Chapter 2

EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY IN ISRAEL

This chapter attempts to focus on the education policy making in Israel: the goals, the constraints, a review of how the policies have been shaped and have fared, the major objectives outlined for the policy changes, and finally how far education serves as an instrument of social policy in Israel. We begin by looking at the conception of social justice in Israel and what bearing it has on the Israeli social policy. For the study of the conception of social justice the manifestoes of the two major parties have been mainly taken into consideration.

The Conception of Social Justice in Israel

As discussed before there is a need of a normative conception to determine the basis on which the societal resources can be distributed. One of the criteria as we saw can be the conception of social justice existing in a society. Israeli politicians often speak of social justice, as if the term was self-explanatory. Yet when we examine what they mean, the only clear conclusion we can draw is that they all agree on the importance of talking about it. If we want to see whether there exists in Israel a coherent conception of social justice, at least in the two major political parties (Labor and Likud), we can examine their ideologies by looking at their manifestoes.

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1 For details see the discussion in the previous chapter relating social justice with social policy as a concept that can determine the shape of policies.
An examination of the various ideologies in Israel clearly shows that the two big parties (in their various permutations) have never presented a coherent normative conception of social justice. Rather they use terms like: 'diminishing distress and poverty' and after 1970, 'narrowing gaps', 'increasing integration', 'equality and participation'. It is interesting to note that in the Labor and Likud manifestoes for the eight, ninth and tenth Knesset we find a consensus between the two parties regarding two goals - diminishing distress and narrowing the gaps. Labor speaks about the advancement of the distressed both in income and in education, and the abolishment of slums in order to diminish poverty and decrease social gaps. The Likud speaks mainly about narrowing social gaps and abolishing poverty. However, a careful reading of these manifestoes reveals that in most cases the terms are simply not defined clearly. They make no systematic attempt to put forward a conception of social justice and to derive from it an order of priority and policies. This very ambiguity in a sense is the root of the consensus between the two parties. After the publication of the findings of the 'Prime Minster's Committee For Youth and Children in Distress' (which first showed the dimensions of the distress, especially in families of Oriental origin), it was impossible not to advocate the goals of diminishing distress and narrowing gaps. The brewing discontent in the 70s that took the form of Panther movement also referred to as "Oriental revolt" further attracted attention and

3 see *Prime Minister's Commission Report*, pp.15-18
necessitated such an inclusion. Yet it is easier to use these slogans than to deal coherently with the critical issue: what is a just society and what has to be done to achieve it. Moreover, dealing with the issue of social justice in depth could have divided existing parties. For example, the two components of the Likud—Herut and the Liberals—presumably have entirely different conceptions of social justice. Also in the Labor party, dealing in depth with the issue of social justice could show that there exist serious differences of opinion within the party.

Social Justice in Party Manifestoes

The parties certainly lack a real social policy program in their manifestoes. Except for the awareness of such a basis for the creation of a just society, their manifestoes do not show any new attempt to re-examine the conception of social justice and thus reassess their advocated policies regarding the distribution of major resources. We do find a series of recommendations to neutralize the ethnic element, but they fail to form any coherent conception of social justice. In labor’s manifesto for the 1981 elections there is one exception. We find a new section dealing with the advancement of social equality. However, this chapter was not integrated into the part of the manifesto that deals with the party’s social and economic policy.

In the manifesto of the Labor party (or Alignment—Labor and Mapam) for the eleventh Knesset, one could expect to find a clearer view of social justice

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considering the fact that they had been out of power and hence would have got time to rethink on a lot of issues including this that had been one of the prominent reasons for the drubbing of the party. In the section titled "The Advancement of Society", we find: ‘the policy for social advancement in the coming years will be based on an effort to narrow the gaps within Israeli society in all aspects of life, and on an effort to narrow the gaps within Israeli society in all aspects of life, and on the wish to build a more just, cohesive and egalitarian society’. There is no further mention of social justice in this section.

The section dealing with the Histadrut says: "The Alignment will continue to make an effort to keep the power of the Histadrut... pursuing a socio-economic policy based on the principles of equality and social justice, the preservation of the inner strength of Israeli society, strengthening the state and its welfare, free and democratic character'. Whereas in this manifesto an attempt was made to clarify the goals of mutual responsibility, diminishing inequality, increasing social integration and liberty, whenever the term social justice (or justice) appears, there is no attempt to explain what is meant by it. Coming to the Knesset elections of 1999 there isn’t much of a change either. The term social justice appears twice in the manifesto of "One Israel" or The Barak Plan for Better Israel Platform and both the times it remains unclear. The first appearance has nothing to do with redistributive justice at all. It says, “we are now engaged in the shaping of Israel as a Zionist, Jewish democratic state, based on a merging

5 The alignment manifesto for the eleventh knesset, July 1984, pp. 18, 57.
and a balance between values of Jewish culture and liberal-democratic values; a state that expresses our commitment to humanistic values and values of social justice rooted in the Jewish heritage. This is a very vague conception of social justice to be derived from religious beliefs and does not have any practical meaning. The people behind shaping this idea do not look to have the urge to clearly conceptualise the idea of social justice based on "Jewish beliefs" nor the intentions. The second reference is in the section "Economy and State". It says, "this socio-economic platform is motivated by sensitivity to the suffering of our fellow-man, and the endeavour to achieve social justice". Keeping in tune with earlier manifestos it talks about "desirable distribution of income and property" but does not suggest methods to implement it or the conception of doing so. In the first paragraph of the same section the platform talks about the just division of national resources, a step towards redistributive justice, but doesn’t go beyond it. It highlights the potent dangers of not taking steps to create such environment that lead to diminishing of gaps but the ways to do it is thoroughly missing.

The fact that the concept of social justice remains unclarified is not accidental. It seems to remain ambiguous precisely because it is the most complex of concepts and is related to even more difficult concepts such as equality, liberty, integration and mutual responsibility. In other words, a coherent conception of social justice necessitates a clear understanding of the relations between all the

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6 The One Israel Platform, 1999, p.5. See Last visited on 30/01/02.  
7 Ibid. p.6.  
8 ibid.
other values mentioned and the existence of a coherent, normative view. This is precisely the element which is lacking in the ideological thinking of the Labor party — the ability to present a timely coherent world view in the light of which the desired social policy could be formulated.

In the manifesto of the Likud for the same elections the term social justice does not even appear. The manifesto speaks of diminishing alienation and relative deprivation and abolishing poverty. The values which according to the manifesto must underlie education are: love of the country and loyalty to it, liberty, equality, tolerance, mutual help, love of others and scientific advancement. Needless to say, this reads like a collection of good intentions and nothing more. Also the recommendations in the ‘society and welfare’ chapter read like a catchall collection. The Likud, manifesto clearly makes no attempt to represent a coherent conception of social justice. In comparison the Labor manifesto at least attempts to clarify certain values.

