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CONTENTS

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Preface

The aim of the ***11th International e-Conference on Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* (11IeCSHSS)** was to bring together scholars, administrators and students from different countries, and to discuss theoretical and practical issues in different areas of Humanities and Social Sciences. The e-Conference was organized as a kind of a *multi-disciplinary forum* which provided the appropriate opportunities for *inter-disciplinary communications*.

The areas of study covered by the e-Conference were the following: Philosophy, Anthropology, Psychology, Science of Education, History, Linguistics, Arts, Sociology, Political Science**,** Law**,** and Economics.

The e-Conference was organized in cooperation with the COAS Partner Institutions: South-West University "Neofit Rilski", Faculty of Philosophy, Blagoevgrad, BULGARIA, University of Ruse "Angel Kanchev", Faculty of Business and Management, Ruse, BULGARIA, Albanian University, Tirana, ALBANIA, and Kaye Academic College of Education, Beersheba, ISRAEL.

The e-Conference was organized exclusively as an online conference, and the English was the only language of the conference.

The e-Conference had realized on **15-17 September 2025**, starting by exposing accepted abstracts at the COAS website (15 September 2025, -01:00 BST). It was followed by the posting at the COAS website different textual contents sent by the e-Conference participants, such as discussions, analyses, critics, comments, suggestions, proposals, etc., regarding exposed abstracts and other contents. All textual contents were reviewed and posted at the COAS website by the e-Conference moderators, appointed by the Scientific Committee.

All submitted abstracts/full texts went through two reviewing processes: (1) double-blind (at least two reviewers), and (2) non-blind (two members of the Scientific Committee). Thus, final decision for the presenting and publishing depended of these two kinds of reviews, in order to be accepted for presentation at the conference and to be published in the e-Conference Proceedings.

The Conference Proceedings will be submitted for indexing in different international databases.

Finally, we would like to thanks to all participants of the e-Conference, as well as to all reviewers and editors, for their efforts, which enable that the e-Conference was productive experience.

We are looking forward to the ***12th International e-Conference on Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* (12IeCSHSS)** that will be held in **September 2026**, using the same online model. We hope that it will be an interesting and enjoying at least as the previous e-Conference.

Scientific Committee

C O A S

Structural and Visual Aspects of Contemporary Typography – From Handwritten Calligraphy to Digitization and the Creation of Dynamic Variable Fonts

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Abstract

The article examines the role of the aesthetic characteristics of calligraphy in the creation of dynamic variable fonts in contemporary typography. By analyzing the visual approaches in the creation of a calligraphic work and comparing them with the possibilities provided by modern software tools for generating dynamically changing fonts, the process of creating new-generation fonts is traced. Particular attention is given to the analysis of significant examples from contemporary typography that use digital fonts in text design – from simplified sans serif, serif fonts, decorative scripts, and others. In recent years of the 21st century, a trend has developed in the creation of digital fonts that can proportionally change and deform based on width, weight, slant, style, texture, optical size, and other parameters. This variable function of Adobe's software programs is part of the OpenType features, called "Variable font," which enables greater flexibility in text design.

Keywords: variable font, calligraphy, digital font, OpenType feature.

1. Introduction

Calligraphy is a highly impactful art form, capable of evoking and creating emotional depth and space for the imagination. The leading visual approaches of calligraphy artists are always tied to a sense of harmony and balance, combining activity and dynamism with compositional silence and calmness, which is then conveyed to the viewer. Calligraphic works are powerful not only because of the meaning embedded in the written message, but also due to the high emotional intensity of their purely visual aesthetic qualities. The distinctive characteristic of calligraphy – merging meaningful messages with visual impulses conveyed through composition – goes beyond simple interpretation and immerses the viewer in complex, multidirectional associative and aesthetic-perceptual connections. The pursuit of a unified aesthetic whole in a calligraphic piece, along with its uniqueness, makes it a complete artistic work of undeniable aesthetic value.

Contemporary typography is filled with a wide variety of examples using digital fonts in text design – from simple grotesques and serif fonts to decorative scripts and more. In recent years, there has been a growing trend toward creating digital fonts that can change proportionally and deform based on width, weight, slant, style, texture, optical size, and other parameters. This variable function, supported by Adobe software and part of the OpenType format, is known as the

Variable Font, and it allows for greater flexibility in text design. A variable font includes one or more axes, each providing specific variation between different design parameters. The format also allows for intermediate designs, either for the entire set of letters or for specific characters, offering finer control over the letterform's silhouette.

A variable font is one in which the equivalent of many individual fonts can be compactly packed into a single font file. It is done by defining variations within the font, forming a design space with one or multiple axes (e.g., weight, width, or optical size). Many font variants can then be represented by interpolating unknown values between known data points.

This new function opens exciting possibilities for fine-tuning the typographic palette and for new types of typography that can adapt to dynamic content, the reader's device, screen orientation, or even letter spacing.

Variable font technology is based on the OpenType 1.8 specification, introduced by Microsoft, Apple, Google, and Adobe in 2016. It is revolutionary in digital typography, being efficient and adaptive not only for designers but also for developers. Instead of having separate files for bold, italic, condensed, or extended styles, a variable font can seamlessly transition between these. This is achieved through "axes" that control various aspects of the font's appearance, such as weight, width, slant, optical size, etc.

A diagram (Fig. 01) illustrates a design space for a three-axis variable font with axes for weight, width, and optical size. The red glyph "a" at the center of the graphic represents the core or base design. Each green glyph represents the endpoints of the three axes, and the gray glyphs show transitional positions between these endpoints.

It's not necessary for every axis to affect all glyphs in a font, nor must each axis include a wide range of variations. Font designers can adjust the behavior of transitions along an axis to be gradual or abrupt – allowing the axis to act as a switch or provide discrete steps without intermediates. It is also possible to create axes affecting only one glyph (e.g., one that adjusts the tail length of the capital "Q") or axes that affect only a subset of glyphs with specific traits (e.g., an axis that shortens or upper lengths).

When using an axis that controls stroke weight, without affecting character width, font styles can range from ultra-thin to extra-bold (Fig. 02). An axis controlling width allows for condensed to very extended styles while maintaining letter proportions (Fig. 03). An axis for slant transforms upright styles into italics (Fig. 04). An axis controlling contrast between thick and thin parts of the letter allows for a palette with or without stroke contrast (Fig. 05). Serif axes can add or reduce serif prominence, enabling transitions from serif to sans-serif styles, even with adjustable serif lengths. Other axes can adjust x-height, improving small-letter readability, or modify capital height independently. Another axis could manage letter spacing – dynamically increasing or decreasing it. The optical size axis improves legibility at various sizes depending on the medium, whether digital or print (Fig. 06). For digital media, differences across web browsers may require size optimization for each channel. These are some of the key features of variable font axes.

There are also custom axes based on creative and experimental projects. These include detailed changes to the silhouette and character of letters. One example is an axis for roundness, morphing shapes from sharp angles to smooth curves. Another example involves adding or removing ink in places where natural ink buildup occurs when writing with a metal nib. This design element - known as an *ink trap* – helps letters appear visually balanced in small sizes. Ink traps are often used in glyphs with diagonal strokes. An ink trap axis can dynamically add or remove these features, improving legibility in small print sizes.

Other axes can toggle decorative elements, strokes, or flourishes – especially useful for script and ornamental fonts. In calligraphic fonts, an axis could modify stroke style – from delicate

monoline strokes to expressive brush textures. Axes can also alter the texture of calligraphic fonts – from refined and smooth to rough and bold lines. Additionally, an axis can adjust ascender and descender lengths of lowercase letters, compressing or expanding vertical spacing. These are just a few possibilities; many other axes arise from designer experimentation.

Practical applications of variable fonts can be found in web design, branding, print preparation, and enhancing accessibility for both designers and developers. In web design, variable fonts improve site performance by reducing the number of font files and allowing responsive typography. In branding, they ensure consistency and flexibility across different media and formats. Purchasing a variable font expands the potential for developing diverse brand visuals. In print design, especially at small sizes, selecting a variable font with an optical axis ensures legibility across different sizes.

This accessibility to fine-tune weight and size improves user readability, optimizes workflow and communication between designers and developers, and provides flexibility while maintaining consistent typography. It also enables innovative designs, such as animated typography. Variable fonts offer a modern, versatile approach to typography, giving designers more creative control and enhancing the user experience.

The efficiency of a single file reduces the number of necessary font files, simplifying asset management and decreasing webpage load times. Designers can fine-tune typography for any layout or context by adjusting parameters with precision. Variable font functionality is supported in most modern browsers and design software (e.g., Adobe CC, Figma).

Technical details in the OpenType variable font format include additional tables that support variable functionality. The main tables are:

fvar: Lists the variation axes and their ranges.

gvar: Contains glyph variations for each axis.

cvar: Manages variation of control values.

avar: Adjusts interpolation of axis values.

Variable fonts use interpolation to generate intermediate styles between defined masters. For example, a font may have light and bold masters, and interpolation can generate any weight in between. Designing smooth interpolation requires careful planning, especially for highly decorative elements. Smooth transitions in variable fonts are achieved through consistent design and interpolation across all masters.

2. Gerrit Noordzij

Gerrit Noordzij is one of the most influential figures in contemporary typography. His research in the field of form generation and the dynamics of letterforms is essential to the development of modern type design. In his foundational work *'The Stroke: Theory of Writing'* (2005), Noordzij examines letters not as static shapes, but as the result of the movement of a writing tool. He emphasizes that the shapes of characters arise from how the tool is manipulated in relation to the baseline and slant.

Central to Noordzij's theory is the concept of the *'stroke'* – the fundamental structural unit in the construction of a letter. The stroke is understood as the movement of the writing instrument, which defines not only the contour but also the rhythm and visual dynamics of the form. This approach shifts the traditional perception of typography by focusing on the process of creation, rather than merely the final graphic result.

One of Noordzij's most significant contributions is the so-called *Noordzij Cube* – a three-dimensional model describing the interrelations between the three main parameters of type: weight, width, and contrast (Fig. 07). The model presents these characteristics as interdependent and subject to continuous transformation, allowing for more flexible and adaptive type family design.

In the context of modern technologies, Noordzij's ideas prove particularly relevant in the development of variable fonts. In the article *'Variations on a Theme'* (Beier, 2019), it is explored how his principles of weight and contrast form the basis of variable axes that allow for smooth interpolation between different styles within a typographic system.

Noordzij emphasizes that even minor changes in the angle of slant or the pressure of the tool can result in significant visual changes in the character. These changes affect not only the shape but also the perception and readability of the text. This movement-focused, process-oriented, and hand-based approach lies at the heart of modern type design methods, which seek a productive dialogue between historical writing traditions and the capabilities of the digital environment.

Noordzij's theories have a profound impact not only on type design but also on the pedagogical methodology of teaching typography. As a longtime professor at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague (KABK), he has shaped several generations of designers through his analytical and practical approach to writing and form-making. His method is based on a systematic study of the movement that generates form, rather than starting from fixed visual outcomes. This laid the foundation for the so-called *'Hague School'* of typographic education, known for its emphasis on calligraphy and letter construction.

Noordzij regards writing as a primary act, preceding graphic design and typography, meaning that each letter carries traces of the tool that formed it. This understanding allows for a deeper grasp of the visual differences between humanist and modern typographic styles, seeing them as results of different tools and movement angles – flat nib, quill, brush, engraving tool, etc.

In the digital context, Noordzij's approach is reflected in software environments such as RoboFont, Glyphs, and DrawBot, where type is treated not only as a visual object but also as the result of programmed movements and transformations. His concept of *'dynamic forms'*, which change in real time depending on context or platform, finds concrete application in the development of adaptive fonts for interface systems. Thus, despite its handwritten origins, Noordzij's theory is both traditional and visionary – offering a universal framework for analyzing and creating typographic forms in both analog and digital contexts.

3. TypeMedia

TypeMedia is a master's program at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, Netherlands. It is one of the most renowned type design programs in the world, offering in-depth study and creation of typefaces. The program specializes in the development of high-level type design and typography. Many of the graduate projects focus on the creation of type families that include one or more axes to optimize design processes and file formats.

4. Cosm by Benn Zorn

Cosm is a typeface family created in 2022 as a graduation project by German typographer and graphic designer Benn Zorn. The project is an experimental investigation into the interaction between analog and digital methods in the type design process, where drawing and

programming are used in parallel and treated equally as tools for shaping typographic structure (Fig. 08).

The initial concept focuses on visualizing psycho-emotional states – specifically anxiety and phobia – through letterform. The underlying hypothesis is that such states are underrepresented in contemporary type design and could be expressed through an unstable, non-traditional visual logic. In this context, the typeface aims to provoke an emotional response through formal deviations from standard typographic models.

Cosm includes several stylistic variants: a regular style with moderate geometrization, a sharply drawn and highly slanted italic with pronounced expressiveness, as well as additional stylistic variations inspired by the so-called abyssal aesthetic. This aesthetic is associated with visual qualities such as stickiness, mesh-like structure, organic fluidity, and fragmentation – forms that challenge conventional rationality in type design.

The creation process involves a generative approach, where coding is used not only as a tool for automation but also as an essential stage in the actual form-making. By using tools such as DrawBot and RoboFont, the author applies algorithmic principles, including Voronoi diagrams and other geometric transformations, to generate organic structures. These structures create visual tension and disrupt expected typographic rhythms, reinforcing a sense of destabilization and fluidity of form.

The project follows a repetitive process, in which drawing and programming alternate and mutually adjust each other, forming a dynamic cycle between intuitive and computational aesthetics. According to the author, this approach is *'a mixture of frustration and exhilaration'* that leads to an original result, disconnected from traditional historical or functional references.

Cosm questions the boundaries of the typographic system, demonstrating the potential for type to act as a mediator of psychological content. At the same time, the project showcases how contemporary design processes can integrate code as a creative tool, opening new directions for expression beyond established aesthetic and technical norms.

5. Furya

Furya is a variable font inspired by 1950s car lettering and the calligraphic model Civilité. The font includes a single variable axis that simultaneously affects several parameters – weight, slant, and letter construction. It is designed along three primary axes that differ in weight, angle, and formal structure (Fig. 9).

The variable axis, tentatively called the *'speedometer'*, ranges from 45 to -45 degrees and enables a smooth transition from a back-slanted, heavy style, through an upright, lighter form in the middle, to a forward-slanted and once again heavy style at the other extreme. This coordinate system synchronizes the transformation of all visual characteristics, creating a sense of motion and speed within the typographic composition itself.

6. Grima

The Grima Font Family is a contemporary display font based on the concept of *'Unispace'* – a new genre in type design inspired by both unicase and monospaced fonts, published by Fontfabric. The family includes five fonts with fixed darkness, expanding width, and a variable version for more fine-tuned control over widths (Fig. 10).

The axis responsible for the font's width offers a spectrum ranging from narrow to very wide, while preserving the proportional characteristics of the letterforms. This allows for a rich set

of variations expressed through dynamic shifts in weight and width, making the typeface suitable both for headlines and texts across different visual contexts.

The letterforms feature short ascenders and descenders, designed to ensure compactness and allow for text lines of uniform height but varying width. Each character has a unique skeleton, carefully crafted to fill the type body and space as densely as possible. The even spacing between characters, combined with their detailed shapes, creates harmony and a unified stylistic appearance in composition.

The Grima Font Family was created by type designer Todor Georgiev, part of the Letter Collective team. The typeface was developed as a result of an exploration into complex forms, guided by a fruitful idea to create a decorative lettering font where readability ranks third – after challenge and innovation.

Based on pencil sketches influenced by writing with a broad nib and featuring very fine calligraphic details, the font was designed to fill the gap in unconventional Bulgarian typefaces.

7. Gwen

Gwen is a typeface that blends modernity with geometric elegance. With its variable axes, it is particularly well-suited for projects requiring diverse visual impact, such as adaptive headlines or extended blocks of text. Gwen is distinguished by its delicate variations in stroke thickness and angle, which give it a unique character. The distinctive sharpening and elongation of the serifs, combined with the shifting weight of the rounded strokes, contribute to an impression of bold elegance and lightness.

The type family, created and published by Fontfabric, includes seven weights. The complete type system consists of two subfamilies: a highly distinctive Display serif family, which reveals its full potential and beauty at large sizes, and a more refined Text version, suitable for smaller sizes. The variable font combines the best of both variants and provides unique flexibility, allowing for seamless transitions across all weights and between the Text and Display styles simultaneously.

In this case, the axes are combined. The first axis adjusts the weight of the strokes without affecting the width of the characters. The second axis alters the details of the serifs – in one direction, they become more rounded, suitable for text (print) usage, while in the other, they become sharper and more decorative, ideal for display purposes (Fig. 11).

The font supports extended Latin and Cyrillic character sets, and its primary purpose is editorial use, though it can also be effectively applied to headlines, posters, packaging, and more.

8. Drumnik

Drumnik is a typeface family developed by Fontfabric Studio, drawing its inspiration from the traditions of Cyrillic script, specifically from the calligraphic practices of the Old Bulgarian literary canon. The typeface is designed as a variable typographic system, in which control axes allow tracking the transformation of forms between different stylistic states. This approach broadens the possibilities for dynamic typographic usage depending on the context and functional needs (Fig. 12).

The conceptual foundation of Drumnik is based on in-depth typographic research, including an analysis of historical styles such as Ustav (Cyrillic uncial) and Vyaz (a decorative, highly ornamental script from the late Middle Ages). The influences from these sources are not direct quotations but rather interpretations adapted to the contemporary visual environment. As

a result, the design incorporates distinctive structural features – pronounced contrast between primary and secondary strokes, expanded horizontal proportions, unique terminal shapes, and ornamented connections between elements.

At a later stage of development, elements from classical serif typefaces were integrated into the font, resulting in the creation of a hybrid typographic structure. This synthesis of historical reference and modern legibility seeks to achieve a balance between cultural identity and functional adaptability.

The project supports extended Latin and multiple stylistic sets, making it applicable across a wide range of visual and communicative contexts. The ability to interpolate across various axes (weight, contrast, style) positions Drumnik as a contemporary tool for adaptive typographic design, including in digital environments.

The development of Drumnik can be seen in parallel with broader trends in the renewal of Cyrillic graphic culture through the use of variable fonts and technologically assisted methodologies. In this sense, the typeface represents not just an aesthetic creation but part of a deliberate process of typographic reform aimed at providing new tools for cultural and linguistic representation in contemporary visual design.

9. Transforma

Transforma is a typeface family released by Fontfabric, skillfully combining an elegant sans-serif typeface, a smooth handwritten script, and a third hybrid style – *'The Mix'*, in which all elements blend into a visually harmonious whole (Fig. 13).

The serif component of Transforma is designed with wider proportions, ensuring excellent legibility even at small sizes. The inclusion of ink traps and vertical cuts gives it a contemporary and technological feel. The ExtraBlack version increases contrast and introduces experimental letterforms such as 'a,' 'f,' and 'g', offering an innovative reinterpretation of classical typographic elements.

The handwritten style captures the natural rhythm of handwriting, creating a lively, emotional, and engaging appearance that brings a sense of human warmth to the composition.

Enter The Mix – the creative direction where the geometric precision of the sans-serif and the organic softness of the script merge seamlessly, proving that contrasting forms can coexist and balance within a unified typographic system.

With its flexible structure and multi-style character, Transforma is suitable for a wide range of applications. The clarity and functionality of the sans-serif make it ideal for web design, mobile interfaces, navigation systems, and corporate communication, where readability is a priority. The handwritten style adds emotion and personality, making it perfect for packaging, advertising, invitations, magazines, and fashion branding. Meanwhile, The Mix is a great choice for editorial design, headlines, posters, and brand identities seeking a creative and modern visual language.

This typographic family, Transforma, offers both visual contrast and coherence, enabling designers to build rich, multi-layered compositions within a single font system.

10. Sofia Sans

Sofia Sans is a typeface that combines minimalism and flexibility, created and released by the Lettersoup studio. Thanks to its variable axes, Sofia Sans allows for fine-tuning of weight, width, and slant, making it particularly suitable for both digital platforms and print materials. The

typeface maintains its clean aesthetic and elegant design regardless of the context in which it is used (Fig. 14).

Sofia Sans was specifically developed to meet the needs of the tourist wayfinding system in Bulgaria. It supports both the Bulgarian form of Cyrillic and extended Latin, enabling full usability in multilingual environments. The type family is built according to the OpenType standard, including a rich set of features – small caps, various numeral styles, arrows, circled numbers, and more – further enhancing its functionality and versatility.

Visually, Sofia Sans impresses with its harmonious balance between geometric structure and humanist touches. The letterforms are stable and well-structured, which contributes to excellent legibility even at small sizes. At the same time, slightly rounded corners and occasional bouncing off the baseline in certain styles give the typeface an informal and approachable feel, softening the rigidity of its minimalist design.

This makes it especially suitable for wayfinding systems, public environments, web and mobile applications, where clarity, a friendly tone, and visual consistency are essential.

11. Shantell Sans

Shantell Sans is a modern handwritten font created by artist Shantell Martin in collaboration with Google Fonts. The typeface reflects her unique style – free, playful, and artistic, with references to handwriting and contemporary calligraphy. What's particularly interesting in the development of this typeface is the use of four variable axes: width, casualness, bounce, and spacing. Two of these – casualness and baseline bounce – convey a loose and unpretentious appearance of the text. The way the letters bounce off the baseline creates a sense of motion, lightness, and dynamism, which further enhances the informal character of the typeface (Fig. 15).

12. Segmenta

The Segmenta type family, developed by the Type Department, is an excellent example of the application of variable typography principles in contemporary design. Specifically, Segmenta A is designed as a decorative display font, intended for use in headlines, posters, advertising materials, and other visually impactful contexts. It includes 18 predefined styles, showcasing a variety of combinations across three primary typographic parameters: weight, width, and italic angle (Fig. 16).

These three variable axes not only cover the traditional dimensions of type but also enable continuous interpolation between values. Furthermore, the inclusion of an italic angle axis, which controls the slant of the letters, allows for extremely nuanced typographic expression – for example, when creating dynamic layouts or adapting to a specific linguistic context (especially in languages where italics carry different semantic or visual functions). The width axis, on the other hand, is especially useful in responsive web design, where text space is limited or varies depending on screen size and device orientation.

13. Conclusion

The dynamic development of typographic approaches in recent years is a result of both the rapid evolution of digital technologies and the shift in visual thinking, along with enhanced ability to influence and direct viewer perception. As the field expands with endless possibilities for aesthetic transformation and creative interpretation, a new emphasis is also emerging on the functionality and social relevance of typography in today's visual communication landscape.

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Appendix
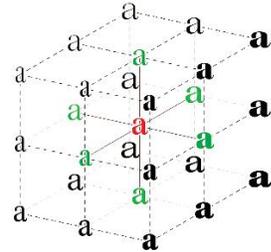
01. Kepler (3-axes variable font). Robert Slimbach

Figure 01

02. True – Mckinght Robinson

Figure 02

Width
Width

06. Grilli Type Foundry

Figure 03

Italic
Italic

04. Grilli Type Foundry

Figure 04

Contrast
Contrast

05. Grilli Type Foundry

Figure 05

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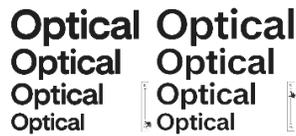
06. Grilli Type Foundry

Figure 06

Fig. 1. Translation   Fig. 2. Expansion
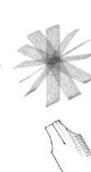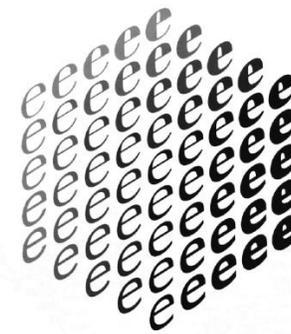
07. Gerrit Noordzij - cube and tools research

Figure 07
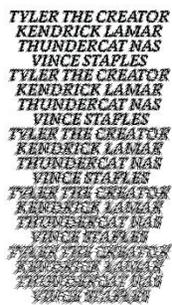
08. Coon, Benn Zorn, 2022

Figure 08

09. Furya, Benn Zorn, 2022

Figure 09

10. Grima, Todor Georgiev

Figure 10

Gwen Text Regular

Gwen Regular

11. Gwen, Fontfabric

Figure 11

12. Drumnik, Fontfabric

Figure 12

Lorem ipsum

Lorem ipsum

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13. Transforma, Fontfabric

Figure 13

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14. Sofia Sans, Lettersoup

Figure 14

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Кирилица

15. Shantell Sans, ArrowType

Figure 15

Condensed
Condensed

Condensed
Condensed

16. Segmenta, Kobuzan

Figure 16

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Decolonial Horizons and Epistemic Justice: Reimagining the Humanities and Social Sciences from the Global South

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the enduring coloniality of knowledge within the humanities and social sciences, with particular focus on African intellectual traditions and epistemic struggles. Drawing on decolonial theory, cognitive justice frameworks, and Southern epistemologies, it argues that prevailing academic paradigms continue to marginalize endogenous knowledge systems through epistemicide, linguistic hegemony, and methodological imperialism. The study critically examines how Eurocentric standards of academic excellence undermine pluriversal knowledge, and explores how indigenous philosophies, oral traditions, and Afrocentric pedagogies offer fertile grounds for epistemic reconstitution. Methodologically, the paper adopts a comparative analysis of curricular structures, publishing trends, and research policies in selected African and Western institutions, alongside case studies from grassroots knowledge production initiatives. It highlights the role of youth movements, digital platforms, and Pan-African intellectual networks in resisting epistemic domination and forging new futures of knowledge. The paper concludes by proposing a reconfiguration of the humanities and social sciences through dialogical ethics, plural rationalities, and decolonial praxis that affirm the dignity, complexity, and validity of all ways of knowing. This contribution speaks directly to the conference's commitment to interdisciplinary reflection and global cooperation, offering a transformative lens for rethinking the future of scholarship in a multipolar world.

Keywords: decoloniality, epistemic justice, cognitive justice, African studies, humanities and social sciences, pluriversality, knowledge decolonization.

1. Introduction

Contemporary knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences remains deeply shaped by what decolonial scholars conceptualize as the *coloniality of knowledge*—the persistence of epistemic structures established during colonial rule that continue to privilege Euro-American ways of knowing (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011). Although formal colonial administrations have largely receded, their epistemological legacies endure through disciplinary canons, methodological norms, linguistic hierarchies, and institutional standards that determine what counts as legitimate knowledge. Universities, scholarly journals, and research funding

regimes frequently reproduce these hierarchies, positioning Western epistemologies as universal while relegating non-Western knowledge systems to the status of culture, tradition, or empirical data rather than theory (Grosfoguel, 2013; Santos, 2014).

Within this context, epistemic hierarchies in the humanities and social sciences demand sustained critical interrogation. Dominant paradigms often claim neutrality and objectivity while masking their historical entanglement with imperial power relations (Connell, 2007). Eurocentric theoretical frameworks are routinely treated as benchmarks of academic excellence, marginalizing alternative epistemologies through processes of exclusion that Santos (2016) conceptualizes as *epistemicide*—the systematic devaluation and destruction of knowledge systems associated with colonized peoples. These hierarchies are further reinforced through linguistic dominance, particularly the privileging of English and other colonial languages in scholarly communication, which constrains the visibility and legitimacy of knowledge produced in African and other Global South languages (Bennett, 2015; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). As Ngũgĩ powerfully observes, "*the choice of language and the use of language is central to a people's definition of themselves*," and the domination of language constitutes a domination of the mental universe of the colonized (Ngũgĩ, 1986: 4).

African intellectual traditions occupy a critical yet persistently underrecognized position within global debates on epistemic justice. African philosophies, oral traditions, ethical systems, and indigenous modes of knowledge production have historically generated sophisticated insights into ontology, relationality, governance, and morality (Wiredu, 1996; Hountondji, 1997). However, these intellectual contributions have often been excluded from mainstream theoretical discourse or selectively incorporated only when translated into Western conceptual categories. Paulin Hountondji has critiqued this tendency by warning against static notions of "tradition," emphasizing that "*African tradition… is dynamic*" and internally generative rather than derivative (Hountondji, 2002: 34). Recent work on epistemic and cognitive justice challenges such asymmetries by affirming the equal legitimacy of diverse ways of knowing and calling for a *pluriversal* intellectual order in which epistemologies coexist without hierarchical ranking (Fricker, 2007; Santos, 2014).

Against this backdrop, African decolonial scholars have emerged at the forefront of efforts to reimagine the humanities and social sciences by contesting epistemic hierarchies and asserting epistemic freedom—the right to theorize the world from African historical experiences and lived realities. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that this struggle requires "provincializing" Western knowledge and dismantling what he describes as the *cognitive empire*, a global system that continues to colonize the minds of formerly oppressed peoples. As he states, "*epistemic freedom in Africa is about the struggle for African people to think, theorize, interpret the world and write from where they are located, unencumbered by Eurocentrism*" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 19).

Similarly, Kwasi Wiredu's project of *conceptual decolonization* insists that African philosophers critically examine the conceptual frameworks inherited through colonial languages and institutions. His injunction—often summarized as "*Africa, know thyself*"—underscores the necessity of reclaiming indigenous categories of thought as the basis for intellectual autonomy (Wiredu, 1996). Achille Mbembe complements this position by critiquing what he terms the "imperial denial of common humanity," whereby African experiences are devalued as legitimate sources of theory. His call for a plural, relational, and historically grounded "Creole Africa" challenges rigid epistemic boundaries and affirms African agency in global knowledge production (Mbembe, 2001).

The enduring relevance of Frantz Fanon further illuminates the psychological and epistemic dimensions of colonial domination. Fanon's analysis of internalized inferiority and colonial trauma reveals how epistemic subjugation operates not only at the level of institutions

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but also within subjectivity itself. His assertion that *"true revolution is born of suffering"* emphasizes that epistemic liberation is inseparable from broader struggles for human dignity and social transformation (Fanon, 1963: 93).

It is within this intellectual and political landscape that the present article situates itself. The study seeks to contribute to ongoing decolonial debates by examining how coloniality continues to structure the humanities and social sciences, with particular attention to African epistemic struggles and intellectual resources. Specifically, it pursues four interrelated objectives: (1) to analyze the mechanisms through which epistemic hierarchies are reproduced in contemporary academic institutions; (2) to critically assess how Eurocentric standards of knowledge production marginalize African and other Southern epistemologies; (3) to explore the theoretical and practical contributions of African intellectual traditions to debates on epistemic justice; and (4) to consider possibilities for reconfiguring the humanities and social sciences through decolonial and pluriversal approaches. The central questions guiding the analysis are: How does coloniality continue to shape knowledge production? In what ways are African epistemologies rendered invisible or subordinate? And how might epistemic justice enable the transformation of global knowledge systems toward more equitable and dialogical futures?

2. Conceptual and theoretical framework

This study is grounded in a decolonial theoretical orientation that interrogates the historical and contemporary conditions under which knowledge is produced, legitimized, and circulated. Drawing on theories of coloniality, cognitive justice, and Southern epistemologies, the framework provides an analytical lens for understanding how epistemic hierarchies are constituted and how alternative knowledge systems may be recognized and institutionalized within the humanities and social sciences.

2.1 *Coloniality of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences*

The concept of the *coloniality of knowledge* emerges from Latin American decolonial thought and refers to the enduring epistemological structures established through European colonial expansion that continue to shape modern systems of knowledge (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2011). Modern academic disciplines—including anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and history—were largely institutionalized within colonial contexts and were instrumental in producing classificatory regimes that positioned Europe as the epistemic center of the world (Mudimbe, 1988; Said, 1978). These disciplines not only described colonized societies but also constructed them as objects of study, reinforcing asymmetries between the knowing subject and the known Other.

Eurocentrism, as a foundational feature of these disciplines, is characterized by the universalization of European historical experiences, philosophical traditions, and methodological standards (Dussel, 1995; Connell, 2007). Knowledge produced in Europe and North America is routinely treated as theory, while knowledge from Africa and other regions of the Global South is often relegated to empirical data or case studies. This epistemological ordering naturalizes inequality by obscuring the power relations that underlie claims of universality and objectivity (Grosfoguel, 2013).

The enduring effects of colonial epistemological ordering are evident in contemporary academic practices, including curricula that privilege Western canons, peer-review systems that marginalize non-Eurocentric approaches, and research methodologies that prioritize positivist or extractive paradigms (Bhambra, 2014). These practices sustain what decolonial scholars identify as epistemic dependence, wherein scholars from the Global South remain structurally constrained

in their capacity to generate autonomous theoretical frameworks (Hountondji, 1997). As a result, coloniality persists not as a historical residue but as an active and constitutive force in the organization of modern knowledge.

2.2 *Cognitive justice and epistemic pluralism*

Cognitive justice provides a normative and analytical framework for addressing epistemic inequality by asserting the equal legitimacy of diverse knowledge systems (Visvanathan, 2009; Santos, 2014). Unlike approaches that seek mere inclusion within existing epistemic hierarchies, cognitive justice challenges the foundational assumptions that authorize certain forms of knowledge while disqualifying others. It calls for recognition of multiple epistemologies, including indigenous, oral, and community-based knowledge practices, as valid and theoretically generative.

Central to cognitive justice is the critique of epistemic exclusion—the systematic marginalization of knowledge produced outside dominant epistemological frameworks. Santos (2016) conceptualizes this process as *epistemicide*, referring to the destruction or silencing of entire knowledge systems through colonialism, modernization, and global capitalism. Epistemicide operates through language suppression, educational reform, and the imposition of Eurocentric standards of rationality that delegitimize non-Western modes of knowing.

The politics of recognition plays a crucial role in mediating epistemic justice. Recognition, however, is not merely symbolic; it involves material and institutional transformations in how knowledge is produced, disseminated, and evaluated (Fricker, 2007). Epistemic injustice manifests both as testimonial injustice—where certain knowers are deemed less credible—and hermeneutical injustice—where collective interpretive resources are insufficient to make sense of marginalized experiences. Addressing these injustices requires not only expanding epistemic inclusion but also restructuring the conditions under which knowledge claims are validated within academic institutions.

2.3 *Southern epistemologies and pluriversality*

Southern epistemologies emerge as a critical intervention in global knowledge debates by foregrounding the intellectual traditions and lived experiences of societies historically subjected to colonial domination (Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014). Rather than viewing the Global South as a passive recipient of theory, Southern epistemologies position it as an active locus of knowledge production, capable of generating conceptual frameworks grounded in local histories, struggles, and social realities.

This perspective challenges the assumption that theory must originate in the Global North to achieve global relevance. African, Latin American, and Asian intellectual traditions offer alternative ontologies, ethics, and epistemologies that unsettle Eurocentric assumptions about individuality, rationality, and progress (Wiredu, 1996; Escobar, 2018). These traditions emphasize relationality, communal knowledge production, and the inseparability of knowledge from ethical and political commitments.

Pluriversality, as articulated within decolonial scholarship, provides a conceptual alternative to epistemic universalism (Mignolo, 2011). Rather than seeking a single, all-encompassing epistemological framework, pluriversality affirms the coexistence of multiple, incommensurable yet equally valid ways of knowing. It envisions a world in which knowledge systems engage in dialogical rather than hierarchical relationships. Within the humanities and social sciences, a pluriversal orientation demands a rethinking of disciplinary boundaries,

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methodological norms, and evaluative criteria in ways that accommodate epistemic diversity without subsuming it under dominant paradigms.

3.

3.1 *Linguistic hierarchies and knowledge validation*

Language functions as a primary site through which epistemic hierarchies are produced and sustained. Scholarly communication in the humanities and social sciences is overwhelmingly dominated by colonial languages—particularly English and French—which serve as gatekeeping mechanisms for academic legitimacy and global visibility (Bennett, 2015). Knowledge articulated in African languages is frequently excluded from prestigious journals, global citation indices, and international conferences, reinforcing a hierarchy in which linguistic proximity to Europe determines epistemic value.

African intellectuals have consistently foregrounded language as a central terrain of decolonization. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) famously argued that "*language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture*" (p. 13). For Ngũgĩ, the dominance of colonial languages in education and scholarship constitutes a form of cognitive dispossession, severing African intellectual production from its cultural and historical foundations. The marginalization of African-language scholarship also undermines oral knowledge systems, which rely on narrative, performance, memory, and communal participation rather than textual fixation (Fanon, 1963; Wiredu, 1996).

This linguistic hierarchy reflects a broader colonial strategy of fragmentation and control. Patrice Lumumba explicitly warned that "*these divisions, which the colonial powers have always exploited… have played an important role in the suicide of Africa*" (Lumumba, 1962/2002: 178). Linguistic fragmentation—alongside ethnic and territorial divisions—has impeded the development of integrated intellectual traditions capable of contesting Eurocentric dominance. Thus, linguistic marginalization is not merely a technical issue of communication but a structural mechanism that regulates whose knowledge is heard, preserved, and institutionalized.

3.2 *Methodological standardization and epistemic authority*

Beyond language, epistemic marginalization is reinforced through methodological standardization that privileges Euro-American research paradigms as universally valid. Positivist, empiricist, and extractive methodologies—developed within specific Western historical contexts—are frequently treated as neutral benchmarks of scientific rigor (Connell, 2007). Alternative approaches grounded in relationality, lived experience, oral testimony, or indigenous cosmologies are often dismissed as anecdotal, unscientific, or insufficiently theoretical (Smith, 1999).

African leaders and thinkers understood methodological domination as inseparable from political and economic subjugation. Julius Nyerere's philosophy of *ujamaa* emphasized self-reliance and contextually grounded knowledge, rejecting externally imposed models of development and analysis (Nyerere, 1968). Similarly, Kwame Nkrumah argued that "*we must find an African solution to our problems, and that can only be found in African unity*" (Nkrumah, 1963: 217). This call extended beyond politics to knowledge production, insisting that African realities require African-centered analytical frameworks rather than imported epistemologies.

Methodological imperialism also manifests in extractive research practices, where African communities serve as sources of data rather than co-producers of knowledge. Such practices reproduce colonial relations between researcher and researched, reinforcing epistemic authority in Global North institutions (Grosfoguel, 2013). As Jomo Kenyatta's ethnographic work

demonstrated, reclaiming interpretive authority over African societies is itself an act of intellectual liberation (Kenyatta, 1938/1965).

3.3 *Metrics, rankings, and the political economy of knowledge*

The political economy of contemporary academia further entrenches epistemic inequality through metrics, rankings, and evaluation systems that privilege Eurocentric standards of excellence. Global university rankings, journal impact factors, and citation indices disproportionately favor institutions, publishers, and epistemic traditions located in the Global North (Marginson, 2016). These systems reward conformity to dominant theoretical paradigms, methodological norms, and linguistic practices, marginalizing scholarship that is locally grounded, politically engaged, or epistemologically alternative.

Such evaluative regimes function as instruments of epistemic discipline, shaping research agendas and career trajectories in ways that reinforce intellectual dependency (Hountondji, 1997). Nelson Mandela's lifelong struggle against apartheid underscores the broader ethical implications of such hierarchies. His insistence on dignity, equality, and democratic participation resonates with contemporary calls for epistemic justice that challenge structural exclusions in knowledge production (Mandela, 1994).

African feminist and activist traditions further expose the moral contradictions of dominant evaluative systems. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's defiance of colonial authority—"*I am beyond their timid lying morality and so I am beyond caring*" (Ransome-Kuti, as cited in Johnson-Odim & Mba, 1997: 122)—speaks to the refusal of externally imposed standards that deny legitimacy to African intellectual and political agency. In the academic sphere, such refusal translates into resistance against metrics that obscure power relations behind claims of neutrality and excellence.

Taken together, linguistic hierarchies, methodological standardization, and evaluative regimes constitute a mutually reinforcing architecture of epistemic marginalization. These mechanisms sustain Eurocentric dominance while limiting the capacity of African and other Global South epistemologies to shape the humanities and social sciences on their own terms.

4. African knowledge systems and epistemic alternatives

African knowledge systems constitute a rich and internally coherent body of epistemic traditions that offer substantive alternatives to Eurocentric paradigms in the humanities and social sciences. Rather than being residual or premodern forms of knowing, these systems articulate distinct ontological, ethical, and pedagogical orientations grounded in communalism, relationality, and holistic understandings of reality. Contemporary African philosophers and cultural theorists have conceptualized this intellectual project as *conceptual decolonization*: the critical recovery and renewal of indigenous categories of thought as the basis for epistemic autonomy (Wiredu, 1996).

4.1 *Indigenous african philosophical traditions*

Indigenous African philosophies are underpinned by ontological assumptions that differ fundamentally from Western individualism and dualism. Reality is commonly understood as relational, dynamic, and constituted through interaction among humans, ancestors, spiritual forces, and the natural environment (Mbiti, 1969; Wiredu, 1996). Knowledge, within this framework, is inseparable from ethics, social responsibility, and communal well-being.

Kwasi Wiredu's work on conceptual decolonization has been particularly influential in articulating the philosophical significance of these traditions. He argued that African philosophy must critically examine indigenous concepts on their own terms rather than through inherited Western categories, advocating intellectual independence in which Africans "think for themselves" rather than merely "think in English" (Wiredu, 1996: 20). This position challenges the assumption that philosophical rigor is exclusive to Western analytic traditions and underscores the capacity of African languages and concepts to generate original philosophical insights.

Similarly, Léopold Sédar Senghor's articulation of African epistemology emphasized participatory and affective modes of knowing. His oft-cited formulation—"*Emotion is African, as Reason is Hellenic*" (Senghor, 1964: 72)—was not a rejection of rationality but a critique of its reduction to abstraction and detachment. Senghor's work foregrounded the epistemic value of embodied, intuitive, and participatory knowledge, situating African ways of knowing within a broader critique of Western epistemological dualisms.

Molefi Kete Asante's theory of Afrocentricity further systematizes African philosophical principles as the foundation for knowledge production. Asante (1998) identifies core elements of what he terms "the mind of Africa," including holism, inclusiveness, poly-consciousness, and the unity of material and spiritual worlds. As he observes, "*there are several elements in the mind of Africa that govern how humans behave with regard to reality*" (Asante, 1998: 17). These principles collectively affirm a relational and communal epistemology that challenges the fragmentation characteristic of Eurocentric thought.

4.2 *Oral knowledge, memory, and social reproduction*

Oral traditions constitute a central epistemic modality within African societies, serving as repositories of history, ethics, cosmology, and scientific knowledge. Contrary to colonial assumptions that equated orality with intellectual deficiency, African oral systems operate through complex mechanisms of memory, performance, repetition, and communal validation (Vansina, 1985). Knowledge is preserved and transmitted not through textual fixation alone but through embodied practices embedded in social life.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has consistently emphasized the epistemic significance of orality and language in sustaining collective memory. He argues that "*the choice of language and the use to which it is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment*" (Ngũgĩ, 1986: 4). His description of colonial education as a "*cultural bomb*" highlights how linguistic displacement functions to erode confidence in indigenous knowledge systems and sever communities from their historical memory (Ngũgĩ, 1986).

The philosophical legitimacy of oral knowledge has also been defended by Sophie Oluwole, whose work on the Yoruba *Ifa* corpus demonstrated its internal logic, philosophical rigor, and epistemic sophistication. Oluwole rejected claims that African philosophy emerged only through Western contact, arguing instead that African thought is structured around a "harmony of opposites," where apparently contradictory positions are understood as complementary rather than mutually exclusive (Oluwole, 1997). This epistemic orientation challenges binary logic and affirms pluralism as a foundational principle of African knowledge systems.

Guardians of indigenous knowledge, such as Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, further emphasize the ethical dimensions of oral epistemologies. Mutwa understood knowledge as a sacred trust transmitted across generations, stressing the "significance of peace" as a prerequisite for intellectual and cultural continuity (Mutwa, 1999). In this sense, oral knowledge is inseparable from moral responsibility and collective survival.

4.3 *Afrocentric pedagogical approaches*

Afrocentric pedagogies translate African epistemic principles into educational practice by re-centering African histories, philosophies, and cultural experiences within curricula and teaching methodologies. These approaches challenge Eurocentric models of education that privilege abstraction, competition, and hierarchical authority, advocating instead for dialogical, communal, and contextually grounded learning environments (Asante, 1991; Dei, 2012).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's call for linguistic decolonization has profound pedagogical implications. Writing and teaching in African languages is not merely a cultural preference but an epistemic intervention that restores the integrity of African conceptual systems and affirms the authority of indigenous knowledge producers (Ngũgĩ, 1986). Afrocentric pedagogy thus reconceptualizes education as a process of cultural reclamation rather than assimilation.

Julius Nyerere's philosophy of *ujamaa* provides a socio-pedagogical framework rooted in communal responsibility and self-reliance. His assertion that "*no nation has the right to make decisions for another nation; no people for another people*" (Nyerere, 1968: 44) reflects an epistemic ethic that rejects externally imposed models of knowledge and development. In educational terms, *ujamaa* emphasizes collective learning, social relevance, and the moral purpose of knowledge.

Afrocentric approaches also require rethinking assessment and scholarly authority. Rather than privileging standardized metrics and individual achievement, they value collective inquiry, ethical accountability, and the social consequences of knowledge production. In this respect, African pedagogical traditions align closely with contemporary movements for epistemic justice, which seek to correct the historical silencing of African voices by restoring the dignity, validity, and institutional presence of indigenous scholarship (Santos, 2014).

5.

5.1 *Youth, student movements, and knowledge politics*

Youth and student movements have emerged as critical actors in contemporary struggles over knowledge production and institutional transformation. Across African and Global South universities, students have mobilized against curricula, symbols, and governance structures that reproduce colonial epistemic hierarchies. Movements such as *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* articulated demands not only for material access to education but also for epistemic inclusion, curricular Africanization, and institutional accountability (Heleta, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

These movements foreground knowledge politics as a central dimension of decolonization. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni conceptualizes these struggles within what he terms the *cognitive empire*, arguing that epistemic domination persists through patronizing structures that naturalize Eurocentric authority. As he asserts, "*there is no decolonization without de-patronization*," emphasizing that dismantling coloniality requires deep epistemic, gendered, and institutional transformation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021: 63). Student activism thus represents a generational refusal of inherited epistemic subordination and a demand for intellectual self-determination. Beyond universities, youth-led initiatives—including reading collectives, political education forums, and community dialogues—extend epistemic contestation into public life. These spaces challenge the monopoly of formal academia over knowledge production and affirm popular education as a legitimate site of theory formation (Freire, 1970; Mafeje, 2000).

5.2 *Digital infrastructures and knowledge circulation*

Digital infrastructures have become crucial arenas for epistemic negotiation and visibility, particularly for marginalized voices excluded from traditional academic publishing. Online platforms—such as open-access journals, blogs, podcasts, social media forums, and digital archives—enable scholars and activists to circulate ideas beyond institutional and linguistic gatekeeping mechanisms (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). These platforms facilitate what can be described as counter-hegemonic knowledge circulation, allowing African and Global South intellectuals to bypass conventional metrics of academic legitimacy. Digital spaces also foster dialogical knowledge production, where academic, activist, and community knowledges intersect. In this sense, they contribute to epistemic democratization by disrupting hierarchical distinctions between "expert" and "lay" knowledge.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's insistence that "*language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture*" (Ngũgĩ, 1986, p. 13) acquires renewed significance in digital contexts. Online spaces allow for the resurgence of African languages as vehicles of intellectual exchange, challenging the linguistic monoculture of global academia and expanding the epistemic public sphere.

5.3 *Pan-African and Global South intellectual networks*

Pan-African and Global South intellectual networks constitute another vital site of epistemic contestation. These networks—formal and informal—facilitate transnational collaboration, South–South dialogue, and the co-production of theory grounded in shared histories of colonialism and resistance (Connell, 2007; Santos, 2014). Such formations resonate with earlier Pan-African intellectual traditions that emphasized unity as a condition for epistemic and political liberation. Contemporary networks challenge the assumption that theoretical innovation flows unidirectionally from the Global North, instead asserting Africa and the Global South as sites of conceptual generation. Achille Mbembe, Paulin Hountondji, and Achie Mafeje have all underscored the need for autonomous intellectual traditions that resist dependency on Western theoretical validation. Achie Mafeje, in particular, rejected Western universalism and advocated *Africanity* as a combative methodological orientation. He argued that social scientists "*should increase the level of social awareness and consciousness of the citizens of their societies*" (Mafeje, 2000: 67), positioning scholarship as an ethically and politically engaged practice rather than a detached academic exercise.

6. Reconfiguring the humanities and social sciences

Reconfiguring the humanities and social sciences requires a fundamental shift in epistemological orientation, institutional practice, and ethical commitments. Central to this transformation is the dethroning of Eurocentrism—the assumption that Western knowledge systems possess universal applicability and epistemic superiority (Bhambra, 2014). Dialogical ethics and participatory knowledge production offer an alternative foundation for scholarly practice. These approaches emphasize reciprocity, co-creation, and accountability to communities, aligning with African epistemic traditions that understand knowledge as relational and socially embedded (Wiredu, 1996; Santos, 2014). Plural rationalities—rather than a single dominant logic—must be recognized as legitimate modes of understanding reality.

Kwasi Wiredu's call for *conceptual decolonization* remains central to this project. His injunction, often summarized as "*Africa, know thyself*," underscores the necessity of critically examining inherited conceptual frameworks and recovering indigenous categories of thought as resources for contemporary theory (Wiredu, 1996). Similarly, Paulin Hountondji's critique of

static notions of tradition cautions against romanticization, insisting that endogenous knowledge be understood as dynamic, critical, and open-ended. As he notes, "*there is no absolute origin at all, and the concept of endogeneity itself should therefore be relativised*" (Hountondji, 2002: 35). Institutionally, reconfiguration entails curricular reform, changes in research evaluation, and diversification of publishing practices. Afrocentric and Africa-centered paradigms, as articulated by scholars such as Asante (1998), provide methodological tools for grounding scholarship in African historical experiences and intellectual priorities without lapsing into essentialism.

7. Conclusion

This article has examined the persistence of coloniality in the humanities and social sciences and the diverse ways in which African and Global South intellectual traditions contest epistemic marginalization. Through an analysis of linguistic hierarchies, methodological dominance, institutional metrics, and contemporary sites of resistance, the study has demonstrated that epistemic injustice is structurally embedded yet actively challenged across multiple arenas. The theoretical contribution of this work lies in synthesizing decolonial theory, cognitive justice, and African epistemologies to articulate a pluriversal vision of knowledge production. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o reminds us, the struggle over language and culture remains central to resisting the "colonization of the mind" (Ngũgĩ, 1986). Ndlovu-Gatsheni's critique of the cognitive empire further underscores that epistemic freedom requires sustained, critical, and collective effort beyond symbolic inclusion. The implications for interdisciplinary scholarship and global cooperation are profound. Moving toward epistemic justice demands not only recognizing multiple ways of knowing but restructuring the institutions that govern knowledge production. The pluriversal academy envisioned here is one in which African, Global South, and Western epistemologies engage in dialogical rather than hierarchical relations, affirming the dignity, complexity, and validity of all knowledge traditions.

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S. Ouma & I. H. Maganya – Decolonial Horizons and Epistemic Justice: Reimagining ...

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Teacher Training in Pedagogical Communication Through Drama-Based Practices

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Abstract

The integration of digital technologies into education is reshaping the role of the teacher, placing renewed emphasis on the development of strong pedagogical communication skills. Effective communication remains central to successful teaching and is increasingly recognized as vital for supporting students' emotional and mental well-being in both traditional and digital learning environments. This study explores the impact of drama-based training programs on the development of communication skills among pre-service teachers in Portugal. Two cohorts participated: one engaged in a long-term course embedded within a higher education curriculum, and the other in a short-term Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) involving international collaboration. Data were collected through participant questionnaires and reflective activities, including verbal feedback and written diaries. The results indicate that drama-based learning fosters greater confidence, emotional awareness, and interpersonal competence – key components of effective pedagogical communication. The study draws on the theoretical frameworks of Dorothy Heathcote's (1995) Mantle of the Expert and Augusto Boal's (1979, 1995) Theatre of the Oppressed, highlighting the potential of drama education to enrich teacher training and prepare educators for the communicative demands of contemporary classrooms.

Keywords: drama education, pedagogical communication, teacher education, experiential learning, higher education.

1. Introduction

The growing integration of digital technologies in education is transforming the way teaching and learning take place. As classrooms become more technologically equipped, new modes of accessing knowledge and developing skills emerge. However, these changes extend far beyond the tools themselves, profoundly affecting the interaction between teachers and students.

Where face-to-face communication once formed the foundation of classroom interaction, digital platforms and online learning environments now play a predominant role. This transformation reflects the expectations of a generation of students who have grown up surrounded by digital media and are accustomed to interacting with content through technology. Artificial intelligence (AI) also plays an increasingly significant role in education: for teachers, it offers tools to generate content, personalize instruction, and assess student learning; for students,

it provides support in completing assignments, conducting research, collaborating in groups, and preparing for exams. Alongside these evident benefits, however, crucial questions arise regarding the appropriate use of technology and the need to maintain a healthy balance within the educational process.

Despite these advances, it is important not to forget that pedagogical communication remains central to effective teaching. Whether in digital or face-to-face contexts, the teacher's ability to communicate clearly, empathetically, and meaningfully is essential. In teacher education, the development of relational and communicative competencies is a key element in preparing future educators to navigate the complexities of contemporary classrooms.

In this current context, researchers are increasingly concerned about some unintended effects of the digital transformation in education. Studies suggest that growing dependence on digital tools may contribute to a decline in meaningful human interaction in schools (Woodruff et al., 2024). Likewise, the reduction of face-to-face communication may compromise the development of students' emotional intelligence, empathy, and social sensitivity. Selwyn (2024) notes that although AI can perform repetitive tasks efficiently, it lacks the capacity to handle the emotional subtleties and relational dynamics that often arise in real educational settings. Furthermore, as digital technologies streamline learning processes, some students may lose access to deeper learning experiences that develop through effort, dialogue, and interpersonal engagement. The convenience of obtaining instant answers can come at the expense of exploration, critical thinking, and emotional growth.

An OECD report (2025) on child well-being in the digital age raises similar concerns. The document introduces the concept of digital well-being, which encompasses the physical, emotional, and educational effects of technology on children (OECD, 2025: 31). The report highlights the close connection between students' online and offline lives, showing how their digital experiences shape behaviors, relationships, and school engagement. As children spend more time in digital environments, many become progressively disconnected from real-world social interactions.

Considering their developmental stage, children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of this disconnection. Therefore, support strategies should not be limited to controlling screen time or access to digital content; it is necessary to provide real, face-to-face opportunities to develop emotional awareness, practice self-expression, and cultivate healthy digital habits. UNICEF (2024) promotes a comprehensive framework for child well-being that includes emotional regulation, creativity, self-confidence, and social connection. These competencies are important not only for personal growth but also as protective factors within a digital context. Teachers, as daily points of contact in children's lives, play a crucial role in fostering these abilities. Educators are not merely facilitators of knowledge, they are communicators, mentors, and emotional guides.

Effective pedagogical communication is fundamental to creating safe, inclusive, and responsive learning environments. It is also a determining factor in student development and mindset formation (Tokhirova, 2023), involving intentional interactions that build trust and simultaneously support students' academic and emotional growth. Therefore, initial teacher education must strengthen the essential skills needed to create supportive environments grounded in positive communication and acceptance within the classroom and the wider educational community.

A central point in this discussion concerns how teachers can use appropriate teaching techniques to ensure classroom effectiveness. Some researchers distinguish between instructional communication and communication pedagogy (Goodboy, 2018): instructional communication emphasizes clarity of instruction, the choice of linguistic tools for the precise expression of ideas, and the explanation of new concepts; communication pedagogy, on the other hand, encompasses

relationships between students and teachers, classroom interactions, and the creation of a positive atmosphere that promotes teaching and learning. The set of competencies involved in pedagogical communication includes, among others, the ability to question, listen, and reflect critically

A key challenge is to develop these competencies during university training, before the start of the teaching career. Experiential learning and educational drama hold great potential for promoting the development of these communicative skills.

1.1 Drama and education

The concept of theatre as a space for dialogue—where social learning takes place through connection with others, the construction of life's meaning, and the empowerment of individuals to communicate and express themselves – has been further developed by numerous scholars and practitioners (Wagner, 1976; Bolton, 1998; Boal, 1979, 2006; Jackson, 2007; Neelands & Goode, 2015). Through their contributions, drama and theatre have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to foster competence, agency, and meaningful engagement, serving both as powerful educational tools and as transformative experiences within the classroom.

The relationship between drama and education has been profoundly shaped by pioneering practitioners and researchers such as Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton in the United Kingdom, who developed and disseminated innovative approaches for integrating drama and theatre into educational practice during the 1960s and 1970s. Their theatrical methods, techniques, and dramatic strategies actively engage students in constructing their own learning. One notable approach, the *Mantle of the Expert* (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), enables students to explore various areas of the curriculum through dramatic enactment.

Dorothy Heathcote, initially as a teacher in English schools and later as a professor at the University of Newcastle, developed a pedagogical method in which children and young people are challenged to assume the roles of "experts" and to act with the authority of expertise. In this framework, students adopt active roles and, through dramatized narratives, are encouraged to articulate ideas, emotions, and perspectives, thereby fostering empathy and mutual understanding. By assuming responsibility, exercising judgment, and engaging with awareness, students observe, assess, and act with intentionality. This empowerment stimulates participants' intrinsic interest, transforming them from passive observers into active, engaged learners.

The use of theatre for educational purposes has evolved differently across contexts. Anthony Jackson (2007) has suggested that perhaps the most significant and far-reaching influence on what is known as Theatre in Education and Theatre for Development derives from Augusto Boal's advocacy of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979, 1995), particularly his Forum Theatre techniques, which have been widely adopted and adapted in diverse educational and developmental settings.

By fostering new forms of communication and dialogue between performers and observers, these theatrical forms and drama-based educational methods center the active engagement of the audience as a fundamental component of the learning and transformative process. The provocative concept of the "spect-actor" challenges the traditional boundary between audience and stage, establishing a direct and tangible connection between the events occurring within a theatrical performance and their potential impact in the world beyond Forum Theatre – a technique in which fictional narratives based on real-life problems are performed and subsequently replayed and modified by the audience to explore possible solutions – transforms spectators into active participants, or spect-actors (Jackson, 2007: 136).

In educational contexts, the teacher assumes the role of facilitator and mentor, guiding both the group and individual students through the exploration of dilemmas, thereby fostering

critical reflection and nurturing creative thinking (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). This approach cultivates horizontal pedagogical relationship, characterized by trust, reciprocal communication, and shared responsibility, which is essential for the development of effective pedagogical interaction (Tokhirova, 2023).

The present research focuses on pedagogical communication and aims to analyze the perceptions of university students from different educational and cultural contexts regarding their readiness to perform the professional role of teachers, emphasizing a transformative learning attitude during their initial teacher education at university through exposure to the Educational Drama approach. The primary objective of the study was to assess how students perceived the impact of drama-based training on the development of their communication skills.

2. Methodology

The research indicators focused on key components of transformative learning, specifically participants' awareness of the expectations associated with the teacher's role and their perceptions of the teacher's function in contemporary schools, particularly in relation to teacher–student communication and interaction.

The study involved a total of 151 undergraduate students enrolled in pedagogy-related degree programs, who were divided into two groups according to the format and duration of the communication skills training delivered through drama-based methods.

Group 1 comprised 133 undergraduate students from the Bachelor's Degree in Basic Education at the School of Education, Polytechnic Institute of Porto (ESE-IPP). The course *Dramatic Expression/Theatre* is part of the first-year curriculum of the Bachelor's program at ESSE – IPP, with 67.5 contact hours over one semester.

