, and human agency should not be assumed *a fortiori* as omnipotent in relation to the restrictions of structures.

It may be argued that in the teachers’ labour process, the key element seems to be the formal curriculum. The curriculum can be seen as the ‘key’ element to the extent that it constitutes the framework which teachers have to follow in order to achieve the predetermined (by the state or educational authorities) targets, in short, the production targets. The formal curriculum is accompanied by a hidden curriculum¹⁵ where the teachers’ role – just as in the case of the formal one – is

also active through their practices (such as, for example, the classroom reward structures and classroom rules and procedures). Hence, the aim of both curricula is to ensure the ‘production of new social beings’, the production of concrete outcomes. Given the extent to which the curriculum, as described above, contributes to the ‘production of new social beings’ which lies at the centre of teachers’ labour process, then as Smyth (2000) argues:

‘... the main specification of the labour process of teaching, and the nature of this specification is political and therefore contested.’ (p. 37)

The political nature of the curriculum follows from the very fact that it is a product and outcome of politics. This means that the views on what kind of knowledge schools should ‘deliver’ through the formal curriculum vary¹⁶.

Given the role education plays in capitalist societies, as well as the fact that teachers are expected to implement a specific curriculum irrespective of whether or not they agree with and accept the outcome of this process, then the state can develop a range of controls in order to ensure that teachers will work in such ways that the predetermined outcomes will be achieved. In other words, any possibilities and attempts by teachers to resist the state’s demands must, so far as the state is concerned, be discouraged and neutralised while still maintaining a sense of ‘professional’¹⁷ legitimacy.

Since the object of the labour process of teaching is the development of students’ ‘capacities for social practice’, it might therefore be expected that control will be located in the way knowledge is defined (curriculum) to be then transmitted to students (pedagogy). Control does not solely have to do with the curriculum and pedagogy; it could also be related to teachers’ recruitment practices and the methods of their assessment.

Hence, teaching means and presupposes *relationships* between teachers and students that arise while the process of transformation of students takes place in the classroom. It is exactly, we argue, this parameter – namely, the ‘students’ – that the labour process theory fails to take into consideration in the development of the proletarianisation thesis.

Teachers’ labour process: the Greek case

In this section we aim to demonstrate the changes which took place in Greece in 1980s with the introduction of the *Desmes* system, which should be seen as a factor that contributed to a restriction of teachers’ autonomy and control over their labour process.

The introduction of Desmes university entrance examinations

In education, one of the changes which took place under PA.SO.K was the modification of the selection system for the entrance to higher education institutions (see 1351/1983 Law). The previous system – that of Panhellenic examinations – was considered by the government as problematic. Consequently, ‘the government decided to abolish it because its implementation had many serious deficiencies/disadvantages, such as the increase of para-education (*frontesteria*¹⁸), the degradation of the role of the state school ...’ (Prefatory Memorandum of the 1351/83 Law).

It thus seems that, according to the government, the problem of the Lyceum’s dysfunction was related to the amount of years devoted to the preparation for the entrance examinations. Instead of two years, which was the case under New Democracy¹⁹, it became one year.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that the degradation of the role of the state school and the enhanced role of *frontesteria*, which were the reasons why the PA.SO.K government proposed a change in the selection system for entrance to higher education, ultimately became the major problems caused by the newly introduced *Desmes* system.

The government seemed to believe that with the new selection system, they would offer proper preparation and a fair assessment of the candidates who would be prepared, at any time, for their entrance into higher education. The 1351/83 Law introduced the General examinations system (or the *Desmes* system, as it is known) as the new system of selection for higher education. The *Desmes* system (groups of specialised subjects) in practice replaced the Panhellenic examinations. According to this system, the subjects of the third class of Lyceum were categorised into two groups: subjects of general education (core subjects) and the preparatory subjects for higher education, which were divided into four groups or *Desmes*. Students had to choose one group at the beginning of the academic year in order to sit for the General examinations. Each group of subjects (*Desmi*) gave the opportunity of entering a specific category of Higher Schools of University status²⁰.

The distinctiveness of the *Desmes* system lies in the fact that the work done in Lyceum is directly related and connected to the requirements of the higher education entrance examinations. First of all, we have to make it clear that the relationship between secondary and tertiary education is not a recent phenomenon. Before *Desmes*, there was also a connection between the two, but this was very indirect and loose, whereas the introduction of the *Desmes* system meant that it became direct, concrete and tight. This closer connection between Lyceum and tertiary education started with New Democracy’s policy of selection

for higher education, which defined that what was examined in the Panhellenic examinations derived from the syllabus taught in the last two years of Lyceum. Before New Democracy's policy (1979-80), the secondary and tertiary education sectors were also connected, but this relationship was not the same as that of *Desmes*. Before the Panhellenic examinations system, the syllabus tested was drawn from all (three) years of Lyceum. In other words, it was not located in a specific year, so the aim was not the preparation for university entrance examinations. Consequently, teachers' work in Lyceum was then not inscribed within the needs and requirements of university entrance examinations. We argue that those teachers could feel more autonomous in comparison to those who teach *Desmes*.

As a result, the effects that this close connection had on the function of Lyceum in general and on teachers' work in particular are not the same. It is the *Desmes* system, we argue, that moulds and structures teachers' work almost exclusively in order to meet the requirements of university entrance examinations.

More specifically, with the last two education reforms, namely those by New Democracy and PA.SO.K., there has developed a direct and strong association between secondary and tertiary education. This can be inferred from the fact that the Lyceum has been adjusted to the requirements of the entrance examinations (Panhellenic or General). *Indeed, what is required by the General examinations is exactly what is taught in Lyceum.* This situation is highly problematical because all the emphasis is placed on the examinations, and the teachers' as well as the students' interest is confined to and exhausted in the preparation for them. Students are interested only in the subjects in which they will take examinations and tend to neglect others. As it is only *Desmes*-subjects and only a specified syllabus of the third year which is examined in the entrance examinations (Genikes/General), the selective preparatory function of Lyceum is very clearly defined. This, we argue, makes the connection between Lyceum and higher education tighter, accompanied by tighter forms of control by the educational authorities, and has created restrictions on teachers' autonomy on issues such as the pace and sequence of teaching. In short, teachers' labour process is now governed by the requirements of the university entrance examinations.

Thus, in the case of *Desmes*, almost all the work done in the third year has to do with the entrance examinations. In the case of the 1980 Law, this was carried out within the last two classes of Lyceum, while in PA.SO.K.'s case only within the last year. Thus, we have a concentration of the process of preparation since this is restricted within one year. Consequently, teachers' work is being intensified.

To sum up, before 1980 the Lyceum had a very loose relationship to tertiary education and this was reflected on the structure of the curriculum which did not have any direct relationship to the requirements of the entrance examinations.

Hence, by transferring the preparation for the entrance examinations from *frontesteria* to the Lyceum and by identifying the syllabus of the examinations with that taught in schools, the Ministry of Education aimed at making the whole process of selection accessible to all students, regardless of their economic and cultural capital²¹. Now, let us try to describe the specificities of the teachers' labour process in Greece.

The implications of the Desmes system to teachers' labour process

In this context, we argue that the *Desmes* system has had serious effects on teachers' labour process. In particular, it has resulted in changes in their work related to increasing restrictions of their autonomy on issues such as pace and sequence, and in the control of their work by educational authorities. It should be stressed at this point that our intention is not to argue that there was a 'golden age' before the introduction of *Desmes* as far as the issue of teachers' autonomy is concerned. In fact, what we will try to argue is that with the *Desmes* system, teachers' autonomy was restricted as far as the issues of organisation, pacing and timing of their teaching are concerned. This is because their teaching work is subject to control and restrictions which are related to the particular aim of *Desmes*, namely, the preparation for the higher education examinations. This was not the case before, because the objective 'preparation for entrance to higher education examinations' did not form part of the Lyceum's focus. Thus, what needs to be shown empirically is the transformation process which took place during that period as far as teachers' autonomy and the control of their labour process are concerned.

In the *Desmes* system, teaching aims at the provision of knowledge which will be exchanged with a place at university. Thus, students are mainly interested in getting the knowledge required for the university entrance examinations; otherwise, knowledge is of no immediate interest to them. In short, knowledge for them counts only insofar as it has an exchange value and not a use value.

Having in mind the theoretical approach developed above, teachers' labour process is structured as following: *Desmes* (the curriculum) along with students (the 'object') constitute the means of teachers' production. As for the curricular aspects of selection, organisation, pacing and timing, these are determined first by the state educational authorities (Ministry of Education) and then by the needs and requirements of the entrance examinations. Such decisions concern what has to be taught and the period of time within which a specific part of the syllabus has to be taught. Given the above restrictions, teachers are unable to control their labour process. In short, 'what' has to be produced and 'when' it might be produced are predetermined. Within this educational context, and given the previously referred

to primacy of *Desmes*-subjects together with the fact that the *Desmes* syllabus is examined in the entrance examinations, students may only be interested in the specific syllabus and nothing more. In this case, the teachers' efforts to go beyond the examinations' requirements may be dependent on the students' dispositions to knowledge. In other words, the success of any effort to transcend the imposed determinations might be dependent on the students' 'cultural capital' and *habitus* towards knowledge.

The relations between teachers and their object of work (namely, the students) which constitute, along with the relationships between teachers and the curriculum/*Desmes*, the relations in production, can be described as follows: the nature of these relationships is determined by 'who' controls the frame of teaching. Is the teachers, students or educational authorities? Framing refers to the strength of the boundary between what may be transmitted and what may not. In the case of *Desmes*, framing is controlled by the educational authorities (the Ministry of Education) and its logic concerning the requirements of the General examinations. This means that everything that is not part of and may not serve the requirements of the entrance examinations cannot be easily transmitted. The above-discussed structure of the Lyceum seems to favour its preparatory function. Consequently, it might be the case that students are mostly interested in getting only the kind and the amount of knowledge which will be useful and helpful for their examinations.

Therefore, teachers' autonomy may be restricted to the degree that they have to focus on the needs and requirements of university entrance examinations and on the related preparation of students, that is, to give them only the knowledge which is useful and helpful for the examinations²². All this means that teachers have to design and plan their work in such a way that the university entrance examinations requirements can be fulfilled, irrespective of students' capability to follow their teaching. They have to organise their work in such a way that they will be able to perform it within the time limitations defined by the authorities²³.

Hence, preparing for examinations demands that a more technical style of teaching should be developed, in that it is the 'technicalities' of the examinations – such as, the questions which may be considered as very probable to be asked, the spirit of the examinations, the way the questions are posed etc. – that have to be taught. This focus undermines in general a more reflective style of teaching and work, and shapes an alienating form of teaching/learning.

Thus, it might be inferred that the process of conception is separated from that of execution in a very clear way. The educational authorities (Ministry/Directorate) define the 'conception' process; teachers carry out the 'execution' process²⁴.

However, in the above processes, the factor ‘students’ has to be taken into consideration. Students do not form a homogeneous group of people, but come from families belonging to different socio-economic strata and they carry, in Bourdieu’s terminology, a variety of forms of ‘cultural capital’. This might result in differentiated working understandings of teachers. It might mean that teachers working with students from privileged socio-cultural strata may not perceive the restrictions on autonomy imposed by the *Desmes* system in the same way as teachers working with students from working class strata. This is because middle class students are geared to learn almost anything²⁵. Teachers may consequently easily overcome the restrictions and go beyond the requirements of *Desmes*, because they have an attentive and willing audience.

However, with the introduction of the *Desmes* system, this preparatory role is now attributed by the state to schools (Lycea). It is now clear that both sectors – state/schools and private/*frontesteria* – do share a common aim, namely, that of preparing students for the General examinations. The above thoughts lead us to argue that we are dealing here with the phenomenon of the *quasi market*²⁶. This means that students ‘buy’ preparation for the General examinations from two sectors: the state school (public) and the *frontesteria* (private). Yet, at this point, we have to say that *frontesteria*’s *raison d’etre* has always been the same, namely, they specialise in preparing students for examinations. This might mean that in the students’ minds *frontesteria* are the best places for preparation in that they are the ‘specialists’ and ‘experts’ in this area. Consequently, students may pay more attention to *frontesteria* than to teachers’ work at schools.

We thus argue that all this signifies a kind of *deskilling* of teachers’ work in schools. Deskilling here means that since teachers’ work at schools is controlled by the two mentioned agents (state educational authorities and students via their comparisons made to *frontesteria*), it may then be almost impossible for teachers to have any form of control over their work process. Teachers at schools may be seen as deskilled in that the students take *frontesteria* and the teachers there to be more skilled as far as the examination domain is concerned.

In sum, there are two forms of control upon teachers’ work. These are an explicit form by the state and an implicit one by *frontesteria*, both of which undermine, reduce and hinder teachers’ control over their labour process.

The focus of the Lyceum is now identified with that of *frontesteria*. But this, in essence, results in favouring and empowering *frontesteria* – the private sector – since the work done in state schools, that is the preparation for the General examinations, constitutes *by definition* the domain of *frontesteria*. In short, it can be said, that a process of ‘frontesterisation’ of state schools is taking place.

This situation is being identified now, some time after the abolition of the *Desmes* system. In fact, in 1998, when P.A.S.O.K was still in power, a new

educational reform took place²⁷. According to this reform, the entrance to higher education was again channelled through Panhellenic exams. More specifically, students had to sit for Panhellenic examinations in all subjects of the second and third year of Lyceum. This resulted in further restriction of Lyceum's autonomy and in further upgrading and strengthening of the role of *frontesteria*.

In 2001, the new Minister of Education modified the system of the Panhellenic examinations. This resulted in students having to sit for examinations in nine subjects instead of all the subjects, as was the case before. In 2004, when New Democracy came back to power, the Minister of Education abolished the Panhellenic exams in the second year of Lyceum and announced that, as from the following year, students would be taking examinations in six subjects instead of nine.

The situation presented above shows that teachers' professional autonomy is being restricted by the Lyceum's *preparatory* role. In addition, the focus of Lyceum on the higher education entrance examinations strengthens the role of the market, namely *frontesteria*.

Since the 1990s, there have been a number of studies on teachers' work (see Mavrogiorgos, 1992; Giannakaki, 1997; Papanaooum-Tzika, 2003; Koronaiou & Tiktapanidou, 2004; Thoma, 2004). Issues of stress, depression and burnout are at the centre of their findings. In particular, Koronaiou & Tiktapanidou (2004) report that 57% of teachers experience a feeling of exhaustion during their work process. Other reported symptoms include depression, insomnia and moodiness.

Conclusion

It follows from the above theoretical discussion on teachers' labour process that teachers' work should be reconsidered after a reconceptualisation of teachers' labour process. In particular, the theoretical tools for approaching and investigating teachers' labour process should be enriched by introducing a new parameter, namely, 'the students' and more specifically 'the students' cultural capital' and *habitus* towards knowledge. Teachers' labour process should be seen as a production process. In this process, the 'object' of teachers' work – that is, the 'students' – should be taken into consideration, as this might shape teaching as a labour process, and affect teachers' working experiences. Hence, when the theoretical discussion of the labour process theory does not take 'students' into consideration, we have to do with a production process/ labour process without any 'object'. This is an oxymoron, namely, a scheme of production, and denotes a labour process in need of an object upon which it will take place.

Notes

1. PA.SO.K stands for Panhellenic Socialist Movement.
2. *Desmes*, in Greek, refers to the 'bunch' of subjects with predetermined curricula on which students were examined in order to enter higher education (i.e., the equivalent of A-levels). *Desmes* can therefore be seen as 'groups' of subjects.
3. For a discussion on what the term 'labour process' signifies, see next section.
4. This perspective is reflected in the works of Ozga & Lawn (1981), Harris (1982), White (1983), Apple (1986), Lawn & Ozga (1988), Carlson (1992), Watkins (1992), and Smyth (2000). Reid's (2003) work on teachers' labour process, we argue, is characterised by the same deficiencies as those of the established labour process theory. He argues that the labour process theory in education needs renovation. Reid uses the concept of 'control' in order to examine and reconsider the labour process theory in education, but he does not offer us a detailed conceptual pattern of teachers' labour process.
5. These are: Functionalist approaches, Ethnographic approaches informed by an interactionist perspective, and Critical approaches. Perspectives within the latter category comprise feminist studies in education, the postmodernist perspective to education, and the labour process theory inspired by a Marxist perspective. The functionalist approach was mainly dominant in American sociology of the 1950s and 1960s. Teaching as work was analysed in relation to its contribution to stability and persistence, and those features which were considered questionable were seen as potentially 'dysfunctional' (Lortie, 1973; Dreeben, 1973).
6. In this paper, the term 'control' is used as developed by Edwards (1979, p. 17) for the workers' case. That is, the ability of the state to obtain desired behaviour from teachers.
7. In ethnographic studies the 'control' exercised by the state, as a structure, is not conceptualised and problematised. In short, it does not become the focus of analysis. 'Control' remains a descriptive rather than an analytical category in these kinds of studies and, as a result, they are unable to grasp and locate teachers' work within the specific socio-historical context. By this we mean that 'control' is not adequately theorised or contextualised.
8. As exhibited in the works of Ozga & Lawn (1981), Harris (1982), White (1983), Apple (1986), Lawn & Ozga (1988), Carlson (1992), and Watkins (1992).
9. Concerning their labour power: gender, specialisation and seniority, and their 'object' of work, namely, the students' socio-cultural background.
10. Marx (1976, p. 284; cited in Knights & Willmott, 1990, p. 77), from whom the term originally derived, outlined the basic components of the labour process as follows: first, the work itself, a purposive productive *activity*; second, the *object(s)* on which that work is performed; and third, the *instruments* which facilitate the process of work. The objects of work and the instruments of work together are called the 'means of production'. The alteration in the object of work affected by labour is the creation of use value. However, in capitalism the products are use values for the capitalist only insofar as they are bearers of exchange value.
11. *Macmillan Student Encyclopaedia* (1983, p. 356) describes 'skill' as a slippery concept, usually defined in 'technicist' terms by reference to a combination of learnt expertise in a repertoire of actions or activities, together with the mental ability to apply them effectively and resourcefully.
12. By differences in their cultural background we mean, for example, differences in their dispositions towards knowledge, what Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*, and educational resources. In short, they are carriers, as Bourdieu (1986, p. 243) argues, of different '*cultural capital*'.
13. We use the term 'relations in production' and not the Marxist 'relations of production' because the latter refers to issues of ownership and control of the means of production, which would be impossible to apply in the teachers' case. For example, who is the owner of 'students' minds'? Is it the state, their parents, the teachers, or the students themselves? This is, however, a philosophical issue which, we think, is beyond the scope of this paper.

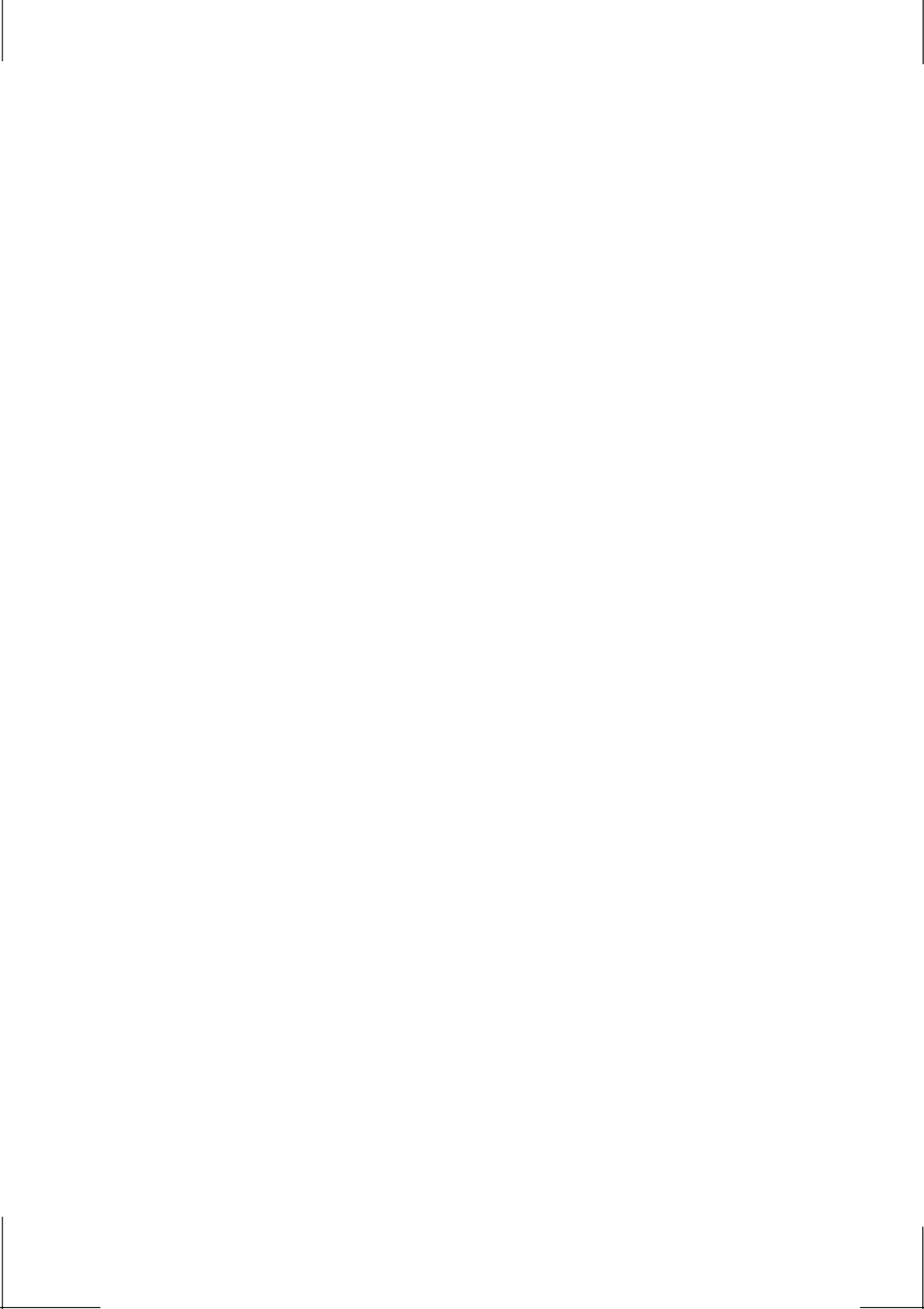
14. The concept of the *duality of structure* leads us to Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. For a discussion of the relationship between structure and agency see Thoma (2004, section 2.4).
15. 'Hidden curriculum' refers to the organisational arrangements and practices which establish the 'right way' to function in classrooms, schools and educational systems (Smyth, 2000, p. 26).
16. Employers, for example, seem to see education as a 'producer' of skilled labour power. On the other hand, parents may have specific expectations from education, such as enhancing the life opportunities of their children or inculcating a particular set of values and beliefs.
17. There is a contradiction here. On one hand, the state buys teachers' labour power because they, as professionals, know how to do the specific kind of job required. But, on the other hand, the state discourages teachers from developing their views as professionals and from resisting its demands.
18. *Frontesteria* refers to the commercial firms that specialise in preparing students for examinations.
19. New Democracy is the Liberal party which was in power before the socialist party PA.SO.K (i.e., 1974-1981).
20. The first group of subjects (*Desmi*) – consisting of Composition, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry – led to the university Departments of Science and Technology, and Higher Technological Institutes. The second group – Composition, Physics, Chemistry and Biology – led to university Medical and Biology Schools. The third group – Composition, Ancient Greek, Latin and History – led to the university Departments of Philosophy, Law, Modern/Ancient Literature and Education. The fourth group – Composition, Mathematics, History and Sociology (this was replaced by Political Economy in 1994) – led to the university Departments of Social and Political Sciences, Business, Economics, Administration and Mass Media. In addition, there was, until 1988, a fifth group that enabled those students not interested in going to university to get the school-leaving certificate. Students were not obliged to sit for the examinations in order to graduate.
21. The economic burden of *frontesteria* on poor people was supposed to be lifted, because the preparation for the entrance examinations would take place within Lycea. This policy could be justified by the fact that PA.SO.K, as a socialist movement, at that time wanted to satisfy the great demand for higher education by making the dream of the less privileged for higher education possible and achievable.
22. To give an example, let us suppose that most students in a classroom cannot assimilate a unit within the pre-specified period of time. This means that their teacher has to spend more time on it until the students are in a position to follow him/her. But this can hardly be achieved, as the teacher has to teach and complete his/her work within a pre-specified period of time.
23. The educational authorities exert control, at regular intervals, by sending teachers a form and asking them to specify the number of pages already taught. This results in a process of *intensification* and feelings of stress, as teachers must always keep in mind the concrete deadlines set by the authorities. In practice, the teaching of the specific *quantity* of the syllabus must be finished within a strictly predetermined period of time.
24. In the execution of their work, teachers have guidance and support by School Advisors whose role is to provide scientific-pedagogic guidance, to contribute to teachers' in-service training and in general to help teachers face school problems. They visit the schools of their educational area and get information from head teachers and teachers about the school's educational work (Tsountas & Xronopoulou, 1995, pp. 40-43).
25. According to Bernstein (1975), 'The middle-class child is oriented to learning almost anything ... for middle-class child is geared to learn; he may not like, or indeed approve of, what he learns, but he learns ...' (p. 113).
26. We characterise the market as 'quasi' because students do not really have the choice of attending ('buying') either the public school or *frontesteria*.
27. Known as Arsenis' Reform, after the surname of the then Minister of Education.