**Social Policy in Israel**

It is the ambiguity surrounding the conception of social justice by each of the two major political parties forming the National Unity Government which prevents the formulation of national social policy or even the possibility of an ideological debate between them on social issues. This stands in dramatic contrast to the ideological differences that exist between Labor and the Likud on the issue of peace. If there are differences of opinion regarding the social issues
they cut across party lines. Also most politicians still equate social policy with welfare policy, and developing social policy is interpreted as providing more services. Thus the crucial role of social policy, precisely when resources are scarce eludes them. For when there is an abundance of resources the need for social policy to deal with the distribution of resources is less crucial. When resources are plentiful, wages are higher, unemployment lower and people enjoy more social mobility the role of social policy is less significant. It is precisely when resources are scarce the role of social policy is crucial, as it determines the distribution of the few resources available and thus shapes the future character of the society. Indeed, if one holds the view that social justice means unequal distribution, an economic crisis serves this purpose, as it usually results in sharpened inequality in all spheres. However, if one interprets social justice as a more equal distribution of resources, then precisely in a difficult economic period a coherent, well-coordinated and controlled social policy should be implemented. For example, a serious unemployment policy dealing both with the problem of people who are out of work and with the problem of bringing people back into work, both through changing their occupations to suit the future development of the economy and, while shaping the economic growth, taking into account the qualifications of the unemployed, becomes crucial at a time of economic crisis. A serious unemployment policy takes into account also geographical and ethnic considerations. For example, unemployment on the northern border of Israel or unemployment in the Israeli Arab sector are far more

9 The Likud manifesto for the eleventh knesset, pp. 8-11.
dangerous then unemployment in the center of the country, as in the two cases mentioned the effects of unemployment can bring people to abandon the north of the country and to political extremism. A situation that Israel is currently going through, in view of the recent intifada, when unemployment has been soaring high and a lot of people are having to work in sectors that do not utilise their skill, a clearly defined social policy comes in handy to check further deterioration of the situation. The external threat does not necessarily have the potential to keep people united for too long and with further deterioration of the economic situation the resentment arising out of growing unemployment is bound to follow.

The Achievements and Shortcomings of Israeli Welfare Policy

We can see from the above discussion that if there is no coherent normative conception of social justice, there is no coherent social policy that aims to establish social justice. Second, as the necessary tools for a coordinated welfare policy do not exist, even the welfare policy in Israel today is lacking, and sometimes it is simply irrational. As welfare policy is part of social policy, I would like to point out its achievements but mostly its shortcomings, limitations and side effects. Before focusing on the shortcomings of the Israeli welfare state, one should first point out its achievements. There is no question that the welfare services developed in Israel have contributed a lot to the distressed population. A social minimum has been created and access to all the major services

(education, health and personal, family and community services) exists. This is true of all Western welfare states and it is clear that welfare policies can be a success story when they are oriented towards the goals of establishing a social minimum and free or almost-free access to services for all. In addition it can be said that the welfare services and payments stem the widening of socio-economic gaps\textsuperscript{11}. However recent studies have shown that Israel is lagging behind in comparison to other Western rich nations when it comes to providing proper facilities to its children. An annual report published by the National Council for the Child has shown that children are poorer and more exposed to violence and less well educated now in Israel than in previous years. The study brings out that the situation has worsened so much by the year 2000 that Israel ranks 23\textsuperscript{rd} among 24 “rich nations”, followed only by Mexico\textsuperscript{12}. The study further goes on to say that the “most worrying is some of the statistics in the Arab, immigrant, and periphery populations which are reminiscent of the data in third world countries”. This is the kind of alarming situation that was being pointed out in the previous section that deserves a sound policy keeping in view the dire consequences. When welfare services are expected to achieve additional goals, like in Israel since the 1970s, their effectiveness is questionable. In the 1970s politicians began to believe that welfare policy could also go far in diminishing inequality and increasing integration, solidarity, participation and mobility.

Project Renewal - 1977

The major social policy carried out in Israel since 1977 - Project Renewal, was launched by the two Likud governments, which made the rehabilitation of poor neighborhoods a national goal. Initially, the project was supposed to deal only with the physical rehabilitation of the poor neighborhoods, but very soon the goal of social rehabilitation was added. The idea was to encourage the participation of the population in the process of renovating their neighborhood. The idea in itself was a departure from the traditional welfare approach. One might even say that the conception was the beginning of social policy, as distinct from welfare policy in Israel. However, as several years have passed an evaluation of the project is in order, and some crucial questions may be asked regarding Project Renewal. While there is little doubt that the physical rehabilitation was successful in most places, there are also faults in the project. First, because Project Renewal was local it was not accompanied by a national social policy in the field of occupation and recurrent education, and thus a real rehabilitation of the population was not possible. Second, the goal of increasing participation was not achieved. As decision-making remained in the hands of the professionals, ministries and local authorities, the participation of the population was mostly formal, if not ceremonial. The project however, did encourage a redistribution of political power.

13 This will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter dealing with the effects of educational policy in reducing socio-economic inequalities.
The major goal of the projects – social rehabilitation in the neighborhoods – was not achieved. Real rehabilitation means that when the professional rehabilitators leave the neighborhood can cope with the situation on its own. This happened in only a few cases. Sometimes the reverse occurred, i.e., the population became even more dependent on professional rehabilitators, in complete opposition to the initial goals. 

Thus Project Renewal, the only attempt to establish a new social policy, failed due to the lack of a clear conception of national social policy. As it was largely the conventional tools of welfare services and policies that were used, it is not surprising that participation could not be enhanced. Increasing participation among the populations of poor neighborhoods necessitated a social policy that provides new tools designed for the redistribution of power. On the whole, lacking a national social policy, it was naïve to expect that a real breakthrough could be achieved in Project Renewal, despite the good intentions. It may also be noted that the most important side effects of welfare policy are the encouragement of a culture of dependency and demands, and the creation of huge and sometimes alienating bureaucracy. The centralism of the Israeli welfare state sometimes acts as a deterrent to citizens’ participation and responsibility.

Guidelines for Future Social Policy in Israel

Ben-Hur has suggested a guideline for social policy in Israel. 16 First, a normative conception of social justice should be decided upon. Second, the major national social goals should be derived from the normative conception of social justice. Third, a broad social policy should be formulated through which it would be possible to influence significantly the distribution of the major resources in the society in the desired normative direction, as put forward by the social goals.

The major changes in the social policy which can be taken up for achieving these goals are: (a) transition from welfare policy alone to broad social policy, i.e., all policies affecting the distribution of resources (including economic and defence policy), and shaping national policy also in accordance with the social goals; (b) shifting the emphasis of social policy to the sphere which greatly influences the distribution of power, education, income and wealth – to occupation and work. 17 Special attention should be given to the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Through education, the worker who starts with little education and in an unskilled or semi-skilled job and stands no chance to advance, will be able to increase his education, qualify for promotion, increase his income significantly and thus enlarge his share also in power and wealth.

