

DEVORAH KALEKIN-FISHMAN

*University of Haifa—Israel*

*dkalekin@construct.haifa.ac.il*

## **CROSSING BORDERS**

*Ambiguities and Convictions*

*Q. What have been some of the most formative moments in your own education? Here you can also tell readers about the individuals, movements, organisations, etc that were most influential in shaping your development as an educator/scholar/citizen.*

Most formative in my life were the moments that were strung together as my childhood and adolescence—in a milieu that was thoroughly multicultural. I had the great good luck to be born, grow up and go to school in New York. My parents had migrated to the US from a small town in the part of Poland that was occupied by Russia until the end of World War I, now part of the Ukraine. As young adults, they studied some English and immediately went to work to make enough money to live on. I, on the other hand, had the advantage of excellent free public schools, and a university stipend that got me through to a BA at the age of nineteen. Beyond this, living in New York was an education in democracy and multiculturalism. Regular visits to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street public library, with the two welcoming lions on the front steps filled me with awe and joy. Toscanini led the New York Philharmonic every Sunday and I could hear them on the radio. My first experience of the ballet was in the balcony looking down at creations of George Balanchine and Anthony Tudor, among the most respected classics of modern dance. Joining a seemingly endless queue and getting to see a new film together with a stage show at Radio City Music Hall around Christmas time was exquisite.

And the people! I knew about WASPs from my school textbooks (nobody bothered about culturally appropriate materials then), but as the daughter of Jewish immigrants I knew exactly what it meant never quite to match the ideal. Now, I think the very definition of WASPs is an ideal type in Weber's sense—a configuration of traits that is never found among real people, but provides a basis for telling how any given group deviates from the 'ideal'. When I was growing up, I was not sure that I could even aspire to approach it. But in New York, I was after all a native; I rode the subways daily to and from school, rode the buses for going shopping and spending time with my friends. This meant endless opportunities to hear all the languages spoken in the city, to see faces of all colours of the rainbow, and to internalize the lifelong understanding that diversity is normal.

The centre of my world during the week was of course school and the neighbourhood. But other influences were intertwined with these. Because my family was religious, I joined a Jewish youth group at the age of eleven. This was an introduction to being totally foreign. We called each other by our Hebrew names, the names given to us at birth by our families but understood to be inappropriate in a non-Jewish milieu. Our activities in the 'nest' of the movement were all oriented to the renaissance of the Jewish people in Biblical Palestine, the site of our dreams. We danced and sang Hebrew songs, whose words I then learned by rote because I did not know the language. The girls and boys I met in the movement were my weekend life, a different place altogether. I loved living in a melange of different frames and this enhanced my taste for multiplicity and miscellany.

There were also individuals who turned me in directions that have determined the tenor of my entire life. Studying piano from the age of seven added a different kind of language dimension. I spent years learning how to make the little black circles turn into varieties of sounds, and trying to think through what those designs meant. And in school, teachers indeed made a difference. Miss Garrahy, my home room teacher in the sixth grade was a model of the teacher who calmly accepted all her students and patently believed in their ability to make progress; her manner was an inspiration at the time and, indeed, has been ever since. Hunter College High School, now co-ed and then an all-girls school, was where I discovered the magic of serious study. And at Queens College, where I was a freshman at the age of 15, there were at least four professors who made a lasting impression on me: one who never prepared a lecture but always brought the liveliest criticism of political injustice into every class. In a class on the philosophy of science, Carl Hempel (one of the original Vienna group) demonstrated that logical positivism was the reigning truth for reasonable people. But in that class, I learned even more from a mature student, who untiringly raised objections to the positivists' cold evasion of emotion. There was the professor of English who opened my eyes to the fact that only people with self-confidence are capable of learning from criticism. And there was Mr. Emory, from whose lectures on Ancient Rome, I shored the immortal sarcastic comment: 'After all, no one really objects to war except mothers.' Those four years leading up to a BA taught me that even in school one didn't have to say 'yes' to everything someone in authority was saying or doing.

That lesson served me well many years later when I was working on a thesis for my MA, and had to find answers even though all the professors were annoyed with my constant questioning. And even better when I did my doctorate with Thomas Luckmann who showed me in a most economical way that an adviser can be completely permissive and democratic but at the same time ready to pounce on any weakness, no matter how cunningly camouflaged.

In looking back on what I have written in answer to this question, I found that a word that comes into almost every sentence is 'but' (I've deleted some). And if I went on and mentioned some more people, and one or two more organizations with which I was associated, I think that apart from the magic of multiplicity, I learned from all

of them an ineluctable lesson—there is indeed always a ‘but’—the key to complexity.

