This article will juxtapose the goals and implications of two pedagogical programmes that promote education for belonging in Israel. Representing the official knowledge of the Ministry of Education, the first is the ‘100 Concepts in Heritage, Zionism and Democracy’ curriculum. The second, which embodies the counter knowledge produced and disseminated by Arab civil society organizations, is entitled ‘Identity and Belonging: The Basic Concepts Project for Arab Pupils’. The article grapples with the attempts of Israel to impose a state-standardized version of education for belonging, as well as the active resistance to this by Arab civil society in Israel which provides an alternative one. The article argues that the concepts included in the curriculum posed by Arab civil society, albeit controversial and challenging to the very definition of Israel as both a Jewish nation state and a democracy, should be considered an act of citizenship, rather than a sign of radicalization and separatism. Indeed, the alternative curriculum constitutes a political and ethical act of ‘in your face’ democracy, which is deeply confrontational and interruptive. The paper is organized into three sections. The first explicates the politics of recognition as a theoretical framework for this study. The second unit presents both curricula and compares and contrasts the two. The third and final section offers concluding thoughts regarding the interplay of the rival Palestinian and Israeli historiographies in the struggle over canonizing and standardizing a collective narrative through the Israeli education system.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1979) argues that dominant groups mobilize stocks of social knowledge that legitimize their own interests, conceal power relationships through representation of sectional interests as universal ones, and deny contradictions by naturalizing the socio-political status quo. Yet, power is always contested and subordination is never complete, especially when it comes to the influence of education systems on the pupils’ identity formation (Subedi & Daza, 2008; Peters, 2009). Therefore, when ‘only specific groups’ knowledge becomes official knowledge’ (Apple, 1993, p. 65), and dominant groups mask their collective power by promulgating their worldview as if it were universally shared by all, counter discourses (Terdiman, 1985) emerge to challenge the terms, images and language of the ‘official knowledge’ through which socio-political identities are deployed and recognized.

Focusing on the education system of the Palestinians in Israel, who form a distinct community separate from the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and elsewhere, this article juxtaposes two historical narratives: the state propagated ‘official knowledge’...
and the ‘counter knowledge’ proposed by the Palestinian civil society organizations in Israel. Specifically, the *100 Concepts of Heritage, Zionism and Democracy* programme (henceforth *100 Concepts*) (Ministry of Education, 2003), a recent attempt to impose a Zionist narrative on the Arab–Palestinian education system in Israel (henceforth Arab education), will be compared with *Identity and Belonging: The Basic Concepts Project for Arab Pupils* programme (henceforth *Identity and Belonging*) (Ibn Khaldun—The Arab Association for Research and Development, The Center for Combating Racism & the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, 2005), a civil society initiative of educational activism within the same education system.

As it targets the political meaning of *Identity and Belonging* and its capacity for resistance and dialogue, this article argues that the programme represents, at best, the Palestinian ‘ethno-national’ activism (Haklai, 2011) and the ‘contentious politics’ (Tilly & Tarrow, 2006) mobilized by the Palestinian minority in Israel to resist the Jewish ‘ethnocratic’ hegemony (Yiftachel, 2006) and promote group based equality and recognition for this minority. Considered by this article as a ‘citizenship act’ (Isin, 2008), *Identity and Belonging* presents a counter narrative of Palestinian history, permeated with moral and political claims for meaningful recognition and equal representation of the Palestinian collective identity in the public sphere, especially in the education field. However, these claims do not challenge only the differential regime of Israeli citizenship (Shafir & Peled, 2002), but also the boundaries of Palestinian nationality. Inasmuch as it contests the unequal access to educational resources for national recognition in Israel, *Identity and Belonging* questions the unity and continuity of the Palestinian people as well (Agbaria & Mustafa, 2012), considering that it represents the Palestinian minority in Israel as an independent political actor with a distinct collective memory.

Furthermore, the article argues that *Identity and Belonging* submits itself as pedagogy of ‘interruptive democracy’ (Davies, 2008). As a citizenship act of ‘in your face’ democracy (Davies, 2008), this counter knowledge initiative employs confrontation and conflict to decolonize the Arab education system in Israel and resist the differential Israeli citizenship regime it serves. This is achieved by means of democratization of, and dialogue with, the rival official narrative, a break from the existing education policies and practices of control and surveillance, and empowerment of the Palestinian agency to restore and regain its sense of community and collective identity. Concurrently, *Identity and Belonging* engages critically with Palestinian nationality via the production of a historical narrative that is specific to, and confined by, the political boundaries and historical circumstances of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

In what follows, we will first provide a theoretical framework for the significance of the politics of recognition in the education field, especially in postcolonial contexts similar to that of the Palestinian minority in Israel. In the second section, we will shed light on the research context, focusing on the Palestinian ethno-national politics vis-à-vis the state of Israel. The third section presents the two programmes; the fourth compares the similarities and differences between them. Finally, the concluding section discusses the entangled relationship between the official and counter knowledge embedded in and embodied by the two programmes.
Politics of recognition and education

It is safe to argue that cultural identities are not only a matter of historical roots, but also of social paths routed by dialogue with others and by seeking recognition from them (Taylor, 1989). Therefore, Axel Honneth (1996, pp. 25–26) asserts that:

... non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being... Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need.

In the same vein, Iris Marion Young (1990, p. 59) perceives misrecognition as a form of oppression. For her:

To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the perspective of one’s group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it as the Other... Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm.

Nancy Fraser (2000) further expands on the idea of misrecognition as a social injustice. According to Fraser, misrecognition may involve: cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one’s own); non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of authoritative representational, communicative and interpretative practices); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life situations) (see more in Power & Frandji, 2010). Such injustices are particularly common in the education systems, through which the state produces and disseminates its story of peoplehood (Smith, 2003) and its official historiography (Zajda & Whitehouse, 2009).

To do so, the state highlights certain narratives, while downplaying and even denying others, especially in school subjects, such as history, civics, geography and literature. In other words, the state indoctrinates a selective and uniformed master narrative of the collective memory of the past (Zajda, 2003, 2007, 2009). Problematic as it might be, this standardizing of the official narrative provides congruity and distinctiveness to the collective history, establishing continuity between past and present, and, thus, a sense of unified political fate (Zerubavel, 1995). In this regard, literature is rife with examples of ways in which the state harnesses the education system to socio-politically engineer a hegemonic collective memory in service of the longstanding hegemonic hierarchies and political interests of the dominant groups (Zajda, 2005, 2007; Quaynor, 2012).

For example, Irene Nakou and Isabel Barca (2010) introduced 14 case studies from different parts of the world. All of these, including the chapter authored by Ayal Naveh (2010) on the public uproar over the history curriculum and textbooks in Israel, present history education as a highly debated school subject in terms of its goals, content and pedagogies with regard to its capacity to accommodate ethnic diversity, reflect rival narratives and serve competing political interests.

In 2013, Robert Guyver, in a special issue of the International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research, provided a similar volume of international studies of history education, offering 15 national case studies. Guyver notes that within these case studies, ‘there are often conflicting expectations among politicians, the general
public, history teachers or educators and historians, about what the purposes of history education are’ (Guyver, 2013, p. 3). According to him, ‘one major point of contention is the nature of the narrative itself, who peoples it and what focus it might take’ (p. 8). In the same volume, Tsafir Goldberg reported on the shifts in the Israeli history curriculum following the various swings of the conservative–liberal pendulum in Israeli politics and society. For him:

[The] 100 Concepts program marked a strong conservative move, away from the seemingly progressive long-term trend characterizing the first 40 years of Israeli history curriculum… The fact that the memorization of concepts in Zionism (the Jewish national movement) was forced upon Arab students, while mention of their indigenous heritage was censured, indicates aversion to diversity and a coercive approach to minorities. (Goldberg, 2013, p. 115)

It seems that practices of imposing a standardized official narrative in education systems thrive particularly in colonial realities and legacies, as colonial projects often aspire to confine the colonized populations into repressive subject positions and, thereby, limit, shape, or even deny their possible expressions of identity (Subedi & Daza, 2008). For the purposes of this article, the ‘colonial’ is understood as ‘imposed and dominating’ rather than simply ‘foreign or alien’ (Simmons & Dei, 2012).

In the education field, colonial schooling has incubated and disseminated discourses that present the West as superior and the indigenous society as inferior (Grande, 2004). This is accomplished by re-appropriating and re-presenting the history of the indigenous societies back to these societies via school knowledge and pedagogies, among other channels (Smith, 1999; Crossley & Tikly, 2004). On a wider scope, the education field has indeed been a central arena for indigenous and ethnic minorities’ struggles for cultural recognition and group based rights, worldwide (May et al., 2004; Zajda et al., 2009). Simultaneously, educational systems continue to marginalize and prevent minorities from succeeding at school, using numerous institutional practices, including standardized testing, narrowed curriculum, ability grouping and in-grade retention, among others (Power, 2012). These practices value and privilege the students who most closely model the language, culture, values and intelligence of the upper classes and dominant groups.