However, her recommendations do not entirely hold true for today. The Israeli policymakers, especially in the educational field, have taken measures that create opportunities for social mobility and enhancement of societal roles and it

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16 Ibid. pp. 55-6.
has borne fruit. It would still be too early to however assess the extent of change that these measures have brought. This topic would be taken up for discussion in the chapters to follow. To analyse the use of education for social policy ends we would broadly have to look at the trends in educational policy reforms and its orientation from social policy perspective.

The Evolution of Educational Reforms

In discussing the significance of educational policy and reform, H.M. Levin uses the term 'correspondence principle'\(^\text{18}\), whose application makes doubtful any change that educational reform can effect in society. Levin distinguishes between two polar attitudes commonly adopted towards the relation between education and society. One approach maintains that education is capable of effecting a change in the quality of society, and man’s imagination sets the only limitations of the influence of education. The second approach, which Levin favours, maintains that education is only a function of an institutional-social system, and serves that system. Any change in education is a product of changes in the social structure. The ‘correspondence principle’ expresses this relationship between education and society.

The acceptance of this principle has important implications for the assessment of the nature of policy and reform in education, especially in a changing society.

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\(^{17}\) Lewis, A., ‘Educational Policy and Social Inequality in Israel’, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no.12, 1979, p.103.

One of the ways of testing the validity of this principle is by systematically examining the process of reform in education against the background of the changing situation. We shall evaluate the policy changes in state education in Israel since its establishment, against the background of demographic and social processes.

The Pre-State Education System

In the pre-state period, from 1920 onwards, the Jewish educational system in the country was peculiar in being composed of three educational streams operating in conjunction with and dependent on three political frameworks: general, orthodox religious, and labour. The hallmarks of this splintered structure were the common recognition of national aims, the active involvement of society in educational matters, and the expression of the school’s connection with current life problems in the syllabus and in the pedagogic atmosphere. This division into sub-systems was the result of profound political differences regarding the way the Jewish sovereignty should be realised in the country. In traditional Jewish society, as in most of the other traditional societies, religious thought, action, and institutions were of supreme importance. Generally in the case of any tension between the secular and the sacred, religious values and institutions were the dominant and decisive factors since they were seen in traditional Jewish life as the sole source of legitimation. With modernisation and gradual secularisation

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there was gradual erosion of both the structural and functional integrity of the traditional Jewish society. In Palestine the secular processes appeared a little later with the intensification of the intra-communal strife for supremacy in the political, social, and ideological fields throughout the yishuv (Jewish settlement in Palestine) and in Jerusalem in particular.\(^2\) The conflict began to develop at the end of the period of Ottoman rule and in the early years of the British mandate in Palestine. On the one side of the battle were the representatives of secular Jewish nationalism, Zionists and their supporters, among them were a significant percentage of the ideologues of the new yishuv. Their opponents were primarily the followers of the old yishuv, held to a traditional religious conception of Jewish life, which found its political expression in the positions taken by the Orthodox Agudat Israel Party. These political differences were manifested in the different chain of educational systems operating in the old yishuv.

It should be noted here that the Jewish community in Palestine was essentially directed towards the creation of an independent Jewish political entity. The Jewish schools were seen as a part of the social revolution that was put into motion by Zionism. Therefore, the Jews of Palestine preferred to go to their own school than to schools run by the British mandatory administration. For the Arabs of Palestine however there was no separate school system and they mostly

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relied on the British mandatory administration run schools.\textsuperscript{22} Being predominantly peasants the importance of education was attached only by a few and there were too many dropouts. For the female population the tradition bound Arabs did not prefer education beyond a limit. The poor facilities in these schools combined with culturally less significance attached to education by the Arabs resulted in poor educational attainment among them. To make matters worse, during the war of 1948 most of the Arab intelligentsia left Israel and most of those who stayed back were mainly peasants. The stipulation of the British Royal Commission asking for the creation of a separate school system for the minorities for preservation of their cultural and religious rights led to a virtual segregation of the Arab school system in Israel.\textsuperscript{23} Though these schools were completely funded by the state they did not get the attention required to avoid allegations of interference. Also the priorities of the nascent state were primarily centered around the Jewish population. The most pressing problem for it was the absorption of the immigrating Jews and it received utmost attention. The Arab schools meanwhile received little or no attention beyond state funding. Due to the lack of enough Arab teachers a lot of Arabic speaking Jews were employed in these schools and it was presumed that with the progress of time the Arabs would replace these teachers as educational attainment among them increases. Most of the reforms discussed in this chapter do not apply to the Arab School


\textsuperscript{22} Adler, C., 'Israeli Education Addressing the Dilemmas Caused by Pluralism: A Sociological Perspective', in Krausz, E. (ed.), \textit{Education in a Comparative Context}, op.cit., p.25
system and hence the discussion primarily revolves around the Jewish population. However, in the following chapters when we would see measures taken up for the improvement of the educational attainment among the different sections of the population, including the Arab population, we will take it up for discussion. The later policy measures are different from the ones discussed here in being more decentralized and more accommodative of the local factors and local participation.

The 1953 state education law put an end to the pre-state division into sectors and set up a unified dual system comprising secular (mamlakhti) and religious branches (mamlakhti dati)\(^24\). The state educational system was designed as a centralist framework based on a minimum of laws and a plethora of regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Culture\(^25\). Society's involvement in educational affairs became increasingly smaller since the system was initiated, and although educational policy is supposed to be affected by external political pressures\(^26\), the fact remains that the system has been characterised by the education-consuming society's lack of involvement in the determination of education. The school itself sometimes operates like a neutral island in all questions preoccupying society, while its policy on the social problems it is

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\(^{24}\) Schachter, H.L., 'Educational Institutions and Political Coalitions: The Case of Israel', *Comparative Education Review*, vol.16, no.3, 1972


expected to handle is set firmly by the establishment. The existence of the educational system as a centralistic, autonomous structure basically confirms the validity of the ‘correspondence principle’. The ‘correspondence principle’ and its pessimistic note regarding the power of education implies that the solution lies in a modification of the relationship between education and society, and not in the reform of the educational system itself. However, it may also be stated that the democratic nature of polity and power struggles within the society does have an impact on the consciousness of the population that in turn plays an important role in the educational reforms. These reforms, at times necessitated by the intense power struggle, do bring about a change and have considerable impact on the representation of different segments of the population. This chapter will analyse the education policies in Israel under the scrutiny of this principle and see how much the policies have been shaped keeping the needs of the society under consideration. An examination of the policies in the state educational system of Israel, in its attempts to create a society that is culturally and nationally integrated, indicates four stages of development.