Group 2 included 21 students from various European universities, namely the Polytechnic Institute of Porto (Portugal), Sofia University (Bulgaria), the University of Maribor (Slovenia), the University of Valencia (Spain), and the University of Bucharest (Romania). These students participated in a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), supported by the Erasmus+ program, entitled *Applied Theatre in Education: Communication and Development in Learning Communities*. This 35 present hours, short-term intensive program, held in Poro, Portugal from June 24 to 29, 2025, emphasized the application of drama and theatre techniques in educational and social contexts and featured highly practical, collaborative, and immersive in-person sessions.

Data were collected through:

• Participant questionnaires, designed to capture students' reflections, levels of satisfaction, and perceptions of skill and competences development during and after the training.

· Reflective activities, including verbal feedback (audio recordings collected at the end of sessions, addressing the impact of the techniques and exercises on participants' communication, openness, and interpersonal relationships) and written diaries, in which students described and reflected on their experiences, emotional responses, and perceptions of personal and professional challenges and transformation throughout the program.

The indicators for the questionnaries, used in the survey are based on the document *Perfil dos Alunos à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória* (PASEO, Profile of Students at the End of Compulsory Education), approved by the Portuguese Ministry of Education through Dispatch No. 6478/2017 of July 26. This document serves as a national reference framework guiding educational policies and practices, defining a common matrix for curriculum design, planning, implementation, and evaluation across all schools. It emphasizes the development of

key competencies – complex combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes – that are central to students' education during compulsory schooling.

Data analysis followed a mixed-methods approach: quantitative and qualitative. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize questionnaire responses, while content analysis was applied to the diaries and audio recordings to identify recurring themes and qualitative evidence related to the development of communicative and relational competencies.

The primary objective of the study was to assess how students perceived the impact of drama-based training on the development of their communication skills. The study also aimed to identify the specific ways in which drama techniques contributed to the development of pedagogical communication among future teachers.

Convinced that "Art is a special form of knowledge" (Boal 2006: 20), to better analyze and understand the processes and impact of drama-based practices - such as drama games, image and forum theatre (Boal, 1979, 2009), or frozen frames and process drama (Heathcote, 1976, 1995; O`Neil, 1992) – and their subsequent reflection and processing, as well as the individual and collective creation of theatrical pieces, this study seeks to explore the following question: How does one move from statements such as "theatre isn't for me," "I'm a shy and reserved person," or "I don't like being exposed," to expressions like "I didn't know theatre could be like this" or "I didn't know I would love doing theatre"? Furthermore, how does this transformation influence participants' understanding of the teaching–learning process?

3. Results

In both groups analyzed, a common finding emerged: a growing awareness of the importance of educational drama activities in fostering positive and open attitudes within the "Self – Group" relationship. Participants also demonstrated a distinctly positive attitude toward the potential influence of these techniques on their future professional practice as teachers, recognizing themselves as future agents of positive communication within their classrooms. Overall, the data highlight the recognition of drama's relevance in shaping teachers' professional identity and in developing tools that enhance teacher – student communication and relationships.

The analysis also compares students' perceptions "before" and "after" the training, revealing the awakening of an awareness that, for many, had previously remained dormant. When asked to self-assess across several competencies, based on PASEO (2017), we considered as significant for their role of teachers (awareness and control of body and voice; ability to improvise and be spontaneous; creativity and imagination; artistic competence and aesthetic sensitivity; knowledge of drama and theatre languages; communication and interpersonal relationships; collaboration; autonomy and initiative; ability to internalize and reflect; critical thinking; problem-solving; resilience; and self-confidence), the results reveal a clear pattern. Observation of the data visualizations indicates that while the pre-training responses were more evenly distributed, the post-training responses clustered predominantly in positions 4 and 5 (on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents the minimum and 5 the maximum), with only residual representation in positions 1, 2, and 3. This shift demonstrates a qualitative leap in students' self-awareness regarding their personal and professional growth, their relationships with themselves and others, and their development as future education professionals.

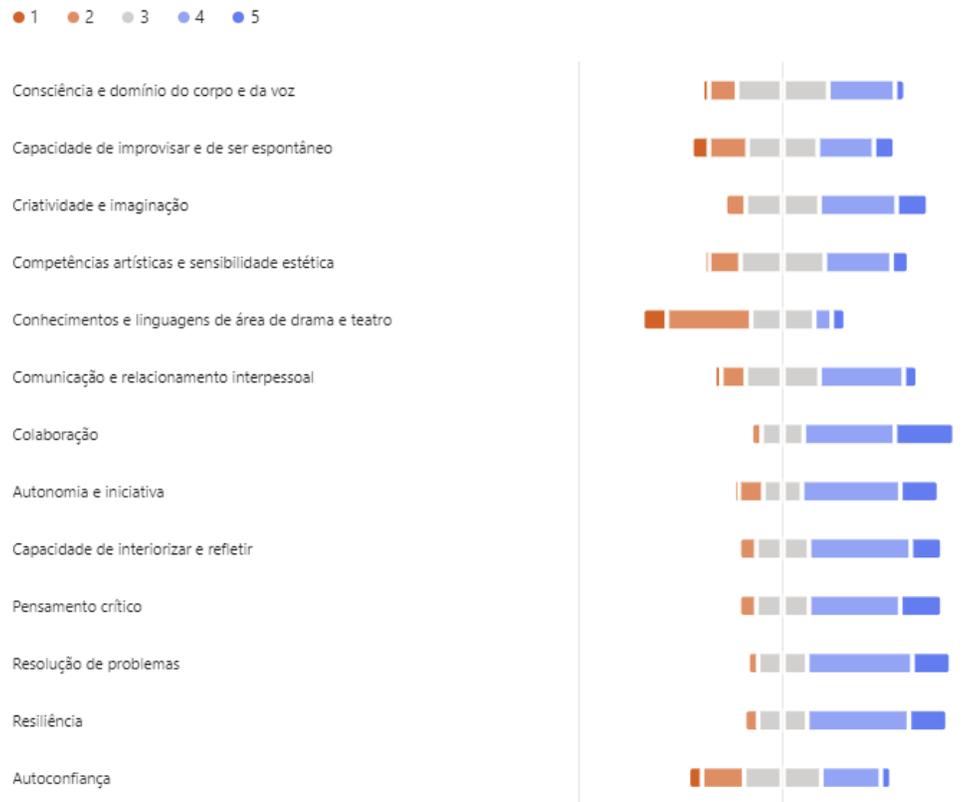Table 1. Assessment before starting the experience

Table 2. Assessment after completing the experience

When analyzing the testimonies recorded in the Logbooks and shared orally in group circles at the end of sessions, a clear pattern emerges: each participant demonstrates an individual awareness of the challenges they will face in their future professional practice – the "stage" they will occupy in front of their classes or groups, guiding and mediating the teaching and learning processes of their students. Participants expressed intense emotions and reflective thoughts, such as: *"How can I truly teach each of my students?"* or *"How can I develop a global communication with my body that fosters participation, attention, and curiosity?"* There was unanimous recognition of the positive impact of Educational Drama on the development of various personal and interpersonal competencies, including increased self-confidence and self-esteem, greater emotional awareness and empathy, and enhanced interpersonal competence through collaborative dialogue, active listening, and valuing the perspectives of each group member.

> *"Drama Expression is much more than performance: it is listening, it is empathy, it is presence."* – Participant A

> *"Observation proved to be a powerful technique for understanding others better. I realized that each person has their own unique way of expressing themselves: some use their entire body to communicate, while others convey emotions with just a glance, a facial expression, or a simple gesture."* – Participant B

> *"By observing them I first learned that we are all capable of bringing out things in ourselves that are as spontaneous as they are beautiful, that we all have the chance to fail but also another opportunity to try again, and mainly that if we contribute our opinion, we can improve something."* – Participant C

"I discovered that I am more creative, more open, and more capable of engaging than I thought. I can work well with others, even when barriers arise." – Participant D

"I realized that I don't need to be perfect or know everything to be present in the moment. I can be nervous, I can make mistakes, but that doesn't prevent me from growing." – Participant E

"Throughout this course, I learned through the body, gestures, gaze, and presence. And that taught me more than many theoretical contents. I realized that dramatic expression is not 'theatre to show to parents'; it is a language for personal and collective development." – Participant F

Other reflections from students highlight how the practice in sessions influenced their envisioned professional practice:

"Attending this class has been a continuous, practical, and reflective learning experience; I enjoyed learning in every session and observed my own evolution as well as that of my peers." – Participant G

"These activities have been highly important for our future work as teachers/educators. For example, using non-verbal communication to energize activities helps students understand that communication can take multiple forms." – Participant H

In Group 1, participants also recognized that the process of empowerment and activation of communicative capacities, whether through creating or being observed by the group – is inherently transformative, sometimes challenging but ultimately fostering personal and collective growth:

"…another learning experience was realizing the power of improvisation." – Participant I

"Although our story creation supported by objects was not fully structured, when it was our turn to present, we managed to tell a story, even generating good ideas we had not considered during the discussion." – Participant J

Reflections, both written and oral, emphasized the positive effect of the sessions on the development of skills, qualities, and meaningful learning, suggesting transferable principles, methods, and best practices for communication in university and school contexts:

"We leave with our 'teacher training backpack' much fuller in terms of knowledge, and filled with emotion and enthusiasm to carry out our practice with even greater motivation." – Participant K

4. Discussion

As a pedagogical approach, Educational Drama integrates theatrical practices with the aim of promoting meaningful learning, socio-emotional skills, and personal development. It differs from traditional theatre in that it does not seek to produce a performative object for presentation but rather uses the creative process of theatrical language as a space for reflection, social interaction and the construction of knowledge and learning (Neelands & Goode, 2015). This approach strengthens participants' critical and creative abilities, allowing them to experience multiple realities and reflect on complex situations of everyday life in a safe context, mediated by the teacher or educator, who acts as a facilitator of the process and a guide for reflection. By valuing creative process, emotional expression, and critical reflection, this approach places aesthetic experience at the service of learning, while simultaneously promoting pedagogical, relational, and artistic development, capable of fostering deep learning, strengthened interpersonal relationships, and essential life skills for social participation.

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In both Heathcote's and Boal's models, the use of theatrical techniques in educational contexts enables the creation of cooperative learning communities in which error is understood as an integral part of the creative process and improvisation as a space for freedom and discovery. In addressing the challenges faced by contemporary education, these models demonstrate that this approach facilitates not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the formation of citizens capable of thinking critically, communicating effectively, and interacting ethically and responsibly within society (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). Ultimately, it allows for a profound integration of cognition and affectivity, supporting transformative learning by making of meanings (Jackson, 2007).

The contributions of educational drama to the acquisition of communicative and relational tools, as well as to the construction of professional identity, can be found into some strategies and languages of Drama and Theatre like active participation, quality presence – "here and now," individual and collective creation as an experience. In Drama-based activities students are engaged physically, emotionally, and mentally. The whole person participates in performance, bringing their integrity:

> *"I learned to use my body and voice in different ways to express and communicate with others. Through this, I discovered aspects of my personality that had been 'hidden' from me."* – Participant M

> *"Certain exercises, especially body and voice warm-ups, helped me become more uninhibited and open to spontaneity. Many of my difficulties related to introversion and speaking softly were largely overcome."* – Participant N

The analysis revealed a significant shift in participants' perceptions of theatre and its role in education. Initially, many participants expressed resistance or apprehension, describing themselves as shy, reserved, or uncomfortable with exposure. Through the engagement in drama-based practices—particularly forum theatre, image theatre, and drama games—participants began to experience a sense of inclusion, agency, and creative freedom.

The resonance of these experiences persists in students' bodily and emotional memory, emphasizing the importance of learning by doing:

> *"At the end of our warm-ups, I felt a release of tension and was more focused on what was to come."* – Participant O

> *"The warm-up marks the start of the class, integrates the group, and can prepare children for upcoming activities."* – Participant O

> Teacher training begins with developing the ability to engage entirely in the "here and now," which is foundational for authentic, human communication. Presence in this state creates transformative learning opportunities in dramatic activities:

> *"I had many ideas coming to mind whenever the teacher gave new tasks, ideas that grew even bigger with help from classmates."* – Participant P

This quality of presence is particularly challenging for a generation constantly online. Fully engaging in the present moment fosters self-confidence and internal satisfaction.

A recurring theme across participants' reflections was the discovery of theatre as a collaborative and exploratory process rather than a performative or evaluative one. Statements such as *"I didn't know theatre could be like this"* and *"I never thought I would enjoy doing theatre"* illustrate this transformation. Participants reported increased self-confidence, enhanced communication skills, and a greater willingness to engage in group dynamics.

Moreover, this attitudinal change extended beyond the artistic experience itself, influencing participants' broader understanding of the teaching–learning process. They began to view learning as a participatory and co-creative act, rather than a unidirectional transmission of

knowledge. The findings suggest that drama-based pedagogies not only promote personal expression and social connection but also foster a more holistic and experiential approach to education.

The impact of Educational Drama is evident as a pedagogical tool that aligns with contemporary educational models emphasizing the holistic development of students, encompassing not only individual growth but also the enhancement of group cohesion and the strengthening of interpersonal communication. Through collaborative engagement, participants develop skills in teamwork, conflict resolution, and shared responsibility, thereby reinforcing interpersonal relationships and fostering an appreciation of cultural and social diversity.

The recognition of drama and theatre as essential components of teacher education and professional development has become increasingly urgent in the digital age, particularly given the challenges it poses for developing in-person communication skills. Higher education institutions therefore bear a critical responsibility in designing and implementing programmes that prepare and support a new generation of educators, capable of adopting comprehensive, holistic, and flexible pedagogical approaches while fostering the interpersonal and expressive competencies necessary for effective teaching and meaningful engagement.

The methodologies intrinsic to Drama and Theatre – such as active participation, heightened present-moment awareness, and processes of individual and collective creation – play a substantive role in developing learners' attitudes, skills, knowledge, and competencies. Moreover, these practices underscore the pedagogical relevance and transformative capacity of drama based methods, positioning them as both instrumental tools and integral aims within contemporary educational frameworks.

5. Conclusion

In a generation increasingly immersed in the digital realm, the cultivation of a meaningful and authentic presence through drama-based activities emerges as both essential and urgent, yet inherently challenging. Engagement that integrates physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions within social interactions through drama facilitates experiences of intrinsic satisfaction and deep psychological immersion, even within constructed or fictive realities. Such immersive participation not only supports the development of self-confidence and personal fulfillment but also fosters enhanced interpersonal connectedness and communicative competence. Through this iterative and reflective process, participants are able to interrogate and reaffirm their identities, cultivate empathetic and effective modes of communication, and advance their learning trajectories in socially, emotionally, and cognitively enriched contexts, thereby highlighting the transformative potential of drama as both a pedagogical tool and a vehicle for holistic education

In an educational context increasingly shaped by digitalization and changing communication modes, it is imperative to refocus on the essence of teaching and learning and on the role of the teacher. Beyond being a mere transmitter of knowledge, the teacher acts as a mediator of experiences, a sensitive communicator, and an emotional guide whose actions directly influence both learning quality and student well-being.

Within this framework, drama practices in education – as developed by Dorothy Heathcote and further explored by Gavin Bolton and Augusto Boal – assume renewed relevance. Drama, understood as an experiential and relational methodology, provides a safe space where teachers and students can experiment with roles, listen, question, act, reflect critically, and develop affective, social, and communicative skills (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Boal, 2006, 2009). These practices integrate body, emotion, and thought into a learning process that transcends rationality, valuing dialogue and empathy as core dimensions of human formation.

Through strategies such as *Mantle of the Expert*, dramatization, or *Forum Theatre*, educators create opportunities for students to actively engage in problem-solving situations, developing self-confidence, emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal competence. Dramaturgical experiences significantly contribute to holistic education, help students understand the world and themselves more deeply, promoting transformative learning.

In an era in which communication is increasingly mediated by digital technologies, drama functions as a pedagogical counterbalance to depersonalized educational relationships. It underscores the value of human encounter, attentive listening, and presence, fostering the capacity to perceive others with sensitivity and understanding. Drama is not merely a teaching technique but an educational philosophy that places human beings – creative, relational, and ethical – at the center of the learning process.

Consequently, it remains essential to continually reflect on the essence of education, balancing technological innovation with pedagogical practices grounded in human experience. Drama-based activities are fundamental in both initial and continuing teacher education, as well as in social sciences instruction, supporting the integration of knowing, feeling, and acting. Furthermore, collaborative and international learning experiences should be encouraged to facilitate the exchange of perspectives and pedagogical practices across cultural contexts. Such global dialogue reinforces drama as a universal language of empathy and mutual understanding, contributing to the formation of critical, creative, and emotionally aware citizens.

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The AI, The Virtual, the Human Senses and One "Imperfect Concurrency"

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Abstract

The digital technology and the world of a virtual space by projecting them, cardinally changed the face of the world. This widespread in varying degrees digital-virtual technology in modern society for nearly thirty years now radically changed the society on a planetary scale, in various economic, political, social, legal, ethical, cultural, etc., perspectives. Indeed, to this day the world turns into a possible "togetherness" (with all possible "for" and "against" globalization) – the catalyst for this is the digital, technical and technological boom. The whole boom in turn raises many questions, mostly related to the source, which builds the digital-technology "body" and its "life" – the human. What happened to his purely human body senses and what possible virtual or imaginary worlds hover it? Here are a few thoughts as sketched lines in the first-person singular, an essayistic-philosophical perspective on human senses and virtuality. The "imperfect concurrency" … for which we do not speak or do not think, but actually it is constituted direct and intentional phenomena of "stuff" into, within and out of the world. Moreover, we, the humans, experience the world in narrow barriers of time in which there remains no reflects not seen, or rather not take very much of what happens in it. For virtual, fantasy and sensuality in touch for life. Unfortunately, humans in their existence are increasingly trying to "numb themselves" and rely on their eyes and ears, and distance itself from their non-visual senses. For the loss of this ability or the need for feeling, for example, a touch of liveliness helps – contributes comparison of humans, with residence and his communication in virtual space. The virtual creates the false illusion of a public (free-for-all) world, that is "with" and "together" us.

Keywords: AI, digital technology, virtual space, imperfect concurrency.

> "Pure touch gives access to information, a soft correlate of what was once called the intellect."
>
> (Serres, 2009: 85)

> "Wise knowledge heals and moulds the body, it embellishes. The more alert and inquisitive I am, the more I think. I think, therefore I am handsome. The world is beautiful, therefore I think. Knowledge cannot do without beauty. It is a science of beauty that I seek."
>
> (Serres 2009: 105)

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1. Introduction

Discoveries in the field of *BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE* are expected by millions of people, not for fun, but to be able to make their lives possible.

Neurological diseases are increasing, and in addition to affecting motor functions, they lead to damage to vision, hearing, the sense of touch, etc. For example, multiple sclerosis is one of the most well-known of the entire spectrum of such diseases that currently exist. Most of these diseases are from the group of so-called autoimmune diseases. They are triggered suddenly and there is no treatment option. Along with them, we have classic versions of blind-deaf people, for whom such implants will be an incredible solution to their sensory problems, will help them speak and most likely, in the near future, see.

The hope in developing these implants is that the step will not be large between finding a version to overcome blindness in people caused by damage to the optic nerve, which is often caused by the disease glaucoma.

"This funding round would represent a major jump in valuation for the company, which is developing brain-computer interface implants. While details are still in the works, it shows growing investor confidence in the neurotech space. Neuralink is currently testing its implant on human patients, with the first participant already controlling a computer cursor, playing video games, browsing the internet, and posting on social media, all with brain power alone" (see Capoot, 2025).

2. Experiences for very different phenomenology

Experiences for very different phenomenology, which recommends these to Edmund Huserl – always I have wanted to able to describe this moment – the moment of experience, feeling and grasping the time of becoming and experiencing the thing. I have the chance to be one of those people who have ever had to travel somewhere, I would say I am grateful for this opportunity, because it is an extraordinary chance of reflection. Maurice Merleau-Ponty expressed this reflection with the words: "As an effort to found the existing world upon a thought of the world, the reflection at each instant draws its inspiration from the prior presence of the world, of which it is tributary, from which it derives all its energy" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 34).

I love to travel at night or when it's dark. Perhaps the fact that I am almost blind, at such times makes it easier for me to turn my handicap into a quality, or even an advantage. There is no light that annoys me, as Michel Serres writes in his essay: "Often light appears harsh, aggressive and at times cruel" (Serres, 2009: 67). On the other hand, I feel natural and free – the images witch I perceive is not necessary to be completely processed by my consciousness. I do not have to look at them in order to detail them, unfortunately the "things" or "the thing" whether it is a tree or piece of asphalt, this so superficial real-socially visible objectivity is deinformationally non-reflexive. Thus the darkness allows me not to see visual and not visualize to appreciate the "thing" past which I pass, but accepting it in its silhouette, to feel and to reflex over it's, until I contemplate it in myself and until I fill it with content to turn it from the shadow-silhouette of the tree or piece of asphalt in their real images, as they are perceived in the visible world, or at least the content that is embedded in them. Is not this an empirical experience described here as a very modest confirmation of Husserl's theory of constitution of the higher degrees of the intersubjectivity, as well as the confirmation of Serrese's reflection: "My shadow body can evaluate shadows, it glides amongst them, between their silences, as though it knows them. Shadows excite the closest possible attention and are even subtly revealing; our whole skin comes alive" (Serres, 2009: 68).

As I perceive the "things" around me (thereby), I cannot ask myself "Where am I?". Without intermingling in paradoxical questions such as "What and who is this Ego?", because the Ego know very well at such times "who and what is" ... The Ego at this moment is not topped up, he does not have specific place and time, but is nevertheless in the categories of one a real present and one coming future, or in one a compromised position called of us "imperfect simultaneity." Through and by means of this "imperfect simultaneity" which it is charged with the task of constituting the world around and within itself. The Ego have the task to harness the phenomena and the intentions of the "things" "of" and "for" world in world.

In this "imperfect simultaneity," in this kind of "transition" or "passage" is born the problem of the spatial and the sensory reflexivity. The moment in which the Ego has the ability to form himself within (inside) himself in time, and at the same time monitors the emergence of himself constitution – seeing how the prospect of him constitution "on" and "for" himself, and the picture "of" and "for" the world, is filled with "things". At some time, the Ego realizes that these "things" are constitutional in themselves constitutions of others Ego – descriptions of "things" themselves. Thus, the constitution of what is happening at the moment of the movement is the reflexive intuitive-shared description between "all" – to be a possible as the personal (reflection of the Ego), as well the "cooperative" social reality...

3. The uncontinued continuity

... for which WE do not talk, do not mark, do not think, but in fact in it is constituting and mentally directing the phenomena of things "of" and "for" the world. It is worthwhile to note that we people perceive and experience a world in very limited barriers of time, in which does not remain, does not reflect and does not perceive or more precisely, it does not involve much of what is happening in it.

If we people were not so "limited" in our perceptions, we would have to react to 100 stimuli per second, which would not be in our power, we actually save no more than 30. Thus, the objective world fits into our heads only under certain conditions – for example, if less than three milliseconds have passed between two acoustic stimuli, the sounds remain in a "window of simultaneity," or that information is irretrievably lost to us. And this "window" is not equally open to all the senses – between two skin irritations or feelings of touch, we have to spend 10 milliseconds to distinguish them as separate ones. The optical stimuli require even more, the visible world to perceive it as it is we have assumed that it is visual, it must be thirty milliseconds so that our human brain can make one of all the events that happen around it in at least two images, but the human can never say which of the two was the first and which the second.

The imperfect simultaneity is called this brief phase of brain disorientation - we need a new 30/40 milliseconds before identifying the first image as the first and the second as the next. Another difficulty in identifying the accepted image of something in us comes from the fact that in our consciousness we can not have more than one figurative content, and no longer than approximately 3 seconds - it is actually our "window in the present" in which we are thinking, it is the basis of a human relationships ..., relationships in a three-second tact. The poets apparently always knew it – studies of several hundred poems on the length of the verse show that poetry is created on average in 3,1 second tact.

What happens to this "imperfect simultaneity" when something about the "proper" functioning of our senses is violated, and how large will this "window in the present" be through and through which we will perceive the world? Then is not the world so accepted by us to be closer to the fantasy world, or this different image of the world, will be closer to a kind of "perfect simultaneity", a more real world than more the real invading through the "window of the present" within us?

The fact is that through our vision, we humans get 80 % of the information about the world around us and that human can only use 10 % of him brain – different studies show that even for the execution of a simple task, practically all sectors of us main brain. It is a fact, however, that when the function of one of our senses is disturbed, the others to the extent possible take on the functions of contributing information and data about the empirical world to our brain. But to what extent human has thought in his being (daily routine) that if he tries to work on his senses, his perceptions of the visible-empirical world, as well as his soul-inner world, perceptions and images of things will become fuller, dense and nuanced. This will also be the way the human to start to using most part of his brain. We say that we do not seem to have enough senses, but in fact we human do not use the ones we have of full value and adequate. The center that will process our senses is our brain and it will do what we give it as information. The periphery "by" and "through" which the entire full imagery will be invaded "of" and "for" the world will be accomplished through our senses, their sensitivity and delicacy. Our senses are our periphery. M. Serres ask: "Have we five senses, or six? Scholastic thought in the Middle Ages divided our sensorium into external and internal. Hearing, sight, touch, smell and taste were reputed to be external. (…) Indeed, a sixth sense is necessary, in which the subject turns in on itself and the body on the body: a common or internal sense, indeed a sixth island was necessary, a doubly enclosed island for the body itself." (Serres, 2009: 53-54) This thing within us maybe is our soul. Our ephemeral, superstitious and sensual body of our Ego.

When we hear the following description: It is yellow, oval, lightly rough, with an acidic flavor and we see the object, it is very easy, given the elementary empirical attempt to answer that it is lemon. And if we have an attempt to know this information, we have it thanks to our perceptions that synthesize and organize the data coming from all our senses. All the information is stored in our brain and we only know what it is about with the sight and hearing of the description and the object we see. The answer to this question is very easy when we have vision and we see the subject, but if we do not have one, or the subject that we are talking about is not in front of us and we have to guess it, the situation is complicated. If we only hear the above description, we are focusing on the information that comes from the other senses that are stored in us and which we are beginning to look for in order to synthesize it … Or if the subject is said to be: in yellow color, oval shape, slightly rough surface, with sour taste … our consciousness will automatically focus on the information that could come into us through the other senses: oval shape – by touch, a slightly rough surface – touch, with a sour taste – with our taste, and finally we will think about the characteristic "yellow," and we will try to guess which objects is characteristic the yellow color.

In fact, in the moment when human begins to lose his vision, he begins to realize how important it is to work and enrich his senses … how important is the sense and ability of our sense of touch and our awareness. Our sensitivity in all its varied and multidimensional information that it can admit within us directly touches our soul – adjusts it positively or negatively, caresses or hurts us soul. Thus, us soul have to possibility to opportunity to judge before the reason has told "for" and / or "against"… Here is how easy it is to answer the question: "Why do we like something and why not?"… without we have a reasonable explanation. This is a thing, which us Ego is perceive of "Imperfect simultaneity" – it is a priori combination which us reason most likely will not understand, confuse or process and realize after time.

Yes, after the vision that leads us around the world with astonishing precision, the touch is the other most developed human senses. By the way, if human relies only on his vision and on the other senses like taste, hearing, but without touch, the world around him will look like a very beautiful perspective picture, but it will not feel the multidimensionality and density of its being – our world would be like an artificial panorama – "Touch has the upper hand (…) an internal sense or the body itself, closes its veils as the body does its skin. The organs of the external

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senses are open veils or envelopes. Through these doors we see, hear and experience tastes and fragrances; through these walls, even when they are shut, we touch" (Serres, 2009: 65).

4. For virtual, the fantasy and the seniority in adding for life of blind human

Unfortunately, the human in his daily being (routine) to trying to "stiffen himself," to rede on his eyes and ears, and to distance himself from his non-visual sensibility. For the loss of this ability or necessity for feeling, for example a touch of vitality helps the human adhesion "with" and him predominantly living and communicating in the virtual space. The virtual creates the false illusion of a world accessible to us, which is in front of us and with us. This virtual artificial world is without any limits and time constraints, with accessible and up-to-date information, with the ability to communicate at any level without the need for much extra movement in real space. The virtual reality today is transferred to all the means of digital and visual information we use – from our phones, through our TVs to the dpi press devices which navigate the cars we drive … Thus, the virtual create the false illusion that we are not alone – there is always some presence around us in the form of a sound or voice signal that tells us something, informs us. But the virtual creates and strengthens the sense of loneliness, alienation and lust for a lack of living presence, a lack of freshness with a breath of reality.

The human will increasingly live through and in the virtual. Increasingly, his mobility in space will be mediated. We will deform our bodies with not our desire for active movement, or if we do it, most of the fitness equipment will help us in this activity by informing us how many kilometers we have escaped and how many calories we have burned for that time – another is the question that no gym, even with the best visual effects and multimedia environment that attempts to simulate natural scenery, cannot replace workout in and around the living environment. That is no matter how much we try to deceive our body's sensibility, that for it the digital-virtual reality is normal and that it is more useful, it is our living body lives mostly through its sensuality. And what the virtual can provide is just an imitation, a holographic image that does not animate our essence. This digital adhesion, in the end will lead the human to the state of not seeing (blindness) or hearing (deafness). It is a fact that our useful technologies harm our vision and our hearing. On the other hand, this so fake touch to life virtual world is further enhancing the inner need for physical closeness between people. Yes, we are able to talk to and see our loved ones from anywhere in the world, but we are unable to touch or embrace them. The contact in the virtual is short, cool, and incomplete. The contact in the virtual deprives the Ego of experiencing to his being. The being of something or someone through and in the virtual is a being without identity – this "thing" "there" is simply a bunch of digital licenses. This makes the necessity and the absence for the other even greater, because in its essence a person is sensuous – he first senses the world through the touch of his body with the environment, then he hears with his own and sees it through his eyes. Therefore, it is so hard a human to break up with someone – whether because of death, departure, separation, because the other is missing as a presence for a living touch, because it is no longer in your "space", there is no being created and in living contact with the other. This being with the other begins to translate himself living space, which its has when and one and the others Ego communicate in themselves living. This being creates itself story and when it is necessary to end, because of the impossibility of life, such as death – a meta-reaction to the extreme of something, but still to death. Then everything that the other has touched becomes important and vice versa, it is unimportant, because there where was the other, it is no longer because it is no longer there – there is no touch of living life with which and the other leaves. The human can deceive his mind, force his heart, but can not change his sensibility of his senses or his sensations of touching something or someone. The touch to human is touching to his living life, to his unique, mechanically irreproducible, because when we touch the other by means of us body – us skin – touch soul of other. In one of his essays, the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega-y-Gasset describes how city topography is being restructured if viewed through the optics of changing human

relationships: "While Madrid's space remains the same, it is already sharply altered if the beloved human with which is the city was lived – him has already left there: "Now I perceive to what extent my love for Soledad was irradiated all the city and my life in it … Now I paid attention to the fact that even the farthest things I did not think they might have something in common with Soledad, to have gained an additional connection with her, and that is precisely what they are doing for me their determining quality. Although ones and the same the geometric, topographic attributes of Madrid have lost their validity. Before this city had for me a center and a periphery. The center was Soledad's house, a periphery – all those places where Soledad never appeared … Some things were close, others far, depending on their distance to where I expected to see my beloved." (Koprinarov, 2010: 43; Galily, 2019: 225).

The virtual itself is a kind of fantastic, one imaginary world. These two so temporary features are its most distinctive traits, so the feelings, sensations or knowledge that could be brought about through it are characterized by perishability. From the real space, whatever it is, man can not escape, disappear because he is in it through his body. From the real space, the real-world human can to leave only by his death. In the virtual, he can enter only if he wants to communicate with others on virtual social networks. Now often we are witnessing the death of the person in the real life, and actuality of him account in the virtual space. Here the life to being of the person continues – physical death not means virtual. Us virtual identity is updated every time when others seek us virtual Ego in a virtual space – in other words, the human create and himself virtual birth, virtual life and virtual death by himself identity.

When you communicate with someone in the virtual, he is per se is virtual alive and dead at the same time: because he does not have his physical living being – "being to you"; because he does not have that feeling of "imperfect simultaneity", which we are reconverted to realize that experience, which publishes an enormous existence of the other – inaccessible of our senses when the other is gone.

After the world is so richer in experiences that are left unacceptable by our senses, is not our human perceptible image of the world, too fancy, even virtually cold and visually constrained?

The road to a richer of sensible sensations and images world passes through to awareness of the perception of our senses and into in ourselves. As biological-physical beings, we humans in the world always and foremost manifest through our bodies. This the rich anthropocentric existence that we may have in our present is somehow forgotten, broken and discarded.

Yes, the world of the blind human is not so precise from the "visibility" of "things," but it is more multidimensional and denser from the feelings and images, which remain in himself. The real space of the blind person is much more fulfilled with information about "things" than could be perceived only by means of vision as a sensing, suppressing the other senses. When the blind people get acquainted, they feel their bodies far more meaningful than the glimpse that we could throw on the other. The touch forever leaves into you the sense of vitality and presence of the human being of other - a sense of ontological presence of the body as a vital essence and emanation of the impenetrable despite its morbidity, transience, variability and death. The touch is also contact to the possibility of "grasping" this proximity and marking it as unique. When we are greeting, we appreciate the handing and taking of the foreign hand, which says much more about its owner. By touching the hand of the other, the energy coming from the hand tells us that he is warm or cold, worried or happy, ill or quiet, etc. We know how is other only by him handshake. What we lose and what remains in the space of "imperfect simultaneity" by not using our sense of touch in the world, from which the blind human enjoys, and to whom he relies heavily?

A little known fact is that when a human touches another human, his body releases endorphin, which calms us, so living people is so important. When we talk to someone, we can not touch the body is under of stress and is not sure of the follow-up action – when the human is ahead of us and we exchange handshake, we are consciously rest assured of his biological being at the next moment. That is why we love touching, hugs or embracing our dear people, because we get a confirmation sign for their "here" and "now" for their future.

There are millions of touch receptors on the surface of our skin. They transmit the sensation directly to our brains. We have specialized feelings for dry and wet, smooth or rough. It is not hard to figure out what we are touching. The receptors for touch capture things like pressure, temperature or vibration. They send this information to our brains in the form of signals, and the combination of signals allows us to know what we are touching. One of the main tasks of our receptors is to protect us from injury. When it is possible to cause pain from pricking, the pain receptors alert and we withdraw. The receptors for touch are the most in places that most actively interact with the surrounding world. When we cut our finger with grass, the pain is very unpleasant, but if we cut our feet, we may not even feel it. The different parts of the body feel different. This, however, is not due to the number of receptors. Each section of the body sends information to a particular brain partition. For example, as we go in a certain direction, the receptors of the foot transmit to our brains, the information from where we pass, what is the surface under our feet, so also the blind people are very fast in their familiar spaces without respecting the environment. "The soles of your feet begin to be more aware, your shoulders brush against the branches, the stone in the ditch gives off a peaceful light. One can do almost anything without light, except write. Writing requires a glimmer. Life is satisfied with shadows, reading requires clarity" (Serres, 2009: 68). Or…, bathing – when we stand in the shower, we are quite aware that our vision is not necessary. We know very well what is on our body and when a part of it is already clean and when it is not. The skin tells us where the water that touches us has passed, and which section of it is already thoroughly cleansed, and consciousness it takes this information with complete confidence, that is, if we look at every detail around that we pass, we will lose a lot of time, and we look every inch from our body while bathing. M. Serres describes and expressed our skin sensation with the words: „Our skin resembles that of jaguars, panthers and zebras, even though we do not have fur. The pattern of the senses is displayed there, studded with subdued centres and spotted with marks; the skin is a variety of our mingled senses. The skin, a single tissue with localized concentrations, displays sensitivity. It shivers, expresses, breathes, listens, loves and lets itself be loved, receives, refuses, retreats, its hair stands on end with horror, it is covered with fissures, rashes, and the wounds of the soul. The most instructive diseases, the sicknesses of identity, affect the skin and form tattoos that tragically hide the bright colors of birth and experience" (Serres, 2009: 52) If we use our eyes in such moments, they supply our brain with a vast amount of information that it will already have received from our other senses – unfortunately, we are set up that almost 1/3 of our brain is committed to processing the information coming – in fact, the slowest through our vision. The blind people have the incredible ability to compress time by relying on the information they receive to the outside world through its senses, which information they transmit it to the brain faster than the visual organ, as they can use the rest of the time for other activities necessary to the body.

It turns out that for the blind human is not a big difficulty to sew or to paint – activities, which need ostensibly to visual precision. The blind people also make to build and construct buildings. They make sport scores, to climb mountains, to write poetry, or compose music. Obviously, everything is a matter of mindset – how far you are able to turn inward to what is a priori set in reason as knowledge and pre-experience, and based on the breadth of the spiritual horizon to realized, not just relying on visual perception. Immanuel Kant in his "Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics" is thinking about this how knowledge for the "thing" in world, and to our experienced concepts which we construct before consciously to understand over one a priori base of knowledge which we carry in our minds and to them to put, to construct and project in world.

After that, though our senses to consciously perceive them in us. For this possibility of our mind Immanuel Kant writes: "Pure mathematics, and especially pure geometry, can have objective reality only under the single condition that it refers merely to objects of the senses, with regard to which objects, however, the principle remains fixed, that our sensory representation is by no means a representation of things in themselves, but only of the way in which they appear to us" (Kant, 2004: 38). M. Merleau-Ponty gives another example for Immanuel Kant: "When Kant justifies each step of his Analytic with the famous refrain "If a World to be possible," he emphasizes the fact that his guideline is furnished him by the unreflected image of the world, that the necessity of the steps taken by the reflection is suspended upon the hypothesis "world", and that the thought of the world with the Analytic is charged with disclosing is not so much the foundation as the second expression of the fact that for me there was been an experience of a world-in other words, that the intrinsic possibility of the world as a thought rests upon the fact that I can see the world, that is, upon a possibility of a wholly different type, which we have seen borders on the impossible. It is by a secret and constant appeal to this impossible-possible that reflection can maintain the illusion of being a return to oneself and of establishing itself" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 34).

5. Why sometimes our brain refuses to register the obvious?

The answer to this question is quite easy.

First, as it has already become clear the human has his "window in the present" or horizon of perception in which he can assume the various facts that happen around him, but in a certain range.

Second, because the human who very rely on his vision, is accustomed only to perceiving things, which are somehow known to him, or are a collection of images (agglutinations).

And third, because our visual system is so structured to perceive and keep our look over something, which we will be useful to us in our being, or our survival, and the other to it we ignore. Our eyes can to perceive many things and to miss just as much as happen in front of them. For example, in the sky over Los Angeles is one of the places where we can play of chasing with real planes. When we observe such a play of chasing, we can to understand how our eyes work at a very high speed. The pilot should notice an airplane moving at speeds over 400 km, then he not must to letting it out of his look as it runs through the air. This requires a huge concentration. The subject moves and that is what attracts the human look. Now the other plane now knows it's been spotted and trying to get away. While the pursued plane moves by making holes, the pilot cannot trace it. This high-speed study is conducted at the limits of our vision for perceiving a moving object in front of us. Imagine if in front of us are move objects move, which a much higher speed than our eye is set to perceive – they would never be recorded by our senses. The human as a part of the animal world is armed with medium-sized eyes, but hence the road is gifted with very sensitive sensations of touch and a very well-developed intuition that should not be ignored and underestimated.

If an elephant can fix him prey to more than a kilometer or a cheetah can run at a speed of 100 km per minute, or the chameleon's eyes move in different directions, so that he can control the space around him. Then for life in the present of human will him begin to learn to rely on his other senses of his vision. It turns out that the human eye has not been ready to be so high irradiation by digital technologies. The virtual facilitates the everyday life of a globalized, mobile human, but blinds and immobilizes him – damaging the eyes, hands and spine. Already every 20th person on the ground with a computer faces a syndrome called "dry eye", glaucoma, progressive myopia, and "tunnel syndrome" – characterized by numbness, pricking and shaking of the fingers, and wrist pain. As Jacques Attali writes "Our industry will produce "artificial joints, fingers, lenses, bones, heart valves, speech and motor apparatuses" (Attali, 1992: 124).

In fact, how does the image of the world of the blind human is a real image of the world, after in it may be allowed to perceive sensations, sensibilities and feelings unknown to people with normal vision? Is this world imagined in which the hearing of the word "yellow" is associated with the heat of the sun, the light (for those blind people catching the light), or the taste of mature pear and sour lemon?

How could this knowledge of the blind human for the things in the world to surrender to the people with normal vision, so that they may somehow more often turn to "imperfect simultaneity" – to be able to contemplate there the world's phenomena? How could this knowledge of the blind human for "things" in world to teach people with normal vision that they could to shorten the time around them for various activities as they used more complete their sensibility? With the rest of time for example, they would be to re-define the world. The blind human compresses time with the ability to use him senses more complete. So, the rest of the time seems somewhat material, necessary or unnecessary as something to be used or discarded. More compete use of our senses compresses the time and changes its parameters. The time is relative, sleek, flexible in its nature, function and structure, but it canes be rather dense and cumbersome when lives through incomplete. Very difficult must be to apply about it the parameters like "cut", "deleted" or "eaten" because it is already lost, missed unnecessary. It is clear that the way we experience the time is specific, but and it becomes clear that when our senses their capacities, try to draw and reflex on the "impossible simultaneity", the time as a factor loses its essence and dies.

6. Conclusions: We need more looking at ourselves

How the blind human canes to convince the human with normal vision that the world of the blind human is much richer in terms of feeling: soul, voluminous imagery and humanity?

How the blind human canes to convince the human with normal vision, who is obsessive in the virtual, that the feeling of touch with the other person's life is irreplaceable and unfortunately – sometimes unique in time...?

If we look at the analysts of the gestalt psychologists on the human perceptions, we will come to the following. Unfortunately, as every touch to something sacral and mysterious is punishable, so also the blind human who has returned to the vision world, he must difficult to find, to understand himself, to become accustomed to the visibility of the world. The spectacular world overturns the entire tuning of reason for the essence of the reality of the blind human. This return or re-entry into a world alien to the blind human in most cases perceived by consciousness as an existential murder. Must to be deleted one world at the expense of another – one of the two – forever remains alien. With other words – opportunity already of vision translates the personality from one reality into another, from one dimension to another – which makes it difficult to get used, because for the blind human, the real world one he is experiences through sensuous his senses, and the fantastic one of the humans with normal vision, who use his eyes to watch the world.

The British philosopher John Locke, in his memoirs, notes a letter received from colleague William Molino. In his letter, William Molino puts the following question to John Locke, finally giving himself an answer:

> "Suppose a human was born blind. He is now an adult, and by his senses, he has learned to distinguish a cube of a sphere made of the same metal and approximately the same size so that when he touches one and then the other, he can say what it is. To suppose them, that the cube and the sphere are placed on a table, and the blind human has seen. Can he before touching them through vision, distinguish them and say what is the globe, what – the cube? W. Molino answers alone and says "no". The

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good empiricist J. Lock agrees and without the knowledge gained through the visual experience, the hypothetical Molino would be impeded.

The experiment who W. Molino and J. Locke imagine themselves has in fact been repeatedly held. People who were born blind, but have regained vision themselves on a surgical path have been examined by psychologists. Many of them initially see very little and fail to distinguish even simple forms. They are able to distinguish objects, fix their eyes on them, and follow them if they move, so these abilities are probably inherent. Usually, they cannot visually recognize even those objects that are capable of identifying sensibly, such as keys, fruits and faces of their loved ones. They can identify triangles, but only the number of angles. Sometimes – after long learning – they develop vision that works and they are able to visually recognize the objects. The sad thing is that some of them are emotionally upset, refused, and actually return to their earlier, blind ways of life" (Rödiger, 1999: 58).

6.1 *General conclusions*

The text started with the following keywords: digital technology, virtual space, AI, imperfect concurrency. The last two words were and the main subject of this essay. We often wonder "what the human soul is", "how a psyche is possible", "how other people perceive world" or "how other people filling world", etc.

This essay we introduced into a little explored problem like the imperfect concurrency. Into it are hidden the answers to the questions we mentioned in the previous sentence. Knowing our senses is the way to our soul. The virtual space even more requires the need to turn to our purely human sensibility, because we are human, not robots.

Well, my travel is over. I arrived. On the road stayed many "things" with which I was only touching on the level of their constitutive existence, they only stayed as appeared before me phenomena, but in an inexpressible, even bordering on the fantastic "imperfect simultaneity", which actually leads us around the world – "essential is invisible to the eye" …

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The Muslim Brotherhood between Turkey and Egypt

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Abstract

This study presents the doctrinal and dogmatic differences related of the Muslim Brotherhood between Turkey and Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) flight from Egypt after the ouster of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 went through several stages, predominantly to several countries that were perceived as safe havens for the leaders and members of the outlawed Islamist movement. They took advantage of the experience they had gained from their constant escapes to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. As early as the mid-20th century, after the repressive policies of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, they found a warm welcome in these countries. The first country in the region to become acquainted with the ideology of Egyptian Islamists was Kuwait. This happened through Egyptian students – MB members who studied at local universities. There, the radical organization has a significant social, political and media presence.

Keywords: The Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey, Egypt.

1. Introduction

The Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) flight from Egypt after the ouster of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 went through several stages, predominantly to several countries that were perceived as safe havens for the leaders and members of the outlawed Islamist movement. They took advantage of the experience they had gained from their constant escapes to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf. As early as the mid-20th century, after the repressive policies of former Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, they found a warm welcome in these countries. The first country in the region to become acquainted with the ideology of Egyptian Islamists was Kuwait. This happened through Egyptian students – MB members who studied at local universities. There, the radical organization has a significant social, political and media presence. It has managed to bring youth unions under its control and publish a weekly newspaper, as well as to carry out extensive charitable activities. Currently, the MB has its own political party – the Islamic Constitutional Movement, which has its own deputies in parliament (Schwartz & Galily, 2021).

2. Saudi Arabia is also a preferred destination for many MB members persecuted by their governments

Saudi Arabia is also a preferred destination for many MB members persecuted by their governments. In addition to Egypt, many Syrian Islamists have found refuge in the wealthy Arab country. This was especially the case in the 1980s. Some activists of the movement even became

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close to the royal family. At one point, MB literature was widely distributed in bookstores and academic institutions of the Saudi state, such as the works of Said Qutb.

Qatar also provides hospitality to Egyptian Islamists. One of the most prominent is the MB ideologist, Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi. The latter created a religious institute there, and later a Sharia faculty at Qatar University. However, he did not develop political activity there, but was more involved in cultural and educational activities.

In Bahrain, local Sunni Islamists are part of the pro-government forces that confront the Shiite opposition. Due to the strong influence of Iran and the local Shiite majority, the government is in a delicate position with respect to the MB. However, in 2014, the authorities in Manama declared the organization a terrorist organization.

The authorities in the United Arab Emirates are waging the most uncompromising war against Egyptian radicals among all the Gulf states. It is believed that in 2013, circles around the Islamists attempted a coup against the ruling family. It is obvious that the representatives of the local dynasty did not expect such actions from the MB. However, the Islamists have their historical place in the creation of the state, as in 1971 they participated in the formation of the first federal government. Emirati political figures associated with the MB, such as Minister Saeed Abdullah Suleiman, have a significant presence in the educational, teaching and judicial sectors of the country. Even in the past, the Emirati state provided educational scholarships for Islamists such as Musa Abu Marzouq, who later became the head of the Executive Bureau of the Palestinian "Islamic Resistance Movement" Hamas (Al Ikhwan al Muslimin....ujud qadim fi al Khalij, The Muslim Brotherhood....an old presence in the Gulf countries, 18 June 2017, Al Jazeera, https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2017/6/18/%D8%A7%AC, 29.05.2025).

Qatar has become the main refuge for extremists fleeing Egypt. The official Qatari branch of the MB was dissolved in 1999. However, Qatar has continued to provide the group with financial, media and diplomatic support, including through the satellite network Al Jazeera, which has been accused of consistently favoring representatives of the Islamist movement on the air. Not coincidentally, it was engaged in broadcasting live demonstrations by Morsi supporters from Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda squares, as well as MB marches (Ghunaim, 22 February 2019, Ma waraa daam al-fadaya al-jazirah lil ikhwan, What is behind the support of the satellite channel Al Jazeera for the MB, Al Fajr, https://www.elfagr.org/3475191, 30.05.2025). Qatar is home not only to the aforementioned Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi, but also to prominent leaders of the Palestinian branch of the Islamists, Hamas, namely former leader Khaled Mashaal and the late leader Ismail Haniyeh, who moved to Qatar in 2020.

3. Doha has a long history of supporting the MB and its affiliates

Doha has a long history of supporting the MB and its affiliates. During the year that the Islamists ruled Egypt, Qatar provided the government of President Mohamed Morsi with loans worth nearly $7.5 billion. In parallel, Qatar supported Morsi's regime with both grants and direct energy supplies. Separately, the Qatari government secretly transferred funds to leaders of Egypt's MB. A document dated March 28, 2013, consisting of a long list of individuals from the Islamist movement, detailed sums of money given to them by former Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassim. An Egyptian court later accused Morsi and his aides of handing over state secrets to Qatar. (Al Ikhwan al Muslimin fi Qatar, Muslim Brotherhood in Qatar, Markaz Arabi li Dirasat al-Tatarof, https://thearabcenter.org/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AE%D9%88%D8%B1/, 29.05.2025).

According to information from Saudi Al-Arabiya TV and Western media, Qatar has relied on the MB since the Arab Spring to establish itself as a regional power with influence and weight. It is logical that the gas and oil-rich emirate would support the formation, unlike its neighbors in the Persian Gulf (Qatar wa al-Ikhwan, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood, August 3,

2019, Al-Arabiya, https://www.alarabiya.net/pdfServlet/pdf/dc75e805-dfaf-4c6f-abd3-b9dcd27196b8, 30.05.2025). Due to Qatar's apparent support for radicals and their attacks on the Egyptian state, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain decided in March 2014 to withdraw their ambassadors from Doha. They cited Qatar's failure to comply with agreements reached in 2013 at the Gulf Arab summit (Limada sahabat dual al-khaleej al-talayata sufaraiha min Qatar, Why the three Gulf states withdrew their ambassadors from Qatar, (5 March 2014), Al Arabiya, https://www.alarabiya.net/saudi-today/2014/03/05/%D8%, 30.05.2025. This demarche proved to be a powerful anti-MB tool, as Doha signed the Riyadh Agreement in November 2014, according to which the Qatari authorities suspended the activities of the Al Jazeera Mubashar Misr television channel. The latter provided direct media support to Islamic radicals in Egypt. An unofficial demand immediately followed for the MB leaders to leave the country. (Qatar tabood 7 min al-qiyadat al-ikhwan wa al-mutatifin maaha, Qatar expels 7 Muslim Brotherhood leaders and their sympathizers, 13 September 2014, BBC Arabi, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/09/140913_qatar_brotherhood_egypt, 30.05.2025). In practice, a kind of distribution of extremists fleeing Egypt between Turkey and Qatar took place. The former went to the second and third echelons of the MB, while the latter went to Qatar. In this regard, on November 14, 2014, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on board a plane on which he was returning from an official visit to Doha, stated: "Prominent figures of the Muslim Brotherhood will be welcome in Turkey if they wish to come" (Erdogan yurahib fi turkiya bi al-qiyadat al-ikhwan al-muslimin alyati sayugadir Qatar, Erdogan welcomes Muslim Brotherhood leaders who will leave Qatar, September 16, 2016, France24, https://www.france24.com/ar/20140916-%d8%86, 30.05.2025).

4. At one point, Ankara became the main destination for MB members fleeing both Egypt and Sudan. Some of them passed through

At one point, Ankara became the main destination for MB members fleeing both Egypt and Sudan. Some of them passed through Doha as a transit point, such as activist Mohammed al-Hallouji (Fargali, M., 8 February 2017, Bi asma wa al-waqayya…Sudan akbar al-dual al-daima lil ikhwan al-haribiin, With names and facts…Sudan the largest country supporting the fleeing brothers, Al-Bawaaba, https://www.albawabhnews.com/2363250, 30.05.2025). The year 2014 is a key year in the history of the MB. Then they received an unexpected blow in the back from Qatar and thus Turkey turned out to be the only reliable destination for them. At the same time, it was in 2014 that highly radicalized youth appeared – members of the MB, who formed the "special cells" – a generator of a new type of violence. The structures in question were tasked with opposing the law enforcement agencies, who suppressed the violent pro-Morsi demonstrations or thwarted "civil disobedience". Practically, the youth in question became a special guard for events previously organized by the MB, destroying the foundations of the new government. Movements such as "Walaa", "Idam", "Molotov" and "Ajnad Misr" appeared (Hashem, M., Wyss, A., 8 April 2014, Molotov, Wilaa, Idam, Ajnad Misr…Abraz harakat al onf al jadid, Molotov, Wilaa, Idam, Ajnad Misr… The most famous new movements of violence, Ash Shuruk, https://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=08042014&id=48f24c97-d0ec-465a-a9ba-56d08bfbafbe, 30.05.2025). The structures in question immediately became the target of persecution by the authorities, which forced them to leave Egypt and Sudan, heading for Turkey, despite the fact that travel is not without problems. Initially, the Egyptian authorities encouraged such individuals to leave the country, but subsequently imposed travel restrictions, requiring prior approval from the security services since December 2014 (Abdul Basit, A., 11 December 2014) Taarif ala al-dual alyati tusafir ilayha biduna al-taashira…wa akhra tahtaj tasrih amni, Learn about the countries you can travel to without a visa… and others that require security clearance, Al-Watan, https://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/616940, 30.05.2025).

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Overall, since 2015, due to the increasing number of MB members fleeing, Sudan has transformed from a temporary stopover for leaders and rank-and-file activists preparing to leave for Qatar and Turkey after the dispersal of pro-Morsi sit-ins, into one of the most sought-after refuges. The majority of Islamists who have settled in Sudan have been youth leaders or third-level and lower-level leaders. Sudanese authorities have facilitated the presence of the MB there and allowed them freedom of movement. A document, described as "leaked information" and circulated in October 2015 by MB-affiliated social media outlets, shows that those fleeing the Islamist party's structures are being given support during a meeting attended by Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. The presumption in the actions of the authorities in Khartoum is that the MB could one day return to power (Tausiyat min riyasat al-sudan bi daam ikhwan masr al-fariin ilayha, Recommendations from the Sudanese Presidency to Support Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Members Fleeing to Sudan, 4 February 2016, Nunpost, https://www.noonpost.com/10097/, 30.05.2025). As circumstances became unfavorable for the MB, as well as after the deteriorating relations with the authorities in Sudan, the Islamist fugitives themselves began to engage in a number of non-traditional activities, such as entering the speculative financial market for currency exchange. The goal was to create jobs and livelihoods for the activists and their families.

5. Another, albeit more distant, destination of the target group is Malaysia. The group of Egyptian MBs there increased sharply in 2015

Another, albeit more distant, destination of the target group is Malaysia. The group of Egyptian MBs there increased sharply in 2015. The Asian country in question was first mentioned as an object of special attention by the MB when it became clear that in November 2013 the Egyptian authorities had prevented the son of Mohamed Morsi from traveling to Kuala Lumpur. It is assumed that the MB leadership had planned an escape of its members to this distant Asian country after the overthrow of the Islamist president in Cairo. This was to be done through small groups. However, a year later the situation changed and Malaysia, which was dynamically developing in economic terms, became one of the important investment centers of the radical formation. (Ban: Najl Morsi lan yusafir kualalampur: li istijmam…wa malaysia maakl al-safiliyat al-aktar al-taatiran fi al-tanzim al-duali lil ikhwan, Ban: Morsi's son will not travel to Kuala Lumpur for "vacation"… and Malaysia is a bastion of the most influential figures in the international organization "Muslim Brotherhood", 5 February 2013, Al-Balad, https://www.elbalad.news/667402, 30.05.2025)

In general, it can be summarized that initially the plans were only for the leadership to leave Egypt in order to preserve it. The hope was that after successful subversive measures, the MB would return to power. The latter was to be taken up by the youth, who quickly organized themselves into overt terrorist groups. It soon became clear that the way to return to power was chimerical. Then activists from the lower levels of the MB's management also began to withdraw. They were followed by the youth, who found themselves in the most difficult socio-economic situation in the countries in which they resided. Moreover, friction began between the individual levels in the hierarchy of the Islamist movement. The younger and more declassed members of the MB felt the differentiation with the leadership and their families, who were heading to Qatar and Turkey. They began to look with anger at those who had practically abandoned them after the collapse of the Islamist regime. Moreover, even in Turkey, a social hierarchy is beginning to form between the successful and unsuccessful MB members on the labor market. Former leaders and activists of the first and partly second level become the object of generous donations and successful jobs with huge salaries, while those who go further and to poorer countries go directly to the labor market and begin to build their lives again.

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Turkey attracts the most Egyptian MB members compared to other countries. The number of activists in the country is not clear, but the most common figure is 14,000, which together with their families becomes over 40,000 people. As time goes by and relations with Egypt warm, the restrictions of the Turkish authorities on the activities of the MB community increase. Some of them return to their homeland, while others head to other destinations, mainly Europe. However, they have managed to fit well not only into the country's economic life, but have also made great efforts to become the center of the Arab community in the country. This is especially true for the largest city – Istanbul. In 2016, members of the Egyptian MB established the "World University for Renewal", offering curricula in Turkish, Arabic and English. Its founder is Al-Azhar graduate Dr. Jamal Abdul Sattar, one of the most active members of the MB leadership. He is known as one of the skillful speakers at Rubaiya Square and a frequent guest on the Al Jazeera satellite channel (Jamal Abdul Sattar, Al Markaz al-Arabi li dirasat al-tataraf, https://thearabcenter.org/%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B1, 30.05.2025). The students accuse the institution of misusing the collected fees and donations. The Turkish state has not accredited the institution in question. At the same time, the university recruits young people for information technology training, who are then used as hackers to carry out cyberattacks against Egypt and other Arab countries (Jamiyya al-Ikhwan fi Istanbul…tadlil hadafu tajnid al-talaba, Istanbul Brotherhood University: Disinformation Aimed at Recruiting Students, (November 9, 2020), Ronahi, https://ronahi.tv/ar/%D8%B3, 30.05.2025).

Istanbul is the seat of the largest number of organizations, platforms, educational, media and ideological institutions that are directly or indirectly connected to the international network of the MB. In the largest Turkish city, mourning events were held in memory of the former ideologist of the MB Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the official announcement of one of the factions in the leadership of the MB – the "Movement for Change," the election of a new leadership of the European Islamic Council, which serves as an umbrella organization for most organizations of the European branches of the MB in Europe, and numerous other events of the organization of Egyptian Islamists. One of the leading institutions operating in Istanbul is the Imam Malik International Academy of Sciences. This is an educational organization that was established and registered in 2018. Its activities are focused on the field of humanities, and in particular, Islamic studies and the Arabic language. Its stated mission is to educate young people who have completed secondary education. The institution is led by the Libyan preacher from the city of Zawiya, Abdul Basit Yarbu. He is a member of the MB and a supporter of the deposed Libyan Mufti al-Sadiq al-Ghariani.

