

6. Research on Welfare and Well-being in Israel: A Palestinian Perspective



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This review essay focuses on the issues of social welfare and well-being for the Arab minority in Israel, a topic that has attracted minimal research during the first fifty years of Israeli statehood, despite its pressing importance. The books under review here are unique for their attention to the structural deficiencies and inequities that work to the detriment of Israel's Arab citizens, and for their authorship by Arab scholars. Based on their findings of institutional discrimination against Arabs in Israel and the wide gap between Arab and Jewish Israelis in the areas of education, social welfare, and psychological services, this essay argues that no positive change can be expected without national affirmative-action laws favoring the industrialization of Arab towns and a vigorous enforcement of antidiscrimination laws already on the books.

Al-Haj, Majid, *Education among the Arabs in Israel: Control and Social Change*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press/Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 1996 (In Hebrew: *Hinukh be-Kerev ha-Aravim be-Yisrael: Shlita ve-Shinuy Hevrali*).

Amara, Muhammad, and Sufian Kabaha, *Divided Identity: A Study of Political Division and Social Reflections in a Split Village*, Givat Haviva: Jewish-Arab Center for Peace, 1996. (In Hebrew: *Zehut Hatsuya: Haluka Politit ve-Hishtakfuyot Heuratiot Be-Kfar Hatsuy*).

Atrash, A'as, *Days Go By: Unemployment among Arabs in Israel*, Beit Berl: Institute for Israeli Arab Studies: 1995 (In Hebrew: *Yom ve-Od Yom: Avula Aravit be-Yisrael*).

Dwairy, Marwan, *Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Arab-Palestinian Case*, New York: Haworth Press, 1998.



With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, one of many new considerations for Palestinian Arabs was the social welfare and general well-being of those who remained in Israel and became citizens. The four books reviewed here, which focus on social and educational services in the Arab sector, were all written by Palestinian residents of Israel. They raise a number of important questions:

1. When the State of Israel was established, what plans did the government have for shaping the political, national, religious, cultural, and economic lives of its Arab citizens?
2. Bearing in mind that Israel was established as a welfare state, what were the negative implications of living under military administration (1948–1965) for the social, psychological, and educational welfare of Israel's Arab citizens?
3. If Israel is indeed a welfare state for all of its citizens, who determines welfare policies for the Arab population, and on what basis?
4. Finally, and most critically, how has welfare become a means of social and psychological control and oppression over the Arabs in Israel?

Very few books have been devoted to studying welfare issues concerning the Palestinians living in Israel. Indeed, during the first and fifty years of Israel's existence, there were no more than fifteen, and only a few written by Palestinians. Early research studies written

by Palestinian citizens of Israel centered mainly on politics and the social sciences.¹ The first research study on education among the Arabs living in Israel, published in the mid-1970s, exposed for the first time numerous facts about the poor educational situation of Israel's Arab population. In addition, its results pointed out the state's salient educational bias toward treating the Arabs as a cultural rather than as a national minority, thus cutting them off from their Palestinian and Arab history, nationality, and heritage.²

Books published in the 1990s adopt a similar line, wherein the main efforts of the investigators are focused on presenting data. Though most of the conditions tabulated stem from the political situation of the Arab population in Israel and result directly from political decisions, the investigators have not declared their political positions. Even though the state is directly and exclusively responsible for the lack of social welfare services in the Arab sector, not one educational or social welfare study specifically makes this claim. In other words, these researchers are writing books with political messages, but without taking a clear-cut political stand.

Reflecting a shared Palestinian perspective, the four books reviewed here demonstrate many commonalities, but the one most prominent characteristic is that, while their arguments are shaped by political factors, the authors' political convictions are only implied, not openly stated. All of these books indicate that Israel has undertaken a consistent and deliberate policy that perpetuates the lack of social welfare for the Arabs in Israel, a condition that originates from the establishment of the state. Despite Israel's self-declaration as a social-welfare state, over the years its Arab population has not benefited as has the Jewish population. Recently, as the result of political agitation and legal action by its Palestinian citizens, the Israeli Supreme Court has forced some government ministries and programs to adopt more egalitarian policies. Nevertheless, the books under discussion reveal a variety of policies that preserve discrimination and perpetuate the inferior status of the Arabs in Israel.