Unity and Egalitarianism (1949 – 1955)

The demographic revolution that took place in Israeli society in the early years of the state produced social, political and national processes that shaped the

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27 The active involvement of the state in most of the democratic countries of today in the educational sphere and its goals and implications have been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

28 The impact of power struggle in various fields of education shall be discussed in detail in the section dealing with constraints in policy formulation.
character of the society as well as the education system. In 1948, for instance, there were 97,668 pupils in the Jewish schools. While in 1951 there were 231,199\(^{30}\) and the numerical expansion was just one side of the coin. The more severe problems originated from the diverse nature of origin of the newcomers. Coming from many different countries speaking dozens of languages and having cultural backgrounds of extreme diversity the creation of an identifiable culture for the whole population became a matter of immediate concern. The cultural, ethnic and social distinctions almost instantaneously replaced political and class distinctions. "Cultural integration"\(^{31}\) became the educational aim, and there appeared to be a connection between ethnic origin and socio-economic status.

The education policy of that phase failed to realise the trends and instead of addressing the problems arising from the demographic revolution, it sought to bridge the political gaps that existed before the establishment of the state. This phase is characterised by a policy aspiring to attain unity and uniformity in the educational system. Three components were evolved in that phase, representing a dual process of the growing centralisation of the educational system on the one hand, and the almost total reduction of society's involvement in the determination of educational policy, on the other. The three components were: (a) the 1949 compulsory education law for ages five to fourteen; (b) the 1953 state education law which stipulated that 'the object of state education is to base

\(^{29}\) Reshef, Shimon, op. cit. p.98. Also see Adler, Chaim; 'Israeli Education Addressing Dilemmas of Pluralism' in Krausch, E. (ed), *Education in Comparative Perspective*, Transaction Publisher, New Brunswick, 1989, pp.22-42.


\(^{31}\) Lewis, A., 'Educational Policy and Social Inequality in Israel', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no.12, 1979, p.110.
elementary education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love for the country and loyalty to the state and people of Israel, on training in agricultural work and craftsmanship, on pioneer training and the aspiration to a society based on liberty, equality, tolerance, mutual help, and love for mankind, and\textsuperscript{32} (c) the publication of a single unified curriculum for all elementary schools in the country, divided into chapters, that set operational goals and provided detailed didactic guidance for the teacher\textsuperscript{33}. Retrospectively, the curriculum appears to indicate a naïve faith in the ability of unified education and a single curriculum expressing a national consensus to develop common national patterns of life. The realisation that education could not determine the quality of such a heterogeneous society came even before the effect of this single encyclopedistic curriculum could be tested. In 1955 the Ministry of Education for the first time conducted a survey of the elementary school graduating classes in the form of achievement test designed to help select the pupils for high school. The findings revealed astounding differences in that time. The Israeli secondary school was still based on selection on the basis of academic achievements, and this led to considerable students left out from backgrounds generally termed Afro-Asian\textsuperscript{34}. This led to a new policy intended primarily to change the secondary-school statistics of children from Afro-Asian ethnic origin.

Artificial Norms and Standards (1956 – 1963)

This stage cannot be delineated chronologically. It involves the use of new means, and not long-term policy\textsuperscript{35}. Basically it was designed to enable a larger number of children from the lowest socioeconomic strata to gain admission to high school, at a time when socio-economic status began to be identified with ethnic origin, aggravating the gap between social groups and casting its shadow over the aspiration for cultural integration of the earlier stage.

The two chief artificial devices developed during this stage were as follows; (a) except for the first grade and the last, no elementary school pupils were to be left back. This measure was likely to increase the number of elementary school graduates from the Afro-Asian ethnic origin without however raising the level of their studies. Adler\textsuperscript{36} has called this strategy aimed at equalising students’ chances of gaining the rewards of education, irrespective of performance or achievement as “By – Pass” strategy. He rightly points out at the lacunae of such a strategy. The students getting certificates without demonstrating the performance required are more likely to fail at the next stage and also in their profession. It also reflects negatively on those of the same origin who earn the certificate in their own right. (b) a second norm was set for the country-wide eight grade achievement test, allowing pupils from the ethnic background to be admitted to high school with a lower score on that test. Needless to say, the

\textsuperscript{35} Dar, Y. & Resh, N., Homogeneity and heterogeneity in Education, school of education, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1981.

Towards the end of the 50s pedagogical intervention was initiated. Some of the measures introduced included early intervention, mainly through kindergartens and nurseries. Home intervention was initiated later. Experiment was initiated with didactic measures and remedial courses were started.
result was that high schools began to have classes of various levels, with differences in academic achievement paralleling ethnic and cultural differences, so that the gap problem made its appearance in high school as well\textsuperscript{37}.

A more difficult aspect of the problem was the fact that high school became a dead end for many pupils who dropped out in the middle, deprived of both the opportunity to continue to any post-secondary institution, and preparation for life through proper vocational education\textsuperscript{38}. The situation led to the recognition, still operative in many countries of the world, that the value of education is to commensurate with its ability to adapt to the individual or to groups with common features. The educational way to achieve this is through a policy of compensation, or ‘fostering’, in Israeli terminology.

**Enrichment and “Fostering” (1963-1968)**

In the early 1960s, the Ministry of Education began to make serious attempts to cope with the problems of disadvantaged pupils, and initiated ‘fostering’ projects. In 1961 a training programme was instituted for teachers of grades one to four in schools where it had proved impossible to cover the syllabuses. In 1962, the ‘long school day’ was introduced in 216 classes in order to help pupils

\textsuperscript{36} Adler, C., Equality and Excellence: Contradictory or Complimentary Goals in Israeli Educational Policy,

\textsuperscript{37} Schools faced with mounting numbers of underachievers at the end of the 60s despite the pedagogic measures and applied instituted patterns of ability groupings. Even though the measures helped schools to overcome the problems incurred by great gaps in achievement, they evidently contributed to the segregation of students by ethnic background without at the same time having any impact on their achievement levels.

\textsuperscript{38} Bentwich, J., op.cit., p.90.
requiring ‘fostering’ to attain better results. To this was added a longer school year, by which, during one month of the summer vacation, classes were combined with social activities. In 1963 the Center for Disadvantaged Educational Institutions was set up. The policy then adopted was fostering’ in the existing heterogeneous elementary schools, and not the establishment of new homogeneous ones, and the heterogeneous class was decided upon as the framework for intellectual fostering.

The Target Population

An institution requiring such fostering was one where scholastic achievement was low, the population composed of new immigrants, and the teachers uncertified and relatively inexperienced. The chief instrument, developed during the period when fostering was the declared policy, was ‘grouping’. The grouping system is designed to help each pupil advance according to his ability and prevent frustration and apathy in pupils of low achievement. Grouping is based on homogeneous groups in various subjects, while retaining the heterogeneous character of the class in which most of the scholastic and social activities are conducted. In subjects such as arithmetic, Hebrew and English, pupils are divided into three groups – slow, average and advanced. It is a differential system facilitating advancement according to the individual’s ability within an overall heterogeneous framework. Strategically Adler terms this the “fill-in” strategy. It basically aims at increasing and improving the quality of the
resources with which the target group performs. The division into groups is according to level of knowledge and not intelligence. Grouping is an attempt to develop the individual’s intellectual potential, which is impossible to another set-up, but it is incapable of closing the achievement gap as was originally thought. The grouping system led to the construction of syllabuses system led to heated debate in the general public, and in the educational community in particular, because of the danger of the formation of social classes in the classroom and school on the bases of scholastic achievement and ethnic differences, the concern grew that the division into groups would not contribute to the mobility of students from weak groups into strong ones, as the subjects in question arose that prevent a great many students from continuing their studies in high school. The social dangers inherent in the fostering policy and the lack of coordination between elementary and post-elementary education (since the latter made no special provision for the pupils needing fostering) was the basis for the next change in Israeli education policy, which in Israeli terminology is known as the ‘reform’.