The Omran Project is another initiative related to the MB in Istanbul. It was established on April 21, 2019, in the Municipal Council Hall of this cosmopolitan Turkish city. The activity of Omran is of great importance for the structures of the MB international network. According to the founding documents, the project is "a pioneering media platform for the creation and management of youth innovative activities that contribute to the creation of a mature, renaissance society and work to transform the nation into an international leader and a global competitive factor." The project concept also aims to "create long-term plans that direct the efforts of competent youth towards the optimal use of planning tools and strategic projects" (Mashrua Omran, The Omran Project, https://omran.org/ar, 30.05.2025). The de facto head of the project is the Kuwaiti preacher Tariq al-Suwaidan, one of the leaders of the radicals in the Persian Gulf countries. The former advisor to the media training center of the Al Jazeera television channel in Qatar, Ibrahim Hawari, is its executive director (Mashrua Omran, The Omran Project, Al Markaz al-Arabi li dirasat at-Tatarof, https://thearabcenter.org/%D9%886, 30.05.2025).

In this light, we must also add the Al-Sharq Forum, which is an Islamist structure and whose motto is "Communication, Dialogue and Democracy." It was founded in 2012 in Tunisia under the leadership of the former director-general of Al Jazeera, the Palestinian journalist Wadah Hanfar. Moroccan members and sympathizers of the Islamist movement also participate in the

initiative (Homrou, H., 13 January 2013, Wadah Hanfar yutlaq al montada al sharq min tunis maa musharaka maghrebia, Wadah Hanfar starts the "Al-Sharq Forum" from Tunisia with Moroccan participation, Hespress, https://www.hespress.com/%d9%8873197.html, 3005.2025). After the removal of the Nahda party, which is the local branch of the MB, from power, the headquarters of Al-Sharq moved to Istanbul. In late 2018, the leadership opened a branch in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur. The forum's institutions currently include platforms for dialogue and research. These include the Al-Sharq Center for Strategic Studies, the Al-Sharq Academic Platform, and the Al-Sharq Youth Network. The forum's activities are sponsored by Turkey and Qatar and enjoy a wide presence of MB cadres (Muntada al-Sharq, Al-Sharq Forum, https://www.sharqforum.org/ar/, 30.05.2025).

Another important civil society organization controlled by the MB in Istanbul is the Academy of International Relations (AIO). It is an official Turkish institution headed by Egyptian citizen Issam Abdel Shafi. Publicly, it specializes in education, training and qualification in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Special emphasis is placed on the activities carried out in the scientific fields of political science, international relations, strategic studies, law, economics, management, media and sociology. Unofficially, the AIO's activities are aimed at qualifying personnel from the upper management echelon of the MB. This is about preparing them for positions in the executive and legislative branches if the Egyptian Islamists return to power in the Arab country.

The academy was founded in 2017 and is headquartered in the Yenibosna district of Istanbul, Turkey, in the Vizyon Park complex. It houses numerous Arab research centers, international and Arab trading companies, and satellite channels (including those that reflect the MB's positions, such as Al Mukmalein, Al Cairo wa al Nas, and Sada al Balad). The academy's administrative headquarters consists of two main lecture halls, the first of which has a capacity of about 30 people, and the second – 14 people. The four offices are intended for use by administrative staff and lecturers. There are also two logistics rooms, which allow the AMO to implement numerous programs and hold events in the wonderfully equipped premises (Academy of Al Alaqat Al Dualiya, Academy of International Relations, https://iraacademy.uk/, 31.05.2025).

The academy's director, Issam Abdel Shafi, who holds a PhD in philosophy, is one of the most dangerous members of the Egyptian MB in Turkey. He plays a key role in recruiting and training the new generation of MB leaders who are trained in the media and intelligence fields. Shafi also maintains active ties with political decision-makers in Turkey, particularly with representatives of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). The Egyptian Islamist is well-known and in constant contact with the Qatari media establishment (Issam Abdel Shafi, Al Arabi al Jadid, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/author/19893/%8A, 31.05.2025).

Among the AMO cadres is the former university professor and former advisor to Mohamed Morsi, Seyfeddin Abdul Fattah. He is seen as the spiritual father of the so-called "Movement for Change", which played a significant role in overcoming the governance crisis in the MB after the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi (Seyfeddin Abdul Fattah, Mausua al-fiqh al-siyasi al-islami, https://web.archive.org/web/20220217184534/, 31.05.2025).

6. The members of the Egyptian MB are the Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey (SEAT)

The next structure controlled by members of the Egyptian MB is the Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey (SEAT). It was established in 2018 under the leadership of prominent MB activist Midhat al-Haddad. Currently, SEAT is one of the organizations involved in managing the funds of Egyptian Brotherhood members abroad, implementing the group's investment projects, and collecting donations and monthly subsidies for individual members. The structure in question

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is a member of the Union of Islamic Non-Governmental Organizations, which is under the supervision of the MB international organization and plays a major role in attracting the younger generation from Egypt and the entire Arab world. Midhat al-Haddad himself is one of the founders of the MB's economic wing and a member of the Shura, the Consultative Council. He was in charge of the administrative office of the Alexandria Governorate before fleeing Egypt. His deputy in SEAT is Said al-Azbi, and his treasurer is Mukhtar al-Ashri (Al Ittihad al Jama'iyat al Masriya fi Turkiya, Union of Egyptian Associations in Turkey, https://egau.org/, 31.05.2025).

The last significant entity under the control of the IB in Turkey is the Union of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Islamic World (UNOIS). The structure was established in Istanbul in 2005 to serve as a bridge for communication with IB organizations throughout the Arab region, under the guise of "civil society associations and initiatives." UNOIS includes several institutions and foundations in Turkey and in Islamic countries. According to the organization's own data, the members of the Union number approximately 340 organizations in 65 countries (Ittihad al-monazamat al-ahliyya fi al-'alam al-islami, Union of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Islamic World, https://web.archive.org/web/20240913110732/https://idsb.org/ar, 31.05.2025). The Union maintains broad partnerships with the Council of Muslims in Europe, the Union of Islamic Organizations in France and other international institutions related to the MB in Europe. Its task is also to collect donations, zakat and charitable funds. In 2025, Turkish citizen Ali Kurt was elected as chairman, but the real leadership is carried out by two activists belonging to the MB international network, namely Ghazwan al-Masri and Jamal Karimadin, who are Syrians but have Turkish passports (Istanbul...club al-ikhwan al-nabid, Istanbul...the beating heart of the Brothers, (December 22, 2022), MENA, https://www.mena-researchcenter.org/ar/%d8%b6/, 31.05.2025).

In November 2013, waving four fingers (the sign of the MB - ed. author) Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan declared that "they (the Turks - ed. author) will never be silent to please the coup plotters in Egypt...the unjust coup plotters will inevitably go away...the people will remain and Turkey will not abandon them" (Rais al-wazara at turki recep tayyeb erdogan yujedid wasf al-nizam al-masri bi al-nizam 'al-inqilabi', Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan again describes Egyptian regime as 'coup plotter', (26 November 2013), BBC, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2013/11/131126_turkey_egypt_erdogan_critique, 31.05.2025). Not only the stability of President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi's power, but also a number of international circumstances stimulated Cairo and Ankara to gradually warm relations. Turkish President Erdogan became convinced that the MB did not represent an alternative to the new authorities in Egypt. The first reason was the clash between Turkey and Egypt in Libya. There, the two countries stood on two different and warring sides. Turkey supported the internationally recognized government in Tripoli, and Egypt - the one that controls the eastern part, headed by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. The situation stabilized on the principle of relative parity. The second reason is the rivalry for maritime territories in the eastern Mediterranean. In 2019, Egypt, together with Palestine, Jordan, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Israel and France, created the "Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum". It is aimed at Turkey's ambitions to extract gas in this part of the world, after Ankara agreed to merge the exclusive maritime zones of Turkey and Libya, represented by the government in Tripoli. This act provoked opposition from countries that felt harmed by this demarche, which contradicts international law (EastMed Gas: Paving the Way for New Geopolitical Era, (24 June 2019), DW, https://web.archive.org/web/20191207220343/, 1.06.2025).

This has led to the formation of serious preconditions for seeking compromises between Cairo and Ankara, at the expense of restrictions on MBs residing in Turkey. In July 2021, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry stated: "The decision to ban refugees and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which the Egyptian government considers a terrorist organization, from appearing in the media and social networks is a policy compatible with international law. If

maintained permanently, it will lead to the normalization of relations and the continuation of communication between Cairo and Ankara at various levels in order to establish a framework for joint relations" (Masr wa Turqiya: Wazir al-Kharijiya al-Masri yusheid bi manaa turqiya musriyin min zuhur al-ilami, Egypt and Turkey: Egyptian Foreign Minister welcomes Turkey's ban on media appearances by Egyptians, (July 4, 2021), BBC, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-57714239, 1.06.2025). The restrictions are expressed not only in the media sphere, but also in the suspension of granting citizenship or, in individual cases, the withdrawal of such. In this light, the refusal of the Turkish authorities in 2023 to allow the residence and citizenship of the radical Egyptian preacher and MB member Wajdi Ghunaim is not a big surprise (Abdul Hamid, A., (21 August 2023), Baad azmatuhu fi Turkiya...al ikhwan yatadahalun li istak wajdi ghunaim, After his crisis in Turkey, the Brotherhood intervenes to silence Wajdi Ghunaim, Al Arabiya, https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2023/08/21/%D85, 1.06.2025). Confirming Ankara's obstructionist policy towards the MB is the deprivation of the acting Supreme Leader Mahmoud Hussein (leader of the Istanbul group of the splinter MB – ed. author) of the Turkish citizenship that had already been granted. This act is categorical evidence of the change in Turkey's assessment of the political status quo in Egypt and, respectively, the possibilities of the radical Egyptian formation to return to power.

All this comes days after Erdogan's visit to Egypt on February 15, 2024, at the invitation of his counterpart Abdul Fattah al-Sisi (Hasan, A., (February 14, 2024), Al alaqat al musriya at turqiya: ziyarat erdogan bi qahira yutawi sanawat min al qatia, Egypt-Turkey relations: Erdogan's Cairo visit ends years of estrangement, BBC, https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cjl3wg39k1do, 1.06.2025). The return visit of the Egyptian head of state to Turkey after only seven months outlines very well the trend in Egyptian-Turkish relations. The analysis of the Turkish university professor Abdullah Kuran and his conclusion that "Turkey will not allow the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood to reside on its territory and that the era in which they led and directed their members in Egypt from Turkish territory will end" is very accurate (Suz, D., (23 February 2024), Turkish Academic: The Era of the Muslim Brotherhood, in Which Its Decisions Are Made from Turkish Territory, Will Soon End, Al Arabiya, https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/egypt/2024/02/23/%D8%A3%A7, 1.06.2025). The restrictions are likely to continue, as the two countries commit to exchanging intelligence on "sensitive topics" related to national security. However, Ankara is unlikely to ever blacklist the MB as a terrorist organization, as Egypt did on December 25, 2013.

7. Conclusion

Following the development of the MB's relations with the Turkish state, Ankara will probably continue to have the status of a kind of intermediate stop for the fleeing and agonizing Egyptian Islamists. As if using Turkey's geopolitical position, the MB can easily move its multitude of personnel, commercial companies and non-governmental structures to some Asian or African country. It is not excluded that this will also happen in the direction of some closer European destination (for example, the Balkans and especially Bosnia). If we have to look for a third, equal partner in the complex Egyptian-Turkish relations with regard to the development of the situation around the Egyptian Islamist movement after its defeat in 2013, this is undoubtedly the United Kingdom. It has historical ties with the Egyptian radicals, since the time of the creation of their movement by Hassan al-Banna. The visit of former MI6 director Robert More on November 9, 2020 to Cairo will remain symptomatic (Rais Abdul Fattah Al Sisi Yastakbil Rais Al Mukhabarat Al Britannia, President Abdul Fattah Al Sisi receives the head of British intelligence, (November 9, 2020), ARE Presidency website, https://www.presidency.eg/ar/%D9%89-9-11-2020/, 1.06.2025). Interestingly, literally from Cairo, the British top intelligence officer flew to Ankara, where he met with the then director of the presidential office and current head of Turkish intelligence MIT, Ibrahim Kalin (Turkish Presidential Spokesperson Meets with MI 6 Spy Chief in

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Ankara, (November 12 2020), Duvar English, https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-presidential-spokesperson-meets-with-mi6-spy-chief-in-ankara-news-55006, 1.06.2025). The timing of the double visit is very symptomatic – the deepening crisis in the MB and the split between the so-called Istanbul Group and the London Front in the leadership of the Egyptian Islamist movement. It is evident that the very appointment of More in October 2020 as director of the famous British institution is aimed with a serious emphasis on the Middle East region and, respectively, the role of the MB in it. It is noteworthy that More is the first British senior intelligence officer who was born in Tripoli, the capital of Libya, and has one term as the British ambassador to Turkey, speaking fluent Turkish. Thus, on the eve of the centenary of its establishment, the organization of Egyptian Islamists is "split" between its native Egypt, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It is not clear what the directions of the transfers of MB members will be on a regional and global scale, but the Istanbul-London route remains leading.

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C O A S

Saudi Wahhabism After 9/11 – Ideology Versus Pragmatism. Modern Wahhabism: The "Shaping" of Ideology

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Abstract

In recent years there has been voices against the Wahhabis as someone who "exports Islamic fundamentalism." Indeed, radicalism and the father can still be found inside and outside Saudi Arabia in the form of organizations such as Ahl al-Sunna and al-Tawhid in Sudan, elements and foes of the al-Qaeda organization headed by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and Yemen and other neo-Wahhabi organizations throughout the Muslim world. However, these organizations should not be regarded as representing the Wahhabist ideology, so that their law is no different from other marginal radical movements, such as Al-Takfir and Al-Hijra, who were educated on the knees of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Keywords: Wahhabism, Saudi-Arabia, Muslim Brotherhood.

1. Introduction

A day after 9/11, the Saudi government issued an official statement in the Al-Riyadh newspaper on religious rulings and media. According to the announcement, which is a reminder of an existing 1980 order, the publication of religious rulings is permitted only to the official religious establishment of the state or a person authorized by it. The announcement also mentioned the names of the authorized religious authorities (muftis), their telephone numbers (Goldberg, 1981).

The argument was to prevent contradictions between religious rulings of the establishment and those of private religious authorities. It is reasonable to assume that this announcement was part of an immediate Saudi reaction to the events of September 11, in order to prevent potential responses by private religious authorities that do not conform to the official policy of the government. More importantly, however, this is another expression of the long tradition of trying to preserve the monopoly on the interpretation of religion by the government as a mechanism for adapting classical ideals and cubes to the conditions of a modern state and a constantly evolving cosmopolitan space.

That the construction and stabilization of a modern state is incompatible with the traditional puritanical Wahhabist concept. Fanaticism that stemmed mainly from a conservative interpretation of the sources and the demand to adhere to the tradition of al-Salaf al-Salih or the ancestors of the first three centuries of Islam. According to this traditional view, Muslims must

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follow the path of the ancient patriarchs by adhering to their heritage while avoiding innovations in religion that are incompatible with the same heritage as interpreted by the Wahhabis. (Lish, 1996).

Moreover, Salafiyya is the only guarantee for those who wish to belong to the survivor group (al-Farqah al-Najiya), who is a servant of the path, which is mentioned in tradition, which says: "This nation (Islam) will be divided into seventy-three groups, One group." Hence, the Wahhabis were not only impatient to non-Muslims, but also to other Islamic movements. For example, the Wahhabi doctrine rejects Greek philosophy and the kalam or theological discussion, including the formulas of al-Ash'ari, claiming that they are foreign to the Koran. A similar attitude was felt toward the Scouts or the mystics and the Shiites on the grounds that they caused a forbidden opinion or innovation in religion (Bligh, 1985: 37-50).

In relation to non-Muslims, the classical Wahhabi doctrine adopted the legal approach especially Ibn Taymiyyah, which is familiar with both types of jihad, initiated by Talab, (Daf), dividing the world into two main parts: the land of Islam (Dar al-Islam), the land of war (Dar al-Harb). It is important to note that according to this view, the imam or the leader is obliged to expand the land of Islam at the expense of the land of war. As much as they enjoyed militant circles and foes, and based on this political philosophy, they demanded that King Abd al-'Aziz ibn Saud (the father and founder of present-day Saudi Arabia, 1953) declare jihad even on neighboring Islamic countries such as Iraq and Jordan in order to spread the Wahhabism among the urban population Al-Khadr.) (Layish, 1984: 29-63).

This approach was not accepted by Ibn Saud, who took operative steps to suppress the militant Ikhwan movement in the late 1920s, and sent the clerics to the Bedouin neighborhoods to instruct them on matters of religion, and especially to preach to them against radical religious positions .

This approach of the Wahhabi recession was preserved by Ibn Saud's heirs, so that a significant attempt was made under Feisal (1964-1975). Feisal, who was perceived in the historiography of Saudi Arabia as a modernist, sought to see a modern Saudi state developing as part of the advanced global world.

However, he was aware of the difficulties on the way and stemmed mainly from the opposition of clerics and conservative circles and fathers, who viewed openness as a threat to traditional Wahhabi values. It is not surprising, therefore, that King Faisal was conspicuously interested in exerting his influence on the clerics, and especially the religious authorities, as the commentators and official sheikhs of the shari'a by institutionalizing them and integrating them as part of the ruling elite (Rentz, 1982).

The first expression of the establishment of the masterpieces was on August 29, 1971, when King Feisal ordered the establishment of two official institutions of religious rulings:

(1) The Supreme Council of the World (Hayat Kabar al-Ulma). This council, which was composed of senior Wahhabi clerics in the country, was under the direct authority of the king. Thus, for example, Article C of the Royal Order, which deals with the main purpose of the Council's existence, determines that this Council will issue a religious ruling in accordance with the King's request, and will advise him on matters of religion related to public legislation.

(2) The committee for scientific research, religious rulings, and the spread of Islam "(al-Lajnah al-Daamah, al-Bakhut, al-'Alami, al-Afta, and al-Dawa and al-Arshad). This committee was composed of four halachic authorities, including the chairman, who were elected from among the members of the Supreme Council of the World. Its function is to answer public inquiries in the field of transactions, rituals and personal affairs, conduct research on religious questions, and provide logistical and administrative assistance to the Supreme Council of the World.

These two institutions were under his direct authority of the king, so that he determines not only their composition but also the validity of their halachic ruling by enforcing it by royal decree based on the doctrine of Siasa Sharaya. The fact that halachic rulings are not binding according to Muslim law enables the king to use the halachic ruling of these institutions as a mechanism for shaping legal and social norms. In any event, the establishment of these two institutions under the direct authority of the king, with a clear definition of the powers of the Ulema, undoubtedly marked an important turning point in world-ruling relations that expressed a new order of forces within the famous formula of Ula-Umra in the Saudi-Wahhabi state (Al-Sadhan, 1980).

On the face of it, the new division of powers weakened the status of the Ulema as one of the country's traditional centers of power, and as a result increased the power of the royal family (Umra). Moreover, the fact that most of the ummah members of the two religious authorities (Afta) are not members of the Aal al-Sheikh family is not coincidental and comes as part of the trend of increasing the power of the Umra at the expense of the Ulema.25 It is reasonable to assume that the royal family preferred to cultivate loyalty to their rule Olma outside the Aal Sheikh family who will have influence. A prominent example of this was Sheikh Abd al-'Aziz ibn Baz, who as head of the halachic ruling establishment over two decades (1975-1999) enjoyed a privileged position within the religious establishment during this period. Ibn Baz is considered a member of the royal family and works to preserve their rule by legitimizing their policies, although this often contradicts the religious ruling. This criticism was voiced mainly by the Saudi opposition following a number of rulings on political matters that, in the opinion of the critics, aimed at legitimizing the King's policy.

One of the most famous rulings in this context was, for example, the one that allowed the entry of American soldiers into Saudi Arabia following the first Gulf War and the ruling on peace with Israel. In any event, the official religious establishment was "accused" of having "renounced" the classical Wahhabi tradition in favor of processes of change and modernization of the state. And the question, then, is what is the world of contemporary Wahhabis different from the world of their forefathers?

2. The Wahhabi ideology between past and present

The worldview of religious and modernist men was referred to by Frank Vogel in his book on the modern legal system in Saudi Arabia. Vogel referred to the legal views of judges (qadis) and modern fathers in relation to issues that reach sharia courts in a comparative historical perspective. His conclusion was that the world of modern Wahhabis was different from that of their ancestors. "It is clear that the modern Saudis who seek to adopt traditional ideals and fathers are very different from their fathers in terms of the openness and loyalty they profess. In any case, the world of modern Saudi Ulema is drastically different from that of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab [...] The Saudi Ulema are no longer leaders of a militant sect that seeks to create a new Muslim world, but they have become part of the international community of Ulema [...]] The Wahhabi worldview has become more accepted in the world [...] (Vogel, 1996).

A change in the ideology of modern Wahhabis is also expressed in their political worldview. In fact, they define their attitude to the outside world differently than that of their ancestors. This is expressed in a different approach to doctrinal issues, such as jihad, the attitude towards members of the monotheistic religions or The people of the book (Ohel al-Dhimma) and the contract between them and the Muslims ('Aqd al-Dhimma), you asked (Wala'a and Bara), and even on subjects related to ritual and world order.

For example, Abd al-'Aziz Aal Shaykh (the current Saudi Mufti) states that hijacking planes is prohibited from the religious point of view because passengers may belong to one of three

D. Galily – Saudi Wahhabism After 9/11 - Ideology Versus Pragmatism. Modern Wahhabism ...

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main categories, the fighting against which is prohibited: Ba'ath (Maadh), members of monotheistic religions such as Jews, Christians (Ahl al-Dhimah), or a protege (Mastaman). In the first category, the prohibition applies due to the honoring of a contract between the Muslim state and other countries, so that harm to the nationality of a state with which a treaty is in breach of that covenant is contrary to the religious principle of honoring promises (Al-Ifaa in al-'Ahud). As for Ahl al-Dhimma, Aal al-Sheikh states that they enjoy immunity according to the principle of 'Aqd al-Dhimma. According to the classic definition, 'Aqd al-Da'ma is a contract between the Muslims and the people of the Book, who are sponsored by the Muslim state, such as the Jews, the Christians, and the Zoroastrians, so that fighting against them is prohibited as long as these conditions are met. Din is equal in relation to a non-Muslim whose permanent residence is in the territory of Dar al-Harb and enjoys temporary protection of the Muslim state within the framework of the Maskman category. He enjoys security (Aman) for his safety and property, but for a limited period of one year.

However, extending the stay beyond a year entails a transition to the status of Ohel al-Dhimma and the payment of a poll tax (Jizya)

In fact, this is the use of classic basic terms of defining Muslims' relationship with non-Muslims, although they do not correspond to the current context of the nation-state in the Middle East. For example, there is no al-dhimma under the protection of the Muslim state, so the payment of a poll tax (jizya) is irrelevant.

In any case, the Saudi mufti's halachic interpretation is interesting and undoubtedly teaches a pragmatic approach, while reading the sources differently, and thus on dialogue and the father is uncompromising in relation to non-Muslims (Al-Yassini, 1985: 37-50).

This approach is expressed in a long line of coherent halachic rulings, from the one that confirms the coalition against Iraq, to the halachic ruling of peace with Israel, to the halachic rulings of September 11 and the Palestinian suicide bombers. For example, Ibn Baz states that a peace treaty can be made with enemies, whether temporary or permanent, to the degree that the leader sees fit.

He bases his arguments mainly on religious principles, such as the general good (Masalha), and a vital need (Drora), but mainly on the textual sources (the Koran and the Sunnah). As far as he is concerned, the peace treaty with the Jews can be expressed in diplomatic relations and commerce, although this treaty does not require a vaunted (Jewish) loyalty to the Jews, which is indeed a contradiction in theory. This ruling provoked a wave of negative reactions by religious scholars in the Muslim world. For example, Sheikh Yussuf al-Qaradhawi argued that peace with Israel is not possible because it occupies Muslim territory, so that a peace treaty with it is not halachically valid.

For him, it is the Muslims' duty to go to jihad as a defense of Muslim land (jihad daf), so that a permanent peace agreement, as proposed by Ibn Baz, is irrelevant. For example, on December 29, 1994, Osama bin Laden sent an open letter to Sheikh Ibn Baz in response to this ruling. In his letter, Ibn Laden tried to challenge the halachic competence of the fatwa and severely criticized the functioning of the religious establishment headed by Ibn Baz, as a "betrayal" on his Wahhabi mission. nother example was the fatwa through which Ibn Aaz confirmed the aid Saudi Arabia received from the Allies during the Gulf War and the US military presence in its territory.

The analysis of the fatwa once again demonstrates Ibn Abbas's massive use of the principle of the common good (success) (Fandy, 1999: 1-20).

He stressed the authority and even the religious obligation of the ruler (king) to take actions in order to safeguard the common good. In his opinion, due to the existence of a danger to the security of the state, it is the duty of the king to take every possible step to remove this danger, even if it involves seeking assistance from strangers. 129

Ibn Baz finds references to this ruling in the narratives of the prophet's biography. According to him, the Prophet Muhammad was assisted by the son of Adi when he returned to Mecca from the city of Taif, as well as in 'Abd al-Hala ibn Arit, despite being non-Muslims. He notes the migration of the Muslims to the land of the Abyssinians according to the Prophet's instruction, despite being a Christian land, in order to preserve their safety by keeping them away from their enemies in Mecca, as well as the help that the Prophet sought on the day of the Khenin system, in the form of an armor garment "He was not a Muslim."

Another example brought by Ibn Baz was the assistance that the Prophet received from the Jews of Khaybar in agriculture and in the treatment of palm groves while the members of the Prophet (Tshuva) were busy with jihad. In his view, receiving non-Muslim welfare does not necessarily mean loyalty to the aid recipients, which is indeed forbidden by Islamic law. From here he states that there is nothing wrong with the entry of American soldiers into the land of Saudi Arabia (Armstrong, 1988).

There is no doubt that in this matter at least (assistance to non-Muslims against Muslims) is their halachic position of modern Wahhabis is drastically different from that of their forefathers, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and Ulamah, and the later fathers. Ibn Taymiyyah, for example, states that the aid of non-Muslims against Muslims is contrary to the religious principle of al-Wala'a and al-Baa, which is considered an outing against Islam.

An example of this was found by Ibn Taymiyyah in the Muslims who helped the Tatars in their war against the Muslims and who were defined by them as apostates from Islam (Martadon). Ibn Abd al-Wahhab states that helping non-Muslims against Muslims is considered one of the most contradictory acts in Islam (Nuked al-Islam).

A similar approach was presented by his grandson, Sheikh Abd al-Rahman Ibn Hassan (1868), a senior al-Qaeda scholar of Najd and the chief mufti of the second Saudi state, who ruled that any assistance to non-Muslims, whether moral or logistical, was in complete contradiction to belief.

Abd Allah Ibn Abd al-Latif Aal al-Sheikh (the leading Wahhabi scholar in the first half of the twentieth century, died, 1932) states, like Ibn Taymiyyah, that this is indeed a departure from Islam (al-Haruj al-Mala) (Donner, 1999).

3. The Wahhabis and the September 11 events

The dramatic regional and global geopolitical events of the past two years, centered on the Palestinian intifada and the September 11 attacks, posed many challenges not only to politicians but also to clerics and halachists throughout the Arab and Muslim world (Khadduri, 1955: 63). The involvement of Islamic organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and others in these events once again raised religious-political issues of Islamic radicalism, Islamic movements, and political Islam in general (Schwartz & Galily, 2021). However, the issue of jihad as a holy war and its contemporary conceptual significance was particularly prominent in light of events such as the massive attack on the Twin Towers, described by Bernard Lewis as "an unprecedented act of terror even in human history" (Lewis, 2001).

The phenomenon of suicide bombers; these actions, which were carried out in the name of jihad, at least for the perpetrators, raised many questions that were placed at the door of religious men throughout the Muslim world, including the Wahhabis. For example, is the military activity of Al-Qaeda, including the attacks on the United States, considered jihad? How does this organization differ from the military activities of Palestinian organizations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad against Israeli targets? What is the religious law of the suicide bombers in the September 11 attacks against the Palestinian suicide bombers?

The Wahhabi response to these questions was coherent and largely preserved their approach to the events of the Gulf War. This can be seen from the religious definitions of the attacks on the United States, the coalition of Muslims and non-Muslims in the war on terror, and also with regard to the issue of Palestinian suicide bombers. The Wahhabis condemned the attacks on the United States and defined them as contradicting all the rules of jihad and the most basic principles of Islam in general, which prohibit attacks on innocents and destruction of property.

For example, Sheikh Salih Al-Lahidan, head of the Supreme Judicial Council (Ra'is Majlis al-Qada'a al-'Ala), condemned the attacks and referred to an existing religious ruling on the matter issued by the Supreme Council of Ulama in 1988. Al- States that hijacking planes is prohibited whether the passengers are Muslim or not, because it contradicts the clear halachic injunctions of harming innocent people.

For him, such acts are prohibited even during war, because harming the weak, children, women, adults, and property destruction is a very serious contradiction of Muslim law (sharia). Moreover, Al-Lahidan stresses that Muslims aspire to live on the basis of mutual respect with other peoples because Islam does not distinguish between mortals: "Muslims want to live in peace with all human societies, because Islam does not distinguish between people - after all, they are all brothers."

The modern Wahhabi position was also interesting in the Palestinian question. In fact, the recent events of the intifada and the issue of suicide bombers were a delicate and sensitive issue in the Arab and Muslim world. The suicide bombings, which received widespread support in the Arab street, received the halachic seal of approval by many in the Muslim world (Vogel, 2000).

The Wahhabis were part of the minority in this case, which rejected their halachic legality as they deviated from the definition of jihad as perceived by them. As stated, Abd al-'Aziz al-Sheikh (the current mufti) states that these acts are contrary to the principle of basic justice among the people enshrined in the Koran, as well as the religious principle of forbidding the intimidation of peaceful citizens (Tar'iy al-Aamnin) Harming innocent people such as women, adults and children who are not combatants (Harbion).

The approach of Muhammad ibn 'Abdallah al-Sabil, the chief preacher of the two great mosques in Mecca and Medina, was similar. He stated that the suicide attacks are prohibited from the halachic point of view, since the victims are not considered part of the campaign, except that they belong to the monotheistic religions (Ahl al-Dhimma), who are accorded special treatment in Islam.

According to their rulings, the harm to innocent people and the destruction of property is forbidden from a religious point of view. Islam gives special attention to members of the monotheistic religions (Ohel al-Dhimma) and instructs them to respect the contracts that are made with them. Even if these contracts are violated by them, they should not be harmed until after the announcement of the termination of the contract and the notification thereof to them (Schleifer, 1991).

The "compromise" approach of the official religious establishment is clearly expressed in the Saudi letter mentioned above. The authors, who, as noted, represent broad cross-sections of the Saudi intellectuals, tried to present their world of values and their worldview with regard to cultural and political issues, especially those that were controversial in Western-Islamic discourse. Below we shall attempt to understand the significance of this letter by analyzing its content and methodology (Lewis, 2001).

4. Conclusion

The events of September 11 brought the Wahhabis to face serious challenges due to the prominent role of circles identified with them in these events. They were forced to defend their ideology to the outside world by presenting their world view on a long list of universal values.

However, one of the most important changes in the post-September 11 Wahhabi discourse, as expressed in the response of the official religious establishment, but mainly in the letter, was their presentation of their world normative values as part of a universal world and treating others on an egalitarian basis.

For example, the authors focus on world peace and treat Islam as an equal among equals while ignoring the principle of supremacy as a universal religion, which characterizes the Muslim discourse in general and the Wahhabi discourse in particular. This approach undoubtedly represents a worldview and the abyss is different from the past. Although in the evening Saudi Arabia of today can still be seen in religious and abhoristic rhetoric, which professes allegiance to the classical Wahhabi teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. However, the contemporary religious-political worldview of contemporary Wahhabis differs greatly from that of their forefathers.

In practice, modern Wahhabism has come a long way towards the center of the modern Muslim political map. The establishment of the Ulema in the early 1970s and their transformation into a governmental establishment contributed significantly to the "soft" process of Wahhabism as a religious-ideological movement, and especially to the political worldview and the attitude toward the outside world. It was possible to learn from the modern Wahhabi definitions of political-legal doctrines, such as jihad, loyalty (Wala'a and Bara), dhimmis, the attitude towards the monotheistic religions (Ahl al-Da'ma), and expressed in their "compromising" reactions to geopolitical events The Gulf War, the issue of peace with Israel, and the attitude toward Palestinian suicide bombers.

In other words, modern Wahhabism is no longer considered militant which seeks to declare jihad on all who are not and who are fathers. This conclusion contradicts the claims which has even recently been voiced against the Wahhabis as someone who "exports Islamic fundamentalism." Indeed, radicalism and the father can still be found inside and outside Saudi Arabia in the form of organizations such as Ahl al-Sunna and al-Tawhid in Sudan, elements and foes of the al-Qaeda organization headed by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and Yemen and other neo-Wahhabi organizations throughout the Muslim world.

However, these organizations should not be regarded as representing the Wahhabist ideology, so that their law is no different from other marginal radical movements, such as Al-Takfir and Al-Hijra, who were educated on the knees of the Muslim Brotherhood.

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COAS

"God" in *The Secret Doctrine* by Helena Blavatsky

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Abstract

Theosophical doctrine is often referred to as a "religion without a god," and the founder of the Theosophical Society, Helena Blavatsky, has been accused of outright atheism. These accusations stem from a lack of understanding of Blavatsky's seminal work *The Secret Doctrine*, as well as from centuries-long efforts by certain groups to reject and discredit her. In *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky repeatedly states that the One, all-pervading, absolute reality is the true Divine essence from which all phenomena – visible things – originate and to which everything returns once the period of cosmic rest begins. This article examines the central question of "God" according to *The Secret Doctrine* and related concepts such as "noumenon" and "phenomenon," the cycles of rest and activity – Pralaya and Manvantara – as well as other elements within the broader theme of the Theosophical understanding of the Divine essence.

Keywords: Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, God, Divine Essence, One, noumenon, phenomenon, triad, Divine Mother, Divine Father, The Son, time, spirit, soul, duration.

1. Introduction

In theosophy, and specifically in Helena Blavatsky's seminal work, *The Secret Doctrine*, the concept of God is referred to and defined by many names. At its core, it is non-anthropomorphic and is presented as the foundation and source of all things in the universe and all beings. It is called the Absolute and has dozens of other definitions – the One Reality, the Rootless Root of all that has been, is, and ever will be, Self-Essence, Absolute Cause, Root-Nature, the Eternal Mother Giver of Birth, Divine Essence.

Although such an interpretation is close to the polytheistic understanding of the world, Blavatsky has been accused of creating a religion without God and, in effect, denying the God of the monotheistic religions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The author of *The Secret Doctrine* is aware of these accusations and repeatedly attempts to explain that they stem from a misunderstanding of theosophical views, which differ from the anthropomorphic conception of God in Christianity or Judaism and are closer to pantheism.

Behind all these attempts and efforts lies Helena Blavatsky's true goal of breaking the monopoly of materialism in science and society in her 19th century by revealing and proving the essence of man and life. Man is a unified, inseparable part of the Absolute, of the Divine essence, which he carries in the connecting link – the heart. It is the connecting link between the dense material shell and the finer spiritual essence, which is as immortal for man as the One Reality of the Absolute – the Theosophical God. And since man carries God within himself, he possesses divine qualities. However, their manifestation requires a high degree of self-awareness and

responsibility, so that the light and darkness within man are balanced and harmonized, enabling him to become a true co-creator of the Absolute. The whole of human history – known, unknown, hidden – is a manifestation of the opposition between light and darkness and of the efforts of one of the two sides to gain supremacy, which in essence are two manifestations of the One Reality, of God. Conscious personal change in humans, based on high morality and spiritual development, also leads to a change in the environment and society, which in its civilizational dimensions is currently at risk.

2. God is a Unified Reality

Theosophy is often called "a religion without God" (Nosovsky, 2012). Blavatsky is aware of these definitions and accusations. She repeatedly attempts to explain that the accusations stem from a misunderstanding of theosophical views, which differ from the anthropomorphized concept of God in Christianity or Judaism and are closer to pantheism.

The eternally existing Unified Reality, absolute and unchanging, is the God of theosophists or the Tao in Hinduism, the unmanifested Brahman as Parabrahman and Mula-prakriti simultaneously. Blavatsky constantly tries to explain this using various symbols and metaphors. The prologue to *The Secret Doctrine* is mainly devoted to these explanations. "It is ONE LIFE, eternal and invisible, and at the same time omnipresent, without beginning and without end, but periodic in its manifestations, between which reigns the darkness of the mystery of Non-Being" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 52), explains Blavatsky and continues: "The Deity is a secret, living (or moving) Fire, and the eternal witnesses of this invisible presence are Light, Heat, and Water"; this trinity contains everything and is the cause of all phenomena in Nature" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 52). One of the clearer explanations is this: "*The Secret Doctrine* says that at the beginning of the period of action, obeying the eternal and unchanging law, this Divine Essence spreads from the outside in and from the inside out, and the phenomenal or visible world is the end result of a long chain of cosmic forces, successively set in motion" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 54).

In the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky draws dozens of parallels to explain the non-anthropomorphic nature of the theosophical understanding of God, as opposed to the humanized concept of the Divine essence in the most widespread religions around the world. She responds to accusations of atheism by again using the ontology of Eastern teachings: "Esoteric doctrine, like Buddhism and Brahmanism and even Kabbalah, teaches that the unified, infinite, and unknowable essence has existed since Eternity, appearing passively or actively in harmonious succession. In Manu's poetic phraseology, these states are called the Days and Nights of Brahma. Brahma either "wakes" or "sleeps." The Svabhavikas, or philosophers of the most ancient school of Buddhism (still existing in Nepal), allow only speculation about the active state of this "Nature," which they call Svabhava, and consider it reckless to discuss the abstract, "unknowable" Power in its passive state. Hence the nickname "atheists" given to them by Christian theologians and modern scholars, since none of them can grasp the depth of the logic of their philosophy" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 54).

Blavatsky does not deny the right of contemporary rational science to "welcome Buddhists and Svabhavists as 'positivists' of ancient times" (Blavatsky, 2005-I:54) and explains one of the most complex questions of Buddhist philosophy - the question of Buddha's silence on topics such as "Creator," "God," and "Soul": "If we adhere to the one-sided view of the materialists, they may be right from their point of view. Buddhists claim that there is no Creator, but only an infinity of creative forces, forming in their entirety the unified eternal Essence, whose nature is inexpressible and therefore cannot be the subject of speculative speculation for the true philosopher. Socrates always refused to discuss the mystery of the World Essence, especially since no one ever thought of accusing him of atheism, except those who wanted his destruction" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 54).

3. Unified Reality, Absolute, Divine Essence

Absolute, Unified Reality, Rootless Root of all that has been, is, and ever will be, Self-Essence, Absolute Cause – these and other names are given in *The Secret Doctrine* for one of the basic philosophical concepts – Absolute, with Blavatsky always capitalizing every word in the phrases. From Latin, Absolutus means "unconditional, unlimited, perfect" – the foundation of the world and everything that exists, unified, eternal, and unchanging.

Throughout all ages of human knowledge, "Absolute" and "Absolute" are concepts that are present in one form or another in both Eastern and Western cultures. In monotheistic religions, the Absolute corresponds to the concept of God. In ancient Indian teachings, the Absolute is Brahman in its identity with Atman. In the Vishnu Purana, Parashara tells Maitreya about "the supreme Brahma, imperishable, unborn, imperishable, eternal, his original image is one, always free from extinction, unblemished (...) the supreme Atman, dwelling in every individual Atman, devoid of distinctive features, form, color, (...) the cause of creation, existence, and destruction of the world (...) the source of beings (...) whose original image is Knowledge" (Vishnu Purana, 1995, II-7-8). "The true essence of Brahman is existence itself. It is that One, Tad Ekam from the Rigveda, which gives rise to all that exists," points out Antoaneta Nikolova (Nikolova, 2022: 101) and notes that, to a certain extent, in Confucianism, Heaven can be viewed as the Absolute, while for Laozi, the Absolute is the natural order of the Tao. In Kabbalah, the Absolute is Ein Sof – unlimited, pure divinity.

The history of classical Western European philosophy discusses various aspects and levels of the concept of the Absolute. For Pythagoras, it is the One. For Parmenides, it is pure being. For Plato, it is the One, the Good. For Aristotle, it is the "form of forms," the "ultimate goal," the highest or pure entelechy. For Descartes, the Absolute is being, whose connection with self-consciousness manifests itself in the act of thinking. For Spinoza, the Absolute is substance, and for Leibniz, it is the Monad of monads, as shown later in this chapter. Gottfried Hegel discusses the Absolute as absolute spirit (Krichevsky, 2011: 10-68).

The One Reality, the Absolute, is the basis of theosophical doctrine. Helena Blavatsky presents over 30 definitions of the One Reality. In its ontological essence, it is the Absolute consciousness and Absolute being of the unmanifested universe, from which everything originates at the beginning of periods of active life and to which everything returns in periods of rest. The One Reality is the only unchanging essence, unlike visible life, in which, according to theosophy, everything is temporary, i.e., illusory. The unified reality is unconditional, eternal, genderless, and without attributes. Its two aspects are Absolute abstract space and Absolute abstract movement.

It is a self-essence that does not create or produce. But it contains the noumena of all things, and from it emanates, emerges, manifests itself the creative force (*Blavatsky calls it the Dual Force, Parabrahman and Mula Prakriti in Hindu philosophy*), which unfolds and becomes the basis for the manifested universe. At the end of the life of the manifested, visible universe, at the end of the manvantara and at the beginning of the pralaya (according to the Hindu terms used by Blavatsky), all things dissolve, return to their unchanging noumenal essence in the Absolute, the One Reality, to remain noumena throughout the entire period of pralaya and to manifest for a new life in the next manvantara, but now at a higher evolutionary level. The impersonal, non-anthropomorphic One Reality is the deity, the divine essence according to theosophy. In an attempt to bring the theosophical understanding of the Absolute closer to her time, Helena Blavatsky notes: "To present this idea more clearly to the reader, let him begin with the assumption that there is only One, Absolute Reality, which precedes all manifested and conditionally Existing. This is the Infinite and Eternal Cause, vaguely formulated in the 'Unconscious' and 'Unknowable' by contemporary European philosophy" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 64).

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4. Unified Reality and the Category of "Time"

Time does not exist; it is only a product of human consciousness. This statement is axiomatic for theosophy according to *The Secret Doctrine*. Blavatsky notes that "time" is only an illusion created by the successive alternations of our states of consciousness as we wander through Eternity, and that it does not exist, but "rests in sleep" where there is no consciousness in which Illusion can arise (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 7). This definition raises two questions. The first is "What is eternity according to theosophy?" and the second is "Where is there no 'consciousness in which illusion can arise'?" The theosophical interpretation of "time" is based on Hindu concepts and is related to the understanding that the universe goes through periods of rest and action. These are the theosophical eternities, which are enormous in duration, but still finite.

Rest is called pralaya, a term borrowed from Hinduism. During pralaya, all visible, manifested, phenomenal worlds and beings are absorbed, dissolved into the Absolute unified reality. Only this reality exists. The period of action is called manvantara. During the manvantara, the visible universe manifests from the One Reality. The manifestation goes through seven periods called the "Seven Eternities." From a human perspective, these are indeed eternities, as each of the seven periods is very long. Just as in the Vishnu Purana (Vishnu Purana, 1995, II-7-8) Parashara describes to Maitreya the creation with the alternation of the periods of rest and action, manvantara and pralaya, Days and Nights of Brahma, so Blavatsky writes about the duration: "One day of Brahma corresponds to 4,320,000,000 years of mortals. Each year of Brahma consists of 360 Days and as many Nights of Brahma, calculated according to the Lunar year" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 86). 100 years of Brahma constitute the "Great Age," which equals 311,040,000,000,000 years. This is the duration of the period of action, of activity in the Universe, called manvantara. Equally long is the period of rest or pralaya, when all visible things, all phenomena, dissolve and are absorbed into the One Reality.

The answer to the second question – Where is there no "consciousness in which illusion can arise" – is related to the One Reality, to the Absolute, where there is no illusion. The One Reality exists both during the period of action – manvantara, and during the period of rest – pralaya. It is truly eternal and unchanging. It does not evolve because it is absolute and perfect, but from it manifest the creative forces that create the visible universe. Hence Blavatsky's remark that "nothing on Earth has true, real duration, since nothing remains unchanged, or is so only for a billionth of a second" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 87). This also explains the theosophical axiom that time is only an illusion created by our consciousness. Blavatsky makes the following detailed clarification: "The sensation we get from the apparent division of time, known as the present, arises from the vagueness of fleeting perceptions or a series of perceptions of objects that our senses convey to us, insofar as these objects belong to the realm of ideal representations, which we call the future, and pass into the realm of memories, which we call the past" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 87).

In confirmation of the thesis that time is only an illusion, Helena Blavatsky notes: "A person or object does not consist solely of what is visible at a given moment, but represents a combination of all its different and changing states from the moment of its appearance in material form to its disappearance from our Earth. It is precisely "these aggregates," existing eternally in the future, that gradually pass through matter to exist eternally in the past" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 87). This assertion is very close to Buddhist ideas, where "time is a construct of consciousness, since it is consciousness that must determine for itself both the sequence of moments of the objects that constitute its thinking, the series of moments of thinking, and the 'intervals of non-thinking'" (Kamburov, 2011: 182). Victoria Lisenko emphasizes that "the entire development of the philosophy of 'time' in India after the Upanishads is a kind of conceptual shaping of the two images of Brahman – the unembodied and the embodied, and their polarization, which reached its peak in Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta. The focus of Buddhism is on "embodied" time, identical to the temporary and fluid existence of the elements (dharma). Advaita turns eternity into an absolute

value and declares time to be a product of maya, of illusion, as a distortion of the unchanging and self-identical nature of Brahman" (Lisenko, 1986: 106).

The understanding of time as a product of human consciousness and its connection with the concept of "eternity" is not a discovery of Blavatsky. In addition to ancient Indian thought, a similar understanding can also be found in Western philosophy. For example, in Timaeus, Plato (427-347 BC) says that "eternal nature served as the prototype of time, so that it might resemble it as closely as possible." The founder of Neoplatonism, Plotinus (204-270 AD), adds to Plato's definitions the possibility of a psychological and transcendental interpretation of time, and in his Confessions St. Augustine (354-430) develops Plotinus' understanding of time as "the life of the soul": "In you, my soul, I measure time." "Time is nothing other than the form of the inner sense, i.e., the visual representation of ourselves and our inner state," says Immanuel Kant, adding: "Time is the formal a priori condition of all phenomena in general" (Kant, 1992: 113). Edmund Husserl introduces the concepts of "time of consciousness" and "time of vocation" in his Lectures (Husserl, 1994).

5. Unified reality and the category of "space"

Space as a philosophical category in *The Secret Doctrine*, like time, belongs to the realm of metaphysics. In historical and philosophical terms, it is mainly related to the philosophy of the Indian Upanishads, where everything is Brahman, or the eternal unknowable essence from which life originates. According to theosophy, space is the soul of the One Reality, the noumenon, from which the Spirit is separated, through which the differentiation of the visible objective universe begins. Metaphorically, space is called "the Primal Mother - giving birth, hidden in her veils," which Blavatsky comments on as follows: "The veils" mean the noumenon of undifferentiated Cosmic Matter. This is not the matter we know, but the spiritual essence of matter, which is eternal and even one with Space in its abstract sense" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 85). This spirit-matter (in *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky does not use the term spirit-matter. Only in The Key to Theosophy, where she attempts to explain the metaphysics of theosophy, does she call the One Reality spirit-matter) is called by Blavatsky "Root-Nature," "the source of the most subtle, invisible properties in visible matter" and "the soul of the One and Infinite Spirit."

The unified reality or Absolute is space as a unity of abstract spiritual matter, from which the spirit "the uncaused cause of both spirit and matter" emerges as the first differentiation. This spirit-matter is "neither boundless emptiness" nor "conditional fullness," but is both. It has always been and always will be" (Blavatsky, 2005-I:85). Everything originates from the spiritual eternal essence of matter, i.e., all manifested, visible things, phenomena, which at the end of their existence "return" and are "absorbed" into this eternally existing spiritual matter. As Blavatsky notes, this is a metaphysical concept, a plane of consciousness, "a place (or rather a plane) where everything began and where all things dissolve" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 97). Thus, defined and explained with the complex symbolism of The Secret Doctrine, space is identified with the Absolute itself, with the One Reality itself as its basis, essence, and expression. It is noumenal essence in the Absolute and phenomenal in the manifested world. This definition of space is connected with two other theosophical symbols of the One Reality – its meaning as the One Element and the theosophical Divine Essence.

6. Unified reality as a unified element

The absolute noumenal essence of the eternally existing spirit-matter of unified reality, according to *The Secret Doctrine*, is a unified universal element. "The Primary Primordial Matter, eternal and existing in space, 'which has neither beginning nor end, is neither hot nor cold, but possesses a peculiar nature inherent in itself' (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 135), notes Blavatsky. The

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complex, convoluted explanations she gives are full of symbols, among which it is difficult to discern that the One Element is fire. But not the one that burns and smokes on Earth, but its much finer essence as a cosmic source of life. "The Vedas teach that 'Fire truly contains all deities within itself,'" Blavatsky comments, adding that "Shankara (*Shankara (788-820) was an Indian thinker and religious reformer who, based on the Upanishads, created the monistic system of Advaita Vedanta*), the greatest of India's esoteric teachers, says that Fire means the Deity who rules time (Kala) (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 140).

And the One Element – fire, like everything else in *The Secret Doctrine*, is first a metaphysical concept in the One Reality, it is the One Reality itself, and second – in the phenomenal universe it gives rise to manifested life. From Blavatsky's extensive and not always clear comments in the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine*, it can be concluded that the first differentiation of spirit-matter-fire in the world of phenomena is the electromagnetism of nature, identified with a deity or deities in Blavatsky's exposition. "All of them, 'Light', "Flame," "Cold," "Fire," "Heat," "Water," and "Waters of Life" – on our plane are offspring, or as a modern physicist would say – correlates of Electricity" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 135).

7. Unified reality as non-being

Blavatsky strives to make the metaphysical essence of the Absolute, of Unified Reality, more understandable by presenting and describing it with different terms. However, this diversity of concepts is more confusing than helpful in understanding the essence of the Unified Reality. This approach is probably based on the assertion that "Omnipresent, Eternal, Infinite, and Unchanging PRINCIPLE no reasoning is possible, since it exceeds the capabilities of human perception and can only lose its value through human expressions and likenesses" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 64).

The transcendental metaphysics of the One Reality is difficult for the mind accustomed to rational assessments of the world and physical dimensions. The concepts of "Unity," "Life," "Eternity," "Beginning and End," "Light and Darkness," "Periodicity and Infinity" are extremely intellectual in nature. In Blavatsky's theosophy, the One Reality, the Absolute, is an unchanging, constant essence and as such is called non-being. In contrast to it, everything in the visible universe appears, develops, and dies. Therefore, in Theosophy, as in all Eastern philosophy, the world is referred to as maya, a term that means "illusion." It is everywhere because in the world of phenomena nothing is immutable, nothing is permanent. Only "Absolute Being, encompassing the noumena of all realities," is unchanging and immutable, Blavatsky asserts. The existence of man, objects, and the entire visible world are only a relative reality, which is temporary and, accordingly, illusory. It is maya in comparison to the Unified Reality of Absolute Being. In the Unified Reality of non-being, there is liberation from maya.

The axiomatic reflection of this liberation is formulated by Blavatsky as a process in which our development proceeds through "apparent realities toward Absolute Consciousness" (Blavatsky, 2005-I:90). These apparent realities, as Blavatsky puts it, are the physical world and all its inhabitants. Here we find a direct connection and even identity with the unified Brahman of the Upanishads, where Brahman as an unmanifested and absolute principle is called nirguna (without qualities) or nirkara (without form), and Brahman as the manifested world is called saguna (with qualities), sakara (with form). These are two sides of the same reality described in the Upanishads: "The changing forms arise and exist only in the words of speech. In reality, forms do not exist, they are just an illusion in name, and only clay is reality," says the Chandogya Upanishad. The Mundaka Upanishad adds specific dimensions to the unified Brahman: "Just as rivers lose their name and form when they flow into the sea, so everything, even the greatest sages, lose their form and name and merge with the Supreme, the Eternal, the Self-existent" (Nikolova, 2022: 71). In the most widespread doctrine of Vedanta - Advaita Vedanta - the manifested world

is unreal. When Shankara says that the world of objects (i.e., *the products of matter*) and thoughts (i.e., *the products of the mind*) is unreal, he does not mean that it does not exist. The visible world exists in our perception and mind, but in a state of true enlightenment, consciousness knows the other absolute reality and the manifested world ceases to exist. Shankara calls the manifested world maya (illusion), and only Brahman is reality" (Nikolova, 2022: 82).

According to theosophical doctrine, the process of cosmic and human evolution occurs in cycles, with everything that exists, i.e., everything in form dissolves into the non-existence of the One Reality and, after a long period of rest, manifests itself again to begin evolving anew, but on a higher plane, at a higher stage of evolution. This seemingly creates a paradox. The paradox can be described as follows: Is it possible for the One Reality to be unchanging and constant, since periodically – albeit with enormous intervals between periods - the forms and phenomena of the visible universe dissolve into it, after which, again after an enormously long period of time, the phenomena of the visible universe manifest themselves at a higher evolutionary level from the Unified Reality. How, then, does the Unified Reality, the Absolute, the Divine Essence remain unchanging, eternal, and omnipresent? The possible answer comes precisely from the absolute nature of the Unified Reality. The very concept of absoluteness means perfection, completeness, unconditionality, unlimitedness, immutability, unboundness, and infinity. In the Unified Reality, the noumena of all phenomena are part of the "body" of the unchanging and eternal Absolute. They are perfect and absolute always during the periods of pralaya, the rest of the universe. But in the manifested universe, perfection must be achieved. It is not a given.

The world of phenomena is ruled by impermanence, changeability, and imperfection. Immersed in these conditions, noumenal entities lose their absolute character and become part of the evolutionary process. They must immerse themselves in manifested matter and rise again to the next stage of the evolutionary cycle that follows the next pralaya. Only in the tranquility of pralaya do noumena – from the smallest infusoria to humans, in Blavatsky's words – rest in the perfection of absolute light. When they become phenomena, noumena lose their perfection, and absolute perfection has no need to develop. That is why it is absolute, because it has already attained supreme essence. Therefore, the Absolute does not create by itself, because it contains within itself the perfection of all forms and phenomena. From it emanates the creative essence – the first Logos, Brahma of the Hindus, which becomes the basis of the next universal creation and creation of the visible world.

With regard to the noumenon of each human soul at the beginning of the manvantaric period, it begins its next long evolutionary path from that point, from those achievements with which the previous manvantaric cycle ended for it. In pralaya, the human soul is merged with the Universal Perfect Soul, with the Absolute of the One Reality, and its ego, its individuality, is dissolved in this reality. With the beginning of the new period of universal activity, the individual Ego or spark of the individual soul awakens to new life, to climb the ladder of evolution, whose ultimate goal is identity and eternal abode in the Absolute, in the One Reality, the nirvana of Buddhism. Having reached this point, our limited mind imagines an end to existence and movement, which has ended in the Absolute. But Helena Blavatsky repeatedly points out in *The Secret Doctrine* that movement and perfection are a continuous and unceasing process. Therefore, we are hardly in a position to answer how far evolution can go and which end of the visible universe will actually turn out to be the beginning of a new evolutionary cycle and new perfection. In this regard, Blavatsky notes: "Existence is an endless cycle within the One Absolute Eternity, in which countless internal cycles, conditioned and finite, move" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 286).

This affirmation leads to another conclusion: the Absolute always exists, and the fact that it remains invisible to the physical senses does not negate it. Its transcendental metaphysical essence and the visible world are that unity which can be called "Life" – always enduring and in countless forms and manifestations. Defining the One Reality as non-being, in which the noumena of all things are contained, Helena Blavatsky specifies that it is "rather Beingness than Being Sat

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in Sanskrit" (Blavatsky, 2005-I:64). It has no constituent parts, no properties or qualities, i.e., it is devoid of any attributes – again a direct parallel to the Upanishads mentioned above. We cannot say that the One Reality is hot or cold, long or short, good or bad. Because it is everywhere and in everything, infinite and fundamental, it is not caused by anything. At the same time, it causes all things. "It is the Rootless Root of all that has been, is, and ever shall be" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 64), an omnipresent reality, and "its impersonality is the fundamental concept of the System" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 345). Another clarification is important, given by the following definition: "The Unified, Absolute, Abstract Eternal Essence is 'THAT which 'does not sleep' and never awakens, because it is Sat or 'Beingness', not a Being" (Blavatsky, 2005-II: 398).

8. Unified reality as the noumenon of the phenomenal world

The metaphysics of *The Secret Doctrine* is most clearly expressed in the description of the noumenal essence of Unified Reality, from which everything accessible to the five senses used by modern humanity manifests itself. Blavatsky calls it "Cosmos Noumenon" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 53) and tries to be clearer with an interesting example close to everyone's heart: water as the noumenon of hydrogen and oxygen. Separately, the two elements are noetic entities, gaseous manifestations of their liquid unified essence, which is water. "The existence of oxygen and hydrogen in the form of water can be called Non-Being, which is a more real Being than their existence in the form of gases, and may, albeit to a small extent, symbolize the state of the Universe when it sinks into sleep or ceases to exist during the Nights of Brahma, only to awaken or manifest itself again when the Dawn of the New Manvantara calls it to what we call existence" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 106).

In the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky links the understanding of noumena to the cognitive abilities of the individual and emphasizes that everything, even people, exists or, more precisely, is part of the One Reality. But as phenomena of their noumenal essences in the Absolute, humans and everything that the human mind perceives as visible and material around them are temporary and illusory. Elena Blavatsky compares this "visible" and "material" to "shadows cast by a magic lantern on a white screen" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 90), emphasizing the illusory nature of the manifested universe, contrasting it with the Absolute, the One Reality. It is impossible to answer the question of whether Blavatsky consciously alludes to the shadows in the cave in Plato's "Republic" (Plato, 1982) or whether the above quotation is merely her own idea. But given Blavatsky's exceptional respect for Plato, which she emphasizes particularly in Isis Unveiled (Blavatsky, 1995, I-II), it is likely that the example of illusion, of maya, is dictated precisely by the episode in Plato's Republic. After emphasizing the aforementioned comparison of the physical universe to the shadow of a lantern, Blavatsky, like Shankara, makes the reassuring clarification: "Nevertheless, everything is relatively real, since the knower is also a reflection, and therefore all the things he achieves are as real as he himself is" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 90).

9. The Unified Reality as Absolute Light

In the field of metaphysics, which is the domain of theosophy, the Unified Reality, non-being, is Absolute Light, unattainable for the ordinary person and therefore defined as darkness. Blavatsky gives the following explanation of this paradox: "The Absolute is called Darkness, 'because to our limited understanding it is perfectly impenetrable'"(Blavatsky, 2005-I: 108). Hence the identification of non-being with darkness. "The nature of Darkness is Absolute Light, therefore Darkness is taken as an appropriate allegorical representation of the state of the Universe during pralaya or the period of Absolute Rest or Non-Existence, as it is presented to our limited mind" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 122), Blavatsky clarifies and, as if to justify the abstract nature of what she is trying to explain, adds: "In the teachings of Eastern occultism, Darkness is a unified,

true reality, the foundation and root of the world, without which it could never manifest itself or even exist. Light is Matter, and Darkness is Pure Spirit. In its fundamental metaphysical basis, Darkness is subjective and absolute Light; while Light in all its radiance and brilliance is only a mass of shadows, since it can never be eternal and is only a mere Illusion or Maya" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 123). During pralaya, darkness fills the "Infinite All," and both darkness and light are phenomena of the same noumenon - the One Reality. The light of the Absolute, of the One All, is transcendental to the human eye at our stage of evolution, a rationally unattainable, a priori form. It is also called "Pre-eternal Light" and even more descriptively "the Self-Existing Lord" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 139).

