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The Representation of Arabs in Hebrew Educational Materials: An Analysis of Orientalism, Zionism, and Ideological Themes in Israeli High School Textbooks

By: Areen Jabarin ,

Nuran Igbaria

areen.jabarin@gmail.com

nsg217@hotmail.com

كلية الدراسات العليا - مسار تعلم وتعليم - قسم اللغة الإنكليزية - جامعة النجاح الوطنية - نابلس



Abstract

This study examines the representation of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials used in Israeli high schools, mainly focusing on textbooks approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education. The analysis is heavily influenced by Orientalism, Zionism, and the dominant Israeli-Jewish mentality. Drawing on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, which critiques the Western depiction of Eastern cultures as inferior and irrational (Said, 1978), the study reveals how these textbooks continue negative stereotypes about Arabs. These illustrations reinforce the Zionist narrative, which often justifies the displacement and marginalization of Palestinian Arabs by emphasizing Jewish historical ties to the land and portraying Arabs as violent and irrational obstacles to the Jewish state's survival (Masalha, 1997; Podeh, 2000).

The research further explores the integration of themes related to politics, individual freedoms, community service, and Jewish identity within English language education. These themes are analyzed to understand their role in promoting a cohesive national identity and reinforcing specific ideological perspectives. The study draws on interdisciplinary perspectives, incorporating insights from sociology, political science, and cultural studies, to comprehensively analyze how these educational materials shape societal attitudes and perceptions in Israel (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Al-Haj, 2005).

By examining these dynamics, the study aims to illuminate the broader implications for education and societal perceptions in Israel. The findings underscore the need for a more balanced and inclusive representation in educational materials to foster mutual understanding and resolution between Jewish and Arab populations (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Berghan & Schissler, 1988). The study concludes with recommendations for revising textbooks to promote a more inclusive education system that accurately represents the history and contributions of all groups within Israeli society (Jacobmeyer, 1990).

Keywords: Arabs, Hebrew education, Israel, Orientalism, Zionism, high school textbooks, English language education, stereotypes, Jewish identity, societal perceptions.



.1Introduction

.1.1Background of the Study

The Israeli educational system is crucial in shaping societal perceptions and national identity. Textbooks and educational materials, particularly those certified by the Israeli Ministry of Education, are effective instruments for constructing collective memory and national narratives. These materials are educational tools and vehicles for ideological programming, reflecting and disseminating the dominant socio-political ethos. This study investigates how these educational resources portray Arabs and how themes within English language education represent and spread broader ideological objectives. By examining these representations, the study seeks to uncover the intended biases and their implications for education and societal perceptions in Israel.

.1.2Purpose of the Study

This study aims to analyze the representation of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials and the integration of specific themes within English language education. The research aims to comprehensively understand how educational materials influence societal attitudes and perceptions in Israel by exploring these aspects.

.1.3Statement of the Problem

The representation of Arabs in Israeli educational materials often reflects deep-seated biases rooted in historical and ideological contexts. These representations can spread stereotypes, justify exclusionary practices, and contribute to ongoing conflict. There is a need to critically examine these materials to promote a more inclusive and balanced educational environment that fosters mutual understanding and reconciliation.



.1.4 Research Questions

.1 How are Arabs represented in Hebrew educational materials approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education?

.2 What themes are emphasized in English language education, and how do they relate to broader ideological objectives?

.3 How do these representations and themes impact societal attitudes and perceptions in Israel?

.2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

Beyond the frameworks of Orientalism and Zionism, other theoretical perspectives such as postcolonialism, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and new historicism provide valuable insights into the portrayal of Arabs in educational materials. Postcolonialism examines the effects of colonialism on cultures and societies, highlighting how colonial legacies continue to shape representations and power dynamics in contemporary contexts (Ashcroft et al., 1989) (Saada, 2020). This perspective is crucial for understanding how colonial histories influence current educational narratives and societal attitudes.