Reform in School Organisation (1968 onwards)

An accepted element in modern educational policy in an enlightened society is the extension of the age of compulsory education. A public committee was set up in Israel in 1963 to examine the need and possibilities of extending the age

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for free compulsory education. In the course of its work, however, the Ministry of Education began to recognise that such a step alone would not solve the problems of the school system, nor contribute to the closing of the social gap. Although the purpose of the proposed extension was to lengthen the stay in post-elementary school of children of Afro-Asian backgrounds, it would only be a partial solution\textsuperscript{42} that did not provide varied scholastic possibilities according to the qualifications and inclinations of the pupils. The conclusions of this committee led ultimately to the establishment of a parliamentary committee to examine the structure of the Israeli school system and make proposals for reforming it, keeping in mind two goals derived from the basic problems aggravated by the policy of fostering; (a) the creation of a scholastic framework ensuring the maximum exploitation of the intellectual potential of each of each and every pupil and (b) the creation of an educational-social meeting of children of varied cultural backgrounds and levels of scholastic achievement. This seemed to say that the division into groups and tracks on the basis of achievement should be solved through the development of heterogeneous society with common life patterns\textsuperscript{43}. After protracted and exhausting discussions, under pressure from special interest groups, both professional and political, the committee submitted its recommendations to the Knesset, which decided to

\textsuperscript{40} Adler, C., "Equality and Excellence: Contradictory or Complimentary Goals in Israeli Education Policy" in Kahane, R. (ed.), op.cit., p.256.

\textsuperscript{41} Reshef, Shimon, op.cit., p.101.

\textsuperscript{42} Report of Parliamentary Committee, p.63.

\textsuperscript{43} This strategy has been termed by Adler as the "Assets" strategy. It focuses on strengthening and fostering the assets that at risk students possess. The underlying assumption being that students should be encouraged to perform in areas they excel, or identify with on cultural grounds, will gain confidence in themselves and improve
accept them and thus enter upon a new stage in state education, based on the following principles.44

(a) the first stage, elementary education, will last six years instead of eight as earlier. The second, post-elementary stage will last six years instead of four, and be based on two units, a three-year junior high school (grades seven, eight, nine) and three-year senior high school (grades ten, eleven, twelve).

(b) the junior high school will constitute a period of observation and follow-up, making it possible to direct pupils to the choice of secondary-school courses in accordance with their inclinations and ability.

(c) all pupils completing grade six will be admitted to grade seven (in the junior high school and there will be no selective achievement test governing the transfer from elementary to junior high school.

(d) Separation of pupils into specialised courses will start in grade ten.

(e) all those completing the junior high school will be able to continue, subject to guidance counseling, in one or another of the courses in the senior high school.45

Thus the non-selective post-elementary school, made up of two units, was supposed to develop into a comprehensive school, absorbing, all the neighbourhood children completing elementary school and providing studies in their chance of demonstrating satisfactory levels of achievement in other areas as well.

44 Report of the Parliamentary Committee, p231.
all the academic and vocational streams and specialisations needed to serve a heterogeneous child population.

The application of this educational reform to the entire school system has not yet been completed. In 1977 a research commission charged with investigating the effect of the ‘reform’ in the light of pedagogic and social expectations completed its work, but its findings do not allow for an unequivocal decision regarding the value of the reform. As a uniform structure has become the hallmark of the Israeli educational system, it was doubtful whether a varied structure would be recommended. The later measures taken up in the education system had a different orientation in the sense that a process of slow decentralization started with expansion of education. They shall be discussed later as they do not exactly fit into the reform category and are only partial measures taken up to increase the participation of people in higher education. Most of these measures have also been inclusive of the Arab population and therefore their subsequent effect on the Arab population’s educational attainment shall also be analysed.

The policy of the state education system of Israel has, throughout its existence, shown itself to be dynamic. The policies and the reforms it instituted aimed at contributing to the solution of two basic problems; the integration of the varied cultures making up the Jewish national population in Israel and the contraction of the social gap characterised by ethnic and socioeconomic features. These

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problems have, in the course of time, become the dynamite of Israeli society, and every government has looked towards to education for a solution. A.F. Kleinberger notes that the policy of extreme centralisation in the administration of the Israeli educational system is offset by the tendency to decentralise political power, causing the centralisation in the administrative and supervisory patterns to be applied at times only selectively to certain educational institutions. This political decentralisation is not evident in the legislature, and one of the only times educational policy was made in that body was in 1968 when the reform in the structure of the schools was decided upon. Political pressures outside the legislature did not change the picture evolved throughout twenty-eight years of state education of a grouping dissociation between the society consuming the education and the system providing it. The power of social bodies connected with education, such as parents and local authorities, is minimal, both legally and in practice. But in fact, under present conditions, the school itself has little power in choosing its educational path or in translating policy into operational language.

It is no wonder then that the educational system is well aware of these two weaknesses, and in the early 1970's two committees were set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture to find ways of encouraging pedagogic initiative in classroom teachers of the elementary and post-elementary schools. The Ministry also encouraged the participation of parents' committees in school activities as long as it did not concern the educational work. This sensitivity to the involvement of parents and the

initiative of teachers is understandable for two reasons: (a) the recognition of the fact that without the dynamic initiative of the teacher and teaching staff, any reform will have but limited success; (b) as the community’s involvement in the school grows and the school becomes responsible to the society it serves directly and not just to the professional hierarchy, it is incumbent upon the teacher to innovate and improve his work. This is evident in the history of progressive education in the US, the USSR, and in pre-state Israel in the 1920s.

The same kind of connection that obtains between the centralistic educational system and the overall socio-political structure is characteristic also of other social institutions in Israel. Under these conditions we would have to confirm Levin’s ‘correspondence principle’ and point to the need for an educational policy aware of its capacities, and consequently doing its best to educate children to a dynamic, active adaptation to social processes. There are however two essential differences between education and other social institutions in their relation to society at large; (a) the involvement of the consuming society in setting the operational policy of other institutions is greater, especially as concerns the social unit best suited to the development of social involvement – the community. The community is the framework likely to improve its own quality through various service institutions, but in Israel its involvement in educational matters is nil; (b) society is by nature inclined to view education as the social institution responsible for its particular quality. Other institutions are defined as providing services as determining the quality of life, while education
is conceived of as charged with solving fundamental problems and designing the very shape of society.