Nevertheless, the official hegemonic memory is often confronted by various versions of ‘counter-memory’ (Foucault, 1977, p. 160), which often contradict and expand the official past (Schwartz, 1996). With counter discourses, misrecognized groups attempt not only to invert their inferior status and affirm the value of their previously undermined identity (Simmons & Dei, 2012), but also to cultivate their own societal culture in ways that would eventually be officially endorsed by the state (Kymlicka, 1995). For Will Kymlicka, access to a societal culture instrumentally facilitates personal autonomy and choice. This access, he argues, enables individuals to understand ‘meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life’ (1995, p. 76).

For misrecognized groups, the remedy for the denial of the expression of their societal culture in the public sphere lies with official, yet meaningful, equality and recognition. To achieve this goal, minorities often apply various strategies of identity politics that are indeed, according to Tully (2000), a serious game of ‘disclosure and
acknowledgment’, rather than quests for definitive recognition. Jocelyn Maclure (2003, p. 6) summarizes Tully’s understanding of the nature of these politics as:

... primarily: (a) practices oriented toward the public unveiling of an identity-related difference that has been neglected, distorted or silenced by the majority, and (b) demands addressed to this majority to acknowledge the disclosure of this mis/non-recognized identity.

However, identity politics of recognition are not necessarily geared to ‘invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond’ (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Following Stuart Hall’s constructivist approach to ethnic identity, identity politics raise dilemmas regarding the approach and utilization of history, language and culture as resources: ‘in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are or where we came from’, so much as ‘what we might become’, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves’ (ibid.). Perceived in this way, identities become the political target of the politics of recognition, as the objective of the ‘politics of becoming’, rather than the ‘politics of being’ (Connolly, 1999). ‘Politics of becoming’ emerges, William Connolly (ibid.) argues, out of ‘intuititionally congealed injuries’ aiming at adjusting ‘the cultural balance between being and becoming without attempting the impossible, self-defeating task of dissolving formations altogether’ (pp. 51, 57).

Accordingly, the identity politics of recognition are always dynamic and dialogic, also when they suggest counter discourses of reasserted collective memories and identities. These counter discourses correspond intertextually with the official discourses (Kristev, 1980), as they concurrently relate to similar historical and political events, figures and institutions and imbue them with rival meanings. In postcolonial contexts in particular, counter discourses are not independent of the colonial relationship and do not emerge in isolation of the dominant discourse, but result from a re-centering of marginalized discourses (Loomba, 2005). Hall (1990) explains this point by stating that the reifications of culture that occur through the creation and dispersal of visual images, texts and language become ‘resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which experience [of the colonized] has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of... representation’ (p. 225).

A counter knowledge usually offers a more fragmented and truncated narrative because it is often created outside the ‘melting pot’ of the authoritative institutions, especially within the education system, and it represents the divergent perspective of an excluded group (Porat, 2004). Writing on the topic of resistance, Edward Said (1993, p. 218) explained that resistance mobilizes political forces toward ‘restoration of community, assertion of identity, [and the] emergence of new cultural practices’. Unsurprisingly, as the process of oppression is never all-encompassing, practices of misrecognition and un-recognition are always resisted in a variety of sites, including schools, to reclaim the authenticity of the indigenous identity and knowledge, amplify its voice and empower its agency for social change (Dei & Kempf, 2006; Peters, 2009).

Promising as it might be, successful oppositional politics is not an easy task to accomplish, especially in education. As schools often do not recognize and include—
rather than deny and marginalize—the cultural identities and differences of children, one of the major challenges of oppositional politics within education remains overcoming the natural tendency to overlook ethnic and cultural diversity and complexity (Kamat & Mathew, 2010; Power & Frandji, 2010).

Drawing on Freire (1970), critical pedagogy theorists have proposed many frameworks to incorporate ‘border crossing’ pedagogies (Giroux, 1992) and ‘oppositional politics’ (McLaren, 1995) in schools, in order to meet such challenges. Yet, for the purpose of this article, the framework of interruptive democracy in education, proposed by Lynn Davies (2004, 2008), is of particular interest, as it purposefully engages with identity conflicts rather than avoiding them, using notions of dialogue and encounter in educational settings.

Specifically, Davies’ framework does so by teaching, in theory and practice, civic rights and responsibilities; thus, pupils are encouraged to behave as political actors who are aware of their rights and duties as responsible citizens. Additionally, this framework recommends that identity be handled in a secure pedagogical environment, in which it is possible for the pupils to engage critically with their identities. In such a supporting environment, pupils are able to reflect not only on familiar/safe issues within their ‘comfort zones’, but also disputed terrains of traditions and narratives. In Davies’ words, students would be enabled to discuss ‘exclusionary collective identities’ not only ‘overlapping or cooperative ones’ (Davies, 2008, p. 21). In parallel, schools are required to provide a wide berth within which students may deliberate in regards to identities in conflict. This means that pupils should be encouraged to reason their views and communicate their disagreements in public, while increasing their awareness of the importance of evidence, humor and creativity in mutual dialogue. Most importantly, Davies (2008) proposes to transform critical awareness into educational activism, as she advocates that educators should empower their pupils’ agency for democratic activism and social change, and provide venues in which the pupils’ experiences and abilities can be heard and exercised.

**Research context**

The Palestinian minority in Israel is an example of what Kymlicka distinguishes as a national minority that has acquired their minority status, involuntarily and often unwillingly, due to historical circumstances of colonization and territorial expansion, etc (Kymlicka, 1995). The 1948 war, known in Arabic as al-Nakba (The Catastrophe), and its aftermath, resulted in the dispossession and expulsion of the vast majority of the Palestinian people (Khalidi, 2010). The Palestinians who remained in the area that became the state of Israel were granted Israeli citizenship, and became a minority in the Jewish state that constitutes now approximately 20% of the total population in Israel in 2013 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Sami Mar’i (1978) describes the impact of al-Nakba on this distinct indigenous, national and linguistic minority in what follows:

The Arabs who remained within the boundaries of the newly created state of Israel can best be characterized as emotionally wounded, socially rural, politically lost, economically
poverty-stricken and nationally hurt. They suddenly became a minority ruled by a powerful, sophisticated majority against whom they fought to retain their country and land. It was an agonizing experience, for every family which remained had immediate relatives on the other side of the border. Arabs in Israel were left without political leadership and educated elite. (Mar'i, 1978, p. 18)

Against this traumatized community, the state of Israel employed various strategies of control and surveillance. For example, the minority was held under military rule until the late 1960s (Lustick, 1980). Generally speaking, these strategies enabled the Jewish majority to maintain the differential and hierarchical Israeli citizenship regime that privileges the Jewish majority (Shafi & Peled, 2002). This type of hierarchy constitutes the Jewish majority as an exclusive ethno-national polity, an ‘ethnocracy’ as Oren Yiftachel (2006) has aptly coined it. As an ethnocratic regime, Israel excludes its Palestinian citizens and treats them as merely an aggregate of individuals entitled to selective individual liberal rights, but deprived of collective rights of self-definition or collective claims over the nature and distribution of public goods in Israel.

Controlling the Arab education system that serves this minority is part and parcel of these hierarchical strategies, which include unequal allocation of state resources, lack of recognition of the Palestinian minority’s cultural needs and marginalization of the influence of Arab leadership on education policy (e.g., Al-Haj, 1995; Abu-Saad, 2004, 2006a; Abu-Asbe, 2007; Agbaria 2010, 2013). Despite the fact that Arab schools teach in Arabic, the literature mentioned above is consistent in observing the absence of recognition of the Palestinian collective identity. This lack of recognition is particularly salient in the school curricula and textbooks which were voided of any substantial engagement with Palestinian history and culture. All in all, Arab education was designed by the state to ‘instil feelings of self-disparagement and inferiority in Arab youth; to de-nationalize them, and particularly to de-Palestinize them; and to teach them to glorify the history, culture and achievements of the Jewish majority’ (Mar’i, 1978, p. 37).

Although the majority of schoolchildren in Israel are enrolled in the state education system, it does not provide any form of common education. In fact, the education system is divided into separate education sectors, each of which caters to the various different social groups in Israel. Jewish and Arab schoolchildren, as well as secular and religious Jews, attend different schools. Indeed, to a large extent, Israel’s state education system is segregated along the lines of nationality, religion and degree of religiosity. Yet, a common feature of the Israeli education system, as argued by Yossi Yonah (2005), is its commitment to function as a main carrier of the Zionist historiography, while disregarding the Palestinian narrative. More recently, relating to the attempts to stipulate a unified and comprehensive Israeli core curriculum, Markman and Yonah (2009), criticize these attempts for its thin democratic orientation and misrepresentation of the multicultural and multi-ethnic reality of Israel as a deeply divided society. These attempts, they asserted, serve the desirable character of the state as a Jewish state, thus ignoring the need for cultural recognition of the non-Jewish student population.

