

Where Have All the Palestinians Gone?

by

Yehuda Bar Shalom, Ruba Daas and Zvi Bekerman

The authors of this paper, a Palestinian-Israeli and two Jewish Israelis, are engaged in higher education in Israel, teaching in departments of education in institutions of higher education. As Israelis, we participate in a society which has been characterized as involved in an intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000), a conflict that is painful for all groups involved but in which Palestinians suffer the most. As educators we share emancipatory views in education and believe educational practices have the potential of changing, or at least supporting, moves geared towards amelioration of the society in which we live. Our experience has been that many (even most) of our colleagues in educational departments in institutions of higher education in Israel share these views. We read their scholarly papers, we meet them at conferences, and we never fail to appreciate our common and well substantiated critical understandings. It is this appreciation which brings us to question the disparity between the institutions they inhabit, which replicate the structural inequalities of the larger Israeli socio-political context, and the critique that these scholars and teachers profess.

In this article we examine the dearth of Palestinians in full-time positions in Schools of Education at Israeli universities and Colleges of Education. Our emphasis on these settings derives from the almost unbearable incongruence between the always critical and at times revolutionary rhetoric of the scholarly publications these educational institutions produce as compared with the inequity of their actual practice. Their rhetoric, founded on well established theorizing in (critical) multicultural, social psychological, postmodern, or even simply humanistic liberal approaches, calls for accessibility, inclusion, equality, and social justice, yet these institutions keep the Palestinian population and other marginalized groups in a position of invisibility sustained by meager resources. In other words, it seems that in Israeli academia the socio-political problems identified in the research of its scholars have no impact on dominant practice. One could conclude that scholars maintain a sharp distinction between their academic work and their personal standards and are thus dishonest, or that knowledge in itself can contribute little to changing the world. Both may be right.

The Socio-Political Background of the Palestinian Minority in Israel

The State of Israel has institutionalized itself through the establishment of public education, the standardization of law, and the development of a secular equivalent to the church (Ben-Amos & Bet-El, 1999; Gellner, 1997; Handelman, 1990). Like many other

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modern nation-states, it is the product of an invented tradition (Hobsbawm, 1983). The Jewish-Palestinian conflict remains the most potentially explosive of conflicts in Israel, placing the Jewish majority (80 percent of the population) and the Palestinian (primarily Muslim) minority (20 percent) in a situation plagued by tragedy and suffering.

For the most part, Israel as an ethnic democracy (Smootha, 1996) has not welcomed the active participation in political, cultural or social spheres of anyone other than its legitimate invented community (Anderson, 1991) of Jews. Israeli Palestinians, though officially possessing full rights as citizens, have chronically suffered as a putatively hostile minority with little political representation and a debilitated social, economic and educational infrastructure (Ghanem, 2001). In spite of the declared policy that Israeli Arabs are entitled to all civil rights, they remain discriminated against in all aspects and fields of Israeli life. This is especially salient in education, as the Israeli Arabs see education as a means of strengthening their position while the Israeli establishment employs it as a means of social control over a group they perceive as a threat (Shibli, 1999).

While riddled with conflict and social gaps, Israel must attempt to meet the often-competing requirements of a multi-ethnic national-religious society. The dominant socio-political conflicts are reflected in the Israeli educational system, which is divided into separate educational sectors: Non-religious Jewish, Religious National Jewish, Orthodox Jewish, and 'Arab,' all under the umbrella of the Israeli Ministry of Education (Sprinzak, Segev, Bar & Levi-Mazloum, 2001). Official numbers published by the Ministry of Education reveal that the Palestinian educational system is allocated much lower budgets than the Jewish one (Bashi, 1995; and see Golan-Agnon 2004, pp. 83-90, for statistical evidence of the gaps in many different categories). Some claim that the Israeli education system perceives its Arab schools as being outside the mainstream (Mittelberg & Lev-Ari, 1999). The integration of Palestinians in the Israeli educational system in general, and particularly within the ethnically segregated coeducational Arab subsystem, took place mostly at the lower level of teachers and school administrators. At the level of policy-making, integration remained marginal (Alhaj, 1991; Golan-Agnon, 2004; Swirsky, 1990). Another consequence of the quality gap between the two systems is the lower achievement rate and higher dropout rate among Arab students (Mazawi, 1998).