The inevitable conclusion is that what is required is a reform in the main direction of removing the correspondence between education and other social system as a whole. Just because the expectations from education and the faith in its powers are so great, the 'correspondence principle' must be countered not by an additional reform in the school system, but by a reform in the relations between education and society. The dependence of the Israeli school on the centralistic educational system must be replaced by a reciprocal relationship between school and community, with the latter bearing joint responsibility for education and not accepting it as is, and all within a state system containing centralistic elements which guarantee national involvement in dealing with questions such as social integration 48. Thus the abandonment of the 'correspondence principle' is accompanied by a revival of faith in the power of education to cope with fundamental social and national problems and with the opportunity of shaping the image of a changing society. This brings us to the question of educational policy making and the forces shaping it. As discussed in the earlier chapter the nature of policies (including education policy) is shaped by power struggles and composition of the government. Given the nature of power struggle and coalition politics throughout its existence, the education policy in Israel has its limitations in formulation as well as implementation.

48 Ibid. p.104-8.
Hence, a look at the various constraints in the education policy making is in order.

**Constraints in Israeli Education Policy Making**

A look at the educational policy making in Israel suggests that like in most of the democracies it is the outcome of efforts to avoid conflicts. Utilizing Aaron Wildavsky's diversity-intensity and consensus-deference indices, it could be said that the Israeli educational policy-making system is high on both the tendencies to produce conflict and the ability to contain it. Israeli educational policymakers look to be avoiding conflict and trying hard to achieve consensus, and are somewhat successful in doing so. This could, however, be called a quasi-consensus, as there is a difference between consensus attained after explicating policy differences, discussing and fighting over them, and one reached by avoiding, veiling and suppressing differences. On closer examination one might get the impression that the main objective of the Israeli Educational policymakers is not to make policy but to obviate conflicting pressures.

Israel's Jewish society is considered to be a cohesive society with a high degree of consensus stemming from its background of common Jewish bonds and traditions and the shared ideals and values of Zionist ideology. In addition of these inner consensus-building mechanisms, such factors as the external pressures for cooperation and solidarity, the long history of Jewish persecution

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and a continuing war with the Arab states should be borne in mind. This factor has an effect on the Jewish relations with the Arabs residing in Israel as a result of which the Arab-Jewish relations does not enjoy the same cohesiveness. Actually suspicion and mutual mistrust remains between the two with feeling of deprivation in the minority population. The Arab population as pointed out is out of the purview of this discussion as it revolves around the policy measures taken for the Jewish population alone.

At the base of each of these consensus-facilitating forces, however, lie conflict-generating differences of ideology, attitudes and interests. The educational policy formation process in Israel is of special interest as it reflects the dilemmas, deficiencies, potentials, pitfalls, and challenges faced by a society engaged in a continuous struggle with itself and its surroundings. Consensus and conflict are the two major poles around which educational policy-making processes in Israel revolve and are held in a delicate and vulnerable balance. In order to maintain this balance and to function despite the pull of opposing factors, the educational policy-formation system is obliged to find a strategy which will cater to all tastes and be good for all seasons.

50 It was the need to evolve consensus on the central issues of Jewish concern that most of the differences within the different factions of the Jewish nationalist movement were concealed. The trend looks like continuing in the post-statehood considering the fractured political ideologies and lack of a clear-cut majority for any one of them. The coalition nature of the government and the sometimes sharp differences among the coalition partners makes it necessary for the government to slow down on reforms for the government to continue.
As it cannot answer all the demands all of the time, it tries to answer some of them some of the time. In order to be able to fulfill these contradicting tasks, the Israeli educational policy-formation system has developed a series of strategies designed to relieve tension and enhance solidarity. Although not actually resolving conflict, they keep the system functioning, albeit at a high cost.

The Zionist movement and its ideology brought about tremendous changes in traditional Jewish education. Despite these and other shifts in many aspects of Jewish life in Israel, certain features of educational policy-formation, and especially its modes of treating conflicts, reveal a striking resemblance to traditional Jewish patterns of dealing with consensus and conflict especially those developed by East European Jewry. First and foremost is the view that consensus must be maintained at all costs. This emphasis on consensus, which became a matter of life and death in the survival of Jewish culture after the destruction of the Temple and dispersion of the Jews, did not mean weeding out individualism and eliminating conflicts. On the contrary, there were always bitter internal disputes and fights, but since there was neither political autonomy nor national sovereignty, the need for consensus regarding the authority of the Halacha (the religious laws) and the community, became vitally important. The rule: "Both are the words of the living God but the Halacha (rule) is according to the House of Hillel," epitomizes the sensitive balance has to be kept between
freedom of thought and ideas and the need for consensus and authority in a society devoid of political sovereignty\textsuperscript{51}. 

The centrality of consensus and the need to contain conflict and maintain a united front also dominated the Zionist movement and the life of the \textit{Yishuv} in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel\textsuperscript{52}. The need to attain consensus in the \textit{Yishuv} and in the State of Israel has often been explained as an outcome of the multi-party system in which no one party has the majority needed to form a government. But, as Hurwitz and Lissak claim in their study that the formation of coalitions in Israel did not follow the rule of a "minimum winning coalition:" instead efforts were made to achieve an absolute majority, and even "a wall-to-wall" coalition in times of crisis, to express a national unity and consensus\textsuperscript{53}.

The pressure to avoid conflict in educational policy-making in Israel seems to evolve from the basic norm of adhering to consensus, despite conflict and disputes, which is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and is reflected in Israeli political culture.

Looking at the educational policy-making process from a conflict-avoidance perspective, Rachel Elboim-Dror has identified seven strategies employed by the

\textsuperscript{52} It was like unity imposed by outside pressures upon a minority group striving to attain specific goals.
system to reach this end. While some of these points are repetitious a brief look at them vindicates the point made in the previous chapter that while education can serve as a vital instrument of social policy, but the decision regarding educational policies in a democratic country is liable to political parties and pressure groups and hence the ability of the educational system to bring about a desired change or achieve social objectives basically remains a question of political will. This also in a way necessitates having a proper look at the programmes of the various parties. Generally parties reluctant to follow or implement something ignore the questions related to a particular aspect or have an elusive approach to it. Briefly the general approaches in Israeli educational decision making can be explained under the following strategies.

**Ignoring and Veiling Differences**

Disputes centering on ideological differences that rocked the education system in the pre-State days have all but vanished. Today all parties and interest groups are all “for education.” The active role played by political parties, the kibbutzim, the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) and other groups and organizations has been taken over by “statism” (mamlachtiut). Education, the politicians claim, is “above politics,” it is a sacred area kept apart from the “ugly facts of political life.” Thus, efforts are made to remove questions of education policy from politics. To use Charles Lindblom’s statement about another issues:

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"They do not press for agreement on the grand issues but for political silence on them"\textsuperscript{56}. The outcome of this process is "politicization without politics," as described by Aaron Wildavsky\textsuperscript{57}.