For the purposes of this analysis, the concept of "welfare" refers to the social services, mental health treatments, and educational opportunities available to Israel's Arab citizens. Each of the books constitutes a small piece of the very large puzzle that affects the well-being of the Palestinians living in Israel. A'as Atrash discusses unemployment; Majid Al-Haj focuses on education; Muhammad Amara and Sufian Kabaha deal with both of these issues as well as

leisure time, family structure, and identity; and Marwan Dwairy considers mental health and psychological services. Despite the importance of the welfare issue, studies have yet to touch on other important aspects such as housing, addiction, crime, prostitution, and mental health in Arab families, particularly Arab refugee families, and violence in Arab villages. One of the problems facing researchers in this field is that Israeli government ministries either do not keep accurate records of current statistics regarding the Arab population in Israel, or consider such data classified and do not make it available to researchers.³

These books can be read as case studies that together present a broad insider's picture of the overall social welfare and educational situation in Israel's Arab sector. Atrash discusses the city of Shfaram, the second largest Arab city in Israel, inhabited by three religious groups (Muslims, Christians, and Druze) in order to illustrate the significance of Arab unemployment. Amara and Kabaha focus on the village of Barta'a as an instructive example of socio-political and educational changes resulting from macropolitical decisions. Al-Haj, in dealing with education, illustrates the well-known link between education and the advancement of the social conditions of minorities—in this case, the Palestinian minority in Israel. Dwairy focuses on the mental health of Israel's Palestinian population to point out the significance of cultural sensitivity during psychological treatment. Following a summary of the main points of each book that will emphasize the political context of welfare with respect to the Arab sector in Israel, this essay will consider the correlations among the central themes of all of these books.

Unemployment and Poverty among Arabs in Israel

In *Days Go By: Unemployment among Arabs in Israel*, Atrash describes his method of "comparative research," in which he compares the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel in order to identify the causes of unemployment within the latter. This section begins with a general discussion of unemployment among the Arabs and presents the major trends specific to that population (p. 8). Atrash examines the effectiveness of government policies for granting unemployment compensation to Arabs versus increased wage-earning opportunities available through projects launched to expand employment in the Arab sector. He concludes that, whereas most

Jewish employees earn more than the minimum wage and are motivated to find new work when they become unemployed, Arabs, who are more likely to earn only the minimum wage, have no incentive to seek new jobs when they can receive the same wage through unemployment payments. These findings indicate that the differences in social, familial, economic, and political structures between the Arab and Jewish sectors require that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs differentiate between the two sectors in its employment and unemployment policies.

Atrash does not analyze his data in terms of the historical, sociological, and political status of the Arabs living in Israel; his starting point is rather to analyze unemployment in light of various economic theories, such as classical economics versus Keynesian economics (p. 84). But the book is riddled with facts that beg thorny political questions that the author neither explicitly verbalizes nor answers. For example, what are the consequences of the striking unemployment figures on the welfare of the entire Arab sector? Atrash reveals a significant average wage gap between Jews and Arabs, but does not address questions such as, Why is the average salary of Arab males so close to the amount the state pays for unemployment compensation? (p. 27) Or, why has the percentage of Arab males in the work force in Israel always been lower than that of Jewish males? Why is the percentage of Arab women in the work force lower by dozens of percentage-points than that of all other Arab and Jewish population groups? (p. 12, table A-1) Why hasn't the unemployment rate in the Arab sector declined even though the level of education has increased? (p. 37, table A-6). If the highest rate of Arab unemployment is among the illiterate and uneducated (p. 42, table A-8), why haven't employment bureaus offered adult-education courses to Arabs in addition to professional training?

Atrash's study demonstrates how the severity of unemployment in the Arab sector in Israel leads to a deterioration of individual well-being. Without a job and a permanent and secure income, the effort to meet existential needs becomes an economic and emotional ~~warrior for the individual. When unemployment affects an entire~~ community, it causes an acute social problem. Chronic unemployment is often accompanied by a host of social ills, among them family violence, low self-esteem, apathy, hopelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and widespread anger and despair. Since unemployment is usually a long-term problem, its deleterious effects on the economic and emotional welfare of the unemployed and their fami-

lies usually require systemic treatment. In the introduction, Atrash hints that "since unemployment has particularly harmed one of the two ethnic groups in our society, it is clear that emphasis should be placed on treating this problem within that sector. In this context, it would not be redundant to point out the negative political significance of unemployment differences among different sectors" (p. 7). In other words, the state must stop treating unemployment in the Arab sector as equivalent to unemployment in the Jewish sector, and must relate to it as a political, and not purely as an economic, issue.

Even though the Arab and Jewish populations live in the same country, fluctuations in the economy affect these two groups differently. Atrash proposes several reasons for this, among them the fact that close to 59% of the Arab population is over the age of fifteen, as compared to 71% of the Jewish population. That is, the potential Jewish workforce is larger than the Arab workforce. Also, Arab families have more children than Jewish families, which constitutes a larger drain on their resources. Additionally, Arab towns and villages cannot meet employment needs. Because of a shortage of industrial development, almost 50% of employment opportunities for Arabs are outside their residential area.