We also note that the starting point of the Israeli Jewish and Arab educational systems was quite different, the Jews having created strong institutions in the pre-state era with the help of Jewish European academic refugees, while the Arab system, in contrast, lost many of its intellectuals when they fled the 1948 war (Al Haj, 1996).

The events of 1948 created a negative situation for the Palestinians, who from their perspective, became guests in their own land. Perhaps in compensation for the loss of their land, Palestinians put new emphasis on educational achievement. Since 1948, there has been an improvement in the achievements of Palestinian students, with a current literacy rate of over ninety percent. In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of Palestinian students entering universities and colleges. Yet despite their academic training, many Palestinian graduates find themselves unemployed or not working in their field (Bar El, 1993). Fifty percent of Palestinians in Israel live in poverty, and there is growing concern about the consequences of a group of people oppressed over a long period of time under such conditions (Al-Haj, 2005). Israeli Palestinians tend to identify themselves as Palestinians who would choose to remain

citizens of the state of Israel with full and equal rights and recognition of their cultural identity (Al-Haj, 2005), even after the creation of a Palestinian state. Part of the reason for the absence of Palestinian academicians in growing industries such as high-tech could be associated with security concerns of the Jewish majority (Al-Haj, 1996), but in many cases the security concerns seem to be used as an excuse to strengthen the glass ceiling (Al-Haj, 1996; see also the report of “Sikui” and the Israeli Democracy Institute, Gara, 2006). The attitude of the Jewish majority toward the Palestinian minority is one of exclusion which many times leads to negative stereotypes and the de-humanization of the Palestinian minority (Suleiman, 2004). Palestinian researchers point to the fact that ex-Soviet Jewish refugees, as they arrive in Israel, get all imaginable educational and professional help in job placement, less than veteran Jewish Israelis, but much more than the meager resources allocated to the Arab indigenous minority. These visible gaps create unnecessary and avoidable social tensions (Al Haj, 1995).

Palestinian Lecturers in University Schools of Education and in Colleges of Education in Israel

The situation of Palestinian academicians in the field of education parallels the unequal resources allocated to the Palestinian educational system in comparison to the Jewish sector. Palestinian students get fewer teaching hours, less investment in school maintenance, and there are very few Palestinians in positions of power in the Ministry of Education (Golan-Agnon, 2004).

The latest report on the number of Palestinians in Israeli academia leaves no room for doubt. Palestinians in Israel constitute 20% of the population, but only 1.2% of the 6,000 Lecturers in Israeli universities are Palestinians (Biur, 2007) In other words, the actual representation of Palestinians in academia is fifteen times lower than their number relative to the general population.

We counted the number of Palestinian faculty members registered in the websites of five Schools of Education at Israeli universities and found them extremely low as well. In one of the leading universities we found only a single, non-tenured, Arab faculty member. The lack of Palestinian academicians in education is even more ironic in light of the fact that Palestinian academicians are being pushed to work in the educational sector at three times the rate of their Jewish colleagues due to restricted employment options, (38.7% of Arabs in the educational system among university graduates, compared to 15.3% among Jews; see Diab & Bar Shalom, 2007). Looking at the websites of Israel’s Schools of Education, we also see evidence of a disproportionately low number of other excluded groups such as Mizrachim (Jews descended from immigrants from Arab countries). The clear majority of faculty in these institutions belongs to the Jewish Ashkenazi population with roots in Europe and America. In this paper, however, we focus on an analysis of and solutions for the situation of the Palestinian minority. These solutions, if relevant, could also be applicable to other disenfranchised groups in Israeli society.