**Deferring Decisions for “Appropriate” Time**

The educational policy-making system usually reacts to conflicting demands and pressures by expressing its willingness to oblige, discussing the issues and sometimes even considering what legislative action should be taken. This is, however, in many cases as far as it goes. The pattern of reaction can be described as primarily expressive, avoiding specific instrumental decisions that would commit the education system to act. Salisbury describes as expressive actions, those actions in which expression is given to the interests or values of a person or group rather than instrumentally or concretely pursuing interests or values\textsuperscript{58}. This expressive response fulfills an important role in building consensus and strengthening the solidarity of different groups within the education system. It would, therefore, be correct to say that the threshold of the education policy-formation system to demands from its environment is very low as far as expressive reaction goes. Its threshold for decisions, however, is high. Although it reacts to and deals with many of the demands, it does not produce policy decisions that commit the system. The result is that the Israeli policy-making system “deals” with many problems but decides about very few. As this

\textsuperscript{57} Wildavsky, A., Speaking Truth to Power, Little Brown, Boston, 1979, pp. 320-323.
mode of dealing with issues does not meet the demands raised by the different groups, the same issue crop up time and again and are discussed repeatedly by the committees which produce comments, suggestions, and thousands of pages of minutes.59

When the system is forced to make decisions and cannot satisfy demands by expressive modes only, it resorts to its alternative strategy of trying to gain time by delaying the decision-making process as far as possible. This approach is well known and used in Israel as well like in most other democratic countries going through political constraints. The time gained by postponing decisions is supposedly used in order to build bridges between differences in attitudes and interests. This serves the objective of not antagonizing or alienating any group too much. It is the Israeli answer to satisfying most of the people some of the time. During the lingering decision-making process, marginal changes are made in policy decisions in response to demands by interest groups, first to one group in partial fulfillment of its demands, then to another group, and so on. Sometimes this aggregate process of marginal incremental decision leads to the erosion of major education policies or to the emergence of a new one, which was never been considered. However, on many occasions delaying decisions has increased costs rather than reducing them.

Crisis as Deliverance from Conflict

Crises are extremely convenient for rescuing educational policy-makers from the pressures of conflicting objectives and demands. While crises narrow the options, they facilitate acceptance and save the decision-makers from the lengthy process of reaching a compromise. When a crisis is imminent, all conflicting views are subordinated to the more pressing problem at hand, consensus is reached swiftly and differences are set-aside until a more appropriate moment.60

The Israeli educational policy-making system often functions best in an atmosphere of panic, as if it were contending with a serious crisis. (Every time it transpires that three or four high-school pupils have been smoking hashish, the whole system – the Knesset, the Ministry the press – are thrown into a crisis-like situation61.) In this respect, Holsti’s definition of a crisis as characterized by surprise, a threat to important values, and little time for making decisions, seems to accord with the way decisions are made in the Ministry of Education62. According to Holsti’s analysis, and serving as a good excuse both to forego former procedures and to circumvent the rigid structure and long processes of reaching consensus. Although cognitive abilities may be eroded, crisis liberates educational policy-makers from the necessity of accommodating conflicting

6. This crisis can be a crisis of governability like the withdrawal of crucial support for continuation in power or even an internal threat caused by massive protests. To cite examples from the educational decisions we can easily take into consideration the decisions taken in the post-wadi salib and panther movement phase. To cite a recent example the Barak government agreed to more funds for Shas network of schools despite ideological problems to thwart the immediate crisis.

60 Elboim-Dror, R., op.cit., p.225.
interests and demands, legitimizing their unsystematic decision-making methods.

By adopting the strategies mentioned above, by ignoring issues, postponing decisions and drawing out the attendant processes, educational policy-makers cause more crises situations to erupt.

**Compartmentalization and Autonomy**

The education system in Israel is divided into state education and religious state education. The ultra-orthodox party, Agudat Yisrael, has an independent education system outside the state education system. While it enjoys complete freedom from state intervention and supervision, it is largely financed by the state. The *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* (cooperative settlements) are granted wide autonomy in all matters of education policy in their schools, even if their policies sometimes contradict government education policies, as is the case with the integration of disadvantaged children and school consolidation policy.

By separating religious education from secular education, allowing each system to develop autonomously, and by allowing kibbutz schools considerable freedom, many potential conflicts and battles are avoided. In the long run however it might be creating different blocs with completely different set of outlook, much against the set objective of evolving some sort of uniformity. The results of this are already visible with simmering discontent among the religious
and the secular population reflected in media debates and attitudes of the two sets of population towards each other.

**Exchange of Financial Resources for Political Survival and Consensus**

The allocation of resources has played an important role in maintaining consensus through an exchange process among different groups from the very beginning of Jewish settlement in Palestine, as has been demonstrated in the research by Hurwitz and Lissak among others. This exchange process is conspicuous in education, especially in the relationship between the government and the religious parties. The part played by the religious parties, as a major interest group in educational policy-formation is well known, as are the ambivalent feelings and attitudes of most Israelis towards the Jewish religion. Because of the diffusion of power among the many parties in Israel, it is difficult to form a coalition government, without the support of the religious parties. The situation gives them a leverage that they exploit to the full. In effect, the desire to include the religious parties in the government stems from their strategic electoral position. The price paid for the consent of the religious parties is reflected in the field of education, extending the autonomy of the Division of Religious Education in the Ministry of Education and allocating more resources to the religious school system, amongst other things. A replica of the bargaining

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63 Hurwitz & Lissak, op.cit.
64 This was too evident when the Shas party urged the Barak government to allot more funds to its network of schools. Additional funds were obtained through blackmail and the religious parties normally use their network of schools to keep their constituency intact.
and exchange process on the national level takes place at the local authority level.

Although the government rarely discusses education policy issues, one of the prime factors in the establishment and dissolution of governments are disputes regarding education policy or, more specifically unwillingness to accept the religious parties’ demands concerning education policy. Education policy questions, particularly the expansion of religious education and services, constitute a major part of all government and local authority coalition agreements.

Considerable financial resources are allocated each year both to state religious education and the "recognised" school system of the orthodox party, Agudat Yisrael, which enjoys complete independence while being almost totally financed by the state. In addition to these formal, institutionalized budget allocations, there are many other avenues for the allocation of resources to religious education and religious cultural activities. The kibbutz schools and the cultural activities sponsored by the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) also have special arrangements for allocating resources, in some cases through regular budget procedures, in other through bypassing them.

As the religious parties, as well as the kibbutzim, are extremely efficient and powerful pressure groups, the price of their autonomy in terms of resource
allocation is quite high, as expressed in school buildings, the spatial allocation of education services, staffing, programme developments, etc.