A similar view exists in apophatic and mystical theology in Eastern and Western Europe. Through negation, the essence of the Divine is affirmed, and in this regard, Prof. Tsotcho Boyadziev points out that "Plato seems to be the pioneer, at least in the European tradition, of this approach to defining the first principle through negation rather than affirmation" (Boyadziev, 1995: 11). In the Eastern tradition, apophatic definitions are also used when attempts are made to clarify the nature of Brahman. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states that Brahman is "both light and non-light, desire and non-desire, anger and non-anger, law and lawlessness, both near and far, this here and that there." This is because it is impossible to say what Brahman is, but it is possible to say what it is not. The Absolute is beyond any definition or assertion: "It is neither dense nor subtle, neither short nor long, neither luminous nor in shadow, neither dark nor attached, without passion, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without words, without mind, without breath, without mouth, neither internal nor external, neither feeding on anything nor eaten by anything," says the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Associate Professor Antoaneta Nikolova emphasizes that the emphasized impossibility of defining "the nature of Brahman does not mean that it does not have one, but that we cannot define it by the random manifestations we register, since they do not belong to its essence." Similar to the idea in *The Secret Doctrine* of darkness as absolute light and the essence of the Absolute during pralaya, in the treatise "On Mystical Theology" Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (*Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite was a Christian theologian and philosopher who lived before the 6th century. His real name is unknown, as are details of his life, but his work is sometimes associated with Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul*) points out that Divine darkness "is primary and more than any negation and affirmation" (Areopagite, 1995: 345).

According to Areopagite, positive or cataphatic knowledge of God is imperfect because it leads to partial knowledge of God. In contrast, apophatic or negative knowledge is the only perfect and best way to the Unknowable, which is beyond the limits of all that exists; it is "superluminous darkness," in whose silence simple and perfect mysteries are revealed. In order to approach Him, one must reject everything that is lower than Him, i.e., everything that exists (Lossky, 1991: 11). Areopagite's apophatism creates a model of verbal expression that simultaneously denies and affirms the Unknowable: "The cause of all things, being above all things, and insubstantial, and lifeless, not speechless, not devoid of mind, and not a body; it has neither image nor form, nor qualities or quantities, or magnitudes; it dwells nowhere, invisible, without sensory perception; it does not perceive and is not perceived" (Areopagite, 1995: 361).

Several centuries after Areopagite, the German philosopher and theologian Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) continued the apophatic line of knowledge of God, saying: "This abyss is uniform silence, immovable in itself, but from this immobility all things receive movement, and from it all those 'lives' are conceived which led their own rational life" (Erhart, 1995: 162). In his sermons, Eckhart also expresses the idea of illusory nature arising from the temporary nature of the visible world: "If the soul wants to see God, it should not look at any temporary thing" (Erhart, 1995: 169). According to Meister Eckhart, knowledge of God is everywhere and in everything: "God is neither a being nor a rational being, nor does he know this or that. Therefore, God is free from all things - and precisely because of this, he is all things" (Erhart, 1995: 154).

10. Three symbols of the Unified Reality

10.1 *The Spirit – the world mind*

The unity, indivisibility, indestructibility, and wholeness of the Absolute is manifested through three symbols, Blavatsky comments in the spirit of transcendental paradoxes. One of the symbols is the Absolute Abstract Movement or "Pre-Cosmic Thought Foundation." Blavatsky identifies it with the Parabrahman of the Vedantists and points out that this is the spirit of the One Reality, which is "Unconditional Consciousness" and "the Root of all individual consciousness" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 66). Movement never ceases in the One Reality, as well as in the manifested world. The spirit as thought and consciousness always exists in everything abstract in the Absolute and in manifold forms in the phenomenal Universe. The spirit is the world mind, and Blavatsky provides a clearer commentary on this comparison: "During the long night of Rest, called Pralaya, when all Lives have dissolved, the 'World Mind' remains as a constant possibility for mental activity or as an absolute and abstract thought, the concrete and relative manifestation of which is the Mind." In the series of clarifications on "mind," it is noted: "Mind" is a name given to a set of states of consciousness grouped around the determinants: Thought, Will, and Feelings" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 66).

10.2 *The Soul – Matter as Abstract Space*

The absolute abstract space in which the spirit or world mind never "sleeps or awakens" is the pre-cosmic cubstance, mula-prakriti of the Vedantists, aditi in the Vedas, and "that aspect of the Absolute which lies at the basis of all objective planes of nature" according to *The Secret Doctrine*. Absolute space is the soul of the One Reality. Blavatsky's metaphorical imagery calls space "the Eternal Mother - giving birth, hidden in her veils" and explains: "The veils" mean the noumenon of undifferentiated Cosmic Matter. This is not the matter we know, but the spiritual essence of matter, which is eternal and even one with Space in its abstract sense" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 88). This spirit-matter is "neither boundless emptiness" nor "conditional fullness," but is both. It has always been and always will be" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 85).

The spirit - the world mind - and the soul - Absolute space as pre-cosmic matter - are absolutely bound and inseparable in their essence as a Unified Reality. This unity is commented on by Blavatsky in the following way: "Regardless of the Cosmic substance, Cosmic Thought-base could not manifest itself as individual consciousness, since consciousness develops as "I am I" only through the conduit (upadhi) of matter - the physical basis necessary for the concentration of the Ray of Cosmic Mind upon reaching a certain complexity. In turn, separated from the Cosmic Thought-basis, the Cosmic substance would remain an empty abstraction and no emergence of Consciousness could take place" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 85).

10.3 *Duration*

As the third symbol of the One Reality, Blavatsky points to duration and emphasizes that "all our ideas of duration and time have arisen from our sensations, according to the laws of association" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 66). From a human perspective, duration is infinite and eternal, but according to theosophy, in the non-existence of the Absolute, these sensations disappear. The duration of the alternations between rest-noumenon and activity-phenomenon is infinite, indivisible, and eternal. And here we encounter a paradox: infinite indivisible duration is divided by the "Seven Eternities." Similar to other aspects of the "Secret Doctrine," in this case, the paradox is only a symbol. This is the name given to the alternation of rest with activity, of pralaya with manvantara. These are periods that are as infinite for human consciousness as they are limited against the backdrop of the eternity of the One Reality. According to Blavatsky, the term

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"Seven Eternities" is "established in esoteric philosophy and divides the infinite Duration of unconditional Eternity and universal time (Kala) and conditional Time (Khandakala)" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 94).

11. The Unified Reality as a Triad

The Absolute, the Unified Reality, is characterized by impersonality, has no attributes, and does not create. So what kind of triad are we talking about, and doesn't such a statement contradict the theosophical axiom about the Absolute? In mentioning the triad, Helena Blavatsky introduces nothing unfamiliar or inconsistent with the ontological characteristics of the Unified Reality, but adheres to the typical mode of expression in Eastern philosophy – the symbolic. The triad as a concept is only a sign, a semiotic possibility for expressing in a different, or more precisely in yet another way, the two aspects of the One Reality – the Absolute abstract space and the Absolute abstract movement/consciousness – pre-cosmic matter and pre-cosmic spirit. "Spirit (or Consciousness) and Matter should be regarded not as independent realities, but as two symbols or aspects of the Absolute" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 65), and the three together – the Absolute, Absolute Abstract Movement, and Absolute Abstract Space – form "a metaphysical triad as the Root from which everything manifested originates" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 66).

The elements of this triad have another direction of symbolic determinism: they are father, mother, son. The mother is matter, the Absolute abstract space of non-being. The father is spirit, the Absolute abstract movement/consciousness of non-being. The father and mother, spirit and matter, dwell in the darkness of non-being during the rest of the universe, the pralaya. Spirit and matter, father and mother, give birth to the son, light, at the beginning of the new period of activity, the new manvantara. The father cannot exist without the mother, spirit cannot exist without matter in which and through which to manifest itself. That is why in theosophy it is said that in the womb of the mother, of pre-cosmic matter, the father, the spirit, flashes, and the son is born, who is the universe, awakened to new life at a new, higher evolutionary stage in the new manvantara. Thus, the son appears as the third part of the triad - he is the body, born of the mother matter, fertilized by the father spirit.

During pralaya, they – mother, father, and son - are merged, they are one. Elena Blavatsky offers another perspective on the triad, noting: "Not Being, Emptiness, and Darkness are the essence of the Three in the One, and only They are self-existent and perfect" (Blavatsky, 2005-I: 93). The concept of "emptiness" refers to the absence of attributes, specific forms, and essences in the noumenal world of Absolute Reality. In its formlessness, everything that existed during the period of activity of the universe is dissolved and awaits the dawn of the new manvantara to manifest itself again from the absolute emptiness, from the non-existence of the absolute everything.

12. Conclusion

Following the theosophical understanding of God and the Divine essence, the conclusion of a non-anthropomorphic concept is necessary. Since civilization requires us to speak and think about God, theosophy says that this is not a being, but rather the universe and nature as a whole, of which humans are a natural and interconnected part. Next, Helena Blavatsky's theosophical doctrine rejects the perception of God as a lord and master to whom people must submit and who is considered an almighty being who gets angry and punishes. Blavatsky asserts that as an integral part of the Divine non-anthropomorphic essence, man is the bearer of this essence. As divine beings, humans possess the power, courage, light, and love characteristic of this essence, the One Reality or Absolute. The existence of evil in its various manifestations on Earth is a matter of insufficient awareness, spiritual and moral bondage, and ignorance. Man has

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everything necessary within himself as an essence and qualities to overcome all this, to harmonize good and evil within himself, and thus begin to change the world around him. The realization of this inherent potential in every human being is one of the main tasks of Helena Blavatsky's theosophical doctrine, and the goal is personal change that will transform the whole of society and civilization towards peace, understanding, and brotherhood.

Acknowledgements

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C O A S

Institutionalization of Political Power:
The Primacy of Representative Democracy

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Abstract

This paper examines the institutionalization of political power as a defining characteristic of modern constitutional democracy. It traces the historical evolution from anonymous and personalized forms of power to institutionalized systems grounded in representative democracy. The analysis demonstrates how institutionalization fosters legitimacy, stability, and a balance between individual autonomy and collective interests within a constitutional framework. Representative democracy is presented as the primary mechanism for exercising state power, transcending direct democratic rule by integrating diverse social interests into a rational and legally mediated decision-making process. The paper argues that institutions enshrined in constitution channel and sustain popular sovereignty, preventing arbitrary or absolutist power, including that of the people themselves. Ultimately, representative democracy emerges as a rational response to the complexity of modern society, ensuring legal predictability, accountability, and the protection of individual freedom while safeguarding the common good through constitutionalism restraints of political power.

Keywords: institutionalization of political power, representative democracy, constitutional democracy, political institutions, popular sovereignty, individual freedom, collective interests, rule of law, legitimacy, political representation, direct democracy, modern state, common good.

1. Introduction

The modern nation-state and constitutional democracy are products of three interrelated historical processes that have shaped the nature and exercise of political power. These are the transition from individualized to institutionalized power; the transformation from a heteronomous to an autonomous society – that is, from a society whose laws derive from transcendent sources to one that creates its own legal order; and the secularization of state power and governance. These processes, which unfolded over centuries in Europe, emerged from the interplay of economic, legal-political, and socio-cultural factors. The growing complexity of social relations has led to an increase in diverse and often conflicting interests seeking representation and protection through political power. At the core of these processes lies the most enduring social conflict: the struggle over the control, form, and exercise of supreme political power. This conflict involves various social groups and interests aiming to shape state and society politically. Through it, diverse interests are arranged, balanced, and hierarchized, thus constructing contemporary political reality. Ultimately, this conflict constitutes the essence of the political. The fundamental question of the modern constitution is how to channel and pacify this conflict by embedding it in

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legal and institutional frameworks that limit state power while guaranteeing personal freedom and the autonomy of civil society from excessive state intervention.

2. Institutionalization of the political power

The evolution of political power and its exercise is a multifaceted and dynamic process accompanying human civilization's development, from archaic forms of social organization to the emergence of the modern constitutional state following the Atlantic revolutions of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This evolution involves the gradual emancipation of political power from sacred and personalized forms, transforming it into an institutionalized system of government normatively authorized and constrained by principles of popular sovereignty and representative democracy. The general trajectory is a shift from primitive, unlimited, direct forms of power, as in the archaic model of the sacred ruler or Athenian democracy, towards institutionally organized representative government, characterized by a rational deliberative process of coordinating, integrating, and consolidating diverse social interests. The political substance of this process lies in establishing and maintaining a balance between individual freedom and collective interests in pursuit of a shared conception of the common good formed within a particular historical and social context.

Political power is a universal social and legal phenomenon arising when a community, viewed as a group of individuals with distinct interests, recognizes the necessity of a unifying social goal and forms a consensus around it. This goal transcends everyday circumstances and concerns the community's very survival. Such consensus is three-dimensional: it connects the past through shared historical markers, defines the present through established ways of life, and outlines the future through a common vision of development and goals. As emphasized by Georges Burdeau, power is a force generated by collective consciousness that ensures community continuity and guides it toward what it perceives as its good. Historically, three forms of political power can be observed – anonymous, individualized, and institutionalized – each emerging from the increasing complexity of social relations. In primitive societies, power is anonymous, an extension of familial authority or a religious appendage embedded in ritual and mythology, lacking a distinction between public and private. Gradually, power becomes individualized: "the man commands, not the structure." It becomes embodied in charismatic leaders, concentrated in their personality, as seen in Roman imperial traditions and monarchical absolutism, where the ruler is the source and embodiment of power.

However, individualized power inherently produces instability and conflict. Thus arises the need for stability, continuity, and legitimacy, achieved by separating power from the individual and institutionalizing it as a depersonalized function of political institutions. This transition marks the shift from sacralized to rational-normative power. In Western Europe, from the 15th century onward, power based on individual patrimony gave way to institutionalized, public-oriented governance, leading to the constitutional state. Here, deliberative processes filter and peacefully transform social conflicts into a legitimate legal-political order under constitutional supremacy.

The Greeks saw citizens as *homo politicus*, directly involved in governance; medieval societies, in contrast, emphasized *homo oeconomicus*, valuing economic freedom as foundational to personal well-being. Modern democracy arose to protect individual freedom from excessive state power, thus defining constitutional relationships between state and individual within the fundamental social conflict over political power's control, form, and exercise. This conflict brings together different social groups and interests and is reflected in the political relationship between the public and the state. The current political reality is shaped by a multitude of diverse interests that are structured, balanced, and hierarchized through it. The modern constitution is precisely an expression of the effort to control and pacify this political conflict by embedding it in

institutional and legal frameworks so that state power is limited, personal freedom and the autonomy of civil society are guaranteed, and the tension between the individual and the collective is balanced in the name of the common good.

The institution is a complex social and normative phenomenon. It structures and guides the life of the political community under the constitution. It can be seen as a social fact that integrates and channels certain social actions and conditions. These conditions are subject to a common goal defined by the community and regulated by the legal order. In a sense, an institution is a fiction to which social and normative significance is attributed. The renowned German constitutionalist Carl Schmitt famously observed that "all the most important concepts of modern state theory are in fact secularized theological concepts." The institution, if we follow him, is what we call the "temple" of political power. According to Christian theology, the temple is a sacred space for the gathering of the faithful in Christ (John 4:21), associated with the idea of heaven on earth. Viewed from a similar perspective, the institution is the social and normative space sanctified by the constitutional order, in which the people, as the source and bearer of sovereign power, connect with social life through those whom they have democratically empowered to adopt and implement political decisions. From the moment a nation defines itself as the source of legitimacy, as the privileged object of collective loyalty, and as the basis of political solidarity, there arises an absolute need for institutions through which power can be exercised legitimately and effectively to maintain and preserve this legitimacy.

The French legal school of institutionalism has developed the concept of political institutions in depth. An institution, as Maurice Hauriou argues, is an idea embodied in an undertaking that is realized normatively in a social environment. In a political society, political power is the most important institution. Joseph Delors, another leading representative of this school, illustrates the diverse and adaptable nature of the institution by likening it to Proteus, the ancient Greek sea god and son of Poseidon, who had the ability to change form. Georges Renard emphasizes that the idea realized in social practice creates solidarity among those who pursue it simultaneously or successively, establishing communication between people and generations. Ultimately, an institution is defined as an idea endowed with appropriate means and resources enabling it to obtain an objective existence, to be created, implemented, and perpetuated. He identified two primary expressions of legal life: rules and institutions. "Rules" include laws and contracts, divided into general legal rules deriving from authority and specific rules deriving from individual legal acts. Institutions, on the other hand, are ideas transformed into "acts of creation."

According to Jacques Chevalier, the existence of an order supreme for both individuals and groups is characteristic of every society. This order maintains societal cohesion, promotes integration, and ensures long-term stability. Institutions express and guarantee this order. He argues that the concept of social constructivism, developed by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, provides an interpretative framework for understanding institutionalization, which occurs in three phases: exteriorization, separating institutions from their creators; objectification, transforming them into objective realities; and interiorization, integrating them into everyone's life. Institutionalizing political power is linked to legally codifying coercive power and transforming rulers into representatives who exercise power on behalf of the abstract whole of the state as authorized agents.

Political institutions presuppose not only the existence of a community and social goals but also political consensus. Hannah Arendt rightly argues that it is the support of the people that gives strength to state institutions, continuing the consent that created laws. As Marcel Gauchet writes, all political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power that become fossilized and disintegrate when the people's living force ceases to sustain them. The very process of institutionalizing political power in the state is linked to the legal codification of coercive power. It is also tied to the transformation of those who govern from holders of personal prerogatives into representatives who exercise power on behalf of the abstract whole of the state.

These representatives act merely as authorized agents of this collective entity. According to Gauchet, when society takes control of the power it has politically established, it seeks to express this through administrative power. This administrative power assumes responsibility for regulating collective existence. For this reason, the democratic state is necessarily bureaucratic, and historically, the administrative state has had to become representative. We should not see institutions merely as structures for governing or exercising power. In Gauchet's political philosophy, institutions are ways to establish and stabilize the founding will of the people, especially within his understanding of democracy as a process of emerging from religion. Gauchet argues that democracy is the historical result of "leaving heteronomy," leading to a self-governing society through institutions. Autonomy is not an absolute but a historical process realized through stable institutions and legal forms. Power becomes a form of institutionalized founding will reproduced through legal and political mechanisms.

The state body, understood as an institution - as summarized by Georgi Bliznashki – is a social formation or establishment that is assigned specific functions and granted corresponding powers. This definition of "institution" is accepted as more comprehensive and adequate to social and legal reality than the purely normative understanding. According to the latter, institutions are not social facts but formal legal constructs – bearers of competences defined by a hierarchy of legal norms derived from the basic norm (*Grundnorm*). However, governmental political institutions are more than decision-making structures; they also derive legitimacy from public support and are perceived as fair. They act as a political and legal framework that unites the national community to establish and uphold the current objectives of state governance, aligning them with the shared concept of the common good.

On this basis, it should be accepted that modern state and representative democracy are the highest form of institutionalization of political power. In this form, power is no longer a private, patrimonial relationship but a depersonalized social relationship embedded within a system of political institutions, rules, and procedures. This creates a qualitatively new political space - the space of institutions - where personal dependencies and loyalties are replaced by legal predictability, procedural structuring, and accountability. This is democratic constitutional power, limited by law and legitimized by the people through elections. It is not power *over* society but power *from* society, institutionalized and conditioned by collective consent. In this context, state institutions are not merely organs of power; they are also the architecture of the legitimacy of the political and legal order. They combine legal form, political function, and legitimate authority recognized by the political community, ensuring a balance between individual rights and the collective interest, as well as between personal autonomy and social solidarity.

3. The primacy of representative democracy

In essence, representative democracy is a rational response to the complexity of modern society. The idea that all public power – including that exercised directly by the sovereign - must be legally limited to protect individual freedom and the integrity of the social and political whole in the name of the common good – is fundamental to the modern constitutional state. Constitutionalism, in its historical and doctrinal development, is incompatible with unlimited power and absolutism, regardless of its origin, bearer, or legitimacy. Popular sovereignty, although fundamental, is not exercised arbitrarily but within limits explicitly or implicitly defined by the constitutional order. The unlimited power of the sovereign people, exceeding constitutional boundaries, can manifest only in exceptional historical moments of profound revolutionary change that abolish the old order to create a new one. During normal social development under constitutional supremacy, both representative and direct democracies remain subject to constitutionally determined restrictions.

The demographic, territorial, and economic growth of societies requires abandoning direct forms of government in favor of structures capable of performing complex governance functions. Increasing stratification and pluralization of social interests also necessitate mechanisms that can integrate and balance this heterogeneity. The transfer of sovereignty from monarch to people, presupposing identity between rulers and ruled, raises questions of how power is exercised. Rousseau's radical democratic thesis emphasizing the general will's unrepresentability conflicts with the social reality of the modern nation-state. The complexity and scale of modern states necessitate projecting the economic division of labor into politics. The fundamental constitutional question in pluralistic societies, marked by clashes of diverse social interests, is how to reconcile individual freedom with collective interests in the name of the common good. In other words – how to integrate *volonte general* (Rousseau) with Judgment (Kant). Thinkers such as Montesquieu, Sieyès, and Madison integrated social reality with constitutional theory, rationalizing the necessity for political representation with a free mandate.

This forms the basis for the political rationalization of power – a process requiring expertise, competence, and predictability. Therefore, the professionalization of politics and governance becomes a structural necessity intrinsically linked to the functioning of the modern state. Governance through political representation thus becomes the main mechanism for exercising state power in a constitutional democracy. Representative democracy acquires normative primacy over direct democracy, which becomes subsidiary. This marks a transition from an arithmetic sum of individual wills expressed directly by citizens to an institutionalized, legally regulated system of collective decision-making. Decisions made by politicians result from a formal process integrating diverse public opinions. This process is complex, based on legal principles, procedural rules, and institutional guarantees. It does not mechanically aggregate individual preferences but transforms them into a legitimate and rational public will.

A characteristic feature of representative democracy is that political decisions are not mere emotional responses to a momentary arithmetic majority, but the outcome of a rational, systematic, contextualized, and legally mediated deliberative process. This process integrates individual and collective interests, relating them to the constitutionally established concept of the common good. It ensures individual autonomy by imposing legal limits on arbitrary, discretionary, or excessive government interference. It also guarantees the supremacy of the public interest by subjecting the political process to the fundamental principle of the rule of law. In such an institutional environment, representative democracy acts as a filter that generally prevents spontaneous, opportunistic, emotionally motivated, or externally induced public attitudes from becoming dominant political will. This protects the foundations of constitutionalism, democracy, and citizens' rights and freedoms. The democratic impulse is thus transformed into responsible public authority through the institutionalization of political power, in accordance with the principles of legitimacy, legal predictability, and institutional accountability. These principles form the essential foundations of every modern democratic system based on the rule of law.

Contemporary democracy, as Jürgen Habermas notes, differs from its ancient predecessors precisely in its constitutional character, being based on modern positive law that institutionalizes freedom through equal subjective rights. Above all, it emerges within extensive state structures where direct involvement is essentially unfeasible, and political representation is not just a technical necessity but an inherent guarantee of democratic principles. Modern constitutional democracy is based on a balance between individual freedom and collective social interests. This is in the name of a shared idea of the common good of the nation. The dynamics and proportions in which people establish and maintain this balance form the political and normative content of the phases in the development of constitutionalism in the modern era. The 19th and first half of the 20ᵗʰ century saw an emphasis on individual freedom in liberal constitutionalism. In contrast, after World War II, democratic constitutionalism placed the

principle of social justice on an equal footing with individual freedom. The common good constitutes the core value of the constitution, embodying the national community's expressed and satisfied understandings and needs through the current political and legal order while outlining the national future of the social and state whole. The modern constitutional order's goal and function is maintaining a balance between individual freedom and collective social interests (political, economic, socio-cultural, etc.). This is achieved through the structural separation of powers and systematic restriction and control of all political power, regardless of its source, purpose, or destination. Another necessary condition for maintaining a balance between individual freedom and the interests of the collective is the inclusion of deliberation as an essential part of political decision-making. Deliberation, which is defined as discussion and consensus-building based on a balance of interests and forces in society, is only possible in an institutional environment. Direct democracy effectively precludes the possibility for effective and rational deliberation. The outcome of a referendum is essentially the aggregate of the individual voters' preferences. Public debates and information campaigns conducted on national issues to be decided by referendum, inherently possess a more or less spontaneous and chaotic character. They are rife with political emotions and biases and, at the same time, highly susceptible to manipulation and the influence of deliberately created false public narratives that influence voters. The latter is particularly evident with the transformation of social media into a mass medium for public communication. Representative democracy, as James Madison advocated, plays the role of this political "filtering" of the stormy sea of public opinion. This process gives an advantage to rationality, dialogue, negotiation, and compromise. It does so not only in building political majorities united around a common state policy, but also in effectively protecting the rights and interests of political minorities. When there are effective opportunities for deliberation in an institutional environment that is normatively established, political representation based on a free mandate is the constitutional mechanism that ensures the pursuit and maintenance of the balance between individual freedom and collective social interests.

4. Conclusion

The evolution of political power within an autonomous society and democratic statehood is inseparable from rejecting absolute power, including the absolute sovereignty of the people. Transforming popular sovereignty into constituent power and creating a constitution means that *We, the people* place themselves under norms they establish, voluntarily limiting popular sovereignty in the name of freedom and peaceful coexistence.

The digital age is characterized by increasing transparency and access to information, making the state and the world more "visible" to citizens. This gives new meaning to civic control and participation in governance, while reinforcing the role of representative democracy as an institutional filter channeling and rationalizing public sentiment. Modern technologies amplify these sentiments on the public surface. In this context, Pierre Rosanvallon introduces the concept of "counter-democracy," referring to forms of democratic control, distrust, and surveillance of power that complement traditional mechanisms of representative democracy. He describes the desire of active civil society to scrutinize the entire government system and exercise effective civic control over politicians and decision-making. Forms of direct democracy should enrich representative democracy and increase trust in it, but they could not and should not replace it. Destroying representative democracy and its primacy would only mean returning to the empowerment of yet another "good despot" who tomorrow would be replaced by ever worse ones.

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Typical Psychosomatic Problems in Children's and Adolescents' Development

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Abstract

Psychotherapy of psychosomatic disorders in adolescents is one of the most responsible tasks that a therapist could take on. The psychosomatic spectrum of disorders in children aged 5 to 18 is wide-ranging. The similarity between the individual symptoms lies in the fact that they are masked satisfied desires, but not in an adequate, but in a neurotic way. Psychotherapy of psychosomatic disorders is a responsible process and in most cases works with the painful awareness of the fact that a person is a carrier of self-deprecating memories, intentions, and traits, and this gives rise to anxiety. The desire to be saved from it takes on the role of a motive for pushing out the painful information. The process of psychotherapy should be approached individually and the personal characteristics and character traits of adolescents should be taken into account. This article examines some of the most common disorders, as well as the causes that caused them. The focus is on eliminating not the symptom, but the cause of its occurrence.

Keywords: psychosomatics, children, adolescents.

1. Introduction

Psychotherapy of psychosomatic disorders is a responsible process and in most cases works with the painful awareness of the fact that a person is a carrier of self-deprecating memories, intentions, and traits, and this gives rise to anxiety.

The desire to be saved from it acts as a motive for repressing the painful information. This repressed information, as well as the process of repression that has taken place, have an unconscious nature, but all of them have inherent evidence confirming their real existence. The task of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy is to reveal specific manifestations of the relationship: repressed painful information – its specific conscious manifestations (symptoms).

In adolescents, unsatisfied desire generates frustration of even greater magnitude than in adults, and as a result the child feels helpless and powerless (Cobb, 1974). The natural emotional response to a blocked or thwarted desire is the emergence of anger as a pleasurable relief from the frustration process.

Anger is the only tool through which the adolescent can regain "power" over the situation. In many cases, for one reason or another, it is difficult to express the spectrum of emotions experienced, because the nature of anger is of the "caliber's range" of attacking emotions. When repressed, along with desire, it attaches itself to the ego and simultaneously attacks it. The expressed symptomatology is the result of the attack on the ego.

2. Methods

In my psychotherapy practice, for the past 9 years, I have worked with hundreds of children with psychosomatic symptoms, coming from disharmonious families (families with dominant only primary or only secondary abilities; with the inability to integrate a balance between them in the conceptual framework of the family environment). My observations date back to January 2016 up to date.

Despite the individual approach to each case of psychosomatic manifestation in adolescents, what they have in common is the reason for the appearance of anger, which lies behind the question "who" (Jores, 1981).

In some cases, when the answer to "who?" in human equivalent is absent, then the target of this anger becomes the Ego. This auto-aggressive response gives rise to psychosomatics. By identifying the target of anger and then becoming aware of this emotion, anger disappears more easily in the process of psychotherapy. This process occurs by involving anger in "actively doing and happening something" related to the original desire (Gieler, 1987).

These actions accelerate the elimination of the symptom. The person's active participation places them "ahead of the line" – in a real place, outside that space "behind the line" - i.e. outside that withdrawal in which the symptoms of the psychosomatic spectrum reside. My psychotherapeutic practice testifies to a direct proportional relationship between personal anxiety and the manifestation of verbal and physical aggression. The personality rebels against anxiety and this forces it to include aggressive forms of behavior in its behavioral repertoire. Therefore, the registration of such forms by the psychotherapist should be evaluated as a sign of an unconscious interest in dulling anxiety, the basis of which are repressed predecessors.

3. Results

All my hypotheses regarding the above were confirmed based on the study of 150 adolescents between 5 and 18 years of age, to whom the following methods were applied:

- Spielberger Self-Assessment Anxiety Scale;
- Buss-Durkey Aggression Test.

After applying a correlation analysis between the levels of personal anxiety and verbal aggression and personal anxiety and physical aggression, a proportional relationship was established in both directions. After analyzing the results of the applied statistical procedure, using SPSS software, it was found that there is a significant, strong proportional relationship between personal anxiety and the manifestation of verbal aggression (r=0.585; sig<0.001) and a directly proportional relationship with the presence of a strong and significant relationship between personal anxiety and manifestation of physical aggression in the studied 150 adolescents undergoing a psychotherapeutic process (r=0.586; sig<0.001), where "r" is a correlation coefficient, and "sig" determines the significance of the correlation. The results obtained are a contribution to the work of the psychotherapist, due to their statistical significance, relative to the entire population, and not just to the specific sample (Sig<0.005).

The available psychosomatic symptomatology, on the basis of which the results discussed so far were derived, includes a wide range of disorders, including those of an "implosive" nature, such as schizophrenia, split personality, affective and depressive disorders. In psychotherapy with adolescents, a deep connection was established between traumatic childhood experiences and current behavioral manifestations in the form of clearly expressed symptoms. The process included family psychotherapeutic intervention, and work with 10 of the families continues to this day.

Moving through the emotional equivalents of the three interaction stages:

(1) Bonding;

(2) Identification;

(3) Separation.

And most importantly, focusing on SEPARATION, not SEPARATION at all, reduces parental anxiety and allows for further work by the therapist on delegating autonomy to adolescents, which precedes the formation of responsibility as a key personality trait.

In many of the studied cases, after conducting an initial psychotherapeutic interview, the presence of auto-aggressive manifestations was identified, with the most common form of auto-aggression being a depressive state.

Regardless of the type of symptom and its magnitude, the release of accumulated tension occurs by taking 4 basic steps towards peace of mind, the key of which is identifying the origin of the anger.

4. Discussion

The paradox is that a person finds it difficult to part with even some of the most painful symptoms, because they are actually his satisfied needs (Benedetii, 1983). Due to the above-described process of suppressing anger and the fact that the symptom that appears afterwards represents a satisfied desire, rules are formed regarding anger and symptoms, which indicate the following points:

• Where there is suppressed anger, along with suppressed desire, not only will there be symptoms, there must be symptoms;

• Where there is no suppressed anger and suppressed desire, not only will there be no symptom, there cannot be any symptom;

• Where there is a symptom, not only will there be suppressed anger along with suppressed desire, but there must be suppressed anger with suppressed desire;

• Where there is no symptom, not only will there not be suppressed anger and suppressed desire, but there cannot be suppressed anger and suppressed desire.

Despite the individual approach to each case of psychosomatic manifestation in adolescents, what they have in common is the reason for the appearance of anger, which lies behind the question "who?". In some cases, when the answer to "who?" in human equivalent is absent, then the target of this anger becomes the Ego. This auto-aggressive response gives rise to psychosomatics. By identifying the target of anger and subsequently becoming aware of this emotion, anger then disappears more easily in the process of psychotherapy. This process occurs by incorporating anger into "actively doing and making something happen" related to the original desire. In some cases, the child finds himself in an environment that creates hostile impressions in him, which make him perceive the world as hostile to him (Kinzl, 1989). This impression is quite understandable, considering the dissatisfaction of the child's brain.

These actions accelerate the elimination of the symptom. The person's active participation places him "ahead of the line" – in a real place, outside that space "behind the line" – that is, outside that withdrawal in which the symptoms of the psychosomatic spectrum reside. The anxiety generated by this whole process is itself a symptom. Signal anxiety is experienced in a

specific way by adolescents. The above-mentioned contingent between 5-18 years of age deliberately avoids talking about the painful and repressed topics that are the roots of the angry and anxious reaction.

In the psychotherapy office, the client verbalizes the anxiety he experienced. By verbalizing his emotion, a person is verbally "poor" in terms of experiences, even facts, due to the unconscious desire to silence the rising anxiety.

My psychotherapeutic practice testifies to a direct proportional relationship between personal anxiety and the manifestation of verbal and physical aggression. The personality rebels against anxiety and this forces it to include aggressive forms of behavior in its behavioral repertoire. Therefore, the registration of such forms by the psychotherapist should be evaluated as a sign of an unconscious interest in dulling anxiety, the basis of which are repressed predecessors.

5. Conclusion

All manifestations of this kind, regardless of whether they are due to disharmony caused by excessive primacy or excessive secondaryness in the family conceptual framework, have one thing in common – the child becomes more or less isolated. Children who, for example, have psychosomatic symptoms related to the digestive system, react to food in a completely different way than children who grew up in a harmonious family environment of an integrated balance between primary and secondary abilities. Often these children do not feel part of a community, they even reject the world and others. Life does not present itself in a particularly favorable light for these adolescents. They either feel like martyrs or fighters. This is a picture of the extremes in which they were raised – excessive secondary or excessive primary.

The principles of treatment of somatic and mental illnesses at different times have been closely linked to the corresponding idea of human nature. The developing medicine of the West is the medicine of diseases: it studies the conditions for the development of a disease state, its regularities, as well as the possibilities for intervention.

A transcultural model was established at the foundation, which categorically connects the individual; family and culturally determined forms of the phenomenon and requires unity in diversity.

The cause of difficulties does not always lie in the imperfection of the organism. It is due to a large extent to the difficult tasks set by an environment that does not understand it, or to some carelessness in setting these tasks; some defect in the child's environment based on complications in the outside world.

Because the child who wants to adapt to his surroundings, in this case to feel like a full member of the family environment, even if it is disharmonious, suddenly encounters difficulties in this adaptation.

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The Role of the School Nurse in Supporting Parents of Children with Autism and in Creating an Inclusive School Environment

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Abstract

Supporting children with special needs in the school environment requires a holistic approach, in which school nurses play an important role. They are not limited to providing medical care or monitoring chronic conditions; they also act as crucial links between parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals. Through this collaboration, they significantly contribute to the creation of a safe and supportive learning environment. At the same time, they offer valuable guidance and information to parents, enhancing their involvement both in the care and educational journey of their children. Strengthening the school-family relationship is a key factor in improving students' quality of life and promoting their meaningful inclusion. However, challenges remain, such as understaffing and the limited institutional recognition of school nurses' roles. It has become clear that strengthening school nursing is essential for shaping a more humane and inclusive school environment.

Keywords: school nurses, children with special needs, parental support, school-based medical care, school-family relationship, student inclusion, inclusive education, safe learning environment, student quality of life.

1. Introduction

The presence of a school nurse in the educational environment proves to be critical for supporting parents of children with autism and improving the school experience of students, their role is not limited to providing health care, but extends to counseling, guidance, and collaboration with teachers and health professionals. Strengthening the school–family relationship, creating a safe learning environment, and taking a holistic approach to special education are key aspects of the work. However, understaffing and limited institutional recognition of this role present challenges that affect its effectiveness, so strengthening staffing and institutional support are necessary for the full development of this role's potential, to ensure an inclusive and supportive school experience for every student. Introduction The inclusion and support of children with autism in the school setting is a process that requires coordinated efforts by multiple professionals. The role of the school nurse, in this context, emerges as particularly significant since it is directly connected to promoting students 'overall health and wellbeing. This role is not limited merely to managing health issues, but extends into developing effective collaborative relationships with parents so that the needs of children with autism can be addressed in a timely manner within the

school. The collaboration between the school nurse and parents creates a communication framework that facilitates the provision of individualized care services. Parents provide valuable information regarding their child's health and specificities, enabling the nurse to design suitable interventions. The exchange of this information forms the foundation for more targeted support, which strengthens the safety and functionality of the school environment. School nurses do much more than provide medical care. They're also involved in education and prevention, working to improve the everyday wellbeing of students. By teaching both staff and students about health topics—including how to understand and support classmates with autism—they help create a more inclusive, accepting school culture (Kastriti, 2023). When nurses are part of conversations about inclusion policies, their hands-on experience often brings valuable insight that can shape more thoughtful and practical decisions. Complimentary to the nurse, support from the school social worker plays a decisive role in cases of children with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Social workers are involved in designing and implementing individualized education programs (IEP), while offering psychosocial support to parents and facilitating access to community resources. Although research on how social workers serve parents of children with ASD remains limited, existing data suggest their contribution is multidimensional. The holistic approach proposed in many studies involves cooperation among nurses, social workers, teachers, and psychologists. Working together across disciplines doesn't just help identify or manage specific challenges—it also allows for more complete support for the entire family. Regular meetings between professionals help keep everyone on the same page, making sure that the care and interventions stay consistent and well-coordinated. However, a critical look at the data reveals an interesting dynamic: although the vast majority consider the existence of support structures such as parent groups essential, these are not systematically implemented within the activities of the school social worker (Foster, 2015). This may suggest either lack of resources or limitations in the precise definition of responsibilities among professionals within the school. Therefore, there is room for further development of practices that strengthen this dimension of parent involvement. Another issue concerns teachers 'attitudes toward children with autism. The use of instruments such as the TATIS scale has shown that their perceptions significantly affect the effectiveness of inclusive practices (Kella et al., 2015). If teachers feel confident and informed about the peculiarities of autism, collaboration with the school nurse and other specialists is facilitated. Conversely, insufficient training or hesitation may act as a barrier to implementing successful interventions (Koukourava, 2022). From this evidence it becomes clear that there is a need to create communication networks among all parties involved: parents, teachers, and school nurses. The existence of such networks can reduce parents 'stress, especially in situations where they must face daily challenges with their child (Kastriti, 2023). Open communication helps ensure that support strategies are consistent throughout the student's schooling. It is likely that without this comprehensive collaboration, the process of including children with ASD in mainstream schooling will remain dysfunctional. The aim is not simply the presence of support structures but that they be active and easily accessible to the parents who need them most. This presupposes both institutional changes and ongoing professional development for practitioners to guarantee the quality and continuity of interventions (Foster, 2015). Emerging trends show interest in developing new forms of parent–teacher consultation that could be further reinforced through existing support mechanisms (Koukourava, 2022). Ultimately, this field calls for an approach in which each professional recognizes not only their responsibilities but how these are dynamically interconnected with other roles within the school system. Only then can there be real improvements in how children with autism are supported and in how their families are assisted.

2. Theoretical framework for the role of the school nurse

2.1 *Primary health care and the school environment*

Primary Health Care (PHC) within the school environment constitutes a special adaptation of core public health principles to the needs of students, with the aim of safeguarding their physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The coexistence of children from different backgrounds, ages, and health statuses creates complexity that the school health team must address, with the school nurse taking a leading role (Davli, 2024). The nurse's daily presence ensures prompt response to incidents, as well as the implementation of long-term prevention programs that go beyond simply providing first aid. The importance given to individualized care for acute and chronic conditions is particularly pronounced in the research evidence. This work is considered the most important duty of the school nurse, with very high average evaluation scores— an indication that direct clinical support remains the core of PHC in the school context (Dauli, 2024). This responsibility is not limited to intervention after a specific incident but extends to developing action plans for students with chronic conditions such as type 1 diabetes or epilepsy. In such cases, collaborating with parents and educators is essential to adapt the student's schedule. Simultaneously, PHC in schools has a clear community health dimension. Networking actions with primary care providers, mobile units, or health centers can strengthen the school's capacity to meet more needs (Davli, 2024). One example is organizing routine preventive checks by external health professionals, who inform both staff and students on issues such as nutrition or psychological resilience. Here arises a component of PHC that is often implied but not systematically implemented: integrating health education into the daily educational routine. Such interventions have proven effective in cultivating self-care behaviors in students (Kastriti, 2023). However, if confined to fragmentary initiatives without continuity or basis in well-structured plans, their impact is reduced. At this point the issue of institutional organization arises: in the Greek reality it is observed that the framework for operating the school nurse role remains in early stages (Davli, 2024), which may limit the integration of PHC into the education system. This creates inequality in students 'access to comprehensive care services. The scientific discourse around PHC in schools highlights that, beyond the clinical dimension, the nurse's role includes elements of education and counseling toward parents and educators. Contemporary views emphasize that the effectiveness of these actions depends on continuous training of the health professionals serving schools (Kastriti, 2023). Without continuous education, gaps or incorrect practices in dealing with special needs may arise. Another element that should not be overlooked is the connection between collaboration and student outcomes. Data show that when there is close communication between school and the parents of a child with disorders such as ASD, both behavior and academic outcomes improve. This finding bears particular importance for implementing PHC practices in schools: health promotion actions are not only individual but collective, involving all links of the educational community. Despite the theoretical recognition of this dynamic relationship among parents, school, and nurse, it seems there are areas where practice lags behind expectations. For instance, limited support is provided for psychoeducational groups or family therapy in the school setting (Foster, 2015). Such services could operate complementarily to the main dimensions of PHC, building a more robust safety net around the student. It is also worth noting that teachers' perceptions of the nurse's role affect the effectiveness of PHC in school. When educators regard the nurse as an integral member of the learning community and are well informed about their responsibilities, the likelihood of synergies in favor of students increases. Conversely, low understanding or unclear conception of the nurse's contribution may lead to underutilizing its potential. Ultimately, integrating PHC into the school environment requires strategic planning that takes into account not only immediate needs for incident response but long-term prevention and health promotion demands. This means developing policies of cooperation between the Ministry of Education and public health bodies so that every school is equipped with the necessary resources to implement a full spectrum of

services. Such an approach functionally links everyday care practice with wider public health goals, transforming the school into not only a place of learning but a nucleus of prevention and health security for the entire community.

2.2 *Legal and institutional framework*

The legal and institutional framework governing the role of the school nurse is intimately connected to the effectiveness of Primary Health Care in schools, defining clearly responsibilities, constraints, and opportunities for the health professional within the educational system. In the Greek reality, the framework is still in formation, making the implementation of uniform standards not always feasible (Davli, 2024). The absence of a clear division of roles among different specialties—such as nurses, social workers, and psychologists—may lead to overlaps or gaps in service provision. International trends show that institutional recognition of the school nurse includes not only clinical work but participation in health education, prevention, and support of special groups of students. In countries like the United States, laws such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reinforce the presence of health professionals in schools, providing policy guidance to improve access to comprehensive care services (Dauli, 2024). Adoption of similar provisions in Greece could ensure more consistent implementation of practices and stronger protection of students 'rights. Moreover, regulations governing the nurse's role often include requirements for continuous education and certification of skills. This is considered necessary for staff to meet the needs of a constantly changing student population, including those with chronic diseases or disabilities. However, in practice, this education is not always institutionalized as a mandatory process in Greece, leaving room for variation in the quality of services provided from school to school. A critical part of the institutional framework concerns the legal responsibilities the school nurse carries in performing duties. These include adherence to safety protocols for first aid, protection of students' personal health data, and compliance with international and national public health guidelines. Data protection laws (such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR) require particular caution when recording students' health information. Another important aspect is the need for institutional provision of multi-level cooperation between the school and external agencies. Some legal frameworks foresee collaborations between the Ministry of Education and health structures so that consistent coverage is provided across all schools (Dauli, 2024). If such collaborations are not well structured or funded, there is a risk of inequality in students 'access to specialized services. The institutional dimension also includes defining procedures for inclusion and support of children with developmental disorders such as autism. International best practices call for specific protocols for creating individualized education plans (IEPs), with active participation of the school nurse in planning teams (Kastriti, 2023). These arrangements rely on legislative recognition of every child's right to adapted education. The debate around the institutional framework brings up a dual issue: on one hand, the need for comprehensive legal coverage for all nurse functions; on the other, ensuring that these policies are translated into feasible field procedures. Examples from other countries show that even well-organized policies may not be supported with adequate resources or administrative oversight (Davli, 2024). The institutional framework is the foundation upon which all actions are built; without clarity in rules, efforts to provide high-quality services may remain fragmented. Essentially, what is required is a systematic mechanism for evaluating how these policies are implemented in the field to detect and address areas needing improvement early. Finally, one must examine the influence of the institutional framework on parents' and teachers' perception of the school nurse's role. Research shows that when legal statutes clearly define the responsibilities and rights of the health professional in the school, this helps build trust among all participants (Dauli, 2024). In contrast, unclear or incomplete provisions may create confusion about what the nurse can or should undertake, undermining the dynamic collaboration necessary to support vulnerable student groups.

3. School nurse and support for children with autism

Understanding the Autism Spectrum (ASD) is foundational for effectively supporting children and families involved in it. The literature indicates that diagnosis can be reliable as early as 18 to 24 months, provided it is conducted by an experienced professional. However, real-world implementation of early diagnosis encounters obstacles, as many children are diagnosed later, depriving families of access to early intervention and support structures (Foster, 2015). The developmental screening precedes more extensive diagnostic evaluation, which examines aspects such as social skills, verbal and nonverbal communication, and adaptive behavior. Scientific evidence confirms that the heterogeneity of symptoms is substantial: two children with ASD may present entirely different behavior and needs. This poses challenges for school nurses and educators because it demands personalization in both care and inclusion strategies. Heterogeneity is observed in both the range and intensity of difficulties—from children with significant linguistic and social deficits to those who communicate adequately but struggle intensely with changes in routine or sensory processing. The psychosocial dimension of ASD makes it necessary for the school nurse to act as a central bridge among family and school. Research shows that parents and teachers consider participation in consultative programs that include parallel training in autism needs positively. This consultation functions not only as a collaboration improvement tool but also enhances consistency in interventions, reducing familial stress in daily life. The challenges faced by families of children with ASD vary—from practical difficulties managing episodes of intense stress to handling critical attitudes in the broader social environment (Koukourava, 2022). Such situations may lead to increased physical or psychological burden for parents, making collaboration of all professionals in the school context necessary. Here the school nurse serves as a main support hub, providing information on crisis management strategies and contributing to long-term plans for social inclusion. Their service is not limited to handling health emergencies during the day but extends into psychosocial support of parents. Data show that most school social workers have supported parents of children with ASD, but nurses can provide a complementary role by acting as a steady daily support resource within the school system. In practice, this means they may allocate time—even in limited hours—to listen to parents' concerns and link them to community services. Their approach is often guided by ecological frameworks that view the student as part of a dynamic system of person–environment relations (Kella, 2015). Within this perspective, intervention is not one-dimensional but seeks to positively influence both the immediate school context and broader social structures affecting the child. In this framework, collaboration becomes central: without systematic information exchange among all involved stakeholders, there is risk of fragmented measures that do not fully meet the child's needs. Another critical point is that the nurse may contribute to training school staff in first aid and safety for children with ASD. Because these children often present different reactions in emergencies, it is essential to have sensitized and properly trained adults in the school. Moreover, the nurse's presence gives parents a sense of security since they know that crises or health issues arising during the student's day can be managed immediately. However, there are limits to the nurse's direct involvement in deeper psychological or family issues—these typically fall within the domain of other professionals such as the school social worker (Foster, 2015). Nevertheless, identifying needs and making referrals to external services is a key responsibility of health professionals in schools. International literature has shown that when school nurses participate actively in planning Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the gap between clinical recommendations and classroom practice is bridged more effectively (Kastriti, 2023). This involvement allows better adaptation of learning goals to each child's characteristics. Coordination of health and educational goals helps the child maximize their capabilities without becoming excessively burdened physically or mentally.

A particularly interesting aspect is the nurse's role in promoting inclusive practices in the school. Through daily interventions and collective awareness-raising actions, the nurse can

improve classmates' attitudes toward a student with ASD, reducing exclusion or stigma (Koukourava, 2022). Successful strategies include small group activities in class where students work cooperatively to understand and respect the needs of a peer with autism. Empirical observation shows that the closer the collaboration between nurse and parent, the better the inclusion outcomes of the child in daily school life (Kella et al., 2015). The quality of this relationship depends on trust; without it there is high risk that essential information for improving care in class remains incompatible or incomplete. In contrast, an active communication channel can prompt timely adaptation of strategies even before problems arise. Limited resources are a constant challenge: many support programs rely on professionals' personal efforts rather than institutionalized processes (Davli, 2024). This can lead to uneven service levels among schools. Establishing a clearer policy framework could ensure consistent quality of care in all cases. Overall, the school nurse's presence adds value to the collective effort to support children with autism: acting as a provider of direct care and as an educator for school staff; strengthening relations with parents; participating in IEP teams; promoting inclusive practices within the student community; and serving as a gateway to external resources when specialized intervention is needed (Foster, 2015; Kastriti, 2023).

4. Supporting parents of children with autism

4.1 Communication and counseling

Communication and counseling among parents, school nurses, and teachers constitute a pivotal axis that can significantly influence the inclusion experience of children with autism in school. Combining clinical information from the nurse with pedagogical strategies from educators establishes a common reference framework for all stakeholders. Research demonstrates that when parents actively participate in counseling programs alongside teachers, collaboration is strengthened and consistency in intervention practices increases (Koukourava, 2022). This kind of coordinated engagement substantially reduces parental stress and facilitates implementation of appropriate classroom modifications. The process of communication is not always straightforward. There are cases where parents feel their child's needs are not fully recognized, either due to insufficient understanding of autism or absence of a clear institutional framework defining professional roles and responsibilities (Davli, 2024). In such situations the nurse may act as mediator, translating clinical needs into educational language that teachers can immediately integrate into daily class activities. It is worth noting that counseling involves more than just information exchange: it includes developing parents' skills to manage crises or behavioral changes in their child (Foster, 2015). Through organized meetings or workshops, parents learn how to apply anxiety-management techniques, identify warning signs before behavioral outbursts, and establish stable routines at home. These skills diffuse into the school environment when communication is bidirectional: the nurse informs teachers of what worked at home, while teachers share effective strategies used in class with parents. Successful counseling depends on mutual trust. Data indicate that the quality of the relationship between nurse and parent largely determines support effectiveness (Kella et al., 2015). Without that trust, interventions may become fragmented or inconsistent, especially when new needs arise requiring immediate response. Establishing stable communication channels—such as scheduled weekly meetings or secure digital platforms—facilitates early detection of issues and adaptation of action plans. Research observations suggest that counseling gains greater momentum when paired with educational awareness actions within the school system (Kastriti, 2023). For example, presentations on the particularities of ASD to the entire teaching staff reinforce consistency in responses toward students of the spectrum. The nurse can play a central role in such presentations by bringing clinical examples and offering practical guidance for everyday situations. Moreover, via collaboration with social workers and psychologists, the content of counseling sessions can be enriched to more holistically address the family's psychological and social needs. The Greek reality

displays difficulties in institutionalizing such practices; many schools rely on individual initiative rather than formal policies or guidelines that guarantee consistency over time (Davli, 2024). This results in considerable variation in support quality across regions. Institutionalizing structured counseling could help address these discrepancies by providing a common implementation standard. When peers are educated about ASD, incidents of stigma or exclusion decrease. The nurse can guide these actions by collaborating with teachers so that acceptance messages reach the entire school. Teachers often express reservations about including a child with autism in a typical class; such attitudes can shift through continuous communication and participation in consultative programs where they come to better understand the child's needs and potentials (Kella et al., 2015). Here the nurse acts not only as an information source but also as a motivator in changing attitudes. At a practical level, a comprehensive communication and counseling strategy might include: Scheduled multidisciplinary meetings (nurse–teachers–parents) to review progress Open communication channels via email or secure digital applications Parent workshops on crisis management and routine adjustments Awareness workshops in the school for students without ASD to foster acceptance These activities require resources and institutional support; without that there is risk of their implementation being episodic. Scientific evidence shows that investment in consistent processes of communication among all stakeholders yields long-term benefits not only for students with ASD but for the entire school community (Foster, 2015; Koukourava, 2022).

4.2 *Parent participation in school activities*

Parent participation in school activities—especially for families of children with autism—is not merely auxiliary to educational processes but a dynamic tool for enhancing social inclusion and the child's socio-emotional development. Their active presence allows a more holistic approach to the educational experience, directly connecting school and home environments (Koukourava, 2022). In many cases, such involvement acts as a catalyst for sensitization and education of the broader teaching and student body about the special characteristics and strengths of children on the Autism Spectrum. One particularly important dimension is creating collaboration structures—such as parent groups or participation in school committees designing activities—where parents can contribute experiences, ideas, and practical solutions for better adapting the school environment and schedule. However, research shows that such structures often underperform or rely on the initiative of individual professionals without a coherent institutional framework (Foster, 2015). This leads to unequal utilization of parents' contributions—some schools fully integrate their input while others remain in a more formal communication mode. The presence of parents in events such as cultural activities, informational seminars, or interactive activities with students without developmental disorders can shift attitudes toward autism. When peers observe the close connection and cooperation among school, student, and family, acceptance is reinforced and prejudices reduced (Kella et al., 2015). The school nurse can play a pivotal role here by facilitating parent involvement through information programs or providing them with practical guidance on how to participate. Experience shows that when nurse, teachers, and parents coordinate, interventions have more coherence and stability. It is also important that parent participation is linked to school training in crisis management or social skills development. Through personal knowledge of daily child interaction, parents can offer examples of strategies that worked at home. Teachers can translate these into classroom adjustments (Foster, 2015). On the other hand, participation gives parents access to techniques and resources used in the school, which they can feed back to the home environment. Yet there are challenges: sometimes parents hesitate to attend public activities due to fear of social criticism or prior negative experiences (Koukourava, 2022). Here the nurse's role is dual: to provide psychosocial support creating a sense of security so the parent feels welcome, and to mediate to teachers for dissolving misunderstandings regarding the child's behavior. The Greek reality is

M. Okoutsidou – The Role of the School Nurse in Supporting Parents of Children with ...

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uneven in terms of opportunities for active parent participation in school activities. While in some cases regular meetings are organized to exchange good practices within the school community, in others such processes are completely absent (Davli, 2024). Institutionalizing parent participation not only in formal procedures (e.g. information meetings) but also in planning and implementing actions could equalize these inequalities. It is equally important that parent-involving actions have experiential, not merely theoretical, character. For instance, educational games that bring together children with ASD and their classmates under guidance of teacher and parent can build authentic relationships. In such settings, the physical presence of the nurse acts as a safety net so that any unexpected health needs or behavioral crises are immediately addressed (Kastriti, 2023). Educator perceptions also affect the extent to which they will permit or invite parent presence. If the teacher believes parent presence might weaken the learning process or reveal difficulties in classroom management, they might limit such opportunities (Kella et al., 2015). Conversely, informed teachers who understand the supportive role of the parent tend to actively promote such bonds. From a policy implementation perspective, a clear institutional framework predicting specific forms of parent participation in the school lives of children with ASD is needed (Davli, 2024). In its absence, each school may apply measures ad hoc without consistency or continuity. A coherent plan should ideally include collaboration of multiple professions (nurses, social workers, psychologists) so that parent participation links both educational and psychosocial dimensions. Ultimately, the quality of participation depends on three core elements: open communication among all stakeholders (Foster, 2015), action programs that provide meaningful parental involvement (Koukourava, 2022), and an institutional base guaranteeing continuity of these initiatives regardless of changes in personnel or school administration (Davli, 2024). When combined effectively, this produces a strong support network benefiting not only the student with autism but the whole school community.

5. Creating an inclusive school environment

5.1 *Policies and inclusion strategies*

Implementing policies and strategies for including students with autism in school requires a system combining clear institutional provisions with everyday collaboration among all stakeholders. The goal is to create a framework that supports not only the academic but also the social development of the child, incorporating experience and expertise from professionals such as the school nurse, educators, and social workers (Kastriti, 2023). International practice shows that the effectiveness of these policies depends on their institutionalization; when legally defined protocols foresee individualized inclusion programs (IEPs) with involvement of health professionals, outcomes are more consistent and efficient (Dauli, 2024). Strategy formulation often begins with a needs analysis for the student and family, a process that can be guided by the school nurse. The nurse functions as a translator of clinical data into educational inputs used for designing adaptations in schedule, teaching methods, and behavior management (Koukourava, 2022). In practice, such adjustments may include sensory-neutral spaces for children sensitive to noise or lighting, flexible durations for tasks, and special social interaction strategies. A key success factor is ongoing communication between school and parent. Policies that reinforce continuous information exchange reduce potential inconsistencies in interventions. Reports show that active parent involvement in school actions contributes to building a common support front for the student, providing shared defenses against difficulties (Foster, 2015). The nurse can guide this cooperation by facilitating regular meetings to review strategies. Moreover, inclusive strategies should include awareness actions for the broader school community. When all staff— from teachers to administrative personnel—know basic characteristics and needs of children with ASD, tension and misunderstandings are minimized (Kella et al., 2015). School awareness programs can be designed by the nurse in collaboration with social workers, integrating experiential exercises for nondisabled students to cultivate acceptance. Institutional policies need

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to specify clear role divisions. Without that, risk arises of overlaps or gaps in support—something observed in Greece, where inclusion processes may be influenced by limited resources or non-institutionalized practices (Davli, 2024). Developing a national framework incorporating best practices from other countries could help yield more consistent service quality and application of inclusion strategies. A critical point is training educators in special education matters. Continuing training programs centered on ASD can improve their attitudes toward inclusion and the effectiveness of practices they apply (Koukourava, 2022). The nurse has a coordinating role so that this training connects directly to students 'daily needs. Inclusion strategies are not limited to educational interventions—they must also account for students' health safety. Safety protocols for emergencies, developed jointly by nurse and teacher, add protection for ASD students and build parents' trust in the school. Furthermore, establishing networks linking the school with community health structures can enable specialized visits or evaluations at school without forcing parents to move or find private resources (SIMOPoulou). This connection brings the school closer to its role as a community support hub. In practice, many policies remain theoretical due to lack of funding or human resources (Davli, 2024). Even with political will, if permanent staff and infrastructure are not ensured, strategies risk remaining occasional. Hence, evaluation mechanisms are needed to assess policy effectiveness in the field, not just on paper. The final form of an effective inclusion policy includes multi-level actions: a clear institutional framework (Dauli, 2024), systematic teacher training (Koukourava, 2022), parent participation in program planning (Foster, 2015), active nurse involvement in IEP teams (Kastriti, 2023), and continuous updating for all stakeholders on inclusive practice best practices (Kella et al., 2015). Only through such multifaceted planning can the school environment truly become inclusive for children with autism.