*Q. Tell us a little about who you are, about some of the most significant milestones in your personal/professional life, and your most noteworthy achievements as an educator/scholar/citizen. Locate and position yourself within the socio-political and historical movements that define who and what you are, and where you ‘stand’.*

Milestones? Let me begin with the most recent. In 2009 I was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Joensuu, now part of the University of East Finland. As part of the celebration, we planted trees in a little wood not far from the university. The combination of academic recognition for past work and a live sapling taking root for a hopeful future was particularly moving.

During four years (2006-2010), I served as Vice-President for Publications of the International Sociological Association (ISA). This was after I had been a member of the Executive Committee for four years and President of the Research Committee for the Study of Alienation for eight years. All ISA terms of office are subject to constitutional limitations. The experience in the ISA was a further broadening of horizons, coming together with and after my participation in two European consortia that worked on multicultural teacher education and later on dual citizenship as problems of the European Union. (These research projects were summarized and published in five books.) Back to the ISA: Founded sixty years ago by a handful of sociologists from North America and Europe; now the ISA is an organization of close to 5000 members from across Australasia and Africa as well as Latin America, Europe and North America. Working in the ISA enabled me to gain at least an initial understanding of some of the professional similarities of sociologists everywhere, and of the wide differences among localities, because unhappiness and inequity and oppression are both universal problems and unique to each locale.

In 2005, I was asked to edit a new publication, two issues of a key journal of the ISA, *International Sociology*, and I became the founding editor of the *International Sociology Review of Books*, a publication with the central mission of publicizing the work of sociologists in the global south and east to the extent that that is possible. Thus, I was able to learn something about the publishing industry, and professionally speaking, about gatekeeping—its importance and the hazards.

It would be misleading to see career milestones as detached from milestones in my personal life. My migration to Israel was the point of departure for all the rest. The plan was to visit for a year, and then go back to New York to live in an apartment of my own in Manhattan while going on to graduate studies. When I arrived in Israel, I found it enchanting to be in a small country (then with a total population of under a million—even today the population of Israel is less than that of New York City), then a place where it seemed that everything was yet to do. Having had the experience of a Zionist scout movement, I wanted to ‘get a taste’ of collective living before I left and visited a kibbutz where I knew there were some Americans. There I met the man who became

the father of my children. Living on a kibbutz, a tiny village with all the advantages and disadvantages of everybody knowing everybody else well, was for the first time an experience of realizing equality and justice in an intimate setting. When I gave birth to my first child, though, and had to share his first year with the people responsible for the 'Infants' House', I found the atmosphere stifling and the separation from my son unbearable. That was when we left. My five children have been milestones in the best sense of the word. With each of them, I went through intensive courses in what it means to be a parent—a mother, and I'm still making discoveries.

Professional life was always there, however. Looking back as you have asked me to do, I see that no matter what else I have done, I've always taught. In the kibbutz, I taught music—both in classes and privately. After that, living in a development town, I set up the town's first music school, taught piano, guitar, mandolin, and recorder, and also conducted a children's choir. Students were almost all the children of new immigrants from Europe and from countries in the Near East and North Africa. Later, when the municipality could no longer support the school, I began teaching English to secondary school students; then I became a supervisor of English teachers in a town about an hour away from ours. When we moved to Haifa, I became head of the TEFL department of a large secondary school and was invited to join the staff of the School of Education. I then felt that the varieties of teaching I had done were all in preparation for and pertinent to instruction on an academic level and I was excited at the prospect of finally being obliged to do research.

In the Faculty of Education, I was in charge of teacher education for TEFL and once I had an MA in sociology I was asked to add courses in the sociology of education. I soon began doing research for my dissertation thanks to a stipend from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Commission). When I presented my project at a Faculty colloquium ('Aspects of Socialization in the Kindergarten: Time, Sound and Control'), I evoked something of a scandal. No questionnaires! No laboratory experiments! I was doing ethnographic observations of entire kindergarten days in Germany and in Israel; and conducting open interviews with kindergarten teachers and supervisors in both countries. The scandal abated a few years after I had earned the doctorate when some other professors in the faculty discovered that 'even in the USA', there were people doing qualitative research. As the first on the staff to have had experience with such methods, however, I had the pleasure and the honour of being the first to teach qualitative research methods to undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty, a particularly satisfying milestone. For several years, I coordinated the practice teaching of students in the Department of Teaching and Teacher Education—which meant constant contact with all the post-primary schools in Haifa and its environs. And I also coordinated the staff involved in teaching didactics of all the school subjects. Apart from simply having to be on top of it all, 'coordination' meant consultation, organizing in-service study days, and being available for support and help when necessary. Later, I was also the first Head of the Department of Educational Sciences of the Faculty.