Critical discourse analysis, founded by scholars like Norman Fairclough, emphasizes the role of language in constructing social realities and power relations (Fairclough, 1995) (Mohrem, 2020). CDA uncovers the underlying ideologies propagating stereotypes and biases by analyzing textbooks' language and informal practices. This method is instrumental in revealing how educational content can subtly reinforce dominant ideologies and marginalize certain groups.

New historicism, introduced by Stephen Greenblatt, situates texts within their historical contexts, revealing how historical narratives and power structures influence contemporary representations (Greenblatt, 1980). By contextualizing educational materials within the



broader historical and political landscape, new historicism helps to elucidate the continuity and transformation of specific ideological portrayals over time.

These frameworks collectively emphasize the importance of historical context, power dynamics, and discursive practices in shaping representations of Arabs in educational materials. They comprehensively understand how educational content can perpetuate or challenge existing power structures and cultural narratives (Podeh, 2000).

2.2 Contemporary Research

Recent research continues to explore the persistence of stereotypes in Israeli textbooks and the indirect ways these biases are disseminated. Feniger and Yahav (2015) highlight the enduring presence of stereotypes in educational materials, while Peled-Elhanan (2012) explicitly examines the portrayal of Palestinians in Israeli textbooks, revealing a consistent pattern of dehumanization and negative stereotyping. These studies underscore the importance of scrutinizing educational content to identify and address biased representations (Tzoreff, 2020).

The impact of digital textbooks and online resources is another emerging dimension of this research. Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) explore how digital media can challenge and reinforce traditional biases. This study area is particularly relevant as educational resources increasingly move online, offering new opportunities and challenges for addressing bias and promoting inclusivity.

2.3 Historical and Ideological Context

The representation of Arabs in high school textbooks is an intricate nexus of Israel's historical, ideological, and pedagogical components. It reflects a convergence of power dynamics that shape societal identity. Al-Qatawneh et al. (2021) emphasize that the symbolic order of Arab identity in Israeli society is deeply rooted in historical and educational contexts, significantly influencing the formation of Israeli identity. The portrayal of Arabs in educational materials often mirrors the broader social and political narratives, reinforcing dominant ideologies and marginalizing alternative perspectives.



2.4 Ideological Functions of Educational Materials

In analyzing Hebrew high school textbooks and instructional schemes, it is evident that Orientalism and Zionism, with their intertwined ideological tenets, play a critical role in shaping the social construction of juvenile identity, particularly Israeli identity. Ben-Asher et al. (2020) and Zeid and Cretu (2020) argue that the omission of Arabs from high school curricula is part of broader social and cultural practices that serve an ideological function. These practices reflect and perpetuate the ideological hegemony of Zionism and Orientalism, positioning educational materials as central to the continuation of specific social attitudes towards Arabs.

Despite the purported aim of fostering critical thinking in high school education, there is a primary concern that social studies curricula often propagate Zionist and Orientalist ideologies. These curricula can reinforce dominant narratives and marginalize critical perspectives, limiting students' understanding of complex social and political issues.

Drawing on these interdisciplinary perspectives and contemporary studies, this literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of the portrayal of Arabs in Israeli educational materials. It underscores the need to critically examine these materials to promote a more balanced and inclusive educational environment that accurately represents the history and contributions of all groups within Israeli society.

2.5 Orientalism

Orientalism is a concept defined by Edward W. Said as a way of seeing reality based on knowledge, traditions, and political forces vested in the West, especially Europe. Orientalism began when Western colonial expansion met ancient Greco-Roman ideas of its empire when going east. Given that European nations were the descendants of this legacy, this linkage, whether cultural or spiritual, was manifested in colonial practices. According to Said, Palestinians, and others, it continues to this day in the Anglo-American-led invasion of the Middle East (Mohrem, 2020).