To demonstrate the severity of the problem, Atrash carried out a more comprehensive survey of the residents of the city of Shfaram, in which he examined the employment structure and its effect on unemployment and the degree of mobility of the city's workforce. The results of the Shfaram survey confirmed his conclusions regarding unemployment in the Arab sector at large. Most Arabs are "blue-collar workers" (professional laborers and construction workers) with 4-11 years of schooling; unemployment hits first and foremost older males (over the age of 45); and since most Arab families have a single breadwinner only, an unemployed father means disaster for the entire family. Shfaram, however, is somewhat of an exception to these rules. A city with many educational institutions, employment opportunities for educated Arabs did **increase in response to a modicum of private Arab investment** within the community. But only Shfaram, Nazareth, and Um el-Fahm have local investors with enough capital to build institutions and industries capable of absorbing an educated Arab workforce. Had the state similarly invested in Arab towns, the unemployment rate would be much less severe than at present.

Atrash proposes the following solutions to the unemployment problems:

1. increased investment in employment opportunities in Arab towns and villages to not only reduce the rate of unemployment among males, but to also encourage Arab women to enter the workforce;
2. investment in educational and professional training in the Arab sector;
3. reorganization of unemployment services in the Arab sector;
4. encouragement of traditional occupations that are currently dying out, such as agriculture, by ceasing discriminatory policies.

Atrash believes that the adoption of these solutions can narrow the employment and welfare gap between Israel's Jewish and Arab population groups.

Change and Control: The Two-edged Sword of Education

Al-Haj's *Education Among the Arabs in Israel: Control and Social Change*⁴ relies on two main theoretical approaches: a positivist approach, which is based on the functionalist school of thought, and a conflict approach, which sees education as an agent for maintaining the power of the ruling group and for legitimizing the authority of those who dominate society. The first treats education as a socio-historical agent which, on the one hand, shapes values and behavior, leads to social change, and trains elite groups and political leaders, and, on the other hand, preserves intellectual systems (pp. 4-5). For the second approach, school is an institution used by the government to control society and to maintain the existing power ratio, and change is possible only if the official system chooses change or if it comes under an unusual amount of pressure applied by minority groups demanding change (p. 19).

~~Al-Haj notes that both of these approaches disregard ethnicity and its interaction with nationality and education in countries that have adopted philosophies of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism.~~ He highlights the impact of British colonial requirements on setting educational goals, which even today influence the structure and contents of the Arab educational system in Israel. Throughout the book, the author attempts to answer this question, Does education serve to catalyze social change within the Arab community, or does

it serve as a mechanism for social control by the Jewish majority over the Arab minority?

The book integrates qualitative and quantitative research methods. The author relies on three field studies that investigated the physical conditions in Arab schools, educational trends within the Arab population, and the employment status of Arab graduates of Haifa University. The qualitative method consisted of analyzing the contents of documents from the Israel State Archives; the archives of Arab local councils; Ministry of Education reports; the minutes of the Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education in Israel; and relevant articles in the Israeli press (in Hebrew, Arabic, and English). In addition, Al-Haj interviewed people active on all levels in the field of education. The author's objective is to investigate the "function and nature of formal education among the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel" (p. 11).

Al-Haj briefly summarizes the macrosociological conditions in which the Arab population developed from the late Ottoman period through 1948, emphasizing the changes in social, familial, and economic structure wrought by the creation of the State of Israel. Overall, the status of Palestinian Arabs within Israel immediately became marginal. He then discusses how this macrosociological background constitutes the basis for explaining the development of the educational system during the Ottoman period and the British Mandate. Under the Ottomans, education attracted little interest within the Arab population, especially for girls, despite the fact that schooling was free. The Arab elite's interest in education focused on a struggle to change the system from a Turkish one to an Arab system, with Arabic as its official language. During the Mandate, the British considered education a way to maintain the existing status quo and prevent an Arab national awakening. Thus, educational programs stressed universal values and avoided political content and national ties. The adoption of different educational curricula for urban and rural populations widened the existing social, class, and economic gaps within the Arab community. British officials believed that this trend was necessary in order to "maintain a balanced employment structure" (p. 40).