One of the most exciting positions that I filled in the Faculty of Education was that of being coordinator and lecturer in Co-Existence Workshops—courses in which Arab and Jewish students met for at least a semester as part of their preparation for teaching. We planned this as a means for advancing intercultural understanding and we were naive enough to hope, peace. With a wonderful staff (among them, Dr. Nimer Ismail and Edna Toledano-Zaretsky), we developed different ways of conducting the workshops: focusing on proverbs and sayings that Arabs and Jews in each group had grown up with; discussing current events and airing contrasting opinions—getting it out of the system, so to speak; doing simulations that made it possible to ‘take the part of the other’. In the early 1990s, we received a three year grant from the Ford Foundation for workshops where Arab and Jewish students in ‘mixed’ pairs, prepared teaching materials together, and then, as part of their coursework, each pair actually taught the materials in two schools: one where Arabic was the language of instruction, and one where Hebrew was the language of instruction. Thus, not only did the students get to work together on something that was of professional and personal interest to both, but they also each had the experience of being part of the dominant majority in a school and, most important for the Jewish students, being part of the minority that is strange in another school.

Throughout the years, I have found a great deal of satisfaction in fulfilling the academic demand for publications. I have seen articles and books as a means of self-actualization (Maslow, 1965) as well as a way of adding some ideas to the marketplace of sociological theorizations, on the one hand, and to the marketplace of findings that may, hopefully, be of use not only to colleagues, but also to the shaping of Israeli society (see Kalekin-Fishman, Selected Publications, below).

I am hopeful that my involvement with education in schools and in the university has contributed something to civil society. When looking at myself strictly as citizen, I have been active in two types of organizations: ‘Partnership’ in which I chaired the Board of Directors for several years, was an organization to promote neighbourhood collaboration among Arabs and Jews in Haifa, which is, as you know, a city with a population of both Arabs and Jews, but with very little mixing. This neighbourhood initiative is now part of a municipal project. I have also been active in an organization that tried to advance a secular agenda, i.e., finding ways to annul religious laws and practices that are part and parcel of the legal apparatus of Israel (personal law, family law are primarily adapted to religious law).

Although I grew up in one country and immigrated to another, I have found myself constantly reflecting on what it means to ‘belong’ to a state, to a nation. Where I live affects the language, the ‘vibes’ and the content of discourse in the everyday, it affects relationships, and the ordinary behaviours that I partake in. But it can’t any more mean shutting myself away from discourses, relationships and ordinariness in other parts of the world. Blind loyalty to a single state no longer seems to make sense in an ineluctably globalizing world. The total commitment to a Jewish state and being part of it, which was part of my education in the week-end youth movement and inspired my migration to Israel, has undergone radical

change. I have learned, *pace* Gertrude Stein of the 1920s, that a state is a state is a state—and certainly not a rose. The Jewish state operating with a bureaucracy and an army is no different from states throughout the world, struggling to preserve sovereignty and using nationhood as a frame for solidarity, a basis for impressing identities. And yet, things are never so simple, are they? The definitive genocide in the twentieth century, a century of genocides, was the Nazi Holocaust. In all conscience, I cannot desert the notion that as a state Israel has a sacred obligation to make sure that people called Jews will, if persecuted, have somewhere to go. It is commonplace today to argue that Israel is a last ditch European colonialist project, and from the macro point of view that is a fair description (Lubin, 2008; Penslar, 2007; Rodinson, 1973; Shohat, 1992). But from the micro standpoint, people involved in establishing the state and in its development were moved by enthusiasm for creating what they understood to be a new kind of society; determined to rehabilitate those Jews who survived the Holocaust, and thoroughly imbued with faith that they were making the world better! The contradictions between the deliberate manipulations in the macro and the naïve commitment elicited from individuals who felt they were binding themselves to a sacred mission are the stuff of which Israel as a state is made.

*Q. What are some of the key educational ‘problematics’ that currently preoccupy you? How are these linked to the broader preoccupations you may have about society? What is your response to these problematics and preoccupations, as a scholar and as a citizen?*

Academics involved in education confront a perennial puzzle. Even though there is constant progress in educating personnel for work in education as well as in conceptualizing effective pedagogies, schooling does not solve social problems. To my mind, it is coping with the dynamics of school life tends to lead to an over-emphasis on classroom management and an evasion of the difficulties of coming to terms with how the political institution, or if you will, politicians, make sophisticated use of schooling to protect the status quo, the regime in power. Interventions in the form of curricula and textbooks are obvious, but more insidious are the interventions installed as ‘natural organization.’ Among them is the unalterable hierarchy that governs schools, the arbitrary but unalterable conception of how to conceive of classes, the allocation of children to different groups, the kinds of tests devised for classifying students at different stages of the school career, the credentials enthroned, and many more. The most subtle way of preserving the status quo is the pretence that teachers are *neutral* purveyors of knowledge and that knowledge, too, is by nature *neutral*. Teachers with preparation in which political questions are ignored, become willing tools for ensuring the perpetuation of ‘natural’ conventions. Clearly, educating teachers to carry out curricula that are pre-cooked with the aid of textbooks that have been approved by government-appointed bodies is a deeply political project. In this context, the rules of ‘good pedagogy’ are only relevant in connection with the dimension of human relations.