The situation of Palestinians is slightly better in teacher-training institutions. In colleges of education we can identify two distinct categories: colleges which have developed a Palestinian track to accommodate the needs of the Palestinian-Israeli

population (especially concerning subjects taught in their mother tongue) and Jewish colleges which do not have such tracks. In the colleges with a Palestinian track, we find both an attitude that encourages discourse about cultural needs and a larger number of Palestinian faculty members. For example, a leading college of education in the south of Israel increased its number of Palestinian students after creating a special track for Bedouin students; all staff members in this track are Palestinians. The track also allows for the possibility of Palestinian students joining their Jewish colleagues in the 4th and last year of studies to gain their B.Ed. academic degree. The student population is more than 20% Palestinian and the faculty is about 20% Palestinian. An important college in the north also offers a special track, used mostly by Druze women, with a 20% Palestinian student body and close to 10% Palestinian faculty members. A central college in Jerusalem has a special-education Palestinian track representing 20% of the student body and 10% of the Palestinians on their faculty. All of these colleges reflect the belief that it is ineffective to be the “pedagogic tutor” of the student-teacher in the field if the tutor does not speak the student’s (and his pupils’) mother tongue.

When the numbers of Palestinians in academe in general are compared with their representation in colleges of education, we see a higher representation of Palestinians among faculty and students in the colleges. This likely derives from the low status of the teaching profession in Israel and the disproportionate number of Palestinians who, for lack of other opportunities, are pushed into the educational field, rather than enlightened policies of the colleges.

In Jewish colleges of education that do not have a Palestinian track, we see a repetition of the trend in education departments at universities. We do find Palestinian students in them, but almost no Palestinian faculty members.

Some of these colleges, which have almost no Palestinian faculty members, enhance their progressive facades with ‘enlightened’ programs/projects (such as the Institute for Democratic Education) and/or organize national events in which the future of education is discussed with the participation of prominent Israeli scholars and leaders (the Minister of Education, the Supreme Court President, Israel Prize laureates). In one recent case, such a gathering produced very impressive rhetoric generated by 23 prominent individuals, none of whom were Palestinians. Some of the colleges of education have historic ties with the Kibbutz movement which, while strongly supportive of a socialist ideology, became the main contributor to a Jewish-dominant nation-building socialism¹.

Looking at the publications of many of the researchers at these institutions of higher education, universities and colleges alike, one finds a spectrum of exciting and critical ideas. Jewish-Israeli professional educators research minorities, multiculturalism, critical pedagogy, and social inequality in schools and in society. These texts, if perceived as a cumulative educational vision, would imply that the schools of education at universities and the colleges of education must be settings in which social realities are constructed differently, however modestly, than in the “world outside” that is portrayed in these scholarly texts as a “cruel and bureaucratic nightmare”--a nightmare which these social scientists like to attack and would certainly love to change, or so they say. Given their research results and theoretical conceptualizations, one would expect, perhaps

¹ Sternhell doubts if there was ever in the Zionist movement a real inclination to create an egalitarian socialist society (Sternhell, 1999).

naively, a difference in these institutions, which so vocally support a rhetoric of social critique towards change, but that does not seem to be the case.

The Social and Educational Meaning of the Palestinian Minority's Absence from University Education Departments

The lack of involvement of Palestinians in the higher echelons of power at the universities reminds us of the general treatment of excluded groups by many democratic and even social democratic governments around the world. According to McCowan (2003):

Even elected democratic governments, while using the rhetoric of participation, are seen to provide few real opportunities for involvement in decision-making. Gentili (1998) describes the falsification of consensus whereby neo-liberal policies are implemented on the basis of processes that are apparently democratic, but which deny the majority a genuine opportunity to consider alternatives and make choices. It is not only neo-liberalism, however, that is seen to be lacking 'real' democratic commitments: the centrally-planned socialist governments, and even the social democracies of the twentieth century rarely showed evidence in support of 'real' participation by all members of society. Participation, and lack of it, is today seen as a key indicator of quality of life. The oppressed suffer not just from poverty, but from exclusion, which can involve economic, political and cultural arenas (McCowan, 2003, p.6).