Like Atrash, Al-Haj also compares the Jewish and Arab populations. This is clearly an effective method for researchers to utilize in order to underline the historical, institutional, and resource gaps between the two. For instance, whereas the Israeli objective of education for Palestinian society was to prevent the development

of nationalist sentiment, in the Jewish sector the goal was to instill Zionist ideals as part of building the nation, in spite of the variety of trends in Hebrew education during this period (pp. 42-46). In Israel, both the Arab and Jewish educational systems fell under the auspices of the same Compulsory Education Law (1949). Among its many other stipulations, the law dictates that local government units must erect, maintain, and furnish school buildings. The lack of Arab local government units led to an initial gap between Jewish and Arab education in Israel. That is, although Israeli law required that the Arabs must send their children to school, the law also prescribed that the Arabs set up and maintain their own educational institutions, even though the Israeli government knew full well that at the time most Arabs lived in rural and unincorporated areas. Many other laws have similarly discriminated against Arab education.

Al-Haj demonstrates that Jewish control of education serves as a means of social control over the Arab population. When the Arab educational system was set up, a Jew was appointed as its head; Jews also made up the entire professional staff, with the exception of one inspector. Jews dominated the committees that formulated educational programs and goals for Arabs. Al-Haj writes that at one time the Ministry of Education even tried to convince Arab citizens that setting up high schools was not worthwhile (p. 65).⁵ The ministry consistently avoided developing professional and technological education in the Arab sector, thereby maintaining the Arabs as an unskilled labor force. The Ministry ruled over its Arab teachers with an iron hand, threatening to dismiss anyone who was involved in political activity or who refused to officially identify with the declared policies of the State of Israel. Not surprisingly, it banned educational materials with Palestinian or Arab nationalist content (p. 101).⁶ Al-Haj argues that Israel purposely instituted educational programs designed to create submissive Arabs who would lose their Palestinian identity and accept the superiority of the Jews. He quotes Jonathan Peres et al., who concluded that

policy makers [in the Ministry of Education] sought a compromise for contradictory trends: . . . Equality vs. Jewish superiority, development of general values vs. development of national values, granting autonomy to Arab education vs. aspiring for full integration into the Jewish educational system. . . . Instead, Arab national identity was blurred, and

Arabs were educated to inferiority and mediocrity within the Jewish majority. (p. 103)

While Al-Haj makes no recommendations or suggestions for changing the gloomy situation in Arab education, his study can be considered an "operative research study." Policymakers, educators, and politicians in the field can make excellent use of the comprehensive statistics from the Ottoman and Mandate periods, while the comparison with the Jewish sector can spur the Arab sector to demand improvements in the educational situation in every town and village.

Splitting Up Arab Families: National and Psycho-Social Consequences

The village of Kfar Barta'a, the focus of the study by Amara and Kabaha, *Divided Identity: A Study of Political Division and Social Reflections in a Split Village*, provides an instructive and rare example of how arbitrary political decisions made on the macrolevel can affect every aspect of the everyday lives of individuals, families, and clans. Even though its arbitrary division puts the village in a rather unique situation shared by only a few others in the "Triangle" region (the concentration of Arab villages in the center of Israel), Barta'a's situation presents a particularly salient illustration of how the lack of governmental investment in basic services directly affects welfare in the entire Arab sector.

The 1949 Rhodes Armistice Agreement between Jordan and Israel allowed the international frontier to run right through Kfar Barta'a, dividing the village between the two countries until 1967. Western Barta'a remained under Israeli jurisdiction, and Eastern Barta'a was transferred to Jordanian jurisdiction, although the two villages continued to draw water from the same well. Oddly enough, no border fence was ever erected; instead, the wadi that ran through the center of the village became the international border, and Jordanian and Israeli military patrols prevented residents from crossing from one side of the village to the other. Clearly, the wishes of the Kabaha clan, which comprised the village's inhabitants, east and west, were not a factor for the decision makers.⁷

The political agreement dividing the clan changed its members' lives enormously. The authors' objective in studying the Barta'a case

is "to examine the social repercussions of the political changes" caused by the division (p. 11). Prior to 1948, the Kabaha clan eked out a meager living from three sources: agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry. After 1948, the economic situation of those who remained in Israel seriously deteriorated as a result of Israeli policies toward the Arab minority, particularly martial law that limited mobility and work, along with the confiscation of thousands of dunams of Barta'a's land and the lack of even a paved road connecting Western Barta'a to the neighboring Jewish settlements.

For Amara and Kabaha, the case of Western Barta'a constitutes an example of the interactive relationship between the policies of the ruling Israeli government and the welfare of the Arab population. The most salient connections between national policy and Arab social, economic, educational, and psychological welfare can be summarized under the following headings, which can be but briefly treated here.