Specifically, the study of history and civics in Israel is rendered with full commitment to uphold the Jewishness of the state and its national ethos (e.g., Naveh & Yoge, 2002; Mathias, 2003; Mathias & Tsabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2004; Pinson, 2007a,
b; Kizel, 2008; Agbaria, 2010; Peled-Elhanan, 2012). Commenting on the historical development of the Israeli history curriculum, Goldberg (2013, p. 111) argues that the decade since the turn of the millennium has been ‘turbulent and inconsistent. New heritage projects sponsored by right-wing Ministers of Education have alternated with a curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, interpretation and multiple sources. The pendulum swung from expressive populist ethnocentrism to critical inquiry and diversity and back’. Yet, be it at the liberal or the conservative side, the ‘pendulum’ has been consistent in underscoring the Jewish nature of the state, in normalizing the ‘Jewish and democratic’ state political framework, and in marginalizing the inclusive ideal of Israel as a state for all of its citizens.

In this regard, proliferative governmental efforts are being made to preserve the Jewish identity of the state and advocate it as consensual by imposing a core curriculum that standardizes collective memory and, thus, affirms the Zionist definition of the state as ‘Jewish and democratic’ (Amara, 2006; Yonah, 2006). More recently, in 2009, for example, the Ministry of Education decided to remove the concept of the al-Nakba from Arab schools’ curriculum (Talmor & Yahav, 2009). It was decided, moreover, to recall Building a State in the Middle East, the first Israeli textbook to include the Palestinian claim of ethnic cleansing in 1948 (Kashti, 2009a). Commenting on the centrality of the principle of a ‘Jewish and democratic’ state in the Israeli education policy, Al-Haj (1998) argued that the Ministry of Education enforces a strategy of ‘controlled multiculturalism’, in which various groups are permitted to articulate their collective identities provided they do not flout that principle.

Consequently, the curricula for the subjects of history and civics have become fertile ground for political conflict in which the regulative and normative powers of the state collide with the counterforce of Arab civil society organizations (Agbaria, 2013). During the past two decades, as these organizations have been deeply involved in empowering the Palestinian minority vis-à-vis the state by promoting processes of mobility, development and democratization (Jamal, 2007, 2008), they have likewise become more proactive in mobilizing initiatives of politics of recognition in the education field (Agbaria, 2010, 2013). As politics become more divided, the economy more privatized and civil society more diverse, the central government’s capacity to impede minority mobilization for equality and recognition, including in the field of education, has considerably diminished (Haklai, 2011). Therefore, as Yossi Dahan and Yossi Yonah (2005) argue, having receded from the socio-economic spheres under neoliberal policies, the state subsequently seeks increased control over the cultural arena.

Against these efforts to render the hegemonic Israeli narrative as canonical and shared by all ethnic and cultural groups in Israel, efforts which were often devised without significant public deliberation or involvement of the Palestinian minority, counter and ‘insurgent discourses’ emerged to contest ‘the given symbols of authority’ (Bhabha, 2004, p. 277). These counter and anti-colonial discourses have become more prominent as the Palestinian civil society in Israel has become more proactive in linking civic equality to national recognition, placing more emphasis on the indigenousness status of Palestinian minority in Israel to justify demands for collective rights (Jamal, 2007, 2008). For Oded Haklai (2011), Palestinian political mobilization in Israel has moved from politics of inequality and grievance, to politics of recognition and belonging, becoming more ethno-nationalist and vociferous.
As insurgent discourse, *Identity and Belonging*, As’ad Ghanem (2006) asserts, is an act of resistance to ‘save the younger generation from the loss of national identity and from their negative assimilation into Israeli society... [and] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the colonialis... [at] to counter curricula aimed at the coloniais...
lov (2008, p. 194), citizenship education scholar, describes the chronicles of this programme in what follow:

The Ministry of Education commissioned a curricular committee chaired by Israeli Palestinian–Arab, Dr Kassem Darawsha, to replace an existing curriculum entitled 100 Zionist related concepts with a new curriculum 100 concepts of heritage, society and democracy for Arab state schools. Realizing that arriving at a common list of concepts for all state schools is highly unlikely, the Ministry issued three different lists of concepts, for Jews, Arab and Druze (a small national and religious minority).

The two sections on Zionism and democracy were to be taught identically to all pupils, including Arabs, while those in the religious heritage section were to be adapted and taught to pupils according to their sector. However, the section on Zionism was adapted for the Arab education system. Ironically, Arab pupils were expected to study and be tested on the history of Zionism in a sort of ‘light-Zionism’ tailored by policy makers within the Ministry of Education for the Arab sector (Abu-Saad, 2006b).

According to Political Scientist Yoav Peled (2006) the programme sparked considerable criticism in Israel. Overall, the debate—for example see media reports by Kashti (2007, 2008, 2009b) and Khromchenko (2005)—focused on the following interrelated three aspects:

1. The majority of the concepts related to Jewish and/or Zionist aspects pertaining to the pupils’ national identity, whereas only one third pertained to democracy and the students’ civic identity. Moreover, within the latter category were concepts such as anthem, the state symbol and the flag, which are directly associated with national identity, and are in fact correlated to the other two sections: national heritage and Zionism. Furthermore, for Jewish pupils, the heritage concepts were part and parcel of strengthening their national bond with the state and homeland; whereas for Arab pupils, heritage concepts overlooked current cultural and national aspects of their identity and focused instead on Arab folklore, and its historical and religious dimensions.

2. Use of excessively narrow and technical phrasing of concepts, while excluding other possible ideological connotations or controversial political implications (for instance, the attempt to account Israel’s wars in a manner which intentionally obfuscates their political consequences and significance).

3. Attempting to consolidate a set of dominant, canonical concepts without public deliberation or input. In essence, this attempt amounted to coercion of the cultural canon of a particular group on others—Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox Jews and Mizrahi Jews. Among the criticism raised, Peled (2006) points out that:

Clearly, the impression the Arab students are supposed to imbibe from this list of terms is that the Arabs have no common historical or cultural heritage, at least since the Middle Ages, and that most definitely no such heritage exists with regard to the Palestinian Arab people. (Peled, 2006, p. 1)

A research report released by the Knesset Research and Information Center reveals that the average score on the national exam on the concepts within the Zionism, heritage and democracy sections was 66 (Kashti, 2009b). Dissecting the results
according to population and exam section shows that the average score for Hebrew speakers was 67 for heritage, 55 for Zionism and 76 for democracy. Similarly poor results can be seen among the Arab speaking examinees as well, with average scores of 70 in heritage, 47 in Zionism and 66 in democracy (Vergan, 2007, p. 7). These scores indicate the programme’s profound failure to inculcate the concepts related to Zionism to both Arabs and Jews alike. Precisely the field in which the state sought to educate towards a particular nationalist identity was where most students failed. Whereas the heritage concepts relate directly to students’ identity, and those belonging to the democracy section are universal, the Zionism concepts are most closely associated with the State’s identity and historical narrative. It is our opinion that these results ultimately led the Ministry of Education to review whether or not to continue the programme, as well as to reconsider its policies for instilling national ideals in students in Israel (Kashti, 2009b).

Indeed, in 2007 it was decided to discontinue the 100 Concepts programme (Vergan, 2007, p. 7). The Ministry of Education justified its decision, remarking that the 100 Concepts programme was largely based on memorizing concepts, rather than teaching for understanding and seeking ways to establish a significant connection between the pupils and the texts they were studying. It was reported that the then-Minister of Education, Yuli Tamir, declared that the new programme ‘will bring the student closer to the ‘Jewish bookshelf’ through a meaningful discussion. The experimental and challenging learning method will help the student to develop a Jewish identity while learning the value of tolerance’ (Kashti, 2008). Similar to the way in which it was introduced, 100 Concepts was cancelled and a new programme suggested, with no regard to fact that more than 26% of the child population in Israel are Palestinians (Muslims, Christians and Druze) (Blass, 2012, p. 5).

‘Identity and Belonging: The Basic Concepts Project for Arab Pupils’

This programme was introduced by Arab civil society organizations in response to 100 Concepts. Ichilov (2008, p. 194) described this Palestinian response in what follows:

The new lexicon for Arabs [the 100 concepts programme] was heavily criticized by Israeli Palestinian Arabs. It was described as an attempt to present an orientalist–folkloristic image of Arab heritage, detached from Palestinian and Arab traditions and identity. The Ministry was accused of having a hidden agenda attempting to disconnect Israeli Palestinian Arabs from their land and heritage. An alternative list of concepts was developed and publicly introduced in 2005.

In fact, various different organizations external to the Ministry of Education devised alternative curricula in response to 100 Concepts. For example, The Gilo Center for Citizenship, Democracy and Civic Education distributed an Arabic pamphlet titled Civic Lexicon for Pupils in the Arab Education System in Israel, which was written in Arabic (Jamal, 2005).