The Orientalist discourse refutes the Muslims' political, cultural, or other achievements, believing instead that Islam arose as a religion of the sword and, from that moment on, was accompanied by blood and murder and ascribed to it the establishment of the empire. Succinctly, the West views the East as a single, homogeneous space, populated by a people who never managed to part from their origins or to develop modern culture, a people who were never able to legitimize their government, religion, or the cultural complexity desired by the processes of modernization. Said categorizes these attributes as making up the essence of the discourse of Orientalism that the West still maintains. (Spruyt, 2020)

2.6 Zionism

According to Zionism, the land of Israel is a land for the Jewish people, a territorial element that is inseparable from environmental and historical anchors. Proponents of Zionism saw this philosophy as the solution to the problems of the Jews in the Diaspora and to their oppression and persecution. This view is linked to a belief in the historical existence of the Jewish people and that there is a continuous living bond between the Diaspora and the land of Zion. According to the traditional Zionist position, the Jews must be in the land of Israel, and they must be an integral part of the territory. According to the religious Zionists, the Jews who were exiled from the land must return. Utilitarian (pragmatic) Zionists are motivated by the social and economic benefits that the State of Israel provides. These benefits help the Jews and solve social problems in the Diaspora. (Piterberg, 2020)(Tzoreff, 2020)

In high school education, the pragmatic view is expressed through the study of agricultural education, the training of skilled workers, urban planning, and more. However, the emotional and ideological approach is given greater weight, and the study of the land and its environmental attributes is emphasized. The religious-Zionist emphasis is not on the territory and its physical sides but rather dealing with its historical aspects. This ideological aspect provides the Jews with the meaning of their existence. Of these, the Palestinians are presented in terms vacated of their rights—Arabs, intruders, indigenous Philistines. Their oppression is not presented at all in connection with how the Israelis have come and settled the land. It can be concluded that, according to Zionism, the concept of the need for the



land to be healed is just an excuse for the political and exclusive targeting of the neighbor's land. (Teff-Seker, 2020)(Christison, 2023)

2.7 Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Integrating findings from sociology, political science, and cultural studies enriches the analysis and provides diverse perspectives on the role of education in shaping societal attitudes. Sociological studies, such as those by Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005), explore how education contributes to constructing collective identities and intergroup relations. Political science research, like that by Apple (1991), examines the interplay between education and power, highlighting how educational policies and materials reflect broader political agendas. Cultural studies, drawing on scholars like Stuart Hall, emphasize the role of cultural representations in shaping societal attitudes and reinforcing power structures (Hall, 1997) .

2.8 Addressing Counterarguments

Acknowledging and addressing alternative perspectives on the representation of Arabs in Israeli textbooks strengthens the argument and enhances the credibility of the analysis. Some scholars, like Podeh (2002), argue that there have been efforts to reform educational materials and present a more balanced representation of Arabs. These perspectives highlight initiatives by the Israeli Ministry of Education to revise textbooks and promote inclusivity. Additionally, counterarguments from scholars like Pingel (2010) suggest that educational materials in conflict zones often reflect the complex realities and competing narratives of the societies in question .

2.9 Israeli-Jewish Mentality

Justice demands that clear and coherent thought guide our actions. Public opinion is subject to frequent fluctuations and is often far removed from the truth. The role of scholar, teacher, and educator is to educate the public to improve society. It is tough to succeed in a situation where public opinion, influenced by the mass media, is uninformed and



prejudiced. The educational system must examine, inform, and present the students with an opportunity to integrate into the sophisticated society in which they live. It must respect all its citizens' rich and diverse values and traditions. The educator's job is to struggle for tolerance and human warmth to prevent students from taking a hostile and self-righteous attitude toward the Other. (Galanti et al., 2020)(Saada, 2020)

Israeli schoolchildren's socialization process has been widely examined in the research literature. A review of some of these publications shows that before 1980, most of the studies were descriptive and apologetic. One of the most renowned researchers studying the Israeli-Jewish mentality is the psychologist Brovender. In the early 1980s, half the junior high schools in Israel incorporated a program called "Me am lo esrim el?" - "Who am I if not for the Other?" Dr. Brovender observed the changes in the pupils who participated in the revolutionary program, which included meetings between seventh graders from Jewish and Arab schools, as part of the curriculum, and compared the findings with those of a control group.