Discrimination

During the period of Israeli military administration, the state regarded the Arab minority as a hostile fifth column and placed restrictions on Arab mobility within Israel. For Barta'a this meant that its inhabitants' freedom of movement was limited beyond the village's boundaries. Thus, levels of employment, income, education, and basic infrastructure development in the village were extremely low. When the state decided to integrate Arabs from the region with a special professional training program for construction, the residents of the village slowly began integrating into the life of the nation (p. 43). The 1956 war brought resignation to the fact of Israel's existence; at the same time, the state eased its requirements for work permits and the village became more proletarian and less agricultural. After the 1965 abolition of martial law and the 1967 war, most of the residents of the region became construction workers, largely abandoning agriculture.

The State's Failure to Provide Basic Services

Even today Western Barta'a has no official local government. It was not until 1970 that the government paved the village's main road; in 1985, the internal roads were paved, but at the residents' expense. The village was connected to the Israeli telephone system only in 1979, and to the national electricity grid in 1981. The

villagers themselves set up a private water system unconnected to the national water system. Private associations developed preschool education; the village school is maintained by a local committee called the "Education Authority," which hires and pays the salaries of school employees other than teachers, who are employed by the Ministry of Education.

The authors compared the socialization of schoolchildren from Eastern Barta'a (the Jordanian educational system) with that of those from Western Barta'a (the Israeli educational system), arguing that the behavior of the children reflects the civic socialization of each population group. For instance, pupils in Eastern Barta'a participated in the 1987 Intifada, losing numerous teaching days but demonstrating a high maintenance of pan-Arab values and a Palestinian identity. Their peers in Western Barta'a, however, were kept out of the streets by their parents, who insisted on their maintaining regular school and extracurricular activities, despite the unrest raging across the wadi. One can conclude that the Jordanian educational system thus constituted an agent for Palestinian social preservation, while the Israeli educational system worked to mute the community's indigenous identity and served instead as an agent to instill and preserve the civic values of the state (p. 81).

*Secure Family Relations within a Clan
as a Factor in Psycho-social Welfare*

The case study of Barta'a also shows how the dynamics of clan relations are affected by macropolitical decisions. In 1949 the reigning powers' decision to split the village severed clan relations between east and west; in 1967 Israel's occupation of the West Bank led to clan reunification. Despite the elimination of the physical border, a psychopolitical border had developed between the citizens of the two halves of what had once been one village and one clan. The renewed contact only served to underline the differences and the degree to which each group had become integrated into the culture and institutions of the ruling country (p. 57).

In their discussion of the 1987-1993 Intifada the authors provide an outstanding example of the clear difference between the existential needs of Barta'a's residents of the occupied territories and those of Barta'a's citizens of the State of Israel. At the beginning of the Intifada, with the army keeping a close watch on activists in Eastern Barta'a and warnings from the police, the residents of

Western Barta'a chose to stay within the boundaries of Israel, and daily contact between the clan members declined. Interestingly, Eastern Barta'a's Intifada leaders accommodated their Western Barta'a relatives' desire to avoid run-ins with Israeli law, and asked for their moral, economic, and media support only. Even while distinguishing between them, the Intifada also brought Barta'a's western and eastern clan members closer together. Clan leadership passed from the elders to the young leaders of the Intifada; as this new generation gained power, strength, and authority within their families, relatives from Western Barta'a hastened to renew their ties with family members whose sons were leading the uprising in the eastern side of the village. In addition, the authors were amazed at how the citizens themselves had revived the significance of the international border running through the wadi, which, more than anything else, came to symbolize the presence of the state within the collective consciousness of the residents of Western Barta'a.⁸

The Intifada both strengthened family relationships within the divided village and emphasized the civic differences between the residents of the two halves. Amara and Kabaha examine the dynamics of developing a collective social identity, as opposed to a national civic identity, based on the relationship with the state over time. They conclude that, for the residents of Western Barta'a, "the Islamic identity remained extremely significant, followed, in descending order, by Arab and Palestinian identity, identity with the Kabaha clan, and, in last place, identification with Israel and with the village" (p. 143). Most of those claim that they did not consider themselves Israelis, but rather citizens living in the State of Israel, and they differentiated between their civic identity, as holders of Israeli identity cards, and their national identity, as Arabs, not Israelis. The villagers perceived Israel as the country of the Jews, and believed that they were being treated as inferior to the Jewish population. In their discussions with researchers, villagers expressed deep psychological grudges against Israel, claiming that they were not interested in defining themselves as "Israelis" because they were not interested in the political power that Israel had acquired Arab lands in the 1948 and 1967 wars.⁹ The book mentions this only in passing. In general, very few such assertions appear in the research literature because of the thin line between respondents' freedom of expression and what the authorities might define as denial of the right of the country to exist or attempted provocation and rebellion (*hasata ve-hamrada*).