However, the Identity and Belonging: The Basic Concepts Project for Arab Pupils (‘Hawiya W-Intimaa’ in Arabic), which included 99 concepts, was the main, alternate Arab language programme published and adopted by other organizations (e.g., the
Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education which is a public non-profit organization, under the auspices of the National Committee for Arab Mayors and the Supreme Follow-Up Committee for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, that represents the Arab public in its educational struggles). The choice of *Identity and Belonging* for the present paper was, therefore, for three reasons: the programme’s centrality, its contentious nature and the fact that all sponsors and authors work within Israel.

The main goal of *Identity and Belonging* was to pose an alternative narrative to that presented by *100 Concepts*, with an emphasis on the Palestinian historical narrative. According to its introduction:

"... the Palestinians in Israel are the last remains of the Palestinian people who suffered in the 1948 *al-Nakba*, and most of whom have become refugees in their own homeland. Palestinians make up a native group with their own historical narrative, which often contradicts that of the Jewish majority, especially with regard to the struggle for land, identity, and the definition of the identity and character of the state. (Ibn Khaldun Association, 2005, p. 5)"

For Ghanem (2006, p. 3), the *100 Concepts* programme ‘does not engage with Palestinian history or memory; rather, it is aimed at anchoring Jewish history and its symbols’. Therefore, he is convinced that ‘it is our duty to take a stand and formulate a responsible response to the forced obliteration of the history and struggle of the Palestinian people, and to the right of our children to know their history and cultural heritage’ (*ibid.*). Specifically, Ghanem details the following aims for the project:

(a) Raise the level of knowledge of the cultural icons, symbols and institutions of the Palestinian people; (b) Deepen and reinforce the link between our children and the Palestinian people’s history and struggle; (c) Create a dialogue with the Israeli authorities over the importance of our cultural characteristics and collective identity; (d) Expose the approach of Israel’s educational system, which endeavors to emphasize the ‘Jewishness’ of the state, to the exclusion of 20% of the citizens of the state. (Ghanem, 2006, p. 3)

Eighteen Arab intellectuals from various disciplines contributed to the composition of *Identity and Belonging*. In contrast to the Ministry of Education’s three-branched categorization, this programme’s 99 concepts were divided into five sections: historical events (19 concepts); places and sites (17); institutions (Palestinian, Zionist–Israeli and international) (26); outstanding figures (Palestinian and Zionist–Israeli) (27); and general values and symbols (10).

More than 60,000 copies of *Identity and Belonging* were distributed, with support from the al-Taawun Fund, a Palestinian foundation that supports cultural and educational curricula (Ghanem, 2006). Several other Arab political and educational organizations helped promote and distribute the programme. Among these was the National Committee of Arab Parents, which welcomed the initiative and defined its goals:

[To expose] pupils and future generations to the history and values that we are proud of, which bear testament to our being a creative people with rare talents and abilities, a people that is among the owners of this land not a foreigner in it, a people that endeavors to thwart attempts by the Ministry of Education to perpetrate a cultural, historical and even physical transfer of the Palestinian people residing in Israel. (Ibn Khaldun—The Arab Association for Research and Development, The Center for Combating Racism & the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, 2005)
Shawki Khatib, the then-chair of the Supreme Follow-Up Committee for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel endorsed the programme and took it under his patronage, emphasizing its importance as an alternative educational tool to that proposed by the Ministry of Education:

This project is the first step of many taken by the Follow-Up Committee as well as other institutions to help deepen and inculcate Nationalist Arab awareness amongst the younger generations. This is a counter measure to actions taken by Israeli authorities to cause young Palestinians in Israel to forget that they are an inseparable part of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation, and to turn them into Israelis with no national belonging. (Ibid.)

The publication and dissemination of *Identity and Belonging* generated strong animosity among the Jewish hard-liner politicians. The reaction of the leader of the Yisrael Beitenu party (lit. ‘Israel Is Our Home’), Avigdor Liberman, was particularly inimical: ‘This is a severe act of incitement and subversion against the pillars of the regime. Those responsible for the publication of this pamphlet should be seen as terrorists [emphasis added] in every respect’ (Inbari & Zelinger, 2005).

At the official level, the Ministry of Education issued a missive to the principals of all Arab schools prohibiting the use of the programme (Goldberg, 2013). Minister Livnat’s scathing response in the media unequivocally expresses the Ministry’s stance on the matter:

The Ministry of Education is the sole body authorized to distribute content in the education system. No other entity, including the Follow-Up Committee, has the authority to distribute any material whatsoever to the schools. As is evident from the content [of the pamphlet], this is an attempt to brainwash and incite pupils of schools in the Arab sector. I view this with great severity and will ask the Attorney General to determine whether the mere act of its publication is a violation of the law. Should a similar attempt be made to distribute [such material], the Ministry will employ all legal means at its disposal and every manner of enforcement available within a law-abiding country. (Inbari & Zelinger, 2005)

**Comparison between the two programmes’ curricula**

In this section of the paper we will present the concepts which appear in both curricula and undertake a comparative discussion of the two. First, we will present the concepts that appear in both programmes, but are defined differently in each programme. Second, we will present the concepts exclusive to each programme, i.e., those that appear in only one programme or the other.

**Similar concepts**

Close scrutiny of the concepts included in both programmes reveals that they relate to six major categories: historical figures, historical events, historical documents, institutions and organizations, national identity symbols, as well as policy and politics, as shown in Table 1.

The list of historical figures that appear in both programmes includes two of the founding fathers of Zionism, three Israeli prime ministers and two Christian Arabs.
(see Table 1): Theodor Herzl (widely considered as the founder of the State of Israel), Ze’ev Jabotinsky (widely considered as the founder of the nationalist Revisionist movement in Zionism), David Ben-Gurion (Israel’s first Prime Minister and main founder), Menachem Begin (Former Prime Minister of Israel, founded the right wing Likud party and signed a peace treaty with Egypt), Yitzhak Rabin (Fifth Prime Minister of Israel assassinated in 1995 after signing the Oslo Accords), Bishop Gregarious Hajjar (A Christian clerk widely known as Bishop of the Arabs for his pro-Arab positions during the British Mandate) and Emile Habibi (Palestinian novelist and a Member of the Israeli parliament on behalf of the communist party).

What is remarkable about this shared list is that all figures were born and active during the pre-state period. This inclination toward figures that witnessed the al-Nak-

| Table 1. Similar concepts: concepts which appear in both curricula |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| **Identity and Belonging** | **100 Concepts** |
| Historical figures | Bishop Gregorios Hajjar | Bishop Hajjar¹ |
| | Emile Habibi | Emile Habibi |
| | Theodor Herzl | Theodor Herzl |
| | Menachem Begin | Menachem Begin |
| | David Ben Gurion | David Ben Gurion |
| | Ze’ev Jabotinsky | Ze’ev Jabotinsky |
| | Yitzhak Rabin | Yitzhak Rabin |
| Sinai War 1956 | The Wars of Israel |
| The June 1967 War | |
| War of Attrition (1967–1970) | |
| Historical events | The October 1973 War | November 29, 1947 [The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine² |
| | 1982 Lebanon War | |
| | The Question of Palestine at the United Nations | |
| Historical documents | The Balfour Declaration | The Balfour Declaration |
| Institutions & organizations | Zionist military organizations | Military organizations prior to the establishment of the state |
| | The Jewish National Fund | National Institutions |
| | The Jewish Agency | |
| | The Histadrut | |
| | The Knesset | Knesset |
| | The Executive Branch: The Israeli Government | Government |
| | Israel Supreme Court | Supreme Court of Justice |
| National identity symbols | Menorah | State symbol |
| Policy and politics | Democracy | Democracy |
| | National minority | Minorities |
| | Discrimination | Racism |
| | Separation of powers | Separation of powers |

Notes: (1) Names are brought exactly as they appear in the each respective programme: full names in the table indicate that the full name appeared as such in the programme as well, and vice versa. (2) Brackets indicate the authors’ own additions or clarifications.
ba and its aftermaths, excluding Bishop Hajjar, highlights the struggle to mould the collective memory of the pupils, as each figure is defined differently in the two programmes. For example, in the *100 Concepts* programme, Emile Habibi is presented as an Arab–Israeli author and the 1992 recipient of the Israel Prize in Literature. The definition in *Identity and Belonging*, however, describes Habibi as a Palestinian author and the 1990 recipient of the Al Quds Prize for Palestinian Culture, who was later awarded the Israel Prize as well.