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TEACHING DEMOCRACY FOR POLITICAL ACTION: ON THE AIMS OF DEMOCRACY EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

MAHER Z. HASHWEH

Abstract – *This paper aims to identify and explicate the aims of democracy education, and to reach some agreement on the importance of these aims. It is divided into two parts. In the first theoretical part, a brief review of the works of some scholars who examined education and democracy is conducted in order to identify some of the important aims of democracy education. Subsequently, a classification of the aims of democracy education, emphasising teaching democracy for empowerment and political involvement, is presented. In the second empirical part, a report is presented on using the Delphi technique to reach consensus among key Palestinian educators about the important aims of democracy education in Palestine. It was found that two groups of independently working educators – namely, university professors and school teachers – shared the author's priorities for democracy education.*

Introduction

1t is becoming increasingly evident that the establishment of democracy and respect for human rights are crucial for real security and sustainable development in the Arab World. The important role of education in achieving these ends is also gradually realised. It is opportune to incorporate teaching for democracy as an important aim of schooling, and for democracy education curricula to be included along with language, mathematics, religion, science and other school curricula. Civic education courses in some countries, including Palestine, already devote substantial portions to the teaching of the different components of democracy and human rights. In the last decade, it has also become popular for NGOs working in the area to offer workshops on democracy and human rights. This is done, however, without agreement on what we mean exactly by democracy education, and without proper cognisance of the variety of aims for teaching democracy. Only after we reach agreement on the meaning and aims of democracy education can we design the appropriate curriculum and instruction.

Democracy and education in the Arab World

Interest in the relations between democracy and education has a long history in the West mainly due to the nature of the democratic western countries. Dewey (1966) was among the pioneers who explored these relations at the beginning of the 20th century. A century later, interest in these relations is still high, and it has gained global acceptance. In the discussion paper presented to the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (UNESCO, 1992), education was considered an important tool for democracy, human rights and citizenship. The report asserted, 'there is a perceived need to envision a learning environment where knowledge and respect for democracy, human rights and conscious citizenship will be constant dimensions for life' (p. 11). The report additionally posed many questions. These included:

- What kind of citizens should be educated and for what type of democracies?
- What should be the relationship between schools and communities?
- What should be done to enable young people to learn how to work in teams, to be tolerant and cooperative?

Issues of democracy and education, and the role of education in transitions to democracy have gained significant attention after the collapse of East European regimes. The recent developments in the Middle East have also triggered interest about the role of education in political and social stability and change in the Arab and Moslem countries.

It is interesting at this point to identify the aims for democracy education in western scholarly writings. Some scholars emphasise the development of cognitive aspects – the knowledge and skills necessary to live in a democratic society or to bolster democracy in society. Wood (1990), for example, advocates engaging students with big questions – the real local issues and problems that they face, such as labour problems in areas of high unemployment. Students are engaged with these problems to make sense of the world. They realise that these problems originate from some prior made choices, and are not inevitable. Consequently, students realise that things can, and should, be different. He also calls for developing critical forms of literacy that concern 'the ability to evaluate what is read or heard with respect to the interest being served or the positions taken' (Wood, 1988, p. 178).

Following a review of different ideas about teaching for democracy in the United States, Smyth (1997) concludes that it is important to develop students' critical abilities, and 'to work in ways other than individual ways and to create forms of shared responsibility and community' (p. 1125). Thus, although Smyth

emphasises the development of values – such as cooperation in place of competition – his emphasis on the cognitive outcomes of teaching for democracy is still clear. Strike (1993), who comes from a different orientation, nevertheless emphasises cognitive outcomes. He calls for creating a school culture that supports a discursive or deliberating community where all positions are presented and discussed. In such a community, social relations are characterised by equality, autonomy, reciprocity, and high regard for rational means of attaining consensus.

Noddings (1997) points out that in contrast to this emphasis on the cognitive domain – in particular on reasoning, problem solving and critical thinking – the character education movement concentrates on the development of virtues. She draws our attention to the important role of stories in moral development. And this irrespective of whether one takes a conservative orientation that teaches values in a direct manner or a liberal orientation that concentrates on the function of rational discussion in adopting certain values. What is important in Noddings' call for the use of stories is its emphasis on the affective domain rather than just focusing solely on the cognitive domain in democracy education.

In the Arab World, in spite of the big interest in democracy, the relations between democracy and education have still not been widely examined. In studies prior to 1990, scholars criticised the content and pedagogy of Arab education for being incompatible with democracy. Some aspects that hinder the development of democracy were also identified. It needs to be said, however, that these studies did not empirically examine child-rearing practices or school educational practices, and that in many cases these relied solely on personal experience.

Bahlul (1997) reviewed the works of some of these scholars. In terms of content, Bahlul asserts that Arab education emphasises values such as dependence, incompetence, respect for elders, charity, and collective belonging rather than individual autonomy – values that impede the democratisation process. For example, Bahlul discusses what Sharabi (1975) has termed 'the bourgeois-feudal mentality'. This mentality, which promotes the values of dependence and incompetence, inevitably maintains the status quo and the existing hegemonic forces in society. Bahlul also reminds us that Barakat (1984) had considered well-accepted values in Arab societies, such as charity and mercy, as values that rationalise an unjust social order since these values implicitly legitimate social and economic inequality rather than justice and equality.

With regard to educational methods, Bahlul asserts that Arab education emphasises rote learning and punishment at the expense of rational dialogue, and that these methods contradict those that are required for democracy. He further refers to Sharabi's assertion that Arab education gives a lot of importance to recitation and corporal punishment, both of which emphasise power relations and

de-emphasise deep understanding. This leads students to accept the status quo, which consequently hinders democratic change.

In contrast, Giackaman (1997) contends:

‘Modern education encourages the abilities to analyze, make connections, deduce, and provide evidence to defend one’s position or point of view. It tries to convince, as far as possible, through dialogue and rational debate. These characteristics assume the existence of more than one point of view about specific issues, and, therefore, the need to resort to evidence and support to convince the other party. If there were only one point of view about most issues there would be no need for proof, displaying of evidence, and seeking to convince others, and the requisite skills and abilities related to these needs. These characteristics of modern education are of the same type of characteristics needed for democracy education.’ (p. 8)

Reading Giackaman and Bahlul, one can identify interest in the development of both democratic values and attitudes. These include, for instance, open-mindedness and accepting defeat in the democratic game on one hand, and cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, and critical thinking on the other hand. Following his review, Bahlul calls for changes in both curriculum content and delivery. In terms of content, he calls for the introduction of the principles and values associated with democracy, including freedom, equality and respect of basic human rights. In terms of pedagogy, he calls for adopting methods that facilitate freedom and independence in research, thinking and expression. His intention is to inhibit close-mindedness and fanaticism, and to encourage students to open up to the world and the ‘other’.

Since 1990, a number of Arab researchers have conducted detailed empirical studies of child rearing and schooling practices. This research body shows that child rearing practices are affected by society and culture, and that these practices also affect society and culture by contributing to stability. According to Watfa (1996, 1999a, 1999b), the culture of authoritarianism is reflected in, and simultaneously maintains, relations between the old and young, between teachers and students, and between home and classroom practices. Watfa contends further that the pertinent literature in the Arab World reveals how the embedded authoritarianism is largely related to the patriarchal structure of Arab society. His point is that Arab culture, which emphasises the need for the young to obey their elders, expects schools to train students to become obedient and submissive by incorporating these values in teacher-student relations. Al-Naqib (1993) similarly concludes that the role of Arab education is to teach students blind obedience, thereby facilitating the acceptance of the prevailing values and ideology. A number of studies have shown that such a patriarchal relation affects negatively

students' learning outcomes (see, for example, Haidar's [1996] study which reports on the effects of a hierarchal relation on students' scientific attitudes).

Although, in the last two decades, there have been a significant number of research initiatives that examine the relationship between democracy and education in the Arab World, there is still lack of detailed specifications regarding possible and desirable aims, (and student learning outcomes), of teaching for democracy. What one encounters is either complete lack of specification of aims or specification of aims that emphasise certain domains, such as knowledge or cognitive skills and abilities, while neglecting other domains, such as attitudes or action. But the highlighting of the full range of possible aims allows educators to consciously identify priorities and to pursue certain aims at the expense of others.

A classification of the aims of democracy education

Table 1 provides a classification of the aims of democracy education. In reality, although the aims are presented here under four domains for analytical and functional purposes, they cannot be totally separated. For knowledge and skills, or products and process, are interrelated, and so are attitudes and actions. While the first two domains can be mapped to the cognitive domain in Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, the third is related to Bloom's affective domain. The classification can also be seen as bridging the gap between knowledge, understanding and abilities in the first two domains and the action and performance aims identified in the fourth domain. However, no hierarchy in these domains is assumed. For instance, understanding (in the first domain) aids application (in the second) that facilitates in turn deeper understanding. Again, knowledge and understanding guide action and performance, but performance also helps to realise the limits of principles and theories, thus promoting understanding.

The first domain 'knowledge and understanding' has eight aims. It is important for a student who has studied about democracy to understand the content or substantive structure of democratic thought. This includes the concepts of freedom, equality and human rights, and the basic components of democracy such as the rule of law, the legislative process, and citizenship (Aim 1.1). It is also important for students to identify the characteristics of democratic political systems, such as the separation of powers and the presence of mechanisms for monitoring the performance of each branch of power (Aim 1.2). This enables students to evaluate their local system. Additionally, it is valuable that they understand basic philosophical concepts related to democracy, such as political power, religion and politics, rationality, and the nature of knowledge (Aim 1.3).

TABLE 1: A classification of the aims of democracy education

1. Knowledge and Understanding

- 1.1 Knowing facts, concepts, principles, and theories of democratic thought.
- 1.2 Knowing the characteristics of democratic political systems.
- 1.3 Understanding the philosophical concepts and principles related to democracy.
- 1.4 Realising the limitations of democratic thought and practices.
- 1.5 Historical orientation: becoming cognizant of the background and development of democracy.
- 1.6 Understanding the interrelations between democracy, society and economics.
- 1.7 Knowing the characteristics of the local society and political system, and the important current socio-political problems.
- 1.8 Knowing the alternatives for democratic practices and for augmenting democracy in the local society.

2. Intellectual and Social Skills

- 2.1 Application: using democratic thought and knowledge about democratic systems in understanding and analysing reality.
- 2.2 Higher cognitive skills I: analysing, connecting, deducing and defending positions in order to debate and convince in a rational manner.
- 2.3 Higher cognitive skills II: making justified moral decisions and judgments.
- 2.4 Analytic/critical skills: critical analysis of texts, positions, and opinions to identify implicit assumptions and hidden interests, and distinguishing between knowledge and opinion.
- 2.5 Synthetic/creative skills: solving non-routine socio-political problems innovatively.
- 2.6 Using information resources in problem-solving and autonomous learning.
- 2.7 Effectively communicating with others in oral and written form.
- 2.8 Cooperatively working with others, and organising them for action.

3. Attitudes and Interests

- 3.1 Showing positive attitudes towards democracy and democrats.
- 3.2 Accepting democracy as a political system and as a way of life.
- 3.3 Enjoying political activity.
- 3.4 Embracing democratic values and attitudes.
- 3.5 Developing a positive sense of self-efficacy.

4. Action and Performance

- 4.1 Demonstrating democratic behaviour or practices in daily and political life.
- 4.2 Participating in building a just and democratic society.

The key point is that democracy presumes that knowledge cannot be proven true, and that knowledge is only provisionally accepted and subject to change in the future. The consequent understanding that nobody owns irrefutable knowledge calls for open-mindedness and the willingness to engage in dialogue with others in order to reach consensus. Other important philosophical concepts and principles including justice, individual freedom, and consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethical theories that help students realise the ethical bases of democracy and democratic systems.

Deep understanding of democracy also entails a realisation of the limits of democratic thought and its various applications in different political systems (Aim 1.4). For instance, it is important to be cognizant of the relation, in many Western countries, between the economic status of a citizen and his or her ability to undertake an election campaign for public office, or the substantial influence of some special-interest groups on the media and on the political decision-taking process. A deep understanding of democracy would not be complete without knowledge of the social, economic and ideational conditions that influence the development of democratic regimes and that accompany the development of democracy (Aim 1.5), and without understanding the interrelations between democracy, society and economics (Aim 1.6). This last aspect includes studying the effects of the prevalent culture, including norms and values, the nature and structure of society, and the degree of economic development of a country on democracy, as well as the social, economic and ethical implications of democracy.

While the first six aims of the ‘knowledge and understanding’ domain concentrate on the development of a deep understanding of democracy and cognisance of the means of developing democracy, the last two aims of this domain are meant to help students relate democracy to the characteristics of the local society. Aim 1.7 allows the student to realise the characteristics of the local society and political system, and to identify the important current socio-cultural problems in his or her society. On the other hand, Aim 1.8 introduces the student to the alternatives for democratic action and for augmenting democracy in the local society. These eight aims form a solid intellectual platform for the student to use in developing his or her intellectual skills, democratic attitudes and practices (i.e., the other three domains).

The second domain is concerned with developing students’ intellectual and social skills and abilities. The idea here is to help them use what they have learned about democracy to understand and analyse reality, to take defensible moral and political positions and judgments, to participate in deliberations and argumentations, to critically analyse public written texts and oral discourse, to solve personal and societal democracy-related problems, to become autonomous learners and problem-solvers, to communicate effectively, and to work with others

and to organise others for action. Aim 2.1 emphasises the need for learning for transfer – that is, to use knowledge about democracy in private and public life. The next two aims emphasise the higher order cognitive skills necessary for democratic and moral practice. These include analysing, making connections and deductions, and arguing and deliberating – all of which are necessary skills in decision-making and in defending the decisions taken. It is also important that future citizens, in order to be in a better position to cope with the rhetoric or demagoguery of politicians, are critical thinkers who can analyse the opinions and allegations of others (Aim 2.4).

Aims 2.5 and 2.6 highlight the need for the democratic citizen to solve problems individually and in collaboration with others, and to use different information resources to solve these problems and to learn autonomously. Citizen participation in decision-making requires educated and well-informed persons who are aware of all relevant information about a certain issue or who can gather the required information on their own. The last two aims in this domain are concerned with the social skills of effective communication and collaboration. This builds on the understanding that political democratic action is most frequently a long-term collaborative effort rather than a short-term individual undertaking.

The third domain identifies the attitudes and interests needed for democratic practice. The first two aims identify the need for students to hold positive attitudes toward democracy and to personally accept democracy as a political system and a way of life. These aims basically focus on the essential attitudes that should be promoted in programmes of democracy education. A student with such attitudes will support democracy without necessarily becoming politically active or engaged in political life. It is also important for citizens to enjoy, or at least not to hate, social/political activity (Aim 3.3 – see also Aims 3.4 and 3.5 for their importance in developing a politically active citizen). In fact, many prominent figures in political and public life enjoy their work. In particular, they value working with others, struggling to solve certain issues, and showing solidarity with specific sectors of society. The activities themselves, which need not necessarily be means to important aims held by these activists, become internally motivating or satisfying.

Aim 3.3 emphasises the need for the student to adopt democratic values and attitudes, such as respect for the opinions of others and open-mindedness. Open-mindedness, or the disposition to listen carefully to others and to change one's opinion when there is a need to do so, is related to one's epistemological beliefs (an issue previously discussed under Aim 1.3). There are differences between individuals with regard to the degree to which they adopt certain values or beliefs. According to psychologists who have studied moral development, when certain

ethical values and beliefs become part of the individual's personal identity, that individual tends to act or behave in a manner that is harmonious with these values and beliefs (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003). Consequently, one of the aims of democracy education is to assist the student to incorporate ethical beliefs into his or her personal identity. Erickson (1968) contends that adolescent students are primarily concerned with the crisis of identifying and developing their identities. This aim is thus particularly important for democracy education during the period of adolescence, even if it is known that people also remain concerned with the dilemma of identity formation in later years.

Some researchers have investigated the presence and development of a political or civic identity. Some studies (e.g., McAdam, 1988; Colby et al., 2003) have found that politically active college students remain active only when this activity becomes part of their political identity, that is, their sense and views of themselves and who they are. But others, in spite of their political activity during college years, do not continue to be politically active because political interests and activities do not become part of their political identity.

The last aim in this domain concentrates on the significance of developing students' sense of self-efficacy so that they come to believe in their ability to participate in social and political activity and in their capacity to influence and change their environment. Closely related to this is the concept of empowerment, that is, providing the learner with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to make decisions and to take responsibility for them. Some studies have shown that individuals who have a positive conception of fate control are more active than others, for these individuals believe that the future is affected by what the human being does at present (see Rowe, 1983). Ramsey (1993) reviewed some studies that show that a student's behaviour toward the environment is influenced by fate control and other factors such as the valuation by the student of his or her abilities and effectiveness or self-efficacy. Analogically, it seems that the teaching of concepts and principles of democracy or of higher-order and critical thinking skills is not sufficient to develop in students the tendency to participate effectively in political life and to work to consolidate democracy in society. Indeed, the acquiring of the proper attitudes and interests is also vitally important. In particular, developing the students' confidence in their ability to influence their social and physical environment, or their capability to make a difference, helps bridge the gap between intellectual understanding and democratic practices.

In this area, psychologists have differentiated between personal- or self-efficacy (i.e., the valuation of one's ability to affect one's own personal situation and future) and political efficacy (i.e., the valuation of one's ability to influence the political process). Bandura (1997) has shown that an individual's sense of self-efficacy and political-efficacy are related, even if the correlation is weak, and that

an individual's political-efficacy is more predictive of political behaviour than self-efficacy. It seems that many persons feel that they can control their personal life but that they do not have any political influence. This can lead to feelings of frustration and a sceptic outlook toward the political process and the political institutions in one's country.

The fourth and final domain is concerned with action and practice. The final aim of democratic education is not merely to develop a student who is well educated about democracy, or even a student who is a critical thinker. The aim should be instead to develop future citizens who are well empowered for political participation and who act, individually and collaboratively, in a democratic manner to develop and bolster democracy in society. Aim 4.1, which is related to behaving in a democratic manner in a democratic society, is about being a 'good citizen'. Aim 4.2, however, is more radical. It involves challenging and changing the status quo in order to build a more *just* and *democratic* society. This might include challenging the authorities, getting into conflicts and actively opposing existing policies and social-economic structures.

Empirical validation: a Delphi study

The aims of democracy education presented above, which also reflect the author's own philosophy and point of view, were identified by means of a review of scholarly writings about democracy and education. The next step was to investigate: (i) the extent to which other Palestinian educators share the author's priorities; and (ii) how much consensus there is among them about these priorities. To answer these two questions, a two-stage Delphi study was conducted.

The Delphi technique

The Delphi technique is a procedure to reach consensus among a group of experts without face-to-face interactions. Each participant usually first answers a questionnaire, and then responds to subsequent ones after receiving feedback on the opinions expressed by the other participants on previous questionnaires. In each subsequent questionnaire, the participant is encouraged to re-evaluate each item in the questionnaire, for example to re-rate its importance, in the light of the average rating that the item received on the previous one. The method's main advantage is its efficiency. It makes it possible to reach consensus among a group of experts, separated geographically, without bringing them into the same place. The method also allows the participant to express his or her opinion anonymously, thus reducing the pressure to conform to others' opinions. This affords the

participant the chance to reflect critically on his or her opinion, to rationally consider the issue at leisure, and to provide reasoned written responses. The method has been used since the 1960s for identifying aims and priorities in a variety of areas of educational research, including teacher education (e.g., Cyphert & Gant, 1970), school educational planning (e.g., Rasp, 1974), and research in science education (e.g., Butts, Capie, Fuller, May, Okey & Yeany, 1978) and the science curriculum (e.g., Hausesler, Frey, Hoffman, Rost & Spada, 1980; Osborn, Collins, Ratcliffe, Millar & Duschl, 2003).

In most Delphi studies, a group of experts is identified, usually composed of a number of subgroups that are however all treated as one group. That is, all participants receive feedback for the previous questionnaire using all the participants' responses. For example, the Osborne et al. (2003) study identified 25 expert science educators from five subgroups: (i) scientists; (ii) historians, philosophers, and sociologists of science; (iii) those working to improve the public understanding of science; (iv) science education academics; and (v) science teachers. Participants in each subgroup received the same feedback provided to the other subgroups: It consisted of mean ratings of all the participants' responses. The first round is usually an open-ended questionnaire, which is followed by two (and, in rare cases, three) rounds. The minimum number of Delphi participants is recommended to be 10 (Cochran, 1983; cited in Osborne et al., 2003). The participants are usually identified as experts according to certain criteria defined by the researcher, and no effort is made to select a representative sample.

Methodology

In the present study, two groups of 'experts' were chosen. The first group was composed of 21 faculty members in a Palestinian university in the central area of the West Bank. The criteria used for choosing them were that they held degrees in a democracy-related social science or humanities field, and that they were interested in democracy education. The second group was composed of 107 grade nine school teachers of civic education in the Educational Directorate of Ramallah in the central West Bank. The different 'sample' sizes for the two groups reflects the respective sizes of the pools from which they were drawn – that is, university faculty members in one university versus grade nine school teachers in a central West Bank directorate. All 21 university educators (henceforth called 'professors') and 85 school teachers (henceforth called 'teachers'), that is about 79%, answered the questionnaire distributed in Round 1 of the study. The professors held doctorate degrees in philosophy, cultural studies, history, political science, sociology, law and education. Seventy three percent of the teachers held bachelor degrees, 5% held masters degrees, and 22% held a two-year course

education diplomas. Sixty three percent of the teachers had majored in history or a combination of history and another social science, 16% in geography, and about 21% in other specialisations ranging from the natural sciences to Islamic religious studies.

In Round 1, a close-ended questionnaire, consisting of 23 items, was used. The items, which represented the aims classified in Table 1, were presented to the participants in an unordered manner and without the classifying categories. The participants were asked to rate each aim in relation to its perceived importance within a democracy education curriculum at secondary school level. The following five-point Likert scale was used: 5 – very important; 4 – important; 3 – moderately important; 2 – slightly important; and 1 – unimportant. Unlike many other Delphi studies that start with an open-ended questionnaire from which the items of the second round questionnaire are inductively constructed, in this study we started with a closed-ended questionnaire because the aims had already been identified and the purpose of the study was to validate these aims.

In Round 2, the participants were provided with the items of the original questionnaire with three adjacent columns. In the first column, the participant was reminded of his or her previous rating. In the second column, the Round 1 mean rating for the item was provided. The participant was asked to re-rate the item in column three, given the feedback provided in column two. Unlike other Delphi studies, the two groups were treated as two separate samples. That is, the participants in each group were provided with the means calculated for their particular group. This decision reflected the author's interest in reaching consensus within each group and then comparing the results for the two groups. Nineteen professors (90.5%) and 73 teachers (85.9%) returned the Round 2 questionnaire. The reliability of this questionnaire (coefficient α) was .89 for the teachers' group, .80 for the professors' group, and .87 for the combined (collapsed) sample of professors and teachers.

Results

Main findings

The mean score, the standard deviation and the mode for each aim or item in the questionnaire were calculated using the data of the 1-5 response categories collected in Rounds 1 and 2. The results, sorted in descending order according to the means in Round 2, are presented in Table 2. These results are based on calculations from the two subgroups (i.e., professors and teachers) taken as one group. The two categories were collapsed for this part of the analysis because,

TABLE 2: Aims of democracy education by mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and mode as ranked by Palestinian educators according to perceived importance

Aim	Round 2			Round 1		
	M	SD	mode	M	SD	mode
2.8 Working cooperatively with others	4.54	.65	5	4.31	.85	5
1.7 Characteristics of local society	4.49	.73	5	4.31	.84	5
1.1 Concepts and theories of democratic thought	4.45	.65	5	4.38	.75	5
2.2 Cognitive skills I: deliberating publicly	4.45	.80	5	4.26	.94	5
4.1 Exhibiting democratic practices	4.43	.88	5	4.44	.89	5
1.2 Characteristics of democratic political systems	4.37	.67	5	4.27	.78	5
4.2 Participating in building a just and democratic society	4.28	.98	5	4.20	.96	5
2.5 Synthetic/creative skills: innovative problem-solving	4.27	.81	5	4.16	.91	5
2.3 Making justified moral decisions and judgments	4.24	.78	4	4.22	.98	5
1.6 Interrelations between democracy, society and economics	4.24	.71	4	4.10	.83	4
2.6 Using resources in problem-solving and learning	4.24	.86	5	4.16	.97	5
2.7 Effectively communicating with others	4.21	.83	4	4.12	.82	4
1.8 Alternatives for democratic practices in local community	4.16	.85	4	4.15	.86	4
2.4 Analytic/critical skills: critical analysis of texts and discourse	4.13	.91	4	4.06	.95	4
3.2 Accepting democracy as a system and a way of life	4.09	1.15	5	4.19	1.13	5
3.5 Developing a positive sense of self-efficacy	4.09	.72	4	3.97	.86	4
1.4 Limitations of democratic thought and practices	3.98	.82	4	3.89	.92	4
3.4 Embracing democratic values and attitudes	3.98	1.18	5	3.98	1.13	5
2.1 Application: using democratic thought to understand and analyse reality	3.96	.93	4	3.99	1.00	5
3.1 Showing positive attitudes toward democracy	3.93	.96	4	3.98	.93	4
1.3 Philosophical concepts and principles related to democracy	3.93	.91	4	3.87	.98	4
1.5 Historical orientation: development of democracy	3.77	1.00	4	3.66	.97	4
3.3 Enjoying political activity	3.63	1.01	4	3.64	1.00	4

as will be shown in detail later on, there were almost no differences between the two groups.

The mode for each aim, even in Round 1, was ≥ 4 . This indicated that the educators viewed the aims as either important or very important. Fifteen aims (65%) in Round 1 and 16 aims (70%) in Round 2 had a mean ≥ 4 . There was relatively high consensus about the importance of these aims among the respondents: In Rounds 1 and 2, 19 aims (82%) had a standard deviation < 1 . Another way to measure the consensus about the importance of a certain aim is to calculate the percentage of respondents who rate that aim as at least ‘important’ (i.e., mean ≥ 4). Table 3 shows these percentages for each aim in both rounds.