*The Relationship between the Level of
Public Services and Identity*

An examination of the development of identity in the two halves of the village of Barta'a underlines the depth of the relationship between institutional intervention and identity. As government institutions became more prevalent in the village, traditional alternatives diminished. For example, because the lives of villagers in Western Barta'a are bound by the laws of Israel, they did not preserve or develop their tribal laws. In comparison, Jordan allowed tribes and large clans to choose between the laws of the state and those of the tribe. Thus, Eastern Barta'a residents preserved and developed their clan identity.

Because of a serious shortage of public institutions and welfare services in Western Barta'a, the extended family became the critical source for childcare, financial assistance, psychological support, care for the elderly and disabled, and so on. Not surprisingly, the authors report that "most of those surveyed see the extended family as a shared base and as the source of moral and material support" (p. 36). It is clear that as Israel shirks its obligation to provide welfare services to its Arab citizens, the role of the extended Arab family intensifies, and its influence on the life of the individual continues to be central. As a result, the identification of the individual with his extended family is of utmost importance.

In Search of National and Cultural Sensitivity

Marwan Dwairy, of Haifa University's School of Education, is an educational, developmental, and clinical psychologist and an integral figure overseeing the Ministry of Education's program for gifted Arab pupils. In *Cross-Cultural Counseling: The Arab-Palestinian Case*, Dwairy argues that cultural insensitivity constitutes another means of state control over the Arab population. His methodology is inductive, using his clinical experience to reexamine Western psychological theories and axioms. He supports his ideas with the results of several studies conducted within Palestinian Arab society in Israel. Like the authors of the other three books, Dwairy uses the conjoint approach of relating to Palestinian mental health as a case study for cross-cultural counseling, and to his clinical cases as more specific case-study examples.

Dwairy begins by presenting the history of the Palestinians and their relationship with Arab nationality and Islam as important

aspects for understanding their cultural and psychosocial well-being. He then deals with the influence of Arab family structure on developing the "self" and "personality" among Arabs. Dwairy's argument relies upon results of research conducted on large numbers of Palestinian-Arab families living in the Nazareth region.

Dwairy exposes the disadvantages suffered by Arab clients when they are diagnosed and treated according to the norms of Western psychology. He claims that modern psychology has developed with an emphasis on understanding the qualities of the individual, who emerges as an independent entity in individualistic societies. Individuation, according to Western psychology, is the main process that takes place during the course of a human being's development. After adolescence, a person is expected to have accomplished the process of individuation and to begin conducting his or her life through an independent personality construct. Behavioral as well as psychological disorders are explained, according to Western psychology, by intrapsychic constructs or processes driven by elements such as ego, self, conflicts, and defense mechanisms. Psychological problems are defined as intrapsychic disorders. Psychotherapy intervenes to restore the "normal" intrapsychic order. The ultimate objective of all Western psychotherapy is to allow the patient to be aware of his or her unconscious and to achieve self-fulfillment.

Dwairy argues that this form of psychology is able to offer only a partial explanation for the behavior of Arabs and for other peoples living in close-knit traditional communities, and may cause more harm than good in treatment. People who live in an authoritarian and collective social structure are directed by an external authority that defines for the individual "shoulds" and taboos. Therefore, Dwairy argues, cultural norms and other external oppressions will explain behavior in Arab society better than intrapsychic constructs and processes. In his view, personality development and structure in authoritarian and collective societies differ substantially from the assumptions embodied in Western personality theories. He describes Arab personality development, structure, and dynamics, which are collective rather than individuated and have two main layers of personality: social and private. He summarizes a large body of cross-cultural research into the substantial differences in the prevalence of, and diagnosis of, psychological disorders across ethnicities.¹⁰ He argues that many normal behaviors among Arabs may be pathologized and misdiagnosed by therapists relying exclusively on Western psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy that targets an intrapsychic order, according to Dwairy, actually misses the main source of conflict and anxiety which, in Arab societies, is interpersonal rather than intrapsychic. Dwairy claims that focusing on the intrapsychic with a traditional Arab client may bring forbidden drives and emotions to consciousness. Fulfilling these drives in a conservative society is likely to lead to individual-family conflicts that are unsolvable, and may cause an acceleration of oppression for the client. Therefore, culturally insensitive psychotherapy may transform a minor intrapsychic conflict into a major familial one, which may proceed to extended family conflicts and violence. Dwairy presents several cases that demonstrate this process and the open wounds left after supposedly "successful" psychoanalysis. Such therapies were not culturally sensitive to the structure of the Arab family and norms.