As for the five Zionist leaders who appear in both programmes, the general bibliographic information on them is virtually identical, although each programme places different emphases. In *Belonging and Identity*, a capsule biography of each leader is presented and followed by a critical commentary on their devastating role in Palestinian history, from the Palestinian perspective. David Ben-Gurion is designated as the main mastermind behind the transfer of 1948, and as having ‘personally oversaw the expulsion of Palestinians… and called for the Judaization of the Galilee and the Negev’ (*ibid.*, p. 64). Yitzchak Rabin is presented as responsible for the mass expulsion from the Palestinian towns of Lod and Ramle; Menahem Begin is portrayed as the head of a terrorist organization and wanted by the British mandatory authorities. In contrast, *100 Concepts* emphasizes the efforts of these figures in the building of Israel as a Jewish state, while ignoring their engagement with the Arab–Israeli conflict. For example, Ben-Gurion is described as:

[The] architect and founder of the state of Israel and the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), Ben-Gurion established Israel’s military and economic power, and shaped the country’s image during its early stages. His nationalistic attitude is evident for instance in his approach to the IDF as an army of all its people—secular and religious alike—as well as in his advocacy for the legislation of the State Education Law. Due to his initiatives, immigration was extensive despite the many hardships prevalent in the first decade of Israel’s existence. (Ministry of Education, 2003)

On the whole, The Ministry of Education’s programme emphasized the pre-state role of these historical figures and organizations in founding the state of Israel, and their contribution in shaping Jewish national identity. The definitions of these terms reassert the Jewish–Zionist historical narrative without any form of reflection or criticism. Specifically, the programme ignores any possibility of a Palestinian narrative or experience, overlooking even the consequences of these figures’ and institutions’ course of actions on the Palestinians. Conversely, *Identity and Belonging* presents these same concepts in order to promote the Palestinian narrative. To do so, it highlights the negative impact of the same Jewish figures and organizations on the Palestinians. This is most evident in how founding documents were introduced in accordance with the rival political objectives of the authors. For example, The Balfour Declaration is described in the Ministry of Education’s *100 Concepts* in a dry, informative manner:

The Balfour Declaration is a proclamation by the British government, stating its willingness to assist in the establishment of a national homeland for the Jews in the Land of Israel (issued on November 2, 1917). This declaration was the result of negotiations between Jewish Zionists in Britain, led by Dr Chaim Weizmann, and received the consent of the major powers. (Ministry of Education, 2003)
In sharp contrast to this, the definition for the Balfour Declaration in *Identity and Belonging* is contentious and politically charged:

The Jews view this declaration as one of the important stages in their efforts to seize control of Palestine. The Palestinians call it ‘the accursed promise’ and see it as the first step in a process that led to their al-Nakba in 1948 and as proof of collusion between Britain and the Zionists against the Palestinians. (Ibn Khaldun Association, 2005, p. 8)

Yet, it is not only the definitions that differ but also the disparate naming of the same set of historical occurrences. For example, despite referring to the same events in 1948, *Identity and Belongings* uses the word ‘al-Nakba’ of 1948, while the *100 Concepts* programme uses the phrase ‘War of Independence’, which is defined as follows:

The War of Independence, also called the War of Liberation, began on November 30, 1947, the day after the United Nation resolution to partition the Land of Israel into two states. The Arab inhabitants launched a war against the Jewish residents. On... May 15, 1948, at the termination of the British mandate and the proclamation of the State of Israel, the military forces of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon invaded it, thereby opening the second phase of the war. At the end of the war, cease-fire agreements were signed with the combatant states, with the exception of Iraq. (Ministry of Education, 2003)

In contrast, the definition of al-Nakba in *Identity and Belonging* reads:

Palestinians use this term to refer to their expulsion and the destruction of most of the elements of their society, economy and culture in 1948... when they were deported and lost their homeland due to the establishment of the Jewish state—the State of Israel. The al-Nakba events include the occupation of the majority of Palestinian territories by the Zionist movement and the expulsion of approximately 750,000 Palestinians, making them refugees. These events also include dozens of massacres and atrocities perpetrated against Palestinians and the demolition of approximately 500 Palestinian villages and towns, which were turned into Jewish cities. This was in addition to... the attempt to destroy the Palestinian identity and wipe out Arab toponyms and replace them with Hebrew names, thereby destroying the character of the original Arab land through an attempt to create an unnatural, European landscape. (Ibn Khaldun—The Arab Association for Research and Development, The Center for Combating Racism & the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, 2005, p. 11)

In *Identity and Belonging* the al-Nakba of 1948 is designated an independent concept, while the War of Independence is presented in the *100 Concepts* programme under a more broad-spectrum concept: the ‘Wars of Israel’. This emphasis on the events of 1948 is typical to *Identity and Belonging*, as it incorporates several concepts to describe and their aftermaths, including massacres and the 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt, which do not appear in the Ministry of Education programme. These additions, as we will explain later, underscore the importance of al-Nakba as a critical turning point in the history of the Palestinians.

Noticeably, the shared list of historical events is minimal, to say the least: only two of these exist. Of which, one relates directly to the events of 1948: The United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine on 29 November 1947, and the other concerns the wars of Israel. Here, the *100 Concepts* programme suggests a general framing of the ‘Wars of Israel’, under which the programme goes on to describe each war in particular. The names of these are presented as subheadings. Conversely, *Identity and Belong-
ing discusses these wars independently under exclusive concepts, using names that
differ from the individual names provided by the 100 Concepts programme. Appar-
ently the generalized and all-compelling concept of ‘Wars of Israel’ is offered as a way
to avoid the controversies and debates surrounding some of these wars within the Jew-
ish community itself in Israel (e.g., the June 1967 War and the 1982 Lebanon War).
As mentioned earlier, Identity and Belonging provides detailed accounts of these wars.

Notably, this approach is reversed when it comes to the Zionist military organiza-
tions. Identity and Belonging regards these organizations as one single entity and
emphasizes their reliance on terrorism and violence to realize their goals. The Minis-
try of Education’s programme, on the other hand, differentiates between their politi-
cal orientations and describes each one separately, while delineating each
organization contribution to the formation of the state.

Even when it comes to what seems as a safe and de-politicized ground each pro-
gramme suggest a different emphasis. More specifically, as both programmes include
similar terms associated with Israeli institutions (e.g., Government, Knesset [the uni-
cameral national legislature of Israel] and Israel’s Supreme Court of Justice), each
programme defines these in accordance with its own political objectives and in line
with its ideological perspective. In 100 Concepts, these are introduced through particu-
laristic definitions that underscore the Zionist narrative and normalize the definition
of Israel as a Jewish state therein. On the contrary, Identity and Belonging defines these
terms from a Palestinian perspective. For example, the role and place of the Knesset
within the Israeli political system reads as follows: ‘the Knesset has passed many racist
laws which discriminate Arab citizens on the background of their nationality. Such
laws include: the Citizenship Law, the Absentee Property Law and the Planning and
Construction Law’ (Ibn Khaldun—The Arab Association for Research and Develop-
ment, The Center for Combating Racism & the National Committee for the Heads of
the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, 2005, p. 41).

Similar to the 100 Concepts programme, Identity and Belonging also enlists general
political terms; yet, these are often presented in a generalized and theoretical wording
that is de-contextualized from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. For example, democ-
racy and separation of powers appear as abstract concepts detached from their spe-
cific relevance and their implications to the status of the Palestinian in Israel or to the
characteristics of the Israeli political regime. Even the one and only shared national
identity symbol, the Menorah (the Jewish seven-branched candelabrum), is presented
in both programmes with different emphases. In 100 Concepts, it is presented as the
state symbol, while in Identity and Belonging it is introduced with more emphasis on
its religious character, though still in relation to the identity of Israel as a Jewish state.

Different concepts

The different concepts that appear in only one of the two programmes can be usefully
divided into nine major categories: historical figures, historical events, historical doc-
uments, institutions and organizations, religion-related concepts, cultural practices
and values, national identity symbols, policy and politics, and sites and locations, as
shown in Table 2.
Evidently, most concepts do not appear in both curricula. Belonging and Identity presents concepts essential to the national Palestinian narrative which are absent in 100 Concepts (see Table 2). Both curricula include the key figures responsible for shaping the cultural and political awareness of both peoples. The focus of Identity and Belonging is on Palestinians important to their general history as well as to their culture and identity as Palestinian minority in Israel, such as politicians, authors, artists, philosophers from the time of, and subsequent to, the British Mandate. The inventory of important historical figures include Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini (leader of the Palestinians in Mandatory Palestine), Yasser Arafat (Palestinian leader and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) who signed the Oslo Accords with the Israeli government), Ahmad Yassin (founder of Hamas, a major Islamist Palestinian organization).

Identity and Belonging places a heavy emphasis on the inclusion of intellectuals and literary figures (Khalil al-Sakakini, Asaf Nashashibi, Ibrahim Touqan, Abd al-Karim abu-Salma, Noah Ibrahim, Samira Azzam, Akram Zuaitar, Ghassan Kanafani, Naji al-Ali, Tawfiq Ziad and Edward Said). The effect of this emphasis is that it helps establish a significant connection between the Palestinian minority in Israel and the rest of the Palestinian people elsewhere, and present an uninterrupted cultural continuity between the Palestinian minority in Israel and the history of Palestinian people in Israel prior to statehood. The majority of these are historical figures who had witnessed the al-Nakba and are widely considered as seminal to Palestinian culture, some even prior to 1948. The inclusion of Tawfiq Ziad (poet and member of the Israeli parliament and mayor of Nazareth), Bulus Farah (historian) and Rashid Hussein (poet) is of particular interest, as both lived and worked in Israel, accepting, de facto, their status as Israeli citizens. Their inclusion provides a sense of continuity, though the vast majority of the Palestinians included are non-Israeli citizens. This attempt to demonstrate continuity and completeness with the Palestinian people as one whole nation is also reflected in concepts that relate to historical documents, including the United Nations Security Council Resolution #242, which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in 1967.