TABLE 3: Percentage of respondents rating each aim at least as ‘important’ in Round 1 and in Round 2

Aim	At least ‘important’ (Percentage)	
	Round 2	Round 1
2.8 Working cooperatively with others	93.5	84.9
1.1 Concepts and theories of democratic thought	93.5	87.7
1.7 Characteristics of local society	92.4	84.0
4.1 Exhibiting democratic practices	91.3	84.9
1.2 Characteristics of democratic political systems	91.3	84.0
2.2 Cognitive skills I: deliberating publicly	89.1	80.2
1.6 Interrelations between democracy, society and economics	89.1	76.4
2.5 Synthetic/creative skills: innovative problem-solving	87.0	77.4
1.8 Alternatives for democratic practices in local community	87.0	83.0
4.2 Participating in building a just and democratic society	85.9	82.1
2.6 Using resources in problem-solving and learning	85.9	81.1
2.3 Making justified moral decisions and judgments	84.8	79.2
2.7 Effectively communicating with others	84.8	80.2
3.2 Accepting democracy as a system and a way of life	82.6	76.4
3.5 Developing a positive sense of self-efficacy	82.6	73.6
2.4 Analytic/critical skills: critical analysis of texts and discourse	81.5	76.4
1.4 Limitations of democratic thought and practices	77.2	69.8
2.1 Application: using democratic thought to understand and analyse reality	77.2	70.8
3.4 Embracing democratic values and attitudes	76.1	73.6
3.1 Showing positive attitudes toward democracy	72.8	76.4
1.3 Philosophical concepts and principles related to democracy	67.4	65.1
1.5 Historical orientation: development of democracy	67.4	59.4
3.3 Enjoying political activity	63.0	58.5

For this Delphi Study, it was decided to define consensus as a minimum of two thirds of the participants (66.7%) rating the aim as ≥ 4 on the Likert scale. Eventually, only one aim (i.e., Aim 3.3 – Enjoying political activity) fell below this criterion. Two other aims just passed the criterion. These were the aims related to gaining a historical orientation about democracy (i.e., Aim 1.5) and understanding the philosophical concepts and principles underlying democracy (i.e., Aim 1.3).

Research questions

Coming back to the two questions asked at the beginning of this Delphi Study, the analysis of the present data indicates that:

- (i) The respondents, composed of Palestinian school teachers and university professors, rated the aims of democracy education proposed in the first part of this paper as either important or very important. This shows that they shared the author's priorities about the aims of teaching democracy in Palestinian schools.
- (ii) There was consensus about the importance of 22 out of the 23 proposed aims. Consequently, the Delphi study served to validate the proposed aims of democracy education.

It was moreover deemed interesting to investigate whether there were differences between the priorities of the professors and the school teachers. This is discussed in the following section.

Variance between subgroups

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for each aim in Round 2. A *t*-test for differences between means was conducted for each aim. Significant differences were found for only two out of the 23 aims. While the professors rated Aim 3.3 (i.e., Enjoying political activity) as moderately important with a mean of 3.1, the teachers rated it close to 'important' with a mean of 3.8 ($p < .01$). The professors probably viewed this aim either as not important or else as difficult to achieve at this level of education. In contrast, the professors viewed the development of critical thinking abilities as more important than the teachers (means of 4.6 and 4.0 respectively, $p < .05$), who still viewed this aim as important. In conclusion, when comparing the ratings of each aim given by teachers and professors, very little differences were found between the two groups. There were in fact no significant differences on 91% of the aims.

TABLE 4: Round 2 means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for each aim by subgroup

Aim	Teachers		Professors	
	M	SD	M	SD
1.1 Concepts and theories of democratic thought	4.480	.669	4.316	.582
1.2 Characteristics of democratic political systems	4.356	.714	4.421	.507
1.3 Philosophical concepts and principles related to democracy	3.890	.891	4.105	.994
1.4 Limitations of democratic thought and practices	3.904	.819	4.263	.806
1.5 Historical orientation: development of democracy	3.795	.985	3.684	1.108
1.6 Interrelations between democracy, society and economics	4.233	.736	4.263	.653
1.7 Characteristics of local society	4.452	.782	4.632	.496
1.8 Alternatives for democratic practices in local community	4.206	.833	4.000	.943
2.1 Application: using democratic thought to understand and analyse reality	3.863	.918	4.316	.946
2.2 Cognitive skills I: deliberating publicly	4.425	.848	4.526	.612
2.3 Making justified moral decisions and judgments	4.247	.760	4.222	.878
2.4 Analytic/critical skills: critical analysis of texts and discourse	4.014	.920	4.579	.769
2.5 Synthetic/creative skills: innovative problem-solving	4.343	.837	4.000	.667
2.6 Using resources in problem-solving and learning	4.260	.866	4.158	.898
2.7 Effectively communicating with others	4.274	.804	3.947	.911
2.8 Working cooperatively with others	4.589	.642	4.368	.684
3.1 Showing positive attitudes toward democracy	4.000	.850	3.684	1.336
3.2 Accepting democracy as a system and a way of life	4.137	1.071	3.895	1.449
3.3 Enjoying political activity	3.781	.932	3.053	1.129
3.4 Embracing democratic values and attitudes	4.000	1.130	3.895	1.410
3.5 Developing a positive sense of self-efficacy	4.069	.733	4.158	.688
4.1 Exhibiting democratic practices	4.452	.867	4.368	.955
4.2 Participating in building a just and democratic society	4.384	.922	3.895	1.150

TABLE 5: Round 2 means (M) and standard deviations (SD) for the aims by domain and subgroup

Domain	Teachers (n = 73)		Professors (n = 19)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Practice	4.42	.77	4.13	1.01
Skills	4.25	.57	4.26	.47
Knowledge	4.16	.49	4.21	.52
Attitudes	4.00	.64	3.74	.85

To examine the variance at the domain level, the means and standard deviations of the two subgroups were calculated for each of the four domains (see Table 5). Application of the *t*-test for differences between means for each domain revealed that the teachers and professors did not view the importance of each domain in a significantly different manner. In summary, the examination of the variances between the two subgroups at the domain level revealed no differences between them, while the examination at the particular aim level revealed no differences in 91% of the cases. Two conclusions could be drawn. Firstly, the fact that the two groups of educators did not differ significantly in their priorities for democracy education, and the fact that these priorities – which corresponded with those of the author as presented in this study – validated the aims of democracy education offered in this paper. Secondly, the fact that the two subgroups did not differ significantly in their priorities allows us, as was done in the previous section, to collapse the two subgroups and analyse the data for one sample only.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to identify and classify the priorities of democracy education for Palestine. It was argued that the final goals of democracy education should extend beyond providing the students with deep understanding of democratic concepts and principles, or helping them to acquire democracy-related intellectual and social skills, or even developing their attitudes and interests in democracy, even if these aims are all important. The final aim of democracy education should be the development of good citizens who are engaged in the political life in a democracy, and who participate in building a just and democratic society where this does not exist. It was to that end that the classification of the aims of democracy education was proposed. The present study revealed that two independently working groups of Palestinian educators shared the author's priorities. Consensus was achieved for all aims except for one related to the enjoyment of political and democratic activities. The educators perhaps viewed this aim as not appropriate for all students, but only for the few who will become political activists in the future. And, perhaps, they are right. The importance of this study is that it starts a dialogue and initiates serious thinking about our priorities for democracy education. Issues about pedagogy and resource development are important, but these require careful studies in the future and are only subsequent to identifying our priorities. It is moreover hoped that the present study contributes to a dialogue about democracy education beyond Palestine – particularly, in the Arab World and in our Mediterranean region. It would, for instance, be interesting to learn to what extent other educators in the region agree with these aims, and if

the present framework has neglected important aims or approaches to democracy education.

One particular finding, however, still merits some discussion. There is a need to explain the early consensus achieved within both groups, the agreement between the two groups in spite of the fact that they represent two different sectors of educators (i.e., university professors and school teachers), and finally the agreement of both groups with the author. One probable reason for this agreement is the fact that almost all aims in the taxonomy were derived inductively from the literature on democracy education. That is, the taxonomy included aims that previous scholars working in this field of study found important. One consequently should not be surprised that Palestinian educators also found them important. The present taxonomy merely organised these aims and allowed a view of the whole rather than the parts.

A second factor that could explain this agreement is the peculiar context of Palestine. Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories have lived since 1967 under foreign military rule. This made any democratic participation for them impossible. Yet, they have witnessed democracy in Israel, the state that occupies them, and the recent transitions to democracy in many countries. This has made democracy an important ideal for them. The recent internal violence and lawlessness in the occupied territories have made the democratic ideal even more essential to the majority of Palestinians. Indeed, the rule of law, accountability, and civil liberties have become more appreciated and desired in a situation in which they are absent. Consequently, the aims of democracy education presented to the educators in this study were deemed important.

Finally, the identification and validation of the aims of democracy education provided in this study have important implications for education in Palestine. Identifying the full range of important aims allows educators, when designing different democracy education programmes, to provide balance in their aims between the different domains – namely, cognitive, affective, and performance or action. Additionally, the identification and classification of aims helps in the analysis and evaluation of existing programmes, curricula and instruction. It guides programme and student evaluation, and also provides a common language to discuss democracy education programmes. In short, classification of aims, as Shulman (2002) asserts in another context, provides a framework, or a middle-range theory, that guides development, analysis, assessment and evaluation in democracy education.

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THE DIALECTIC OF NATIONALISM AND FEMINISM AMONG PALESTINIAN WOMEN STUDENT-ACTIVISTS IN ISRAELI UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract – *This paper explores the dialectical relationship between nationalism and feminism in the experience of a group of Palestinian women student-activists in Israeli universities. An overview of the history of Palestinian women's involvement in the national movement leads to the conclusion that the Palestinian Intifada in 1987 was a turning point in articulating a feminist-nationalist agenda among Palestinian women activists in the West Bank and Gaza and inside Israel. Qualitative interviews with 11 Palestinian women student activists in Israeli universities reveal two intertwined themes of nationalism and feminism. Participants clearly challenge their male dominated political organisations to espouse a progressive social-political agenda focusing simultaneously on national and gender forms of oppression.*

Introduction

Any attempt to understand the Palestinian Women's Movement without viewing it within the context of the broader Palestinian National Movement, or to discuss the latter without paying special attention to the indispensable role played by Palestinian women activists and their organizations in mobilising and sustaining the struggle for Palestinian sovereignty, is incomplete and misleading. Feminism and nationalism in national liberation movements around the world have historically been intertwined and clearly influence each other (Abdo, 1991), especially in relation to Third World feminism. Third world feminism is a concept that has received much attention in feminist and postcolonial circles. Rather than restate the multiple formations that Third World feminism speaks to, for the purposes of this article we use the term to underscore the various struggles that oppressed and marginalized women engage in as part of their collective pursuit for social justice, liberation and transformation. Following Chandra Mohanty (2001), we consider the 'intersections of the various systemic networks of class, race, (hetero)sexuality, and nation' (p. 55) that position women in Third World feminism. In the case of the Palestinian Women's Movement, and student activists in particular, our analysis pays distinct attention to the subjective location of

women engaged in struggles for preserving Arab-Palestinian national identity within an alienating educational context.

Numerous attempts to understand the ways in which nationalist movements for liberation could simultaneously be conceived as feminist (and vice versa) have revealed a corpus of contradictory relations between nationalist and feminist projects. A limited analysis of nationalist-feminist projects views the former as inherently masculine and patriarchal in purpose and scope, and the latter as stand-alone movements for women's liberation. When considered in unison, the contradictions between nationalism and feminism appear irreconcilable under the fixed definitions from which both concepts are conceived. Traditionally, various schools of Western-liberal feminism have been critical of the very concept of nationalism on the ground of its marginalization of women's liberation and their oppression (Hasso, 1998). However, as Kumari Jayawardena (1986) maintains in her classic text *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, women's feminist agendas have been, to a large extent, an integral part of general national movements for liberation from foreign colonialism and domination. In this sense, feminism in Third World countries is not a recently imported Western idea, but has its historical indigenous roots in the experiences of the native women themselves.

Himmani Bannerji (2001, 2002) correctly asserts, in our view, that feminist critiques – analyses rooted in the concepts of patriarchy and gender – of nationalism and nationalist movements include an examination of the cultural, economic and state dimensions from which nationalisms operate. Bannerji identifies two main strands of feminist critique that have emerged of nationalism. On this point, it is worth quoting her at some length:

'One strand considers any nationalism as inherently patriarchal and containing oppressive and exclusive moral constructions and regulations within its cultural, ideological and state apparatus. A patriarchally constructed icon of woman serves as the cultural/moral sign of the nation. Any national project, it is contended, identifies itself through this critique which deduces its patriarchal nature not from any direct content but from an ideologically driven absence of women and gender within their purview.' (2002, p. 6)

According to Bannerji, feminist criticisms of nationalisms primarily centre on the placement of women – both figuratively and concretely – as part of an overall movement towards nationalist transformation. Feminist critiques, as Bannerji also asserts, are important and necessary because they dutifully illustrate how women and the concepts of gender and patriarchy have either been ignored or manipulated to achieve un-feminist goals and objectives. But, as she also notes, such criticisms do not fully consider the social, political and economic sphere of feminist

struggles within nationalist movements. According to Bannerji, such an undifferentiated view does not offer us a lens from which to examine the complexity of women's participation in nationalist projects, and it does not allow us to move beyond the static formulations of 'feminist' versus 'nationalist' movements. Importantly, dominant conceptions of feminism and nationalism do not consider how both frameworks – when conceived as simultaneous projects towards liberation and justice – dialectically inform one another and how they can empower all members of a nation to rewrite their social location. As Bannerji notes, the purpose of expanding feminism's critique of nationalism is to 'broaden the parameters ... both as politics and as an epistemology, by situating the issues of patriarchy and gender justice within a wider space of revolutionary social criticism rooted in a demand for social justice – for all and at all levels' (2002, p. 6).

In light of Bannerji's insights, we are examining Palestinian student women's activism from a vantage point that pays considerable attention to the broader social relations that inform women's participation in the Palestinian struggle for national liberation and for women's rights. In the context of Palestinian student activists attending Israeli universities, our focus is on the factors – namely, family and collective ethnic identity – that motivate women to actively participate in the nationalist struggle. Further, their level and form of participation is examined in relation to their social location as women in a traditionally male dominated sphere. Consider, for example, the qualitative study conducted with a sample of Palestinian women students at the Hebrew University in which Erdreich & Rapoport (2002) investigated the construction of academic knowledge as a process of elaborating national identity among women student activists. In their reference to gendering the ethnonational discourse among Palestinian women, they point out that 'joining their male Palestinian peers in higher education catapults the women into the heart of the Palestinian national project' (p. 510). Erdreich & Rapoport (2002) note further that 'the attachment to the ethnonational story of Palestinians' positionality in Israel represents active participation of women in an arena previously reserved for men' (p. 510).

As Ibrahim Makkawi (1999) has noted elsewhere, asserting and enhancing their Arab-Palestinian national identity is one of the core issues for Palestinian student activists in Israeli universities. For female student activists, the growing awareness of their oppression not only as members of the Palestinian national minority but also as women within their own patriarchal Arab society, adds more complexity to their struggle. The women we interviewed for this study were committed activist members in mixed gender student political organisations. These organisations are the student branches of the various Palestinian political parties in the community. The contradictions identified by Palestinian women

activists between the politically progressive and socially conservative outlooks of their male comrades become one of the major concerns they grapple with as political activists. This dialectic between feminism and nationalism is the focus of this paper.

In order to understand the complexity of feminist consciousness among Palestinian women activists and its dialectical relation with their nationalist consciousness, it is essential to review the historical roots of the Palestinian Women's Movement as it evolved within the context of the Palestinian National Movement. We therefore first provide a brief historical review of Palestinian women's political involvement with special attention to the *Intifada* in 1987 as a turning point in Palestinian women's struggle. Then we turn the focus to the situation of Palestinian women in Israel, and discuss findings from in-depth interviews with Palestinian women student activists in Israeli universities.

History of the Palestinian Women's Movement

Since the beginning of the Palestinian resistance during the British Mandate (1917-1948), participation of Palestinian women in the public space would not have been possible unless it was part of the national struggle despite the lack of articulation of social agenda pertaining to women's equality. The precedence of the national cause over the social cause in the Palestinian women's political involvement during that time was attributed to the conservative nature of the Arab-Palestinian society (Kuttab, 1993). In contrast to earlier women's activism in other Arab countries (such as Egypt and Tunisia) where women activists focused on social issues such as the abolition of polygamy and the right to vote, Palestinian women at that time marched against the Balfor declaration, Jewish immigration to Palestine and the treatment of Palestinian prisoners (Hiltermann, 1991). The argument put forth by the male dominated national movement was that the challenges facing Palestinian society as a whole demanded the participation of all segments of the population, which required the minimisation of internal conflicts. As expected, Palestinian women's organisations at that time reflected the political and social structure of Palestinian society. Indeed, the leadership of the women's associations consisted of women from the upper class, usually relatives of the national male leadership. Most of their activities were limited to charitable and humanitarian domains, which was consistent with the society's class structure and reflected a picture of 'the rich helping the poor'.

The Palestinians refer to the war of 1948 and the establishment of Israel as the *Nakbah* (catastrophe), which resulted in the fragmentation of their society and the destruction of their sociopolitical institutions. Consequently, they became

scattered in several locations under different sociopolitical and economic conditions¹. The uprooting led to a series of dramatic changes in Palestinian women's lives that included a weakening of the power of the family as a social, economic and political unit.

Class differences in Palestinian society did not vanish after the *Nakbah* of 1948. On the contrary, class differences became more acute in exile as peasants and the poor settled in refugee camps while the upper class urbanites settled in towns and cities in their host countries. The tradition of Palestinian women's grassroots work around charitable issues continued in exile, but was expanded by the entry of peasant (now camp) women into the political arena which had been dominated by men (Peteet, 1991). Women's charitable organisations mushroomed in the camps in order to meet the pressing demands of survival in exile. Although this may be seen as an extension of their domestic roles as care givers and protection providers to those in need, the women carried on a substantial role of substituting for the state services.

Palestinian women in Lebanon had played an indispensable role in both the preservation of the refugee community in exile and the armed struggle led by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Their major participation in the struggle was made through the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), which has officially represented Palestinian women in the PLO since 1965 (Kawar, 1993). The GUPW membership reflected the size and power of the different factions within the PLO, and its membership and structure supposedly unites women from all the various political factions (Peteet, 1991). However, in reality, these women advocate and represent the agendas of their respective political organisations rather than their common issues as women. The failure of the Palestinian leadership to formalise a clear policy of social change and the incorporation of women's issues in the agenda of the national struggle has been attributed to its reluctance to 'rock the social structure with an accelerated, social change ideology that might be divisive and might drain its limited political and financial resources' (Kawar, 1993, p. 57).

Mobilising Palestinian women to participate in the national movement during the period of 1970-1982 in Lebanon was not isolated from the situation of war. Not only was their participation in the resistance affected by the war itself, but also their daily lives in the camps were continuously under war related stress. The class differences that the Palestinians carried with them in exile and the conservative outlook of the camp community were crucial to the manner in which women organised themselves. The camp women were caught between the revolution and the traditions of the Palestinian patriarchal society. What made matters worse was the fact that from the outset the leadership of the Palestinian National Movement had pursued compromise and coexistence with the existing patriarchal structure

rather than challenge it with an agenda of social transformation and change. Woman's earlier involvement in the revolution required the blessing and approval of her father or husband (Bendt & Dawning, 1980; Peteet, 1991). Because of the economic difficulties among the camp community, women recruitment was geared towards this domain, which also had more chances of support by the men in the family. According to Kavar (1993), 'programs to engage women included literacy classes, sewing, embroidering, and beauty salon workshops which formed the sort of traditional activities that were attractive because they increased opportunity for employment' (p. 38).

Having lost the base of their revolution as a result of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the focus of the Palestinian struggle has since shifted to combating the deplorable and inhumane living conditions of the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Since 1967, Palestinian women's charitable organisations in the occupied West Bank and Gaza played a significant role in supplying public services such as nurseries, orphanages, relief and income-generating projects for needy families (Sayigh, 1989).

Most interesting in the Palestinian women's movement is the political disparity between the older and younger generations of women activists. While both generations are equally eager to end the Israeli occupation, they sharply differ regarding the role and status of women in Palestinian society. The fact that older Palestinian women activists are reluctant to commit themselves to radical social change must be attributed to their relatively influential status in the traditional patriarchal system. As Haj (1992) notes,

'The entry of the older generation of activists into the political struggle is a natural extension of their relatively powerful status as mothers within the extended family household, earned through seniority and bearing sons. Since they are part of the power structure, their political mobilization does not lead them to question patriarchal relations or the prevailing forms of gender inequalities. Simply put, they have an investment in protecting patriarchal relations.' (p. 775)

Despite the magnificent role played by these charity organisations in defying the occupation authorities, and the abundant services they provided to women in need, their older women leaders continuously refrained from addressing issues of women liberation in their agenda. But a new generation of Palestinian women activists in the West Bank, motivated by their national consciousness on the one hand and their awareness of the need to address women's social issues on the other, began looking for appropriate organisational frameworks in the 1970s. When the next wave of Palestinian women activists realised the absence of such organisations, they set up their own (Hiltermann, 1991).

Four Women's Working Committees (WWC), who differed sharply in their structure and political ideology from the charitable associations, have emerged in the West Bank and Gaza since 1978. They recruited members from all sectors of women with the aim of building a mass women's movement (Sayigh, 1989). The political views of the four main women's committees roughly paralleled the four organisations of the PLO's consensus block. But while there may be differences on long-range political questions, there has been a firm unity among them on the need to mobilise all women in support of the *Intifada*, the PLO and an independent Palestinian state.

The WWCs had since their inception advocated two separate but interrelated agendas. Their political stances regarding the national cause have been mere extensions of that advocated by their respective mother organisations. The other agenda focused on Palestinian women and their oppression both under the Israeli occupation and within the patriarchal social structure of the Palestinian society. For the first time in Palestinian history, women organisations stressed the need to work towards the advancement of women's issues regardless of their political differences. Nearly a decade of organisation and grassroots activities before the *Intifada* allowed the women to enter a new phase of Palestinian national struggle. They were better organised and more determined to achieve national liberation for their people and social liberation for themselves as women.

When the *Intifada* erupted in the West Bank and Gaza in 1987, it demanded the mobilisation of the entire Palestinian population, and consequently, women's organisations emerged as one of its most active and visible constituencies. Women ran kindergartens and child care centres, conducted literacy and skills classes, helped to create and support agricultural and food processing cooperatives, and maintained a wide variety of discussion and support groups, and other activities that women working from a Western framework generally define as 'consciousness raising' (Sosebee, 1990).

During the *Intifada*, Palestinian women extended their participation from mere economic and social projects. They organised demonstrations, smuggled wanted youths to safety, mobilised and issued political manifestos and communiqués, and threw stones at the soldiers. Furthermore, women have been arrested, beaten, shot and killed in unprecedented numbers in Palestinian history. According to Sayigh (1989), 'after decades of media-starvation, Palestinians are suddenly bombarded by journalists, film-makers, researchers, novelists, conference-conveners, all interested in one topic: Palestinian women' (p. 465). It is this turning point that made Palestinian women's voices advocating a combination of feminist and nationalist agendas finally be heard. This qualitatively new form of Palestinian women's participation led to the conclusion that the *Intifada* was not only against the Israeli occupation, but also a new way of life the Palestinians were creating.

While the question of how much social change Palestinian women accomplished during the *Intifada* remains debatable, 'some writers went so far to claim that women had achieved equality through the *Intifada*' (Hammami, 1991, p. 73).

Many Palestinian women activists dwell on the lesson they have learned from the experience of Algerian women. Ask any Palestinian woman activist and she will tell you that although Algerian women had fought in the revolution, when Algeria was liberated they were sent back 'to the kitchen'. Palestinian women do not want to repeat this mistake. Hiltermann (1991) quoted an activist member of one of the women's committees as saying: 'The struggle for our rights as workers and as women should start now or we'll end up with another bourgeois state and another kind of regime that will oppress women and the working class. It all has to go side by side' (p. 165). Another Palestinian woman activist, representing her committee at the international women's conference in Nairobi in 1985, was also quoted by Hiltermann (1991) as saying: 'If a woman is going to participate only in the national struggle, she'll have to start at square one after liberation' (p. 165).

An articulated and clearly defined feminist-nationalist agenda has emerged among Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza during the *Intifada*. The new agenda addresses the status of Palestinian women and their oppression both under the Israeli occupation and within their own society. Inspired by the experience of Palestinian women during the *Intifida*, and subsequently the growing body of literature about their experiences, Palestinian women activists everywhere began voicing their demands to integrate the feminist agenda within the national struggle.

The Palestinian Student Movement in Israeli universities²

Unlike many so-called Third World voluntary ethnic minorities living in Western societies, it is important to remember that the Palestinians in Israel constitute a non-voluntary national minority group who did not immigrate to a new society or system; rather, the system was imposed on them. The reference here is to an indigenous people striving for their national self-determination while under the British Mandate, only to find themselves under a new form of Zionist colonialism. The abrupt change in the status of the Palestinians who fell under Israel's control in the aftermath of 1948 was very traumatic. It took them several years to realise its impact on their collective existence. Almost overnight, these Palestinians were transformed from a majority living in their own country to a minority forced to live, work and study in an alien system imposed on them against their national aspirations (Minns & Hijab, 1990).

The government has systematically manipulated the formal educational system among the Palestinians in Israel in order to inflict social, economic and political control, mainly aiming at stripping them of their national and cultural identity (Nakhleh, 1977, 1979; Mari, 1978, 1987; Zureik, 1979; Lustick, 1980; Al-Haj, 1995; Makkawi, 1999). The implicit goal found in the Israeli schooling system is to educate Palestinian youth for a special type of collective identity that does not challenge the status quo of Israel as a Jewish state. This 'reproduction' model of schooling (Giroux, 1983) is applied throughout all levels of the educational system. However, there is evidence of a growing resistance among the Palestinian students to such an oppressive educational experience.