5.2 *Collaboration of interdisciplinary teams*

Collaboration of interdisciplinary teams in schools emerges as a necessary condition for successful inclusion and support of students with autism, especially when efforts focus on both academic progress and psychosocial development. Linking this issue with the earlier discussion of inclusion policies makes it possible to see how inclusion strategies must be implemented via coordinated action by various professionals (Kastriti, 2023). In practical terms, an interdisciplinary team may consist of the school nurse, the classroom teacher, a special educator, a psychologist, and the social worker. Studies show that each member contributes a different perspective and specialization—the nurse is responsible for monitoring health issues and implementing safety protocols, while the social worker focuses on connecting with community resources and family support (Foster, 2015). The psychologist contributes by assessing the student's cognitive and emotional functioning and providing a framework for psychological empowerment. Collaboration is not limited to mere information exchange. Effective teams plan individualized programs based on a shared understanding of the student's needs. Tools such as the Individualized Education Program (IEP) allow clinical data to be integrated into educational practice so that classroom adaptations align with medical or therapeutic guidelines (Kastriti, 2023). The nurse's presence at meetings is critical for conveying information about physical health, medication regimens, or sensory discomfort. A common challenge is that the level of collaboration among team members varies. Schools with institutionalized collaboration frameworks show greater consistency in interventions; conversely, when participation depends more on personal initiative than policy, service quality disparities emerge (Davli, 2024). This means two students in different schools may experience very different support even if their needs are similar. Communication with parents should be considered an integral part of collaboration. Data show that when parents actively participate in interdisciplinary meetings, alignment of goals between school and family is improved (Koukourava, 2022). The school nurse often functions as a "translator" between clinical and everyday language—explaining research findings or technical

terms to parents and offering them directions to apply at home. On the other hand, parents share significant observations about the child's behavior outside school, helping the interdisciplinary team grasp the student's broader context (Kella et al., 2015). In practice, there are challenges: lack of time for joint meetings or absence of a unified digital information platform can reduce collaboration effectiveness. Also, when responsibilities are not clearly apportioned, risk arises of overlaps or unaddressed gaps in care. International experience shows that existence of cooperation protocols—with defined steps of evaluation and quantitative goals—allows better monitoring of outcomes (Dauli, 2024). Training of team members is another crucial factor. Educational programs that cover both clinical aspects of ASD and pedagogical strategies can create a shared knowledge base across professional disciplines (Koukourava, 2022). For instance, a seminar designed by the nurse together with the psychologist can include exercises recognizing sensory triggers causing difficulty and practical ways to manage them in class. Furthermore, participation in community health actions enhances interdisciplinary approaches: when school nurses use networks of health providers to access external evaluations or therapies not available in school, new support channels open (Simopoulou). The ability to refer a student directly to a specialized center without bureaucratic delay can make a difference in timely intervention. Team coherence is reflected in participants 'perceptions: when members consider their contribution to be equal and necessary, a collaborative environment emerges that offsets resource limitations (Davli, 2024). Conversely, if any discipline feels marginalized or its role is not fully recognized (something that has historically happened in some settings with nurses), quality of interventions diminishes. That is why policies strengthening roles are necessary so each professional has a clear scope of action and accountability connections with others. The ultimate goal is a culture of continuous collaboration in which strategy design occurs at the same table with all professionals and the parent (Foster, 2015), not in isolation by specialty. Structures such as monthly multidisciplinary review sessions or joint training workshops can be pivotal starting points. Through this process the school acquires characteristics of an integrated support environment where no field—educational or health—is isolated but all function dynamically toward the benefit of the student with autism.

6. School nursing and student population health

6.1 *Health promotion and prevention*

Health promotion and prevention in the school environment are inseparably linked to the role of the school nurse, who is called upon to act both as a provider of direct clinical care and as a catalyst for transforming the school into a healthier, safer learning environment. Experience from daily practice shows that health promotion initiatives do not merely have therapeutic goals but are developed proactively to mitigate potential problems that may affect students 'attendance and social inclusion (Davli, 2024). The concept of prevention—especially in environments with children having chronic conditions or developmental disorders such as ASD—extends beyond routine health checks. The school nurse designs and implements health education programs addressed to the whole school community and integrated into the regular school schedule. These initiatives may include training for handling emergencies, guidance on good nutrition, strategies for psychological resilience, or information about school safety. The nurse's contribution to continuous updates on infectious disease prevention and epidemic management is particularly important, as the school is a setting of rapid disease transmission (Dauli, 2024). The school setting requires balance: prevention efforts demand deep collaboration among nurse, parents, and educators, yet many Greek schools still rely on fragmented initiatives lacking formal institutional backbone (Davli, 2024). This leads to variation in service quality—some students enjoy fully developed health education programs while others lack access. In international best practices, designing prevention programs follows stages: assessing student population needs, setting prevention goals, and integrating them into the overall IEP when necessary (Dauli, 2024). A key

component includes creating links with local health or community institutions so that the school acts as an access point to a wider set of health services (Simopoulou). Training all school stakeholders is essential for strengthening prevention efforts (Koukourava, 2022). When teachers know how to apply health education principles in class, the message spreads to students and becomes part of school culture. The nurse can organize experiential workshops where students actively practice self-care strategies—such as stress management or hygiene practices. Through these experiences, the school transmits not just knowledge but also attitudes of responsibility toward personal and collective health. The psychosocial dimension should not be overlooked: prevention also means empowering psychological well-being and implementing programs to reduce risks of bullying or social isolation (Kella et al., 2015). At the core of these actions lies interdisciplinary collaboration in planning interventions not only when problems emerge but before they lead to substantial dysfunction. The nurse's role also includes systematic collection of health data from students through periodic assessments. Such data are used to design personalized interventions but can also contribute to shaping public health policies when aggregated at a national level. Thus, the school becomes both an implementation site and a source of information feeding into broader prevention strategies in public administration. Studies in the U.S. and U.K. have shown that presence of a full-time school nurse correlates with improvements in accident prevention metrics and better compliance with public health guidelines (e.g., vaccinations) (Dauli, 2024). In the Greek reality, permanent presence remains a goal; many schools are served by personnel covering multiple schools, limiting the possibility of systematic implementation of comprehensive prevention programs (Davli, 2024). It becomes clear that successful health promotion actions require a culture of synergy among all school professionals and active involvement of parents (Foster, 2015). When parents are informed about practices in the school environment, they can replicate them at home, ensuring continuity. Simultaneously, parents 'inclusion in planning actions helps align them with realistic family conditions.

6.2 *Supporting students with chronic conditions*

Supporting students with chronic conditions requires an adaptive, systematic, and multidimensional approach in which the school nurse plays a key role. Chronic conditions include a wide range of situations—type 1 diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, heart disease, or autoimmune disorders—that affect student functioning daily and may pose significant obstacles to academic performance and social inclusion (Simopoulou). Support in such cases extends beyond disease management to organizing a school environment responsive to each student's needs, combining clinical care with inclusive practices. In everyday operations, the school nurse educates both student and staff on self-management of the condition. For instance, in diabetes, the student needs to know how to monitor blood glucose and recognize hypo/hyperglycemia symptoms; educators must know when and how to intervene to protect the student's health during school hours (Dauli, 2024). Similarly, for epilepsy, training in safety protocols to be applied during seizures is crucial for preventing complications (Kastriti, 2023). A critical element is development of Individualized Health Plans (IHPs) closely coordinated with the IEP, where they exist. These plans specify procedures for handling emergencies, necessary schedule adaptations, and actions that must precede or follow a medical event. Their presence prevents improvisation that may endanger the student and ensures all parties (teachers, administration, parents) understand required actions (Simopoulou). Collaboration with community health providers is especially useful. The school nurse can act as a reference point for communication with physicians or therapists overseeing the student, transmitting updated treatment instructions or activity limitations (Dauli, 2024). This connection reduces inconsistency between care at school and at home or in clinical settings. Leveraging community resources, such as mobile health units, also helps families access specialized services without traveling or incurring extra burdens. Health support is closely linked to psychosocial factors. Students with chronic conditions often experience anxiety or low

self-esteem due to limitations the condition imposes on participation in activities. The nurse can develop empowerment programs through small discussion groups or life skills workshops where students share experiences and learn coping strategies (Kella et al., 2015). Such actions mitigate obvious boundaries to inclusion in school social life. Educating peers is also a powerful support strategy. When other children understand what a chronic condition means and how they can assist (e.g., by asking for help if they notice symptoms), incidents of stigma or misinterpretation decline (Koukourava, 2022). Awareness actions can be integrated into broader school health policies, making acceptance culture consistent. However, implementing such integrated programs in the Greek context has difficulties. Often processes rely more on individual initiative than institutionalized frameworks (Davli, 2024). This leads to service quality heterogeneity across schools even when student needs are comparable. Institutional assurance of resources and repeated staff training are necessary so that quality of services for students with chronic conditions remains high regardless of geographic region. Finally, effective support is built through continuous evaluation of applied practices. The school nurse can systematically collect data about students' health status and responses to care plans (Simopoulou). These data are tools not only for internal revision but also for public health authorities to design policies improving the educational environment for children with chronic conditions. With this multilayered approach—combining clinical oversight, psychosocial support, ongoing staff education, family and community collaboration—the school nurse becomes the foundation of daily protection and social inclusion for students with chronic health needs.

7. Conclusion

The inclusion and support of children with autism in the school environment demands a comprehensive approach that integrates multiple facets of educational, health, and social care. The role of the school nurse is pivotal—not confined to delivering clinical care but extending to health promotion, prevention, and boosting students' psychological wellbeing. Collaboration among nurses, teachers, parents, and other professionals establishes a dynamic framework that ensures effective inclusion of children with autism. The development of individualized educational programs (IEP) and health plans (IHP) is a key element for adapting the school environment to each student's needs. Continuous professional development of school staff, active family participation, and formation of networks with community health bodies all contribute to enhancing children's quality of life. At the same time, awareness and acceptance initiatives within the student community reduce stigma and exclusion. In the Greek context, institutional reinforcement and resource assurance are necessary to uniformly implement practices across all schools. Systematic data collection and evaluation can help improve existing policies and build an environment that fully supports every student. Through collaboration and continual improvement, the school can be transformed into a space of prevention, support, and inclusion—serving not only children with autism but the entire educational community.

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Regulations of Moroccan Sages: A Journey Between Jewish Law and Tradition in the Jewish Community

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Abstract

The article explores the regulations composed by Moroccan sages throughout the generations, focusing on their composition process, subjects, and key figures. These regulations reflect the need to adapt Jewish law to changing realities while preserving the core values of Judaism. The article describes the roots of the Jewish community in Morocco and the development of the important community in Fez with the arrival of exiled Spanish Jews. It explains how legal scholars formulated regulations based on traditional Jewish sources. The process of drafting regulations involved discussions, writing, and public proclamation, emphasizing the importance of public consent. The regulations covered a wide range of areas, including marital law, monetary matters, Jewish-gentile relations, ethics, education, and more. The article reviews key regulation collections, such as those from Fez, Meknes, and Sefrou. It presents the unique characteristics of each collection and the central figures behind them. Additionally, it addresses the regulations of the Rabbinical Council in Morocco, which worked to unify laws and customs in the country. Three central regulations are analyzed in depth: a regulation concerning daughters' inheritance, a regulation limiting expenses for celebrations, and a regulation prohibiting the employment of young children. The analysis of these regulations emphasizes the aspiration for social justice, community solidarity, and protection of the vulnerable.

Keywords: regulations, Morocco, Judaism, Jewish Law, sages, Fez, Meknes, Sefrou, education, inheritance, social justice, solidarity.

1. Introduction – The Jewish community in Morocco

The Jewish presence in Morocco began in the first century BCE, represented by diverse and ancient cultural layers. Initially, Moroccan Jews included a core of local Berber tribes, joined by immigrants from the Land of Israel who arrived following the Phoenicians and Romans. After the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, Jews from the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring regions were added (Avitbul et al., 2003).

The city of Fez was built in 789 by Idris I ibn Abdullah, who maintained relationships with Jews and Christians and was influenced by them. Fez served as a refuge for political refugees from Tunisia and Spain. The Idrisids spread Islam and made Fez a religious center. Many Jews arrived in Fez from Kairouan, Egypt, and other places, and it became the most important Jewish community in Morocco. From the ninth century, Jewish Fez became a Torah center for studying the Bible, Hebrew language, poetry, and oral Torah. The lives of Fez Jews experienced many trials

and fluctuations depending on the treatment they received from the ruling authorities (Bashan, 2000).

With the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, a stream of Jewish refugees began arriving in Morocco, continuing from Portugal until around 1500. Many of the exiles settled in Fez, preferring the city due to its status as a capital with significant economic and political importance. Moreover, the positive attitude of King Moulay Muhammad al-Shaykh (1472–1505) towards the exiles was well-known. This attitude strengthened the refugee' sense of security, and therefore many preferred to live in Fez (Amar, 2021).

1.1 *Recovery and revival*

After the arrival of exiled scholars to Morocco, and despite the suffering and difficulties they experienced, within two years of coming to Fez, they began independently organizing community life and rebuilding its ruins. In 1494, they established initial regulations that were innovative and courageous, thereby laying the foundations for proper community management living according to Jewish law and facing challenges with dignity. In these regulations, they addressed difficult issues in marital law that arose from the upheavals of exile, and questions that emerged to unify exiles who arrived from different regions of Spain into one community (Galily, 2019; Amar, 2021).

The integration of exiles into the local Jewish population was not one-sided and showed mutuality. From the mid-sixteenth century, community regulations were no longer written in Judeo-Spanish but exclusively in Judeo-Arabic. Exiles brought, among other things, the concept of monogamous marriages, and under their influence, polygamy became an exceptional phenomenon. The exiles brought cultural and spiritual renewal to Moroccan Jewry (Avitbul et al., 2003).

2. Sages' regulations – Background and process

2.1 *Sages' regulations*

Jewish legal scholars' base Jewish law on written sources in the Torah and ancient oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. Additionally, they have the authority to innovate laws by re-examining Torah verses, deeply investigating passages, and understanding the internal logic of the text using established and known rules – a method called midrash. The validity of these laws is at the highest level, as if they were directly written in the Torah.

In cases where legal scholars cannot establish new laws through midrash, the Torah delegated to them the authority to enact regulations beyond existing laws. Scholars received this authority to ensure that Torah would not be forgotten by the Jewish people (Alon, 1997).

The regulations were designed to resolve problems arising from social and economic changes by creating new regulations alongside existing law. This could be in monetary laws, interpersonal relations, individual-community relations, or by adding a new prohibition or commandment in laws between humans and God. Sometimes the regulation would introduce changes to existing law due to difficulties in its observance, including social, economic, and moral challenges (Toldot – Institute for Moroccan Jewish Heritage, n.d.).

2.2 *The process of formulating regulations*

Jewish communities in Spain made significant use of enacting regulations to provide solutions within Jewish life where Jewish law failed to offer appropriate answers. Influenced by

the exiles, Moroccan Jews began using regulation enactment to address problems that Jewish law did not adequately resolve (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

Enacting regulations was the authority of the "status" – namely, the scholars, community leaders, and the Nagid (religious leader in Sephardic communities of the Middle Ages). When a problem requiring a solution arose, these status members would gather in a central location like a synagogue or the Nagid's home, where they would discuss and decide the matter. After deciding, they would formulate the regulation in writing and sign it. Regulations would be brought to public knowledge through an announcement in the synagogue, and from the moment of publication, they would acquire legally binding status. Regulations affecting only a small group were presumably brought only to the attention of those directly concerned and not publicly proclaimed (Toldot – Institute for Moroccan Jewish Heritage, n.d.).

For a regulation to gain legal binding status, several key requirements had to be met. Leading community scholars needed to be among its creators, it required written documentation with signatures to preserve it for future generations, and the targeted public had to accept it. After a regulation was decided upon, court scribes would draft it, and scholars, status members, and the Nagid would sign a single master copy. Multiple copies were then made and distributed to synagogue scholars for public reading during the Sabbath.

Public consent represented a fundamental principle in regulation-making. As stated in the Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 36a): "A decree is not imposed on the public unless the majority can uphold it." The public reading without objection was considered acceptance of the regulation (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

The process of establishing regulations varied. Most regulations were enacted solely by scholars, though in some cases, they included the Nagid. Regulations concerning court procedures and religious law were typically established by scholars alone, often requiring signatures from only a select few rather than the entire scholarly establishment. In contrast, regulations regarding community affairs involved the broader participation of scholars, community leaders, and the Nagid (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

Regulations varied in their temporal scope. Some were established with predetermined time limits, while others remained in effect until superseded by new regulations. Those deemed appropriate and just for generations maintained permanent validity, while unsigned regulations held no legal force. Beyond formal regulations, judicial customs were also collected and documented, becoming as binding as the regulations themselves.

When the public disregarded a regulation, particularly those affecting the broader community, it would be revised to ensure public acceptance. Sometimes specific details were removed or updated, while in other cases, stricter versions of the original regulation were implemented. Community scholars enforced these regulations through monetary fines, corporal punishment, and even imprisonment, exercising autonomous authority granted by the governing authorities (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

3. Major regulation collections and key figures in regulation establishment

3.1 *Fez Regulations*

The Fez Regulations represent a significant collection comprising approximately 250 regulations enacted between 1494 and 1750. Initially established by Castilian exiles in Fez and later supplemented by city rabbis, these regulations were first written in Ladino and translated to Hebrew after about a century. This collection served as the authoritative code for Moroccan communities for 400 years, with judges and religious authorities frequently consulting it for legal decisions (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

Rabbi Jacob Ibn Zur first compiled the Fez regulations in 1698, drawing from ancient documents and exile community agreements. In the book's introduction, he noted that existing copies were deteriorating, prompting him to personally transcribe the regulations for future generations. Since Morocco lacked printing houses, regulations were typically hand-copied. Rabbi Makhluf Ibn Zakhri created a new copy in 1778, incorporating numerous judicial decisions from 18th-century Fez scholars. The collection was finally printed in 1871 in Livorno, Italy, by Rabbi Abraham Ankawa, a descendant of Spanish exiles, in his work *Kerem Hemer* (Bar-Asher, Shalom et al., 1977).

3.2 *Meknes regulations*

The Meknes regulations collection differs from its predecessors as it was originally written as a unified city collection containing all regulations from 1750 to 1822. This compilation was created as a continuation of the Fez regulations and contains forty original regulations, with an additional thirty regulations collected from various manuscripts.

This collection belonged to the Toledano family of rabbis, whose influence on community life was nearly exclusive between 1640 and 1790. Subsequently, the Berdugo family dynasty assumed leadership for a century, with Rabbi Raphael Berdugo establishing a new community regulations book (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

3.3 *Sefrou regulations collection*

This collection comprises seventy regulations enacted between 1622 and 1953. Rather than being written as a formal community book, these regulations were gathered from individual sheets across various manuscripts. Rabbi David Ovadia compiled and published them in his 1985 book *The Community of Sefrou*. Most regulations address city governance and moral conduct, with notably few innovations in religious law.

Rabbi David Ovadia was appointed as Sefrou's rabbi in 1952 following his father's passing. He authored several books about the Sefrou community, collecting unique regulations, letters, and preserved memories from Sefrou's scholars, along with sources and documents pertaining to the economic, social, political, and spiritual history of Sefrou's Jews (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

3.4 *Regulations of the Moroccan rabbinical council*

Prior to the French Protectorate in Morocco, which began in 1912, no national rabbinical body existed. The French government established a national rabbinical council that convened in Rabat six times between 1947 and 1955. The rabbis aimed to unify Morocco's laws and customs, address matters requiring reform, and strengthen religious observance. The discussions and decisions were published, providing insight into the issues addressed and attempts to correct deficiencies and negative phenomena. In his 1985 book *Jewish Law in Moroccan Communities*, published in Israel, Rabbi Moshe Amar reorganized these regulations and included new ones adopted by the Moroccan Rabbinical Council.

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4. Central themes in the regulations

4.1 *Preservation of religious life*

These regulations focused on maintaining religious life, including Sabbath observance, holiday adherence, and various regulations concerning ritual slaughter and meat kashrut (dietary laws).

4.2 *"Status of women"*

The regulations reflect a trend of elevating the status of Jewish women, protecting their dignity and rights in matters of inheritance, prohibiting polygamy, and establishing compensation for women who claimed they were intimate after promises of marriage.

4.3 *Jewish-gentile relations*

These regulations deal with mutual trade and loan relationships, legal connections and appeals to non-Jewish courts, and the prohibition of selling alcoholic beverages to Muslims, which is forbidden by Islamic law.

4.4 *Social regulations*

An important area of regulations dealt with the many diverse celebrations of Moroccan Jews, such as circumcision ceremonies, redemption of firstborn sons, bar mitzvahs, and weddings with their many customs and traditions.

4.5 *Morality and modesty*

Important regulations addressed social phenomena that compromised religious and moral life. These regulations prohibited card games and prohibited women from going out in luxurious dress or mingling with men, especially during funeral processions and cemetery visits.

4.6 *Family life regulations*

Regulations dealing with broken engagements, early marriages, or permission to take an additional wife for those without children from their first wife. Other regulations dealt with determining the amount of the ketubah (marriage contract) that the husband commits to give his wife in case of divorce or death. Important regulations address the distribution of the husband's or wife's estate among various heirs and daughters' inheritance rights.

4.7 *Taxes*

Tax assessment and collection became a source of tension in the community. Regulations were established for more equitable distribution of the tax burden on the wealthy and middle class, as well as attempts to reassess tax collection from people who were exempt from tax payments for various reasons.

4.8 *Consumer protection*

Following natural disasters that caused crop depletion affecting the economic situation, price gouging, merchandise fraud, and unfair competition between merchants became issues. Several regulations dealt with appointing market supervisors to monitor compliance with regulations and improve the situation.

4.9 *Land of Israel*

Various regulations arranged donations for the inhabitants of the Land of Israel and Jerusalem's poor. Despite their difficult economic situation, Moroccan Jews did not shirk from giving money to support the poor of the Land of Israel. The regulations dealt with proper collection arrangements for the benefit of Jerusalem and Land of Israel residents.

4.10 *Education*

In education, regulations were enacted prohibiting the employment of young children by craftsmen until they completed their studies at bar mitzvah age. Other regulations dealt with free admission of poor children to Torah study and fair payment for teachers (History – The Institute for the Heritage of Moroccan Jewry, n.d.).

5. Case analysis – Three central regulations

5.1 *Inheritance of daughters*

The source of Jewish inheritance laws comes from the Mishnah and is based on Scripture:

> "The order of inheritance is as follows: If a man dies and has no son, 'you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter.' A son takes precedence over a daughter, any descendant of a son takes precedence over a daughter, the daughter takes precedence over brothers, and any descendant of a daughter takes precedence over brothers. Brothers take precedence over the father's brothers, and any descendant of brothers takes precedence over the father's brothers. This is the general rule: whoever takes precedence in inheritance, their descendants take precedence. And the father takes precedence over all his descendants" (Tractate Baba Batra, Chapter 8, Mishnah 2).

The Talmud concludes that when there are sons and daughters, even if there is only one son, the sons inherit while the daughters receive no portion. This was codified in the Shulchan Aruch. However, the sages instituted that an unmarried daughter about to be married should receive one-tenth of the father's assets, as appears in the Babylonian Talmud (Ketubot 68b).

In his book *Kerem Chemer*, Rabbi Abraham Ankawa presents a regulation concerning the division of the father's estate among heirs. This regulation was enacted in 1494 and was read in synagogues on Saturday, the 12th of Sivan, and reaffirmed three years later. The regulation was written in Judeo-Spanish, spoken among the exiles. According to Rabbi Abraham Ankawa's translation in *Kerem Chemer*, as it appears in Rabbi Amar's book *Regulations of the Sages of Fez*, Regulation 1, Section B states:

> "Furthermore, when sons and daughters remain, the daughters shall inherit equally with the sons. This applies specifically before the daughters enter second marriages. If they are engaged, they shall marry with this inherited portion, as this inheritance due to them under this regulation is for the purpose of marriage. If the inheritance is insufficient for marriage, they shall complete the marriage requirements from the remainder. If the inheritance amount exceeds the marriage needs that they are

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obligated to give to the betrothed, all shall belong to the betrothed..." (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

This regulation regarding the division of the father's estate establishes:

(1) If there are sons and unmarried daughters, the inheritance is divided equally among all of them.

(2) Engaged daughters shall use their inheritance portion for marriage expenses.

(3) If an engaged daughter's portion is insufficient for marriage expenses, the remainder shall be supplemented from the rest of the estate.

(4) If the engaged daughter's portion exceeds engagement expenses, the surplus remains with her.

This regulation was part of a trend that began in Spain about two hundred years earlier in the city of Valladolid. These conditions of full partnership between husband and wife in all assets, and the inheritance rights of unmarried daughters brought from Spain, gave women a unique, egalitarian status unparalleled in Jewish communities until and including the twentieth century (History – The Institute for the Heritage of Moroccan Jewry, n.d.).

This regulation does not establish complete equality between sons and daughters, as married daughters do not inherit since they already received their portion from their father at their wedding. The regulation demonstrates great concern for the daughter's dignity, ensuring she can marry properly. If her inheritance portion is insufficient, she receives an additional portion from the remaining estate to make up the difference—in this case, the inequality works in favor of the unmarried daughter.

5.2 *Limitation of luxuries in celebrations*

This regulation appears as Regulation 52 in the Fez Regulations Collection. Written in Hebrew, it addresses the restriction of excessive expenditures in feasts and celebrations. The regulation effectively limits individual personal freedom by preventing people from spending excessively on luxuries in a way that could adversely affect others who cannot afford such expenditures.

The regulation begins with the following statement:

"Because our neighbors' demands regarding tax matters have greatly increased, and the gates of prosperity are narrow, we have observed that the community, despite their hardships and limited wealth, feels compelled to incur excessive expenses in matters of feasts, both poor and wealthy alike. They take loans with interest to maintain luxuries because they see others boasting and spending without restraint. Therefore, even those who struggle for livelihood end up wasting money on luxuries to match the actions of the prosperous..." (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020a).

The regulation proceeds to specify the types of celebrations that may be held and the kinds of food that may be served.

The regulation was established to remain in effect for a minimum of five years. After this period, if the sages and community leaders did not decide to modify or cancel it, the regulation would continue to be valid. Those who violated the regulation would face fines as deemed appropriate by the leaders and community heads.

The regulation bears the signatures of both the sages and community leaders.

During this period, the tax burden weighed heavily on the public. Despite these difficult circumstances, driven by the desire to emulate the upper class (the prosperous = wealthy) and maintain the prevailing social norms, poor celebration hosts were forced to borrow money with interest to hold celebrations as expected of them. As a result, the poor risked falling into debt and becoming a burden on public funds (Bashan, 1980).

The solution implemented by the stages in this regulation was to establish a new, uniform norm binding on all members of society, both rich and poor. While this indeed restricted individual freedom, the sages were primarily motivated by their desire to protect those of limited means.

5.3 *Education*

A statute from 1721 prohibiting people from removing young children aged six or seven from school to teach them a trade. This regulation appears in the Book of Regulations within "Jewish Law in Morocco," Regulation 146:

> "In the House of Israel, we have witnessed a scandal where, due to financial hardship, people are removing their children from school at age six or seven and hiring them out to craftsmen to learn trades such as wool carding and combing and other crafts. These children don't even know how to recite the Shema prayer or pray properly. Instead of growing up under the guidance of scholars and developing fear of Heaven in their hearts, they are growing up in foolishness and irreverence. When they come of age, they cast off the yoke of Heaven and become those who do not lay tefillin, with one transgression leading to another until they stray to evil ways, Heaven forbid. We have seen that the craftsmen who hire these young children for their work are supporting transgressors, for it is not the mouse that steals but the hole that steals, and anything that enables sin, even in thousands of cases, does not become permitted, and whoever causes the public to sin bears the sin of the many.

> Therefore, we have opened our eyes and hearts to this matter, and we have decreed and established, by divine decree and holy word, that none of the wool carders and combers, nor any other craftsmen, may take children and youths who are uninitiated in the commandments to work for them, neither for pay nor for free, in any way from this day forward, until they have been educated in the commandments of tzitzit and tefillin. Only then may the craftsmen hire them, and on the condition that they get accustomed to them, warn them, and encourage them to pray with the congregation. Anyone who violates our words will be caught in the net of excommunication, while those who heed us will dwell securely without fear of evil and merit seeing the day of salvation."

Signed in the first third of [the month of] Iyar in the year 'And all peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the LORD is called upon you' [a biblical verse used to denote the year 1721], here in the city of Meknes, may God protect it, Amen (History – The Institute for the Heritage of Moroccan Jewry, n.d.).

This regulation was enacted in Meknes in 1721, during years when natural disasters led to poor harvests and severe economic hardship. Against this background, many Jews removed their children from schools while they were still young and apprenticed them to craftsmen (History – The Institute for the Heritage of Moroccan Jewry, n.d.).

The sages identified the serious problems caused by preventing children from receiving education in Jewish tradition, which resulted in these children not praying and lacking fear of Heaven. When these children grew up, they abandoned Judaism and didn't put on tefillin, considered a very serious matter since tefillin symbolize the core principles of Jewish faith. Consequently, these children, as they grew older, strayed from proper conduct. The regulation

forbade craftsmen from employing these children until they had been educated in tzitzit and tefillin, around age thirteen, the age of Bar Mitzvah. Additionally, employers were required to ensure that their young employees prayed with the congregation.

The sage authors of the regulation emphasized the responsibility placed on employers. The regulation did not address parental responsibility for their children's education, presumably understanding that their dire economic situation prevented proper judgment, and they couldn't be expected to face this dilemma. The responsibility was placed on employers not to accept young children for work, as they had the power to prevent educational harm. Therefore, the regulation was directed at them. Employers should not assume they play a minor role in the children's misfortune; these craftsmen who employ such youths are the main cause of this serious problem, as "anything that enables sin, even in thousands of cases, does not become permitted" – meaning that the factors causing harm should be measured by their impact rather than their formal responsibility for children's education, which places the blame on these employers.

Furthermore, the regulation's authors use harsh and threatening language towards these employers, stating "the sin of the many rests upon him." The Mishna mentions that the one who causes the public to sin will not merit repentance and will die in their sin. This regulation contains no concrete sanctions against violators except for the threat of excommunication. Bassan (2000) doubts whether this regulation was ever enforced.

From the regulations discussed above, we can see that the sages who enacted them were guided by principles of equality and justice regarding daughters' inheritance, showing deep concern for ensuring that unmarried daughters could marry despite being fatherless, and making bold attempts, even if they contradicted accepted Jewish law, to ease their situation, even at the cost of somewhat affecting other heirs. This concern for daughters continues and develops the trend that began in Spain of viewing women as equal partners with their husbands.

The relationship between the individual and the community underlies the regulation limiting community members' freedom to spend money on luxuries. This intervention in private life was intended to prevent competition and social pressure on those who couldn't afford it, which might cause them to fall into debt and eventually become a burden on the community fund that would need to care for these needy individuals. In this case, the sages considered not only concern for the poor but also for the good of the entire community, leading to the decision to limit celebration expenses. This regulation was limited to five years to ensure the infringement on individual rights would be proportionate. After this period, the regulation didn't automatically expire; the final decision about its expiration was left to community leaders.

In education, the sages showed great sensitivity by strongly opposing the phenomenon of sending young children to work before completing basic education. They directed the requirement to prevent these children from working at employers rather than parents, possibly if due to parents' difficult economic circumstances, they wouldn't comply. Therefore, they tried to close this loophole through the employers, based on the simple assumption that if children weren't hired, they would remain in educational frameworks. This wasn't just concerned for children's education but rather a broader vision looking to the future and considering the young child's welfare in their adult life when they would better integrate into the community. In effect, this regulation created a kind of compulsory education law.

6. Conclusion

The regulations of Moroccan sages were a crucial instrument for addressing social, economic, and religious challenges. These regulations reflect the dynamics of the Moroccan Jewish community and its ways of coping with changing realities.

The roots of the Jewish community in Morocco date back to the Roman and Phoenician periods, and the community developed further after the Muslim conquest in the seventh century CE. The city of Fez became an important religious and Torah learning center in Morocco, especially after the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal in the 15th century.

With the arrival of expelled Jews to Fez, serious problems arose which found their solutions through the enactment of regulations, as was customary among Spanish Jews. The halakhic scholars relied on ancient sources, renewed discussion of Torah verses, and known halakhic rules to innovate laws. In cases where problems couldn't be solved through existing sources, the sages used the authority granted to them by the Torah to establish and renew regulations. These regulations were meant to solve problems that arose from social and economic changes, and sometimes even added new commandments or prohibitions. The process of drafting regulations included gatherings of sages and community leaders, discussion, written formulation, and announcement in the synagogue. Public consent was a fundamental principle in establishing regulations, and in some cases, the Nagid (Jewish community leader) was included in their determination. Some regulations were time-limited, while others remained in effect for generations. In certain cases, physical or monetary punishments were imposed on those who violated the regulations.

The main collections of regulations are those of Fez, Meknes, and Sefrou. The Fez regulations, first compiled in 1698, served as the "Shulchan Aruch" (code of Jewish law) for Moroccan Jews for hundreds of years. The Meknes regulations, written between 1750-1822, differed from their predecessors in that they included regulations collected from various manuscripts. The Sefrou regulations, compiled in 1952, mainly included social regulations without significant halakhic innovation. After the establishment of the Chief Rabbinate Council in Morocco, new regulations were added to unify various laws and customs throughout Morocco.

The central topics addressed in Moroccan regulations covered diverse areas such as religious life preservation, women's status, Jewish-Gentile relations, morality and modesty, family life, taxes, consumer protection, the Land of Israel, and education.

Analysis of three central regulations - one dealing with daughters' inheritance, another limiting celebration expenses, and a third prohibiting the employment of young children in various jobs – reveals values of social justice, community solidarity, protection of the vulnerable, and the importance of education for the younger generation.

Through these numerous and diverse regulations, Moroccan sages succeeded in maintaining the community's unique character and social cohesion during complex periods of persecution, economic hardship, and confrontation with modernity. These regulations, which continued to develop until the early twentieth century, were unparalleled in any other Jewish communities worldwide (Amar, Mori Mordechai ben Meir & Amar, 2020b). With the departure of a significant portion of Moroccan Jews in the early 1960s, the community dwindled and ceased enacting regulations. An important and essential component in establishing regulations was public consent and acceptance of the regulation-makers' authority. Today, in the absence of rabbinical authority agreed upon by the entire public, it is no longer possible to use the method of enacting regulations within communities.

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Integration of Arab-Bedouin Minorities in the Israeli Education System

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Abstract

The integration of minority groups into Israeli society is necessary to maintain and reproduce the link between education and the country's economic and professional capacity. The attitude of the educational system towards the Arab-Bedouin community as part of Israeli society has been controversial for many years and has been evaluated by educational experts. The potential of learning and education as a means of advancing the Arab-Bedouin minority society is poorly reflected in the state's educational policy, and the contribution of its adaptation to the process of modernization and integration into the labor market has been insufficient. In this paper, we present an updated picture of the major changes in the development of the minority population, focusing on the Bedouin society and its civic-cultural integration process. It also examines the educational aspects of the interaction between investment in educational infrastructure and the exploitation of the economic and professional potential of the Bedouin community.

Keywords: Israeli Arab-Bedouins, Israel studies, social integration, minority studies.

1. Introduction – The social integration of Israel's minorities: the political dimension

The status of members of Arab society in Israel, including their personal and collective rights and obligations, was shaped under the conditions of the Arab-Israeli conflict that preceded the establishment of the Jewish state (AGBARIA & MUSTAFA & JABAREEN, 2014). In the early years of the Jewish state's existence, the political institutions decided that Palestinians who remained on its territory after the war would be citizens of the state, and that Palestinians who left Israel would not be allowed to return. In official documents, Israel is defined as the state of the Jewish people, which does not correspond to reality, as Jews make up only 75% of the citizens. The other 25% are Muslims - 17%, Christians - 1.9%, Druze - 1.8% and "others" - 4.3%: national, religious or ethnic minorities in Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the groups have undergone many changes (ABU–ASBA & FRESCO & ABU–NASRA, 2013; ARGOV, 2016). The desire to integrate minorities into the emerging Israeli society has been the subject of many statements by leaders and ruling parties but has not led to any discernible results. The author of the dissertation wants to justify his thesis: every minority group faces numerous difficulties, obstacles in its relationship with the majority society (ABU–ASBA & FRESCO & ABU–NASRA, 2013).

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Some difficulties are caused by discrimination. The Citizenship of Israel Law and the Law of Return define Israel as the state of the Jewish nation, whether living in Israel or not. This discriminates against minorities in Israel because the land is defined as belonging to those who can live elsewhere and not to those who live in the country (a relative of a Jew can immigrate to Israel, while a relative of an Arab or Christian cannot). State symbols, for example, do not allow minorities in Israel to feel part of the state (because an Arab or Druze would have a hard time singing about the "Jewish soul song" of the anthem or connecting to the "menorah" symbol). The scholar Al Hajj, addressing the subject of problematic relations with some state institutions, such as the Jewish Agency or the Jewish National Fund, whose land is sold to members of Jewish society to make the State of Israel as Jewish as possible, notes that this practice is a form of discrimination (AL-HAJJ, 2003). Generalizing such practices, we argue that the attitude of members of minorities in Israel towards the state, as well as within the groups themselves, can be problematic. (AYALON & SHAVIT, 2004).

Y. Jabareen and A. Agbaria in the paper: "Education on hold: Government policy and civic initiatives to promote Arab education" (AGBARIA, 2017), point out that many representatives of the Arab community want to know and speak Hebrew and want to integrate into Israeli society. At the same time, scholars acknowledge that members of this community have feelings of frustration with discrimination and national feelings that allow them to identify with Palestinians. The Bedouin are marked by loyalty to the state and enlistment in the army, difficult struggles with state authorities and the law over their living areas in the Negev, where high involvement in crime is observed. Druze and Circassians serve in the IDF, although they too often face discrimination and socioeconomic disparities from the majority Jewish population" (BLASS & SUSSMAN & TZUR, 2019). The author identifies the political motives of the majority population, the government, which is not interested in taking steps to integrate minority populations, including Bedouin society. One obvious reason is ideological, expressed by the statement: Israel is the home of the Jewish people.

Bedouin community land issue. According to Z. Bekerman and G. Horenczyk, the Bedouin of the Negev are the only Israeli Arab group that, despite being displaced from their original lands at the establishment of the state, despite being almost forcibly relocated to urban areas, still have considerable land ownership (BEKERMAN, 2008). It is a legal-political belonging that the state officially denies in principle but recognizes in practice. And yet, members of Bedouin society in the Negev (the southern region of Israel) are the only large Israeli group that can be said not to be defined as a community entitled to adequate living conditions. In this context, A. Efrati argues that since 1948 the Bedouin have been struggling not only to gain state recognition of their ownership of land, but also to receive government services like those offered to other Israelis, so that they can maintain community life, work, education and ordinary cultural life. And while the Bedouin struggle, all Israeli governments are constantly working to drive them off their lands and gather them into as few settlements as possible (EFRATI, 2017).

A. Agrabia in his monograph *Informal education in Palestinian society in Israel* analyses the Israeli reality, noting the economic inequality and missed opportunities for intergenerational mobility in the minority society, highlighting the Bedouin society. The scholar argues that by using appropriate actions, the governmental system can close the gap between the ideal of equal opportunities and the distribution of opportunities in practice. Although it seems over the years that this topic is urgent, the increasing economic gaps in Israel over the past three decades (1990-2020) have reduced the effective ability to provide equal opportunities in accessibility to education and fulfilment of peripheral potential, especially in Bedouin society (AGBARIA, 2017).

N. Naser Najjab in his paper "Palestinian education and the "logic of elimination" argues that Israeli governments exclude the Bedouin from their development plans, as if they were a group that Israeli society and economy do not need (NASER–NAJJAB, 2020). Those Bedouin

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living in unrecognized settlements exist in a kind of legal-political bubble. "These Israelis are forbidden to form permanent residences, they are denied the basic right to register their place of residence on their identity cards, they are excluded from local government plans, they are forbidden to exercise the basic political right to choose, including in local government, they are forbidden to receive government services, they are forbidden to exercise the basic right of home ownership, and in fact in this reality they receive educational services that are not anchored in a standardized curriculum similar to all groups in Israeli society (NASER–NAJJAB, 2020). In contrast, the Bedouin who have moved to the urban settlements that the government has planned for them live in a kind of political-economic bubble of their own: on the one hand, they lack the proper infrastructure systems and jobs that would allow them to conduct economic activity according to standards. to live like the nearby Jewish settlements; on the other hand, even recognized Bedouin settlements, as well as unrecognized ones, are generally not included in government development plans, both national and for the Negev region. Today, the Bedouin lack community resources for economic development and are low on the government's priorities. At the same time, the population of the Negev, which makes up about 25%, is a weak and fragmented population, with each group working to promote itself without cooperation with its neighbours. In such a situation, the Bedouin are the biggest losers, but the entire population of the Negev loses with them in the long run (SHAHOR & SIMONOVICH, 2021; SHMUELI & KHAMAISI, 2021) (GALILY & SCHWARTZ, 2018).

2. The religious dimension of discrimination

Y. Gabay noted that the State of Israel recognizes the freedom of worship of Arabs and Druze, their right to honour their holidays on time and in accordance with their decrees and rites. This right is reflected in the amended Hours of Work and Rest Law, which lists the holidays and important dates of all religions recognized by the state as days of rest (GABAY, 2009). And the Israeli Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1988 prohibits an employer from discriminating in employment on grounds of nationality or religion. The Ministry of Religious Services allocates budgets for the construction and maintenance of religious institutions and houses of worship (mosques and churches), but there is no equality in these budgets because Arabs receive only 2.8% of the ministry's budget. Marriages and divorces in Israel are governed by the religious laws and religious institutions of each religious group. Freedom of religious worship is reflected in the 1967 Law for the Protection of Holy Places. Economic aspects of discrimination and employment. One of the central points of contention, which some identify as the main variable causing discrimination in education policies, is the economics of discrimination (ARLOZOROV, 2016). The study: 'Employment Discrimination in Israel. A Differentiated approach", conducted by R. Hermon et al. in 2018, highlights discrimination against minorities in Israel (HERMON & PORAT & FELDMAN & KRICHLI–KATZ, 2018).

Scholars state that approximately 21.5% (2022 data) of the country's population are minorities, mainly members of Arab communities, the largest national minority (OECD, 2021). Members of this community suffer discrimination in various areas, including the labour market. H. Yahel has noted that beyond the profound general inequality, there is no dispute that discrimination against minorities also exists at all stages of the hiring, promotion and even firing process (YAHEL, 2021). V. Lavy does not dispute this statement but complements it with the results of the existing reality analysis of 2018, adding that occupational inequality is the main cause of poverty among the Arab population (LAVY, 2008).

According to him, the labour force participation rate among men - members of minorities in 2019 was 79% compared to 86% among Jewish men, and the labour force participation rate among minority women was only 37.1% compared to 76% among women in the Jewish community.

Table 1. Data sequence of the proportion of labour force participants 2018-2021

Year	Men's		Women's	
	Minorities	Jewish	Minorities	Jewish
2018	78%	85%	42%	77%
2019	79%	86%	37%	76%
2020	72%	86%	39%	77%
2021	73%	85%	39%	76%

Source: made by the author (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021; BOI, 2021)

The data presented in the table above allows us to see that the gaps are maintained, even if there are some positive changes in 2019, with a decrease in employment rates in the following years. The existing employment gaps support the inability of state institutions to develop competitive minority communities in the labour market. A similar situation is found in wages. G. Yair and other scholars, note that the issue of wage differentials is one of the most significant barriers to the advancement of minority employees, as having more children in families allows less disposable income to go to private education. Thus, cyclical gaps prevail from one generation to the next (YAIR & KHATTAB & BENAVOT, 2003). Figure 2.1 presents data on the gender wage gap in Jewish and minority society, 2017-2021.
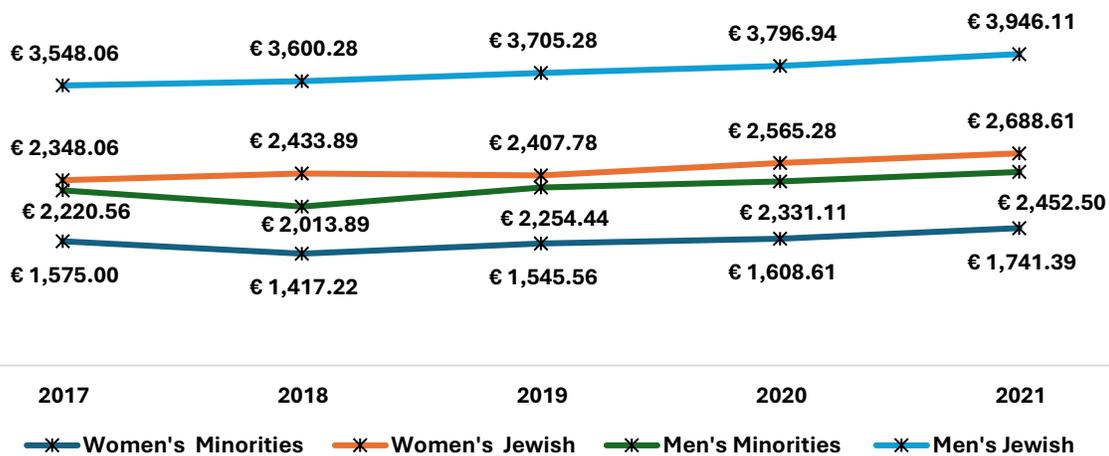

Source: made by the author (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021) (BOI, 2021)

Figure 1. Wage gaps Jewish and minority employees 2017-2021 (in Euro)

We note that the gap between female and male minority representatives in average years of schooling was about two years until the early 1990s, narrowed by 2010, and then was completely erased. The improvement in minority student achievement in the education system is both quantitative and qualitative. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics show that in the years 2000-2019, the number of students in Arab post-secondary education doubled from 95,000 in the 1999-2000 school year to 186,000 in the 2018-2019 school year (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021). M. Justman has argued that the application of the Compulsory Education Law up to grade 12 has reduced the dropout rate in Arab schools (JUSTMAN, 2014). The rate of increase in the number of students in Arab post-secondary education (96%) is very high compared to that in the Jewish sector (71%). This has contributed to the reduction in dropout rates, but most of this change is attributed to the increase in the population at the relevant ages, for example, in the years 2000-2018 we see an increase of 68% for ages 12-17 in the Arab minority compared to only 20% in Jewish society.

Physical infrastructure development. The gaps between the Arab and Jewish education systems and discrimination in education are not only reflected in budgets and school hours (KANTOLA & KETTUNEN, 2012). Another major issue reflecting these gaps is the state of infrastructure and physical conditions in educational institutions. Unlike the distribution of budgets, which was publicly exposed in 2015, information on physical infrastructure is not analysed within the Ministry of Education in an orderly manner and therefore information is made available to the public sporadically and partially. Despite the impact of physical infrastructure and facilities on student performance, violence and safety levels, especially in weaker sectors, the Ministry of Education does not appear to have orderly and clear procedures for the establishment of sports halls and facilities, computer labs, libraries and courtyard landscaping. Even when standards exist, they are not applied in practice (JUSTMAN, 2014). The 2018 TALIS - Teaching and Learning International Survey (Talis, 2018), reflecting the reality in Israel, is an international survey conducted by the OECD. The survey focused on teacher and principal evaluations, examined teachers' and principals' perceptions of teaching and learning, classroom teaching practices, and teacher professional development. Information was collected through questionnaires administered to teachers and principals in schools. The study revealed a gap in infrastructure in Arab education and Jewish education. Figure 2.2. below summarizes the main reports from principals on the lack of infrastructure affecting schools' ability to provide quality educational services.
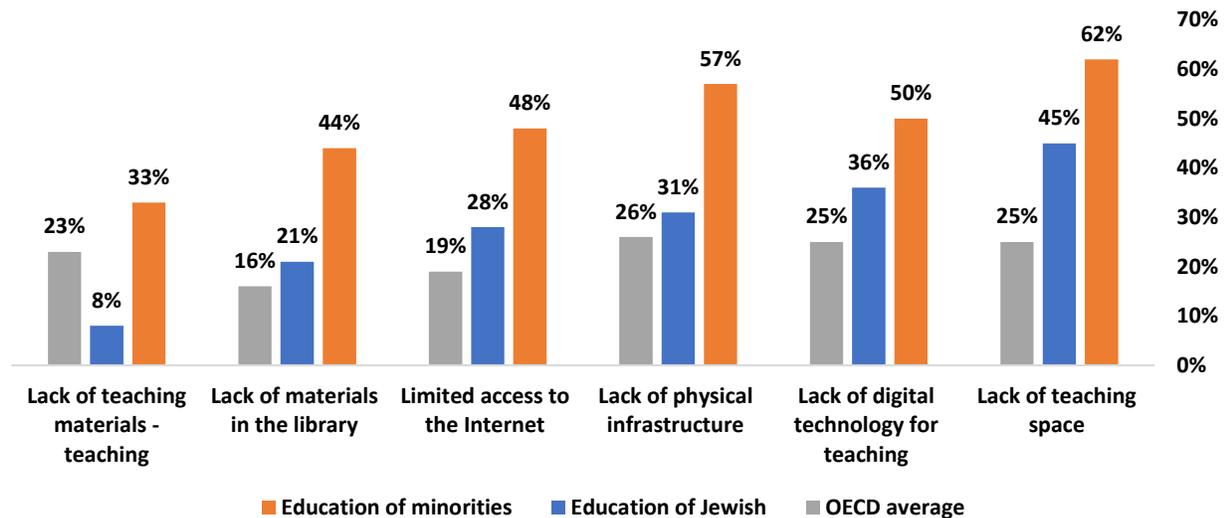
Source: made by the author (Talis, 2018)

Figure 2. Proportion of principals who reported a lack of resources
that impairs the school's ability to provide quality teaching (in %, 2020)

The analysis of the results of the study, reflected allows us to observe that principals in Arab and other minority education face several difficulties, among which are: lack of teaching spaces, physical infrastructure, possibilities of using digital technology. In general, the number of teachers indicating the need to improve school buildings and facilities and to invest in ICT is higher in Arab education compared to Jewish education. Interestingly, Hebrew education is lower compared to the OECD average on most indicators, a figure that explains the differences in educational outcomes between the OECD and Israeli averages. The situation is even more difficult in two regions that suffer from gaps in all areas of education: the Negev and East Jerusalem. In the Bedouin settlements of the Negev in general, and in the unrecognised villages in particular, there is a land dispute between the population and the state, and this conflict has a direct impact on the construction of educational institutions. In 35 unrecognised villages with a population of around 70,000 by 2021, there are only 10 primary schools and not even one post-primary school. Pupils must walk miles or commute, often crossing country roads, to reach the nearest school. The

expensive transportation system complicates school attendance in the Bedouin regional councils in the Negev, burdens the education system in the regional councils (SAIF & HADDAD & CHAI, 2021).

Quality of teaching. Referring to the quality of teaching and other educational services, H. Super Forerman et al. note that the quality of teaching in the Israeli education system in general, and in the Arab education system in particular, is declining (SUPER–FOREMAN & EYAL & HASSAN-DAHER & FRENKEL, 2016). S. Smuha in the paper, "Do not break the tools: Arab-Jewish Relations Index in Israel 2015" argues that the relatively low quality of teaching in Israel is attributed to the many hours of teacher work, a high ratio of face-to-face teaching hours compared to the total number of working hours (including professional preparation, making lesson plans, grading tests and homework, etc.), crowded classrooms, and lack of adequately trained teachers (SMUHA, 2016). In addition, some of the findings show that the education system cannot attract quality staff, as the salaries of entry-level teachers are lower than the national average and among the lowest in OECD countries (OECD, 2019). Researchers S. Svirsky and N. Dagan - Buzaglo (SVIRSKY & DAGAN-BUZAGLO, 2009). and S. Friedman (FRIEDMAN, 2016). consider that the quality of teaching is the most important factor in assessing the quality of learning and its long-term effects. In addition, studies published by the Mofet Institute, elucidate the content of the interdependent relationship between teacher professional development and teaching quality (Mofet Institute, 2021).

The quality of teaching is important in the assessment of learning; studies show that the impact of the teaching environment on the quality of educational provision is greater among pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and therefore investment in them is of primary significance (PISA Test, 2021). Studies examining the effect of reducing class size have also shown that this step helps to improve students' cognitive and emotional skills and future academic achievement, particularly among younger students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, the level of teaching and teacher preparation is of paramount importance in Arab education and in minority communities, where most students come from low socio-economic backgrounds. A 2019 Bank of Israel survey showed that the level of mathematics and reading teachers in Israel is low both compared to other OECD countries and compared to the general population in Israel (ranked 29th out of 34) (BOI, 2021), as assessed by the International Skills Survey - PIAAC (PIAAC Israel, 2021) (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021). Some indicators show that the quality of teaching and teachers in Arab education is below the level of teachers in Jewish education. However, in recent years, there has been an improvement in at least some indicators. This is the data reflected in the TALIS study (Talis, 2018), according to which: 58% of principals in Arab education institutions reported that the lack of licensed teachers hindered the school's ability to provide quality teaching. In Jewish education, such institutions account for -29%. For comparison, the OECD average is 21%.

Quality educational services cannot be provided in the absence of qualified teachers, a statement supported by 47% of those surveyed. 51% of teachers employed in Arab education work in schools where at least 30% of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. For comparison, 29% of principals in Jewish education reported a shortage of qualified teachers teaching students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The issue of the profile of teachers in a minority society is a major issue against which society's ability to sustain and develop the quality of teaching can be judged. According to the Meitzav data (Indices of School Effectiveness and Growth) tests, the rate of teachers in Arab education who reported that the training process prepared them well for teaching was higher than their rate in Jewish education. The proportion of teachers in Arabic education who reported participating in professional development activities was higher than their proportion in Hebrew education (ABU–ASBA & FRESCO & ABU–NASRA, 2013). In addition, A. Argov in the paper: 'The Development of Education in Israel and Its Contribution to Long-Term Growth' points out that a significant proportion of teachers in Arab education value the teaching

profession as a stable career that provides job security and adequate income) (ARGOV, 2016). This figure explains, at least in part, the high demand for the teaching profession in Arab society and the low annual dropout rate of Arab education teachers.

The significance of this analysis for achieving the objectives of the research is important because of the definition of factors that can contribute through their synergy to the improvement and development of minority education. Statistical data from recent years show that the grades in baccalaureate exams and psychometric test of future teachers have been decreasing. Figure 2.3 shows the grades of teaching candidates in the three main sectors: Jewish society, Jewish-religious society and Arab society (minorities).
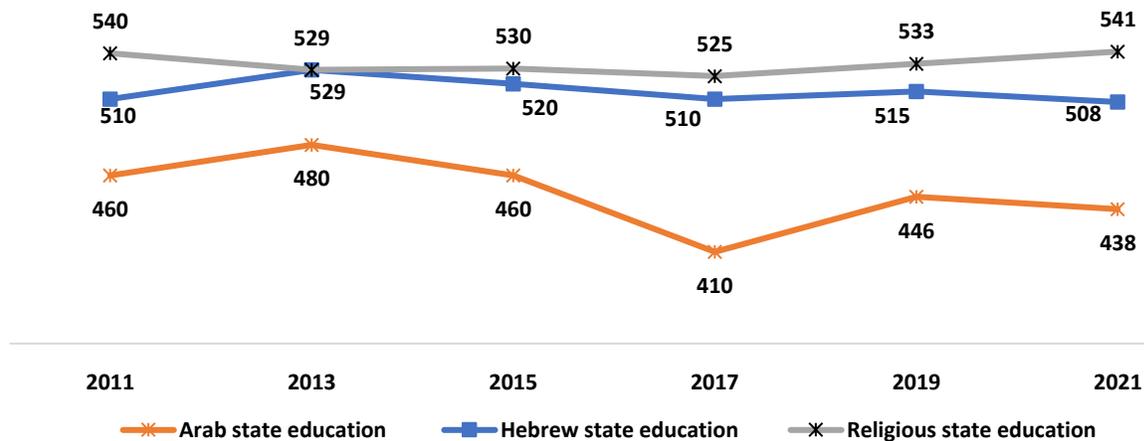
Source: made by the author (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021) (CHE, 2021)

Figure 3. Scores of candidates for teaching from the three sectors 2011–2021

Figure 2.3 informs us that in the years 2011 - 2015 there was a steady increase in the psychometric score of first year students in academic colleges of education in Arab education (from 460 to 530), but since 2015 there has been a steep decline. There was a moderate decrease in state Jewish education from 2011 to 2013, but again there was a moderate decrease, while state religious education has seen an increase in the last three years after a consistent decrease in 2011. Today, the gap between first-year students in Arab education and their peers in Jewish state education is 70 points; the gap between them and their peers in state religious education is 103.