Gamal Abdel Nasser (president of Egypt) and Izz ad-Din al-Qassam (Syrian Muslim preacher who led military activities during the British mandate) were the only non-Palestinian Arab political leaders included in Identity and Belonging. Therein, Gamal Abd al-Nasser is depicted as having had significant influence on Palestinian history and the national identity of the Arabs in Israel during the period of the military government in the fifties and sixties. Izz ad-Din al-Qassam was included for his part in the anti-Zionist and anti-British resistance.

The inventory of events in Identity and Belonging is both nationalized and localized as it pertains entirely to the Palestinian history of al-Nakba and at the same time relates directly to the specific political developments within the Palestinian minority in Israel. It combines general Palestinian terms such as: the First Intifada, the Second Intifada and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Palestinian flag and keffiyeh (traditional Palestinian headdress), along with more context specific terms such as Land Day (an annual day for the Palestinians in Israel on March 30 to commemorate the events of that date in 1976 in which Palestinian Israeli citizens were killed as they protested against the Israeli government’s plan to expropriate thousands of acres.

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Table 2. Different concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity and Belonging</th>
<th>100 Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliezer Ben-Yehuda; Eli Cohen; Baron Edmond James de Rothschild; Hannah Szenes; Hayim Nahman Bialik; Chaim Weizmann; Sarah Aaronsohn; Shmuel Agnon; Abdul Aziz Zuabi; Henrietta Szold; Ibn Khaldoun; Ibn Rushd [Averroes]; Ibn Sina [Avicenna]</td>
<td>Ahmad Yassin; Edward Said; Asaf Nashashibi; Akram Zuaier; Mufti Haj Amin Al-Husseini; Abu-Salma [Abd al-Karim al-Karmil]; Ahmad Shukeiri; Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam; Abdel Rahim Mahmoud; Noah Ibrahim; Ibrahim Touqan; Bulus Farah; Tawfiq Ziad; Gamal Abdel Nasser; Khalil al-Sakakini; Rashid Hussain; Samira Azzam; Ghassan Kanafani; Najj al-Ali; Yasser Arafat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower and stockade; the Eichmann trial; forms of settlement; pre-state immigrations; post-state immigrations</td>
<td>The Battle of Hattin [Took place in 1187, between Saladin the Crusader forces]; The 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt; The Holocaust; The 1948 Nakba; Battle of Karameh; Black September; Land Day (March 30); First Palestinian Intifada (1987–1993); The Second Palestinian Intifada [Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Intifada]; Massacres; Oslo Accords; Or Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical documents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions &amp; organizations</td>
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</table>
Table 2. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity and Belonging</th>
<th>100 Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion-related concepts</td>
<td>People of the Book [monotheistic religions]; The Hijari Calendar; The Doctrine of the Trinity; Eid al-Fitr [Feast of Breaking the Fast]; Eid al-Adha [Feast of the Sacrifice]; The New Testament; Halakha [Jewish Biblical Law]; Jahiliyyah [pre-Islamic Arab]; Christmas; Al-Astaskaa [Prayer for rain in drought]; Bishop; Mosque; Church; Muezzin [Islamic Call for Prayer]; The Quran; Pilgrimage; The Khalifa [caliphate]; Hadith [the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural practices and values</td>
<td>Folklore; the tent; Arab markets; Al-Maruaa [kindness and love for your fellow man]; Mu’allaqat [Poetry composed prior to Islam]; Musha’at [a genre of poetry]; Oratory; Al-Jaha [ad-hoc groups with high profile people who gather to reconcile rival parties and show respect in local events (quarrels, weddings, etc)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National identity symbols</td>
<td>Flag [of Israel]; anthem [of Israel] Palestinian flag; Keffiyeh; Cana’an (the ancient name of Palestine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and politics</td>
<td>Jewish and democratic state; civil society; coalition and opposition; pluralism; freedom; poverty line; humanism; communications and media; elections; reconciliation; tolerance; social contract; equality; human dignity; national health law; state education law Right to self-determination; the Right to Return; colonialism; demonstration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites and locations</td>
<td>Haifa; Akka [Acre]; Ghaza [Gaza]; unrecognized villages; uprooted villages; racist separation fence; Palestine; Jerusalem; Yafa [Jaffa]; al-Khalil [Hebron]; Bissan [Beit She’an]; Ber al-Sabaa [Be’er Sheva]; Palestinian refugee camps; the Al-Aqsa Mosque; Church of the Nativity [last two concepts are religious sites]</td>
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of land for security and settlement purposes in the northern region), the Or Commission (a panel of inquiry appointed by the Israeli government to investigate the events of October 2000 in which 12 Palestinian Israeli citizens were killed by Israeli police) and the Supreme Follow-Up Committee for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel.

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The emphasis on the specific context of the Palestinian minority in Israel is also evident in the symbols as these include unrecognized villages (Palestinian residential communities in the Negev and the Galilee which the Israeli government does not recognize as legal) and the uprooted villages (Palestinian villages which were destroyed and their communities displaced in Israel during al-Nakba). This emphasis is furthered stressed in *Identity and Belonging*, as it relates to terms derived from the modern Israeli history, such as Peace Movements and The Black Panthers.

For the most part, historical figures, events and institutions which appear on the list of terms in *100 Concepts* do not appear in the list offered by *Identity and Belonging*. The *100 Concepts* includes concepts that are heavily Jewish and Zionist oriented, such as pre-state immigrations, post-state immigrations (Jewish immigration to Israel) and the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Specifically, the list of historical figures include the names of Chaim Weizmann (first President of the State of Israel), Baron Rothschild (leading proponent of the Zionist movement, financing some of the first settlements during the pre-state period), Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (widely considered the driving force behind the revival of modern Hebrew), Henrietta Szold (founder of the Hadassah Women's Organization). Ironically, this list included two famous Israeli spies - Sarah Aaronsohn (a member of a group of Jewish spies working for the British in World War I) and Eli Cohen (Israeli spy in Syria). On the whole, the vast majority of these figures are considered seminal figures in the history of Zionism and its development as a political movement.

Noticeably, the *100 Concepts* include Abd al-Azie Zuabi, a more conventional Arab figure, who does not appear in *Identity and Belonging*. Zuabi was an Arab activist in the first few decades after the state of Israel was founded, and one of the leaders of the Arab list affiliated with left-wing party Mapai. His inclusion in the Ministry of Education's programme indicates the type of leadership the Ministry encourages students to recognize: pragmatic leaders who have reconciled with their secondary status in the country and the existence of Israel as a Jewish–Democratic state.

Two categories of concepts that are included in *100 Concepts* do not appear in *Identity and Belonging*: religion-related concepts and cultural practices and values. The concepts in both these categories relate to various aspects of the religions and traditions among the Palestinians in Israel. Yet, they are voided of any collective meaning or particular affinity with their socio-political status and modern living conditions. Some of these concepts are articulated in very general terms that could fit anywhere, anytime and with no particular relevance to the Palestinians in Israel, such as the universal value of Al-Marwa'a, the poetry of Mu‘allaqat and Musha‘at. In this regard, geography seems more important in *Identity and Belonging* than culture, as it includes many concepts that relate to specific locations and sites, referring to them with their original indigenous Palestinian names, for example, Akka (Acre), al-Khalil (Hebron) and Bissan (Beit She’an). Ironically, *100 Concepts*, despite its emphasis on religion, did not include two of the most important religious sites for the Palestinians, The Al-Aqsa Mosque and Church of the Nativity. Both are included in *Identity and Belonging* as part of its attempt to retrieve the Palestinian collective memory and foreground a connection with the Palestinian historical landscape.
Discussion

Generally speaking, both programmes adhere to the same structure, as both pivot around three central axes: political history, civics and tradition. Both tell the historical narrative of their national identity, explain the fundamentals of citizenship in a democratic regime, and introduce traditional customs and cultural symbols. Nonetheless, distinguishable are both the state’s attempt to inflict a political Zionist identity on all pupils in Israel, and the Palestinian minority civil society organizations’ efforts to resist this coercion by countering it with a separate and independent narrative.

Whereas the Ministry of Education constructed an official narrative and imposed it in a top-down manner using the state enforcement apparatus of the education system, Palestinian civil society organizations constructed a counter narrative and disseminated it in bottom-up manner through alternative local channels.