.3Methodology

The methodology for this study is designed to systematically analyze the representation of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials used in Israeli high schools. The approach includes detailed criteria for selecting textbooks to ensure a representative and comprehensive sample, thereby enhancing the validity and robustness of the findings.

.3.1.1Research design

The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach guided by theoretical frameworks, including Orientalism, postcolonialism, and critical discourse analysis. Textbooks are selected based on grade level, subject, and approval by the Ministry of Education and triangulated with interviews and supplementary materials to ensure comprehensive and robust findings. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent and maintaining confidentiality.



.3.1.2 Textbook Selection Criteria

The textbook selection criteria are accurately outlined to ensure a representative sample and enhance the study's validity. The criteria encompass several key dimensions:

.3.1.3 Grade Level:

Textbooks are selected across various grade levels, from high school, to capture a comprehensive view of the educational materials used throughout a student's educational journey. This stratified sampling approach ensures that the study accounts for variations in content and portrayal of Arabs at different educational stages.

.3.2.4 Subject:

The selection includes textbooks from multiple subjects, primarily focusing on history, social studies, and literature, as these subjects are most likely to address themes related to national identity, cultural representation, and historical narratives. Additionally, English language textbooks are included to examine how themes of politics, individual freedoms, community service, and Jewish identity are integrated into language education .

.3.1.5 Publication Date:

Textbooks published over the years are selected to analyze historical and contemporary Arab representation trends. This approach helps identify changes and assesses the impact of educational reforms and policy shifts on textbook content.

.3.1.6 Approval by the Ministry of Education:

Only textbooks approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education are included in the sample. This criterion ensures that the study focuses on materials that have undergone official



vetting processes and are widely used in Israeli schools, thereby providing a more accurate reflection of the educational landscape.

.3.1.7 Representativeness:

To enhance representativeness, the study includes textbooks from state secular and state religious schools, recognizing that these different educational tracks may present varying descriptions of Arabs. This differentiation helps us understand Israeli society's broader spectrum of educational narratives.

.3.1.8 Language of Instruction:

While the primary focus is on Hebrew-language textbooks, including English textbooks provides insights into how cultural and ideological themes are conveyed to students learning a second language. This dual-language analysis enriches the understanding of how educational materials contribute to national identity formation and cultural perceptions.

By applying these comprehensive selection criteria, the study ensures a diverse and representative sample of textbooks, thereby enhancing the robustness and validity of the findings.

.3.2 Analytical Tools

The analysis employs several methodological tools to examine the selected textbooks systematically:

.3.2.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis systematically identifies and quantifies specific themes, narratives, and representations within the textbooks. This involves coding the texts for recurring patterns, themes of violence, cultural inferiority, political conflict, and representations of Jewish identity.



.3.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

As founded by scholars like Norman Fairclough, critical discourse analysis examines the language and discourse used in the textbooks. CDA helps uncover the underlying ideologies and power relations embedded in the text, revealing how language constructs social realities and perpetuates stereotypes.

.3.2.3 Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is conducted across different grade levels, subjects, and types of schools (state secular vs. state religious) to identify variations in the portrayal of Arabs. This approach helps understand the consistency and differences in representations within the educational system.

.3.2.4 Historical Contextualization

New historicism contextualizes the textbooks within their broader historical and political environment. This approach examines how historical narratives and power structures influence contemporary representations, providing a deeper understanding of the ideological functions of educational materials.

.3.3 Detailed Coding Process

The coding process for analyzing textual data is detailed to ensure transparency and reproducibility. The process includes:

.3.3.1 Development of Coding Categories:

Coding categories were developed based on preliminary readings of the textbooks and existing literature. These categories included themes such as violence, cultural inferiority, political conflict, and representations of Jewish identity. Each category was defined with specific criteria to guide the coding process.



.3.3.2 Coding Procedure:

A systematic coding procedure was implemented, where each textbook was analyzed line by line to identify relevant themes. Mark text sections corresponding to the predefined categories, ensuring that every picture instance was captured.