Just to give an example in the USA, though some progress has been made regarding Black student representation in undergraduate and graduate enrollment (Perna et al., 2007), there has been little progress regarding the representation of Blacks among faculty, reaching just a 5.5% of all full time nationwide faculty positions in 2003 (Cataldi et al., 2005, Perna et al., 2007). Moreover, for some areas of the United States, especially in the northern states, recent research points to a decline in Black representation in the faculty of public higher education institutions (Perna et al., 2007).

The Israeli situation is not much different in this sense. The university, rather than countering exclusion, in fact reflects unofficial exclusionary policies. The Israeli government, at least, has one Palestinian member in its cabinet and more than 10 Knesset (Parliament) members. The Israeli universities help foster a false sense of participatory democracy by declaring themselves open and enlightened institutions while applying policies which minimize inclusion of representatives of minority groups.

It seems that our findings correlate with a growing perception of the gap between the social awareness of scholars in "enlightened" fields, such as the social sciences, and the lack of representation and participation of excluded groups. Such is the case with Israeli professional anthropology. In March 2004, the Mizrahi-Palestinian Coalition Against Apartheid in Israeli Anthropology (CAAIA) sent Israel's State Comptroller an official complaint, asking for clarification regarding the almost total absence of Mizrahi

and Palestinian anthropologists in FTE positions in Israeli universities, inquiring about the systematic violations of communal intellectual and cultural rights, and calling attention to the absence of any code of ethics to guide Israel's anthropological research and writing (Lavie & Shubeli, 2006). Moreover, the situation of Mizrahi and Palestinian women in relation to professorial positions was examined by Zarini (in Traubman, 2006). Zarini, then a student working on her bachelor's degree at the open university, checked the websites of all the Israeli academic institutions. She found a total of 4,600² professors, among them only 675 women, of these only 23 Mizrahi women. The number of Palestinian female professors was 0³ (Traubman, 2006).

Countries such as the USA and France have tried to confront and find partial solutions to these problems. In the 1960s, the USA affirmative action programs initially focused on improving employment and educational access available to African Americans, women, and other groups traditionally targeted by discriminatory laws and social practices (Brown & Donahoo, 2003). In 2001 in France, the oldest and most well-known of these programs, the *Conventions éducation prioritaire (CEP)* program at Sciences Po, began after a study revealed that the traditional structure of the Grandes Écoles is highly discriminatory against economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse students (Cheurfa & Tiberj, 2001 in Donahoo, 2007). American programs generally focus on redressing the inequalities that have prevented women and people of color from qualifying for admission or employment at most mainstream institutions of higher education (Amott & Matthaei, 1991; Greenberg, 2002). As such, race and gender have been linked to the politics of education and economics in the USA. In France affirmative action programs focus on addressing educational inequities among economically disadvantaged students, many of whom are immigrants or offspring of immigrants from African nations.

Bowen and Bok (1998) provided definitive proof of the success achieved by affirmative action programs. Using detailed quantitative analysis, Bowen and Bok found that students who attained access to highly selective institutions as a result of race-conscious policies not only succeeded in school but also in life, often making contributions to society and the public good that exceeded those of their Caucasian counterparts. It is very likely that other countries adopting similar programs will achieve similar results. Yet affirmative action also functions as an impediment to social justice for those who are the racial "other" by helping to mask privilege. By allowing a small number of 'others' to attend elite universities and experience economic success, they potentially disguise the true nature and impact of the powerful, helping to protect the privileged by illustrating that the system rewards those who abide by its rules, regardless of race. In some cases, those who achieve success through affirmative action actually work hardest to close the door to others by publicly challenging these programs and denying the impact of these mechanisms on their own success (Crenshaw, Goanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1996). The pros and cons of affirmative action policies paradoxically

² This number is lower than the 6000 lecturers presented before, as in this case they only count professors.

³ Women in the Arab culture are a minority within a minority, as they are not granted the same options as males within their societies (for example, there is a strong preference in Arab society to hire males). When women excel in Academia, they fight both their own society and the stereotyped and exclusion policies of the Jewish majority (see also, Diab & Bar Shalom).

acknowledge the social limitations placed on people of color while also preventing significant redress (Donahoo, 2007).