In this sense, the two curricula represent two models of political education for belonging. The first model is a compulsory nationalizing model which is asserted by the state as official knowledge. The second is a bottom-up model that resists the official knowledge by providing Palestinian pupils in Israel with alternative regime of representations that serves to decolonize the hegemonic discourse and provide educational resources for national recognition. In this model, Palestinian civil society organizations position themselves as a political actor who assumes responsibility for the presentification of the Palestinian narrative in the field of civic and political education.

Despite the opposite approaches of these two models, their goal was identical: to monopolize the past and its interpretation. For us, it seems that neither programme attempts to record or teach history ‘as is’, if such a thing indeed exists; instead, they seek to mould the collective political memory of the pupils. As opposed to documenting events or critically imparting and discursively reflecting on historical knowledge, both endeavors are essentially narratological in nature. As such, they reflect the political struggle over the narrative of the political identity of the Palestinians in Israel and who is entitled to tell it.

In doing so, it seems that both curricula involved similar actions of filtering, interpretation and dissemination (Lebel, 2007). Namely, events and figures were selected, filtered if you will, based on their potential capacity to faithfully serve and present the hegemonic narrative. Thereupon, they were interpreted and imbued with selected ‘facts’ that would present the reader with a coherent plot (White, 1978) and construct a congruent narrative that is derived from the authors’ political objectives. For example, *Identity and Belonging* underscores the oppressive aspects of the Zionist movement, whereas *100 Concepts* emphasizes its role in the national renewal of the Jewish people. As for dissemination, both programmes employed top-down methods. However, *Identity and Belonging* relied mainly on informal means through voluntary groups and civil society initiatives, whereas *100 Concepts* made use of a variety of formal methods, regulating it through the general bulletins distributed by the Ministry of Education director and inserting it into the school curriculum as a mandatory subject.

As both programmes suggest rival narratives that relate to formative periods, historical events and key historical figures in the history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, each programme populates its narrative with different concepts that emphasize the
distinctiveness of the particular narrative and nationalize it in service of constructing a collective and coherent national identity. Thus, these narratoalogical devices attempt to legitimize the moral and political claims raised to grant each specific identity rights of recognition and self-determination.

Specifically, the 100 Concepts programme conveys two complementary narratives: political and cultural. Whereas the first is allegedly shared by all pupils and reflects the common political canon of the Israeli history, the second supposedly espouses the cultural identity of the different groups, be it Jews or Arabs. The former narrative is constructed through a group of concepts that are virtually identical for Jews and Arabs, barring the inclusion of two additional concepts in the Arab version: former Arab Members of Knesset (MKs) Emile Habibi and Abd al-'Aziz Zuabi. This group of supposedly shared concepts was meant to give the impression that Arab pupils are indeed integrated into a common Israeli citizenship, yet it is undoubtedly dominated by concepts that strongly reflect and present the Jewish–Zionist perspective.

As for the cultural narrative, which is basically demonstrated through the concepts pertaining to tradition, the concepts intended for Jewish pupils designate a coherent ethno-national narrative that is congruent with their national identity. In other words, the concepts that relate to culture and tradition were nationalized and employed in service of the political story of Zionism, providing it with more layers, depth, continuity and consolidation. Conversely, the bulk of those intended for the Arab pupils are abstracted, ahistorical and apolitical. These concepts depict an obsolete and fragmented cultural narrative that is detached from the political story of the collective Palestinian identity. In doing so, they contribute to the production of a fractured political discourse, in which the Palestinian pupil is de-Palestinized as an ‘Israeli Arab’ who is placidly at peace with his or her inferior civic and national status and reconciled with the Zionist and Jewish nature of the state (Bishara, 1996).

Therefore, the concepts of both the political and cultural narratives present the Arab students with two competing and distorted images of their national identity. The first illustrates Arab pupils as morally and historically integrated into the ethno-national narrative of the Zionist movement and state. In the second, the cultural narrative depicts an anachronistic, folkloric and nostalgic traditional identity lacking Palestinian nationalist and cultural facets. Both images of the 100 Concepts programme deny Palestinian pupils’ right for a cohesive national identity, similar to that granted to the Jewish pupils in Israel.

Unsurprisingly, Identity and Belonging included many more terms pertaining to the national cultural identity of the Arab students from a Palestinian perspective, and fewer which dealt with their Israeli citizenship or religious heritage. Noticeably, none of the concepts related to Islamic religion and history, ancient or modern, focusing instead on the modern Palestinian national movement’s secular narrative. Consequently, the programme was fiercely criticized by the Islamic movement in Israel, and castigated by its leadership for deliberately neglecting the religious and Islamic facets of Palestinian identity in Israel in favor of secular nationalist discourse (Moufeed, 2005). For comparison’s sake, almost a third of the heritage terms in 100 Concepts relate to religion and Islamic cultural heritage, such as mosque, synagogue, muezzin, Ibn Rushd (an Islamic philosopher), Ibn Khaldun (an Islamic historian), pilgrimage and the Jahaliyya period (pre-Islamic period). In contrast, Identity and Belonging con-
centrates on the last century of Palestinian history and events associated with the contemporary history of the Arabs in Israel, such as Arab political parties and movements in Israel, Land Day and the Or Commission.\(^3\) Thus, the particular choice of terms included reveals the intent to underscore the a-religious and nationalist concepts, and connect the history of Arabs in Israel to their national Palestinian history (Ghanem, 2006).

As previously mentioned, \textit{Identity and Politics}, too, defined many political terms (e.g., democracy, national minority, discrimination and right to self-determination), in an abstracted and generalized manner, de-contextualized from the specifics of the Israeli political regime or the Israeli–Palestinian framework. As such, the strategy adopted by \textit{Identity and Belonging} toward the concepts that relate to Israeli citizenship and political regime is to present a universal angle and exclude Zionist interpretations of the significance and relevance of these concepts. Yet the very inclusion of concepts such as colonialism and discrimination, despite the neutral wording and universal orientation, entails a tacit approach that encourages Palestinian educators and pupils to consider these concepts precisely as being of particular significance within the Israeli–Palestinian context.

Both the similar and the different concepts, we will argue in the following section, mark a common ground between the two programmes. Un-agreed upon, even highly disputed, the two programmes exist in a dialogue, apparent and tacit, that eventually demarcates the boundaries of the debate between the two narratives and establishes an area of ambiguity, in which resistance and dialogue coexist and a new embryonic Palestinian–Israeli identity emerges.

\section*{Concluding thoughts}

In what follows, we propose two observations regarding the nature of dialogue and contestation entailed in \textit{Identity and Belonging} and present concluding thoughts regarding the need to approach national identities discursively in the education field.

Firstly, the two curricula inventories are not only political, but also dialogical, as each inherently constructs an imagined political ‘other’. Inasmuch as there is a collective ‘we’ being created in both programmes, there is a collective ‘they’ that is standardized as the ‘other’. Understanding that ‘othering’ is a dialectical process through which the colonizing other is established at the same time as its colonized others are produced as subjects (Ashcroft \textit{et al.}, 2000, pp. 165–185), we believe that \textit{Identity and Belonging} exemplifies the dialogical character of being political, as it reworks, reinterprets and appropriates some of the major topics included in the official programme (see more on ‘othering’ and ‘appropriation’ in Ashcroft \textit{et al.}, 2000, pp. 15–17).

Adopting the same format—a list of standardized terms—as a didactic tool for teaching civics and history, and seeking to influence the same reality and audience that the dominant discourse of the \textit{100 Concepts} endeavours to mould, to great extent the counter-knowledge of \textit{Identity and Belonging} appropriates the state’s official knowledge to gain political legitimacy and professional credibility. Hypothetically, the authors of \textit{Identity and Belonging} could have selected different concepts altogether, yet they chose instead to dispute many of those already included in the Ministry of Education’s programme. In doing so, \textit{Identity and Belonging} comprises a form of crea-
tive bricolage, in which concepts from the narrative of the ‘other’ is borrowed—indeed weaved—into the Palestinian perspective, even as it categorically counters the Zionist narrative. Thus, in a sense, even a minority canon consciously assembled to serve as an alternative seems incapable of complete independence vis-à-vis the dominant canon of the majority. *Identity and Belonging* inadvertently reproduces the nationalistic nature of the *100 Concepts* programme; it belies an attempt to enforce one exclusive standard, rather than embrace multiple narratives, and to promote a nationalistic narrative that acknowledges the ‘other’ only as dominating and antagonizing. Focusing inward, *Identity and Belonging* certainly constructs an independent historical canon, in which the ‘other’ is critically echoed and contrasted.

Admittedly, *Identity and Belonging* has no intention of persuading the ‘other’ to concede its interpretation of the official narrative, nor of creating a shared canon. As such, it does not reflect any ambition for a direct dialogue; however, it indubitably implants a potential for inward-directed dialogue with, or in response to, an internalized Other (Bakhtin, 1984). Hence, the dialectic relationship between the two curricula reminds us that the conflict with the Zionist movement is integral to moulding the Palestinian national identity (Khalidi, 2010). Woefully, by denying the legitimacy of the story of the ‘other,’ the Zionist movement, and subsequently the Palestinian national movement, have created a platform for structuring collective identity, presenting political demands and providing an interpretive framework for practices of both colonization and resistance (Agbaria & Mustafa, 2012).