The frequently quoted idea that ‘knowledge is power’ has to be rephrased for education (Foucault, 1995): power is implemented and perpetuated through definitions of school knowledge. Given this basic understanding, teacher education should be organized around the task of eliciting evidence of power in every aspect of the curriculum, and of schooling in general. To date, the Faculties of Education that I am familiar with allow themselves to ignore the politics of schooling. While teaching and learning are reduced to psychological issues, analyses of political aspects of education are ghettoized in a course or two—often electives. Yet, confronting politics in education would prepare student teachers for resisting demands for neutrality, demands which misrepresent the true processes of education. In point of fact, teachers should be responsible for communicating the inevitability of multiplicity. Think of Riemannian geometry, arithmetic to the bases of 2 or 12, Einstein’s laws along with Newton’s, not to mention Shakespeare and Zadie Smith, Messiaen and Dave Brubeck. Almost every topic treated in school has diverse definitions and diverse interpretations. Facts as well as ideas and styles have to be placed on the market, for comparison, for weighing and for determining a fair exchange. Technology is advancing at mind-boggling speed because people dare to think in different ways. Yet children are held hostage to ‘the one correct’ way to learn and do in school situations.

What is implied in all of the above is a still under-valued pedagogical principle that has implications for all learning. Doing is always a part of learning – cognition is always coupled with some action. This key theme is undermined because the taste for ‘neutral information’ ignores the importance of action. Yet this is the insight must guide teacher education. Students learning to be teachers should be *doing* teaching all along *and doing* their subject matter through contact with students. Education for teachers has to emphasize this simple principle across the board. Schooling has to impart ways to action that are part of every solution. In many cases, this can be prescribed in subjects connected with citizenship. After all, learning to be part of society and contributing to solutions entails *doing* citizenship. Thanks to transparent media, such doing can be based on flows of information about problems and about what can be done. I would like to think that everything done in regard to schooling, every suggestion that is set in motion is a political act, which changes the air of schooling, even if imperceptibly at first. Virginia Woolf’s (1960) ideas about the ‘common reader’ have a future in the world of sharing research and doing education. Woolf shows that by reading books, people not only acquire ideas but also liberate ideas ‘into the world’ and that these ideas are important to the development of literature. I think that by participating in the knowledge market, picking and choosing among theoretical orientations, and doing what one wants to learn, educators do have a chance to contribute to solving social problems of the most diverse kinds.

I am happy to explicate my approach to education for the good of the children *and* for society in lectures, in op-ed pieces. But for the most part, I implement my ideas, advising graduate students on research projects that involve doing, writing research proposals for active interventions in schools with doing as a core. Since most of the

graduate students in the Faculty of Education are people who are themselves working as teachers at different levels of schooling, these projects do have outcomes in practice, as in principle.

*Q. What are your reflections about the major forces that are shaping educational practice in your country/region? What are the dynamics and interests that underpin these forces, and what kinds of challenges do they represent for the articulation of an education project in your country/region?*

The major forces shaping educational practice in my country derive from the religious presuppositions and the political situation. Unfortunately examples are legion.

Religious presuppositions: One basis for the divisions in the educational system is the claim that the major groups in the population of Israel, have different histories and different religious traditions not to mention different mother tongues, even though all the relevant groups (Jews, Muslims, Christians) trace their presumed history and derive their traditions from similar Biblical sources. According to law, there is freedom to practice / belong to any religion, but the divisions are rigorous. Not only do the religious Establishments each insist on their uniqueness, but state law fixes personal status only according to religion, mobilizing legal strictures against escaping the religious community into which one was born. State support for religion is a boon to the respective religious Establishments and ensures the perpetuation of each stream, no matter how small. In regard to the majority religion, Judaism, government support rules out diversity. Among the four streams in Judaism, only the practices of the orthodox and ultra-orthodox (Haredi), streams enjoy legitimacy. Their influence on education is felt in the sheer amount of time spent on religious matters in all schools. Between the second grade and the 12<sup>th</sup>—primary school to the end of secondary school—children in schools where Hebrew is the language of instruction ‘learn’ the Bible, the Old Testament and the Prophets from start to finish, twice. Moreover, the (ultra-)orthodox religious establishments run schools in which ‘secular studies’ are expressly forbidden. Boys in these schools spend all their time studying religious writings, mostly the Talmud. And many of them continue in these schools as adults, relying on government support to provide a meagre livelihood for their families. The Orthodox Jewish Establishment justifies the general rejection of secular studies by asserting that the sacred books are in fact the pillars of Israeli society, a more effective means than the army for maintaining Israel’s security. If these young men decide to enter the labour market, they have to reorganize their lives entirely, leave their studies for some vocational framework to gain marketable skills. In the organization of the calendar in the public sphere, Israel has very few civil holidays. All the official holidays of the bureaucracy, including the schools, are Jewish religious holidays which shape the year for all. Islamic and Christian holidays are, of course, celebrated by their respective communities; but their impact on the state as a whole is limited. The wide differences among the sectors prevent the development of a repertoire of common concepts.