.3.3.3 Development of Coding Categories:

The development of coding categories for this study is grounded in both initial readings of the textbooks and established literature in the field, ensuring a comprehensive and systematic approach to the analysis. The first category, themes of violence, captures instances where Arabs are shown as violent, aggressive, or involved in conflict. This category is crucial for understanding how the interpretation of Arabs as violent supports broader narratives of threat and justification for defensive actions. The second category, cultural inferiority, includes representations that describe Arab culture as inferior, backward, or uncivilized compared to Jewish or Western cultures. This category helps to reveal how educational materials continue stereotypes that diminish Arab culture and promote a sense of cultural superiority among Jewish students .

Political conflict, the third category, covers pictures of political conflict or issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This theme is essential for examining how textbooks frame the ongoing conflict, often presenting it in a way that legitimizes Israeli actions and delegitimizes Palestinian perspectives. The fourth category, representations of Jewish identity, focuses on how Jewish identity is portrayed, particularly about Arab identity and the broader ideological narratives of Zionism and nationalism. This category sheds light on how educational materials construct a cohesive national identity, emphasizing Jewish historical ties to the land and disregarding the Arab presence and narrative.

.3.3.4 Inter-Rater Reliability:

Multiple coders were involved to enhance the coding process's reliability. Inter-rater reliability was ensured through training sessions where coders adjusted their



interpretations of the coding categories. Regular meetings were held to discuss differences and refine the coding criteria.

.3.3.5 Correction Exercises:

Regular correction exercises were conducted where coders independently coded the same text sample and compared their results. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved, refining the coding criteria and enhancing consistency.

.3.3.6 Use of Software:

Qualitative data analysis software, "NVivo," was used to manage and analyze the coded data. This software facilitates the organization of large volumes of text, allows for the efficient retrieval of coded sections, and supports the generation of reports and visualizations that summarize the findings.

.3.3.7 Ongoing Collaboration :

Coders maintained regular communication and collaboration throughout the coding process, discussed any ambiguities or challenges, and ensured a cohesive approach.

.3.3.8 Additional Data Sources:

Other data sources, such as policy documents, curriculum guidelines, and educational reforms, are also examined to provide a comprehensive context for the analysis. These sources help to situate the textbook content within the broader educational and ideological framework.

By integrating these multiple perspectives, the study offers a more nuanced and holistic understanding of the representations of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials and their broader implications. Triangulation enhances the credibility of the findings and provides a more comprehensive view of the impact of these educational narratives.



.4Results

.4.1Negative Representation of Arabs

The analysis reveals a consistent pattern of negative pictures of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials. Arabs are often described using stereotypes that emphasize violence, irrationality, and cultural inferiority. These descriptions are not isolated but predominant across various subjects and grade levels. For example, history textbooks frequently show Arabs as violent aggressors in conflicts with Jewish populations, often highlighting instances of terrorism and violence while moderating or ignoring peaceful interactions. Social studies materials may describe Arab societies as mainly unstable, disposed to irrational behavior, and culturally inferior to Western and Jewish societies. These stereotypes serve to dehumanize Arabs and present them as everlasting threats to Jewish safety and security. This negative representation supports a narrative that justifies the Zionist project, describing the establishment of the Jewish state as a necessary response to Arab aggression and dismissing Arab historical claims and narratives.

.4.2Orientalist Depictions

Orientalist depictions in the textbooks create an opposition between the rational, superior West and the irrational, inferior East. Edward Said's notion of Orientalism is evident in how Arabs are often described as backward, violent, and incapable of progress. For instance, literature and history textbooks might describe Arab characters and societies as static and unchanging, contrasting sharply with the dynamic and progressive Jewish or Western characters and societies. These depictions reinforce stereotypes of Arabs as "other," alien, and fundamentally different from the West. Such interpretations contribute to a broader narrative of Western superiority, suggesting that Western or Jewish culture is the peak of civilization. In contrast, Arab culture remains stuck in primitive and violent traditions. This opposition legitimizes colonialist attitudes and policies, reinforcing the perception that Western intervention or domination is necessary for progress and stability in the Middle East.