Secondly, but related to the first point, the two curricula are geared as pedagogies of social engineering of the collective memory of the pupils, Palestinians and Jews alike. Yet, *Identity and Belonging* represents an act of intentional rupture from, and resistance against, the ongoing educational policy and practices which preserve Jewish hegemony. As such, the programme entails a strong expression of agency that assumes responsibility and commitment for social change. This agency, however, is interlocked in a complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between dominant and subordinated groups. Indeed, one could best describe this relationship as ambivalent, because, as suggested by Bhabha (2004), the colonized subject is never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer, but rather fluctuates between compliance and resistance. This ambivalence characterizes the selection of concepts in the *Identity and Belonging*, which incorporates figures, events and institutions that are directly associated with Israeli historiography, and adopts a similar mood of representation through standardized concepts.

Yet, dialogical as it is, the capacity of *Identity and Belonging* for confrontation, not only compliance and appropriation, remains high, as it directly challenges the laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education and its official knowledge. Confronting the authority of the Ministry of Education in such a way, at such a scale, and within the most natural sites of influence—the schools themselves—constructs the Palestinians in Israel as activist citizens who seek to expand their rights of recognition into the field of education. According to Engin F. Isin (2009, p. 368) construction of otherness, rupture and struggle for justice are basic characteristics of acts of citizenship.

In this way, *Identity and Belonging* is a citizenship act that challenges ‘the extent (rules and norms of exclusion and inclusion), content (rights and responsibilities) and depth (thickness or thinness of belonging)’ (*ibid.*, p. 37) of Israeli citizenship by © 2014 British Educational Research Association
presenting a counter-narrative permeated with political, moral and socio-political claims. Ultimately, these claims constitute the Palestinian minority in Israel as an independent political actor in both the Palestinian and Israeli arenas. Therefore, this initiative presents a symbolic challenge, which exposes the fragility of the double marginality of the Palestinians in Israel by reconstructing an integrative meaning of being part of both Israel and the Palestinian people (Al-Haj, 1997). Dan Rabinowitz (2001) describes this political status of being marginalized by the Jewish majority on one side, and the majority of non-Israeli Palestinians on the other, as one of ‘trapped minority’. Thus, the struggle of the Palestinian minority in Israel is not only over the symbolic resources of the state, but also over the collective memory of the Palestinian minority and its cultural character, independence and continuity as part of the Palestinian People.

In the general Palestinian context, the narrative of Identity and Belonging competes with two discourses: that of the Palestinian National Authority, which does not offer Palestinians in Israel any viable political models or cultural arrangements that they could join and be part of, and that of the Islamic movement (Hamas and Islamic Jihad), which denies the Palestinians in Israel of any opportunity to ideologically and politically incorporate their Israeli citizenship in the making of the political and cultural future of the Palestinian people. In the particular context of the Palestinian minority, the initiative of Identity and Belonging reflects the struggle of the Palestinian elites in the realm of civil society to shape a Palestinian collective identity that is predominately modern, nationalist and secular. This objective is made apparent by the emphasis placed on Palestinian and pan-Arab content, the presence of critical concepts borrowed from Western and post-colonial thought, and the absence of concepts related to cultural and religious sub-divisions and identities within Palestinian society in Israel.

These secular elites, one should bear in mind, are persistently challenged by other political forces within the Palestinian minority in Israel, especially those identified with the political Islam movements. For example, these movements do not seek to negotiate the boundaries or essence of Israeli citizenship, focusing their political activism instead on founding self-reliant communal institutions, cultivating a transnational Muslim identity, and calling for establishing an Islamic caliphate (Abu Raiya, 2005; Ali, 2007).

Hence, Identity and Belonging should be considered a political act undertaken in order to distinguish the Palestinian minority in Israel from the Israeli–Jewish majority in Israel on the one hand, and the majority of the rest of the Palestinian people, on the other, by proposing a distinct narrative. Congruently, the programme also associates this minority with both of these majorities. This distinct narrative is achieved by combining some concepts that relate to the general Palestinian history and others that pertain specifically to history of the Palestinians in Israel and their status as citizens of Israel. Together, both types of concepts offer an alternative, counter knowledge, to the ‘Israeli’ and ‘Palestinian’ official narratives.

Because the practice of standardizing and universalizing cultural knowledge is potentially oppressive, due to the risk of unjust practices of misrecognition, it seems that the stakes in the making of collective identities remain high especially in the education field. For example, in the context of struggles for recognition by misrecognized
identity groups, Fraser (2000) warns that an essentialist approach to, and emphasis on, national identity may ultimately instigate separatism: ‘stressing the need to elaborate and display an authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity, puts moral pressure on individual members to conform to a given group culture… and encourages separatism and group enclaves’ (pp. 112–113). With such an approach, the internal diversity of the Palestinian minority as well as the Jewish majority in Israel might be undermined, as the construction of a coherent collective identity with a congruent narrative might be insensitive of the internal religious, cultural or even regional complexities.

Also at stake is the mutual incapacity of the two curricula discussed here to offer a narrative that is multilayered, or multicultural, which could potentially be shared as an inclusive, civic culture for all citizens in Israel, Palestinians and Jews alike. In both political stories, the civic narrative, which emphasizes democratic values and practices, has been marginalized in favour of entrenching and expanding a canonical national narrative.

To counter such risks, education systems are being urged to enact transformative pedagogies of recognitive social justice that, as suggested by Gale (2000), can ensure respect of self-identification, opportunities for self-development and self-expression, and participation and representation in the cycles of decision making, for all different identity groups. More specifically, it seems imperative to maintain reflexive critical pedagogies that would enable educators and their pupils to approach identity presentations as located within state sponsored, yet contested, discursive practices and power/knowledge relations (McLaren, 1995). Accordingly, these practices are critically engaged with official and counter narratives of national identities (Davies, 2008), which are perceived as located within socially situated, yet contested, ‘regimes of representation’ (Hall, 1990, p. 225). Regimes of representation, Hall explains, are contained within discursive formations, and consequently within power/knowledge relations. Furthermore, they are both internal and external to one’s identity in that they allow individuals to make themselves recognizable, and to be recognized within communities.

For Stephen K. H. Peters (2009), these reflexive pedagogies are part and parcel of any attempt to decolonize educational knowledge and the production of transformative experience of schooling. They would enable educators and pupils to critically reexamine questions about identity, authority, marginalization and indignity (Dei & Kempf, 2006; Wane, 2008). Some scholars (e.g., Peters, 2009; Subedi & Daza, 2008; Wane, 2008; Simmons & Dei, 2012) argue that resistance and reassertion of identity are predicated not only on reaffirming indigenous knowledge and identities, but also on generating alternative regime of representation, which is essential to empowering the agency of subordinated groups and restoring their sense of community.

However, asserting one’s identity with alternative and counter discourses often involves disrupting the languages, symbols and other practices of representation through which power operates (McLaren, 1995). In this regard, Davies (2008) suggests the use of interruptive pedagogies of ‘in your face’ democracy that would facilitate what Allan Luke (1998) calls ‘the speaking and writing’ (p. 53) of those on the margins. For Luke, schools should approach identity formation discursively, allowing
for more spaces in which to empower the pupil’s agency and provide them with opportunities for critical inquiry (1998, 2008).

In this sense, the very existence of Identity and Belonging provides an excellent opportunity to engage educators and their pupils in Israel in ‘imaginative acts of scholarship’ (Peters, 2009, p. 6) that draw from a marginalized discourse, and with which they may reexamine the official knowledge that is entrenched as legitimate and valuable. However, because of the imbalance between the state and the civil society organizations’ ability to introduce curricular interventions, the responsibility of the state is all the greater to provide pupils with such an opportunity, beginning with equal access to educational resources for collective identity recognition. This may be feasible were the state to provide an accommodating political story of peoplehood that keeps the entry points for belonging to it wide open (Smith, 2003).

An example of such a story, one might argue, is a narrative defining Israel as a shared political community, or a shared homeland for the Palestinians and Jews in Israel, who both belong to different, larger communities: the Palestinians in Israel as a part of the Palestinian people and the Jews in Israel as part of the Jewish people. Yet, as long as the ‘nation’ in Israel is imagined as an ethno-cultural community that is distinct from the citizenry of the state (Brubaker, 2004), Israel will remain internally exclusive, as it defines its Palestinian citizens as outsiders.

NOTES

1 In referring to the minority of Palestinians in Israel the terms ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Arab’ are used interchangeably.
2 Although perhaps more accurately defined as ‘events’ or ‘themes’ as opposed to historical ‘concepts’ (set of second-order concepts used to promote critical thinking and inquiry), this article will nonetheless refer to them as ‘concepts’ in order to maintain consistency with the Israeli Ministry of Education and media who refers to them as such.
3 All the curriculum terms included were translated by the authors of this article.

References


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