Palestinian students in the Israeli universities graduate from school systems that systematically blur and control their national identity according to the political interests of the majority group and the state (Lustick, 1980; Mari, 1987; Nakhleh, 1979). Given this form of identity blurring education, most Palestinian students rely on their families or community-based social and political organisations to develop their national and cultural identity. For a large number of them, the most intense process and actualisation of national awareness and socialisation takes place at a later point – through student activism at university.

Universities are the only educational institutions in Israel where Palestinian and Jewish students are fully integrated. In fact, it is the only educational situation in which Palestinians and Jews, as individuals, engage in direct interaction with each other on a presumably 'equal' basis as students. It is because of this 'integration' that the universities find it difficult to apply double standards in their attempt to limit Palestinian students' political activism while at the same time allowing the majority Jewish students the freedom of political organisation. Nonetheless, due to the very definition of the universities in Israel as 'Jewish institutions', Jewish students continue to benefit from a wide variety of venues for the expression of their collective interests – an activity that is comparatively limited for Palestinian students attending the same institutions. The relationship between the Palestinian students and the university authorities is conflictive and corresponds to the government's oppressive policy towards the Palestinian population at large.

Palestinian students in Israeli universities are politically and culturally alienated because the educational context of the universities belies their national aspirations. Nakhleh (1979) argues that the 'Israeli universities are dominated by Jewish-Zionist ideology, and this ideological basis frequently gets reinforced by rituals. Such context places heavy sanctions on an Arab nationalist expression' (p. 113). Palestinian students maintain their rights to organise independently from the General Student Union (GSU) which is 'dominated by the majority Jewish students who do not cater to the specific needs of Arab students' (Zureik, 1979,

p. 176). Despite their legitimate argument that as a national minority group, they have different national and cultural needs, which are not on the agenda of the GSU, the university authorities still do not recognise Palestinian students' organisations. University recognition of their organisations would imply an explicit recognition of their national identity as Palestinians; a reality which Israeli universities and the Israeli government systematically deny and suppress.

The goals of the Palestinian Student Movement are political in nature and aim at satisfying the social, cultural, and political needs of the general Palestinian student population in Israeli universities. In other words, Palestinian student activists perceive themselves and are perceived by the community as dynamic agents working towards social-political change and national awareness among Palestinian students as a social category. Furthermore, they see themselves as an active branch of the Palestinian National Movement as a whole and participate in activities in their home communities as well. In addition to the social and political contributions of the student movement to the general Palestinian student population and the community, individual student activists also undergo a significant process of personal, social and political development as a result of this experience.

The representation of Palestinian women activists in the student organisations is much higher than that in the general population. Gender role expectations (of marriage, child-bearing, etc.) are less distinct at this stage, which allows equal participation of female students. After college, however, women's political involvement gives away to the expectation to get married and establish a family. Men who continue to be active after college, on the other hand, do not face the same limitation of gender role expectations between their family life and political activism.

Similar to their sisters in the West Bank and Gaza, Palestinian women in Israel have also been active in nationalist male dominated political organisations. Whenever they organised their own women's groups within these organisations, the controversy between the social and political agendas could not be avoided. A clear call for a feminist agenda has been only a recent development in their political participation. In fact, it was the first time in recent Palestinian history that a group of Palestinian women in Haifa set their own organisation called *Al-Fanar* – the Palestinian Feminist Organisation (or 'the lighthouse') with a clear combination of nationalist and feminist agendas. *Al-Fanar* included only women members, which opened the space for more critical and direct action regarding women's issues in Palestinian society. Established in 1991, the organisation considered itself 'totally independent of all existing parties and organizations and their programs. *Al-Fanar* is open to every Palestinian woman who accepts its basic principles and its goals of struggling for full equality for Palestinian women as

women and as Palestinians' (Al-Fanar, 1991, p. 1). By stressing all aspects of oppression as they are manifested in their life conditions, it is evident that Palestinian women are calling for the most comprehensive political and social agenda.

The bulk of the literature on Palestinian women focuses on the experience of Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza, especially since the *Intifada* in 1987. The powerful participation of these women in the struggle for liberation resulted in a growing body of research spearheaded by feminist scholars and predominantly Palestinian activists in the West Bank. However, Palestinian women activists in Israel were often left out of the analysis. Their participation in the national movement through male dominated political organisations reduced their presence as a distinct group actively engaged in a project of feminist and nationalist struggle. In light of their status as invisible members of the movement, recently established Palestinian women organisations in Israel have moved to distinguish themselves from male dominated political organisations. They focused their action around issues of violence against women, sex related crimes, the legal controversy of personal status, etc. (Al-Fanar, 1991; Espanioly, 1991; The Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women in Israel, 1997)³.

Method

The findings reported in this paper build upon and constitute an extension of a larger study, which was conducted with Palestinian student activists in the Israeli universities including both male and female participants (Makkawi, 1999). The broader theme that emerged from 35 in-depth interviews with male and female student activists indicates that the Palestinian Student Movement takes place in an educational context where Palestinian students strive to develop and maintain their sense of national identity. When examined separately and in comparison with their male comrades, women activists repeatedly expressed deeper concerns with issues pertaining women's rights and the pursuit for liberation, both as part of the national movement for all Palestinians and as women oppressed within their own patriarchal Arab society. This led us to believe that a dialectical interplay between nationalism and feminism is manifested and articulated in their experiences. Because of this, we decided to focus on the women's interviews as a separate set of data and conduct a second round of qualitative analysis.

In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 11 Palestinian women student activist members of mixed gender student political organisations. All of the participants were approached due to their visible and recognisable leadership role in their respective student organisation. The interviews focused on: (i) the

students' experience as political activists; (ii) the meaning of being an Arab-Palestinian in an Israeli university; and (iii) the issues, dilemmas, and concerns encountering them as women activists for a national cause in a male dominated national movement.

The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 26 years. Three women identified themselves as active members of *Abnaa al-Balad* (a non-parliamentary Marxist-Palestinian nationalist organisation), three of *Al-Jabha* (which is affiliated with the Israeli Communist Party), and five of *Al-Tajammu* (a newly formed parliamentary organisation with diverse individuals and political groups). As indicated earlier, these student organisations constitute the student branch of the various political organisations active within the Palestinian community. At the time of the study, a student branch of the Islamic Movement had just begun operating within the universities. However, it did not include women activists during those early stages. The women included in this study, thus, all came from secular political affiliations.

There were seven participants from the Galilee, two from the Triangle, and two from the Negev. There were five participants who attended Haifa University, and two each from Ben-Gurion University, Tel-Aviv University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Seven participants indicated that they came from activist families that encouraged and supported them, and four participants were raised in non-activist families and received no support.

All the recorded interviews were simultaneously transcribed and translated into English. The first round of the exploratory interviews was analysed using grounded theory development techniques (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). After several readings of the data, a total of thirteen categories were identified. The second step in the data analysis was clustering these categories into a smaller number of meaningful themes. Two broad themes emerged from the interviews of this group of Palestinian women activists. The first theme illustrates the participants' sense of Palestinian national identity and closely related topics, such as, their sense of group relative deprivation and party identification. The second theme pertains specifically to the struggle between nationalism and feminism, and the experience of the women participants.

The dialect of nationalism and feminism

It should come as no surprise that the Palestinian national cause and the struggle to preserve their national identity has been a major theme, dominating all forms of the students' social-political activism. Consequently, a feminist discourse among Palestinian women activists that ignores their national oppression would

represent only one part of the women's reality, if not distort it. On the other hand, mere nationalism without considering a wide range of social issues and relations, such as women's rights and patriarchy, also distorts the reality women face as participants in activist struggles. The Palestinian women students in this study entered the public domain of political activism through their commitment to the national cause, and subsequently demanded that their feminist agenda be also incorporated.

While what is probably the most revealing finding of this study is the women's insistence on integrating their feminist agenda within that of the broader national movement, it is equally important to emphasise their deep and unquestionable commitment to the national struggle in general. All participants developed a clear and confident sense of their Palestinian national identity. In fact, the participants perceived their collective-national identity as Arab-Palestinian, and saw it both as the cause of their involvement in student activism and as something that was enhanced and further developed through the experience of activism itself. This sense of collective-national identity was much more than self-identification or the choice of a specific label to describe their collective identity. It also included a strong sense of national awareness, the individual's daily behaviour, collective action on behalf of the group's national cause, a strong feeling of national pride, and the perception of national identity as part of the individual's self-concept.

Most of the participants were raised in political activist families that encouraged their national awareness, but they also continued to explore and reconstruct their sense of national identity on their own through their involvement in the student movement. Two Palestinian women activists, one attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the other attending Tel Aviv University, had this to say about their family upbringing:

I grew up in a family where the first rule has always been that 'you are living in order to give-and-take, not only to take'. Since I was in the first grade, my mother made sure that I was always in my class committee. I had to be involved in something else in addition to my own education. There is no doubt that my family had the most impact on my political involvement. (1-1-1998)

I remember since I was very, very young that even the children's songs that I learned were revolutionary and nationalistic songs. Political orientation was rooted in my socialisation through children songs and stories and much more. (12-18-1997)

Arabic is the national language of these Palestinian students. It forms an important component of their sense of collective-national identity. Asked about the importance of being Arab-Palestinian to her self-concept, a student activist

majoring in journalism emphasised the importance of her language and history to her national identity. She clearly articulated her sentimental attachment to her people and the collective self-esteem she derived from that attachment:

I don't believe that people belong to the state as an institution to which they pay taxes and receive education and other social services. I feel that people belong more to their language. I speak Arabic fluently and I feel that the best way I can express myself is in Arabic. Being an Arab goes back to my language, my civilisation, even the Islamic civilisation despite the fact that I am not a Moslem. My Palestinian identity means more to me. Maybe the suffering we live through led us to hold stronger onto our Palestinian identity. In my opinion, and I don't say this as an expression of supremacy towards the rest of the Arabs, but I feel that the Palestinians are very, very, very distinct people. (1-1-1998)

The Israeli universities as sociopolitical contexts are suppressing the development of national identity among Palestinian students (Nakhleh, 1979). Unlike American predominantly white institutions where there is a majority culture and several minority groups on campus, Israeli universities cater mainly to the needs of the dominant Jewish group with Palestinian students as the only minority group on campus. Not only that, but the existing history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the strong need to assert Palestinian identity within that conflict makes the polarisation between the two groups even sharper. Consider how one activist explains her search for collective belonging at the university.

See, when I enrolled in the Psychology Department we were only two Arab students out of 150 Jewish students. When you enter a lecture hall, it becomes very evident that you are a minority even in terms of your feelings since you have no people around you. I used to go look for other Arab students between classes. There was an area where all the Arab students hang out, which we called Sahat Falastin (Palestine Hall), which is the 600 Hall. In this Hall it feels like you are going there to search for your belonging. We used to go there and meet other Arab students. Even if I did not know these students it was enough to hear people speak Arabic around me. It made me feel that I belong and helped me a lot. (12-18-1997)

As citizens of the state of Israel, participants perceived that their collective group, the Arab-Palestinians in Israel, when compared to the Jewish majority group was experiencing institutionalised discrimination, inequality and an overall state of relative deprivation. This cognitive perception of relative deprivation was associated with feelings of injustice, anger and frustration, which in turn led to their involvement in political action on behalf of the interests of their group.

Furthermore, there was a clear link between their individual relative deprivation as individuals and their relative deprivation as a group. In some cases, when individual participants did not feel that they were deprived as individuals, they still insisted that the group at large was not receiving what they perceived as its legitimate right. Let us first consider this clear distinction between individual and group relative deprivation. A very successful student activist illustrated the relationship between her successes as an individual and the situation of her collective group as whole.

See, there are two sides of the issue, which I think are very connected, but I still can talk about them separately ... on one hand, as an individual I can talk about my personal accomplishments, which gives me self-confidence and satisfaction. But on the other hand, on the collective level where I feel strong attachment – I don't feel that I am an individual who can do whatever she wants and move on with life – my feelings towards my group make me feel first of all unhappy. Not unhappy for belonging to the group, but unhappy about the situation of the group itself. Maybe at some point it makes me feel inferior that my group is the one that is working in unskilled labour and serving the other group. The contradiction here, when I go to a restaurant or when I am at the university it seems as if I am with the Jewish group, that I am with the group that had accomplished things. On the other hand, most of the people who do cleaning jobs are Arabs to whom I belong. (12-18-1997)

Being successful as an individual, this student activist is obviously not experiencing a state of individualistic relative deprivation. However, her insistence that her collective group is experiencing a state of relative deprivation indicates a strong relationship between group identity and group relative deprivation.

The most pressing domain of group relative deprivation for these Palestinian students was the repression of their national identity and culture through their formal education. Women activists who graduated from public high schools (the majority) were very critical of their formal educational system for alienating them of their national and cultural identity. Being controlled by the Israeli government, the Palestinian formal educational system was perceived as an instrument of domination and control. There was a strong feeling of resentment towards the biased curriculum taught in Palestinian public schools. The participants who graduated from public schools perceived their education as irrelevant to their national identity. Not only that, but they were very frustrated about the fact that they study Jewish history instead of their own. An activist attending Haifa University, when discussing her educational experience, had this to say:

Everything we study is about the Jews. Everything is Jewish culture. We study Bialik and Rachel. Why do I have to study them? Why don't they teach me Mahmud Darwish? Why don't they teach me Nizar Qabbani? Why don't they teach me Edward Said? Why don't they teach me about Arab philosophers and Palestinian poets? ... The whole world now recognises the existence of Palestine and that there is something called Palestinian people. So why are they still teaching me about Bialik and Rachel? What is the problem in teaching us Palestinian history? The problem is that they are afraid. They don't want us Arab-Palestinians to develop any awareness of our national identity. (1-4-1998)

The gap between the family and the school's practices with regard to Palestinian students' national identity is a problematic area for the formal educational system. The formal educational system continues to disregard the growing awareness among Palestinian students of the need to adapt the curriculum to fit their national belonging. Continuing to do so will only alienate the students from the school altogether.

Identification with the group (or party) and its political programme was evident in most of the participants' responses. Group identity could be viewed as a mediating level of identification between the personal identity (self) and collective identity (society). In order to express their Palestinian national identity, student activists join political organisations that best represent their political views. The organisation provides them with the opportunity to examine and express their ideas about the national cause and their feelings of belonging. In this sense, the party itself provides a deeper psychological connection that exceeds the practical goal of achieving a specific political objective. Consider how a female student activist of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (*Al-Jabha*) is passionately committed to her political organisation. She described her party identity as an important aspect of her self-concept:

I am telling you that I have lots of criticism of Al-Jabha today. We have an unusual leadership vacuum. I feel that it is during this time that I have to stand with Al-Jabha. When Al-Jabha was strong in the seventies, maybe it did not need me as much as it needs me today. The true test of your commitment is at the time of crisis. If we have principles then we stand with the people who share our principles at times of crisis. I would be a defeated person if I leave Al-Jabha when it is weak and then come back after three years when it passes the crisis. (1-1-1998)

Involvement in collective action is obviously conducted through membership in specific political organisations. Friendships and social interactions were more common among in-group members. Viewed within the context of the larger study,

which included both male and female participants (Makkawi, 1999), one finds little difference between the groups with regard to their national identity and national cause. However, when the interviews focused on the question of women's liberation, it became clear that the women participants struggle with a deeper complexity of the dialectical relationship between nationalism and feminism in their political activism.

This group of female student activists expressed a strong sense of awareness of the need to address women's liberation as part of the political-social agenda of their student organisations – definitely more so than their male comrades. Being women in a patriarchal society, which is also suffering from national oppression as a whole, Arab-Palestinian women activists found themselves advocating both nationalist and feminist agendas at the same time. They also perceived an inherent tension between their national identity as Arab-Palestinians and their gender identity as women and expressed commitment to consolidation between the two. The complexity of this oppression in the case of Palestinian women is best illustrated in the programme of *Al-Fanar* – the Palestinian Feminist Organisation:

'As Palestinians they suffer from oppression and discrimination based on nationality, as women they are dominated by the patriarchal system throughout their lives, and as female workers they are the most deprived sector of the workforce. These forms of oppression do not operate separately, but are intertwined, and clearly influence one another. The liberation of women – as persons with a social, personal, gender, and national identity – requires a simultaneous struggle on many fronts, which cannot be fragmented or conducted in separate stages.' (Al-Fanar, 1991, p. 1)

By stressing all aspects of oppression as they are manifested in the life conditions of one particular group, it is clear that Palestinian women are calling for the most radical political-social agenda. A participating psychology major female student activist, who defined herself as a feminist, works both in political groups with men and in all women organisations. She had this to say about the relationship between her gender and national identities:

These are very complicated and interrelated issues. We have the question that my belonging to the Arab-Palestinian society provides me with feelings of attachment and belonging to the group. But, on the other hand, my belonging to the Arab-Palestinian society oppresses me as a woman. There is a clear contradiction here and the question is how can we deal with this contradiction? How can we consolidate the two without satisfying one of them at the expense of the other? What has been going on in the various political organisations so far is their emphasis on the political-national side only. (12-18-1997)

The contradiction between the revolutionary political consciousness and the conservative social consciousness, which many Palestinian male activists demonstrated, remains a major dilemma facing Palestinian women activists. Asked if she sees any contradiction among Palestinian male activists between their political attitudes and their attitudes towards women, the above female student was not even surprised that male activists themselves are unaware of that contradiction. She said:

Palestinian male activists believe it is their role to maintain our national and cultural identity, including traditions. They do not see that many of these traditions were there to oppress women at the first place. I don't think that many Palestinian male activists are aware of this contradiction. (12-18-1997)

Another female student activist, unwilling to accept this contradiction among Palestinian male activists, insisted that in many cases male comrades treated the female activists in a way that constantly reminded them of the traditional domestic roles imposed on Palestinian women.

Take the student movement as a good example. I am used to sitting in meetings as the only woman and feeling that I was being treated differently. It used to make me angry and want to cry. When I go to these meetings and hear a guy giving me compliments on my clothes, I tell him, 'why don't you say the same thing to the guy next to you? We have a meeting to discuss certain issues so let's get to work'. No matter how much confidence I have in myself, when I confront all of these men, they still look at me differently. While they say it as a compliment that another male activist has a strong personality, and I agree with them, they still wonder why I, as an activist woman, am that strong. I am expected to be very soft, not to speak in a loud voice, not to smoke, not to interrupt a guy when he is speaking, not to stand in the cafeteria and speak to a crowd of students. As a woman, I am not expected to do any of this, but to go instead to dances and things like that. There are certain roles imposed on us as women in the student movement, which are similar to our domestic roles. (1-1-1998)

Women's organisations, such as *Al-Fanar*, and their rigorous feminist-nationalist agendas inspire many Palestinian female student activists. However, instead of setting up their own women organisations on campus, they advocate a feminist agenda through the political organisations of which they are members. A female student activist majoring in education expressed her frustration and pessimism about the future of Palestinian women. Her awareness of this conflicted situation and commitment to keep working despite the frustration is supported by

examples from women's experiences in other Arab national movements such as the case of Algiers.

I am fighting for the establishment of a Palestinian state where I would feel much more comfortable among other Arabs. But on the other hand, the oppression of women in Arab society bothers me. First of all, women are oppressed all over the world. Everywhere their rights are being confiscated. But the situation is worse especially in Arab society. We have a double problem here. Before we liberate our country, we first have to liberate ourselves. We have to be liberated both politically and socially in order for the state of Palestine to be a democratic state, which we all aspire for. We are experiencing in Palestine something similar to what happened in Algiers. It was Algerian women who fought in the revolution and now they are oppressed. This is actually what happened in the Intifada. The women were the most active group during the Intifada and now they are left with nothing to do. Men go to work and women stay at home. There is a problem here. There are contradictions among all of these things. This makes me very depressed. The whole situation of being an Arab-Palestinian woman living under occupation, under oppression and repression is agonising. (1-4-1998)

The issue from the Palestinian women's perspective is, however, not only that individual Palestinian male activists are more conservative in their social views. The issue is that many political decisions regarding the Palestinian national cause are inspired by such views. The most controversial example was the tendency of the Palestinian National Movement to compromise women's issues in order to avoid confrontation with conservative forces in the national movement.

Conclusion

The findings show that Palestinian women students' involvement in activism was not only an expression of their collective-national identity, but was also guided by their deep awareness of the need to explore, develop and maintain this sense of national identity among Palestinians in Israel in general. Motivated by their awareness of the Israeli government's planned attempt to eradicate this sense of Palestinian national identity, the women in the study committed themselves to student activities in universities directed specifically towards raising national awareness and national identity among the general Palestinian student population. At the same time, Palestinian women student-activists consistently advocated the issue of gender equality and women's rights within Palestinian society.

In as much as it constitutes a source of motivation for involvement in student activism, Palestinian national identity is shaped, developed and enhanced through the process of activism itself. This dialectical relationship between collective-national identity and activism led to the conclusion that involvement in student activism during the college years is, in fact, a process of national education and development for Palestinian student activists.

The findings about the students' perception of inequality and systematic discrimination practised against their group, that is the Arab-Palestinians in Israel, was intertwined with their sense of national identity and belonging to the Palestinian people in general. The relationship between the students' commitment to the broader Palestinian national cause and their struggle for equality within the Israeli system uncovers the enigma inherent in their status as a non-voluntary national minority. While several areas of oppression were mentioned as examples of this state of relative deprivation (e.g., land confiscation, employment opportunities, and budget for local authorities), the repression of their Palestinian national identity through the formal educational system was the most pressing for them. They repeatedly pointed out the overwhelming emphasis on Jewish history and culture in their high school curriculum in comparison to the complete absence of Palestinian history and culture. To recognise their collective-national identity as Palestinians raises the last, and probably the most important, challenge to Israel as a Jewish state in Palestine.

The prevailing finding of this study was that Palestinian women activists advocated an integrated nationalist-feminist agenda. They clearly articulated the relationship between their national oppression as Palestinians on one hand, and their gender oppression as women on the other. Through their involvement in student organisations, which include both male and female members, Palestinian women activists consistently advocated a comprehensive nationalist-feminist agenda as part of the political programmes of their respective groups. This is not to suggest that Palestinian male activists opposed gender equality – after all, their progressive political outlook requires that they support women's liberation as well – but the issue was less 'burning' for them in comparison to their female comrades (Makkawi, 1999). The view that questions of gender equity or feminist struggles must be secondary to broader social (and, in the case of Palestine, nationalist) struggles is an issue contended with at depth across time and place (see Kurks, Rapp & Young, 1989). It is also an issue that brings to mind a similar situation encountered by women of colour in American society.

According to Bell Hooks (1984), white women and black men are both oppressed and oppressors at the same time. While white women suffer from sexism, the practice of racism still enables them to oppress black women.

Similarly, while black men are oppressed in terms of racism, they can still be sexist towards black women. The conclusion is that black women suffer from oppression both ways. The same analogy can be found in the relationship between Palestinian women and Palestinian men on the one hand, and between them and Israeli Jewish women on the other. In fact, when Israeli Jewish women groups approached Palestinian women to work on common issues as women, it was clear to them that unless they support the Palestinians' struggle against the occupation, such a cooperative relationship would be fruitless. The results were manifested in the establishment of several Israeli Jewish women groups such as Women in Black and Women Organisation for Women Political Prisoners, both of which support Palestinian women as women and as victims of national oppression and occupation (Falbel, Klepfisz & Nevel, 1990).

Liberation for Palestinian women – including national, gender and class liberation – by definition implies liberation for all the oppressed groups in society. These forms of oppression are not additive. Instead, they interact and clearly influence one another.

In conclusion, maintaining that issues of gender and national identity development in the Palestinian National Movement are interrelated, the contribution of this project is twofold. First, to understand the process by which Palestinian young women develop their national and gender identities during student activism and to keep a dialectical balance between the two. Second, by asserting the dual oppression based on their gender and nationality, Palestinian women are making the most rigorous demand for a new society free from all forms of oppression. Their struggles force us to engage difficult questions and to apply painstaking standards of critique to movements for liberation of which we form part. Languages of critique do not shy away from examining cultural, religious, political, economic and other social relations as they impact the formation of and participation of women in nationalist struggles. The narratives and experiences of Palestinian student activists remind us of the importance of directly confronting the 'woman question' in struggles for liberation, recognising that such movements require, and in some way invite, the full participation of all members of society. Nationalist movements can offer the opportunity and the space to creatively imagine societies free from all forms of marginalization, where people are united in their shared and collective struggle against colonisation and oppression. But in order to do so, we must learn from the past and present struggles of women activists and commit our praxis against sexism and all other forms of colonising the mind and body.

Notes

1. Within Israel, the remaining indigenous Palestinians were transformed overnight from a majority in their own country to a minority who was forced to live as second-class citizens in an alien system. Furthermore, Jordan annexed the West Bank and the Egyptian military began to administer Gaza Strip. The rest of the Palestinians became refugees in the neighbouring Arab countries, mainly Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
2. In this study, we use the term Palestinian Student Movement (PSM) in reference to the formal political organisational structure of Palestinian students in the Israeli universities into a number of student political organisations that parallel the political parties that are active within the communities in Israel. Since the early 1960s, these student political organisations have consistently formed through annual elections their Arab Student Committee (ASC) in each campus and an overall umbrella organisation called the National Union of Arab Students (NUAS). Despite their democratic election by the Palestinian students, Israeli universities have never recognised these organisations.
3. In response to their realisation that Israel's Initial Report (IIR) to the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) had essentially ignored the status of Palestinian women in Israel, a Working Group of Israeli and Palestinian women activists developed a report (132 pages long) on the status of Palestinian women, along with a critique of IIR, and submitted it to the CEDAW in July 1997.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE 2000s: A TYPICAL EXAMPLE FROM TURKEY

EBRU AKTAN KEREM

Abstract – *The general opinion about the importance of pre-school education and about the positive effects of the educational curriculum on children, their families and today's society gains more supporters with each passing day. In particular, the discussions are concentrated on increasing the investment in pre-school education. Providing the pre-school education for children at an intended level depends on the physical conditions, choosing the curriculum and personnel well, and careful planning. The aim of this study is to examine the role of pre-school education in the Turkish education system and to propose suggestions for changes by identifying the problems of programme, control mechanisms, work regulations and personnel rights, physical environment, administration and administrators, staff, finance, parents, self-awareness and self development. It also aims to increase the quality of pre-school education in Turkey in all respects. In this study, a questionnaire has been designed to analyse and evaluate the opinions of Turkish pre-school teachers on 'the problems of pre-school education'. The subjects of the study are 1760 pre-school teachers from public or private educational institutions which are under the provision of either the Ministry of Education, or the Society for the Protection of Children, or practice schools within universities.*

Introduction

Nowadays the importance of a child's early development and the positive effects of a structured educational programme on young children and their parents find acceptance throughout the world. Studies on this subject are gaining an increasing significance. Discussions are centred mostly on investing in early childhood education (Myers, 1996).