Consequences of These Approaches to Policy Making

The more serious consequence is the development of consensus on a symbolic level, concealing conflicts and disagreements at the behavioural and operational levels of educational policy-making. The developments in regard to school integration policy, closing the gap between Oriental and Western Jews, may serve as an illustration.

The last decade has given rise to great many interest groups in the West and could be called the decade of minorities, the poor and the weak. In Israel only one of these groups has developed into a fully-fledged effective pressure group, and consists of representatives of the “development towns” and poor neighbourhoods in urban centres, both of which are inhabited primarily by Jewish immigrants from North Africa and Asia. The problems of the low socio-economic strata in Israeli Society are especially complicated and emotionally charged because of the high correlation between ethnic origin, poor educational attainment, and low occupational status and income. Thus, being an Oriental Jew correlates with being disadvantaged. This fact threatens two of Israel’s most cherished values: social justice and the integration of immigrants. The Arabs who constitute around 20% of the population and are socioeconomically even more backward have failed to act as a viable pressure group to extract

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useful concessions. It is only during the last few years that their concerns have been addressed on a prominent basis. The direct elections to the Prime Minister gave them some leverage to use their numbers but that too was more or less wasted.\footnote{Of the two opportunities of such voting they chose to boycott the elections on one opportunity. While they resented the taken for granted attitude of the Labour Party in this election, they could have gone for a strong bargaining with a Prime Minister facing a certain defeat without their support and trying all out to win them.} Otherwise the Arab population has remained more or less a divided house with lack of a proper leadership.

It is possible to distinguish three periods or phases in the development of attitudes towards the disadvantaged in Israel. The first period, prior to the establishment of the state is usually described as the time when the problem did not exist or was ignored. This, however, is not quite true. The social and educational aspects of the problem were already known and were even the focus of research.\footnote{Bernard, S., ‘Education and Integration in Israel: The first Twenty Years’, \textit{Jewish Journal of Sociology}, no.30, 1988, pp.17-35.} The reason why such a grave social and educational problem was disregarded in a society that was so sensitive to social and educational ideals, was not because it was simply ignored, but rather because of what can be termed the Zionist version of the Protestant Ethic\footnote{Elboim-Dror, R., op.cit., p.229.}. The belief that the Jews had to become productive and that everyone should make an effort and work hard created the naïve assumption that willpower alone would erase social differences and improve the achievements of Oriental Jewish children within the educational system. (The centrality of the belief in willpower in Zionist ideology is well expressed in Herzl’s epigram: “If you will it, it is no dream.”)
The second period, when the failure of Oriental children in the schools became a serious problem because of its magnitude, began after the establishment of the state and the resultant waves of immigration of Jews expelled from the Arab countries. The pre-eminent ideology during this period was that Oriental Jews from traditional societies should change, adapting to the modern State of Israel and its Zionist ideology and becoming Israelis as quickly as possible. This absorption process resulted, among other things, in destroying the immigrants' family structure and religious traditions, increasing their passivity vis-à-vis the dominant Western culture and its values, and causing them to imitate primarily its external features. 69

The last period can be considered to have begun with the so-called 'Black Panthers' riots of 1971.70 Despite the tremendous efforts made by Israeli society to help Oriental Jews to better their economic, social and educational levels, and despite impressive progress in these respects, Oriental Jews still constitute the majority of the low income groups and their children form the bulk of under-achieving pupils. Although the level of achievement among Oriental Jewish children has risen, the level of Western Jewish children has done so too, thus leaving the gap as wide as ever. Four out of every five primary school pupils of North African origin are still defined as disadvantaged, while only one out of every nine pupils of European or American origin is so defined. The

immigrants' high expectations, which were not fulfilled, caused feelings of failure, frustration and aggression towards the society that had robbed them of pride in their ethnic origin and culture and failed them in their new surroundings.

In addition, demographic changes partly account for the crystallisation of the new pressure group and the changing attitude towards it in Israel. However, it is difficult to define who belongs to the new pressure group. Not only do people of Oriental origin and the inhabitants of "development towns" speak on their own behalf, but nearly every politician and public figure feels obliged to champion the underprivileged. This new interest group has had an important impact on education policy-making, reducing economic rationality in the allocation of resources while maintaining consensus.

Consensus regarding school integration policy in Israel seems to be very high: no opposition had developed nor have alternatives been suggested. However, disagreements exist and are expressed through pressures exerted by interest group altering and circumventing accepted policy in a variety of ways. Thus, the cry for the integration of children from different ethnic and social backgrounds has served mainly as a political slogan despite statements about positive discrimination, education policy is geared towards developing universal services for all, as exemplified by the 1978 Free Secondary Education Act.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{71} Minkovich, Davis and Bashi, \textit{An evaluation Study of Israeli Elementary Schools}, School of Education, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1977.
Among other consequences, the failure to examine the opportunity costs of education policies should be mentioned. As education is "above politics" and everyone is "for education," education policy implications are not fully discussed, analysed and differentiated. To put it bluntly, the two guiding rules of Israeli politicians in regard to education services are: "the more the better" and "more of the same." The only exception to these rules is the critical attitude towards higher education. As a consequence, the education system is expanding quantitatively without the needed corresponding changes to fit the changing objectives, needs and characteristics of school populations. This is the case in expanding vocational education, kindergartens and the "long school day".

**Education as Social Policy: An Evaluation**

There is no denying the fact that educational activities in Israel have consistently received more public funding than any other undertaking except national defence and has been the cornerstone of Israel's cultural and socio-economic development. There is also no denying the fact that the objectives laid before the educational system to achieve are broadly the objectives of a well thought of social policy. Here it would be interesting to gauge through the major objectives as outlined by the labour manifesto to be achieved through education to make the point clearer. It says, "we will change the order of priorities in favour of the truly important values - education, health and infrastructure". It further goes on to say that, "in the solidarity state, government intervention is justified only in the areas where a market economy cannot bring about the targeted social and
economic results. These include security, education and health, a fair distribution of income and closing of gaps, and creating physical infrastructure. In the long run, investment in these areas encourages economic growth and contributes to equality of opportunity. The highest returns come from the investment in education, because of its contribution to the development of human resources. Education is also an efficient means for bridging the gaps between various sectors of the population, and makes for maximum utilisation of human potential. This clearly underlines the centrality accorded to education in the Israeli society and in the belief that education has the potential to bring about significant social impact. However, it is limited in its scope because of its dependence on the state and its policies. For the education to bring about significant changes to achieve social objectives it requires a well thought of social policy based on clear cut guiding principles which would also get reflected in the states' policies regarding occupation, income etc. For education to serve as an instrument of social policy effectively there is a need for first clearly defining the goals of social policy and then shaping policies in education and other fields accordingly. It is a tool of fulfilling social objectives and not the tool. The main responsibility continues to be centered on the political will to shape and define a social policy and then take adequate measures to achieve them. Not to forget here the constraints exerted by the compulsions of electoral politics in a democratic country.

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72 One Israel Platform, on 30/01/2002, pp.6-7.