In Israel the first piece of affirmative action was indirectly legislated by the Knesset in 1993 in an amendment to the 1975 State-Owned Companies' Act. The main goal of the amendment was to ensure the existence of a proper (standardized *as opposed to political patronage*) appointment procedure for directors of the boards of state-owned companies. Paradoxically the amendment (in contrast to affirmative action policies in the USA that were introduced to assist the African American discriminated-against minority) was introduced in Israel to assist women belonging to the most privileged minority, Ashkenazi (European born or of descent). Similar to the results in other countries, these policies in Israel encouraged women who benefited from them to avoid confronting gender issues—i.e., such women refrained from acting as women on behalf of other women (Izraeli, 2003). Yet between 1993 and 1998 the proportion of directors who were women increased from approximately 7% to 40%, showing once again that while they are in some way prejudicial, affirmative action policies can provide a large step on the way to social justice. The positive influence of the amendment can also be seen in the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court decision of July 2001 which obliged the state to ensure appropriate representation of Palestinian citizens in public bodies, especially those invested with decision-making powers. Unfortunately these decisions have had no influence on the institutions of higher education in Israel. This is indeed surprising, because in contrast to government interests, academics profess liberal views, especially in the social sciences.

Researchers (Cole & Barber 2003; Umbach 2006) have indicated the potential benefits of a more ethnically diverse faculty body: a larger number of minority representation in the faculty body promotes success of minority students; achieving equity suggests that discrimination no longer limits career opportunities; an ethnically diverse faculty body ensures more recognition of diversity; minority students find inspiration to further their academic careers when minorities are well represented in the faculty body; and research in institutions which include minorities have a better chance of gaining insight derived from the faculty's own experiences as a minority, thus becoming better informed on issues they would otherwise disregard. It seems then that it is very difficult to empower people when they do not see their culture reflected in the educational setting in which they operate (Landsman, 2001).⁴ The alienation of groups from structures of power can have many manifestations.

For instance, the generations born in post war Britain were largely disenfranchised by the current status quo as jobs became less available, wages fell, and racism, as well as other forms of divisiveness, rose. Those post-war youth who understood that the extant government and economical system would never alleviate the human suffering engendered by capitalism, either consciously or as an intuitive response (discussed below), took the struggle to the streets through the creation of subcultures based on the refusal to participate in traditional society (Mallot & Carrol-Miranda, 2003, p. 3).

⁴ Landsman refers to school culture, but we assume the same effects when Arab students don't find Arab lecturers in positions of power and influence.

The media in Israel often report and elaborate on members of excluded groups joining in what they perceive as anti-social and anti-state activities, but these activities and groupings may be nothing more than an adaptive reaction to the normative tracks that are closed to members of a particular group. Similarly we could question the popularity of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party among Jews originating from Arab countries, which may be nothing more than a reaction against social systems that regurgitate them. If so, we ask whether antisocial behaviors among some Palestinian and other excluded groups are understandable within this context.

Individuals who operate from within a position of privilege have great difficulty facing and understanding the position of people who are part of a minority (Carr, 2006). Delpit (1995) elaborated the concept of the culture of power. Those who have power deny its existence; those who lack power are more aware of its presence (Delpit 1995). Actually, if we seek professional advice on educational change, we would be very suspicious of individuals whose practice is confined to an isolated, mono-cultural ivory tower, especially with reference to multiculturalism, equity and social mobility. In fact, we would give the academic advice-givers the advice offered in the Hippocratic tradition “*cura te ipsum*” (Latin for “take care of yourself first”)

A New Paradigm, A New Discourse

In this section we would like to give some practical thoughts about what to do next, which is sometimes lacking in social critique. We join critical researchers that believe that every act of research is political, just as reality is political. We apply our critical bias, and we state that we do not like the current situation and we would like it to change (Carspecken, 1996). Like some schools of critical inquiry, our approach is transformative and activist (Carspecken, 1996; Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Giroux, 1988). It begins with looking closely at things the way they are from an emergentist ontological perspective:

Drawing on Marx's theory of alienated labor in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* [Marx, 1975], Rikowski observes that within capitalism we are alien to ourselves - our humanity. However, within the social form of human capital - or capitalized labor power - there exists the (real) potential to create a world free of exploitation. Capital is the negation of this possibility. An emergentist ontology reminds us that just because human potential is suppressed and not actualized, does not mean it is any less real - or non-existent. It exists as a tendency (but not a guarantee). Human emancipation is active struggle and requires human engagement (intellectual, political and practical) to be actualized. Here lies the *potential* of education: the *real* possibility of transformative work (Banfield, 2003, p. 10).

We also believe that a better state of affairs can emerge via discourse:

Hierarchies are necessarily social in that the enactment of a hierarchy inevitably entails more than one being. Racialized hierarchical practices are

achieved through intersubjective (shared) understandings, which are largely achieved through discourse, especially discourse that is widely disseminated. Intersubjective understanding must be achieved before collective actions can occur; and although intersubjective understandings can be achieved through nonlinguistic means, they are largely produced and maintained through discourse. Likewise, for the same reasons, changes in social understandings and hence practices can also be accomplished through changes in discourse (Briscoe, 2006, p. 3).

We would like to generate the inception of a new discourse that will bring about changes in the Israeli academy and society in general, and in departments of education in higher education in particular. Yet we realize our new discourse may ultimately deliver as little as the one we have criticized above. Thus in our case discourse is to be understood mainly as an active practice which, when engaged in the world in spite of its risks, works toward change and not just publishing academic papers.

The Israeli universities can be proud of being the home of such thinkers as Martin Buber, who envisioned his dialogical philosophy as capable of creating social change by really focusing on the needs and existence on the “other.” Freire’s approach was certainly influenced by Buber, and we assume that there is no lecturer at the School of Education who doesn’t know something about Freire’s dialogical and transformative educational approach. This Buberian/Freirian approach should indeed be the tool to analyze the current social situation at Israel’s university schools of education and Israel’s colleges of education.

This transformation, by the way, does not require incredible efforts of abstract thought. Wood’s (1993) analysis of the best practices in some American public schools might be useful here. In his study, Wood found that these schools tend to “abandon” textbooks and introduce studies based on “real books,” with adults playing a mediating role. Teachers develop a curriculum based on these texts, reflecting an internal order and coherence. The children use the cognitive tools they acquire in order to examine the world around them. Through their studies of language, history and culture, they ask such questions as: How can political power be secured? What is considered ‘cultural’ and what ‘barbaric?’ Who writes history? For whom and why? (Bar Shalom, 2006). In other words, we suggest that faculty in education departments in Israeli tertiary education engage in a practical dialogue that assesses a situation and then offers solutions towards change.

We offer a central theme for this dialogue: How do we ensure that social equity is better displayed in the power structures of schools of education? Are there enough Palestinians among our lecturers? If the answer is no, then: What does this lack signify for Palestinian students? What does it mean to Jewish students? What could some of the larger societal impacts of this social fact be? (Similar questions could of course be asked about other excluded groups.) If we want to generate change, what should we do? Are we able to gain a true multicultural approach if we don’t daily engage in an egalitarian discourse with those we perceive as others? Do we have the right to tell “the field” to change, if we are actually part of the field, but worse than (or the same as) the average institution in our country? Could it be that public resistance to our ideas reflect our mono-cultural national self-representation? What social dangers do we help

generate by having a mono-cultural academia? What can we gain from fresh, new, socio-cultural insights made by “others”?

Following these discussions the faculty body should decide that the Schools of Educations will have a policy of affirmative action. The ideal would be that the number of Palestinians matches their population percentile, but if not, the minimum should be at least half. (For some institutions this could mean 27 Palestinian Faculty as compared to 5 today). Unfortunately many at the universities might oppose the idea, hiding behind illusory standards of excellence as the only measure to which a ‘true science’ should be committed. This is often said as if these standards are blind and neutral, a look from nowhere, which clearly they are not, not in France or the USA or Israel; for they are always situated within the core of hegemonic power conveniently blind to itself, its color, its ideology, and its resources.