Early childhood education can be defined as a process of education and development, which includes the period from birth to the day the child begins primary education, and which plays an important role in his or her subsequent life; during this period, psycho-motor, social-emotional, intellectual and language developments are completed to a great degree, and the personality is shaped by the parents and institutions (Oktay, 1985).

Since pre-school education represents the first step of a child's education, it gains a rightful significance. During this period, the quality of the education affects the growth and life of the child. A high-quality education increases the child's desire for learning and helps him or her to be successful in life (Aktan Kerem & Comert, 2003).

To attain a desired level of pre-school education, it is necessary to select the appropriate physical conditions, programme, and personnel, and to plan carefully (Oktay, 1999). Raising children in good health and in an ideal manner can only be achieved by recognising their development characteristics and their needs in view of these characteristics. Regardless of the level and the place of the education, it is necessary to understand the development stage, interests, needs, and capabilities of the child, the environmental conditions, and to have an idea about the problems that may be encountered. 'An effective education can only be discussed under these circumstances' (Kandir, 1999, p. 82). Without this feedback, it would be hard to implement an education programme, and, furthermore, it would lead to mistakes and even damages, since such a curriculum would be left to chance. 'Children, who cannot benefit from an effective educational curriculum, develop slowly and are bound to carry these negative marks throughout their lives' (Aral, Kandir & Canyasar, 2000, p. 13).

During the period of pre-school education, in order for children to acquire particular behaviours and to support their developments, the required educational styles can only be realised by curricula that meet the developments and needs of children in physically and socially healthy places, and by highly qualified teachers. The conditions affect the teachers' performance to a great degree, no matter what the qualifications of the teachers may be. Therefore, increasing the productivity of pre-school teachers depends on the improvement of work conditions and responding to the related problems (Saracho, 1988; Micklo, 1993). A study on the approach of pre-school teachers to the problems of physical facilities, plans and programmes, methods and techniques, and classroom and behavioural management, revealed that the teachers' perception of certain problems presents dissimilarities which depend on the length of their own education and on their professional experience. In Turkey, pre-school education problems are discussed in various milieus in search for solutions. The aim of this study is to offer some suggestions by examining and identifying the views of Turkish pre-school teachers about the issues of 'programme content, control mechanisms, work regulations and employee rights, physical environment, administration and administrators, classroom management, personnel, finance, parents, self-awareness and self-development'. This research aims to reach some conclusions that may benefit people interested in pre-school education (e.g., teachers, students, parents, administrators, university members, etc.).

Method

The participants

The subjects of the study were 1760 pre-school teachers working in: (i) governmental or private educational institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education; (ii) the Society for the Protection of Children; and (iii) practice schools within universities throughout Turkey. These teachers, which represent the study group, were selected by random sampling technique. At the planning stage, the study aimed to reach 40 provinces in Turkey, which represent 50% of the country. However, anticipating that some provinces would not participate, proposals were sent to 10 additional provinces. Eventually, the study covered 49 provinces, as it was decided to include all those who responded.

Data tools and procedure

The researchers prepared a questionnaire to gather the views of pre-school teachers on the problems of pre-school education in Turkey. The survey consisted of 25 questions which essentially dealt with four areas, namely: (i) personal information, such as the province/district they live in, gender, age, educational status, length of service, the type of school they work in; (ii) their views on the problems in the pre-school field in Turkey (the 2002 pre-school curriculum, personnel, physical environment, administration and administrators, classroom management, parents, control mechanisms, work regulations and employee rights, self-awareness and self-improvement, finance, and expansion); (iii) in-service training possibilities; and (iv) the themes, location and time of the in-service training they would like to attend.

The design of the questionnaire was completed in a number of steps. After scanning the related literature, the questions to be asked were identified and listed in a certain order and logical sequence. The questions dealing with personal information were placed in the first part of the questionnaire. With regards to the order of the remaining questions, a logical sequence from the general to the particular was followed. The questions, which were graded, were either close-ended or half-close-ended. Open-ended questions were avoided because of the difficulties in evaluating, coding and analysing the answers. Experts were consulted to refine the survey, and it was then reviewed in line with their recommendations. The questionnaire was first given as a 'preliminary survey' to a small group of respondents with similar characteristics of the sample group. After evaluating their responses with regards to the comprehension of the questions and the approximate answering time, the questionnaire was given its

final form. The survey was administered during the spring term (February to June) of the 2003-2004 scholastic year.

Data analysis and results

After completing the data collection phase, the incomplete questionnaires were removed before starting the data analysis by using the SPSS statistical package. The results of this analysis – namely, the frequency, percentage and chi-square values – are given in Tables 1-12.

TABLE 1: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by the institution in which they are employed

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Governmental schools under the control of Ministry of Education	1333	75.7
Private schools under the control of the Ministry of Education	206	11.7
Private Schools under the control of the Society for Protection of Children	143	8.1
Governmental schools under the control of the Society for Protection of Children	16	0.9
Schools within universities	42	2.4
Other	20	1.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 2: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by gender

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Women	1738	98.8
Men	22	1.3
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 3: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by gender

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
20 years and below	108	6.1
Between 21-25 years	532	30.2
Between 26-30 years	385	21.9
Between 31-35 years	252	14.3
Between 36-40 years	234	13.3
41 years and above	249	14.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 4: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their educational status

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Graduates of Girls' Vocational Schools	356	20.2
Anadolu University Open Education Faculty Pre-School Training Department (specialised instructors)	211	12.0
Graduates of Child Development/ Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training School (junior colleges)	459	26.1
Graduates from Undergraduate Programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Education Schools (bachelor degree)	621	35.3
Graduates from Graduate Programmes of Child Development/ Pre-School Teacher Training/ Kindergarten Teacher Education Schools (masters degree)	33	1.9
Other	80	4.5
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 5: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by length of service

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	266	15.1
Between 1-5 years	593	33.7
Between 6-10 years	303	17.2
Between 11-15 years	221	12.6
Between 16-20 years	248	14.1
21 years and above	129	7.3
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 6: Frequency and percentage values of the classes taught by the pre-school teachers according to age groups

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
3-4 years	174	10.0
4-5 years	250	14.3
5-6 years	1320	75.7
Total	1744	100.0

TABLE 7: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers receiving in-service training

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Receiving	1091	61.9
Not receiving	669	38.1
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 8: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their preferred location for in-service training

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
In my town	1392	79.1
At a holiday resort	198	11.3
In a big city	170	9.7
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 9: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their preferred period for attending in-service training programmes

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Between 15-30 June	802	45.6
Between 1-15 September	445	25.3
During the semester break	118	6.7
During the summer vacation	395	22.4
Total	1760	100.0

TABLE 10: Frequency and percentage values of the pre-school teachers by their views about the priority of the problems of pre-school education

Area of concern	Not at all important		Not important		Undecided		Important		Very important	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Programme	19	1.1	56	3.2	120	6.8	487	27.7	1078	61.3
Personnel	19	1.1	44	2.5	116	6.6	553	31.4	1028	58.4
Physical environment	14	0.8	18	1.0	75	4.3	416	23.6	1237	70.3
Administration and administrators	23	1.3	42	2.4	135	7.7	533	30.3	1027	58.4
Classroom management	24	1.4	55	3.1	159	9.0	533	30.3	989	56.2
Parents	9	0.5	37	2.1	87	4.9	514	29.2	1113	63.2
Control mechanisms	33	1.9	104	5.9	242	13.8	734	41.7	647	36.8
Work regulations and employee rights	9	0.5	52	3.0	253	14.4	616	35.0	830	47.2
Self-awareness and self-improvement	17	1.0	39	2.2	132	7.5	423	24.0	1149	65.3
Finance	13	0.7	52	3.0	247	14.0	619	35.2	829	47.1
Expansion	19	1.1	45	2.6	147	8.4	477	27.1	1072	60.9

Chi-square tests were applied to examine the relationships between: (i) the type of institution and personnel / administration and administrators / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance; (ii) age and classroom management / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance; (iii) education level and administration and administrators / classroom management / parents / work regulations and employee rights / self-awareness and self-improvement / finance / expansion; (iv) length of service and classroom management / parents / control mechanisms / work regulations and employee rights / finance / expansion. Table 12 presents the above listed relationships between the pre-school teachers' demographic information and the problems of pre-school education that were found to be meaningful. The only relationship that was not found to be meaningful was that between the 'type of institution' and the 'work regulations and employee rights'.

TABLE 11: The pre-school teachers' preferred topics for inclusion in in-service training programmes

Categories	1st Preference %	2nd Preference %	3rd Preference %
Turkish language	6.9	6.4	11.3
Music	5.1	7.8	4.1
Play	4.2	7.0	10.5
Techniques of understanding the child	39.2	14.6	12.0
Parental training	13.7	24.2	12.5
Preparation for literacy	3.2	5.1	10.0
Drama	15.8	16.3	15.0
Creativity	6.8	17.0	21.1
Other (Computer, English, etc.)	5.1	1.6	3.5

The statistically significant relationships displayed Table 12 deserve some comments. To start with, the type of institution in which teachers work was found to be meaningfully related to the pre-school problematic issues of personnel ($p < .05$), administration and administrators ($p < .01$), control mechanisms ($p < .05$), and finance ($p < .01$). With regards to the issue of personnel, the analysis shows that it is the teachers working in an institution within a university that consider this issue as most important (85.7%). The issue of personnel is least seen as important by teachers working in governmental schools under the control of the Ministry of Education (56.6%). Again, the problems related to administration and administrators are most seen as important by teachers attached to a university-linked institution (73.8%), and least seen as important by teachers in public school administered by the Ministry of Education (54.5%).

Teachers working in institutions under the control of the Society for the Protection of Children are most convinced about the importance of control mechanisms (50.3%). The least convinced of this are the teachers working in institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education (34.2%). At the same time, teachers working in institutions under the control of the Ministry of Education are the group of teachers that is mostly convinced about the importance of the issue

TABLE 12: Meaningful relationships between the pre-school teachers' demographic data and the problems of pre-school education

Meaningful Relationships	χ^2 (degrees of freedom = 20)	<i>p</i>
Institution Type / Personnel	33.768	.028*
Institution Type / Administration & Administrators	43.346	.002**
Institution Type / Control Mechanisms	35.080	.020*
Institution Type / Finance	55.949	.000**
Age / Classroom Management	37.145	.011*
Age / Control Mechanisms	39.054	.007**
Age / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	42.091	.003**
Age / Finance	48.776	.000**
Education Level / Administration & Administrators	41.884	.003**
Education Level / Classroom Management	34.732	.022*
Education Level / Parents	38.577	.008**
Education Level / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	42.135	.003**
Education Level / Self-Awareness & Self-Improvement	35.777	.016*
Education Level / Finance	89.961	.000**
Education Level / Expansion	41.136	.004**
Length of Service / Classroom Management	32.838	.035*
Length of Service / Parents	53.986	.000**
Length of Service / Control Mechanisms	40.751	.004**
Length of Service / Work Regulations & Employee Rights	40.523	.004**
Length of Service / Finance	41.971	.003**
Length of Service / Expansion	34.745	.024*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

of finance (48.0%). Finance is least seen as important by teachers working in institutions under the control of the Society for the Protection of Children (25.0%).

The age of the pre-school teachers was found to be significantly related to the issues of classroom management ($p < .05$), control mechanisms ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), and finance ($p < .01$). The younger teachers – those aged 20 years and below – are the most concerned with the issue of classroom management (64.8%). Classroom management is least seen as important by teachers in the 31-35 year-old bracket (50.8%). Teachers aged between 21-25 years are the most concerned about the problem of control mechanism (42.5%), whilst teachers in the 36-40 age bracket give the least importance to this issue (30.8%).

The work regulations and employee rights are most considered as important by teachers between 36-40 years (53.0%). These regulations and rights, on the other hand, are least considered as important by the younger teachers of 20 years or less (41.7%). Teachers between 26-30 years are, as a group, the most convinced about the importance of the finance issue (52.2%). Finance is least seen as important by the younger teachers (28.7%).

The level of education of the pre-school teachers was found to be meaningfully related to the issues of administration and administrators ($p < .01$), classroom management ($p < .05$), parents ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), self-awareness and self-improvement ($p < .05$), finance ($p < .01$), and expansion ($p < .01$). The issue of administration and administrators is most seen as important by teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (69.7%). Teachers trained in vocational schools, on the other hand, give the least importance to this issue (50.5%). Again, the teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/ Kindergarten Teacher Training are the most certain about the importance of classroom management (63.6%). This issue is least considered as important by teachers trained in vocational schools (49.9%).

The issue of parents is most seen as important by graduate teachers from the four-year programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (66.5%). Once again, it is the teachers trained in vocational schools who are least convinced about the importance of this issue (54.7%). In contrast, these teachers from vocational schools are the most convinced about the importance of the issue of work regulations and employee rights (51.4%). This issue is least seen as important by the teachers who qualified as ‘specialised instructors’ from the Open Education Faculty (40.8%).

The issue of self-awareness and self-improvement is most seen as important by the graduate teachers from the graduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training (75.8%). At the other

end, the teachers who followed the two-year undergraduate programmes of Child Development/Pre-School Teacher Training/Kindergarten Teacher Training are the least certain about the importance of this issue (60.1%).

Teachers who graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes are most convinced about the importance of both finance and expansion (69.7% and 66.7% respectively). In contrast, these two issues are least considered as important by teachers trained in vocational schools (36.0% and 52.8% respectively).

The length of service emerged to be significantly related to the issues of classroom management ($p < .05$), parents ($p < .01$), control mechanisms ($p < .01$), work regulations and employee rights ($p < .01$), finance ($p < .01$), and expansion ($p < .05$). In particular, whilst the issue of classroom management was most considered as important by teachers with less than 1 year of service (60.5%), teachers with length of service between 16-20 years emerged at the least concerned with this issue (51.6%). Teachers with less than 1 year of experience were again the group of teachers to give most importance to the issue of parents (69.5%). On the other hand, parents are least seen as important by teachers with 21 or more years of experience (48.1%).

The importance of the issue of control mechanisms is at its awareness amongst teachers with a teaching experience between 1-5 years (38.8%). Teachers with 21 or more years of experience are, in contrast, the least convinced about the importance of this issue (27.9%). Teachers with an experience between 16-20 years are the most convinced of the importance of the issue of work regulations and employee rights (56.5%). This issue is least seen as important by teachers with less than 1 year of experience (36.8%).

Teachers with teaching experience between 6-10 years form the group of teachers that is most certain of the importance of finance (53.8%). On the other hand, the least convinced about this importance are the teachers with 21 or more years of experience (39.5%). Teachers with experience between 6-10 years are again the group that is most in favour of expansion (65.7%). The least keen about expansion are the teachers with less than 1 year of experience (56.0%).

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the views of Turkish pre-school teachers on 'the problems of pre-school education'. After identifying this situation, the next step is to develop a set of recommendations. The participants of the study consider 'physical environment', 'self-awareness and self-improvement' and 'parents' as the three most important issues. An education that helps children acquire the desired behaviours and that supports their development

can only be provided in a physically and socially healthy environment. The participating teachers in fact chose 'physical environment' as the most important issue. Interestingly enough, the only existing standards that are laid down for pre-school education concern the physical environment. But these physical environment standards are not being followed in pre-school education institutions. Given this situation, the Ministry of Education and the Society for the Protection of Children need first to re-examine these standards and then to ensure that everyone abides by them.

Self-awareness and self-improvement was identified by the participating teachers as the second most important issue. The results of the chi-square test reveal that teachers who graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes consider the self-awareness and self-improvement process to be more important than teachers coming from junior colleges. This suggests that whilst teachers graduating from the four-year programmes are particularly eager to improve themselves, teachers from junior colleges are not so keen about this and are not as open to new ideas in their field. Sahin, Avci & Turla (1997) conclude from their research on the problems of pre-school teachers that these individuals consider self-awareness and development as an important issue because they do not have the time and the possibility to follow new source material or to attend conferences and seminars. This result seems to be in line with the findings of the present study.

The point appears to be that teachers and administrators should receive in-service training at specified intervals in order to be able to follow innovations, enrich their teaching, gain self-awareness and improve themselves. This would however require an increase in the number of in-service training programmes on offer. These programmes should be developed according to the demands, needs and expectations of pre-school teachers, and teachers' attendance should be encouraged. The majority of the teachers who participated in this study graduated from the four-year undergraduate programmes of Child Development or Pre-School Teacher Training, and their length of service is mostly in the range between 1-5 years. The fact that these teachers – with relatively fresh experience in the profession – ranked self-awareness and self-improvement as the second most important issue, necessitates the re-examination of the quality of undergraduate programmes.

The majority of the teachers stated that they would prefer to attend in-service training programmes held in the city where they live. Their favoured topics for inclusion in such programmes are 'techniques to understand children', 'drama' and 'parental education'; these programmes should be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the universities. The techniques to understand children should be a compulsory element of undergraduate programmes, rather than an elective course. Teachers should give in turn more

weight to creative activities in their teaching plans. As to the economisation principle, which is one of the main features of pre-school education, teachers may engage in projects aimed at saving in appropriate areas. For instance, the left over materials can be recycled and reused for other activities, and children can be taught more efficiently when teachers follow new ideas and include them in their plans. It is thus important that teachers keep this principle in mind and apply it to their professional lives.

In addition, 2+2 undergraduate completion programmes should be offered to the teachers who finish from the junior colleges of Child Development Teacher Training. The universities should develop and implement in turn an appropriate curriculum in this field. For, as revealed by McMullen & Alat's study (2002) on the beliefs and problems of pre-school teachers, these teachers must have a deep knowledge of the development of children if they are to give their pupils an education that takes their own development into consideration. Teachers' knowledge about children's development is then expected to reflect in new approaches to planning that lead to the provision of a proper education for children.

The teachers in the study identified parental training as the third most important issue. In particular, the chi-square test established that parental training is mostly seen as important by the teachers who graduated from the four-year training programmes. This indicates that teachers with a bachelor's degree are the most convinced about the importance of parental training. This finding parallels a result that emerged from a longitudinal study by Bracey & Stellar (2003) concerning the effectiveness of pre-school education. According to Bracey & Stellar (2003), parents with a high educational level attach more importance to their children's education, and these parents are particularly sensitive about their children benefiting from pre-school education. Since educational activities offered during early childhood are generally insufficient in Turkey, it becomes important that parents gain more awareness and that measures be taken to provide support in areas with highest needs. For instance, parental training activities may be organised by teachers and related experts at elementary schools; an appropriate environment for such activities may be created at village clinics; parental training may be declared compulsory at institutions that employ a number of people; and non-governmental organisations, municipalities, media organisations, universities and volunteers may be encouraged to increase their activities in this area (Bekman, 2003).

The teachers in the study stated that they do not consider control mechanisms, classroom management, and administration and administrators as major issues. According to the results of the chi-square test, whilst teachers working at institutions attached to universities perceive administration and administrators as an important problem, teachers working at governmental institutions attached to the Ministry of Education do not. Considering that these latter teachers work in

public pre-schools, it becomes once more apparent that there is a necessity to review urgently the administration and control systems. For not only is the selection of administrators who are directly involved in this field primordial, but the number of pre-school inspectors need be increased from amongst the holders of a relevant bachelor's degree.

With regards to the relationship between length of service and classroom management, the present findings suggest that it is the inexperienced teachers who are particularly concerned about classroom management. It appears in fact that as teachers gain in experience the less important they are likely to see the issue of classroom management. This suggests that when teachers are exposed to real-life situations as part of their education, they should also be trained in classroom management. To some extent, the present finding agrees with Boocock's (1995) conclusion from a study on the efficiency of pre-school education in 13 countries that pre-school teachers, in general, view classroom management as an important process.

Recommendations

Since the educational services in Turkey are particularly insufficient in the early childhood period, parents should be made aware about the benefits of pre-school education, and supportive measures should be developed. As discussed in the previous section, there are various ways in which parental training can become a successful reality for the benefit of the whole community. This calls for the various factions within the community to give a helping hand, which may be directly professional (e.g., teachers, schools, universities) or more of an awareness raising nature (e.g., non-governmental and media organisations). The ultimate target is to achieve nationwide parental training.

Teachers and administrators should receive in-service training on a regular basis in order to keep up with the innovations and consequently to enrich their teaching and work practices. This training, which would also benefit freshly graduate teachers, may also address the regulations and the programmes of pre-school educational institutions. For this to happen, there must be an increase in the number of in-service training programmes on offer. It is moreover of utmost importance that these training programmes are designed according to the demands, needs and expectations of pre-school teachers, who must be encouraged in turn to attend these programmes. Given that most teachers prefer to have in-service training programmes in their towns, the organisers would do well to take this into consideration in their planning. The identification of the needs to be addressed in such programmes would also benefit when universities and the Ministry of Education cooperate together.

Selecting administrators from amongst the professional people with pre-school education experience would ensure a more efficient management. It is also recommended that the administrators themselves attend training programmes that address fundamental topics of pre-school education as well as present the latest international developments in this field. Apart from increasing the number of inspectors assigned to pre-schools, it is also important to ensure that these individuals are well educated in this field. Needless to say, the current primary school inspectors should also be trained in pre-school education.

In order to improve the quality of the current practitioners, 2+2 undergraduate studies completion programmes should be set up for those teachers who have completed their child development teacher training in junior colleges. Universities should design and implement an appropriate curriculum for this purpose. Again, pre-school teacher training departments at universities should be provided with qualified staff and technical facilities, and practice schools should be opened within universities to support their undergraduate programmes. It is also recommended – especially in view of the present findings – that ‘techniques of understanding the child’ should be included in undergraduate programmes as a compulsory course instead of an elective. Additional graduate programmes on pre-school education should also be launched.

If the pre-school sector is to flourish, its budget share has to be increased. Indeed, many of the recommendations listed above cannot come to fruition unless there is more money pumped into the system. This does not however exclude that teachers must keep in mind the economisation principle and the imperative to be more creative in the activities they plan. At present, all Turkish pre-school teachers are expected to follow the goals of the Pre-School Education 2002 Curriculum. Still, there is an urgent need for the Ministry of Education and the Social Services Institution to review the current standards of early childhood education and to ensure unity within the system. As part of this reform, different models (Multi-Purpose Centres of Pre-School Education, Home-Centred Education, Mobile Education, Summer School, etc.) can be developed in order for early childhood education to spread nationwide.

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SIXTH, SEVENTH AND EIGHTH YEAR STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE LEVELS ABOUT GREENHOUSE EFFECT, OZONE LAYER AND ACID RAIN

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Abstract – *The aim of this study is to investigate second stage primary school (6th, 7th and 8th year) students' knowledge levels about three important environmental topics, namely, the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain. The study was carried out with 204 6th, 7th and 8th year students (11-14 year olds) in Turkey. A 25-item scale developed by Khalid (1999) was used as a data collection instrument. The instrument was adapted to the Turkish language and culture, was validated and its reliability co-efficiency was determined. The results of the study showed that 6th, 7th and 8th year students have a very low level of knowledge about the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain. The results of this study can be used by experts of environmental education to focus on starting the teaching of environmental topics – like greenhouse effect, ozone layer and acid rain – thoroughly from the primary school to develop more environmentally sensitive citizens.*

Introduction

Once, environmental problems only affected the locals, but with the passing of time, they now affect the whole world. In other words, the borders between countries cannot stop environmental problems; they therefore become global problems. The current dangerous situation of such problems and their extents can be seen in recent environmental incidents (see, for example, Demir, 1998; Bakac & Kumru, 2000; Goncaoglu et al., 2000).

Human beings are painfully experiencing these problems. For the sake of the future of nature and the human population in this world, it is important to prepare and conduct a proper environmental education to make individuals more conscious of the environmental problems that could lead to devastating results. The increase in fears, worries and sensitivities about the natural environment and its problems at international level gradually leads people to widely accept the idea that 'The best way of make people environmentally conscious is through

education'. This means that they accept that education plays an important role in finding solutions to these global problems and in inhibiting the start of new ones.

In order to protect natural resources like soil, water and forest, environmental education emphasises the protection and improvement of the environment as a whole, including the biosphere, biomes and ecosystems. In the course of time, apart from informing people, environmental education further included the aim of making individuals willing and skilful participants in environmental management (Peyton et al., 1995).

Some researchers claim that developing conscious behaviours towards environmental issues is directly related to positive attitudes of the individuals (Newhouse, 1990). While others insist on the environmental knowledge gained by the individuals, claiming that only through this knowledge could they be more environmentally conscious. Recently, constructivist environmental educators, on the other hand, proposed another way of looking at this issue. Conceptual understanding, according to them, is much more important than pure knowledge because since individuals construct their own knowledge, they could have misconceptions about such concepts which are barriers to understanding (Munson, 1994). Without understanding knowledge, they could neither behave with that knowledge nor develop a positive attitude.