National and international test results. The Israeli Ministry of Education, like other OECD countries, assesses the achievement of primary and secondary school students using the Meitzav (School Achievement and Growth Indices) tests in which fifth and eighth graders are examined every year since 2008 (Israeli State Comptroller, 2021). One test examines students' cognitive abilities, and the results are intended to help the Ministry of Education in monitoring national trends. The Meitzav tests examine scores in several subjects, including mother tongue (Hebrew in Hebrew education and Arabic in Arabic education), English, mathematics and science, and technology (for eighth graders only). Examining and analysing the test results at minority community institutions in Israel, one can see gaps that have been large, but have narrowed over the years, and in some subjects, they remain until recent years (2018). Perpetuating gaps in education will lead to social, economic, and employment gaps in the future, which will naturally affect Israel's national economic product. Figures 2.4-2.7 show data from the main exams.
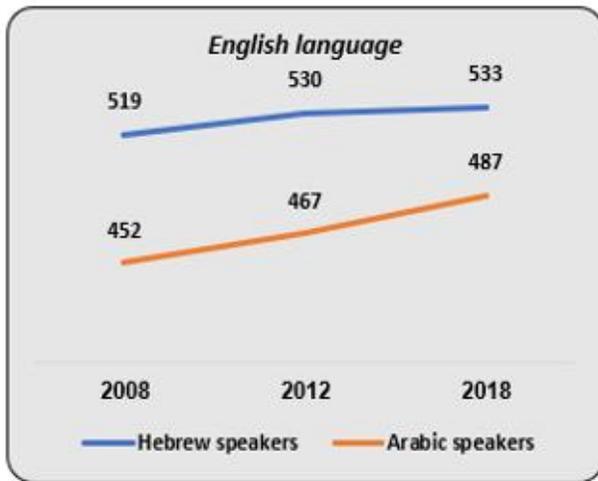
Figure 2.4. International results in
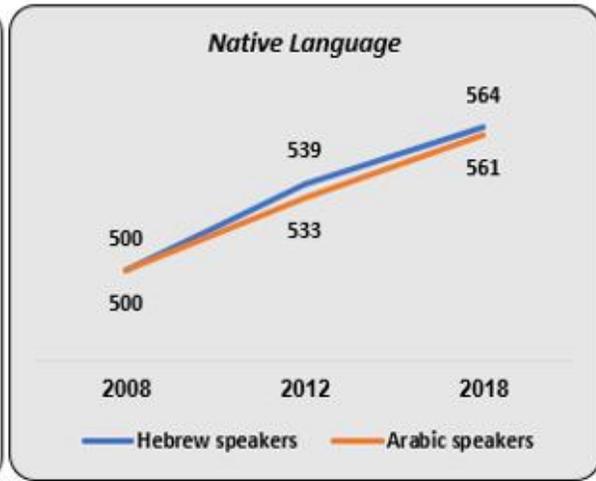English language

Figure 2.5. International results in
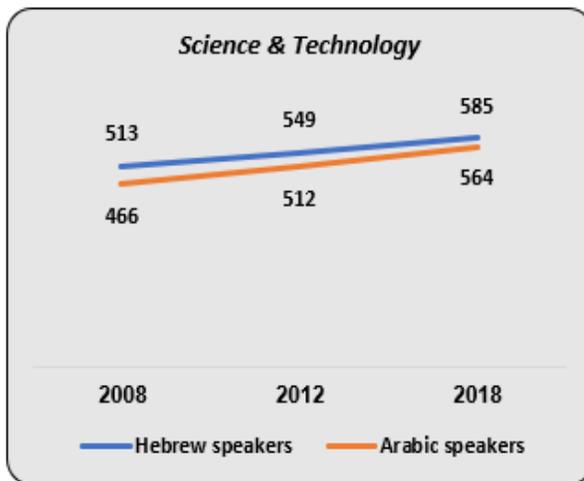Native language

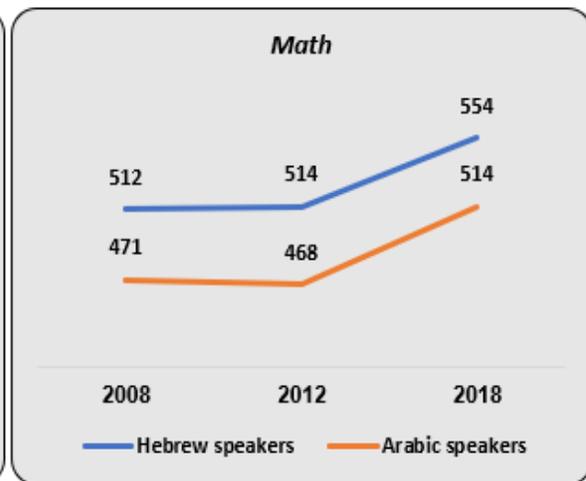Figure 2.6. International results in
Science Technology

Figure 2.7. International results in Math

Source: made by the author (PISA, 2021)

The figures show a noticeable trend of improvement in all areas of knowledge among both Arabic speakers and Hebrew learners. The improvement in indicators characteristic of the Arab population is greater in all domains, so that while in 2008 there were large gaps between Hebrew and Arabic speakers in mathematics and English, by 2018 the gap in English had completely closed and in mathematics it had narrowed considerably. However, there is still a real gap between the two populations in this area. Unlike mathematics and English, in a mother tongue test the method of standardisation is not uniform and therefore it is difficult to compare test results in the two languages. However, even in language the improvement among Arabic speakers is greater than the improvement among Hebrew speakers in the years in question - 92 points among Arabic speakers compared to 42 points among Hebrew speakers. Thus, a comparison of the Meitzav test scores of the Arab population and the scores of the Jewish population shows that the gaps between the populations have narrowed over the years. But the data show gaps still exist, especially in English, math, science and technology. Another reality is found in the statistics on

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students' socioeconomic status and its impact on test scores. When the socio-economic status of students is monitored, it becomes clear that in most subject areas there are gaps between populations.

The international tests that Israeli children take are PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). The test used in this investigation, conducted in 2018, shows that the gaps have reached their widest. A worrying situation concerns the data on the three literacy domains: among Arabic speakers, the difficulty rate was 53%, compared to 12% among Hebrew speakers. Israel is also notable for the differences in scores between students in the Arabic and Hebrew education systems and between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds (PISA, 2021; Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021). The test results show very large gaps between the two population groups. Recall that since 2015 there has been a significant drop in minority grades compared to Hebrew speakers and, of course, a larger gap compared to OECD countries. The test scores are seen as benchmarks in judging the success that students will score in the future: in academia, in employment and their integration into society, and indirectly, they will contribute to the resilience of the economy, economic growth, employment and increased labour productivity. In this context, the Bank of Israel has stated that low PISA test scores, as well as large gaps between students, harm the economy and the resilience of the state.

3. Integration of the Bedouin community in the Israeli education system

The Bedouin population is part of the Arab-Muslim community, citizens of the State of Israel since 1954 (ALVAKILI, 2021). The academic I. Abu Saad in his work: "Palestinian education in the Israeli settler state: divide, rule and control," informs us that Bedouins constitute about 35% of the total population in the Negev district (southern Israel) (ABU-SAAD, 2019). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021), the growth rate of the Bedouin population is high compared to the Jewish society and even higher compared to the growth rate of the Arab and Muslim population, about 7.3% in 2019. The Central Bureau provides a statistical forecast for 2035, in which it indicates a significant increase in the Bedouin population in the Negev, which will be around 370-500 thousand people, depending on the rate of population decline. In each of the CBS projections for the years 2009-2059, the minority group with the highest growth rate is the Arab population, and within this, the Muslim population in the south, which is how the Bedouin society in the Negev is identified. Yeshiv, Kleiner - Kassir (KLEINER–KASSIR, 2012).

The Negev region currently includes one city, six towns and two regional councils (the municipality concentrates eleven additional recognised settlements) in which approximately 76% of the Bedouin live. The rest of the Bedouin population in the Negev lives in unrecognised settlements. Scholars A. Gardner and E. Marx point out that many Bedouin parents have realised in recent years that the key to social and occupational mobility is investing in good quality education for their children. This social perspective has already been realized in other minority societies in Israel and among policy makers. Therefore, in the decade between 2010 and 2020 the number of Bedouin students increased from 1,153 to 2,632 (GARDNER & MARX, 2000). However, the Bedouin education system still faces many challenges and difficulties (SIINER, 2014). In this context, M. Nasasra and E. BELLIS argue that currently only 22% of graduate students are eligible for the baccalaureate degree (compared to 78% in the Jewish population and 68% in other Arab groups) (NASER–NAJJAB, 2020). At the same time, the Central Bureau of Statistics shows that 29.3% of 17-year-olds are not enrolled in any form or level of education (WEININGER & WEISBLAI, 2017). Most of the school dropouts are in the transition between lower secondary school and higher grades. Dozens of students do not return to class the following year for a variety of reasons, such as learning gaps and difficulties, frequent absences, unresponsiveness to social and emotional difficulties, low parental expectations, and a desire to

seek occupational opportunities that help the family economy. Generalising the results of the statistical data analysis, the author stresses that it is essential to refer to Bedouin society separately and to focus the studies on the actual situation of the Arab community in the structure of Israeli society.

The Central Bureau of Statistics consistently classifies all Bedouin settlements in the Negev into the lowest socio-economic groups (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021). A. Saif, N. Haddad Haj Yanya, A. Chai in the paper: "Integration of Bedouin society in high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries - a summarizing report" claim that the standard of living in all recognized Bedouin settlements and regional councils is very low - all infrastructures of electricity, water, sewage, health, recreation and education are maintained at a low level or do not exist. We observe a significant shortage of standards and professional manpower in the areas of local authority responsibility (SAIF & HADDAD & CHAI, 2021). Y. Harpaz explains that the standard of living in non-state-recognised settlements is even lower, as there is no state intervention in the physical and human infrastructure there. The rapid growth rate of the Bedouin population results in a high level of youth compared to the general population in Israel (HARPAZ, 2011). According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021) combined with data from the Ministry of the Interior, approximately half of the population are children and teenagers aged 0-14, compared to only a quarter of the Jewish population in the Beer-Sheva district, the southern metropolis. According to Ministry of Interior data (Ministry of Interior in Israel, 2021), the high rate of children leads to a low rate of funding and public spending. In addition, poverty among the Bedouin population in the Negev is up to four times higher than among the Jewish population in Israel. Poverty signals that the Bedouin authorities' income from taxes is low and spending on public services is high.

4. Bedouin education system

I. A. Krakara explains that, as citizens of the state, Bedouins are entitled to benefit from its legislation, including education (KRAKARA, 2018). Despite equality by law, we observe significant gaps between Bedouins and the rest of the population in Israel on the issue of access to education (JABARIN & AGBARIA, 2010). The gaps are observed in the participation rate of Bedouin students in the education system. According to the 2017 report of the Israeli Knesset (Israeli parliament) Information and Research Centre, entitled "Education in Bedouin society in the Negev - update (WEISBLAI, 2017), in the 2020-2021 study year, 80,543 Bedouin students, residing in the Negev, studied in the education system, including 22,211 students in kindergartens and 42,361 students in elementary and high schools. Educational institutions serving Bedouin residents of the Negev are divided - 746 kindergartens, 147 elementary schools (some have grades I - VIII and some have grades I - IX) and 49 high schools.

Table 2. Bedouin students and institutes recognized settlements in the Negev 2020-2021

City	Students				Institutes			
	Pre-primary	Elementary School	High School	**Total**	Pre-primary	Elementary School	High School	**Total**
Rahat	6,115	9,359	3,650	**19,124**	206	31	9	**246**
Neve Midbar	3,612	7,492	1,941	**13,045**	122	26	7	**155**
El Kasum	3,083	6,224	1,752	**11,059**	109	25	7	**141**
Tel Sheva	1,891	3,189	1,340	**6,420**	65	12	5	**82**
Hora	1,775	3,434	1,778	**6,987**	64	14	7	**85**
Araara	1,492	3,390	1,445	**6,327**	47	11	5	**63**
Kseife	1,680	3,949	1,682	**7,311**	53	11	4	**68**
Lakia	1,387	2,680	1,075	**5,142**	43	9	2	**54**
Segev Shalom	1,176	2,644	1,308	**5,128**	37	8	3	**48**
Total	**22,211**	**42,361**	**15,971**	**80,543**	**746**	**147**	**49**	**942**

Source: made by the researcher (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021; CHE, 2021)

The findings in Table 2.2 indicate that the number of students is high compared to the supply of Bedouin educational buildings and institutes. The author, analysing the data presented in different sources, notes that the gaps are expressed in the participation rate of Bedouin students in the education system. For example, the number of students participating in secondary education in each settlement is decreasing due to the lack of cadres supervising studies in unrecognized settlements. At older ages, Bedouin children in the Negev tend to drop out of school at 2.6 times the national average (HADDAD HAJ YAHYA & VERODNITZKY, 2018). A. Handin & D. Ben Rabbi point out: the potential for Bedouin students to drop out of education is the highest among all other minority populations in Israel. By stealth, the "obvious" result of all this is that the average number of years of study in the Bedouin sector is significantly lower than in the Arab (other minority) or Jewish sector. And it was only 9.5 years of study in 2010-2012. Hidden dropout is an emotional/cognitive/ behavioural disconnect (or a combination), so students are physically at the learning institute, but do not take part in its work and do not benefit from the expected outcome of being there (HANDIN & BEN RABBI, 2016).

Academic skills of Bedouin students (undergraduate and graduate). A further expression of the gaps can be seen in the level of performance of Bedouin students compared to non-Bedouin students. S. Madhala - Brick argues that Bedouin students' grades on the MSEGI (Measures of School Efficiency and Growth indexes in Israel) tests are consistently lower than all other students in Israel (MADHALA-BRICK, 2015). Despite the relative increase in grades since 2016, we cannot indicate a clear and consistent improvement among Bedouin students due to fluctuation in performance over the years (CHE, 2021). Furthermore, O. Tirosh and Y. Eyal add that we can assume that Bedouin students' performance on international PISA tests is also extremely low (TIROSH & EYAL, 2018). Although the results of these tests, as published by the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education, do not separate the scores of Bedouin society in the Negev from Arab society, there is a breakdown that links students' scores to their social, cultural and economic conditions. O. Morgenstern et al. joins the discussion, noting that students who come from social, cultural and economic backgrounds with few opportunities receive the lowest test scores (MORGENSTERN & PONTO & ASHER, 2016). Since all the settlements of the Bedouin society in the Negev are at the bottom of the socio-economic scale in Israel, we can assume that the scores of Bedouin students are the lowest (RUDNITZKY, 2015). On the topic of discussion M. Tzuk argues that the gaps between populations are also expressed in the rate of those who are eligible for the baccalaureate degree, and even more so in the rate of those who are eligible for the baccalaureate degree who meet university acceptance standards (TZUK, 2016). In the same context, Y. Yaish reminds that baccalaureate exam grades and psychometric exam grades are the two main criteria for acceptance to most faculties in higher education institutions in Israel (YAISH, 2015).

Therefore, a matriculation diploma is a crucial factor for students who are interested in studying for an academic degree. There is an additional gap observed among Bedouin minority students in terms of their participation and success in matriculation exams. In the 2014-2015 study year, the rate of those eligible for the matriculation diploma among students studying in Bedouin settlements was 38%-57%, while the national data was 73%-94%. In addition, the rate of Bedouin students who are eligible for matriculation degrees that meet university acceptance standards is even lower, at 20%-39%, which is below the national average in Israel, which is 79%-95% (WEISS, 2017). Thus, the rate of Bedouin students was extremely low in the 2015-2016 academic year, accounting for 6.2%-9.4%, at ages 20-29 in Bedouin settlements for the bachelor's degree (ABU-SAAD, 2019). Compared to the average Bedouin in Israel which was 14% [268]. Figure 2.8 shows the baccalaureate degree eligibility rate among all 12th graders in 2013 and 2020 by education sector.
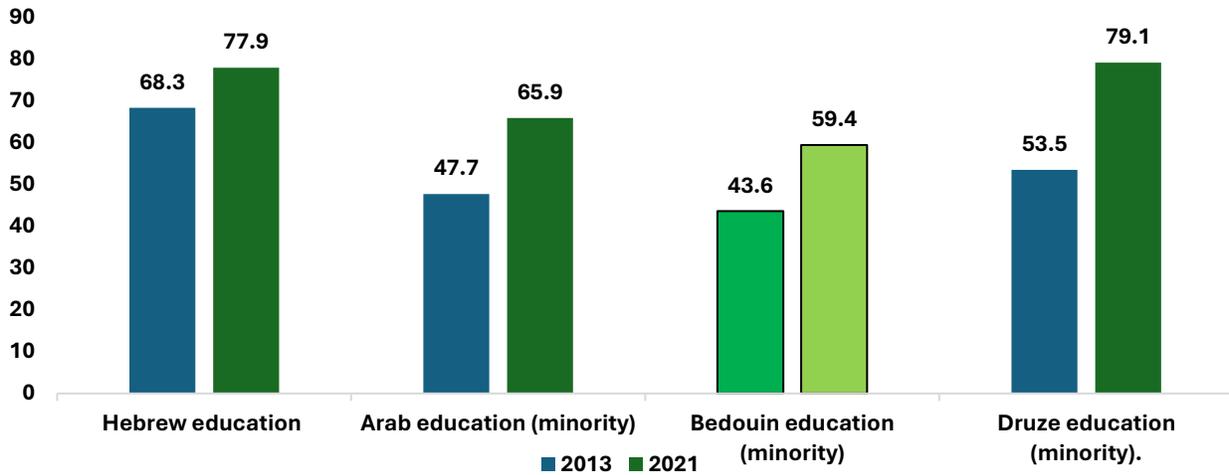
Source: made by the researcher (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021)

Figure 8. Eligibility rate for matriculation diploma (by %) among 12th grade 2013 – 2021

The data indicate that there is a national trend of increasing enrolment eligibility rates:

1.   Students in Druze education had the strongest increase between 2013 and 2021, from 53.5% in 2013 to 79.1% in 2021 (on average), i.e. an increase of 25.6% (even higher than the data for Jewish education). This change is partly related to a program operated by the "YEHOLOT" association in most Druze high schools since 2010.

2. In Arab education, despite the significant improvement in eligibility for enrolment, we note an increase of 18.2%. In the period described, the eligibility rate is low compared to Druze and Jewish education.

3.   Eligibility rates for enrolment in the Bedouin education system are in line with their achievement on the SEGM (Measures of School Effectiveness and Growth) tests and lower compared to other minorities and compared to Jewish education. Note that there was some jump in 2013 from 43.6% and an increase of 15.8% to 2021 (59.4).

5. Technology education in the Bedouin community

Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Education over the last decade to direct students towards technological matriculation courses, we are seeing a sharp increase in the number of students from the minority population (especially students) in general and Bedouin students in particular. D.F. Shmueli and R. Khamaisi in the article: "Bedouin communities in the Negev: Models for planning the unplanned d" draw attention to the results of the structural reform of technological-vocational education, initiated in 2006 - about 40% of high schools teach for technological matriculation in 25 courses of study (SHMUELI & KHAMAISI, 2021). Since 2006 there is a sharp increase among Arab students, while in the Bedouin sector there is an increase of 248% and 190% in the Druze sector. M. Nasasra & E. Bellis note that in the Arab education sectors, in gender segmentation, unlike in Hebrew education, the rate of girls in technological education is higher than the rate of boys (NASASRA & BELLIS, 2020). Ministry of Education data indicate that in high-tech education, the rate of students eligible for the matriculation diploma in Arab and Druze education is about 90% (compared to 74% in Bedouin education). This rate is like Jewish state education, although the socio-economic background of Arab students in higher technology courses is lower than that of Jewish students. Even in comparison to the eligibility rates of matriculation in the theoretical course, the technological course is much higher. However, it

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should be noted that among Bedouin and other minority students, in the medium course, and even more so in the low course, the baccalaureate degree eligibility rate is much lower, both compared to the number of Jewish and compared to Arab minority theoretical education students.

Psychometric testing and integration into higher education. According to data from the Council for Higher Education [CHE, 2021] in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel (WEININGER & WEISBLAI, 2017), there is an improvement in eligibility for matriculation rates and quality of diplomas, and the gap between the Bedouin (other minority) population and Jews, especially among girls, is narrowing, but the results on psychometric exams are slowly decreasing, but they exist. Psychometric exam results and test scores clearly indicate the Arab population's desire to integrate into higher education institutions, as well as the barriers that complicate it (AGBARIA, 2017). The 2018 Arabic psychometric exam rate was 33.6% for all minorities. Specialists in the field point out that in a decade, 2008-2018, their rate increased by about 5%. It can also be seen that the examination rate of the Arab population was higher than its proportion in the population structure - about 22%. According to M. Al Hajj "this rate is not only due to a higher desire to be accepted into higher education institutions, but also to a very high rate of candidate return, about half of the exams, compared to about one third among Jews. Comparing Arabic exam grades with Hebrew test grades, it is clear why Arabic speakers tend to repeat the exam several times (AL-HAJJ, 2003).

Research conducted in 2019 by the National Centre for Testing and Evaluation [nite], which is in charge of the psychometric exam, indicated that there are, in addition to gender and language group, variables are crucial in determining the score: (1) economic status; (2) the cost of the exam preparation course; (3) father and mother's education. The candidate's socio-economic background also has a significant influence on his/her chances of getting good marks. Because of the significant gaps between the Bedouin population (and the Arab population in general) and the Jewish population in terms of their economic status and gaps in education (especially among adults), it is obvious. Young Bedouin, for example, find it difficult to achieve a sufficient score on the psychometric test.

Another study by the National Centre for Testing and Evaluation informs us that the reading time of Arabic speakers is longer than the reading time of Hebrew speakers, even when controlling for cognitive and socioeconomic variables (BOI, 2021). In addition, there have been claims over the years that the exam is culturally and gender biased, such that the proportion of weak-group applicants whose members are accepted into universities is lower relative to the proportion accepted if the exception was based on a criterion that is culturally unbiased. The psychometric exam is supposed to be an objective filtering mechanism for higher education in Israel, it is a barrier for the periphery population whose openness data is poor and leads to the perpetuation of existing gaps and even widens it.

Integrating the Bedouin community into higher education. The development of higher education in Bedouin society in Israel is one of the challenges facing the community and the institutions of the State of Israel. About this writes H. Yahel who argues: the Bedouin society in the Negev is one of the communities facing many challenges in various fields that influence their ability to integrate into systems important for building a resilient society (YAHEL, 2021). Integrating young people into the labour market and higher education institutions is one of them. D. Levi in the article: 'Integration of Bedouins in Higher Education' Pilot Assessment "Gate to the Academy" highlights six main reasons why members of the Bedouin community do not fully integrate into higher education, making it difficult for them to integrate further into the workforce. These are:

1. Many Bedouin face a language barrier, with poor knowledge of Hebrew, which makes it difficult for them to integrate into the education system, particularly

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university education. In addition, many Bedouin also have difficulties communicating in English.

2. The cultural aspect of Bedouin integration is analysed based on the liberal approach, which recognises cultural gaps between Bedouin and Jewish students, which sometimes cause distance between the two groups and prevent optimal integration.

3. Lack of family support. Bedouin students find it difficult to cope with university life because they have not been encouraged to continue their studies.

4. Conditions for registration. Some high school students cannot take university entrance exams because their matriculation average is low, or they are not eligible for the degree.

5. Geographical distance. In most cases, the Bedouin population lives relatively far away from universities, so young Bedouin cannot study in higher education institutions.

6. Economic difficulties. Many families cannot pay tuition fees and do not see this as a necessity for them, especially for women [193, P.18].

Although over the last 15 years we have seen a real increase in the number of Bedouin community members taking part in admissions to higher institutions, there is still a gap between the majority and minority groups in access to higher education. For example, in 2009, approximately 94% of the Bedouin population who had a high school diploma, i.e. met the university admission requirements, were admitted to higher education institutions. For comparison, in the Jewish population the rate is 83% (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021) (Ministry of Population, Immigration and Authorities in Israel, 2021). The statistics allow us to observe that the gap between Jews and Arabs (and Bedouins) is narrowing in the younger generation, so it is not surprising that the gap between Bedouins aged 25-34 and academically educated Jews is 10.4%, while the gap is 21% in the 35–64-year-old Bedouins and Jews (the older generation). According to the Council for Higher Education (CHE, 2021), in the 2018-2019 academic year, there were approximately 0.7% Bedouins (17.7% minorities in academic education) of all undergraduate students, a rate that is closer to their proportion in the population (3.2% Bedouins and 21% of all minorities). However, the rate of Bedouin students at master's and doctoral level is much lower, constituting 0.2-0.3% of all Israeli students (CHE, 2021) (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021). The integration of Bedouin society members is increasing especially in colleges (for teaching training and academic colleges), and less in research universities.

Figure 2.9 shows the evolution and numerical withdrawal of Bedouin graduates in colleges, universities and teaching colleges between 2007 and 2021 academic years.
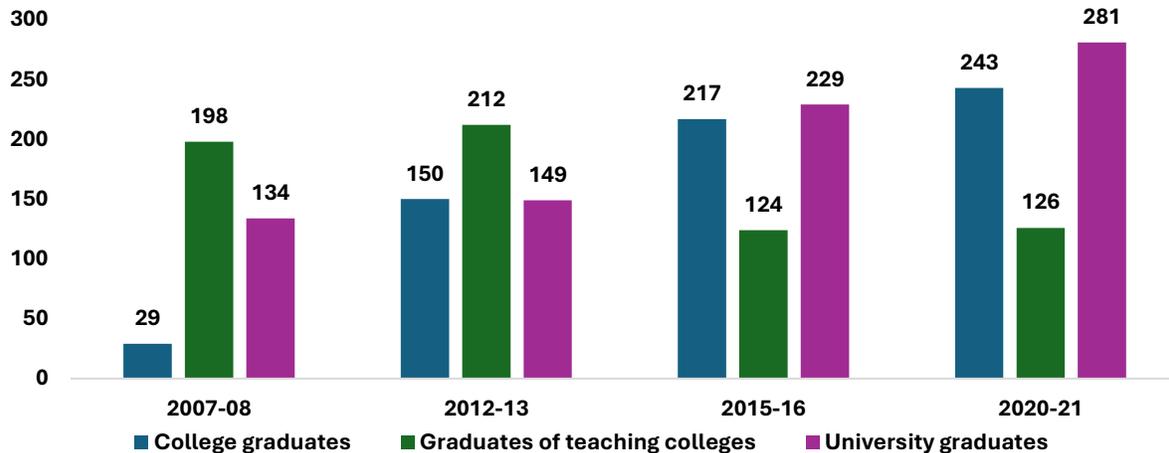
Figure 9. The number of Bedouin graduates in each
higher education framework academic years – 2007- 2021

Analysing the data in Figure 2.10, the author observes that the number of college graduates (134 in 2007 vs. 281 in 2021) is increasing, while the number of graduates of educational institutions, especially those who will go into teaching, is decreasing (198 in 2007 vs. 126 in 2021). In addition, the number of college graduates is increasing, but still in small numbers compared to other minority groups and the Jewish population. This trend of transition to studies in academic colleges and universities is welcomed. We also mention the importance of teaching studies for teachers, which together with the presence of other factors could change the situation considerably for the better. Enrolling Bedouin in universities is an existential necessity resulting also from the understanding that, Bedouin family can ensure the conditions of a decent life, subsistence and welfare, will have to master the secrets of the professions in demand in the 21st century, mainly STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) professions (RUDNITZKY, 2015).

The research data justify the conclusion: the gaps are narrowing, but in addition to the various barriers, the issue of choosing study paths is a complicated challenge for young Bedouin. Indeed, the author describes the orientation of students towards educational and economic directions, pointing out that there is a "long way" to go before the graduates of educational institutions can enter the labour market. Approximately 20% of all Bedouin graduates from universities and colleges in the year of study 2020-2021 received the diploma of young specialist in the field of education and teacher training, the rest graduated from universities or academic colleges. A relatively small number of Bedouin graduates chose other fields, such as social sciences, medicine and paramedical professions, STEM professions, architecture, law and agriculture. The results of the full data analysis of the number and percentage of Bedouin graduates by learning subjects and educational institutions in all degrees and in bachelor's and master's degrees separately are reflected in Figure 2.11. We observe that in both universities and colleges in Israel, the three most common learning subjects among Bedouin graduates in the period 2020-2021 (Figure 2.11) are. (2) general humanities, (3) foreign languages, world literature and regional studies (multidisciplinary), which are not studied in colleges and are the second most common subject of study in universities. Figure/circular diagram 2.10 shows the distribution of training profession in higher education in Bedouin society during 2015-2021.

Analysis of this data allows us to provide a clear picture of a growing number of students studying professions that will not necessarily become occupations. Professions, for example, characteristic of academic fields, such as humanities and social sciences account for 37% (more than one third of graduates). Employees in these fields are expected to "develop"

professional, economic skills, a goal that is unattainable due to the presence of various circumstances, including occupational discrimination against minorities in general and the Bedouin minority in particular. The author's ideas on this subject will be elucidated in another section of the paper.

6. Informal education system

Since the mid-20th century, there has been a growing global interest in informal education, both at the research and public policy levels (SHAVIT, 2015). Y. Reiter and A. Cohen argue that informal education is characterized by freedom and an atmosphere of enjoyment, peer connections, institutional flexibility, and curricula, mainly composed of experiences. Informal education allows individuals to have a spontaneous and original expression that formal education does not necessarily allow (REITER & COHEN, 2012). A. Rudnitzky in his work: "The Arab citizens of Israel at the beginning of the twenty-first century" explains that the organizational flexibility of informal education and the programs it offers respond to the needs, values and traditions of many populations or communities (RUDNITZKY, 2014). Not surprisingly, the importance of informal education and its positive influence, especially among marginalized populations, has a clear recognition by institutions and research around the world (BEN- DAVID, 2010; BEN-PERETZ, 2001; BLASS, 2015). In this context, we recall that the Report of the National Academy of Sciences in Israel, highlighted the large gaps between the level of development of informal education in Arab society and its level in Jewish society (CHE, 2021). The gaps in educational achievement in formal education are largely explained because of socio-economic gaps. The report of the Taub Center for Social Policy Research in Israel (Taub Center, 2018), which examined the socio-economic composition of students in the different streams of education from 2004 to 2020, indicated that there is a significant improvement in the economic status of Bedouin students. In 2004, 54% of Bedouin students were in the three lowest deciles (1-3) and 32% were in the four middle deciles (4-7).

In 2020, there were fewer Bedouin students in the lower deciles, about -38%, and their share in the middle deciles increased to 44%. In fact, according to 2020 data, there is almost no difference between the share of students from all Arab education institutions (including Bedouin) in the middle deciles (44%) and the share of Jewish students in the state education system in these deciles. The large gap between the top three deciles (7-10) - 9% of Bedouin students (and 18% of other minorities) are in these deciles, compared to 45% of Jewish students. Y. Gabay notes that the gaps were expressed in the number and quality of activities, and the significant shortage of physical infrastructure in Arab settlements (sports fields, community centres and buildings for youth activities) (GRUBER, 2017). Furthermore, researchers: N. Blass, N. Sussman & S. Tzur in the study: "Segregation of students in elementary and middle schools" note that the reality in the Bedouin sector, differs more radically in all the mentioned manifestations (BLASS & SUSSMAN & TZUR, 2019). The observed gaps have an explanation: the huge gap in infrastructure and technological level between the Jewish society and the Bedouin community. Scholars also highlight cultural differences, justifying the need for education adapted to social and cultural issues.

Informal education, which operates outside school hours, is the area where the gap between Jewish and Bedouin society is widest. The Israeli Ministry of Education's SEGM (Measures of School Effectiveness and Growth - part of the requirements of the OECD educational organisation) test of the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education confirmed this situation. The 2017 test showed a significant gap in the participation of children and teenagers in leisure activities, it is a gap of 17% in elementary school, 26% in theoretical high school and 22% in high school. Further analysis indicates that the percentage of participation in Arab society is even lower (HANDIN & BEN RABBI, 2016). N. Jabarin and A. Agrabia in the paper:

"Education on hold: Government policy and civic initiatives to promote Arab education in Israel" explain that in state institutions, and especially in the Ministry of Education, it is recognized that formal education is a lever for the integration of the Arab population in the sectors of the national economy, in the future labour market, in society in general. Those responsible for the development and implementation of public policies understand that informal education plays a key role in achieving the state's goals of developing a resilient society characterized by stability, prosperity and well-being for all citizens (JABARIN & AGBARIA, 2010).

In conclusion, the author of the thesis, a specialist in Bedouin education, analyses a series of social mobility tools practised in the modern era. In the education system the individual acquires various social, cognitive skills that help him to integrate into his social and economic environment. This understanding is common to all actors of the political process, the educational process, therefore different social groups: classes, ethnic groups, religious groups erc. are constantly fighting for the necessary resources to develop the infra-structure and provide with competent teachers in the organization and smooth running of both formal and informal educational process. field. To develop an integrated education system, one objective of which would be to reduce social disparities, it is necessary to respect the principle of equal opportunities for all players in the social process. The strength of education policy aimed at reducing gaps in education will contribute to the future reduction of social and economic inequality.

7. Analysis of the contribution of the Bedouin minority to the development of Israeli society: educational and political-economic aspects

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab population has not participated in public discussions, but changes in politics, economy and society have increased public awareness. Today, the interest of state institutions and civil society organizations in the Negev, and especially the Bedouin population, is increasing (AGBARIA, 2017). Several politicians and leaders of non-governmental organizations discuss in various contexts the contribution of Bedouin society to the development of Israeli society. Analysing the January 2021 data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Immigration and Population Authority (Ministry of Population, Immigration and Authorities in Israel, 2021), approximately 280 thousand Bedouins live in Israel. It is the youngest community in Israel, in which about 51% are children up to the age of 18. Most Bedouin live in 18 established and state-declared settlements. The town of Rahat is home to about 70,000 people; the other towns are home to about 100,000 people and two regional councils are home to another 20,000. Bedouin settlements are administered by mayors and local councils. In addition, almost 80 thousand Bedouin live outside the state-recognised settlements.

At present, the image of Bedouin society is not very positive, and some even attribute the alienation of the political institution to them. M. Avinoam and H. Levi in the article: "Bedouin of the Negev and the State of Israel", point out that the media regarding Bedouins is only in negative contexts and portrays them as violent criminals terrorizing the south (AVINOAM & LEVI, 2012). This is one-dimensional coverage that is not only untrue but increases hostility and lack of motivation. In this context, N. Blass et al argue that Bedouin society is indeed in a problematic state and is the first to suffer from crime and violence. The best solution is to integrate its members into society and the economy. Thus, the scholars initiate a balanced discussion in which not only "Bedouin terror" is discussed (BLASS, 2017). The author, who participates in the discussion, proposes to examine the contribution of the State of Israel to the development of Bedouin society, an analysis that highlights the key points of interface, which seeks to promote society and bring it to the social, cultural, economic preparedness and competence required in the 21st century. Thus, we find that one of the main issues involving Bedouin society since the establishment of the State of Israel is the regulation of land and the urbanization of Bedouin society.

The process of urbanisation and the transition to permanent settlements. The Planning and Building Law passed by the Israeli government in 1965 stipulated that most of the uninhabited land was agricultural land, thus ensuring that every building would be considered illegal, including houses that had already been built (AYALON & SHAVIT, 2004). In this way, Bedouin settlement in all areas became illegal. In addition, as of 2021, government authorities refuse to recognize Bedouin ownership of land and do not recognize traditional Bedouin law or other evidence of Bedouin ownership of land in the Negev. When the Bedouin in the Negev concentrated in uninhabited lands, a land dispute was opened, which shapes the reality of Bedouin existence so far (GRA, 2016). H. Yahel in the article "Rural or urban? Planning Bedouin settlements" explains that today about 280,000 Bedouin live in the Southern Negev area in three forms of settlement: (1) about 35 unrecognised villages; (2) 7 planned projected towns established by the State of Israel; (3) 11 villages recognised by the state 20 years ago (in the early 2000s). The Bedouin population in the southern Negev represents about 12% of the Israeli Arab population. Although part of the state-planned urbanization process has been somewhat successful, there is a large population of tens of thousands of citizens living in villages not recognized by the state (YAHEL, 2021). It should be noted that in unrecognized villages there are no basic services and infrastructure, and the population faces difficulties in creating a normative environment in such issues as education, better community life and adequate family life. The collective, political, social, cultural and communication reference that has "stuck" to Bedouin society by Israeli governments (for most of the years of the state's existence) and by large population groups negatively portrays Bedouin society and other minority communities. The fact that many populations (tens of thousands of citizens) move from one place to another greatly complicates the manifestation of a sense of belonging, identification and commitment to the new place. In addition, many of them feel discriminated against because the process did not start on their own initiative, demand and were not involved in its design (BEKERMAN, 2008). With reference to the difficulties faced by the Bedouin minority, T. Y. Jabareen notes that these have varied implications in different aspects of individual and community life. As a result, many Bedouin are not in a hurry to move to these towns, so they do not prosper and have little population (HARPAZ, 2011).

The move to the new settlements required the consent of the Bedouins. Many of them refused, but it was the only option for them to have basic living conditions in the new settlement. Until the early 2000s, the transition to city living was a condition for the legality of the settlement to be recognised. An additional reason for their reluctance to move to regulated towns is related to one of the most significant characteristics of Bedouin society so far - tribal membership (LEVY, 2018).

Belonging is an important indicator of individual Bedouin life, past and present. The level of social mobility between tribes is minimal. At the same time, these processes have also weakened the status of the sheikhs, the Bedouin tribal elders, who were very important in mediating conflicts in Bedouin communities (REGEV & BRAND, 2015). After the failure of the Prawer plan (2011 - government plan for Bedouin settlement), the Israeli administration started a new plan of the Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority in the Ministry of Agriculture, which aims to put an end to one of the most complex land issues in Israel - the settlement of the Bedouin population in the Negev.

Six years after the filing of the ambitious Prawer Plan (2011), which sought a comprehensive solution to the problem (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021), the Authority approves building plans for about 150 thousand housing units, of which about 40 thousand housing units have been allocated by 2021, when the five-year plan ended. Land for the remaining 0 110,000 units was allocated later, as requested by the Bedouin community. Resources (SAIF & HADDAD & CHAI, 2021). indicate that, because of the legal and planned availability of land, there was no need for illegal land-grabbing by the state. In the last two years (2021-2023), plans have already been approved for about 32 thousand housing units, and another 60 thousand units are

in advanced stages of planning. The Bedouin Development and Settlement Authority in the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the development and infrastructure work under the plan, while the construction of the house is carried out by the residents. Through the resources of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Israeli Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2021), the budget of the program is approximately €2.5 billion (NIS 9 billion), of which approximately €1.6 billion (NIS 6 billion) is for physical and social infrastructure development, approximately €460 million (NIS 1.5 billion) for super-infrastructure (road infrastructure and urban development), and several larger amounts for land planning and regulation and compensation for loss of private land.

The new neighbourhoods planned in the Bedouin settlements are for two population groups:

1. 65,000 Bedouin residents, who have since been living in informal settlements that the state plans to evacuate.

2. 60 thousand inhabitants in need of housing and housing in regulated settlements in unregulated housing - a result of natural reproduction that had no infrastructure planning.

That plan is called "regulation in place", even though it often involves illegally destroying buildings and building new ones. The main new building is planned in Rahat, Hura, Kuseife, Laqiya, Arara in the Negev, Segev Shalom and Tel Sheva, and the rest in the regional council. The plan also includes the development of industrial zones in Rahat and seven other towns, which will cost €83 million (approximately NIS 300 million) by 2024 and will be planned and marketed in cooperation with the Economy Ministry.

Integration of IT professions into the professions of economic occupation. As already reviewed, there is a perceptual-cultural problem about directions of employment in Bedouin society. One of them is that they avoid working in economic professions. The occupational variety of the Bedouin population is restricted. Most Bedouins work in traditional or low-tech occupations and not in advanced occupations. Traditional occupations include farming and herding, often with little or no pay. Non-traditional occupations include construction work, auto mechanics, etc. These occupations have higher financial returns than traditional occupations.

Both types of professions require a relatively high level of qualification, but are not high-tech and have no development horizon, so minors are often integrated into these professions at the expense of their studies, even though it is prohibited by law. The absence of economic professions prevents Bedouins from competing for better social integration. It is about the quality of living conditions that allow adequate economic existence, social-cultural integration into Israeli society, connection to the effects of globalisation and escape from poverty. New research initiated by the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation - ERF (Edmond de Rothschild Foundation in Israel, 2021) found that of the 350,000 people employed in the high-tech industry in Israel (in July 2021) only 50 are from Bedouin society. According to research initiated by this foundation, which works to bridge the gap in Israeli society through accessibility of higher education, Bedouin education has a low level and harms the level of knowledge and basic skills of young children, and the result is: that only 50 Bedouins are employed in high-tech.

The study also shows that only 135 Bedouin students in the 2020-2022 academic year are studying for a degree in high-tech professions in academic institutions, of which 60% to 70% drop out without a degree. Despite the great need for employees in the high-tech industry, even upon graduation, Bedouin academy students face many difficulties integrating into the field. Both official resource data - from the Ministries of Education, Economy and Employment, the Innovation Authority, academic organizations and civil society organizations, and about 40 interviews (qualitative research) of Bedouin high-tech experts and employees were used in the calculation. According to the research, poor basic conditions harm and reduce the abilities of

young Bedouin to be enrolled and graduate from academic studies to integrate into science in general and high-tech in particular.

Other challenges faced by young Bedouin are lack of experience and unfamiliarity with the high-tech world, conservative discourse, few job opportunities in their home area (mainly in southern Israel), lack of relevant personal connections and few success stories. All these form additional barriers that prevent young Bedouin from integrating into a suitable workplace. The latest (2021) State Comptroller's report states, "In order to ensure the continued definition of the State of Israel as a "start-up nation," the relevant government institutions should address… removing barriers to achieving the goal … of integrating populations that are currently underrepresented and, in general, can be said to be excluded from it: primarily lacking representation of women, but also of Arab and ultra-Orthodox Jewish populations", and the Bedouin population is the largest of the populations excluded by the state (Israeli State Comptroller report, 2021).

8. Women' s employment in Bedouin society

The Bedouin population in southern Israel is characterised by low employment rates compared to the general population in Israel. The employment rate of Bedouin men in the south at the main employment ages was 72% in 2020, 14% lower than the rate of the general population of men in Israel (84%). The Bedouin women population has the lowest employment rate in Israeli society. In 2020, about 34% of Bedouin women at prime employment ages were employed, compared to 76% of the general population of women in Israel. It is known that employment by Bedouin women increased significantly between 2005 and 2020 – from 6% to 34%. The Israeli government decided in July 2010 (updating the 1994 decision) to set employment targets for Arab women, thanks to OECD experts and professional assessment. It was noted that the low rate of integration of Arab women in general, and Bedouin women in particular, into the country's workforce is damaging Israel's economic potential. The occupational target set for Arab women aged between 24 and 65 was an integration rate of 41% into the labour force in 2020. The parallel target for Arab men was 78%.

In addition, in recent years, due to the crisis, caused by the "COVID-19 Pandemic", there has been a severe decline in the employment of Bedouin women, which is damaging their professional status and erasing many of the modest achievements of the last decade. Also, H. Yahel notes that the employment target was set as part of a national policy aimed at reducing the employment gap between groups and, at the same time, achieving the national per capita employment rate of the 15 developed countries (YAHEL, 2021). In the areas: centre and north, in the Haifa region there is a significant destination approach. However, in the south, where most Bedouin women live, there is no improvement.

The 2017-2021 five-year plan for the Bedouin in the Negev includes employment promotion activities, including investments in the planned direction and employment centres. Recently, information has become public that employment rates among Bedouin aged 25-54 have increased: among men there is an increase from 58% in 2010 to 72% in 2020, and a parallel increase among women of up to 34%. The Brookdale Institute (FRIEDMAN, 2016). Indicated that among Bedouin women with an academic education (from age 13) the employment rate in 2020 was relatively high, up to 80%. However, among Bedouin women with only 12 years of education the employment rate was low - 22%, and among Bedouin women with 11 years of education or less the employment rate was lower – 11%. Therefore, the author concludes that education, period of study, have a major significance in employment. We note in this context that many women, who have not had the opportunity to pursue academic studies, cannot contribute significantly to improving the living conditions of their own families or to the development of the community economy.

Average wage for the Bedouin minority. The employment rate is not only material for comparison, for calculating the percentage of employees among the majority and minority groups, it is also expressed in family income. The small wage that a Bedouin employee earns is divided for many people, the average Bedouin family in the southern district has on average – 6.19 people, while an average Jewish family in this district has only 3.45 people.

Table 3. Comparison of average wages between Jewish and Bedouin settlements 2021 (in euros)

Cities	Average wage for a month (Men's & Women's)	The rate of employment up to the minimum wage
All Israel	2,676 €	39.4%
Jewish cities		
Beer Sheva	2,537 €	39.3%
Dimona	2,633 €	37.1%
Arad	2,179 €	44.4%
Mizpah Ramon	2,071 €	47%
Beduim cities		
Rahat	1,588 €	56.7%
Hura	1,783 €	50.6%
Kseife	1,761 €	50.3%
Harahra	1,711 €	53.8%
El Kasum	1,576 €	56%
Neve Midbar	1,584 €	54.7%

Source: made by the researcher (Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 2021) (BOI, 2021)

Analysis of the data allows the author to observe differences of about 50% on average between the wages of the Jewish and Bedouin sectors. By correlating the data with the needs of the family, in terms of number of people, we understand how deep poverty is in Bedouin society. The column on the right shows the number of employees earning the minimum wage and Bedouin society has a big "advantage" over Jewish society. There is no Bedouin settlement that employs less than 50% above the minimum wage. Looking at women's wages, the average monthly wage (according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics) for employed women in Bedouin settlements in the Negev was €1,453 in 2020, a nominal increase of about 1.6% over 2019, compared to the wage of employees in Israel, which was €2,370, which has a nominal increase of 7% over 2019.

The occupational situation of the active Bedouin population allows us to see that most Bedouins are employed in traditional occupations that do not require knowledge and skills, such as high technology and progress.

9. Employment centers for Bedouin society

The Israeli administration has decided to support the institutions with the opening of employment centres to improve the professional skills of Bedouins. The "Rian" occupational guidance centre programme is part of a wider programme established following four government decisions to promote employment of the Arab population in Israel. As part of this program, it was decided to establish 21 employment centres, 8 of them for the Bedouin population in the Negev (Ministry of Finance in Israel, 2021). The centres provide individual guidance and services to participants and work to establish regional and urban infrastructure to promote employment:

1. Services for the participant

- Building career plans that include initial placement, training and promotion to a quality job.

- Monitoring the work of workshops to prepare for various jobs and develop the necessary skills.

- Work skills courses such as: computer knowledge and use and English language skills.

- Presentation of designated vocational training courses.

- Implementation of programmes to promote business start-up and accompany small and medium-sized businesses offered by the "Maof Centre".

- Assisting in connecting to the workplace and placing the individual in a role that matches their skills.

2. Work with employers

- Develop links with employers and build the employer base in the settlements;

- Tailor training to employer needs;

3. Community employment development

- Develop cooperation to promote employment with community stakeholders: public institutions (such as local authority, community centres) and third sector organisations;

- Build a 'sharing network': an aspect of influencing people in the community who promote the work of the centre to create local leadership.

In addition to the director's work, it was decided to open training and placement centres for potential Bedouin minority labour.

Table 2.4 shows the contribution of the State of Israel to the training model of Bedouin society.

Table 4. National training program for Bedouin society – 2018

Program number	Training model	Description	Program operator – model	Supervising body	Funding factor
1.	Budgeted trainings	Study class for required profession – general	Business factor by tender	Vocational training department	The Ministry of Work and welfare services
2.	Business courses	Study class for required profession – general	Business factor	Governmental supervision	The Ministry of Work and welfare services
3.	Intra-factory training	Training within work – individual	Integrating factory	Vocational training department	The Ministry of Work and welfare services
4.	Class in factory	Training class within the employer	Employers	Vocational training department	The Ministry of Work and welfare services
5.	Apprenticeship training	Apprenticeships in work	Employers	Vocational training department	The Ministry of Work and welfare services

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6.	Training vouchers	Training course by candidate selection	Training factors	Governmental supervision	The Ministry of Work and welfare services

Source: made by the researcher (Ministry of Finance in Israel, 2021).

From the table it can be understood that the Israeli administration has "woken up" in recent years (2010) and understood that it is necessary to integrate the Bedouin minority into Israeli society to gain their trust and economic-occupational cooperation. M. Tzuk argues that knowing and analysing Bedouin society, these solutions are not "magic", therefore a more extensive program is needed (TZUK, 2016). The author explains in the article: 'The politics of equality in the education system: the Arab and Bedouin sectors in Israel' (ALVAKILI, 2020) that the gaps are so deep, after so many years of neglect, that 'the cosmetic solut'on of training is not enough, and its contribution will be minor. She argues that there are social, cultural barriers that prevent large enough parts of the population from finding the necessary "engine of growth" in government solutions.

Development of educational infrastructure – a research topic that highlights the state of the Bedouin formal and informal educational system. This reality starts with the analysis of the infrastructure and ends with the analysis of the recorded results, with the quality educational services offered by the educational institutions. O. Tirosh and Y. Eyal in the article: "Socio-economic measures for the Bedouin population in the Negev" argue that the Bedouin society suffers from poverty and the Bedouin settlements are classified in the lowest socio-economic group (TIROSH & EYAL, 2018). As a result, the quality of life in Bedouin settlements is low, the level of resident services is low, there is a serious lack of infrastructure. E. Weisblai, in the article: "Education in Bedouin society in the Negev – update" defines the problem of educational integration as a social-existential necessity, mentioning that the Arab-Bedouin population in the Negev is characterized by a low level of education, approximately – 9.7%, almost twice as high as their rate in the Arab population (5.0%) and five times higher than their rate in Jewish society (1.9%). In addition, the rate of higher education graduates (university and non-university) in the Bedouin sector (8.4%) is lower than their rate in the Arab population (13.8%) and more than 4 times lower than their rate in the Jewish population (36.5%) (WEISBLAI, 2017).

These shortcomings are reflected in the education system, whose unprofessionalism is expressed in several ways, first of all, outdated teaching methods are highlighted, which are based on memorization and do not encourage the development of creative, critical thinking, which is necessary for baccalaureate exams and even more so in higher education. Additional expressions of the unprofessionalism of the system are lack of talented manpower (kindergarten teachers, schoolteachers, educational counsellors, regular visiting officers, pedagogical guides and educational psychologists), lack of talented management, supervisory and controlling factors, lack of adequate learning facilities, and lack of community involvement and support. In her article: "Integration or Segregation in Societies (Case Study of the Education System in Israel)", the author of the thesis argues that these problems in the education system make it difficult for Bedouin society to integrate into the labour market and Israeli society in general. In this context, it is advisable to solve the problems analysed before the gaps multiply their influence. It is important for higher education to stimulate the promotion and explain the significance of higher education for the development of Israeli society and the Bedouin community (ALVAKILI, 2021).

The author is convinced that in the last decade the state has made efforts to increase the number of Bedouin students in higher education institutions, but the rate of students in universities and academic colleges is lower than that in Arab and Jewish society. Young Bedouin need academic support, from the selection stage of study subjects in high school, through admission to higher education and later to entry into the labour market. In the last few years, several individual projects have started in Bedouin society to strengthen STEM studies, the integration of mathematics, science, engineering and technology, with the aim of higher

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technology studies in universities and colleges. Only about 3% of Bedouin students enrol in these projects. Nothing is known about the effectiveness of the programmes. The study "Education in Bedouin society in the Negev – update" gives us the opportunity to understand that there is no correlation between these programs, that there are no interfaces and cooperation between them (SHLITA, 2021). The reasons are objective for the Bedouin society and set barriers for the development of the skills of Bedouin youth. Here are some examples of development barriers:

- Difficulty in recruiting teachers, there are more problems in recruiting professional teachers in their field, especially in advanced technology, physics, biology, where there are not, they often return to the north after a period of work in the Negev, so there is little investment in their training.

- Limited number of students: only a limited number of students are accepted into the programme, representing only some potential students. Of note is Rahat, where only two students are selected from each class. Local authorities and parents are asking to increase the number of students in the centres of excellence.

- Exceeding the maximum number of students in the class: sometimes the school or the parents press the coordinator and guide, and the number of students exceeds the maximum number in the class.

- Delay in purchasing equipment for the centre's work due to delay in submitting the centre's request to the local authority.

- Difficulty in transport: the transport problem is not fully solved in the programme, so a student without transport cannot participate in the programme.

- Lack of linkage with other programs: there is no continuous program for centre of excellence programs, even there are fewer talented and excellence programs in different classes and settings. For example, the Negev Ministry's program of excellence and the development of the Gali periphery, which targets students in grades 9 to 12 and has many centres in Bedouin settlements. There is no cooperation between programme operators.

Analysing the information about the programs that the State of Israel supports for the development of the Bedouin society, the author of the thesis notes the presence of actions in the Israeli policy, oriented towards the integration of the members of the Bedouin community into the Israeli society. Comprehensive actions are also needed, and a profound process of combining national and community challenges is important to enable minorities in general and Bedouins in particular to assimilate the conditions by which they can provide themselves with a better quality of life on an individual and community level.

10. Conclusion

Defining the status of Arab society in Israel, based on knowledge of their personal and collective rights and obligations, developed against the background of the Arab-Israeli conflict that preceded the establishment of the state. In the early years of the state' s existence, a policy of cultural separation between the Jewish people, Jewish society and members of minorities – Arab society – was approved. This was a starting point, developed into policies of discrimination against the Arab minority in various areas, including issues of religion, investment and urban development, the economy and, obviously, the issue of education. For a long time, state institutions did not adequately appreciate the dangers, the threats coming from the marginalization of Arab minorities. It is only in the first decades of the 21st century that researchers are observing important changes in the public policies of the State of Israel, aimed at narrowing the gaps between the ethnic minorities and the majority group in all areas of social life, including the provision of quality educational services.

The author of the PhD thesis pays particular attention to the gaps in living conditions and employment. The conditions of employment are assessed, for which young and old people from Arab minorities, particularly – Bedouins, need to be well educated, qualified. In reality, for the development of skills required by employers, there are insufficient conditions for training and education, especially, in the Negev region. For a consistent change in the situation in the field of education, integration of marginalized minorities, investments are needed in housing development, solving the problem of residential land, creating jobs, developing infrastructure. The author presents a list of reference points, which expresses the discrimination of minority groups, marginalised and even excluded from the life of Israeli society. In the article: "Educational systems of minorities in the world" [9], the author of the thesis mentions that the Arab community, the largest minority population in Israel, has been discriminated against for years, without any justification, and the Bedouin society, concentrated in the south of the country, suffers most from all aspects of discrimination. This conclusion is justified based on analysis of statistical data, set out in numerous tables.

The author presents the situation in providing schools, sports fields, and rest areas for students, a segment in which there has been neglect for years in areas populated by minority groups. In all the topics under analysis, the author applies comparative analysis to illustrate the existing gaps. It is noteworthy that the physical infrastructure in Jewish society is by a considerable margin compared to the OECD average, despite the large investment in the education budget.

Focusing on the analysis of the real situation of the Bedouin community, the author observes that the biggest gaps between Bedouin and Jewish society. The cultural gaps regarding settlement patterns have been the focus of several programs, through which the government has tried to address the problem, but none of them have been welcomed by the Bedouin community. To this day, this reality damages the economic, educational and professional status of the Bedouin community and places their young people at the bottom of the social ladder. Graduates of the education system have insufficient skills to integrate into higher education in economic professions.

The author points out that the Bedouin community, in recent years, has become aware of the significance of social integration through training and education, because of which engagement in economic professions leads the whole community to a decent life. Therefore, it started cooperating with the leaders of change, supporting an accelerated process of urbanization of Bedouin society. In addition, the state has launched many projects that promote and focus on defined populations within Bedouin society, from kindergarten ages to adults in demand for professional, advanced training. One of the target groups of the programmes is the female population in Bedouin society. Various processes take place within this group, the common denominator of which is the empowerment of women, their preparation for various occupations and their integration into the labour market. Another group is made up of teachers, trained to educate and train the younger generation.

In addition, the author mentions many other projects, which aim to establish vocational training centres and develop urban infrastructure to provide an advanced set of services and commerce that will attract a Jewish population. The training programmes offer various options for the Bedouin community to move forward and out of the circle of poverty in which they find themselves. In his article: "The Arab Minority and the Jewish Majority in the Israeli Educational System" [7], the author concluded: In the period 2021-2022, the Bedouin community does not have the resources to enable their economic development. At the same time, the southern population constituting about 25% is weak and segregated, where each group works to advance, without cooperation with its neighbours. The author adds that in such a situation, the Bedouin are the biggest losers, but the entire population of the country has to lose as well.

With reference to the state's contribution to the development of the Bedouin community and its integration into the education system, the author raises the issue of empowerment in STEM studies. Based on the research, the author concludes that Bedouins need academic guidance from the choice of high school subjects, through the stages of admission to higher education institutions, and then into the labour market and back to the stage of advanced studies. In recent years, the Bedouin Society has launched several projects to improve STEM studies, the combination of mathematics, science, engineering and technology, targeting higher technology studies at universities and colleges. The experience gained in implementing these projects, which cover about 3% of students, does not provide enough information to assess their effectiveness.

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Theoretical Background for Understanding the Impact of YouTube on the Identity of Jewish Religious Societies in Israel

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Abstract

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the influence of social media platforms, and YouTube is at the center of them as a platform with great power and scope. YouTube is not only a source of entertainment – but also an educational, marketing, cultural and sometimes even political tool. Despite the high accessibility and enormous distribution of YouTube content, academic research on the direct and indirect impact of videos on perceptions of reality, emotions, consumer products and even decision-making – is only just beginning. Theoretical foundations for understanding this formation of Jewishness in the age of YouTube, the shaping of one's personal and religious identity does not occur in a vacuum, but is influenced by a wide range of psychological, social, and cultural forces. To understand the influence of the YouTube platform on shaping the Jewish identity of young people in Israel, the approaches of classical thinkers in the field of psychology can be used.

Keywords: Youtube, Jewish society, Jewish studies, Jewish identity.

1. Introduction

The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in the influence of social media platforms, and YouTube is at the center of them as a platform with great power and scope.

YouTube is not only a source of entertainment – but also an educational, marketing, cultural and sometimes even political tool. Despite the high accessibility and enormous distribution of YouTube content, academic research on the direct and indirect impact of videos on perceptions of reality, emotions, consumer products and even decision-making – is only just beginning.

This is where the uniqueness of this study lies: it seeks to look deeply into the way visual content is a style that manages to shape public opinion, create changes in behavior, and influence personal and cognitive consciousness. Research is especially important among the viewing audience, which is more engaged, less critical and sometimes unfiltered exposed to manipulative or incorrect information. Understanding how YouTube videos affect users – cognitively, emotionally and socially – can provide a basis for developing educational, regulatory and personal tools to deal with these effects in a more conscious and critical way.

YouTube is the third largest search engine in the world and the second most visited website. And to understand the power of the impact, we need to go back a moment to the beginning. The first YouTube video was uploaded on April 23, 2005, and showed one of the founders standing in front of an elephant at a zoo. Simple, innocent – almost funny in today's terms. Who would have believed that 15 years later, every single minute, a whole month's worth of content would be uploaded to the platform (Mohsin, 2023)? Since then, YouTube has grown at a dizzying pace. In 2006, Google acquired it for $1.65 billion – a deal that earned many backs. Today, it is a powerhouse that brings in over $10 billion a year, with a growth rate of about 40%.

By the end of 2018, over 5.2 billion videos with a total length of one billion hours had been uploaded to YouTube. The site also had 29 trillion views, 250 billion likes/dislikes, and 33 billion comments. It has everything: religion, faith, racism, love, conspiracies, poetry, Torah lessons, historical documents, and countless interpretations of Judaism. Those who don't swim in the content — might drown.

There are 2 billion connected users accessing YouTube every month. That's why YouTube is the app of choice on iOS for 2018. In terms of monthly users, YouTube competes with almost every other app such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. In fact, only Facebook surpasses YouTube in terms of monthly users, in the social networking category. Most YouTube users are men (62%). In terms of age, 49% of users are between 25 and 44. Every minute, videos are uploaded to YouTube that are worth a month of viewing (almost 10 hours every second). In 2021, this exceeded two months every minute. Also, 79% of internet users have a YouTube account.

The music category is the only one on YouTube that manages to attract hundreds of millions of repeat views on videos:

• The first video to surpass all views was a music video.

• Most of the videos that have crossed the billion marks since then also belong
to the music genre.

• The song "Despacito" reached a billion views in 97 days.

• Adele's song "Hello" did it even faster - in just 87 days.

YouTube reaches more 18- to 34-year-olds in the US than any other television network. 90% of 18- to 44-year-olds in the US use the YouTube app. In this context, even YouTube advertising is more effective than commercial TV – YouTube ads on mobile catch viewers' attention 83% of the time (compared to TV advertising – only 45%) (Osman, 2023).

YouTube provides almost half (47%) of the world's music streaming (compared to Spotify, Apple Music, etc.). Also, people watch a billion hours of YouTube video every day.

Between the summer of 2017 and 2018, there was a 70% increase in YouTube relaxation and calming videos (from yoga and meditation to ASMR and its varieties). 70% of Millennials watched a YouTube video to learn something new.

Since 2016, the number of small and medium-sized businesses advertising on YouTube has doubled. 62% of businesses in the US use YouTube to upload videos. 78.8% of marketers also say YouTube is the most effective video platform for advertising. This is not surprising considering that 90% of people discover new products on YouTube.

Since 2017, the number of YouTubers earning 5 figures per year has increased by 35%, and those earning 6 figures per year have increased by 40%. Most of the profits come from advertising. YouTube does a lot for heavy content producers, allowing them to profit from a wide range of options.