.4.3 Zionist Justifications

Zionist ideology is evident in the interpretation of Arabs as obstacles to the Jewish state's survival. Textbooks often describe Arabs as enemies, emphasizing their hostility and violence. For example, textbooks might describe historical events such as the 1948 Arab-Israeli War in terms that frame Arabs as aggressors and Israelis as defenders. The narrative often highlights Arab rejection of Jewish statehood and violent opposition to Jewish presence in Palestine. This representation supports a narrative that justifies the displacement of Palestinians and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine by depicting Arab resistance as illegitimate and inherently violent. The educational materials may also minimize or omit Palestinian historical narratives and perspectives, presenting a one-sided view that aligns with Zionist ideology. This approach not only marginalizes Arab voices but also reinforces the notion that the creation of Israel was a necessary and justified act in the face of Arab hostility.

.4.5 Themes in English Language Education

High school English textbooks include themes related to politics, individual freedoms, community service, and Jewish identity. These themes are carefully selected to reinforce specific ideological perspectives and promote a cohesive national identity. English language education becomes a medium through which broader social and political values are imparted to students, integrating language learning with ideological considerations.

.4.6 Politics and Individual Freedoms

Themes related to politics and individual freedoms emphasize democratic values and the importance of civic engagement. For example, English textbooks might include texts and exercises that highlight the democratic institutions of Israel, the importance of individual rights, and the value of civic participation. These themes are often presented in contrast to negative depictions of Arab societies, which may be portrayed as lacking in democratic values and individual freedoms. By comparing these contrasting representations, the educational materials implicitly promote the idea that Israeli society is superior and more advanced. This approach not only reinforces national pride but also spreads stereotypes



about Arab societies as undemocratic and oppressive, further establishing negative perceptions of Arabs.

.4.6 Community Service and Jewish Identity

Themes related to community service and Jewish identity promote a sense of national pride and collective responsibility. English textbooks may include stories, articles, and activities that celebrate famous Jewish personalities, historical achievements, and cultural contributions. These themes aim to instill a strong sense of Jewish identity and continuity, emphasizing the positive aspects of Jewish history and culture. For example, students might read about notable historical figures, learn about Jewish holidays and traditions, and engage in projects highlighting community service and social responsibility. By focusing on these positive elements, the educational materials foster a sense of unity and pride among Jewish students while reinforcing the historical narrative of Jewish perseverance and success. This approach helps to create a cohesive national identity that aligns with the broader goals of the Israeli education system.

.5 Discussion

.5.1 Implications for Education and Society

The interpretation of Arabs in Israeli textbooks has profound implications for both education and societal perceptions. By consistently depicting Arabs negatively, these educational materials contribute to the marginalization and dehumanization of the Arab population within Israeli society. Such portrayals reinforce existing stereotypes and shape young students' attitudes and beliefs, embedding these biases into societal consciousness. This systematic dehumanization serves to legitimize and preserve a narrative that justifies the Zionist project, framing it as a necessary response to an inherently unreceptive and inferior Arab presence. By dismissing Arab historical claims and perspectives, these textbooks foster an environment where Arab contributions and experiences are minimized or ignored, reinforcing a one-sided historical narrative (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Peled-Elhanan, 2012).



This biased description has broader societal consequences, as educational materials are crucial in shaping collective memory and national identity. When young students are repeatedly exposed to negative depictions of Arabs, it reinforces a worldview that sees Arabs as lasting opponents, thereby establishing divisions and justifying exclusionary policies. Preserving stereotypes and biases through education contributes to ongoing social and political tensions, delaying efforts toward resolution and peaceful coexistence (Podeh, 2000).

.5.2 The Role of Themes in English Language Education

The inclusion of specific themes in English language education reflects broader ideological objectives that align with the goals of the Israeli education system. These themes, such as politics, individual freedoms, community service, and Jewish identity, are not chosen arbitrarily but are carefully selected to reinforce particular values and perspectives. For instance, themes related to democratic values and civic engagement often highlight the strengths of Israeli society while contrasting them with negative depictions of Arab societies. This association promotes a narrative that Israeli society is superior and more advanced, reinforcing national pride and cohesion (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991).