The position we adopted in this study agrees with that of the constructivist environmentalists. We hold moreover that some environmental topics need some degree of knowledge base. This applies, for example, to acid rain and its negative effects on environment and health, the destruction in the ozone layer, and the damages caused by the greenhouse effect that could all be counted among the global problems. The point is that if individuals do not know what makes acid rain happen, what causes the greenhouse effect, what depletes the ozone layer, or what harms or damages are caused to humans, how could they develop a positive attitude and environmentally responsible behaviours or consciousness towards these issues? With this understanding, the aim of this study was to identify 6th, 7th and 8th year students' knowledge levels about the three global problems of greenhouse effect, ozone layer and acid rain.

Materials and method

Participants

This study was carried out with 6th, 7th and 8th year students (i.e., those in the second stage of primary school) in central Ankara, the capital city of Turkey, during the 2004-2005 scholastic year. Table 1 presents the number of participants according to their school year or grade. As can be seen from this table, 45 grade

6 students, 78 grade 7 students and 81 grade 8 students participated in this study. Their age levels were between 11 and 14. The main reason for choosing students from these levels was that in the teaching sequence of Turkish science classes, topics related to the ozone layer, acid rain and the greenhouse effect are first introduced to students at these levels in the integrated science courses. To gain information from equal and homogenous groups, the data collection instrument was moreover applied to students from schools with similar socio-economical background.

TABLE 1: Number of participants in the study according to their grade and age group

Grade Level	Age Group	Number of Participants
Grade 6	11-12	45
Grade 7	12-13	78
Grade 8	13-14	81

The data collection instrument

To determine students’ knowledge levels about the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain, a scale with 29 items developed by Khalid (1999) was used as the data collection instrument. After requesting permission from the developer of the scale, appropriate modifications were carried out in order to suit the aims and needs of the study. For example, the responses expected from the participants were redesigned as ‘Yes’, ‘No’ and ‘Don’t know’. The new version of the scale was first piloted with 65 second stage primary school students. It was determined from the pilot study that some items were not suitable. The ‘unsuitable’ items that could not be modified were removed from the scale, while those that could be changed in the light of recommendations by field experts. As a result, a scale with 25 items was finalised as the data collection instrument of this study.

The 25 items were divided into three probes – namely, the greenhouse effect (11 items), ozone layer (9 items), and acid rain (5 items). The items categorised under the three probes were also divided into two factors in each probe. Itemised lists of each group in the scale are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Classification of items by factor for each probe

Probe	The Factors within each Probe	Distribution of items by Factor within each Probe
Greenhouse effect	Factor 1: Possible events that may happen as a result of the greenhouse effect	1, 2, 10
	Factor 2: Possible events that may happen as a result of an increase of the greenhouse effect	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Ozone layer	Factor 1: Functions of ozone layer	1, 2, 3, 9
	Factor 2: Things damaging the ozone layer	4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Acid rain	Factor 1: Things causing acid rain	1, 3, 5
	Factor 2: Effects of acid rain	2, 4

Data analysis

The data obtained through this study was analysed by using SPSS (version 11.0). In the data analysis, descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics methods were used. The students' total mean scores, mean and standard deviation of each probe were calculated for each class level. The mean scores of each probe were calculated out of 100, the highest score that each student could have achieved.

High mean scores mean that students have sufficient knowledge about the probe. On the other hand, high standard deviation values mean that there is a wide gap between different students' knowledge level about the respective probe. The one-way ANOVA test was then conducted to determine whether there were significant differences among students from different class levels. The significant level was calculated in between 95% intervals of reliability.

Results

Probe 1: Students’ knowledge levels about the greenhouse effect

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of 6th, 7th and 8th year students on the greenhouse effect probe by total score, Factor 1 and Factor 2.

Table 3: Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of total and factor scores obtained by the student year groups for the greenhouse effect probe

Knowledge of Greenhouse Effect	Grade 6 n = 45		Grade 7 n = 78		Grade 8 n = 81	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	S
Total Score	13.3	13.9	18.7	14.9	20.1	14.6
Factor 1	16.3	24.2	19.2	26.6	17.7	22.4
Factor 2	12.2	13.5	18.4	16.5	22.2	16.9

As can be seen from this table, the students’ total mean scores for this probe ranged from 13.3 to 20.1. Similarly, the students’ mean scores for Factor 1 (i.e., possible events that may happen as a result of the greenhouse effect) varied from 16.3 to 19.2. For Factor 2 (i.e., possible events may happen as a result of an increase of the greenhouse effect), their mean scores were between 12.2 and 22.2.

Table 3 reveals that the total mean score of 6th year students was lower than the total mean score of 7th year students, which was lower in turn than that of 8th year students. The same pattern can be observed for the mean scores of Factor 2. With regards to Factor 1, however, 7th year students had a higher mean score than 8th year students, who had in turn a higher mean score than 6th year students. Although there were some differences in the mean scores among students from different class levels, the low means reported in Table 3 (especially in view of the consideration that the highest score for this probe was 100) suggest that 6th, 7th and 8th year students invariably have an insufficient knowledge level about the greenhouse effect.

The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed that with regards to the total mean scores, there was a significant difference among the responses given to this probe by students in different year groups ($F(2, 201) = 4.122, p < .05$). Dunnette *C* test, which was then used to determine the pair-wise difference between means, indicated that the differences were in favour of 7th and 8th year students. With regards to Factor 1, no significant differences were found among the means of students from different class levels ($F(2, 201) = 0.214, p > .05$). On the other hand, for Factor 2, the means of different class levels were found to be significantly different ($F(2, 201) = 5.636, p < .05$).

Probe 2: Students’ knowledge levels about the ozone layer

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations of 6th, 7th and 8th year students on the ozone layer probe by total score, Factor 1 and Factor 2.

TABLE 4: Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of total and factor scores obtained by the student year groups for the ozone layer effect probe

Knowledge of the Ozone Layer	Grade 6 <i>n</i> = 45		Grade 7 <i>n</i> = 78		Grade 8 <i>n</i> = 81	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>
Total Score	19.7	17.1	26.8	13.5	25.1	17.0
Factor 1	11.1	15.6	14.7	14.8	13.9	16.8
Factor 2	26.7	21.7	36.4	19.3	34.1	22.7

As can be seen from the table, the means of the students’ total score for this probe ranged from 19.7 to 26.8. For Factor 1 (i.e., functions of ozone layer), the mean scores varied from 11.1 to 14.7, and for Factor 2 (i.e., things damaging the ozone layer) the mean scores varied between 26.7 and 36.4.

Table 4 shows that the total and the two factor mean scores of 6th year students were lower than those of 7th and 8th year students. Interestingly enough, 7th year students had, for this probe, higher means than 8th year students for the total score and the two factors. Despite the differences among the means of different class levels, all the scores were very low (the highest score for this probe was again

100). In this scenario, the situation appears to be worse on Factor 1 (i.e., functions of ozone layer), whose highest mean score was only 14.7. As with probe 1, 6th, 7th and 8th year students were found to have an insufficient knowledge level about the ozone layer.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to reveal whether or not there were significant mean differences among the responses given by the students in different year groups. The results indicated that with regards to the total score ($F(2, 201) = 2.917, p > .05$) and Factor 1 ($F(2, 201) = .779, p > .05$), there were no significant differences between the means scores of the three student groups. But, for Factor 2, the mean scores of students from different class levels were found to be significantly different ($F(2, 201) = 3.089, p < .05$). Further investigation determined that the difference was significant between the mean scores of 6th and 7th year students, and that it was in favour of 7th year students.

Probe 3: Students' knowledge levels about acid rain

Table 5 presents the means and standard deviations of 6th, 7th and 8th year students on the acid rain probe by total score, Factor 1 and Factor 2.

TABLE 5: Means (M) and standard deviations (SD) of total and factor scores obtained by the student year groups for the acid rain probe

Knowledge of Acid Rain	Grade 6 <i>n</i> = 45		Grade 7 <i>n</i> = 78		Grade 8 <i>n</i> = 81	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S</i>
Total Score	26.2	30.1	26.9	22.1	24.4	27.6
Factor 1	33.3	38.3	31.6	32.2	29.6	34.2
Factor 2	15.6	23.4	19.9	27.1	16.7	26.2

A glance at Table 5 reveals that the means of the students' total scores for this probe ranged from 24.4 to 26.9. For Factor 1 (i.e., things causing acid rain), the students' means varied from 29.6 to 33.3, and for Factor 2 (i.e., effects of acid rain), the mean scores of the different student groups were between 15.6 and 19.9.

It emerges from Table 5 that although 8th year students were older and educationally more experienced, their mean scores for the total and Factor 1 of this

probe were lower than those of 6th and 7th year students. Again, 7th year students had higher total and Factor 2 mean scores than those of 6th and 8th year students. On the other hand, 6th year students had a higher mean score on Factor 1 than the older students. Although some individual students scored relatively high scores for this probe, the mean scores were again generally very low for all class levels. Like the other two probes, the results seen in Table 5 indicate that students' knowledge levels for this probe were again at an insufficient level.

The one-way ANOVA results indicated that there were no significant differences among the means of students from different grade levels with regards to the total score ($F(2, 201) = .186, p > .05$), Factor 1 ($F(2, 201) = .177, p > .05$) and Factor 2 ($F(2, 201) = .489, p > .05$).

Discussion

Along the lines of the constructivist environmental educationalists, this study is based on the claim that the understanding of taught environmental concepts during formal education is crucial to train environmentally conscious and responsible individuals. However, it was also emphasised that without a basic knowledge level of some environmental concepts that cannot be constructed by the individuals themselves through their personal experiences with the physical world or with the social world in which they grown up, the educational target of training environmentally responsible individuals cannot be achieved. This study therefore tried to determine the basic knowledge level of Turkish 6th, 7th and 8th year students about three global environmental problems: the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain. The previous part of this article presented the results of the students' responses to a 25-item scale developed by Khalid (1999) and modified by us. In this part of the article, after presenting a general overview of the present results, the results for each probe will be discussed separately before having a look at the wider picture.

General overview

Considering the possible scores that could have been obtained, the results of this study show that the students' total and factors mean scores were very low (see Tables 3, 4 and 5). This indicates that the knowledge about these three important environmental probes of Turkish students in the second stage of primary school is low. On the other hand, the high standard deviations reported for each probe and within each grade group imply that students in the same class level had heterogeneous knowledge levels.

The greenhouse effect

With total mean scores between 13.3 and 20.1 over 100, the results presented in Table 3 indicated a marked knowledge deficiency about the greenhouse effect among 6th, 7th and 8th year students. This knowledge appeared to be weakest among 6th year students.

Other research results in the field seem to support our findings. For example, Boyes & Stanisstreet (1992) reported that high school and university students have a knowledge deficiency and make some mistakes about the greenhouse effect. Similarly, Groves & Pugh (1996) maintained that college students suffer from misconceptions about the greenhouse effect and global warming. According to another study, some students have various misconceptions about the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer depletion and acid rain (Boyes et al., 1995). In another study by Boyes et al. (1999), it was found that Greek second stage primary school students had wrong and low levels of knowledge about the greenhouse effect. On their part, Leighton & Bisanz (2003) reported in their study that some students not only did not have a satisfactory knowledge level, but also had some misconceptions about the greenhouse effect. In a more recent study, Pekel (2005) reported similar results for Turkish high school students and prospective science and biology teachers.

It can be surmised from the studies reported above that students across different school levels (indeed, from the primary to university) and cultures either have insufficient knowledge or have some misconceptions about the greenhouse effect.

The ozone layer

The very low mean scores seen in Table 4 show that students in the three grade levels lack a satisfactory level of basic knowledge about the depletion of the ozone layer. Some studies from Turkey and from some other countries reported similar findings. For example, a recent study in Turkey concluded that the knowledge levels of secondary school students (i.e., in the second stage of primary schools) were lower than expected (Pekel & Özyay, 2005). In another recent study, Pekel (2005) claimed that high school students and prospective science and biology teachers had a general lack of knowledge about ozone layer depletion. Much along the same lines, Cordero (2001) reported that university students did not have a satisfactory knowledge level about the depletion of the ozone layer. In their totality, the present results and the results of the other studies seem to depict a situation characterised by students generally not having a satisfactory knowledge level about the ozone layer depletion and some students also having various misconceptions.

Acid rain

According to Table 5, 6th, 7th and 8th year students had low and similar levels of knowledge about acid rain. Although their scores on the acid rain probe were higher than their scores on the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer probes, the fact that their acid rain mean scores averaged approximately 25% still indicates an insufficient knowledge level. This is again in line with the results of other studies. Boyes & Stanisstreet (1997) reported from their study on 14-15 year old students ($n = 1637$) that most of them did not have sufficient knowledge about acid rain. Again, Brodie et al. (1989) pointed out that the gasses which cause acid rain were thoroughly unknown by students. Similarly, Dove (1996) showed that students did not have basic information about acid rain. According to other studies, students seem to confuse the different major environmental problems. For example, Cordero (2000) and Fisher (1998) reported that Australian students confuse the greenhouse effect with ozone layer depletion.

The wider picture

The wider research picture is equally strong in projecting an environmental knowledge deficiency in students. A study conducted by Bahar (2002) in Turkey revealed that students at university graduation level did not have sufficient knowledge about the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer depletion. Moreover, Groves & Pugh (2002) reported that among the environmental problems noted in the prospective teachers who participated in their study were the various mistaken information they had about global warming and the greenhouse effect. In Lebanon, a study by Makki et al. (2003) on students attending the second stage level of primary school established that although these students' environmental knowledge was far from satisfactory, their attitude towards the environment was high. These results indicate that there is no direct relation between students' knowledge and actions. Indeed, it appears possible to have an insufficient knowledge level about the environment but still have a positive attitude towards it.

Planning ahead

Research findings, the present included, suggest that not only do students (from primary to university level) have a low level of knowledge about the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer depletion and acid rain, but that they also suffer from various related misconceptions or mistakes. For instance, while some confuse the greenhouse effect with ozone layer depletion, some others have no

idea which gasses cause acid rain. The situation is such that even student teachers that are going to be responsible for the teaching of environmental topics have a general lack of knowledge about ozone layer depletion, and have various mistaken information about global warming, the greenhouse effect and some other environmental problems.

It is however hoped that experts of environmental education (who can be involved in a variety of activities, such as, curriculum development, textbook writing and teacher training) analyse carefully the results of existing studies, including the present one, before proceeding to plan and to implement courses that teach environmental topics. This would, it is thought, ensure an improvement in students' knowledge levels about environmental topics (particularly pertinent here are the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain) across all levels of education and also develop more environmentally sensitive citizens. The following recommendations are meant as guidelines towards this end:

- Early childhood is an absolutely critical time for environmental education (Palmer, 1999). These formative years leave an impact on children's thinking and feelings about the environment that will endure the passage of time. Needs also to be said that, as Palmer (1999) pointed out, young people (including the very young) are capable of far more complex thinking about environmental issues than many may think. In view of this, environmental experts should rethink their environmental education programmes in order to introduce seemingly difficult topics, such as the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain, to students from an early stage provided that the methodology used suits the students' age and educational level.
- Since knowledge deficiency about issues, such as the ones investigated here, seems to continue throughout the various educational levels, it makes good sense to also develop appropriate techniques that help the older students to improve their environmental knowledge level and understanding.
- In the teaching sequence, curriculum designers, teacher trainers and the teachers themselves should bear in mind that students in all educational levels have various misconceptions about environmental concepts (Palmer, 1999). Formal education does not (and perhaps cannot) make a real impact on the nurturing of people's innermost feelings about the environment. Therefore, an appropriate curriculum should be designed for younger students to learn and understand these environmental issues.
- Topics related to the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain are not simple concepts. Indeed, they rather constitute a set of concepts, a sort of a

conceptual framework or clusters. To reflect on a complex, integrated and multidisciplinary conception of natural phenomena, a multidisciplinary teaching sequence is needed.

- One of the aims of environmental education is to give individuals more environmental knowledge in order to change their behaviour so that they become environmentally responsible persons (Hungerford & Volk, 1990). To realise such a complex set of frameworks however requires effective teaching methods. For instance, Thompson & Stoutemyer (1991) proposed in their study two strategies for dealing with the dilemma of water consumption. One strategy focused on giving information about the potentially harmful long-term effects and other provided information linked to the immediate economic aspects. The authors reported that the only type of information that resulted in behavioural change was that which focused on long-term effects. This puts forward the case of designing and promoting a teaching approach that highlights the long-term effects of the three environmental issues discussed in this paper.
- In an environmental education program, the aim should not be the ‘giving of environmental knowledge’. Instead, students should be taught how to acquire knowledge and how to use it to find feasible solutions to problems.
- It is important to include global environmental problems – such as, the greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion, and acid rain – in the content of new environmental education programmes.
- As teachers are responsible for the teaching of environmental topics, their environmental knowledge levels and understandings need to be checked. The point is that should teachers have knowledge deficiencies, misunderstandings, or misconceptions about the frameworks involved, they may directly affect their students (Groves & Pugh, 1999).

The above recommendations are indicative of how much still needs to be done in order to come up with a suitable environmental education programme. One result from this study that may play a particularly contributory role here is the following:

‘Although their scores on the acid rain probe were higher than their scores on the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer probes, the fact that their acid rain mean scores averaged approximately 25% still indicates an insufficient knowledge level.’

For it would be interesting to know why the students' scores about the acid rain probe, although still insufficient, were higher than those for the greenhouse effect and the ozone layer probes. But to answer this, we need extra information that may be obtained through qualitative research and analyses of textbooks and educational programmes. Since this study aimed to investigate second stage primary school students' knowledge levels about the three global environmental problems of the greenhouse effect, the ozone layer and acid rain, their misunderstandings or misconceptions and the reasons behind their knowledge deficiency were not investigated. But given that these well-documented realities present obstacles to teaching, it is clearly important to also study what lies behind students' knowledge deficiency at various educational levels and their misconceptions.

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CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES: THE CASE OF CYPRUS

ANASTASIA LIASIDOU

Abstract – *The notions of human rights and inclusion are directly interlinked, as the recognition of disabled children's human rights is a sine qua non element in the quest for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Their interconnectedness also pertains to their elusive and contentious nature in an era of increased globalisation. In order to clarify and reinstate the 'conceptual misappropriation' of inclusion, it is important to acquire a cross cultural understanding of inclusion and the ways that it is interlinked with the notion of human rights within the wider context of a cultural, historical and socio-political system. Taking as a case study the island of Cyprus in the emergence of the 21st century, the attempt is to explicate this interconnectedness and lay bare the ways that the linguistic and pragmatic misappropriation of inclusion is both the result and the consequence of the inability to establish a human rights discourse within the wider socio-political context of a nation state.*

Cross-cultural research and inclusive education

Cross-cultural research is crucially important in order to understand the ideological, political and social dynamics that converge and have a direct or an indirect impact on the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive education discourse. It is extremely useful to learn about the variegated contextual socio-political and historical frameworks against which the struggles for inclusive education (Vlachou, 1997) are taking place to thereby acquire a cross-cultural understanding of inclusion. In so doing, it will be possible to reflect on our own policies and practices and be enabled to 'think otherwise' (Ball, 1998), thereby addressing the political and contentious nature of inclusion.

In attempting to follow Ball's emancipatory and critical urge, it is crucial that we envision and conjure up inclusion as a matter of 'cultural politics', as an issue that prominently and unequivocally 'speaks to the protection of rights of citizenship for all' (Slee, 2001a, p. 173). In making the interconnections, it is undeniably important to investigate the wider context within which inclusion and human rights are conceptualised and struggled over.

Cross-cultural research is concerned with the descriptions and analyses of a set of countries with the aim either to draw some conclusions or to facilitate the

process of finding solutions of common problems among the various countries (Vlachou-Balafouti & Sideris, 2000, p. 28). Especially in the contemporary era of increased globalisation characterised by ethnic and conceptual barriers being gradually demolished, the acquisition of cross-cultural insights is essential if we are to understand the political and contested nature of inclusive educational policy and practice. As early as in 1993, the World Education Report of UNESCO put the following clearly:

‘At a time such as the present, when profound changes are occurring in the wide structure of global Economic, Social and Cultural relations, and the role of education in these changes is coming to be recognised as fundamental, all countries can only benefit from knowing more about the cultural premises of each other’s education.’ (UNESCO 1993; cited in Watson, 2001, p. 11)

However, before proceeding to the context-specific interrogation of the interconnectedness under scrutiny and its impact upon educational policy and practice, it is important to provide some information regarding the kind of cross-cultural research deployed in this endeavour.

Cross-cultural research can take many configurations depending on the focal point of analysis. It can refer to single national case studies, and it may be either descriptive or explorative. The explorative case study adopts a critical stance and investigates the ideological, political and cultural bases of educational policymaking. This kind of cross-cultural research can be simultaneously comparative, in the sense that it can compare different historical periods of a particular socio-political context (Sweeting, 2001; Watson, 2001). This would bring to the surface the incessant struggles over meaning and over the discursive constitution of educational policymaking. The diachronic dimension of cross-cultural research is an extremely important task in attempting to disassemble the contentious and thereby political nature of inclusion and lays bare its interconnectedness with the issues of human rights and social justice within particular historical periods. As Armstrong et al. (2000) so pertinently put it:

‘An historical awareness provides the basis for raising questions about definitions, policies and practices in terms of whose interests do they serve and what contributions do they make towards the development of a more just and equitable society ... Historical understanding cannot guarantee the development of a more just and equitable society, but through an informed awareness of past conceptions, perspectives and practices, it will hopefully enable us to ensure that the struggle for change is a continuous one (Giddens, 1986).’ (p. 4)

Evidently, inclusion cannot be adequately understood unless it is placed within a socio-historical context and analysed against that context and the ways that issues of human rights and social justice are conceived and addressed within it. The triptych that underlies inclusion cannot be other than the notions of human rights, justice and power. Power, which is at the centre of this network, refers to the variegated ideological and structural forces that impinge upon the constitution of this interactive and reciprocally interrelated triptych saturating the struggles towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

Thus, the task of the policy analyst is to unveil the wider context within which issues of human rights and social justice are conceptualised and bear a major impact on the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. First, it is important to see how human rights are conceived and concomitantly contradicted by the official rhetoric evinced in the current special education legislation, thereby exhibiting the ways that meaning is implicated in the service of power (Thompson, 1994). Second, the aim is to expose the ideological forces that constitute the hybrid context within which the struggles for inclusion and human rights are taking place – taking the case of Cyprus as an exemplar.

The current legislation and the struggles over meaning

Ostensibly, the Cypriot government is zealously concerned with the promotion of children's rights, especially their educational rights. It is then pertinent to ask:

- To what extent does this concern include disabled children's rights?
- What kind of legislation underpins special education?
- To what extent is the legislation predicated on a human rights discourse?

The government, while extolling its legislative alignment with the other European countries, deploys rhetoric with great dexterity and enthuses its commitment to the protection of disabled children's human rights. Taking into consideration the related stipulations of the Salamanca Report (UNESCO, 1994), the government proclaims the following praiseworthy statements in the preamble of the current Special Education Law:

'For equal rights education and the avoidance of the creation of a restrictive environment for the exercise of their rights ...

Because the rights of the children with special needs are safeguarded by the international proclamations and conventions sanctioned, the Parliament votes the following ...

Because the state has responsibility for the children with special needs from their birth' (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1999)

However, notwithstanding these government's laudable proclamations, a stipulation in Article 2 vividly transgresses disabled children's human rights. For while it is initially stated that the responsibility of the state starts at birth, this statement is unabashedly annihilated by this evasively, albeit lucidly, contradictory stipulation:

'child' means a person from the age of three until the completion of the education as this is indicated in the interpretation of the term 'special education'.' (Article 2)

These statements are the linguistic reminiscent of intense struggles that lasted for many years over the age of the disabled children at which the responsibility of the state starts. The first White Paper in 1995 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1995) stipulated that the responsibility of the state should start at birth. This, however, was considered to be rather expensive. After a string of contestations and alternations of consecutive White Papers (see Ministry of Education and Culture, 1997, 1998), it was eventually agreed that the responsibility of the state should start at the age of three. The preamble, however, remained stuck to the 'at birth' stipulation. Not only did this reflect the perfunctory and contradictory nature of the legislative document and its constitution by the 'ideologically diverse discourse types' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 90), but also the avid desire of the government to retain and add more pomposity to its glossy rhetoric.

Notwithstanding the exaggerated rhetoric, the linguistic progress towards an inclusive lexicon is evident since the first Special Educational Law of 1979 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1979) that was separatist in philosophy and glorified the existence of special schools. Nevertheless, despite the linguistic progress, the linguistic and thereby conceptual reminiscent of special educational thinking is a recurring theme within the document. The proclamations of inclusion constitute only part of the hybrid discursive legislative document whereby disabled children's human rights are contingently and provisionally envisioned. As stipulated within the legislative document:

'The attendance of a child with special educational needs in special units or in a special school or elsewhere is forbidden unless the extent and the length of the attendance is decided according to the stipulations of the Law.' (Article 4.1)

Another interesting quote, which declares the provisional nature of inclusion and the disempowerment of disabled children and their advocates, is the following:

‘... in cases where it is judged that it is necessary to provide special education or part of it, in a place other than the mainstream classroom, it is stipulated whether and to what extent special education and education should be provided in special units or elsewhere’ (Article 12.C)

The document makes explicit its advocacy of the existence of two kinds of education, and testifies in the best possible way its support for a two-tier system of education. So much is the document concerned with the possible placement of disabled children in special schools that it elaborates on the issue, and gives further details on the relevant procedures for the accomplishment of the abovementioned considerations. Thus,

‘In case that the attendance in a neighbourhood special school is not possible, the Regional Committee cares for the free transportation of the child to and from the [special] school.’ (Article 12.C)

Arguably, it could be suggested that the above stipulation merely reflects the intention of the legislator to prevent practical difficulties arising and to safeguard the child’s right for free transportation. Even if this is the case, however, it is still a deficit-driven concern instigated by the intention to provide all the statutory credentials for the placement of the child in a special school, according to the ostensible ‘best interests’ of the child. Concerns like these, which are enunciated in order to render inconspicuous the corrosive effects of power that are discursively conveyed through the legislative document, subjugate disabled children. On the contrary, the ‘productive effects of power’, as encapsulated and explicated by Foucault (see Marshall, 1996), aimed at the empowerment of disabled children are non-existent within the document. Nowhere are there stipulations detailing the processes and procedures in order to enhance the participation of disabled children within mainstream schools and to safeguard their rights towards this end.