Where YouTube stands against other networks? Here is how YouTube stands against the world's leading networks (with at least one login per month) (Pascher, 2025):

• Facebook – about 3 billion average users

• YouTube – about 2.5 billion average users

• WhatsApp – about 2 billion average users

• Instagram – about 2 billion average users

• TikTok – about 1.5 billion average users

• WeChat (Chinese) – About 1.3 billion economic users

• Telegram – about 800 million users

• Snapchat – about 750 million users

• X (formerly Twitter) – about 600 million users

• Pinterest – about 450 million users

How many videos are posted on the YouTube app every minute? By 2025, about 500 hours of video will be uploaded to YouTube every minute. So, it would take a person almost 720 years to watch all the videos uploaded in one day.

YouTube is an American company. Its headquarters are in: San Bruno, California, United States. YouTube was founded in 2005 by three former PayPal employees. In 2006, it was acquired by Google for $1.65 billion. Since then, You-Tube has been operated as part of Google (now Alphabet Inc.).

The YouTube website interface includes 89 countries where you can browse the site (which include versions of YouTube in one or more languages depending on what is spoken there), as well as one territory, which is not recognized as an independent country. There is also a global version in English for users who choose to use it (Pascher, 2025).

2. The "dangers" within YouTube

1. Inappropriate content – Although YouTube uses filters, there are videos with offensive, violent, sexual or misleading content. Even content that seems innocent at first (such as children's videos) can be calibrated to contain disturbing content, as in the "ElsaGate" phenomenon (Maheshwari, 2017).

2. The "degradation" phenomenon (Rabbit Hole) – the algorithm recommends similar content, but over time leads the viewer to extreme content, conspiracy theories or fake news. It is particularly dangerous for teenagers looking for identity or answers to personal questions (Muldrew, 2019).

Additional dangers:

• Exposure to false or manipulative information;

• Addiction to viewing, often continuously;

• Difficulty judging between real and extreme content, especially among children and teenagers.

2.1 *Screen addiction*

Platforms like YouTube do not offer content – they are designed to attract and hold attention. The recommendation algorithm operates on the "one more video…" principle until the user becomes engrossed in continuous and sometimes uncontrolled viewing. The phenomenon known as binge-watching has been extensively studied (Turkle, 2011).

Excessive use of YouTube can lead to several negative consequences:

• Impaired concentration (Turkle, 2011);

• Disrupted sleep patterns (Cain & Gradisar, 2010);

• Decreased face-to-face social interactions;

• Increased levels of loneliness, depression, and anxiety, especially among young people (Twenge, 2018).

2.2 *Native advertising and its impact on consumerism*

Among the many videos watched on YouTube, many are native advertising – that is, advertisements that appear as content for everything. This is especially true of videos that simulate product reviews, games with toys, gadget demonstrations, or "personal diaries" of creators – but they are sponsored content (Atique et al., 2024).

For children and adolescents, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between informative and advertising content. The impact can be powerful: repeated viewing of the same products creates consumer urges, parental expectations, and impulsive purchases. This line has been discussed in communication and developmental psychology studies, which suggest that covert advertising may bypass children's genetic defense mechanisms (Nairn & Fine, 2008).

In addition, the consumer message also prevails over the value or educational message. Identity is formed in an environment where social status is perceived through what is purchased – and not necessarily through what is understood or believed. Research also suggests that parental mediation can help reduce the effects of unwanted advertising (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2005).

2.3 *Offensive comments and cyberbullying*

One of the key features of YouTube is leaving public comments. This feature was originally intended to encourage discourse and community – but in practice, the space has become an arena for offensive expressions, cyberbullying and sometimes even threats (Moor, Heuvelman & Verleur, 2010).

Young creators in particular – children, teenagers or influencers through them – are exposed to insulting, mocking and sometimes threatening responses. These responses erode the creator's self-image, sense of worth and digital security. For many of them, the negative response does not disappear – but is maintained, re-observed and amplified by the platform's disclosure mechanisms.

Research suggests that cyberbullying has similar and even more serious effects than face-to-face bullying, especially when it occurs in public spaces accessible to all (Kowalski, 2014).

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2.4 *Exposure of personal data and privacy risks*

Whether consciously or not, many users – especially children and teenagers – reveal identifying information in comments, videos or collaborations with other creators. This includes data such as full names, locations, private contacts, educational institutions or personal characteristics – which can become fertile ground for harassment, identity theft or misuse of information (Zhu, Wang & Li, 2025).

The exposure does not have to be direct: sometimes it is done through small details in the video (such as a street sign, school logo, name tag), and sometimes through discourse on the platform. Children and teenagers are often unaware of the consequences of such exposure, and the algorithms – which promote popular videos – increase exposure to unexpected audiences.

Communication researchers indicate that the sensitivity to privacy among teenagers on social networks is low, especially when the content is perceived as entertaining, personal or aesthetic (Boyd, 2014). As a result, the boundaries between private and public are blurred, and the implications for personal security can be serious (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007).

Hence the importance of the study – precisely because a platform – precisely because a powerful platform like YouTube is freely accessible even to minors and teenagers. The power of this tool to shape consciousness, identity, and attitudes – requires critical examination, educational sensitivity, and the development of models for conscious and informed coping.

3. "The Impact of YouTube Videos on Identity"

3.1 *Identity, media, and YouTube*

A person's personal and group identity was not created in a vacuum, but rather develops from a complex web of cultural, social, media, and religious influences. Identity – whether examined as an internal "self" or as a collective sense of self – is made up of beliefs, values, narratives, and memories. From infancy, and sometimes even earlier, a person is in constant dialogue with the culture that surrounds them – it writes the boundaries of "normal," what is permitted, appropriate, or inspiring. To illustrate: culture creates a framework. Just like a room that is pre-designed – with colors, furniture, and pictures – culture also "shapes" a person. Music, clothing, language, and stories create a climate in which a person learns how to think and feel. For example, a teenager in Israel who adopts a style of dress, values, and slang from the Korean K-pop world is not just entertainment – it is a component of a cultural identity that crosses borders (Cote, 1996).

3.2 *The influence of society and community*

Different societies give a person clear behavioral code. A girl who grew up in a religious community, for example, from a young age has roles, frameworks, and perceptions of gender roles. Her identity, even when she moves away from the community, carries with it the value and symbolic baggage that was embedded in her. The environment – family, education system, street – acts as a constant steppingstone in the formation of self-esteem. Not always direct, but almost always present (Gutierrez et al., 2018).

3.3 *The media as a screen that shapes consciousness*

In the digital age, media is not just a source of information – it is an integral part of the process of forming identity. The influence of social societies is particularly prominent, through which the sense of the network was created, but also competition, comparison, and self-esteem.

Many young people develop this not through school or home – but through the screen. Videos, photos, comments, shares – all of these constitute experiences that pass-through emotion and lead to gratitude. The path does not only reflect reality – it also creates (Yang, 2025).

3.4 *Religion as an identity anchor*

For many, religion is not only a normative system, but a source of pride, meaning and a life story. A Jewish, Muslim or Christian child will often grow up with symbols, rituals and stories that are woven into their identity. At the same time, it is not a permanent identity: some will approach religion, and some will distance themselves – but the process of disengagement is also part of the construction of identity. It is not a one-time thing, but a constant tension between tradition and innovation, between loyalty and rebellion (Wimberley, 2005).

3.5 *YouTube as an Identity Platform*

YouTube, one of the main platforms in the Jewish community, has become a managed cultural tool through which young and old alike are exposed to content from every possible field – including identity, religion and culture. The viewer chooses, responds, shares – but not always with full awareness. YouTube's algorithm "learns" the user and offers them additions, apart from a repetitive and sometimes surprising pattern. This creates a situation in which watching a single innocent video about Passover songs may lead, within an hour, to a series of content that reinforces a sense of entitlement or challenges it (Cakmak, Agarwal & Oni, 2024).

3.6 *YouTube and Jewish Identity*

The impact of YouTube content on Jewish identity is multi-layered. On the one hand, there is much content that deepens the connection to tradition – from Torah lessons and Hasidic music to videos about holiday customs or the life of a Jewish community in the Diaspora. These videos can evoke a sense of connection, nostalgia or even religious inspiration. On the other hand, there is global, satirical, critical or non-Jewish content that challenges the clear boundaries of ordinary identities. That undermines. Whether in browsing that is clear, this gap creates a fascinating tension – content that strengthens identity versus content that awakens the teenager. Conscious choice of content versus random browsing that leads to a sense of alienation. The question is not just what we see – but how viewing changes us: Do I feel more "Jewish" after watching a certain video, or is my identity slowly eroding, without me noticing? (Creese, 2019; Galily, 2019).

3.7 *Directions for the current study*

Against this background, the study seeks to examine how to influence and see YouTube videos – with an emphasis on religious content – on the processes of forming Jewish identity among Jewish viewers. The study examines questions such as: What is the role of the algorithm? What are the emotional and cognitive patterns that arise in the wake of tea? And how do viewers perceive the connection between what they see and what they feel they are? (Missier, 2025).

4. Religious and cultural identity formation in the digital age

The Process of Identity Construction Influenced by Repeated Exposure to Digital Media (Saputra, 2022).

4.1 *Psychological theories for understanding the process of identity formation*

4.1.1 *Sigmund Freud: Internal conflict and identity*

Freud viewed identity as the product of a conflict between three mental systems: the id (unconscious drives), the ego (mediating self), and the superego (conscience and internalized values). Watching YouTube content creates opportunities for exposure to stimuli that appeals to both drives (such as emotional or entertainment content) and morality and values (such as religious or educational content). The process of watching YouTube constitutes an arena for an internal struggle between the id and the superego, with the ego mediating between them and structuring the viewer's identity according to the content consumed and the internal response to it (Freud, 1923).

4.1.2 *Alfred Adler: Belonging, community, and identity*

Adler argued that humans strive for belonging and status in a community, and that identity is built from an attempt to achieve recognition and a sense of self-worth. Unlike Freud, Adler emphasized the social aspect of the soul. YouTube serves as a platform that enables a sense of belonging through content communities – Judaism channels, lectures on Zionism, and series on Jewish history – that strengthen the viewer's connection to their identity. This process strengthens Jewish identity out of a psychological need for belonging and a sense of contribution to the group (Adler, 1937).

4.1.3 *Viktor Frankl: Meaning, identity, and community.*

Frankl saw meaning as the central force that drives the human soul. Humans seek purpose, mission, and content for their lives – especially after crises or feelings of emptiness. YouTube content that deals with tradition, collective memory, Jewish identity, and national destiny may be a source of meaning for the viewer. Such exposure can strengthen identity through a sense of mission and understanding of one's place within the overall Jewish story (Frankl, 1985).

4.2 *YouTube YouTube as a platform for shaping identity*

YouTube serves not only as a technological platform, but also as a powerful socializing agent. Its algorithms replicate content that the viewer responds to, thereby reinforcing viewing patterns and identity. The viewer may be repeatedly exposed to the same content – whether religious, national, or universal – and this repetition affects the process of identity formation. The platform allows for the construction of self-conscious identity alongside an unconscious identity, guided by deep psychological mechanisms (Rosana, 2024).

5. Conclusion

Theoretical foundations for understanding this formation Jewishness in the age of YouTube the shaping of one's personal and religious identity does not occur in a vacuum, but is influenced by a wide range of psychological, social, and cultural forces.

To understand the influence of the YouTube platform on shaping the Jewish identity of young people in Israel, the approaches of classical thinkers in the field of psychology can be used.

Sigmund Freud – The conflict between drive and social order

According to Freud, a person's identity is built from an internal struggle between three parts within them – the id (the desires and impulses), the ego (the balance between what I want and what is possible in reality), and the superego (the conscience and the values I learned from home, from society and from religion). Within YouTube, exposure to different content can often flood this struggle within a person.

For example, a person who sees a video that talks about absolute freedom versus a video that mentions his religious values – and this arouses questions, hesitations and sometimes a sense of guilt. This struggle affects how the person defines himself as a Jew, and how he chooses to behave in front of the world.

For example:

Impulse vs. Value: A religious guy is surfing YouTube and sees a video about parties and trips abroad, and he feels drawn to it – but immediately an inner voice comes up saying: "Wait, does this even fit with my values? Is this what I want for myself?"

Or repression through viewing: Someone who has gone through a crisis of faith does not talk about it with friends or family but finds channels on YouTube of secular speakers or critics of religion and watches them for hours – as a way to express or escape the thoughts that bother them.

Or imitation or replacement: A girl who wants to feel part of the religious community, but lives in a secular environment, finds rabbis, lectures, songs and prayers on YouTube – and this becomes a substitute or reinforcement of her religious identity, even without a community around her.

YouTube is used as a space for "externalizing the unconscious" by searching for content, responses and counter-reactions to parental or religious authority. The viewer may build an identity through resistance or imitation of authority figures or mini figures on YouTube.

Alfred Adler – The desire for belonging and self-worth

Adler believed that people are driven by the need to feel like they belong and are relevant – they want to know that they are important to others and that they have a place in society. This is very evident on YouTube: there you can find communities Digital around almost every topic, including Jewish identity.

Through the videos, comments, and discussions, people feel part of something bigger than themselves, and this helps them build their identity — whether as Jews or as people searching for general meaning in life.

For example:

Connection through music: A Jewish girl in the Diaspora who watches performances by Jewish singers on YouTube and sings with them — even if she is alone in the room, she feels part of something common and close.

Or discussion in comments: An Israeli guy responds to informative videos about Judaism or Israel, argues with others in the comments, and feels like he is defending his identity — even without meeting any of them in real life.

Or belonging in groups: An ultra-Orthodox woman who connects to the YouTube channel of a spiritual teacher or rabbi, and watches regular classes, feels like she belongs to a broad group of religious women, even if she has no one around her to share this with.

Viktor Frankl – Life Meaning as a Driving Force

Victor Frankl believed that the most powerful force that drives us is the search for meaning in life. When we are exposed to content on YouTube, it can provoke thoughts and questions in us about what is truly important to us. Many times, it is precisely through these videos that people begin to understand how significant their Jewish identity is to them — and this pushes them to want to fill their lives with valuable content and real connection.

For example:

An inspiring video: A secular guy who happens to watch a video on YouTube about a Holocaust survivor who talks about the power of faith and hope — this video makes him rethink his roots and identity.

Or a rabbi's lecture: A young woman who finds a rabbi's lecture on YouTube about the meaning of life and values in Judaism, and feels that it touches her personally, and it even pushes her to start reading books about Judaism.

Or a video from a charity organization: A man watches a video about a Jewish group's charity work, is moved by it, and decides to volunteer himself — not just to help, but because it gives him a sense of mission and fulfillment.

Carl Jung – Symbols and Archetypes

Carl Jung spoke about how shared symbols — like a flag, a prayer, or a familiar story — touch our hearts far beyond words. When we see Jewish symbols repeated on YouTube, it's not just decoration; it evokes deep emotion in us and reinforces the feeling that we belong to something bigger than ourselves, to a community and tradition.

For example:

Lighting Hanukkah candles: A girl who watches a YouTube video of lighting candles at the Western Wall suddenly feels excited and connected to the essence of the holiday, even if she lives abroad far from Israel.

Or singing "Hatikva": A young man who hears "Hatikva" on YouTube in front of tens of thousands of people in the stands at a Jewish sporting event is filled with pride and excitement — and feels part of a people.

Or the Star of David: A little boy sees a video with a story about the meaning of the Star of David, and despite his young age, he begins to ask questions about this symbol and feels proud to wear a necklace with a Star of David.

Existential Approaches – Irvin Yalom and Rollo May

The existential approach deals with our basic need to find meaning in life, to feel that we belong and that our lives matter, and also to deal with the big and difficult questions that arise in every person — such as "Who am I?", "What do I believe in?" and "What gives my life value?" According to this approach, many of our troubles (such as anxiety, depression, or confusion) do not stem solely from biological or social problems, but from our difficulty in dealing with deep existential questions—the knowledge that life is limited, that we are responsible for our choices, and that meaning is not given to us "from outside," but that we must create it ourselves.

Important researchers in this approach are Irvin Yalom and Rollo May, who emphasized how important it is to help a person search for meaning, deal with deep fears, and live an authentic life, that is, a life that is consistent with their true values.

Therefore, when we are exposed to content on YouTube, it is not just entertainment—sometimes the videos touch on deep topics, which really provoke us to rethink ourselves, our faith,

and our place in the world. On YouTube, especially in Jewish or spiritual content, people find both support and encouragement as well as a place that generates questions.

For example:

A teenager watching a rabbi talk about crises and meaning Life:

He suddenly realizes that he is not alone in feelings of confusion or lack of purpose and begins to think seriously about the meaning he wants to give to his life — for example, through connecting to tradition or social action.

Or a woman in the Diaspora who watches a video about Jewish holidays and their connection to personal meaning:

She is excited to discover new perspectives on holidays that she knew only as external rituals, and this arouses in her a desire to learn and deepen her Jewish roots and identity.

Or a young man who watches a vlog of someone who is struggling with doubts about his faith:

He recognizes similar questions in himself and understands that this is legitimate and does not mean that he has "lost his way" — on the contrary, it can be part of a mature and healthy process of building an identity.

Erik Erikson — Theory of the stages of development

According to Erikson, adolescence is a critical stage in which a person builds an identity for himself. This is the time when questions arise such as: Who am I? Where do I belong? What do I believe? YouTube, in this respect, has become a significant arena at this age: it is not only a source of entertainment, but also a place where teenagers choose what to watch, who to be interested in, and how they want to present themselves to the world.

For example:

A religious boy who watches rabbinical questions and answer videos on YouTube strengthens his sense of religious identity.

Or a girl who is interested in social activism is exposed to videos about social justice and feels part of a global community.

Or an adolescent who gets confused between secular and traditional content on YouTube may feel an internal conflict and ask himself which world he belongs to.

Albert Bandura — Social learning theory

Bandura argued that we learn not only from books or from teachers, but mainly from observing and imitating others — especially those we perceive as successful, smart, or significant. There are countless such figures on YouTube: from rabbis to religious musicians, to people who influence the world, whether they are religious or secular.

For example:

A boy imitates an ultra-Orthodox YouTuber who talks about keeping the Sabbath, and he too begins to grow stronger.

Or a girl is attracted to secular content creators, adopts their style of speech and dress, and begins to distance herself from her traditional upbringing.

Or a teenager who listens to an international Jewish singer feels connected to Jewish identity through music, even without a religious framework.

The Israeli and Diaspora context of Jewish identity formation through YouTube Jewish identity, like other religious and ethnic identities, is shaped by a deep historical dynamic integration between the social, cultural and technological realities of the period (Cohen, & Veinstein, 2011).

In the decades since – and especially in the digital age – there has been a growing understanding that exposure to online content, especially on open and multi-layered platforms like YouTube, can significantly influence this formation activity of Jews, both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

The YouTube platform, which is a central source for consuming information, culture, learning and entertainment, appeals to diverse audiences around the world, and offers information and content – including content with a religious, cultural and national dimension.

Included in this abundance are Torah lessons, lectures on Jewish history, Jewish music performances, content by religious or Haredi content creators, channels that deal with Israel and are translated for Jewish audiences in the Diaspora, and more.

The Israeli context among young Jews in Israel – especially among people connected to formal religious frameworks – YouTube may constitute an almost exclusive source of exposure to those with an affinity for Jewish identity.

The platform gives the viewer the freedom to choose the nature and level of connection to the content: both out of authentic and ongoing interest, and sometimes as if from the intention of the algorithm, which offers content with a Jewish background even to those who did not explicitly seek it.

This situation raises a fundamental question: Can the media fulfill an educational and identity role similar to (or alternative to) that of the formal education system?

The current study aims to examine this issue while addressing cultural, social, and technological contexts – in Israel among religious and secular Jews.

Acknowledgements

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Fear of Democratic Influences – The Iranian Regime's Fear of the Introduction of the English Language and Culture into Iran

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Abstract

In 1979, the main fundamental change is the regime change: Iran transformed from a pro-Western kingdom into a theocratic Islamic republic. The second change is the rise of religious rule: Ayatollah Khomeini came to power and introduced the principle of "rule by the cleric." Therefore, the Iranian regime made changes and imposed restrictions on English teaching in both the private and public sectors immediately after it came to power in 1979 to curb the influence of English language teaching. The Iranian regime, which came to power following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, feared that through the teaching of English, foreign ideas and values would be spread in Iran, which could undermine the country's cultural and religious identity.

Keywords: Iran, Iranian regime, English Studies, English teaching.

1. Introduction – The Islamic Revolution of 1979

A new constitution was drafted in 1979, creating the role of "Supreme Leader" for Khomeini, a position through which he could control the military and security services, and veto candidates for other positions in the country. A president would be elected every four years, but only those approved by the Supreme Leader (through the Revolutionary Guards) could run. Khomeini became head of state for life, as "Leader of the Revolution" and then as "Supreme Spiritual Leader."

After a period of internal competition over Iran's future, a coalition led by the Ayatollah Khomeini, who supported Iran as a theocratic state, emerged victorious. On February 1, 1979, Khomeini returned from France after 15 years in France, Turkey, and Iraq and launched a revolution that led to the overthrow of the Shah on February 11 and the appointment of Khomeini as Supreme Leader of Iran.

The new government was extremely conservative. It nationalized industry and restored Islamic traditions in culture and law. Western influence was banned, and the pro-Western elite rushed to join the exiled Shah. There were struggles between the "religious" factions. The various and severe repression has become commonplace. Since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Iran has transformed from a pro-Western kingdom into an Islamic republic under theocratic rule. The revolution brought an end to the rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and the establishment of a new regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The new regime is based on the

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principle of "rule by the cleric" (Velay-e Faqeeh), according to which the Supreme Leader is the absolute ruler of the country. The Supreme Leader is appointed by the Assembly of Experts and has extensive powers, including determining foreign and domestic policy, commanding the armed forces, and appointing many senior officials (Bagheri, 1994).

2. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the changes that occurred in Iran following the rise of the new regime

The main fundamental change is the regime change: Iran transformed from a pro-Western kingdom into a theocratic Islamic republic. The second change is the rise of religious rule: Ayatollah Khomeini came to power and introduced the principle of "rule by the cleric" (Velay-e Faqeeh). The third change is the nationalization of industry: The new government nationalized industry in the country. The fourth change is the application of Sharia law: The regime anchored the Shiite Islamic religion and traditions in culture and law. The fifth change is the suppression of opposition: A severe suppression of political opposition began. The sixth change is the limitation of Western influence: Western influence was banned, and comprehensive censorship was introduced. The seventh change is the establishment of the Revolutionary Guards: A new military force was established to protect the new regime. The eighth change is mass migration: between 2-3 million Iranians, mainly from the urban middle class, migrated to the West. The ninth change is a change in the social and economic spheres: the Revolutionary Guards have become a significant factor in the economic, industrial, and social spheres. The tenth change is a change in foreign policy: Iran became hostile towards the West, especially against the US and Israel (Riazi, 2005) (Schwartz & Galily, 2021).

3. The impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran on the general education system in the country

The Islamic Revolution affected the education system in Iran in several areas:

•Assimilation of Shiite-revolutionary ideology: The Iranian regime introduced Shiite content into the curriculum and limited the place of Sunni religious scholars in public education.

•Establishment of Shiite schools: Public Shiite schools, such as the "High Messenger", were opened in various places in the country.

•Promotion of the Persian language: Iran is working to establish the Persian language among children, for example by opening schools for learning Persian.

•Religious studies for adults: Cultural centers were established, the aim of which is to influence residents to accept the principle of the rule of the religious scholar and convert their religion to Shiite.

•Higher education: Iranian universities established branches in the country, Expanding Iranian influence in higher education.

•Religious discrimination: Restrictions were imposed on certain religious groups, such as the Baha'is, who were banned from higher education institutions.

•Removal of teachers and students: Baha'i teachers and students were removed from the public education system.

These changes reflect the Iranian regime's efforts to use the education system as a tool to spread revolutionary ideology and strengthen its political and religious influence. The education system in Iran since 1979 has been characterized by religious discrimination, restrictions on

academic freedom, and significant ideological changes while persecuting minority groups and alternative educational institutions.

Along with the rise to power of this regime, a policy was also adopted regarding the teaching of English in Iran (Rassouli & Osam, 2019).

4. The changes made by the Iranian regime in English teaching immediately after its rise to power in 1979.

The Iranian regime made changes and imposed restrictions on English teaching in both the private and public sectors immediately after it came to power in 1979 to curb the influence of English language teaching. The changes and restrictions were as follows:

First, the age at which language acquisition began was limited. English language acquisition begins only for students in the seventh grade.

Second, private English institutes were closed as part of the cultural and political changes led by the country's new leaders. The leaders of the revolution feared that private English institutes would spread foreign ideas and values that could undermine the country's cultural and religious identity.

Third, textbooks for teaching English in the public education system were replaced. Until 1979, English was taught in books called: The Graded English Series". The study of these books was based on the situation-based language learning method of the time. The books allowed the acquisition of basic knowledge in the English language for an academic future.

From 1979, the books: "Right Path to English Series" with emphases were introduced into the education system. For the Khatab – the books focused on pronunciation, vocabulary and alphabet recognition. For the upper division – the books focused on reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. Language acquisition through these books was acquired through GTM (Grammar Translation Method). These books did not include writing, listening, and speaking. These books were used until 2013, more than 3 decades (34 years).

Fourth, Methodology – The methodology of teaching the English language was influenced by the books, which were replaced immediately after the rise of the regime. In the public sector, language teaching was based on GTM (Grammar Translation Method). The main skill in these books was reading comprehension. However, this skill did not provide students with the opportunity to communicate, because it was not based on dialogues from life in realistic situations. There was also an emphasis on translating sentences from English to Persian. Although this was considered a method Useful for raising students' awareness of both the source and target languages, through a form-focused approach, its widespread use is considered a disadvantage of English language teaching in Iran.

Fifth, teachers in the public education system – the significant disadvantage is the lack of quality teachers, and those that exist in the public system are unmotivated. They were trained using traditional methods. In addition, they had to endure pressure because they had to finish teaching from books by a given time while ignoring essential skills and strategies of learning English (writing, listening, and speaking). Not only did they not have the ability to communicate in English, or teach communicative English, but there was also no other way to teach.

Sixth, students in public schools did not have to learn communicative English because university entrance exams did not test communicative English skills, but rather tested knowledge of grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. These students lacked productive skills such as listening and speaking.

Seventh, assessment – University entrance exams did not test communicative aspects of language, but rather grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. Therefore, students learned receptive skills and were lacking in productive skills (listening and speaking).

The private sector has experienced significant changes over the three decades since 1979. In the first decade, private English language institutes were abruptly closed by the new regime. In the second decade, institutes began to emerge and grow due to the demand and need of the population in the private sector. In the third decade, the institutes became a profitable industry and a big business (Atai & Mazlum, 2013).

When private institutes in Iran returned to serve the population, they adopted a different approach and contrasted with that which existed in the public sector.

English language teaching in Iran is characterized by a struggle between two opposing approaches: the public sector versus the private sector. The public sector represents a local version of English, adapted to Islamic and Iranian values. This sector is characterized by local textbooks, traditional teaching methods, and less skilled teachers. In contrast, the private sector promotes a global version of English, using international teaching materials, Communicative teaching methods, and more skilled teachers. The Iranian regime dictates English teaching according to the local approach (Iranmehr & Davari, 2018).

5. In the formal (public) education system

In analyzing the regime's attitude towards the teaching of English and its policy on the matter in the public sector, the period can be divided into two phases:

Phase One: From 1979-2013 (34 years) approximately 3 decades.

Phase Two: From 2013-2017.

We will review the policy and its impact on textbooks, methodology, teachers, students, and the assessment of knowledge in language acquisition.

6. In the formal education system in the first phase: From 1979-2013 (34 years) approximately 3 decades

Textbooks – In the first phase, textbooks were replaced in 1979 with books called:

"The Right Path to English Series" - which emphasized skills of pronunciation, vocabulary and recognition of the English alphabet in middle school, while in high school they emphasized skills of reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. In contrast, skills that were not addressed in these books were: writing, listening and speaking (Seidi et al., 2016; Sadeghi & Richards, 2015).

Methodology – The methodology in the public sector was derived and based on English textbooks. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM). This approach incorporates a primary language skill: reading comprehension.

This methodology is acquired through teaching patterns Grammar in a didactic way and vocabulary memorization. The approach did not allow students to communicate because it was not based on real-life dialogue (Mazlum & Poorebrahim, 2013; Forouzani, Foroozandeh & Sharaki, 2015).

The method emphasized translating sentences from English to Persian. This was considered an effective technique, through which students paid attention to the source and target

languages by focusing on formality. The widespread use of this was considered a shortcoming of the language learning system in Iran (Shishavan, 2010; Dolati & Seliman, 2010).

Teachers – The teachers, who taught in the public sector, were not of high quality, and did not show motivation. This was a major shortcoming. They learned using traditional methods, they were not able to communicate in English or communicatively teach English. There was also no other way to teach. They were forced to finish the books each time while ignoring essential skills and strategies for learning English. In these boring classes, students were not motivated enough to learn English and only thought about how to get passing grades to finish the course (Akbari, 2015).

Students – Students in the public sector did not learn English for communication, because they had to pass university entrance exams. University entrance exams did not test communicative aspects of the language, but only tested grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, students acquired only receptive skills (reading and listening) and lacked productive skills (speaking and writing).

Assessment – University entrance exams in English were based on grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary knowledge, not communicative aspects. Therefore, students acquired only receptive skills (reading and listening) and not productive skills (speaking and listening) in written essays, as they had to prepare themselves for standardized tests. The Iranian education system was based on summative mode exams (Kherabadi & Moghaddam, 2019).

7. In the formal (public) education system in the second stage: Starting in 2013

Textbooks – Starting in 2013, textbooks were replaced in schools in the public sector.

In middle school, textbooks called: "English for Schools" began to be taught. These books taught literacy and communication, not through a grammar-translation method, as they had taught for three decades earlier. Also, unlike the previous three decades in which they taught pronunciation), vocabulary, and letter recognition. Also in 2013, they emphasized, through the new books, learning the letters of the alphabet with their corresponding sounds, when they are presented in context, which was not taught in the previous three decades. The books from 2013 combined the teaching of communicative language based on local themes and local culture (Leather & Motallebzadeh, 2015).

This with touches of local identity and culture, enriches the learners. They have characteristics of communicative language such as the insertion of real pictures instead of drawings, the use of all four language skills, a reflection that is close to real life, contexts of conversations and attractions, paying attention to meaning more than form and integrating students in interactions.

In three years of high school, they studied books called: "Vision". The vision book for the upper division also contains the four language skills, diverse and interesting communicative tasks, communicative tasks and activities, while enjoying the right strength of dealing with situations. It is worth noting that the English presented in such books is devoid of Western culture and presents Persian culture and ideology as well as Islamic values. (Mohammadian-Haghighi & Norton, 2017).

Methodology – Under the influence of the shift from the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to a communicative approach, Aghagolzadeh, and Davari (2017, p.55) write that in this ongoing reform process, which aims to reorganize English teaching through the integration of language skills and language components, it is believed that Iranian students will be better equipped to communicate. In the new curriculum, English teaching has been redefined to primarily encourage students' active participation in the learning process and the use of the target

language in communication and to also encourage teachers to promote students' communication skills and reduce the use of the mother tongue. Leather and Motallebzadeh (2015) call this reform: This reform is a 'revolutionary process'.

Teachers – Despite this revolutionary process, teachers are not prepared to deliver the course to the new communication standards. Observations show that teachers do not feel prepared to teach communication skills adequately by the curriculum given to them. There is a significant lack of adequate training before entering teaching and during the job, which has led to an ambiguous implementation of the new communication approach.

Students – Following the social changes in families based in the major cities of Iran, there has been a widening gap in the level of English proficiency among students. Many students with low English proficiency feel confused about how to learn English and how to deal with other students who have high English proficiency. In some areas, classrooms are overcrowded, leading to a lack of sufficient time for each student to participate in class discussions or group and pair work. In such classrooms, students are not motivated enough to learn English.

Assessment – While classroom assessment is based on formative and integrated tests, the English section of the university entrance exam, which was planned to be held for the first time in 2019, is still unknown to teachers and students. In conclusion, as Aghagolzadeh and Davari (2017: 53) point out, although it is still too early to assess and test the quality and performance of the new curriculum, especially the new government-supported textbook series, it is clear that due to the low availability of skilled teachers, limited time, and unclear procedures for assessment, achieving the goals seems out of reach.

8. In the informal (private) education system

Textbooks – The private institutes used textbooks, which were commercially produced but (copied) pirated. As Al-Kabari (2004) writes, the private sector did not publish local textbooks to achieve the goal, but rather, most of them used commercial foreign books, developed by experts in the field which are more interesting because they contain activities, tasks, interesting topics and materials according to difficulty levels. These books prepare students for communication in authentic situations while knowing the target language and culture, and a corresponding assessment method. They use books of high reputation while representing Western culture. These books are based on real situations. These books help students reach their desired goals. They learn the language as an international language (Baleghizade & Motahed, 2010).

Methodology – The methodology in the private sector was built according to the books, which led to the communicative approach. This approach integrates 4 language skills in an integrative way. It comes to responding to the needs of the learners and what interests them.

Teachers – Teachers recruited to teach in institutes were more professional. They were trained and participated in courses before and during their employment. This allowed them to communicate interactively with students. These teachers were more motivated than in the public sector.

Students – Students who come to study in institutes are motivated to learn. This is because students' participation in language acquisition in institutes is not mandatory.

Assessment – Assessment techniques in the private sector are consistent with communicative principles and are more communicative and interactive, to assess students' ability to use language in the context of real-world situation (Iranmehr & Davari, 2018).

9. Conclusion: Fear of Democratic Influences – The Iranian Regime's Fear of the Introduction of the English Language and Culture into Iran

The Iranian regime, which came to power following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, feared the introduction of the English language along with its culture, for several main reasons. The first reason was due to opposition to Western influence, and in particular American influence, which was contrary to the Islamic and national values that the regime sought to promote. The second reason was due to fear of the introduction of foreign values into Iran. The leaders of the revolution feared the English language because they saw it as an imperialist language. In other words, they feared that through the teaching of English, foreign ideas and values would be spread in Iran, which could undermine the country's cultural and religious identity. The third reason was due to the regime's policy focus on teaching Persian. The new regime sought to promote the study of the Persian language, to deepen it and strengthen it, as a symbol of national identity on the one hand, and the other hand, it worked to reduce the study of foreign languages in private schools. A fourth reason was due to the regime's policy of maintaining state education only. The regime worked to centralize the education system under government supervision, it wanted to ensure full control over educational content and educational influences.

From all that has been said above, the regime saw the penetration of English along with its culture as a threat to Islamic-Iranian identity and therefore tried to limit the influence of the English language and its culture.

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The Property Institution and Personality Theory in Copyright Law

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Abstract

The theoretical foundation of Copyright Law, as we know it today, originates in the 18th century in continental Europe, during the philosophical discussions about natural rights. It was at this time that the distinction was made between the economic rights and the personal rights of the creator within the intangible property framework. At this stage, it can be stated that the primary strength of the personality theory lies in its justification of the creator's personal rights and moral rights. In practice, the fundamental assumptions of the personality theory have permeated copyright law as a whole, including the economic aspects of copyright.

Keywords: personality theory, Copyright Law, Hegel, Kant, Fichte.

1. Introduction – Personality Theory

The Personality Theory justifies an individual's control over their property, viewing it as an expression of their inner personality in the external world. In the case of creation, it is seen as a formative expression of the creator's personality (Dagan, 2009).

According to the Personality Theory, the human connection to a creation is reflected in the way the work and the resources from which it was made encapsulate the creator's past and present experiences.

The clearer and more direct the connection between the formative resource and the creator, the stronger the justification for granting proprietary rights to the creator. The legal system supports this connection through the legal protection provided by the Moral Right. This is most clearly evident in the Moral Right, as the protection of such formative resources holds independent social and moral value (Dagan, 2009).

Based on the Personality Theory, rooted in Natural Law, exploiting a creation or using it without the creator's permission constitutes a violation of the creator's right to their personality and an infringement on their liberty and autonomy as an individual (Pesach, 1961). The connection between Copyright and Personality Theory also extends to a broader level, relating to the general justification of property rights based on Personality Theory.

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2. Hegel, Kant and Fichte: The theoretical basis for personality theory

The theoretical and philosophical basis of the Moral Right in Intellectual Property can be traced to the writings of Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Johann Gottlieb Fichts, specifically the personality theory developed by Hegel and Kant. These writings were profoundly influenced by the Romantic movement, which guided the philosophical discourse and cultural creation of the 19th century (Adeney, 2006).

In his writings from the late 18th century, Fichte differentiated between the tangible printed copy and its content, as well as between the intellectual expressions written in the printed work and the form in which those expressions were conveyed. According to Fichte, the abstract ideas, upon their publication, became part of the public domain. However, the tangible copy and the economic rights derived from its dissemination remained the exclusive property of the creator.

In essence, Fichte relied on the theory that the creator's rights over their works originate from their ownership of the tangible copy. Once this foundation was laid, the theory justifying Copyright based on personality theory, as proposed by Kant, began to develop during the same period (Adeney, 2006; Galily, 2023).

Kant's moral philosophy developed the concept of the creator's autonomy, expressed through their works. In his 1785 essay On the Wrongfulness of the Unauthorized Publication of Books (Kant, 1875), Kant establishes the creator's right, through the proprietary rights of the publisher, over their works, including the creator's right to make changes to their work (Treiger-Bar-Am, 2008).

Kant's most prominent expression regarding the Moral Right was his assertion that the creator has the right to have their work attributed to them and not to others and to prevent its harmful use without their consent. In Kant's words, this is *"an inherent right in his own person, namely a right to prevent another making him address the public without his consent"* (Adeney, 2006).

Thus, by the late 18th century, the Moral Right was established in its two main aspects—integrity and attribution—in the writings of one of the most significant thinkers in philosophical thought.

Hegel expanded on Kant's personality theory and, in addition to asserting that the external expression of a creation represents the creator's inner self, sought to distinguish between inalienable cultural assets and transferable assets. Hegel cited as an example essential characteristic that reflect the creator's personality, such as religious beliefs or aspirations, which cannot be transferred. The transfer of an internal asset that is inalienable would result in alienation from the creator's personality, affecting their inner essence and negating the autonomy and will that underpin their existence (Netanel, 1993).

3. The foundation of the moral right in the Personality Theory and the difference between the continental law to Anglo-American law

Kant and Hegel's Personality Theory gained legal recognition in the Moral Right as reflected in continental law. This legal system places significant weight on the creator's subjective perception of the harm done to their creation. Furthermore, a distinction is made between the German and French approaches to the Moral Right. The German legal system examines the purpose of the foundational creation against the nature and scope of the changes made, assessing the extent of the harm to the creator's intellectual interests.

By contrast, the French legal system places greater emphasis on the subjective connection between the creator and their creation. Under the French approach, the creator has

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the right to prevent alterations to their work, as the right to integrity also encompasses the right to respect for the work, with all its implications for the creator's personality and dignity in their subjective perception (Khoury, 2009).

4. The utilitarian approach and Work Theory

Beyond the personality theory, two additional central theories are used to justify the recognition of Copyright: The Utilitarian approach and the Labor Theory. A brief discussion of these two theories will help frame the focus on the personality theory as it pertains to the Moral Right.

The Utilitarian approach, often referred to as the "incentive argument," recognizes Copyright to encourage the creation and dissemination of expressions, works, and other abstract goods with societal value. This purpose is achieved by providing economic incentives through the granting of Copyright. The Utilitarian approach recognizes Copyright when it benefits society as a whole, as the creator serves as a public agent and a means of promoting the public interest rather than being viewed as an independent entity deserving protection (Pesach, 1961).

The Labor Theory, sometimes referred to as the "reward argument," is a perspective that views Copyright as a fair reward owed to the creator for the effort and resources invested in producing the protected work. This theory is primarily based on considerations of justice and fairness and derives from the philosophy of John Locke. According to Locke's property theory, when an individual takes a natural resource, provided by God, and enhances it with labor and creativity, that resource becomes their property (Locke, 1690).

However, it is worth noting that while Locke himself did not explicitly address intellectual property in the context of Copyright, scholars have interpreted his theory as providing a foundation for the justification of intellectual property rights (Hettinger, 1989).

The Anglo-American approach does not place significant emphasis on the Moral Right or the integrity of the work and does not base the Moral Right on the Personality Theory. Instead, this approach prioritizes the Utilitarian rationale for Copyright. Nevertheless, in recent years, the Personality Theory has gradually gained traction within the Anglo-American legal framework.

5. Conclusion – Over-application of the Personality Theory

It can be stated that the main strength of the theory of personality lies in the justification of the personal and moral rights of the creator (Pesach, 1961). In practice, the basic assumptions of the theory of personality have permeated copyright law as a whole, including the economic aspects of copyright. One example of this, as demonstrated by scholars, is found in the requirement of originality, which is an integral part of copyright law in various legal systems. Although this requirement reflects the basic assumption of the theory of personality regarding the personal and immediate connection between the creator and the work – an assumption that should ostensibly apply only to moral rights and not to other economic rights – originality has, in practice, become a condition for the recognition of copyright in its entirety, including its economic aspects. This recognition demonstrates that the existing legal doctrine sometimes suffers from the over-application of personality theory and its assumptions, even in areas that are not based on personality theory and are not intended to achieve its goals (Pesach, 1961).

Over-application of personality theory may lead to unjustified and unjustified harm to various external interests, while relying on the theory as presented in this chapter. On the other

hand, such over-application does not necessarily harm the foundations that justify the existence of moral rights. As argued earlier, the most distinct expression of personality theory lies within the framework of moral rights (Tsekov, 2016).

Therefore, it can be said that the connection between moral rights and personality theory remains strong. Moral rights are based on the personal qualities of the creator and on the protection against harm to his dignity. Over-application of personality theory should not lead to the conclusion that it is necessary to reduce the strength of moral rights (Tsekov, 2024).

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Philosophical Problems in Euthanasia: Classical Foundations and Contemporary Dilemmas

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Abstract

Euthanasia, derived from the Greek *eu* (good) and *thanatos* (death), signifies the act of intentionally ending a life to relieve suffering. While the practice has existed in various forms throughout history, it is only in recent decades that euthanasia has become a central topic of ethical, legal, and philosophical debate. The increasing complexity of modern medicine, the extension of human life through technological means, and the rise of individual autonomy as a moral and legal principle have all converged to bring euthanasia to the forefront of contemporary philosophical inquiry.

Keywords: euthanasia, medical ethics, autonomy, suffering, human dignity, cross-cultural ethics, end-of-life decisions, philosophical ethics, compassionate death.

1. Introduction: Euthanasia as a philosophical challenge

Euthanasia, derived from the Greek *eu* (good) and *thanatos* (death), signifies the act of intentionally ending a life to relieve suffering. While the practice has existed in various forms throughout history, it is only in recent decades that euthanasia has become a central topic of ethical, legal, and philosophical debate. The increasing complexity of modern medicine, the extension of human life through technological means, and the rise of individual autonomy as a moral and legal principle have all converged to bring euthanasia to the forefront of contemporary philosophical inquiry.

The debate over euthanasia is not merely a matter of medical policy or legal regulation—it is fundamentally a philosophical problem. At its core lie questions about the meaning and value of life, the nature of suffering, the legitimacy of personal autonomy, and the boundaries of moral responsibility. When, if ever, is it morally permissible to end a human life? Is the relief of suffering a sufficient justification for such an act? Should individual choice override cultural, religious, or professional ethical norms?

These questions are made even more complex by the variety of forms that euthanasia can take. Distinctions are often drawn between active and passive euthanasia, between voluntary, non-voluntary, and involuntary euthanasia, and between physician-assisted suicide and direct life-ending interventions. Each of these scenarios presents its own unique set of ethical and philosophical tensions, demanding careful analysis and moral discernment.

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This paper seeks to examine the philosophical foundations and implications of euthanasia, drawing upon both classical and contemporary theories. From Aristotle and Kant to contemporary figures such as Peter Singer and Michel Foucault, the ethical terrain surrounding euthanasia is deeply rooted in broader conceptions of human nature, moral duty, and the role of the state or medical authority. By exploring these perspectives, this study aims to illuminate the enduring and unresolved dilemmas that define euthanasia as not just a medical or legal issue, but a profound moral and existential question.

In what follows, we will begin with classical philosophical theories that have shaped our understanding of life and death, move through modern ethical frameworks such as utilitarianism and deontology, and engage with more recent developments in phenomenology, postmodern theory, and cross-cultural ethics. Through this multidimensional exploration, we hope to reveal the complexity and importance of sustained philosophical reflection on euthanasia—an issue that continues to challenge our deepest values and societal commitments.

2. Classical ethical theories and the value of life

Philosophy in the classical world provides an early and fundamental framework for ethical attitudes about life, death and moral agency. The writings of ancient and medieval philosophers, although composed well before the current discussions on euthanasia, still offer readers timeless advice grounded in theories reflective of contemporary ethical debates. These traditions are rooted in different understandings of human nature, of virtue, and of the intrinsic value of life itself.

The philosopher Aristotle, in his Nicomachean Ethics, argues that the highest good for humans is eudaimonia, commonly understood as "flourishing" or "well-being." One attains this state via the exercise of reason and the cultivation of virtue in line with one's nature (Aristotle, 2009). For Aristotle, there is much more to "life" than mere biological existence: there is a teleological journey that each individual has ahead of them, in the direction of achieving excellence. Suicide, or intentional life-ending, would be marginalized as not reaching potential, and therefore, a failure of the virtuous path. Nevertheless, Aristotle admits that death by unbearable suffering might pose an insurmountable barrier to living a flourishing life, allowing for a reasonable alternative space for debate.

The Stoics, by contrast, take a more permissive view of death. Philosophers like Seneca and Epictetus argued that living according to nature also involves a rational choice to terminate one's existence under appropriate conditions. Furthermore, if life cannot be lived per virtue because of intense physical suffering (e.g., terminal illness), loss of autonomy, or moral violation suicide can be a rational and even honorable choice (Long, 2002). From this perspective, death itself isn't evil; the moral quality of life is determined by how it is lived of its duration.

In profound opposition, Thomas Aquinas, writing from a Christian theological perspective, believes murder and consequently, euthanasia is wrong. In his Summa Theologica, Aquinas argues that life is a divine gift and that intentionally taking life, even to relieve suffering, constitutes a grave moral error (Aquinas, 1947). From this perspective, human beings do not ultimately own their bodies; life belongs to God, and the intentional taking of life — either one's own or someone else's — violates natural law and divine will. Thomas Aquinas still is highly influential in modern Catholic bioethics and is influential in maintaining religious opposition against euthanasia.

Even Immanuel Kant, writing during the Enlightenment period, confirms some of these moral absolutes. In his Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals, Kant argues that rational beings have intrinsic dignity and must be treated at all times as ends-in-themselves (Kant, 1964).

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But strangely, even as Kant defends the autonomy of the rational will, he condemns suicide, and therefore euthanasia, with great passion. For Kant, using reason to justify one's own destruction is a contradiction because it reduces the rational self to a means of attaining relief from suffering and thus violates the categorical imperative.

From these classical perspectives, euthanasia is therefore seen as a foundational moral tension between the sanctity of life, the pursuit of virtue, and the exercise of reason. Whereas Aristotle and the Stoics permitted greater situational moral reasoning, Aquinas and Kant offered absolute proscriptions based on theology and deontological ethics. These ideas remain ideological landmarks for contemporary discussions, supporting as well as resisting modern pleas for euthanasia.

3. Utilitarianism and the morality of consequences

Utilitarianism offers a consequentialist framework for evaluating the morality of actions based on their outcomes precisely, their contribution to overall happiness or reduction of suffering. Within debates on euthanasia, utilitarian reasoning has often served as a central justification for permitting the intentional ending of life, particularly in cases involving intense and incurable suffering. The moral legitimacy of euthanasia, from this perspective, depends not on adherence to absolute rules or metaphysical doctrines but on the delicate balance of pleasure and pain it produces, underscoring the weight of ethical decisions.

Jeremy Bentham, the founder of classical utilitarianism, proposed that the rightness or wrongness of any action should be measured by its capacity to produce "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" (Bentham, 1781). From this standpoint, euthanasia could be considered morally permissible or even obligatory if it alleviates extreme suffering and does not lead to more significant harm. Bentham's hedonistic calculus invites a rational assessment of intensity, duration, certainty, and proximity of pleasure and pain. A patient enduring unbearable pain, with no prospect of recovery, might justifiably choose to end their life if doing so would bring about greater net utility.

While maintaining Bentham's consequentialist logic, Mill placed a greater emphasis on individual liberty and qualitative distinctions in the pursuit of pleasure. In On Liberty, Mill defends the right of individuals to act according to their judgments, provided they do not harm others (Mill, 2001). Applied to euthanasia, Mill's principle of autonomy implies that a competent individual should be free to choose death as a rational response to intolerable suffering. Mill also distinguished between higher and lower pleasures, suggesting that preserving mere biological existence is not necessarily preferable to death if life has lost its dignity or meaning.

Contemporary utilitarian thinkers have extended these arguments into the field of bioethics and medical decision-making. Peter Singer, for instance, has significantly influenced the field with his advocacy for a preference utilitarianism that prioritizes the satisfaction of rational preferences over mere life preservation (Singer, 1993). He argues that if a patient clearly and voluntarily expresses a desire to die and if continued existence offers no net benefit, euthanasia may be the most ethical course of action. Singer's controversial stance has had a profound impact on legal and ethical reforms across several countries.

Despite its apparent simplicity and moral flexibility, utilitarianism faces several critical challenges in the context of euthanasia. One concern is the risk of instrumentalizing life. In this concept, individuals may be valued or devalued based solely on their utility, specifically their potential to contribute to overall happiness. This can lead to ethically troubling implications for vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, disabled, or mentally ill, who may feel pressure to choose euthanasia to avoid becoming a "burden". Critics also argue that utilitarianism lacks

intrinsic respect for human dignity and fails to account for the deeper meaning of suffering, relationships, and moral duty.

Moreover, the utilitarian emphasis on outcomes can be ethically destabilizing in borderline cases with ambiguous or unpredictable consequences. Suppose decisions are based solely on anticipated happiness or suffering. In that case, there is a risk of moral relativism, a concept in which what is considered morally right or wrong is not absolute but rather depends on the particular culture or society. This can lead to a loss of principled guidance. These tensions underscore the need to supplement utilitarian reasoning with other ethical frameworks that consider rights, virtues, and contextual factors.

Nonetheless, utilitarianism remains a powerful and persuasive approach in contemporary debates on euthanasia. Its focus on minimizing suffering and respecting individual preferences resonates in secular and pluralistic societies, providing a practical methodology for policymakers and healthcare professionals faced with complex end-of-life decisions.

4. Contemporary debates: Autonomy, consent, and medical ethics

Modern discussions about euthanasia center around a fundamental tension between the rights of the individual and the moral obligations of medical practitioners and society. Where traditional moral systems rely on universal principles or metaphysical doctrines, the current debates over euthanasia and assisted suicide increasingly concern the rights of persons to make choices that affect their own lives and deaths in complex medical, legal and cultural contexts.

The idea of autonomy has become one of the cornerstones of contemporary bioethics. Rooted in Kantian moral philosophy and extended in liberal democratic theory, autonomy signifies an individual's entitlement to make informed, voluntary decisions about their body and life, free from coercion or manipulation (Beauchamp & Childress, 1994; Galily, 2023). Within this framework, the choice of a competent individual to end their life because of unbearable suffering is understood not as a failure of morality but as an expression of rational self-governance. Cases based on autonomy arguments favor legislating voluntary euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide so long as sufficient safeguards and consent procedures are set.

Over the last couple of decades, philosophers and bioethicists have revisited autonomy through the lenses of vulnerability and social context. Pesut et al. (2021) makes the case that any philosophical framework that might enable medical aid in dying must contend with not only an individual right but also the threat such a right pose to marginalized and medically dependent populations. They argue that, in the absence of attention to structural inequalities and psychosocial pressures on decisions at end-of-life, pure autonomy-based models may obscure power relationships among patients, healthcare providers, and the state.

For example, on this view, the philosopher Peter Singer, a leading voice of preference utilitarianism, carries this premise into bioethical decision-making, arguing for an external moral weight to a person's preferences and subjective evaluation of the quality of life (Singer, 2011; Schüklenk & Singer, 2021). For Singer, ethics must be about what people want for themselves rather than what institutions or traditions demand. That position continues to be significant in informing policies in countries that have legalized euthanasia, including the Netherlands and Canada.

However, critics such as Leon R. Kass and Daniel Callahan warn that an overemphasis on autonomy will erode the moral foundations of medicine. Kass (1991) argues that healing ,not killing ,is at the heart of medical practice and cautions against redefining death as a therapeutic option. Moreover, Callahan (2000) argues that medical institutions should prioritize preserving

life and alleviating suffering over facilitating self-destruction. Such stances hold some appeal for more conservative bioethics discourse, as in religious or communitarian traditions.

The principle of informed consent is still core and contentious. Figuring out whether someone is capable of making a decision that is their own ,especially in cases of chronic pain, terminal illness, or depression ,is also tricky. In this respect, recent philosophical literature advocates for relational autonomy, in which decisions are made within the context of empathic dialogue, with an awareness of social dependencies (Gómez-Vírseda at al., 2019).

The moral agency of physicians and the healthcare system is also being examined. Should providers be required to perform euthanasia if it runs counter to their conscience or professional ethos? How can healthcare organizations strike a balance between respecting individual choice and upholding medical integrity and public trust? These are burgeoning questions in pluralistic and deliberative bioethics, in which no single value, such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, or justice, can unilaterally constrain the determination of ethics.

Outside the world of end-of-life specialists, the dominant paradigm has shifted toward shared decision-making and context-sensitive ethics, acknowledging the fluidity and complexity of end-of-life experiences. Hartling (2021) argues for breaking through what they call morally contrived barriers to physician-assisted death, suggesting that moral justification should stem from utilitarian-based, individual-person-like preferences and societal, interpersonal responsibility.

5. Phenomenology and the lived experience of suffering

Most discussions of euthanasia are driven by normative values, such as autonomy and utility, but phenomenology brings a more human, qualitative approach to bear on end-of-life questions. Instead, phenomenology directs our attention to the body in pain and suffering; it centers not on abstract rights or consequences, but on the body lived, suffering, and dying. It asks, What does it mean to be a suffering subject? What is death like from within rather than from without?

This approach finds its roots in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who posited that our fundamental way of being in the world is embodied. Merleau-Ponty (1962), in Phenomenology of Perception, speaks of the body not merely as an object, but rather as an expressive, subjective medium through which the world is experienced. In euthanasia, this perspective urges us to think not only of the biological facts, such as the illness, but of the way the patient suffers, experiences their sickness, and describes it. Pain is not just a physiological phenomenon; it is lived, situated, and imbued with meaning.

A complementary perspective is provided by Emmanuel Levinas, particularly in terms of the ethical relationship to the Other. According to his philosophy, ethics begins with responsibility for the suffering of others, a face-to-face experience that demands the self to react (Levinas, 1969). Levinas offers no rigid ethical rules, only a radical attentiveness to vulnerability. From this perspective, euthanasia may be understood not simply as a tool to be used as the ultimate expression of autonomy, the escape plan, but rather as the other's answer to the call to add to their suffering as little as possible in the face of unbearable pain. However, Levinas also warns against totalizing judgments; no one can completely know the experience of another's suffering.

Phenomenological approaches challenge many of the assumptions we incorporate into clinical language, including standardized scales for measuring pain and quality of life. These tools, although helpful for medical oversight, tend to condense complex spiritual realities into numerical figures. The phenomenological perspective argues that ethical decision-making must first

recognize situations of illness as having both narrative and affective dimensions, as well as the broader social and relational contexts of suffering.

Recent scholarships are still staking out this territory. Picón-Jaimes et al. (2021) contend that the ethical consideration of euthanasia must engage meaninglessness as a subjective experience, which cannot be reduced to either autonomy or utility. Equally, Woods and Graven (2020) emphasize the need for an account of the cultural and symbolic meanings of suffering and death, which vary across different societies and traditions. These insights speak to a more context-sensitive and compassionate ethics, rooted less in rational calculation and more in empathy and moral imagination.

This requires that we approach euthanasia more holistically and not only with an expanded moral lexicon: we must realize the limitations of autism and similarly develop an understanding of the depth of human experience for what is, at the start of life, a premature concept (phenomenology). It warns against ethical reductionism and calls for a renewed attentiveness to listening, witnessing, and dialoguing with those who suffer. It may not provide definitive answers, but it offers the moral depth and humility we need to grapple with some of life's most challenging choices.

6. Postmodern and biopolitical perspectives

While normative ethical theories aim to provide universal principles of morality, postmodern philosophy examines the diverse power functions, discourses, and institutionally sanctioned practices that shape our perspectives on life and death. Moreover, euthanasia within this critical tradition is not simply a moral choice or clinical decision, but a phenomenon viscerally embedded in relations of power, language, and control. Important thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben offer essential tools for exploring how societies administer, regulate, and delineate life through medical and legal structures.

Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, which involves the governance of populations through the management of bodies and life processes, offers a nuanced critique of the role of modern medicine in determining the value of life. In The History of Sexuality (1978), Foucault traces a shift from a sovereign power that operates to "let live or make die" toward a new kind of power that works to "make live and let die" that is, to optimize, normalize, and manage life through scientific and bureaucratic technologies. From this perspective, euthanasia is integrated into a broader strategy of biopolitical regulation, wherein decisions about death are shaped not only by ethical considerations but also by social efficiency, risk management, and institutional logic (Foucault, 1978).

The term *la nuda vita* ("bare life") in contemporary philosopher Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer (1998) builds on Foucault's insights. Agamben examines how contemporary legal regimes generate these zones of exception, wherein individuals cease to hold any political worth and are relegated to the plane of biological existence. In the case of euthanasia, this begs serious questions: What does it mean for a life to no longer have political or ethical significance? Who gets to decide when someone is pared down to "bare life"? Agamben's work implies that some vulnerable people, the elderly or disabled or terminally ill, especially, could become somehow placed beyond the mandate of ethical and legal protection under cover of this compassion.

Such liberal democratic discourse often lauds autonomy and rationality. Postmodern critiques also question this rhetoric. As Foucault cautions, appeals to autonomy can also function as a technology of domination by constituting a subject that comes to desire specific forms of life or death under social and institutional pressure (Foucault, 1988). In this light, the choice to ask for euthanasia is not always entirely free. It may be shaped as much by internalized norms of

productivity, independence, and utility, especially in societies where dependence and decline are marginalized.

These concerns are echoed in recent scholarship. According to Picón-Jaimes et al. (2021), Western societies are experiencing increasing tension between individuals' wishes to exert control over death and the collective discomfort with aging, disability, and suffering. The routine acceptance of euthanasia, he suggests, might be a goodhearted one, but it also expresses a broader cultural fear of frailty and dissolution.

However, postmodern and biopolitical approaches are not opposed to euthanasia in an absolute manner. Instead, they call us to be critically watchful about how and why certain deaths are allowed, who is included and excluded from ethical consideration, and how social norms structure perceptions of worth and dignity. They remind us that each ethical decision is mediated by historical, political, and discursive contexts that should be interrogated, not assumed.

These outlooks broaden the euthanasia conversation beyond that of individual decision or medical ethics. They compel us to examine the structural and symbolic aspects of death in modernity and to acknowledge the fractal nature of the relationship between life and death within society, as well as its connection to flows of power and life.