The religious commitment of the state is also the basis for justifying the state's politics. Settlements in the occupied territories are justified by reference to God's will as expressed repeatedly in the Bible—to the three patriarchs, but also to Moses in his time, as well as to his successor, Joshua. Religious studies in the curriculum actually justify political moves that are condemned by many states and by regional organizations—the EU, the UN.

Concepts of legality are distorted by racist bills designed to limit the number of non-Jews in the country. Thus, the law opposes family unification if an Arab citizen of Israel marries a Palestinian from the occupied territories. These distortions are taught as examples of practices that are legal and just.

What are the underlying interests? Complex. There are the interests of the religious establishments (most vociferously the Jewish religious establishment) in keeping their control over those affiliated with them. The populations of the settlements have an interest in touting religious justifications for remaining in the occupied territories, and individuals who reside in the settlements have significant economic interests: reduced costs for land, generous loans for developing the area, mortgages at low interest rates, access to cheap labour (Palestinian villager neighbours).

These are related to educational practice in two ways: in referencing the contemporary era as a replay of ancient history, and through the interpretation of current political processes as the re-realization of the early Zionist pioneering projects. In the public sphere, as noted above, the new historians, historical sociologists, and human geographers (Seguev, 2007; Yiftachel, 2006) openly discuss ideas that identify Israel as the creation of European, most specifically British, colonialism. But the people mobilized by the Zionist movement, with all its subdivisions (religious, secular, socialist, liberal, right-wing) were moved by the ideal of redeeming a battered people, of finding a place where it would be possible to be free of the stress of anti-Semitism. Immigrants at the beginning of the twentieth century saw themselves as creating a new world for Jews who had been oppressed because of their birth, and rejected, among others, as Weber suggested, because of their unbending observance of dietary laws which prevented commensality. Mythologized as courageous pioneers, early immigrants are presented as secure in the 'knowledge' that they were also redeeming a 'land-without-a-people', and that the 'few' people who were there were simply selling their land and receiving appropriate compensation. Today, historians who reinterpret that period, decry the politics of the Zionist movement and the wrongs that were done. But for the settlers in the occupied territories it is convenient to adopt the foundational myths and to describe their actions as a further realization of the pioneering glories of Zionism. The mixture of myths is embedded in school programs. Moreover, when objections are raised, it is denied that these are anything but the neutralized 'correct' history of the birth of the state.

Throughout this section I have avoided the temptation to use the word 'narrative' in describing historical perspectives as in describing my own. Although references to narratives of different groups sound very up-to-date, I feel uncomfortable with the

idea that grappling with ideas that are crucial to the makeup of a nation-state and crucial to the self-conception of a people should be summed up as a ‘narrative’—a story that has been constructed for a particular purpose and can be/must be? re-constructed when purposes change.

*Q. Which recent developments/innovations in the education sector in your country fill you with hope in terms of furthering the agenda of democracy, and of equity? Which recent developments do you feel most critical of, and why?*

The easiest part of the question to answer is, of course, what I feel most critical of. With every change of government, there are changes in the Ministry of Education. The Minister is appointed by the leading party in the coalition and s/he in turn appoints the Head Administrator of the Ministry as well as the chairperson of the Secretariat for Pedagogy. These appointments are key in a country where the state system is still dominant. After the last elections, the choice was a young Minister, who, on the basis of his past performance in the Knesset seemed to be a moderate and rational legislator. As Minister of Education, he reinstated an Administrator who had already served in two earlier ministers, and he appointed a man whose former position was as head of an Institute for Research on Jewish Communities as chair of the Secretariat for Pedagogy, the council that determines educational policy. Since then, a textbook in civics was withdrawn from schools and from bookstores because, to the mind of the new Chair, too much attention is paid to the problems of the Arab citizens of Israel; similarly a history textbook was invalidated because the war of 1948 is presented in it both according to the ‘narrative’ of the Jewish state and according to the ‘narrative’ of the Arab minority. Both the materials on citizenship and the history textbook had been compiled by committees appointed by former Ministers. The trend of underlining the Zionist ‘narrative’ as uncontested has reached heights of hysteria with a relatively new student organization (‘Im Tirtzu’ – ‘If you will it’) which has taken its slogan from one of Theodor Herzl’s well-known sayings in order to state that university syllabuses have to be examined for anti-Zionist bias. Only ‘good Zionists’, who choose the ‘right’ (in both senses) resources in their courses, deserve to be professors at the universities. One outcome of their vicious campaign is that the Minister now proposes to set up a committee to compose a ‘Code of Ethics’ for lecturers at universities and colleges. Thus, a creeping dictatorship is proposed to replace the freedom of recognized academics to compile courses that to their minds meet standards of integrity. The good news in relation to this proposal is that as one, all the heads of universities in the country, refused to comply with a ‘code of ethics’ dictated by the ministry.