In attempting to expose and explicate the prevalent discursive orthodoxies of the policy document, due attention should be also given to the ‘discursive absences’ (Stenson & Watt, 1999; Fairclough, 2000) of the text that have an equally pervasive bearing on the ways that disabled children are positioned and constituted within the legislative document. Foucault’s idea of *despositif* also encapsulates, albeit from a different perspective, the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the discursive and non-discursive relations constituted by ‘the said as well as the unsaid’ (Gordon, 1980, p. 194). In the same vein, Slee (2001b, p. 114) contends that ‘in the absence of a stipulative language of inclusive education, inclusive schooling represents a default vocabulary for assimilation’ and thereby exclusion. Having said this, it is evident that the legislative

document is by no means saturated by a human rights discourse. Its linguistic ambiguity is the result of the uncommitted and perfunctory ways that the education of disabled children is interlinked to the notions of human rights and social justice. The inclusion of these children in mainstream schools should be primarily a commitment to reinstate their human rights as equally valued members of the society. Kenworthy & Whittaker (2000) are adamant regarding the imperative necessity to forge an explicit link between inclusion and human rights:

‘Those who promote ‘inclusive education’ must be convinced of the human rights foundation and be prepared to assert it plainly and publicly if there is to be genuine progress toward equality for all children and their families. By failing to assert the right of the individual child we undermine the credibility of the campaign for the human rights of all children. We cannot hide behind the ‘illusion of choice’’ (p. 223)

The unabashed violation of children’s rights is legitimated on the basis of ‘their best interests’. The ‘normalising technologies’ of power (Foucault, 1990, p. 18) are inconspicuously and evasively exerted through the ‘professional’ and ‘scientific’ calibration of children’s needs. Suffice it to say that almost half of the legislative document is concerned with the assessment procedures, the professionals involved and the multidisciplinary committees assigned, either on a regional or a national basis, to arbitrate the extent of children ‘deficits’ and their subsequent appropriate placement according to their perceived ‘best interests’. Understandably, the focus of the legislative document and, by implication, of the education system is on children’s ‘deficits’ and ‘needs’ rather than on their ‘human rights’. The individualistic gaze constitutes these children as ‘abnormal’ and ‘imperfect’, while their human rights remain obscured and contingent on a multitude of ‘disciplinary technologies of power’ (Foucault, 1977; cited in Core, 1998, p. 237) imposed by the iniquitous special education practices. Children’s differences and needs become the sole focal point around which the educational system is structured and organised.

In this respect, disabled children’s placement in mainstream schools, far from being regarded as a matter of entitlement, is contingent on the unfettered decision-making ‘regimes’ of professionals that are instigated, inter alia, by vested interests and economic concerns (Tomlinson, 1982; Barnes & Mercer, 2005). Rieser (2000), a disabled person himself, is explicit when saying: ‘Other people’s (usually non-disabled professionals’) assessments of us are used to determine where we go to school; what support we get; what type of education; where we live ...’ (p. 110). In this scenario, disabled children’s human rights become, as Rioux (2002, p. 214) writes, ‘privileges to be earned’ and parents’

concerns to reinstate their disabled children's rights are, according to a New Zealand father, perceived by professionals as if they are 'asking for the moon or expecting too much or whatever ...' (Ballard, 1997; cited in Lindsay, 2004, p. 375).

Unless it is conceptually established and clarified that disabled children are entitled to be given the same chances and benefits as their peers, inclusion will then continue to be misinterpreted and substituted by the historical imperatives of special educational thinking masqueraded under the banner of inclusion. Insofar as the notion of inclusion is contingent on an array of exclusionary ideological and institutional dynamics, it will never cease to constitute a rhetorical apparition, thereby only securing what Slee & Allan (2001, p. 17) call a 'ghostly presence' within all arenas of educational policymaking.

The Salamanca Report made clear, as early as in 1994, the imperative responsibility of the states to protect and enhance the rights of disabled children. It clearly states: 'Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights' (UNESCO, 1994, p. 61). Disabled children's presumable 'needs' should therefore be re-directed to their 'need' to be viewed as equal and valuable human beings entitled to be included in mainstream schools and societies. Failure to conceive and articulate inclusion in these terms leads to its pragmatic and conceptual misappropriation. At the same time, this failure corroborates the historical imperatives of special education thinking that, under the façade of the scientific 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1977), continue to legitimate the incessant violation of disabled children's human rights.

Inclusive education and human rights: the wider context

In order to investigate the wider context within which the struggles for inclusive education are taking place, it is crucial to see to what extent this context is conducive to the protection of human rights – not only in terms of disability, but also in terms of class, racism and sexuality. The education system of a nation state constitutes the microcosm of the wider socio-cultural context and it is inevitably influenced by the prevalent 'ideological orthodoxies' inherent in this context. As Arnone (2003) puts it:

'In order to understand, appreciate and evaluate the real meaning of the education system of a nation, it is essential to know something of the history and traditions, of the forces, attitudes governing its social organization, of the political and economic forces that determine its developments' (pp. 8-9)

Evidently, the conceptualisation of inclusive education and its interconnectedness with the issues of human rights and social justice is contingent on the multiplicity of forces that constitute the discursive contours within which the struggles over inclusive education policy and practice are taking place. The discursive contours are construed by the ideological predispositions entrenched in a particular socio-political and historical context. Ideologies are the result of historical and political conjunctures that shape the idiomorphic characteristics of certain societies. It is through these characteristics that ideologies emerge and get reified, thereby playing a prominent role within the wider educational policymaking framework of reciprocal interactions and interdependencies.

One prominent ideology in the Cypriot context is the excessive ethnocentricity or nationalism that was the result of the prolonged occupation and colonisation of the island and the incessant attempts of the foreign intruders to ‘dehellenise’ or, in other words, to alienate the island from Greece. The dream of enosis (unification) with mainland Greece and the preservation of the national ideals was the main political and cultural objective of the island for many years. Mavratsas (2003) gives prominence and grumbles about the catastrophic impact of the nationalistic ideologies on the consciousness of the social subjects in daily life.

Not surprisingly, the historical reality of the island has led to ‘a closed and ethnocentric education system’ (Angelides et al., 2003, p. 64), as well as to a state with an underdeveloped democratic tradition and lack of the notion of citizenship. These concerns have severe implications on the ways that issues of disability, racism and sexism are addressed within the Cypriot context. The ethnocentric mentality disavows any forms of diversity that, as Mavratsas¹ (2003) writes, ‘is tackled primarily as a political or cultural problem that must be “fixed” ’ (p. 96). Angelides et al. (2003), for instance, write about the lack of a multicultural ethos within the educational system and the society in general. Similarly, as far as sexism is concerned, Westering (2000) criticises Cyprus for its discriminatory practices against women. The following excerpt is indicative of the current position of women in the modern Cypriot society: ‘... women face discrimination that denies them the ability to pass on citizenship to their children if they are married foreign spouses’ (Westering, 2000, p. 16).

Interestingly, the same discriminatory practice applies to the inheritance of the refugee status and its ensuing economic benefits. Women cannot pass on the refugee status to their children – something that, in diametric antithesis, stands true for men. The insular and bigot gender based discriminatory practices have become, in a way, naturalised and well entrenched in people’s consciousness. This is, presumably, the reason why they still remain unquestioned and unchallenged.

These institutional and ideological predispositions are also related to the lack of a strong democratic tradition in an island that has been long bedevilled by

colonialism and that has been constantly threatened in terms of the national and physical survival of its people (Mavratsas, 2003). Not surprisingly, one other related characteristic of Cypriot people, which is the direct result of the historical conjunctures and, in particular, the more recent Turkish invasion of 1974 and the ensuing political instability, is the feeling of fear. This transpires in daily life in Cyprus.

‘The Greek-Cypriots think that they are in a situation of endemic insecurity and uncertainty that occasionally endangers even their physical survival.’
(Mavratsas, 2003, p. 135)

This fear is not unjustified if we consider the history of the island and the constant threat that its people felt from the foreign intruders who wanted to conquer the island. This fear is accompanied by strong ethnocentric feelings and a narrow-minded mentality. Understandably, these characteristics and the ensuing ideologies are not irrelevant to the ways that people in Cyprus regard ‘difference’. Cyprus is still struggling to establish and promote basic democratic values that go beyond the nationalistic concerns, which have inevitably monopolised the political scene so far. Writing about the absence of a democratic tradition and the undeveloped public sphere, Phtiaka (2003) argues that, by implication, the island lacks the potential to beget ‘a broader democratic discourse where debates can be held on such rights issues as equal opportunities, or access to education in terms of race, class, gender or disability ...’ (p. 143). In much the same way, Mavratsas (2003, p. 122) writes about the ‘hegemony of the politicians and the inexistence of the citizens’, thereby denoting the ‘uncivil’ Cypriot society, which is the result of the hypertrophy and centralisation of the state that unabashedly promotes and safeguards conservatism, favouritism and micro-political self-interests.

Again, while recounting the reasons for the creation of the University of Cyprus, Persianis (1999, 2000) attributes some of the above characteristics to the ‘great state legitimacy deficits’, that is, the inability of the state to instil credibility and acceptability among its citizens. This phenomenon, unlike in other states, is exacerbated by the idiomorphic circumstances under which the independent state of Cyprus was constituted in 1960. Under the imposition of the three guarantor powers – that is, the UK, Greece and Turkey – Cyprus was declared, according to the constitution, an independent two-ethnic community state. The existence of an unchanged constitution, coupled with the failure of the government to achieve a viable solution of the so-called ‘Cyprus problem’, exacerbated the state legitimacy deficits. By implication, the Cypriot state sought ‘compensatory legitimisation’ by deploying ‘material gratification’ (Persianis, 1999, p. 53). This practice has inevitably given rise to nepotism and micro-political concerns. Simultaneously, given its fragile and neo-constituted substance, the state has adopted a

conservative and proactive stance to whatever has been presumably perceived as a potential threat to the precarious political stability of the island. As far as these endemic characteristics are concerned, it is also interesting to quote the following:

‘A direct result of this conservatism is that the Cypriot society appears to have very little tolerance to difference ... and pluralism ... The lack of tolerance to difference is also responsible for the big problems that the Greek-Cypriot society faces in the inclusion of foreigners ... Given the atrophy of the civil society, the fact that the Cypriot society is relatively closed, mono-dimensional, despotic, and also exhibits exclusionary behaviours and mentalities, should not be something to surprise us.’ (Mavratsas, 2003, pp. 151-152)

The state has also sought compensatory legitimization through education. This, as Persianis (2000, p. 38) contends, was supplemented by the psychology of a small state whereby ‘the intellectual arena’ is regarded as the only arena in which a small nation can compete on equal terms with rich and powerful nations. As a result, a highly competitive educational system was created that, notwithstanding its immense contribution to the island’s current enviable levels of prosperity, has concomitantly created a materialistic society characterised by wealth and over-consumerism (Persianis, 1996). Inevitably, a capitalist economic system has ascended whereby the market-driven forces emanating from it bear profound and multifarious effects on the constitution and dissemination of educational policy. Although this phenomenon is not unknown in the UK and other Western countries, it finds its distinct place within the mosaic of discourses that underlie and distinguish the Cypriot educational system (Phtiaka, 2003) to systematically marginalize and exclude disabled children in the process.

In addition to the above considerations, it is worth noting that the excessive nationalistic ideas, along with the persistent ecclesiastical influence, are not limited to the construction and preservation of a restricted and unassailable knowledge. They also extend to the construction of a powerful and penetrating charity discourse that directly affects the pursuit of an inclusive education system based on a human rights discourse. The charity discourse that permeates special education (Tomlinson, 1982; Drake, 1999) finds a resonance with the values of the Christian Orthodox religion that preaches compassion and charity. Prominent figures in Cypriot society find their engagement in charitable events for disabled bodies and minds as the vehicle for the promotion of their public image as philanthropists and good Christians (Phtiaka, 2003). Disabled people are viewed as objects of pity whereby the ‘disciplinary technologies of power’ (Foucault, 1977; cited in Core, 1998, p. 237) are evasively and corrosively imposed on them, thus leading to their disempowerment and demotion of human dignity.

This kind of charity discourse, far from facilitating the Christian principle of equality, paradoxically gives rise to the dominance of 'elitist models' by means of which disabled people are cunningly and evasively manipulated by certain 'elites' that are enabled to 'amass and concentrate power' (Phtiaka, 2003, p. 147) to the detriment of disabled people's autonomy and recognition of citizenship (Barton, 1993). Phtiaka (1999) talks extensively about the prevalence of the charity model in Cyprus and the massive success that Radio-Marathon, the indigenous charity fiesta for disabled children, has had since its incipient stages in the early 1990s. But while the state absconds from any responsibilities towards disabled children, government officials and other stakeholders hail with sanguinity the 'achievements' of the charity event.

The 'micro-technologies of power' imposed on disabled children are 'rationalised' and obscured by the economic benefits that disabled children receive. In this respect, disabled people are obliquely constituted as passive receptacles of the benevolent humanitarianism and fail to emancipate themselves from the 'technologies of power' and to engage with the 'technologies of self' that enable 'individuals to affect a certain number of operations on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves, in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom' (Foucault, 1990, p. 18).

The dialectic of the local and the global: setting the agenda

Living in the era of increased globalisation, it is also crucial to interrogate the dialectic of the global and the local, and to investigate the ways that the tenets of globalisation are infiltrated by the idiomorphic conditions of a particular nation state. By no means does the phenomenon of globalisation imply the 'homogenisation' of cultures and social identities across the globe. A more apposite metaphor of the changes abetted by the new state of affairs is the notion of 'glocalization' developed by cultural analyst Robert Robertson in 1995 that conveys reiterating 'the hybridisation and pluralisation of cultures-dominant cultural forms mutated by receiving cultures which globalisation make even more globally visible. A global melange ...' (Green, 2002, p. 10).

In this respect, inclusion (and the policies that surround it) is constituted within an amalgam of both local and global forces that are reciprocally interlinked and interrelated. Given the current state of affairs, the myth of the independency of nations is demolished in much the same way as is the myth of the independency of individuals. Paradoxically, however, the myth of the existence of competent individuals who would be given the incentives to flourish within a liberating socio-political and educational context has ascended. In this respect, concerns for

human rights, social justice and equity are increasingly superseded by market driven considerations.

Prominence is given to the market driven notions of competitiveness and the necessity to incorporate the notions of efficiency, effectiveness and quality within the economic, political and educational policies. Resources are directed at those who are deemed productive and competent individuals, and away from students with special needs (Barton, 1999; Apple, 2001a, 2001b). Indicative of the prevalent thinking is a report prepared by a committee assigned to evaluate the education system of Cyprus and to make suggestions for its improvement. The committee was explicit on the necessity to come to terms with the demands of the EU and to produce the necessary human capital that is arguably the single vital input to the economic, social and individual welfare of a nation state (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004).

Especially in a country like Cyprus, with a turbulent historical past and with limited physical resources, human capital is regarded as the most important factor for production (Press and Information Office, 2003). Consequently, these new policy imperatives are considered crucial if the island is to fulfil the demands of a competitive global economy. At the same time, given the idiomorphic conditions of the island and the underdeveloped political ethos of the people in Cyprus, the market-driven spirit of competitiveness encouraged by globalisation is expected to have a more profound and hence a more negative impact on the already utilitarian and materialist outlook of the ‘uncivil’, as discussed earlier, Cypriot society. Given the historical reality and excessive nationalism of Cyprus, Mavratsas (2003) talks extensively about the ‘atrophy’ of the Cypriot society and the cultural and material incommensurate development of the island that distinguishes it from the other European nations. It is interesting to quote the following:

‘It is due to this cultural underdevelopment that the Greek-Cypriot society often appears with a face that leads to the Third World (with which the Greek-Cypriots consider to have no relation) rather than the European Union ... And given the economic development of the Greek-Cypriot society, (a development that, it should be stressed, has been achieved in the absence of a contemporary economic ethos), one could justifiably talk about a disproportionate cultural and material development.’ (Mavratsas, 2003, p. 134).

The pressures and demands of a global system are likely to exacerbate the abovementioned concerns regarding the disproportionate cultural and economic development of the country, something that will probably further level down the cultural, social and political ethos of the island. The University of Cyprus can arguably be the counter force to these gloomy allusions and constitute the

impartial voice to critique and interrogate the social, cultural and educational ‘pitfalls’ of the system. Even though there still remains some scepticism regarding the role and contribution of the University in the Cypriot society, it remains to be seen whether the ‘dialectic relationships’ of the University (and, soon, of the universities) with society will vindicate Persianis’ (1999) contention that these reciprocal relations will eventually ‘act as catalysts in the societal development of the island’ (p. 65).

Inevitably, the muddled contextual discursive reality evinced in the institutional, social and cultural edifice of a nation-state has a direct and profound impact on the process of inclusive educational policymaking that it is constituted amidst a discursive avalanche of contradictory considerations and interests. Taylor (2004) talks about the ‘discursive multicapitality’ in all levels of social life that results from the economic and cultural aspects of globalisation. The increased concern for efficiency and productivity supersede essential matters related to values and justice that constitute pervasive technologies of power (Foucault, 1990) that might have a corrosive effect on the institutional, cultural and social edifice of the country. ‘Multicapitality’ is the discursive trademark characterising current inclusive educational policymaking. This is evinced both within and between policies that purport to address and reinstate the human rights of disabled children.

Epilogue

Understandably, the phenomenon of globalisation and the tenets of the European Union, which can be characterised as a sub-product of globalisation, instigate distinct local responses (Crossley & Watson, 2003) and pose contradictory considerations and dilemmas to the educational policymakers of the various countries. This is especially true for Cyprus with its idiomorphic and intricately complex historical, political and social realities. The concerns emanating from the competitive global economy are mirrored in and constitute great paradoxes within inclusive education policies that even though they envision a more equal and just society predicated on a human rights discourse, they concomitantly perpetuate the status quo and the unequal power relations that work to the detriment of disabled children and their advocates.

Given the fact that globalisation increased the interdependency of nations, cross-cultural research is necessary in order to address common international problems and assume ‘global collective action’ (Green, 2002, p. 1) for their resolution. As far as inclusion is concerned, cross-cultural research is important if we are to make transparent and unveil the contested and political nature of

inclusion and the implications this has on addressing the issues of disability and human rights.

In this respect, it is important that we establish and explicate a clear link between inclusion and human rights. This can be achieved by acquiring a clear understanding of a human rights approach and its implications on inclusive education policy and practice within a particular socio-historical context. Unless this interconnection is forged, the individualistic gaze will continue to act as a pervasive technology of power leading to the oppression of disabled people. If we are to destabilise and ultimately dismantle the powerful circle that leads to the oppression and disparagement of disabled people, questions like the following should constitute the focal point of our critical inquiry:

- What is a human rights approach to disability?
- What actions are necessary in order to facilitate a human rights approach to disability?
- How and why are certain groups of people constructed as ‘abnormal’ and excluded within a particular socio-historical context?
- How can a human rights approach be applied in education policy and practice?

The research inquiry should be constant and continuous in much the same way as the struggles for inclusion and human rights should be. As the case of Cyprus vividly suggests, the inability to conceptualise the centrality of a human rights perspective in a democratic nation bears a major impact on the inability to conjure up inclusion as a matter of ‘political urgency and necessity’ that is unequivocally concerned with the reinstatement of disabled children’s human rights, not ‘needs’. We should bear in mind, however, that these struggles should take place not only in all ‘arenas’ (Fulcher, 1989) of a socio-political system, but also within the deepest ideological and structural ‘recesses’ of that system. In Cyprus, an amalgam of socio-historical conjunctures and exigencies, have multifariously encumbered the development of a fully-fledged democratic nation-state capable of safeguarding and promoting a human rights approach to gender, race and disability. It is, nevertheless, expected that the European orientation of the island, especially after its accession to the EU, will contribute to the emergence and proliferation of political, social and educational structures and processes aimed at ensuring that all persons are equal before the law irrespective of individual differences. Simultaneously, however, it needs to be noted that the European orientation of the island will act, in a way, as a two-fold sword in the sense that the market values, which patently prevail in the EU, will put more pressure on Cyprus to become more competitive and capable of ensuring continuing development under the siege of globalisation.

Understandably, given the inimical endogenous and exogenous dynamics impinging on policy constitution and dissemination, inclusion remains amiss both conceptually and pragmatically unless it is conjured up as a human rights issue not only for disabled children but also for all children. The catastrophic linkage of inclusion with special education should be immediately jettisoned, while at the same time the linkage of inclusion with human rights should be urgently forged and established in the minds of everybody as the first critical step towards emancipatory change (Barton, 2004) for a more just and equitable educational and social system for all. The conceptualisation of the historically, socially and culturally contingent nature of inclusion will enable both key policymakers and other people to ‘emancipate their thinking’ and leave behind the iniquitous ideological predispositions, fears and biases that jeopardise inclusion and have so far obscured and deflected the road towards emancipatory change through the reinstatement and enhancement of human rights for all.

Note

1. All the direct quotes lifted from Mavratsas (2003) have been translated to English from the original Greek by the author.

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RESEARCH NOTE

TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BULLYING PROBLEM IN LEBANON

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BAREND VLAARDINGERBROEK

Abstract – *This paper presents data arising from a study (see Rabah, 2006) on the bullying problem in a sample of nine Lebanese private schools from the perspective of school personnel. The sample comprised 151 teachers, including nine senior administrators as key informants. The data collected included copies of written school policies. The study suggests that Lebanese teachers, on the whole, exhibit a high level of understanding of the phenomenon of bullying. However, they concede that many Lebanese teachers may not recognise the behaviour in all its forms. Most of the schools in the sample moreover did not have written anti-bullying policies. Most teachers believed that they needed professional development workshops on the bullying issue.*

Introduction

The problem of school bullying has received increasing research attention in western societies over the past decade and a half (e.g., in Australia – Rigby & Slee, 1991; in England – Boulton & Underwood, 1992; in Scandinavia – Olweus, 1993; in the USA – Pelligrini, Bartini & Brooks, 1999; and in Ireland – Collins, McAleavy & Adamson, 2004). Although there is a dearth of information concerning the issue from the Middle East, awareness of the problem among educational psychologists appears to be on the rise (e.g., in Lebanon – Zein, 2001; Kolehlat, 2003; and Nassar, 2005).

The importance of school personnel's perceptions

The definition of bullying is not uncontentious (Boulton, 1997). However, critical aspects of bullying, as opposed to simple altercations between youngsters, include systematic and on-going victimisation in the context of an imbalance of power where the express intent of the perpetrator is to hurt the victim (Olweus, 1993; Ross, 1996; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan, 2004). While bullying of the direct physical kind (punching, shoving, spitting, etc.) is the most

readily recognisable, bullying behaviour can occur in many guises, including indirect physical acts (e.g., taking possession of, or damaging, another child's property) and verbal actions (e.g., name-calling, mocking, teasing) (Olweus, 1993; Siann, Callaghan, Glissov, Lockhart & Rawson, 1994; Borg, 1999; Thompson, Arora & Sharp, 2002). Verbal forms of bullying appear to predominate (Olweus, 1993; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Borg, 1999; Koleilat, 2003; Collins et al., 2004).

Research suggests that teachers play a crucial role in preventing and managing the problem of bullying (Boulton, 1997; Martin, Linfoot, & Stephenson, 1999; Nicolaides, Toda & Smith, 2002; Cooper & Snell, 2003; Garbarino & deLara, 2003; Weissbourd 2003). Teachers must, however, be able to recognise bullying in all its guises before they can become effective in this role (Olweus, 1999; Sanders & Phye, 2004). Unfortunately, they may not always do so, while conversely they may misinterpret other behaviours as bullying (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Boulton, 1997; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Leff & Kupersmidt, 1999; Hazler, Miller, Carney & Green, 2001). At the same time, teachers generally feel a strong professional duty on their part to prevent bullying and to intervene when they come across instances of it (Borg & Falzon, 1990; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Boulton 1997). In some cases, they may feel unconfident about their ability to deal with the problem (Martin et al., 1999).

The attitudes of school personnel towards bullying are pivotal determinants of the responses of the school system to the problem (Scherer, 2003, Payne & Gottfredson, 2004). The response of teachers to the bullying phenomenon depends to a large extent on the ethos of the school as defined by its administration. School administrators may not take the issue seriously, leading to a policy vacuum (Ross, 1996; Geffner et al., 2001; Garbarino & deLara, 2003; Payne & Gottfredson, 2004; Sanders & Phye, 2004). But the existence of a lucid and practicable institutional policy on bullying appears to be a critical component of an effective anti-bullying strategy (Thompson et al., 2002; Sullivan et al., 2004).

The study

Setting

Lebanon is a cosmopolitan democracy with a mixed Turkish and French colonial heritage and a rapidly growing American cultural influence. The latter two formative factors are particularly evident in school education. For while the Lebanese state education system is modelled on the French, there has been a proliferation of American-modelled private schools and universities over the years, and Anglophone schooling is displacing Francophone as the norm. Education is highly valued in Lebanese society, with a very highly developed private school system in place that is patronised by a high proportion of school-age children (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002).