In his book, Dwairy proposes a new model of psychotherapy that is systemic, short-term, problem-focused, and based on outreach. Because mind and body, as well as individual and family, are inseparable in Arab society, he suggests a biopsychosocial approach to therapy that utilizes cultural values and metaphoric language. Central to his approach is the genuine readiness of the therapist to respect and empathize with the client's cultural background and to fit his or her tools to the client.

In the last two decades, many Western societies have become aware of cultural differences in mental health and have started to revise their approaches. Cross-cultural psychology is now the fourth dimension in psychology, after the psychoanalytic, behavioral, and humanistic dimensions. While cross-cultural counseling courses are obligatory in every recognized program for mental health training in academic institutions in the United States, Israel's insistence on the Zionist vision of a cultural "melting pot" means that Israeli academic programs lack even elective cross-cultural counseling courses. Dwairy concludes that the psychological services available to Arabs in Israel, as provided by Israeli-trained therapists (Jewish or Arab), do not serve the best interests of the Arab individual or community. One can extend the same argument to Israeli Jews who also live in tightly knit conservative and authoritarian communal circumstances, such as the ultra-Orthodox or the traditional Ethiopian or Yemenite communities. It is indeed a great misfortune for people in pain to have their problems compounded by inappropriate treatment.

Welfare, Well-being, and the Mechanisms of Political Inferiority

While all four books reviewed here deal with matters in the fields of social, educational, and mental welfare, political elements are quite apparent, to differing degrees, in all of them. A careful reading of each book, including an emphasis on the data presented in the tables, leads to one unequivocal conclusion: a strong political bias dominates the educational and social services in the Arab sector in Israel. While none of the books argues against Israel's right to exist, they all challenge, implicitly or explicitly, the veracity of Israel's professed status as a democratic and egalitarian country.

All of the volumes reviewed also reveal the phenomenal complexity of the "identity" of Arabs living in Israel. The authors rightly perceive this identity as interactive and contextual. In certain situations, Arab citizens ask to be recognized as a national minority, while in other contexts they seek to be considered as a cultural or religious minority. One identity does not negate any other; rather they all complement one another.

At the time of Israel's establishment, the state regarded the Arab minority as a hostile national community and related to it accordingly. The provision of normal welfare services to that minority required special political decisions at the highest echelons of the Israeli government. Those decisions, made in the antagonistic atmosphere of that time, have continued to have a negative impact on the welfare and well-being of Arabs in Israel to the present day. The books under discussion here give innumerable examples of official government neglect, inaction, or malevolence which, over the years, have allowed (or even encouraged) severe social problems to fester within the Arab sector. For example, despite the fact that unemployment among the Arab population has constituted an acute social problem for decades, there has never been an official government recovery program for this sector. The official welfare services have never confronted the mental and familial problems that have developed as a result of chronic unemployment and have disregarded the psychological aspects of these economic problems, at the cost of great suffering to Arab individuals, their families, and the community.

Unemployment compensation payments have helped Jewish unemployed workers return to the workforce because these

payments have been accompanied by the creation of proper conditions, such as the development of industrial areas close to residential districts, the provision of advanced technological education and professional training and the availability of Hebrew-language education, and a high basic wage. One of the most striking findings of Atrash's study is that in the Arab sector, in contrast, unemployment compensation payments perpetuate unemployment because none of the aforementioned additional conditions exist. This is an outstanding example of the ecological, symbiotic, and comprehensive relationship linking welfare issues and politics, education, and economics. In order to find a genuine solution to the Arab unemployment problem, the state must put together a comprehensive program that targets all of these fields.

Another example of the government's irresponsibility to its Arab citizens lies in the field of education. Looking at Al-Haj's research, we must ask why all documents and decisions regarding education for Arabs made at the time the country was established have been treated as "confidential" material all these years, and why it required legal action on the part of researchers to open the State Archives in order to examine these documents. Al-Haj stresses the fact that the educational system in Israel is first and foremost a Jewish system, and that the Arab educational system is a tool in the hands of the state that is in no way organically derived from Arab society. The title of Al-Haj's book summarizes the goal of this system, namely, "control and social change" in order to serve the needs of a country that controls a national minority constituting nearly 20 percent of its citizens. It is impossible to speak simply in terms of social welfare when the central axiom of the education system is based on dominance over an entire population group and total disregard for its national and cultural uniqueness. By itself, the law for free compulsory education is a good thing; unfortunately, the educational system for Arabs has become an effective mechanism for long-term control to shape the identity and mental constitution of the Arab citizens of Israel.