Yet we want to believe that if these steps are taken, other institutions will soon follow. Perhaps this will become a voluntary new standard that everyone will feel obliged to adopt. Also, we envision many donors to the universities, albeit not all, that would condition their donation to the university on adherence to their social interpretation of Jewish (or other) values. After all, even the declaration of Israel’s independence clearly states that the state of Israel

will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. (State of Israel: Proclamation of independence).

Conclusion

We hope that this document will help promote change in the universities by creating awareness within them and also outside in other spheres of Israeli society. Some believe that change comes about when outside pressure is generated. On the issue of Mizrahi women anthropologists, Lavie and Shubeli have suggested similar steps for the corrections needed in anthropology/sociology departments on this matter. They argue that external international support, including pressure from foreign anthropologists who both study and often advocate such rights, may help in the implementation of cultural rights in the Israeli academy (Lavie & Shubeli, 2006).

We do not oppose outside pressures, and often view them positively. They might indeed be beneficial; however, we worry about who should be asked to apply this pressure. Should it be the great powers, the USA, Britain, France, who have had significant roles in creating the situation from which we now suffer, who even today use violent force to impose their will on others in Iraq (we do not support its previous government but we clearly understand that the present situation seems not to be much better).

Change must happen simply **because it is the right thing to do**. Just as Carol Gilligan argued for the need to include women's voices for the sake of true dialogue that would enrich both sides,⁵ the Palestinians in Israel, with their unique viewpoints and attitudes,⁶ have to become equal partners in institutions that claim an ethos of progress, enlightenment and equality (Golan-Agnon, 2004). Researchers in a mono-cultural academia can be likened to a group of tourists who engage in visiting "exotic" lands, only to later refer to the "native behavior" on return to the safe sphere of their compatriots, on a bus or in a hotel lobby⁷. Multicultural discourse has to enter, first and foremost, the bus and the lobby, the faculty lounge and cafeteria. An ongoing egalitarian discourse has true transformative potential, though university researchers often forget that they are also part of the field which they observe. In other words, change in praxis at the schools of education, which are situated within the most prestigious academic institutions, has a potential for serious impact on large segments of society. The elites must leave significant room for others.⁸ In 2007, 15 Ashkenazi Jews were granted the prestigious Israel prize. It would be wonderful to imagine a future in which all segments of society are represented. The ongoing exclusion at universities and other institutions, enhanced by increasingly negative stereotypes among the Jewish majority and growing tensions among different ethnic Jewish groups, will certainly result in a social explosion that will be very difficult to resolve. Experts in education (*Educare*: from Latin – to lead) should be leaders in trying to avoid this seemingly ineluctable outcome.⁹ Buber taught us long ago that "only through working on the kingdom of man is it possible to work on the kingdom of G'd...that which is merely an idea can not become holy" (Buber, 1957, p, 137). Programs for affirmative action can only be a first step for those who, trained in the academy, feel the search for truth to be their calling; what truly needs to be reformed is the overall ideology of the nation (democratic, liberal) state.

⁵ Simply because male discourse was missing the feminine part.

⁶ And all other excluded groups

⁷ This could be an interesting exercise in ethnography, sending students to faculty cafeterias.

⁸ There is always the excuse: "There aren't simply enough good researchers." The writers will be very happy to provide potential names and strategies, requiring resources, to amplify research and writing opportunities for chosen individuals.

⁹ In other worlds, Universities should cease to be the "caviar" offered at the celebration gala party of the victory of the American style Neo-Liberal Capitalism over Israel.

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Yehuda Bar Shalom is Chair of Educational Studies at The David Yellin College of Education, The Hebrew University, Israel. Ruba Daas is a Lecturer at Beit Berl College, Israel. Zvi Bekerman is teaches the anthropology of education at the School of Education and The Melton Center for Jewish Education, The Hebrew University, Israel.