Aim

The purpose of this study was to gauge the perceptions and attitudes of a sample of Lebanese school personnel towards the bullying phenomenon with a view to devising and implementing effective professional development strategies to address the problem. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Lebanese teachers and administrators perceive bullying in general, and how much of a problem do they consider it to be in their schools?
2. What school policies are currently in place to deal with bullying, and what are Lebanese teachers' and administrators' views towards teachers' responsibilities in dealing with the issue?
3. Do Lebanese teachers and administrators believe that they need in-service training to deal with bullying, and, if so, what should this in-service training involve?

Methodology

Targeted sample

The targeted sample consisted of ten grade 1-12 Anglophone private schools with staffs of more than 50 operating within the Greater Beirut area. Two teachers at each grade level were selected randomly as survey participants, while the cooperation of a senior administrator in each school was secured as a key informant.

Instruments

The researcher developed two written questionnaires – one for the teachers and one for the administrators. Both questionnaires contained a core of items to elicit data on how teachers and administrators perceive bullying. In particular, the researcher sought information about: (i) how their definitions of bullying matched those in the literature; (ii) how seriously they regard given bullying acts; (iii) how they view their responsibilities; (iv) how they view the extent of the bullying problem at their schools; and (v) whether they believe they would benefit from in-service training on how to deal with the problem. The administrators' version contained additional items on current school policies and procedures relating to bullying. Copies of these instruments may be procured from the authors upon request.

Piloting

The survey questionnaires were piloted on two school administrators and 10 randomly selected teachers. The instruments were then amended accordingly before they were administered on the selected participants of the main study.

Participants

The received sample consisted of completed questionnaires from 151 teachers, including nine administrators from nine schools, representing a response rate of 74% of the intended sample. Most respondents were female, young (below age 40), and had fewer than 10 years of teaching experience. Three administrators wished to discuss issues arising in the questionnaire. The researcher made notes during the ensuing informal interviews, which will subsequently be referred to.

Analysis

Responses to options in closed-ended items were converted to frequencies. Responses to open-ended items, and school policies, were subjected to thematic analysis.

Results

More than 75% of the participants appeared to be aware of the definitional aspects of bullying (i.e., harasser as an individual or member of a group; systematic on-going nature of the harassment; imbalance of power between harasser and victim; and the express intention to hurt the victim). Physical bullying acts, whether direct (e.g., kicking, shoving, pulling hair, spitting; ripping clothes, and damaging property) or indirect (e.g., appropriation of possessions), were regarded as the most serious. But the respondents also generally regarded non-physical acts – such as name-calling, threatening, teasing, sending malicious notes and attempting to socially exclude other children – as serious to very serious. Teasing and ridicule were reported as being the most prevalent in respondents' schools, whereas direct physical bullying and intimidation were mostly reported as occurring only occasionally. Only 12% of the sample considered bullying to be a fairly serious problem in their schools.

While nearly all teachers agreed that teachers should intervene when they see bullying occurring, almost three quarters of teachers agreed that teachers should report all instances of bullying. A large majority (87%) agreed that teachers play a

crucial role in bullying prevention. But, then, more than 70% conceded that teachers do not notice all kinds of bullying. About equal numbers agreed and disagreed with the suggestion that teachers often deliberately ignore bullying.

All schools, except for one, reported that they had designated school personnel who were responsible for dealing with bullying and its consequences. In all schools, the administrators claimed that students who are guilty of bullying are counselled and given the opportunity to make things right. However, only six of the nine administrators said that they had a definite school policy on bullying. Two respondents referred to a written policy, copies of which were also submitted. Another respondent submitted a document pertaining to expellable offences in the playground. During the follow-up informal interview, the administrator who submitted this latter document said:

Bullying as encompassing physical and psychological is not understood as such in this environment. It is more likely understood only as physical.

A fourth administrator noted that a bullying policy was being written for the coming school year. Three other administrators claimed that their schools have informal bullying policies. For one of these, this involved a disciplinary committee. Another wrote:

Every teacher is responsible at all time to prevent any form of bullying in addition to the presence of our school psychologist and her work on social skills and counseling to both students and parents.

One of the two written policies had been in existence ‘for many years now’, while the other had been implemented at the beginning of the scholastic year. Two administrators wrote that the bullying policy was disseminated through school handbooks. Another noted that

Every year we provide our new teachers with clear instructions as to the importance of promoting proper social values as well as good study and social habits. The faculty holds regular meetings with the administration and this topic is always on our agenda.

One of the written bullying policies was presented in the guise of an anti-harassment policy and covered the full range of bullying behaviours. The other was a composite ‘fighting and bullying’ policy.

There was overwhelming agreement with the suggestion that teachers need professional development workshops on bullying and on strategies to better deal with the issue. Their suggestions for the content of such workshops, presented

here in descending order of the number of times referred to by the teachers, included explanations of the various types of bullying, how to deal with bullying, intervention strategies, and ways of recognising bullying behaviours.

Discussion

Research question 1

Despite there being considerable expert disagreement regarding the definition of bullying (Boulton, 1997), most Lebanese teachers appear to hold views that are consistent with commonly understood aspects of the phenomenon. Moreover, the Lebanese teachers who took part in this study appeared to give high weightings to all kinds of bullying. This is an encouraging sign, as teachers who recognise a variety of bullying modes are more likely to intervene (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Thompson et al., 2002). At the same time, teachers may not recognise bullying acts occurring in their own classes, although they intervene when they are aware of it (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

Similar to the trend reported by Koleilat (2003), verbal bullying was perceived as being the most common type of bullying behaviour in the participants' schools. The overall rating of the bullying problem by the teachers in this study was quite low. While this may reflect the private school nature of the sample, it has also been reported that teachers tend to under-report bullying incidents (Rigby & Slee, 1991).

Research question 2

In this study, the Lebanese teachers' view of their responsibilities towards bullying is consistent with the results of studies by Borg & Falzon (1990) and Boulton (1997). Nearly all teachers agreed that teachers play a crucial role in bullying prevention and that they should intervene when they see bullying occurring. However, teachers do not always recognise problematic behaviours or respond to them appropriately (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Most of the teachers sampled admitted in fact that their colleagues did not always notice bullying behaviour. The fundamental issue, therefore, is not the teachers' 'good will' with respect to reducing bullying in their schools, but their recognition of the problem in all its forms. The teachers' role in this regard is moreover largely defined by policies devised and administered by the school administration (Sullivan et al., 2004).

With regards to school bullying policies in the participant schools, the responses given can be categorised in three types:

1. No specific bullying policy, but there is a set of rules regarding proper playground behaviour and/or intimidating student behaviours (three schools).
2. Unwritten/informal bullying policy through regular meetings, student handbooks, and disciplinary committees (four schools).
3. Specific, written bullying policies (two schools).

One school actually referred to its written policy as an ‘anti-harassment policy’. This is symptomatic of a growing tendency of legal commentators in the USA to consider ‘bullying’ not as a legally recognised behaviour in itself, but to categorise it under the broader and legally sanctioned entity of harassment (Conn, 2004). Both written policies exemplified effective anti-bullying policies as defined in the literature. It can indeed be said that they are logical and easy to understand, properly formed to support the events expected and regularly reviewed with an identified team of bullying experts who implement procedures, are supportive of teachers and help to create a safe place in which to learn (Sullivan et al., 2004).

Research question 3

Teachers are the refuge to which children turn when they are facing a difficult situation. Therefore, as Weissbourd (2003) contends, they should be equipped with strategies to handle these situations. In this study, as in others (see Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Boulton, 1997; Nicolaides, Toda & Smith, 2002), teachers stated they needed workshops on bullying and on strategies to better deal with the issue.

Recommendations

The limited scope and nature of the sample indicates a need for further research in Lebanon to ascertain the full extent of both the bullying problem and of teachers’ and administrators’ attitudes towards it and means of dealing with it. However, the principal recommendation arising from this research is that professional development workshops on the bullying phenomenon need be devised and conducted. As well as focusing on the behaviours involved and on practical strategies to prevent and deal with this phenomenon, such workshops would actively encourage schools to develop, implement and disseminate formal written policies on bullying.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Reflections on the second MESCE Conference held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt, 4-7th February, 2006

PETER MAYO

The magnificent newly built Bibliotheca Alexandrina in the heart of the ancient Egyptian city of Alexandria was the venue of the second Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education (MESCE) conference. The first conference took place in Catania, Sicily, two years ago. The Catania conference gave birth to the society that is the brainchild of Giovanni Pampanini and which adopts the *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies* as its recommended journal. The Alexandria conference was by far the larger of the two. Adopting the general theme, 'Community Participation, Decentralization and Education for Democracy in the Mediterranean Area/Countries,' the conference was intended to place MESCE on a firm footing.

The choice of Alexandria, Egypt, as the venue was appropriate to ensure a strong Arab participation, given the lack of funds that prevents Arab academics, ensconced in Arab universities, to participate at conferences abroad. As expected, there was a strong Egyptian presence at the conference. More pleasing was the fact that there was a strong female presence at this conference both in terms of speakers and convenors. Alas, with the exception of one participant from Lebanon, there were hardly any other Arab countries represented. There were few representatives from Southern Europe. There were presenters from Italy, Turkey and Malta. In addition, there were presenters from Canada, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, as well as participants from Germany. One wonders what more aggressive marketing strategies should be adopted to render the participation more regionally representative next time round.

There was the distinguished presence of the Editor of *Comparative Education Review* (Mark Ginsburg) at this meeting; he is currently residing in Cairo in view of his role as Director of the Reform Division of the Egyptian Education Reform Program. Together with Nagwa Megahed (*MJES* Editorial Advisory Board member) from the University of Ain Shams, Cairo, Mark Ginsburg presented an empirical piece on 'Social Inequalities, Educational Inequalities, and Teachers' Perspectives in Egypt'.

One other prominent figure from the Comparative Education field, with a strong interest in Arab and Islamic educational politics, is Linda Herrera (Institute of Social Studies, The Hague). She provided a critical perspective on ‘Targeted Democracy: Educational Reform and the New Development Hegemony’ in what was an intriguing piece.

Linda Herrera, well versed in Middle Eastern studies and the Arab language, is the co-editor, with Carlos Alberto Torres, of an important compendium of essays on Egyptian education (SUNY Press, forthcoming), entitled *Cultures of Arab Schooling: Critical Ethnographies from Egypt*. One of the key contributors to this volume, Kemal Naguib, from Alexandria University’s Faculty of Education, that lies across the road from the Bibliotheca, made important and perceptive contributions to the debates, especially those concerning Egyptian education and Mediterranean education in general.

Suzanne Majhanovic, from the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, gave a paper with the title ‘Decentralization of Education: Promising Initiative or Problematic Notion?’ that reminded us of the Neoliberal scenario that engulfs much of the activity in formal education these days, including, one should add, the policies of donor agencies that are very much involved in educational restructuring in many countries of the Southern Mediterranean.

The Maltese contribution, by the present author, focused on ‘Adult Education in the Mediterranean’ while there were two Turkish contributions, one by Ismail Guven and Yasmin Gulbhar from the University of Istanbul, regarding the ‘professional learning possibilities and ICT competences of the Turkish teachers in the field of History’, and the other by Fatma Gök, Bosphorus University, Istanbul, drawing on statistical data concerning the ‘Right to Education in Turkey’.

Power-point presentations were very much the norm at this conference, as with most other academic conferences these days. Sunethra Karunaratne, from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, used video-clips concerning teaching experiences conducted in Sri Lankan schools, and among teachers in in-service training activities. This was a feature of her presentation on ‘Capacity Building through Activity-based Workshop’. The Malaysian contribution, by Ruhizan M. Yasin, Norani Salleh and Norzani Azman (Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), was about ‘Computer Literacy and Civic Development in Malaysia’.

All these were interesting contributions. With the exception of a few papers, there was a slight bias towards quantitative data. The Egyptian contributions were many. Some were descriptive while others struck the analytical chords of many of the participants who actually engaged critically with the presentations and policies involved. Particularly interesting was the presentation concerning the prestigious and ancient Al-Azhar University. This was given by Ibrahim Marai and Mohamed

Fathy from the same Cairo university. It proposed a renewed role for the traditional Muslim University in the training, through e-learning and therefore a virtual university, of Imams all over the world. Being so topical in light of recent events in the Western world, this presentation led to a huge debate concerning the nature of Islam and the role of Imams.

Equally instructive were the debates about the role of 'civil society' in Egyptian Education (especially with regard to women) involving Raouf Azmy, Nagy Shenouda Nakhla and Omima Gado, Cairo.

In addition to all these presentations, there was an important address by Traugott Schoefthaler, Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the 'Dialogue among Cultures'. Organising future conferences of this kind around the theme of 'Dialogue among Cultures', without ignoring the political economy dimension involved, would be one important suggestion to make for the future, also in view of possible funding, by this foundation, of prospective Arab participants.

All told, Giovanni Pampanini, now first Past President, and Faten Adly, new vice-President of MESCE, did a great job in getting this conference going. There were simultaneous translations in Arabic and English. The translations were carried out on a voluntary basis by researchers at the National Center of Educational Research and Development in Cairo. In Mediterranean conferences, it is very important to have this kind of facility if a proper exchange among scholars is to be carried out. The overall organisation was impeccable; no registration fee was charged and yet all the necessary accoutrements for a successful conference, including lunches and coffee-break food and drink, were in place. The cultural highlight was no doubt the guided tour of the newly constructed architectural gem that is the Bibliotheca with its fine manuscript museum.

The splendid organisation of the conference augurs well for the future of this Society that now has a new Executive Committee led by the new MESCE President, Adila Kreso, University of Sarajevo. The next stop is, in fact, Sarajevo, the venue for the 2007 World Congress of Comparative Education, in which MESCE will play an important part.

Alexandria was the venue of another important conference last December, the fourth Mediterranean Adult Education conference, sponsored by the Institute of International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ-DVV), which led to the setting up of the Mediterranean Adult Education Association. If one adds all this to the Mediterranean educational research network that the *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies* spearheads, it is clear that there is a lot of creative and organisational energy circulating around this part of the world.



BOOK REVIEWS

Devorah Kalekin Fishman (2004) *Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Education for Immigrants and Minorities in Israel Today*, New York, Kluwer, 433 pp. (including index), ISBN HB: 1-4020-8073-5, ISBN E-book: 1-4020-8074-3.

This is not merely another book on education in Israel. *Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Education for Immigrants and Minorities in Israel Today* is an original and refreshing contribution to research in education – and this is so on several grounds. Above all, it presents a specifically *sociological* discussion of the Israeli educational system, of which in recent years there have been very few. At the same time it is a tract from the pen of a sociologist who knows her field thoroughly. It is obvious that the author has a wealth of experience both in her academic training as educationist, lecturer and researcher as well as in the field of education as a teacher.

The sociological facet of the discussion is marked by the fact that the author leaves aside ‘classical’ approaches to educational research, and turns to new shores. All the experts appear to agree that (state) education has the goal of guaranteeing national solidarity and the civic loyalty of its citizens by securing egalitarianism and equity for every school child. Why, then, the author asks, is educational differentiation not overcome despite countless reforms of schooling and education? Because of this persistent failure, researchers in education continue to consider that the unequal outcomes of demarcations *in* – or rather *through* – schooling have to be the object of their research.

Kalekin-Fishman’s book is new in that it contextualises implementations and practices of differentiation despite proclamations of integration. The first step in the contextualisation is her turning ‘ideology’ into a central concept, the pivot of her investigation, while linking it to the implementation of educational policy and educational praxis. Although such links have for a long time been neglected in educational research or treated at best as a curiosity, critical assessments of ideology are for the most part inserted freely in most educational research. The originality of her treatment lies in the fact that Kalekin-Fishman is not satisfied with using ideology as a ‘buzzword’, but develops these links as a real ‘chain of educational activities’, that determines the entire educational process.

To this end, she distinguishes three central elements of the chain on the level of the macro: (a) statements that frame an official ideology; (b) political implementation of this ideology in school-programmes; (c) the transmutation of such programmes into pedagogical performances.

On the level of the micro, using Burke's 'perspective about perspectives' for purposes of her research, Kalekin-Fishman differentiates five research perspectives: (1) the state as an educational agent; (2) educational ideology as bona fide intention; (3) the position of the educator / teacher as agency; (4) the political and social background as setting; (5) schooling as action. In showing the relations between the macro and the micro, she presents the chain of educational activities as patterns of performances. Educational ideology is carried over into legislation, which is translated into conceptualisations of implementation by an educational bureaucracy; educational administrators manage the transfer of the conceptions and oversee their execution / performance; last, these conceptions are realised in teacher education, and transmitted into the experience of pedagogical performances in the school.

What happens in the course of events until the links of the chain reach everyday life in schools, how intentions and principles are realised in pedagogical praxis through a long process of implementation *and* filtering, is demonstrated no place better than in the school-life of immigrants and minorities. These 'marginal groups' are those most significantly harmed by the demarcation in schooling and the groups that demonstrate the most enduring evidence of failures in egalitarianism. Thus the author builds her argument shrewdly and cautiously on the premise that the failing does not derive from contingent misunderstandings, but rather from systemic contradictions. Indeed, especially because the author is not writing an 'exposé', she succeeds with a staged investigation in shedding light so convincingly on the emergence of disparities that are apparently never explicitly intended.

Kalekin-Fishman divides her work into three parts. Part One – comprising four chapters – delineates the historical and theoretical background. Chapters 1 and 4 are the first introductory steps toward contextualising education in Israel and the particular form of Israeli educational ideology as a national project. Chapter 2 provides an insight into the education of immigrants and minorities in a few selected countries.

This orientation serves the purpose of sharpening her view that the analysis of Israel's educational ideology can be seen as an example of how to relate to ideologies in other states. The selection is deliberately chosen so as to place Israel in a comparative context among self-declared immigration countries (such as the USA and Australia) and supposedly mono-cultural countries (such as Germany, Japan, and Lithuania). Chapter 3 provides a short survey of different sociological approaches to the concept of ideology. The strength of this chapter lies in the fact that it both develops a differentiated bridge between Ideology and Schooling and clarifies the implications that can be derived for researching educational ideologies in school praxis.

Part Two, with five chapters, is devoted to the embedding of educational ideology in practical politics. Thus Part Two presents a broad detailed contextualisation of Israeli educational ideology in respect to historical as well as socio-political events. By choosing to cite key events, Kalekin-Fishman next (Chapters 5 and 6) develops the interplay of macro- and micro-planes in the implementation of educational ideologies in school programmes and school administration. Chapters 7 to 9 present the grounds for tension between (a) proclaimed ideology, (b) administration of school programmes and educational goals, as well as (c) the supervisors' dissemination of instructions. The author unpacks these against the background of her detailed discussion of the concept of ideology and her research design.

The concretisations, revisions and reforms of educational politics and educational administration substantiate and demonstrate how Israeli educational ideology as a national project – under the conditions of scenes of social change and in the hands of (politically) different agents – is constantly materialised anew in new chains of activities.

Part Three, with four case studies, is devoted entirely to school performance. Relating to examples of Russian and Ethiopian immigrants on the one hand and the Israeli-Palestinian minority as well as the multicultural community of immigrant workers on the other, four different types of life in schools are described and analysed as the 'endpoints' of the chain. Four *different* end-products of *one* educational ideology as a national project? The answer to this astonishing question – in each of the four case studies, therefore – is the most gripping part of the entire investigation. Each of the descriptions of daily life in school – in its *specific* form – makes clear how Israeli educational ideology, solemnly stated in the Proclamation of Independence materialises as a benignly functioning mechanism in a chain of politics, administration, and instructions, guidelines and school practices. Each case is presented from three perspectives:

- (1) the background of the respective immigrants – or minority group;
- (2) descriptions of education of the respective immigrant and minority groups in research;
- (3) short observations of events in the four types of schools.

In the presentation of her example cases, we see once again how fruitful is Kalekin-Fishman's approach – specifying ideology as the organising concept for the functions *and* models of how the school and educational system works. In opposition to the state institutionalised educational ideology over a long chain of activities, we learn that there is still space for professional pedagogical reflection, in each area of daily life in school. These considerations are euphemistically justified and identified as 'meeting the needs of the pupils'.

Does this mean, one may ask in puzzlement, that at the end of the chain of educational activities, that is in the school performance, a potential is at hand to resist the benignly functioning mechanism of the Israeli national educational project? The answer, which the author gives in a closing critical interpretation (Chapter 14) of the four case studies, is a decisive ‘no’. The long road of the Israeli national educational ideology through a manifold, complex chain of activities serves ultimately to veil the congruence between (a) the professional preparation approved by the Ministry of Education, (b) the pedagogical consciousness that teachers, instructors and administrators have cultivated, and (c) the ideological principles that the State is promoting. It is indeed this complex process of filtering and veiling that makes the benign character of the systematically layered educational ideology into a functional mechanism.

Ideology, Policy, and Practice: Education for Immigrants and Minorities in Israel Today reaches out far beyond the interest of professional educationists. It will serve a great variety of different researchers and readers: (1) those who are – for any reason – interested in Israel’s policy in respect to the state’s general policy towards its minorities; (2) those who will profit from Kalekin-Fishman’s methods to research the implementation-chain of any value-driven policy (what Kalekin-Fishman did in the field of education could be applied most profitably in the field of social policy); (3) those who are interested in questions in the realm of sociology of knowledge; and last but not least (4) all those in western countries – most probably in the European Union – whose field of research is multiculturalism, education for immigrants from non-Western cultures.

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William Hare and John P. Portelli (eds.) (2005) *Key Questions for Educators*, Halifax, Edphil Books, x + 133 pp., ISBN: 0-9697253-3-7.

For some years now I have desperately searched for a book that introduces education students to the current discussions about the most crucial and current educational issues that would help them develop clearer understandings of their professional journeys in becoming educators. I needed a text pitched at a level that was not too high for students to reach and that did not simplify the complexity of the vast range of issues that challenge educators today.

The book edited by Hare and Portelli does not provide you with the magic drink that helps you grow instantaneously and grab the key on the high table of academic rigour. What the editors offer, as immediately indicated by the front cover of the book, is a keyhole through which you can get a glimpse of the various issues and topics that can be viewed through yet other smaller keyholes. A quick peep into the different keyholes promises a good introduction to the different views and approaches of different authors about different educational questions ranging from what is educational theory to what is imagination, what is feminist pedagogy to what is the marketisation of education, what is multiculturalism, antiracist education, spiritual education, science education to what teaching, professionalism, open mindedness is, to list just a few of the titles of the chapters in this book. The chapters are short, generally three pages long but beyond the keyholes lie deeper worlds and the authors, all of them experts in their field, make you aware of these by a short list of further suggested readings at the end of each chapter. In this respect I feel that the editors could have instigated the authors to be more generous. Nevertheless, as I explained earlier, the authors are only presenting keyholes through which readers are posed with some key inviting questions for further exploration.

The key question about this book is whether such an introductory book should give single key answers to the key questions posed by the editors and authors and sometimes by educators themselves. Such a question generates heated debate in educational circles. Should educators, especially editors and authors, use their power to present their particular values about particular issues as key answers?

For Hare and Portelli, as for most of the authors in this book, the answer is 'yes'. Positioning oneself, giving strong indications of the theoretical, ethical, political affiliations is a must if one is to engage in educational theorising, all the more so if this is grounded in the tenets of a critical theory. Presenting standpoints is essential if one wants to engage in meaningful debates that are educational. The editors themselves insist that the key factor to educational and theoretical endeavours, such as the ones taken up in this book, is the question. The editors

rightfully echo the needs of the reader and ask a number of questions that all the authors dutifully answer in relation to their value laden understanding of the issues.

I believe that it is the responsibility of the reader to actively pose critical questions to the key answers of the authors in this book. Nevertheless I think that a good introductory book such as this one could have been supplemented by further questions (besides the further suggested readings by the authors) at the end of each chapter; questions that could instigate further research, thinking, argumentation and debate.

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Notes for Contributors

The *MJES* publishes original contributions in the field of education that focus on Mediterranean countries and the diaspora of Mediterranean people worldwide. To ensure the highest standards all submitted articles are scrutinised by at least two independent referees before being accepted for publication. Prospective authors are advised to contact the editor before submitting their manuscript. Published papers become the copyright of the journal.

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All contributors should be aware they are addressing an international audience. They should also use non-sexist, non-racist language, and a guide sheet is available in this regard.

Manuscripts, preferably between 6,000 and 8,000 words in length, should be sent to the Editor *MJES*, Ronald G. Sultana, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida MSD 06, Malta, accompanied by an abstract of between 100-150 words. The abstract should be provided in English, the author's mother tongue, and possibly Arabic and French. Research Notes, Project Reports, and Comments (1,500 to 3,000 words in length) are also welcome.

The manuscript can be submitted as an e-mail attachment, to be sent to: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt Alternatively, **three** complete copies of the manuscript can be submitted, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper. A diskette version of the article (preferably formatted on Word for Windows) should be included with the manuscript.

It is essential that the full postal address, telephone, fax and email coordinates be given of the author who will receive editorial correspondence, offprints and proofs. Authors should include a brief autobiographic note. To enable the

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Particular care in the presentation of references would be greatly appreciated, and ensure earlier placement in the publication queue.

Proofs will be sent to the author/s if there is sufficient time to do so, and should be corrected and returned immediately to the Editor. 25 offprints of each article will be supplied free of charge together with a complete copy of the journal issue.

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The *MJES* is a biannual refereed international journal with a regional focus. It features educational research carried out in Mediterranean countries, as well as educational studies related to the diaspora of Mediterranean people world-wide. The journal offers a forum for theoretical debate, historical and comparative studies, research and project reports, thus facilitating dialogue in a region which has strong and varied educational traditions. There is a strong international dimension to this dialogue, given the profile of the Mediterranean in the configuration of the new world order, and the presence of Mediterranean peoples in Europe, North America and elsewhere. The *MJES* is of interest to scholars, researchers and practitioners in the following fields: comparative education, foundation disciplines in education, education policy analysis, Mediterranean studies, cultural and post-colonial studies, Southern European and area studies, intercultural education, peace education, and migrant studies.

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