Perhaps some explanation is called for. While arguing with university professors is the life-blood of the academe, and more important, the only way to ‘do’ knowledge in depth; the activities of ‘Im Tirtzu’ and the proposal to impose a ‘code of ethics’ is no less than a way of throttling scientific judgment and critical thinking. Criticism, as an examination of the validity of conventions, is blackballed and the justification of social science as critique is rejected. A regime that curbs criticism in both senses is

suppressing both democracy and the very possibility of acquiring and disseminating knowledge.

The uproar that these steps have caused is a basis for being encouraged. Democracy is of course evident in that the University Presidents feel free to object to limitations on the freedom of academics to choose sources and resources on the basis of their informed judgment. There are also other indications that primary and secondary education is run democratically. Minority students have the right to study in their mother tongue, but if parents prefer, they also have the right to enrol their children in schools run in the mother tongue of the majority. Of course, this is practicable only in towns or villages where there is a mixed population—and these are few (Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Haifa, Nazareth and Nazareth Ilit, Acre, Ma'a lot, maybe one or two more). Democracy is evident in that there are no quotas on minority students in institutions for higher education.

There are, however, problems of equity in education on the basis of nationality as well as on the basis of class, and often the two go together. A growing number of private schools on the primary and secondary levels accentuate gaps between the privileged and the lower classes. Licensed by the Ministry, private schools have access to government support at the expense of the state school system. Thus, they enjoy smaller classes (the standard in state schools is 40 students per class in state secondary schools), longer school days, closer monitoring of the achievements of individual students, cultural enrichment, and often teachers who have proven records of success. Well-to-do Arab families, Muslim as well as Christian, have throughout this time been sending their children to private church schools which maintain high standards matching international requirements. In state schools in Arab communities, however, the number of classrooms is inadequate to the school population and schools make use of rooms rented in residential buildings, or of 'temporary' structures. Although successive ministerial committees have examined the needs of Arab students enrolled in the state educational system and have drawn up plans for building needed classrooms and for improving facilities; most of the programmes have been filed away, and the problems remain almost sixty years after the 1953 legislation that established free compulsory state education and marked the beginning of universal education for Arab children in the country (Kalekin-Fishman, 2004; Agbaria, personal communication, 2010). The situation in the state schools where Arabic is the language of instruction is actively contested today, however, by the many Arab academics active in advancing the interests of the community, especially the interests in education.

Another problem is language. Hebrew is the language of instruction and communication in Israeli universities. Thus, minority students who have spent their time in schools in which Arabic is the language of instruction have to meet new kinds of demands, among others having to adjust to the exclusive use of Hebrew in their classes. Apart from the studies, minority students who have been accepted to an institution that is far from their homes, have problems finding a place to live. This is often a humiliating experience. Recently, for example, a branch of one of the state

universities was established in Safed, a city known as a centre of kabbalistic study, but also with a secular Jewish population. Many Arab students from the villages in the north of Israel enrolled in the university, and a fairly large number decided to rent rooms in order not to waste precious time in long commutes. The Head Rabbi of the city called a meeting in which eighteen rabbis signed a petition calling on the residents of the city not to rent apartments to Arabs. This attack on allowing Arab students to rent accommodation is especially frightening in that although it was publicized in detail in the newspapers, it was been acted upon by the police only weeks after the story broke.