Moreover, themes that emphasize Jewish identity and historical continuity foster a strong sense of national pride and collective responsibility among Jewish students. By celebrating Jewish achievements and cultural contributions, these educational materials help to create a cohesive national identity that aligns with the broader ideological goals of Zionism. This approach not only instills a sense of belonging and pride in Jewish students but also marginalizes alternative narratives, particularly those of the Arab population (Al-Haj, 2005).

.5.3 Addressing Bias and Promoting Inclusivity

Addressing the bias in educational materials is crucial for promoting inclusivity and mutual understanding. Revising textbooks to include balanced and accurate portrayals of



Arabs and their history can contribute to a more inclusive education system. Such revisions would involve incorporating Arab perspectives, acknowledging historical injustices, and presenting a view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By doing so, educational materials can help foster a more comprehensive understanding of the region's complex history and promote empathy and respect among students from different backgrounds (Pingel, 2010).

Promoting inclusivity in education also requires a broader commitment to equity and social justice. This includes training teachers to recognize and challenge biases in educational materials, creating spaces for critical discussions about historical narratives, and encouraging students to engage with diverse perspectives. Flustering an inclusive and critical approach to education can counteract the negative impacts of biased portrayals and contribute to a more just and equitable society (Feniger & Yahav, 2015).

In conclusion, addressing the biases in Israeli educational materials is essential for fostering mutual understanding between Jewish and Arab populations. Promoting a more balanced and inclusive approach to education can challenge entrenched stereotypes and build a foundation for a more peaceful and cohesive society.

.6Conclusion

The representation of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials and the themes included in English language education reflect broader ideological objectives that are deeply influenced by Orientalism, Zionism, and the Israeli-Jewish mentality. These educational materials serve as tools for learning and as vehicles for ideological transmission, shaping how students perceive and understand the world around them.

As conceptualized by Edward Said, Orientalism critiques the Western scholarly and political description of Eastern cultures, which often creates a contrast between the rational, superior West and the irrational, inferior East. This framework is evident in the way Arabs are represented in Israeli textbooks. By illustrating Arabs as backward, violent, and incapable of progress, these materials reinforce longstanding stereotypes that justify



colonial and imperialist attitudes. This Orientalist perspective dehumanizes Arabs and perpetuates a narrative of Western (and, in this context, Israeli) superiority. The implications of such portrayals extend beyond the classroom, contributing to a societal mindset that views Arab culture as fundamentally inferior and threatening (Said, 1978).

Zionist ideology, which supports the founding and ongoing development of the Israeli state, profoundly influences educational content. Textbooks often show the establishment of Israel as a reasonable and necessary response to historical injustices faced by Jews while simultaneously portraying Arabs as obstacles to this national project. This narrative not only justifies the displacement of Palestinians but also minimizes their historical presence and rights in the region. By emphasizing Jewish historical ties to the land and presenting Arabs predominantly as antagonists, educational materials support a one-sided historical narrative that aligns with Zionist objectives. This skewed portrayal perpetuates conflict by fostering an environment where Arab perspectives are marginalized, and their grievances are delegitimized (Masalha, 1997; Podeh, 2000).

Promoting inclusivity requires a commitment to equity and social justice within the educational system. This includes training teachers to recognize and challenge biases, encouraging critical thinking and discussion among students, and creating a curriculum that reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives within Israeli society. By fostering an inclusive and empathetic approach to education, it is possible to break down barriers of prejudice and build a foundation for a more just and peaceful society (Feniger & Yahav, 2015).

In conclusion, the pictures of Arabs in Hebrew educational materials and the themes included in English language education reflect broader ideological objectives that have significant implications for societal perceptions and the ongoing conflict in the region. Addressing these biases and promoting inclusivity in education is not only a matter of social justice but also a crucial step toward fostering mutual understanding and settlement between Jewish and Arab populations in Israel.



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