Amara and Kabaha's book is illustrative of the rift within Palestinian society caused by the imposition of artificial political borders by the State of Israel on several levels: self, spiritual, familial, clan, and national. The research difficulties faced by the authors—the suspicions expressed by those interviewed and their lack of cooperation, particularly during the time of the first Intifada—indicate the Palestinian Arab citizens' fear and perception of the state as a hostile institution.

Lack of equal state services for Arabs in Israel preserves the collective, authoritarian social structure of Arab society because it retains the family as the main source for providing for the basic needs of individuals. Therefore, psychological problems caused by the oppressive social and political structure are highly prevalent among Arabs. On the other hand, lack of suitable mental health services prevents professionals from providing the most effective help for people who suffer from psychological disorders.

Palestinians in Israel have experienced a traumatic ordeal caused by political, military, and social upheaval, especially during the events of 1947-1949. Amara and Kabaha's case study of the divided village of Barta'a highlights the social, economic, psychological, and political dislocations that Palestinian citizens suffered after the establishment of Israel. While the new state made a social welfare policy for its Jewish citizens a major national goal, it had a different sociopolitical agenda for its Arab citizens. Land confiscation, martial law, internal migration, and poverty caused by the loss of property during the war required a state project for the psychological, social, economic, and educational rehabilitation for Arab citizens. Instead, as Al-Haj's research shows, the state used the education system and martial law to establish subservience among its Arab citizens. Jewish political leaders determined policy toward the Arab educational sector and controlled it by appointing Jewish policymakers who dictated its contents by controlling the curriculum. They also exerted control over the employees through the security forces, creating an education system that was a de facto arm of the security services in Israel. As a direct result, education for Arabs in Israel has long been a mechanism for control instead of a mechanism of social change.

The disadvantages of the Arab educational system in comparison to the Jewish sector have continued since their original establishment. Even though the Arab system is controlled by the same state legislation as the Jewish one, in the Arab sector many of these laws are routinely flouted, such as those pertaining to compulsory education, special education, and welfare services. In the Arab sector, up to 55 percent of Palestinian Arab students do not finish high school. Despite this, no major state project has ever been prepared to treat these unhealthy phenomena. According to Israeli law, psychological and educational counseling and social services are obligatory components of the educational system. Nevertheless, programs were never prepared to meet the needs of the Arab population in this regard, and no Arab mental-health workers were

trained to work within the national and cultural needs of the Arab minority. Atrash's research points out the results of the Arab educational system: a high percentage of unemployment, a high percentage of untrained workers, and all the concomitant social problems.

In reviewing the prevailing conditions of the Arab community in Israel, one may conclude that educational programs and unemployment policy are designed so that Arabs in Israel will continue to re-create the culture of poverty, thus maintaining their status as a deprived, inferior national minority. Culturally insensitive psychological therapies and counseling programs compound the situation. The result is that most young Arab families in Israel are occupied with solving their everyday social, economic, and psychological problems, instead of becoming involved as active and equal partners in running the state. The documentation of this phenomenon by the authors reviewed here is an important early step in bringing the multifaceted problems of the Arabs citizens to light. The condition of the Arabs in Israel will never be truly resolved, however, as long as the state puts the political priorities of the Jewish population above the welfare and well-being requirements of its Arab population.

Notes

1. See especially Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

2. Sami Mari, *Arab Education in Israel* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1978).

3. For details on this issue, see Aziz Haidar, *Social Welfare for Israel's Arab Population* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

4. This book appeared earlier in English as *Education, Empowerment and Control: The Case of the Arabs in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). (See the review essay by Ilham Nasser, in this volume, in chapter 5.)

5. Through the mid-1970s, many villages lacked secondary schools. This led to dropouts among poor students, whose families were not able to pay for travel expenses, and girls, who were forbidden to leave their villages without an escort. In villages with high schools the percentage of highly educated people, both men and women, is much greater.

6. The Israeli Security Services had to confirm the nomination of all new Arab teachers, and the Ministry of Education fired teachers who participated in political activities. For a more detailed picture, see Majid Al-Haj, 134-40.

7. This review focuses only on social change and on the social and educational welfare of the citizens of Western Barta'a, since the goal of this essay is limited to studying welfare conditions for Palestinians in Israel.

8. For more details on this important aspect of the research, see Amara and Kabaha, 107-13.

9. See *ibid.*, chapters 7-9, dealing with the "identity question."

10. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed. (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994).