There have been so many unhappy events recently that it would seem foolhardy to be optimistic, and yet, optimism refuses to disappear. Strangely enough, with all its limitations, Israel is more democratic (in the sense of transparency and opportunity for protest) than it was when it was established. UN Resolution 147 (November 29, 1947), called for two new independent states (for Jews and for Arabs), as soon as the British mandate in Palestine came to an end on the 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1948. While the Arabs did not agree to the division of the territory between two states, the Jews of course were ecstatic at the decision that marked a realization of the Zionist dream. The Party of Workers in the Land of Israel (MAPAI) set up the first government and remained in power until 1977, imposing a social-democratic orthodoxy. The government bureaucracy was populated by 'our people', and government aid went to 'our people' wherever they undertook economic or political initiatives. After the elections of 1977, the right wing parties took over, and since then, except for short flurries in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s (from 1992 until Rabin's assassination on November 4, 1994), Israeli governments have consistently been dominated by right-wing parties. They have undone much of the welfare system that was put in place between 1949 and 1977, and have energetically advanced neo-liberalism in education as in economics and in politics. Still, there was a lesson for democracy in the very fact that the collective mind could change so as to replace one type of government with another. This lesson sustains opposition among Arab Members of the Knesset, and among Left-wingers.

*Q. What comments would you care to make about the impact of globalisation and/or regionalisation (e.g. Europeanisation) on educational development in your country/region?*

There is no doubt that processes of globalisation in the sense of living in one world rather than within narrowly defined boundaries, have penetrated educational institutions in Israel. Most schools are equipped with computers and school children find their way to Facebook even before the age of ten. Most are undoubtedly cognizant of all that can be done by searching the internet from the early years of grade school. Globalisation has penetrated higher education in the form of greater mobility. Far more students now seek opportunities for graduate studies in Europe as well as in the US, and there are, of course, influences of the EU's conventions on how to evaluate studies although this is not acknowledged formally. And further on,

Israeli researchers are usually partners to EU funded research, as was I. Israel was recently admitted to the OECD, and although it was understood that this does not bring any practical benefit, it was touted as a significant measure of the country's prestige. In addition, there has definitely been a growing awareness of the need to connect to other regions of the world. Connections are being developed on the academic level. Members of the Faculty of Education at Haifa have recently been invited to Chile, China, and India, for example, and a group of Chinese educationists visited Haifa.

One sign of the growth of awareness of the importance of other parts of the world is the publication of statistics. The direct advantage to the Teachers Unions of Israel's joining the OECD was the publication of statistics showing that Israeli teachers are among the most poorly paid. The publication of worldwide statistics on pupils' achievements has shown the Ministry of Education that there are elements in the educational systems of Singapore, for example, and of Finland, that should be studied with benefit.

Reflecting on the things we see happening, I find it exciting that Israel is now, at long last, in a situation that will bring her/us into the population of nations and into the appropriate geographical region. Having lived for so long in a situation of conflict with all its immediate neighbours, Israel has paradoxically been sustained by the comfort of 'knowing' that we are a unique country with a unique society, and for many this has meant that Israel has all the resources necessary for realizing the intellectual and the cultural potential. It is becoming increasingly clear that the intellectual potential of humankind is far richer and far more diverse than the potential of a single unit however defined. Of course, it has for long been evident that Israel cannot rely on itself for all its physical needs, but the realization that intellectual collaboration is advantageous is opening Israelis to a new way of seeing ourselves and others. Globalisation is, in a word, a healing process, a chance to overcome the dangerous provincialism of a small, closed-in country, which seeks 'security' by occupying territory and 'necessarily' instituting oppressive measures in order to discipline the Palestinian residents of those territories.

What, to my mind is most interesting is the gap between the slow, even regressive approach of the Israeli government to politics—excessive 'caution' in regard to signing peace agreements—with what is happening in the real world. During a newscast on the government supported television channel, we were shown that Israelis and Palestinians are collaborating in a 'hi-tech' venture. The Palestinian who heads the team in Ramallah mentioned that the Israelis were surprised to find that there are highly qualified Palestinian computer engineers; the Israeli partner was enthusiastic about the important discoveries that his company is making thanks to the collaboration. Even more astonishing is the news in *Haaretz* of November 12, 2010, in a short article by Assaf Schtull-Trauring on the bottom of page 13 (below a report on a rapper who has become a religious Jew and above a report about the firing of the Google employee who publicized the bonus that employees are getting this year). The headline says: 'New Funds Advance the Project of an Electronic Particle

Accelerator of the Middle East.’ And the story begins with ‘In a hotel that faces the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea, scientists from Israel, Iran, Turkey, The Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Pakistan, Jordan, Bahrein and Cyprus, as well as representatives from Europe and the USA, sat at one table last Tuesday to discuss unprecedented future scientific collaboration among these states, for the next fifteen years: the establishment of a research centre with a particle accelerator in Jordan, at a distance of only thirty kilometers from the Allenby Bridge’ [the bridge on which travelers pass between Israel and Jordan] [my translation]. Obviously the Israeli reporter was astounded, for he went on to describe ‘this incredible meeting’ of a group of senior physicists, SESAME, who agreed to carry out the project and cites the ‘virtual certainty’ that all of them will commit to funding the initiative. Whatever happens among the governments is in a sense irrelevant to the perceived need to advance scientific projects in the region, and in effect, through this, to regionalize the Middle East.