7. Cross-cultural and religious considerations

Christian ethics

Most importantly, within Catholicism, life is considered a sanctified gift from God. The deliberate ending of life, whether by suicide, euthanasia, or assisted death, is considered an affront to divine authority and the natural moral order. Based on the Catholic doctrine, established by the Vatican, and teachers including Thomas Aquinas, suffering can hold a redemptive spiritual value, and it is not within human authority to preemptively end life (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994). This position continues to influence laws and policies in majority-Catholic societies and informs medical ethics in faith-based institutions.

Islamic bioethics

Islamic bioethics similarly forbids euthanasia, stressing God's absolute control of life and death. Life is a trust from God, and protecting it is a morally based obligation. Although Islam allows the withdrawal of futile treatment when certain conditions are met, active euthanasia is generally prohibited. Islamic legal theory accords great importance to the concept of intention (niyyah), meaning that even acts designed to alleviate suffering must remain within divinely sanctioned boundaries (Sachedina, 2005).

Judaism

In Judaism, traditional rabbinic authorities have maintained for centuries that active euthanasia is forbidden, although there is debate about withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining interventions in nuanced terms. Some approaches focus on the prohibition of hastening death (euthanasia), while others emphasize the distinction between prolonging life and prolonging suffering (Steinberg & Rosner, 2003).

Cultural perspectives on death and dying

In addition to formal religious doctrines, cultural attitudes toward death, aging and dependence are very different. In collectivist societies, including many in East Asia and Africa, ethical questions about end-of-life care are often resolved not by individuals who might be isolated but within family or community contexts. The radical autonomy that is the Western ideal could

seem strange or even morally problematic. Instead, filial piety, relational harmony and interdependence are the core values that structure moral reasoning (Fan, 2007).

Death, in turn, is an integral part of life; in Indigenous worldviews, life and death are normal, interconnected processes, not events to be controlled and death is sometimes seen as a natural source of ongoing life, spirit and other forms of being. Many Indigenous traditions focus on spiritual balance, connection to ancestors and well-being in its most holistic sense, as opposed to biomedical definitions of suffering or death. In such frameworks, the enforcement of Western medical ethics (whether pro- or anti-euthanasia) is perceived as either cultural erasure or ethical colonialism.

In this context, cross-cultural ethics also calls into question the neutral and universal status of the categories of Western philosophy. It calls for epistemic humility, attentiveness to lived traditions, and the crafting of pluralistic ethical models that can accommodate differing views on the value of life and the meaning of a "good death."

8. Conclusion: Between compassion and controversy

Euthanasia confronts ethical debates demonstrating the challenges of moral reasoning in human suffering, autonomy, and mortality. In all the philosophies considered in this study, the tension between idealism and inductivism, the universal and the profoundly personal, recurs repeatedly, whether in classical virtue ethics, deontological imperatives, utilitarian reasoning, phenomenological insight, postmodern critique, or cross-cultural perspectives.

Classical theories of the same era, such as those of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Kant, offer fundamental principles, whether teleological, theological, or rationalist, that convey the sacredness and moral structure of life. By contrast, relevant utilitarian thinkers include, but are not limited to, those such as Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Peter Singer, who are less concerned with systems of rules and more explicitly care about the results, individual choice, and the reduction of suffering at the moral level. Phenomenology urges us for this reason to listen deeply to the lived experience of suffering, not as an abstraction or a condition, but as an embodied, relational, and narrative reality.

Narratives from postmodern and biopolitical perspectives caution against uncritically embracing liberal ideals like autonomy, revealing the extent to which power, discourse, and institutional machinations underpin both the production of suffering and the perception of its alleviation. Cross-cultural and religious ethics contribute to that conversation, offering diverse perspectives on the world, critiquing Western secular norms, and underscoring the importance of ethical humility and cultural sensitivity.

Euthanasia is not just a simple yes or no, right or wrong question. It is a moral frontier where compassion, dignity and justice meet fear. As contemporary societies grapple with the medical, legal, and existential questions raised by end-of-life care, the task of philosophy is not to provide definitive answers but to help map the ethical territory, open up key questions, and assist us in thinking through our options with clarity and courage.

A just and humane approach to euthanasia must balance the individual's right to die with dignity and autonomy with the community's duty to protect the vulnerable, to embrace diversity, and to guarantee that decisions are made with empathy, reflection, and responsibility. In so doing, philosophy takes back its place not just as an academic discipline but as a powerful ally in one of the most human questions of all: how to live and how to let go.

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Tobacco Use and Digital Dependency in Adolescents: A School-Centered Framework for Prevention

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Abstract

This article explores the prevalence and contributing factors of addictive behaviors among adolescent students, focusing on tobacco use and screen addiction (e.g., mobile phones, social media, gaming). Through a review of international and Greek literature, individual, family, and school-related risk factors are identified, along with the critical role of school-based Health Education programs in prevention. Emphasis is placed on the need for early interventions that strengthen students' psychosocial resilience and promote healthy decision-making. The school is highlighted as a key environment for the development of life skills and the enhancement of protective factors. The article concludes with recommendations for integrating targeted prevention programs into school curricula to address the rising incidence of adolescent addiction.

Keywords: addictions, adolescents, students, digital addiction, tobacco use, risk behaviors, health education prevention, school-based interventions, psychosocial resilience, school environment, addictive behaviors.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a life period marked by particular vulnerability, as cognitive and emotional functions are still developing and neurobiological self-regulation mechanisms have not yet fully matured (Aikaterini, 2023). In this context, the increased availability of digital means and near-unlimited access to the internet create an environment in which excessive usage behaviors are more likely to develop. At the same time, experimentation with smoking continues to appear in a segment of the adolescent population, amplifying the risk of adopting behaviors that may lead to long-term harmful habits (Diamantoula, 2016). The addiction, whether concerning internet use or tobacco consumption, is often accompanied by psychosocial difficulties. Empirical data suggest that excessive use of computers and mobile phones by adolescents can correlate with elevated levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, as well as reduced concentration in school tasks (Panagoula, 2021). Regarding smoking, especially when initiated early, it is observed that social influences and identity-seeking play a decisive role in converting experimentation into regular use (Diamantoula, 2016).

The school environment can either offer protection through prevention strategies or become a place reinforcing harmful influences if adequate support is lacking. Diagnosing internet addiction in adolescents is typically done via standardized measurement tools, such as the Young Diagnostic Questionnaire (YDQ) or specially designed questionnaires, which assess criteria like inability to limit usage and neglect of other activities due to online engagement (Tsampa, 2018).

Such instruments have significantly contributed to the scientific mapping of the phenomenon but require cultural adaptation to better reflect social norms of each population group. This is particularly important for Greek youth, where participation in so-called "internet cafés" remains relatively high (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008).

At younger ages, another risk factor appears: children and adolescents who show symptoms of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) display greater susceptibility to pathological internet use. This often co-occurs with more severe symptoms of the ADHD itself, creating a vicious cycle in which excessive online engagement not only fails to alleviate difficulties of concentration but exacerbates them (Aikaterini, 2023). Thus, a dual burden emerges: existing cognitive dysregulation is magnified by a medium that could theoretically offer learning and communication opportunities.

However, the issue is not limited to individual behavior. The social dynamics among peers often encourage extreme digital engagement or experimental smoking as signs of acceptance by the group. In the case of smoking, it has been shown that school prevention programs engaging students as peer educators achieve greater effectiveness in changing attitudes and behaviors (Diamantoula, 2016). Similarly, collaborative educational models can be employed to inform students about the risks of excessive use of digital tools.

Digital technology, beyond everyday utility and inexhaustible informational potential, becomes dangerous when it is used without limits or awareness of psychological implications, especially for vulnerable groups like adolescents (Tsampa, 2018). Some usage forms involve high levels of social comparison or exposure to unsuitable content, which can intensify tendencies toward self-harm. This has been observed in extreme expressions of the phenomenon, where the purpose of internet use is directly tied to mental health issues. Likewise, in smoking, although the act is clearly linked to biological consequences, its initiation is often more motivated by cultural symbolism or social pressure than by a conscious choice to develop dependence (Diamantoula, 2016).

The 12–17 age group lies at the crossroads between childhood and adulthood, making it a critical point for preventive interventions. Studies have documented a close relationship between digital addiction and the onset of anxiety and depression in this age range, implying that strategic planning of educational actions must consider both learning needs and students ' psychological resilience. The literature supports that, without parental involvement and an active network among school personnel, any effort to curb these behaviors may yield limited results. Finally, it becomes clear that the two forms of addiction — to the internet / mobile phones and to smoking — though seemingly different in mechanism, converge in their impact on adolescents ' psychosocial development (Panagoula, 2021). A common element is the effect on learning capacity, an increase in stress, and a decline in overall well-being. These consequences are most likely to be addressed effectively when there is a multilevel approach: diagnosis via reliable tools, understanding of social risk factors, and implementation of personalized prevention programs within school communities (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008; Tsampa, 2018).

2. Theoretical background

2.1 *Definitions and conceptual approach of addiction*

Addiction can be viewed as a multidimensional concept incorporating psychological, biological, and social components. In its simplest form, it refers to a state in which a person shows repeated and persistent need to engage in a particular activity or consume a substance, despite negative consequences to personal, social, or occupational life (Papadaniil, 2017). Scientific approaches to the term extend beyond traditional substance addictions (like nicotine) to behavioral addictions such as internet and digital media addiction (Aikaterini, 2023). Some

models argue that the core of addiction is dysfunction in impulse-control mechanisms of the brain, with the prefrontal cortex playing a critical role in inhibiting inappropriate behaviors (Panagoula, 2021).

This dysfunction can result from long exposure to addictive substances or from habits that strongly reinforce reward circuits. The term "pathological" is often used to describe behaviors whose frequency and intensity exceed the bounds of what is considered normal or beneficial. In internet addiction research, inability to limit use is often accompanied by social exclusion and the neglect of other activities (Tsampa, 2018). The conceptual distinction between substance addiction and behavioral addiction is of scientific interest. In cases like nicotine, biochemical changes affect neurotransmission via specific receptors. In behavioral addictions the focus shifts more toward reinforcement learning and the development of habitual patterns that become automated (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Nevertheless, a common core remains: the strong connection between the act (either smoking or online navigation) and the feeling of pleasure or relief obtained.

Diagnosis of addiction typically requires detection of specific criteria, such as tolerance (needing increasing doses or duration), withdrawal symptoms when the behavior is interrupted, and loss of control in attempts to limit use (Papadaniil, 2017). In the case of internet use, indicators may manifest as psychosomatic signs like sleep disorders or anxiety when disconnected. There is also critical debate regarding the criteria: some researchers argue that existing diagnostic systems should take into account cultural variation in perceptions of "excessive" use (Panagoula, 2021). For example, a time spent online considered acceptable in one social context may be judged as problematic in another, which poses challenges for prevalence measurement and intervention design.

Comorbidity is common: many adolescents with internet addiction also present anxiety or depression (Aikaterini, 2023). Similarly, youth who begin smoking early may have concurrent self-regulation difficulties or engage in other high-risk behaviors. Thus, "addiction" acts as an umbrella concept covering a set of problems where multiple levels of health are involved: mood, motivation for daily activity, and social functionality. The functional impact becomes a central element in defining problematic behavior. An adolescent might not meet all diagnostic criteria yet suffer noticeable decline in school performance due to excessive social media use (Tsampa, 2018).

Finally, addiction is best viewed as a continuum. Beyond strict psychiatric definitions, there is a dynamic relationship among casual use, problematic use, and full dependence. Transition between these stages may be gradual and often goes unnoticed by the adolescent or family. This makes early detection difficult, yet essential to prevent habit consolidation. Some scholars propose three-factor models for understanding internet addiction: cognitive factors (expectancies of pleasure or relief), emotional factors (loneliness, anxiety), and social factors (peer pressure) (Panagoula, 2021). Likewise for smoking, both biological mechanisms and social norms contribute to the process. From a practical perspective, the conceptual approach must consider not only objective indicators but subjective experience.

2.2 *Historical evolution of addictive behaviors in adolescents*

The evolution of addictive behaviors among adolescents over past decades reflects not only changes in social norms but also technological progress. In the 1980s and early 1990s, smoking was among the most widespread high-risk behaviors in youth, due in part to its societal acceptance. Adolescents were exposed to strong influences from peers and family, while tobacco marketing was relatively unregulated (Diamantoula, 2016). Initiation often coincided with

identity exploration and the desire for social acceptance, increasing the chances of experimental use becoming habitual.

With the entry into the 21st century, while public health campaigns began reducing youth smoking prevalence, another addictive behavior emerged more prominently: pathological internet use. The spread of personal computers in households and the mass arrival of internet-connected mobile phones reshaped how adolescents communicated, entertained, and accessed information (Aikaterini, 2023). What was initially perceived positively — as opportunities for learning or social networking — was soon accompanied by concerns about excessive engagement. As early as the late 1990s, evidence suggested that prolonged digital exposure might yield psychological effects similar to other forms of addiction. Young's (1998) work attempted to describe user profiles showing inability to limit online activity despite negative consequences (Panagoula, 2021).

Over time, interventions against smoking began earlier (e.g., regulation on advertising and sales to minors), whereas digital addiction strategies lagged even as technology was already deeply integrated into adolescent life. This delay likely contributed to the rapid spread of problematic usage patterns. Technological advances after 2010 accelerated this shift: algorithmically tailored social media and apps created environments of continuous engagement. Adolescents spent hours daily producing and consuming digital content, often displacing other social or physical pursuits (Aikaterini, 2023).

Historically, there is a temporal coincidence: the decline in youth smoking (after regulatory policies) and the rise of digital addiction. In many countries, including Greece, anti-tobacco programs in schools began in the 2000s, while structured responses to internet overuse came later. This timing may have facilitated a shift in the direction of reward-seeking behaviors among youth.

Overall, addictive behaviors in adolescents have shifted from mostly chemical dependencies to more abstract but equally powerful forms of behavioral addiction. From cigarettes to smartphones, a shared element is the search for pleasure or relief through repetitive acts that sometimes sacrifice time for productive activities (Panagoula, 2021). The historical pattern shows that each generation is shaped by the technologies and social norms of its time, requiring continuous adaptation of prevention strategies to address new predominant addictive stimuli.

3. Smoking addiction in adolescents

3.1 *Epidemiology and statistics*

The epidemiology of smoking addiction among adolescents is dynamic, shaped by social, economic, and cultural changes. In many countries, experimentation rates may exceed 30% in school populations before completion of lower secondary. In Greece, particularly in earlier decades before stricter tobacco laws, access to cigarettes by minors was nearly uncontrolled (Diamantoula, 2016). Recently, prevalence has declined due to combined government policies and school–based prevention programs. Yet this decline is uneven across regions and socioeconomic strata: rural or semi-urban areas often show higher regular smoking rates than urban centers.

Gender patterns have shifted: while historically males dominated smoking prevalence, in newer cohorts the gender gap is shrinking. In European cross-country studies involving 15–16-year-olds, daily smoking rates vary from below 10% to over 25%, depending on national policy and enforcement. In Greece, prevalence is close to the European average, with regions maintaining high cultural acceptance of smoking. Statistical studies also point to the role of perceived prevalence among peers: adolescents believing that smoking is widespread among friends are

more likely to try or adopt the behavior. Overestimation of peer prevalence can itself be a reinforcing factor. Standard surveys assess frequency (daily vs occasional), age at first use, and family or school environment factors. Data indicate that first experimentation often occurs around ages 13–14, a period of strong social influence and identity development. From a public health view, key statistics include intensity and duration of use in youth. A notable portion of daily users' report consuming more than 5–10 cigarettes per day before adulthood, indicating early development of tolerance and a higher likelihood of long-term dependence (Diamantoula, 2016). Occasional users are often overlooked, but many evolve to more intense usage over years.

Secondary analyses reveal comorbidity with other high-risk behaviors, including excessive internet use. In some studies, adolescents with lower academic performance also show increased likelihood of smoking (Panagoula, 2021). This may relate to lower self-efficacy or less participation in school-based preventive initiatives. Policy measures indeed influence trends: after restrictions on tobacco advertising and sales to minors, many countries saw declines in youth smoking, though residual use persists especially where enforcement is lax or social norms remain permissive. In Greek communities, careful breakdowns show that even as averages decline, vulnerable subpopulations maintain high rates, underlining the need for targeted interventions. Without such granularity, broad strategies risk overlooking high-risk subgroups (Diamantoula, 2016).

3.2 *Risk factors and social influences*

Understanding risk factors for adolescent smoking addiction requires linking epidemiological data with social and individual dynamics. Age at first exposure is not merely a statistic but an entry point into a cascade of influences. Family environment plays a central role: in families with weak boundaries or limited emotional connection, adolescents are more likely to seek acceptance outside the home. When parents or older siblings smoke, they effectively model the behavior, even if verbally opposed.

Peer groups are perhaps the most potent influence in adolescence. Smoking may become a "badge of membership" in certain peer circles. Such normalization elevates adoption risk even among initially uninterested youth (Diamantoula, 2016). Psychologically, traits such as low self-esteem, increased anxiety, or depressive mood often co-occur with experimentation or regular use: smoking may be used as a temporary coping strategy (Panagoula, 2021).

In the school environment, norms matter: schools with a high proportion of smokers in upper grades show higher initiation risk in younger students. Social modeling within the same community is powerful, especially in absence of strong counter-narratives from educators.

Socioeconomic factors also matter: families with lower income or parental unemployment often struggle to provide organized preventive activities, and smoking may be more socially accepted. Cultural contexts where tobacco is not stigmatized pose additional challenges to change.

There is evidence that digital overuse and smoking can interact: excessive internet use is linked to increasing loneliness and anxiety (Panagoula, 2021), which might lead some adolescents to experiment with smoking as a form of emotional regulation. This interaction can form feedback loops: one behavior reinforcing the other. Weak parental monitoring increases the likelihood of both problematic digital use and smoking. Hence effective strategies must address a network of risk factors — from individual personality traits to broader cultural norms — rather than focusing on isolated causes. Collaboration among school, family, and community is essential to weaken negative social pressures and strengthen protective ones.

4. Internet and mobile addiction in adolescents

4.1 *Types of addictive behavior*

Classifying types of digital addiction in adolescents helps to understand underlying mechanisms and tailor interventions. One category is excessive gaming: adolescents spend long hours in multiplayer online games, where continuous progression may supplant real-life goals. This can lead to neglect of school obligations or social life, with emotional distress if disconnected (Tsampa, 2018). Another type is heavy use of social networking platforms, where constant checking for "likes" or comments triggers reward circuits, fostering the compulsion to repeatedly check notifications (Aikaterini, 2023). The phenomenon of continuous connectivity undermines attention and heightens anxiety. A third type is aimless web browsing, where adolescents drift among websites or media without defined purpose. Though seemingly less "harmful," the result is similar: disorganization, time loss, and detachment from offline responsibilities (Panagoula, 2021).

Excessive messaging or chat use is a related pattern: adolescents retain contact with virtual friends even while physically in company of others, reducing in-person interaction and deepening isolation. Another variant is excessive engagement with online commerce or shopping platforms. In older adolescents, motivations may include pleasure from purchasing or belonging to interest communities around certain products. Related to this is internet gambling or betting, combining behavioral and financial risk — though more prevalent in young adulthood, it can emerge in older teens. Some adolescents use the internet as a gateway to other addictive content (e.g., exposure to adult content or cybersexual behaviors). While content-wise distinct, the mechanism reinforces the bond between the platform and brain reward systems (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008).

A common feature across types is the sense that life off-screen is incomplete without digital engagement. This leads to structuring daily routines around online activity, often prioritizing it above real-world demands (Aikaterini, 2023).

In practice, many adolescents display poly-addictive patterns, combining elements — e.g., social media plus gaming plus browsing. This intersection increases not just usage intensity but also resilience against attempts to cut back (Tsampa, 2018). These complex users often present with higher risk of co-occurring psychological problems such as depression or social anxiety. Researchers debate whether all forms should be subsumed under the general label "internet addiction." Some propose multidimensional assessment tools, each targeting core types, so that interventions can map to the individual's specific usage profile (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008).

4.2 *Relationship with mental health disorders*

The association between digital addiction and mental health issues in adolescents is complex and multi-layered. Excessive use of digital media is correlated with increased likelihood of emotional difficulties — anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances — and in some cases may exacerbate existing psychiatric conditions.

One established link is between ADHD and pathological internet use. Adolescents with attention deficits or hyperactivity symptoms show higher susceptibility to compulsive gaming or social media use (Aikaterini, 2023). Such usage can further fragment attention and disrupt daily discipline, exacerbating ADHD symptoms — forming a vicious cycle where addiction and ADHD reinforce each other. Anxiety in adolescents with digital addiction can stem from fear of missing out (FOMO) or concerns about losing connections. This can fuel continuous checking of networks. Some also turn to the internet to escape real-life stressors, perpetuating dependence.

Depression often coexists with internet addiction. Youth with low mood may use online environments to avoid negative feelings (Tsampa, 2018). Though this can offer temporary relief, over time it deepens isolation and weakens real-life engagement. In one longitudinal study, internet addiction and depressive symptoms showed reciprocal influence over time (Junjie Zhang, 2024). Sleep disorders are among the most direct consequences. Nighttime exposure to screens impairs sleep quality and duration, which in turn reduces cognitive and emotional resilience (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Adolescents postponing sleep to continue digital activity often enter a pattern of chronic fatigue.

Moreover, social comparison on digital platforms — constant exposure to curated images of success, beauty, or relationships — can intensify feelings of inadequacy, particularly among already vulnerable adolescents (Panagoula, 2021). The digital environment also increases risk of cyberbullying, which independently contributes to depression and suicidal thoughts. From a neurobiological perspective, digital addiction and mental disorders may share functional circuits involving neurotransmitters like dopamine. Excessive rewards from online engagement can dysregulate these pathways, especially in adolescents still undergoing brain development. Some comparative studies have noted that the motivational drivers differ: nicotine dependence often hinges on habitual drive, while internet addiction may be more influenced by fear-driven use (e.g. anxiety, craving) (Chen et al. 2025). Overall, many of these associations are not incidental but reflect deeper shared mechanisms. Addictive digital use can act both as cause and consequence of mental health challenges, highlighting the need for early detection and integrative interventions.

5. Impact of addiction in the school setting

5.1 *Academic performance*

The influence of smoking and digital addiction on adolescents' academic performance is a complex interplay of direct and indirect factors. As discussed, excessive digital use correlates with anxiety, depressive mood, and impaired concentration (Panagoula, 2021). These traits directly undermine a student's ability to meet academic demands. Sleep disruption is a critical mediating factor: prolonged exposure to screens before bedtime undermines sleep quality, which impairs alertness and cognitive processing during classes (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Academic decline often begins subtly: missed deadlines, reduced class participation, and lagging study habits. Adolescents heavily using social networks or games have less time for study and struggle with time management (Tsampa, 2018). This is aggravated if they already face cognitive vulnerabilities such as ADHD (Aikaterini, 2023).

Regarding smoking, nicotine may temporarily heighten alertness, but long-term use associates with increased anxiety and mood instability, impairing sustained focus and engagement (Diamantoula, 2016). Socially, students who step out during breaks to smoke or check their phones lose opportunities for collaborative learning and interaction, undermining their connection with classmates. Empirical studies show that these disruptions lead to declining grades over time. A student who stays up late gaming may miss class content the next day, they might get distracted in class, checking notifications, and thus fall behind in cumulative knowledge. At the same time, reduced sense of belonging and decreased cooperation with peers can further depress academic outcomes.

To counter this, school programs combining awareness, experiential learning, and skill training (e.g. self-control, planning) have demonstrated effectiveness in helping students balance technology use with study demands (Diamantoula, 2016). In addition, encouraging physical activity within the school day helps counter sedentary habits and supports cognitive alertness. Parental role is also important: students whose parents set consistent limits on screen time or mobile use tend to perform better academically (Aikaterini, 2023). Where parents model

excessive digital or smoking behavior, negative patterns are more likely to be internalized. In combinations of heavy digital use plus regular smoking, the negative impact on academic performance is synergistic. Addressing one without the other yields limited results; an integrative approach is required.

5.2 *Social relations and discipline*

Addictive behaviors affect social relations and disciplinary climate within schools. Excessive mobile use in class or during school activities often signals disengagement from the group, leading to reduced participation in cooperative tasks and erosion of relational skills (Panagoula, 2021). In adolescence, social identity is cultivated through peer interaction; replacing face-to-face interaction with digital isolation fosters a "social void."

Smokers tend to form subgroups that retreat to hidden corners of the schoolyard. These closed circles may provide belonging to new members but effectively segregate them from the broader student body (Diamantoula, 2016). In the digital realm, cliques based on online interests can marginalize students who don't share those interests. Disciplinary issues arise when addictive behaviors violate school rules. Frequent mobile use during lessons may incur warnings or penalties, which undermines teacher–student trust. In the case of smoking, punishments are often administrative and symbolic, lacking preventive emphasis (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Students may perceive rules as obstacles to their addictive impulses, leading them to hide behavior or act covertly (Aikaterini, 2023). Moreover, when high-status students repeatedly flout rules without serious consequences, others may imitate their behavior (Panagoula, 2021). This modeling effect undermines the normative culture. The unhappy consequence is erosion of school cohesion, trust in authority, and a permissive climate toward rule violations.

Cyberbullying, facilitated by uncontrolled digital use, often spills from online to physical contexts, creating tension and conflict in schools (Tsampa, 2018). Victims withdraw from participation, reducing their engagement in the school community. Hence, the role of the educational staff is crucial. A purely punitive approach is often counterproductive; better results emerge when punishment is coupled with supportive counseling, peer mediation, and opportunities for the student to reflect and change (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Peer mentoring programs, where older students model healthy behavior, can reshape group norms and reduce pressure toward addictive practices (Diamantoula, 2016). Ultimately, social relations can also be protective: friend groups committed to moderating digital use or avoiding smoking provide mutual control and encouragement (Panagoula, 2021). Interventions should thus aim to embed healthy norms within peer culture rather than impose them top-down.

6. Role of the school in prevention and reduction of addiction

6.1 *Health education programs*

Health education programs in schools are organized and systematic efforts to improve knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to well-being. Within schools, these programs acquire special importance in countering addiction to smoking or digital technology. An effective program combines not only informational content, but also resistance skills, curiosity management, and avoidance of peer pressure.

Rather than lectures, successful programs use experiential methods: group discussions, role-playing, scenario simulations where students make decisions with full awareness of consequences. Engaging students as active participants — even peer educators — strengthens behavior change (Diamantoula, 2016). When messages come from similar-aged peers, resistance to them lessens and acceptance increases. Enhancing self-esteem is another key objective:

students who recognize their own value are more likely to resist addictive habits. Activities that foster success in non-addictive domains (sports, arts) help build that positive identity.

Developing coping skills is central. Teaching simple anxiety management techniques (e.g. breathing, mindfulness, movement) can provide alternative outlets to nicotine or digital overuse (Panagoula, 2021). Communication training enables students to assert refusal when faced with peer pressure. Success depends also on school–family collaboration. When parents are informed, they can support consistent limits at home (Aikaterini, 2023). For example, the family might enforce screen-time limits or schedule non-digital group activities. Teachers must also be trained to serve as health models: a prevention message loses impact if educators themselves ignore it.

School policies matter: smoke-free zones, bans on mobile use in classrooms, and designated tech-free periods send strong signals (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). But rules must be paired with supportive options: if a student loses their "escape" (e.g. digital engagement), alternative opportunities must exist within the school. A possible model is a themed week: one day devoted to peer pressure, next to screen-time management, then to health impacts of smoking, then to community engagement. Tying knowledge to lived experience helps embed prevention in daily thought. Program evaluation is crucial: pre- and post- intervention surveys measure shifts in attitudes and behaviors, while observation can track actual practice (Tsampa, 2018). If some methods (e.g. role-play) outperform lectures, they should be emphasized. In Greek applications, combining information and practice has reduced initiation rates of smoking over monitoring periods (Diamantoula, 2016).

Similarly, raising awareness about psychological effects of excessive digital use helps students self-detect early problem signs (Panagoula, 2021). Thus, health education programs serve both as prevention and early intervention. Their impact multiplies when the school community treats them not as obligatory lessons but as quality-of-life opportunities, building a collective culture of healthier choices.

6.2 *Collaboration with parents and community*

Effective prevention of addiction in adolescents requires a synergy between the school, family, and community. The school's interventions (from section 6.1) gain greater reach when supported by parents who understand risks and strategies (Aikaterini, 2023). Parents are not passive receivers but active parts of a shared effort. Through regular school–parent communication (meetings, workshops), scientific data on addiction can be paired with discussion of home life. Parents might notice their children spending excessive hours online or sneaking out to smoke; such observations allow the school to tailor support. The community can offer alternative spaces and activities (sports clubs, cultural centers) that reduce adolescents 'free time in risk zones (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). For example, collaboration between school and local sports clubs to provide free training opens healthy social options.

Coordination is essential: forming working groups with teachers, parents, and community representatives encourages discussion of cases, pooling ideas, and organizing preventive events. Parents can contribute their skills (e.g. a parent who is an IT professional might share safe-use tips). Community institutions (public health departments, local NGOs) may offer counseling services for students with signs of addiction (Tsampa, 2018). Public campaigns on smoking can reinforce school messages. In small towns or villages, where people know one another, social stigma around youth smoking can be a deterrent; in larger cities where anonymity prevails, more structured campaigns may be needed (Panagoula, 2021). Digital norms are similar: in highly technologized communities, messages should frame balanced use rather than prohibition. A collaborative weekly schedule might include: expert talks on tobacco risks,

workshops on healthy mobile use, a communal sports day, and a parent–teacher evening to share experiences. Students 'participation in these events increases both knowledge and social connection.

Importantly, the culture of the community shapes success: in places where public disapproval of youth smoking exists, prevention has a stronger effect; in tech-oriented areas, digital overuse is normalized, requiring more sensitivity in messaging (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008). Finally, collaboration demands continuous feedback: after a school event, parents may receive handouts with usage rules and alternative activity ideas (Aikaterini, 2023). This transforms theory into daily practice at home. The goal is a multi-level strategy: the school provides structure and knowledge; the family enacts it in daily life; the community offers alternative positive engagement. When all parts align, adolescents can develop self-regulation skills that protect not only during their school years but into adulthood.

7. Suggested educational strategies

To address smoking addiction and excessive technology use in adolescents, educational strategies must combine scientific grounding, pedagogical design, and sociocultural sensitivity. One highly effective approach is the theory–experiential combination: students should receive both factual knowledge and opportunities to reflect on their own habits via role-play, group discussions, or case scenarios (Diamantoula, 2016). Such methods foster refusal skills under peer pressure and build confidence in personal choices. Incorporating time-management and "digital nutrition" strategies into school curricula helps students distribute their study, physical, and screen time rationally (Panagoula, 2021). For instance, limiting screen exposure in the evening combats sleep disruption (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008).

Linking health messages to motivational incentives (e.g., athletic performance, well-being) tends to resonate more with adolescents. Schools can collaborate with health professionals to demonstrate immediate effects of nicotine on lung capacity, for example (Diamantoula, 2016). Peer-led approaches are potent: selecting and training student leaders to convey prevention messages reduces resistance and embeds change within the peer network (Aikaterini, 2023). This model lessens rejection to messages coming only from authority figures. Within the school, establishing clear policies for mobile use and no-smoking zones is essential — but should be accompanied by support for students struggling to comply (counseling, small group reflection) rather than purely punitive measures (Aggelopoulos et al., 2008).

Equipping teachers through professional development to detect early signs of addiction and engage in supportive conversations is key (Tsampa, 2018). Training in communication techniques helps them address resistance and guide students sensitively. Using technology deliberately is another modern tactic: apps that monitor screen time, present usage statistics, or send gentle alerts can support self-regulation, rather than just surveillance (Aikaterini, 2023). Dashboards showing patterns may prompt self-reflection and reduction. One successful model is a quarterly health curriculum combining weekly experiential classes, expert sessions, and family involvement (e.g. "evenings without phones"). Studies show reductions of up to 25% in daily digital use among participating students over several months (Panagoula, 2021).

Lastly, customization to sociocultural context matters. In highly digital communities, messages should avoid sounding prohibitive, and instead focus on balanced, mindful use. In areas where smoking retains social acceptance, there should be emphasis on long-term health consequences with real-life examples (Diamantoula, 2016). These strategies treat adolescents not as passive recipients of rules but as active partners in shaping healthier lifestyles.

8. Conclusion

The examination of addictive behaviors — digital (internet, mobile) and tobacco smoking — in adolescents underlines the necessity of a holistic approach that incorporates multiple dimensions. Adolescence is a phase of heightened vulnerability, and interventions must integrate both biological and psychosocial perspectives. Excessive use of digital devices and tobacco affects not only individual health but also academic success, social relationships, and school climate. Effective responses rest on multilevel strategies: educational programs, close collaboration among school, family, and community, and the activation of adolescents as agents of change. Knowledge of risks must be paired with practical skills — time management, peer resistance, self-regulation. Simultaneously, schools should foster positive role models and enrich alternative non-addictive activities. Engagement of parents and community ensures continuity of preventive messages beyond school walls. Teacher training and use of supportive technology further enable early detection and intervention. Crucially, strategies must be adapted to the sociocultural setting of each community to maximize relevance and effect. Empowering adolescents with insight, skills, and support can guide them toward a healthier, balanced life and reduce the long-term burden of addictive tendencies as they transition to adulthood.

Acknowledgements

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Egyptian Politics in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Egypt is a presidential republic. The head of the country is the president of Egypt who is elected once every 4 years in direct elections. Under the president, the parliament elected in separate elections once every 5 years operates and consists of two houses: the upper Egyptian Senate, which serves as the body that advises the president, and the lower, which is called the People's Assembly. Egyptian politics knew many upheavals in the second decade of the 21st century. The main political and social struggle was between the religious-extremist parties in the form of the "Muslim Brotherhood" parties and the Salafist parties and the more pragmatic parties in the form of the army and Al-Sisi's party. If in the past, the main agenda of Egyptian politics was a war against external enemies, today it mainly concentrates on reaching political and economic stability. The army remains the most powerful factor in the country and sees its role as excluding religious factors from undermining the internal stability of the country.

Keywords: Egypt, Egyptian politics, the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Sisi.

1. Introduction – Hosni Mubarak period

After the assassination of Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak was the president of Egypt from October 14, 1981, until his resignation on February 11, 2011. Mubarak was the leader of the National Democratic Party that led Egypt starting in 1978. Despite the boycott, the Arab League imposed on Egypt following its signing of the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, the League's permanent offices returned to Cairo in 1990.

Egypt is holding multi-party elections, but international human rights observers are raising concerns about freedom of expression. As part of this concern, in April 2007, the Amnesty organization published a report that in Egypt there is torture in the prisons where opponents of the regime are imprisoned.

The elections in Egypt are not free and are structured so that the ruling party wins anyway. Despite this, democratic reforms made due to the American pressure for democratization in 2003 and 2004, caused the entry of members of parliament who are not from the ruling party (mainly from the Muslim Brotherhood), into the Egyptian parliament as independents. Some researchers define the Egyptian government as a liberal autocracy (Kassem, 2004).

The loosening of American pressure, following its decline in Iraq and its need for assistance from Egypt mediated by Hamas, and the need to create a united Arab front against the Iranian nuclear program caused Mubarak to stop his steps towards democratization, and formulate far-reaching reforms that are supposed to ensure the stability of his party's rule.

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In this way, 34 amendments were introduced to the Egyptian constitution in March 2007, which strengthened Mubarak's position and increased his possibility of transferring the presidency to his son Gamal Mubarak, like the way things were done in Syria in 2000. These amendments state that it will not be possible for a party of a religious nature to compete in the elections in Egypt and that the president of the country, that is, Hosni Mubarak, will be able to dissolve the parliament without the need for a referendum, as was customary until now.

Due to these changes, the opposition circles in Egypt opposed the changes in the constitution. The amendments to the constitution were approved in a referendum held on March 28, 2007. According to the Egyptian regime, the percentage of participation reached one-third of those entitled to vote and the amendments were supported by approximately 75 percent of the voters. According to opposition circles that boycotted the referendum, only six percent of Egyptian citizens participated in the referendum, the results of which were falsified. After the results were published, senior judges in Egypt announced that they would not back the new amendments to the constitution (Hatem, 2010).

2. After the end of Mubarak's regime

On January 25, 2011, huge demonstrations began in Egypt, following which on February 11, 2011, Mubarak resigned and left power in the hands of the army.

On June 21, 2012, the presidential elections were held in which the candidate of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Morsi, won. The Egyptian presidential elections in 2012 were considered the first free Egyptian presidential elections. Following his intention to promulgate a constitution that was seen by many as undemocratic, further demonstrations began, following which the army seized power a second time.

Morsi was ousted in a military coup in 2013 led by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. The head of the Constitutional Court was appointed as the temporary president of Egypt.

In January 2014, a referendum was held on a new constitution. Al-Sisi resigned as Minister of Defense and after democratic elections was elected President of Egypt. The presidential elections were held in 2014 and General Sisi ran as an independent candidate.

The "Muslim Brotherhood" movement and its supporters, as well as the secular April 6th youth movement (who were partners in the demonstrations and the revolution against Mubarak), boycotted the vote, and this reduced the turnout.

The Egyptian presidential elections in 2018 also ended in a crushing victory for al-Sisi, who faced only an opponent who praised his rule after the other candidates withdrew for various reasons (Koehler, 2018; Schwartz & Galily, 2021).

3. The Revolution of 2011

The revolution in Egypt (also called the January 25 Revolution, the Youth Revolution, and the Lotus Revolution) occurred on February 11, 2011, after continuous street demonstrations, mass protests, and civil unrest that began in Egypt on January 25.

The organizers of the protest were inspired by the revolution in neighboring Tunisia as part of the wave of protests in the Arab world, which was nicknamed the "Arab Spring."

The demonstrators clashed with the security forces, protested the regime of President Hosni Mubarak, and called for his ouster against the backdrop of extreme poverty, governmental corruption, and the violation of freedom of expression and other fundamental rights. The main focus of the demonstrations, which took place all over Egypt, was Tahrir Square in central Cairo.

After 18 days of non-stop protests and although Mubarak announced that he would work to carry out reforms and new elections within a few months, he was forced to resign and hand over power to the army.

A few weeks later, Mubarak was arrested along with his wife Suzanne, his two sons, and other senior ministers in the previous government on suspicion of acts of corruption, mainly regarding the supply of natural gas to Israel, and their responsibility for the violent suppression of protesters.

Also, the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the ruling party and thus put an end to the possibility of continuing its political or public activity. An Egyptian commission of inquiry determined after the events that at least 846 people were killed.

Although sporadic demonstrations took place in the years leading up to the revolution, the protests leading up to it were unprecedented and were the largest in Egypt since the "Bread Riots" of 1977.

It was the first time that people from all walks of Egyptian society joined the demonstrations and protests, including activists of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The slogan of the protests was "bread, freedom, social justice."

In the elections held in June 2012, Mohammed Morsi, from the Muslim Brotherhood, was elected president of Egypt. At the end of June 2013, on the anniversary of Morsi's election, mass demonstrations were held in Egypt calling for his resignation.

On July 3, at the end of an ultimatum given by the Egyptian army led by the Minister of Defense appointed by Morsi, General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, Morsi was ousted. Al-Sisi was elected president of Egypt about a year later, in an election in which he had no real opponent since the Muslim Brotherhood movement was outlawed and designated a terrorist organization (Korotayev & Zinkina, 2011).

4. "Bread, freedom, social justice"

"Bread, freedom, social justice" is the main motto and slogan used during this revolution.

This slogan gained great popularity during the wave of protests Mubarak and after them when it was used as an election propaganda slogan for some of the campaigns of the presidential candidates after the revolution, as well as for parliamentary candidates and other parties in Egypt.

The Egyptian singer Rami Essam, who is known as one of the most prominent artists of the protest wave and was named "the voice of Egypt", published a song with this name, which also gained great popularity.

5. The course of events

5.1 *January 25 - Day of Rage*

In the morning, a mass protest began near the Supreme Court in the center of the capital city of Cairo, which continued from there towards the parliament building. The police and security forces, numbering about 30,000 soldiers, used water cannons and tear gas to try to disperse the protesters. Demonstrations were also held in the cities of Alexandria, Mansoura, Ismailia, Aswan, Assiut and Madhya. About 500 activists were arrested in Cairo and about 350 were arrested in the rest of the country.

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In the city of Suez, the police opened fire on the demonstrators, and two were killed. Another protester, about 45 years old, was hit in the stomach by rubber bullets and died of internal bleeding in a hospital. A policeman was killed in the protests in Cairo.

5.2 *January 26-27*

Access to the social network Facebook and the micro-blogging site Twitter was blocked after thousands of protesters began using them. In the mass demonstrations in Suez, 55 demonstrators and 15 policemen were injured by throwing stones. An angry mob set fire to the police station and other public buildings. The building of the ruling party, the National Democratic Party, was also set on fire.

In an article he published in *Newsweek*, Mohamed ElBaradei hurled serious accusations at Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for the restrained criticism voiced by the United States regarding the rigged elections for the Egyptian parliament in late 2010.

On January 27, the Muslim Brotherhood declared support for the protesters. The leader of the opposition, Mohammed al-Baradei stated that he will return to Egypt for Friday's protests. He also stated that if asked, he would take over the leadership reins of Egypt's presidency during the transition period, if Mubarak leaves the country.

Later that day, a Bedouin protester was shot dead by the police in Sharm el-Sheikh in Sinai, bringing the death toll to seven. In Suez, the uprising continued as more buildings caught fire, including police stations. The population of the city of Suez and the Sinai region armed themselves with guns which led to violent riots by demonstrators.

Hundreds of people were arrested throughout Egypt. Over 120 people were arrested in Assiut, most of them members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and about 600 people were arrested in Cairo, including eight Egyptian journalists who were protesting government restrictions on reporting on domestic or Middle Eastern issues.

5.3 *January 28 – Friday of Rage*

The demonstrations on this day were the most violent since the beginning of the mass protest.

At various points, the Egyptian government forbade gathering for Friday prayers, in order to make it difficult to organize protests. According to reports, Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohammed al-Baradei has been placed under house arrest. After violent clashes between the police and protesters, the government imposed a night curfew, but the protesters ignored it. In the early evening, the headquarters of the National Democratic Party in Cairo was set on fire. In the evening, armored military vehicles passed through Cairo, which among other things secured the burning party headquarters in front of the Egyptian Museum, in front of the museum protesters stood in a human chain and protected it from looting.

Al-Wafd party leader Saeed Al Badawi called for the establishment of a transitional government until new elections and the amendment of the constitution.

In a speech given by Mubarak on television late at night, the president justified the measures taken by the security forces and announced a change of men in the government and democratic and economic reforms. The protests continued even more strongly after the speech, and the protesters again called for the resignation of the president. According to the official data, 35 people were killed in the clashes on Friday. According to the media, there were about a hundred dead and thousands injured.

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Barack Obama, Angela Merkel and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an end to the violence and to respect the rights of citizens – especially the right to freedom of expression and information and freedom of association. In the days that followed, these statements became Obama and Merkel's explicit call for Mubarak's immediate resignation.

Following Mubarak's speech, the Muslim Brotherhood came back and demanded the resignation of the president and the intervention of the Egyptian army. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi also called on Mubarak to leave the country and claimed that his speech showed that he "has no connection to reality." On the same day, Mubarak appointed Omar Suleiman as vice president of Egypt, a position that had not been filled since the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and appointed a new government led by former air force commander Ahmed Shafiq.

On January 30, due to the weakening of the police force, the prison system was also silent and thousands of prisoners, including 30 Muslim Brotherhood activists, escaped. Mubarak decided to stop the activities in Egypt of the Qatari television network *Al Jazeera*, which encouraged and inflamed the mass protests in Egypt.

5.4 *February 1-6 - after Mubarak's speech*

On February 1, Mubarak announced that he would end his term in September 2011 and would not run in the next elections. This announcement did not end the protests of the demonstrators, who continued to call for his immediate resignation. The new vice president, Omar Suleiman, was entrusted by Mubarak with conducting negotiations with the opposition elements. One of the main ideas put forward as a compromise was that Suleiman would receive all the powers of the president for a time-limited transitional period, while Mubarak would serve as president in title only, until new elections were held.

On February 5, a station of the pipeline for transporting natural gas from Egypt to Jordan and Syria, near El Arish, was hit. As a result, the supply of gas from Egypt to Israel was also temporarily stopped. On the same day, senior officials of the ruling party, the National Democratic Party, including Gamal Mubarak, son of Hosni Mubarak, resigned from their positions in the party.

On February 6, after 13 days of protest, opposition elements began to negotiate with the vice president, Omar Suleiman. As part of the discussions, it was agreed that a committee would be established that would work to change the constitution.

5.5 *February 10-11 - Transfer of powers to Suleiman and resignation of Mubarak*

On February 10, Mubarak announced in his speech that he would transfer his powers to his deputy Suleiman, but this announcement did not put an end to the protests. The following day, on February 11, a short message was read from the Vice President, Omar Suleiman, allegedly delivered from the President's office, in which it was stated that Mubarak had decided to resign from his post, and that the government in Egypt was being transferred to the Supreme Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces, headed by the Minister of Defense. Muhammad Hussain Tantawi.

The leader of the al-Aad party, Amin Noor, stated that the period of the Camp David agreement has ended.

5.6 *March 2011*

On March 3, Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik resigned, and his place was taken by Issam Sharp, the former Minister of Transportation.

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5.7 *April-May 2011*

Mubarak was arrested at his home in Sinai, and after he felt unwell during the interrogation, he was taken into custody and continued interrogation at the hospital in Sharm el-Sheikh. His two sons and his wife were arrested and interrogated, as well as ministers in the previous government, on charges of committing acts of corruption, mainly regarding the supply of natural gas to Israel, and their responsibility for the violent suppression of protesters. The Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the ruling party.

5.8 *June 2011*

On June 6, Egypt's official news agency announced that the extreme Islamic organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was outlawed in 1954, during the reign of Gamal Abdel Nasser, received official permission to operate as a political party according to the law. The movement plans to field many candidates on its behalf in the general elections expected to be held in Egypt in September. The official name of the party will be "The Freedom and Justice Party".

5.9 *July 2011*

The Egyptian Foreign Minister, Mohammed Al-Orabi, resigned about a month after taking office. A new Egyptian government was sworn in, and Issam Sharif was appointed prime minister.

5.10 *August 2011*

On August 3, Mubarak's trial in Egypt began live. Mubarak was on a bed in a cage along with his two sons, former interior minister Habib al-Adli and other police officers, who were accused of governmental corruption and shooting at unarmed protesters. Mubarak pleaded not guilty to the charges brought against him.

5.11 *September 2011*

On September 10, Egyptian protesters gathered at the Israeli embassy in Cairo, an event that worsened and turned into an attack on the Israeli embassy in Egypt (2011).

The Egyptian security forces did not try to prevent the protesters from storming the building and they even managed to enter the inner rooms of the embassy. The Israelis who remained in the embassy were threatened with their lives, but the Egyptians did not respond to appeals from the Israeli side, not even from the Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who was forced to seek the help of the President of the United States, Barack Obama.

After Obama appealed to the commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army, special forces were finally sent to the scene, which succeeded in rescuing the Israeli diplomats and their security guards. The attack on the embassy was condemned by the Western countries who called on Egypt to comply with the Geneva Convention and protect the embassies in their country.

5.12 *October 2011*

On October 9, Coptic Christians protested the burning of a church in the city of Aswan and clashed with the Egyptian security forces. 2 soldiers and 22 Egyptian citizens were killed in

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the clashes. The clashes were condemned by Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf, who said that "instead of stepping forward, Egypt is stepping backwards."

5.13 *November 2011*

On November 18, about a week before the elections for the Egyptian Parliament (2011-2012), the riots in the country resumed under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist extremists. The protesters claimed that the supreme military council that controls Egypt headed by Mohammed Hussein Tantawi is not working to promote democracy in Egypt, and because of the riots, the Egyptian interim government submitted its resignation to the military council. The demonstrators came out this time in a special way against the army and against Tantawi who is at the head of the country until the elections and the establishment of an elected government.

On the other hand, this time there was also a demonstration of solidarity with the army – the "demonstration of the silent Egyptian voice" – in Abbasiya Square, not far from the Egyptian Ministry of Defense and the seat of the Supreme Military Council (Bassiouni, 2016).

6. First round of parliamentary elections – December 2011

On December 3, the round of parliamentary elections in post-coup Egypt, which began at the end of November, ended. The Central Election Commission in Cairo published the election results, according to which the "Freedom and Justice Party" of the Islamist "Muslim Brotherhood" movement won 36.6% of the votes, the extreme Salafist Islamist An-Noor party won about 24.4% of the votes, the relatively moderate Islamic Al-West party received about 4.3% of the votes, the list of parties of the liberal bloc in Egypt won about 13.3% of the votes and the liberal Al-Wafed party received about 7% of the votes. This round was held for about 30% of the parliamentary seats, the total number of which is 498, and two more election rounds were held after it, in which both parties and independent candidates (some of whom were also unofficially identified with different parties) competed.

7. The Egyptian presidential election (2012)

In January 2012, the three rounds of elections for the lower house of the Egyptian parliament ended, with the Islamist camp of the Muslim Brotherhood winning about three-quarters of the votes.

On January 25, 2012, many protesters gathered in Tahrir Square to mark the first anniversary of the coup, claiming that it was not yet over and that the actual rule of the Supreme Council in Egypt should be abolished.

On January 28, 2012, deposed President Hosni Mubarak wrote letters to the leaders of the Arab world, European countries, and the United States, in which he asked them to help him not to receive the death penalty in his trial.

On June 2, 2012, the Supreme Court in Cairo sentenced Mubarak to life imprisonment for his involvement in suppressing the riots. The Egyptian interior minister in the Mubarak administration was also sentenced to life imprisonment, and Mubarak's two sons, Alaa and Gamal Mubarak, were acquitted. Following the sentence, demonstrations and violent clashes erupted in Tahrir Square in Cairo, between Mubarak's supporters and his opponents, who called for the death penalty.

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On June 16 and 17, 2012, the second round of Egyptian presidential elections took place. The two candidates for the presidency were Ahmed Shafik, a secularist who served as prime minister during the Mubarak administration; and Mohammed Morsi, a devout Muslim from the Muslim Brotherhood. Morsi won 52% of the votes and won the elections. On June 30, 2012, he was sworn in as president.

8. Deposing the heads of the Supreme Military Council

Since the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces adopted a temporary constitution (Egypt's Provisional Constitution, 2011), on March 30, 2011, no new constitution was established, the powers of the incumbent president were unclear, and the Supreme Military Council retained a great deal of political power, especially control over the army and the ability to declare war and thus determine Egypt's foreign relations.

In early August 2012, following the terrorist attack at the Israel-Egypt-Gaza Strip border crossing, Morsi dismissed the head of Egyptian intelligence, Murad Mawafi, who was responsible on behalf of Egypt for the negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit and had good relations with Israel. Morsi appointed Mawafi's deputy, Mohammed Rafat Shahata, to the position of head of intelligence.

Morsi also dismissed the governor of North Sinai and the head of the presidential guard from their positions. On August 12, 2012, Morsi deposed the head of the Supreme Military Council and Minister of Defense, Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, who served as the liaison between Israel and Egypt after the collapse of the Mubarak administration; Deputy Head of the Supreme Military Council and Chief of the General Staff Sami Anan; Commander of the Air Force, General Riza Abdel-Magid; the commander of the air defense, General Abdel-Aziz Seif al-Din; and the commander of the navy, General Mahab Muhammad Namesh. For the position of vice president of Egypt, which Mubarak did not fill during his presidency, Morsi appointed the former judge, Mahmoud Mohamed Maki. Morsi appointed Abdel-Fattah Sisi (who was the head of military intelligence) as Minister of Defense and head of the Supreme Military Council; General Sidki Sobhi to Chief of Staff and Deputy Head of the Military Council; and General Muhammad Al Aser to Deputy Minister of Defense.

In addition, Morsi issued a presidential decree, canceling the "supplementary constitutional declaration." This declaration was established by the Supreme Military Council in June 2012, which stripped the President of Egypt of security and political powers, and therefore Morsi could not depose or appoint individuals to positions in the army. Following its cancellation, his powers were expanded and the removals and appointments he made became possible. According to the presidential decree he published, Morsi will have the sole authority over all matters of security, internal policy, foreign relations, the approval of the budget and its implementation, until the publication of Egypt's new constitution. Morsi also took into his hands the authority to choose the individuals who will be on the committee that will draft the new constitution, thus actually being able to determine and influence its content.

In a speech at Al-Azhar Mosque to senior Muslim clerics in Egypt, Morsi said his goal is "the good of the people and the nation" and "preserving the achievements of the revolution." In response to the measures, senior officials of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist parties announced that "Tantawi and Anan, like other senior officials in the Egyptian security system, were metastases of the old regime who supported cooperation with the Zionist enemy." The Muslim Brotherhood called on the public to take to the streets and show support for the president's actions and emphasized in its announcement that "behind the president there are men who will protect him." Following the call, hundreds demonstrated in front of the presidential palace in

Cairo, while at the same time, in "Nasser" square, others demonstrated against Morsi and called for the overthrow of the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood.

9. The Coup in Egypt (2013)

The coup in Egypt (2013) is a military coup carried out by the Egyptian army in the country when it deposed the elected president of Egypt Mohamed Morsi and appointed in his place Adli Mansour as interim president. The coup followed a wave of public protests and demonstrations by millions against the rule of Morsi, the representative of the Muslim Brotherhood. These demonstrations, which have been described as "greatest in the history of Egypt," and Morsi's disapproval of responding to the protesters' demands led the Egyptian Minister of Defense Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi to announce the coup.

The first mass demonstrations of Egyptians against Morsi began on November 22, 2012, after he decided to fire the Attorney General of Egypt.

A month later, demonstrations were held in Egypt against Morsi's intention to hold a referendum to approve a new constitution. An agitation developed in the Egyptian public and the demonstrators protested the extensive powers that Morsi assumed for himself, at the expense of the justice system and contrary to the spirit of the constitution and the deterioration of the economic situation in the country.

Following the pressures and demonstrations against him, Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi decided to freeze his plan to raise prices.

To calm the public's anger, Morsi canceled the decree granting him broad powers but refused to cancel the referendum on the new constitution.

10. The sequence of events that led to Morsi's ouster

On June 29, 2013, the youth group leading the fight against Morsi announced that it had collected over 22 million signatures from the country's residents on a petition calling for Morsi's removal from office. That day, many protesters began to fill Tahrir Square. The next day, millions of people took to the streets in Cairo and other cities to demonstrate against him. In the demonstrations, five were killed and hundreds were injured by shots fired at the demonstrators. Morsi rejected the protesters' demands to resign and announced that there would not be a second revolution in Egypt.

On July 1, 2013, the Egyptian army announced that it was giving a 48-hour ultimatum to the decision-makers and politicians, during which they would have to agree among themselves, and would not intervene in what was happening and present a "new road map." Morsi rejected the ultimatum. On July 3, at the end of the ultimatum, the army informed Morsi: "You are no longer the president of Egypt." Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced the suspension of the constitution and the appointment of the head of the Constitutional Court, Adli Mansour, as interim president. A temporary government of professional elements was formed which will formulate a new constitution and based on which new elections will be held for the presidency and parliament. Morsi was arrested by the Egyptian army and transferred to a military facility.

11. The events after Morsi's ouster

The next day, Adli Mansour, president of Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, was sworn in as interim president of Egypt in place of Morsi. At the same time, the Egyptian army arrested the supreme leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Mohammed Badie, and his deputy Khirat

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al-Shater, due to their involvement in the killing of eight protesters in the clashes that took place outside the party's headquarters in Cairo.

Other senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood were also arrested. In the three days between July 5 and July 7, 40 people from Morsi's supporters and opponents were killed in the riots and more than 1,400 were injured. On July 8, riots occurred in Cairo during which approximately 53 Muslim Brotherhood supporters were killed and approximately 600 injured, when fire was fired at them during the demonstrations near the headquarters where Morsi is being held, after which a closing order was issued to the Muslim Brotherhood headquarters.

On July 9, 2013, Hazem al-Bablawi was appointed Prime Minister of the Transitional Government, and shortly before the appointment of President Adli Mansour, he announced an emergency plan according to which presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in early 2014.

Hamas, a terrorist organization that began as the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, began sending fighters through the smuggling tunnels of the Gaza Strip to the Sinai Peninsula, and these carried out terrorist and guerilla operations against Egyptian forces. Dozens of Hamas operatives were killed and arrested in countermeasures by the Egyptian army in Sinai.

On July 26, 2013, huge demonstrations of Morsi supporters were held. The army responded by shooting at the protesters, killing hundreds of protesters.

In the massacre on August 14, hundreds of people were killed in the army's operation to disperse the protesters in Cairo (mainly in the Rabia al-Adawiya mosque), and the riots throughout Egypt spread to other areas. A night curfew was imposed on Cairo. Vice President Mohamed ElBaradei announced his resignation. On August 15, 2013, Morsi's detention was extended by a month. On August 20, Muhammad Badie, the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, was arrested. On November 4, 2013, Morsi's trial began, accused of murder and incitement to the murder of protesters.

12. 2014 – The rise of Al-Sisi

In January, a new constitution was approved in a referendum. The trial of ousted President Morsi has begun. Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi resigned from his post to run in the 2014 Egyptian presidential election.

In March, 529 Muslim Brotherhood activists were sentenced to death.

On June 8, 2014, al-Sisi was sworn in as president. A position he held until the third decade of the 21st century (Resta, 2024).

13. Conclusion – The quest for stability

Egypt is a presidential republic. The head of the country is the president of Egypt who is elected once every 4 years in direct elections. Under the president, the parliament elected in separate elections once every 5 years operates and consists of two houses: the upper Egyptian Senate, which serves as the body that advises the president, and the lower, which is called the People's Assembly.

If in the past, the main agenda of Egyptian politics was a war against external enemies, today it mainly concentrates on reaching political and economic stability.

The army remains the most powerful factor in the country and sees its role as excluding religious factors from undermining the internal stability of the country.
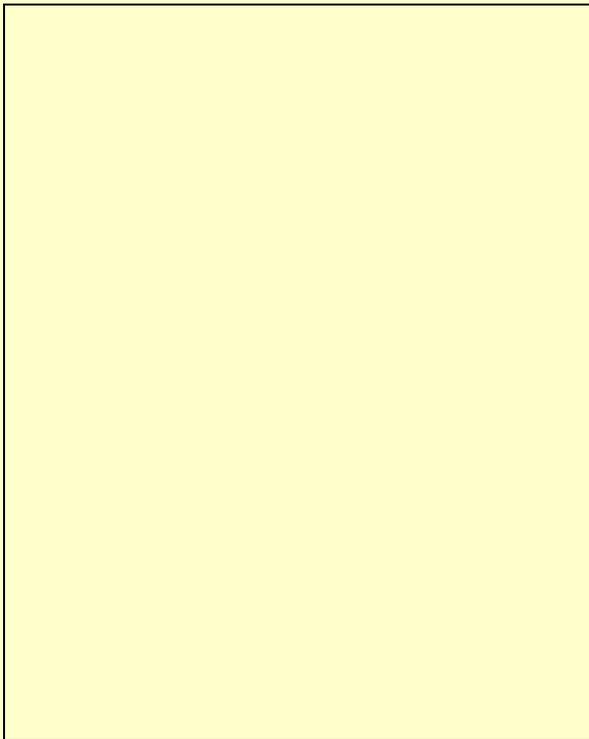
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We are looking forward to the ***12th International e-Conference on Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences* (12IeCSHSS)** that will be held in September 2026, using the same online model. We hope that it will be an interesting and enjoying at least as the previous e-Conference.

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