In the realm of the social sciences, there has, of course, for long been an interest in globalization. But what seems most interesting is seeing how the *fact* of globalization is having an impact on what we as social scientists are doing. For one thing, there is the development of a fascinating body of work that emphasizes intersectionality, the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, as a basis for discovering moments of oppression. An approach that was initiated in feminist research in the wake of the dissatisfaction with theorization that presented all women as cut of the same cloth, the insights achieved by dealing with intersectionality are most important in shedding light on the subtleties of diversity in different cultures and, more pointedly, to my mind, in different political regimes.

Further: given that one of the implications of globalization is transnationalism, i.e., people’s capacity to feel that they are part of more than one nation-state, we see this, too, echoed in intellectual life. The trend of ‘transdisciplinarity’ has gathered impetus in recent decades. The perception that most real life problems require integrative treatment in the light of theories from several disciplines, rather than the orthodox insistence on arguing for the superiority of one social science over another, or of the natural sciences over the social sciences, has been gaining ground. This holistic approach is ‘not concerned with the simple transfer of a model from one branch of knowledge to another, but rather with the study of isomorphisms between the different domains of knowledge ... [It] takes into account the consequences of a flow of information circulating between the various branches of knowledge, permitting the emergence of unity amidst the diversity and diversity through the unity’ (Nicolescu, 1987). Echoes of physical mobility! It may well be that scientific cosmopolitanism is foretelling the full material realization of one world.

*Q. Which authors/texts would you single out as being of utmost importance if one wishes to understand educational dynamics in your country/region? How do you use these authors/texts in your own work? Feel free to cite an extended passage, and to comment on it in ways that add further insights into your own thinking.*

I think there is no better way to understand educational dynamics in my country, and I would venture to say to understand educational dynamics in the region, than by examining religious texts. The messages of the texts are internalized from childhood on; they are part of the taken for granted, the ‘mentalities’ of the different sectors of the population, and have to be reckoned with in order to see why educational institutions are taking the shape they have, and produce discourses antagonistic to one another. In addition, however, it is necessary to consider the advances in science and technology that are constantly brought to the attention of people throughout the world. In the educational system of Israel, careful distinctions are made between the sources of values, i.e., traditions derived from the religions, and the capacity to adopt advanced inventions and to build on them. This is the inner message of the neutrality that is demanded of teachers. One might say that there is a collective shudder at the implication that scientific and technological advances imply changes in traditional modes of behaviour and in the possible interpretation of traditional texts. Among the advances whose implications have to be kept in abeyance (zeroed into neutral) are the processes that unfold in contemporary history. No new political developments can be allowed to undermine the historiography of the Bible, just as no new technology can be allowed to cause a reinterpretation of holy words.

In order to understand the impact of lay mentalities, however, and to demonstrate the unity of the world and of humankind, I find it necessary to recommend to students critical readings of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, along with passages from Simmel. I have worked a great deal with the theories of Mead, and think that they shed light on aspects of human living that the ‘fathers’ simply didn’t get to. There is also more recent work that seems to me to be particularly important. I would like to explain.

Since I joined the academic staff of a university faculty, and participated in the education of people destined to take up different roles in the educational system, I have, perhaps naively, sought ways to enable education to lead to changes for the better in society just as have many of my colleagues. In thinking what ‘better’ can indeed mean in relation to education, I have come to the conclusion that ‘better’ would mean equality in human relationships and in opportunities, equity in inputs. I would like to think that these can be achieved by fostering sensitivity to detail, and a readiness to act.

In teaching this means to me including a research component in every course and choosing readings that lead toward doing studies in the field. In recent years I find that the work done by people in Actor-Network-Theory comes very close to the kind of perception I have. First of all, A-N-T recognizes that in every social situation both people and objects contribute to the situated experience and to its outcomes. Second of all, the approach recognizes that to grasp reality in the whole, it is important to find ways to describe slices of the world in exhaustive detail. Third, in order to find ways to map the world in detail, researchers have to be ready to confront the messiness of living, and even to work through messes (Latour, 2005; Law, 2006). Through this approach to understanding reality and developing appropriate methods, there is hope of finding atoms of intersectionality and meeting points of transdisciplinarity.

But of course there is more, and that is something I have not solved to my satisfaction. From the point of view of teaching method, I attempt to put all the students into positions of responsibility. From the point of view of praxis, I am attempting to apply principles of deliberative democracy in sites where they are not expected (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). My fear is that higher education is far too late for effectively conveying deliberative democracy and I am working on research that will hopefully enable me to make some suggestions for inculcating deliberative democracy and civil activism from stages that are much earlier.

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