Public–Private Hybridity in School Governance: A Solid Foundation or Developmental Process? Lessons from a Historical Analysis of Charter-Type Schools in Israel

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Abstract
Scholarly writing in the field of education policy analysis often considers two conflicting governance agendas: the social-democratic "public" agenda and the relatively young "neoliberal" governance agenda. These agendas are frequently described as being part of a process of transformation from public or state to private education, with an intermediate "hybrid" phase of public–private mixture. Considering this dichotomous framework, this paper wishes to demonstrate and reinforce an alternative, non-dichotomous way of understanding education governance in which public–private "hybridity" is, and historically was, a longstanding, solid foundation, rather than merely a developmental stage of school governance. This alternative narrative is illustrated based on a historical analysis of Israeli "Charter-Type" schools as a representative case.

Keywords: School governance; public–private; hybrid schools; charter schools

Introduction and Conceptual Framework
For the past 30–40 years, there have been two dominant school governance agendas among Western scholars of education policy (e.g. Ball, 2012; Kwong, 2000; Lubienski, 2005), policymakers (e.g. Le Grand, 2005; Levin, 2005), and educational leaders at the school level (e.g. Addi-Raccah, 2012; Whitty, 1997). These two disputing governance perspectives represent different political, moral and economic ideologies (Glatter, 2002; Green, 2005; Manzer, 2003) that shape core governance actions: decisions regarding political values (Glatter, 2002; Manzer, 2003); commission procedures, structures and regulations, and education delivery actions (Bialik, Kafri, & Livneh, 2013; Glatter, 2002; Green, 2005; Manzer, 2003).

The first perspective, in the words of William Boyd, is "committed to a belief in a democratic system of 'common' public schools, *operated* as well as *financed* by the government, that provides standardized curriculum [and] treats everyone equally irrespective of social class, culture, race or religion" (Boyd, 2003, p. 5, italics in original). It is rooted in a social-democratic, egalitarian ideology holding that the state has a central, active governing role encompassing the amendment of social, economic, and cultural malformations (Barry, 2005; Gibton, 2003, 2004;

Manzer, 2003), enabling equal participation and mobility for all citizens through the commission and delivery of classic free and equal *public* education (Gibton, 2010). The second main governance perspective can be characterized from a social–economic–moral perspective as *neoliberal* (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Harvey, 2005; Ichilov, 2009). It is a relatively young political ideology having emerged as a challenge to the public model only in the past several decades. The neoliberal ideology reflects a different ethos of equality than the social-democratic view, revolving around giving each citizen the possibility and freedom to succeed on his or her own, under free-market "rules of the game" (Harvey, 2005; Ichilov, 2009). This agenda is manifested in different although related school governance models such as "school choice," "school vouchers," and "charter schools," which are interwoven into the global trend toward privatization in many realms (Boyd, 2003; Speakman, 2007), where services once offered primarily by the state (as public services) are now also provided by private organizations (Boyd, 2003).

These two agendas are often described as conflicting and competing. Education policy scholars and designers often feel the need to "take sides" in this conflict, supporting either the neoliberal governance agenda and its "effective" outcomes (e.g., Chubb et al., 1990; Kwong, 2000), or the social-democratic "public" agenda and its equity-oriented outcomes (e.g., Apple, 2001; Gibton, 2003; Ichilov, 2009). Different policy analysis perspectives equally describe these agendas as part of a process of transformation from "old governance" toward "new governance" (Ball, 2012, p. 114) through "evolution" on different axes, beginning with the shift from private to public education that began some 140–180 years ago in the many Western countries in the U.S. and Europe (Beadie, 2008; Dror, 2010) and then the neoliberal shift since the 1970s, back from a focus on public education to one on private education, through an ongoing phase of "unstable hybridity" (Ball, 2012, p. 114) or public and private mixture.

Given this dichotomous conceptual framework, in this paper I wish to outline an alternative, non-dichotomous narrative of governance in education. In this narrative, public–private hybridity is, and historically was, a solid foundation of educational governance, rather than a contemporary developmental stage as part of a chronological, one way pendulum process, awaiting the resolution and triumph of public over private or vice versa. This alternative narrative will be based on a historical case study of "Charter-Type schools" (CTSs) in Israel. CTSs, which combine both public and private characteristics, will first be explained in section (a) below using the dominant, dichotomous narrative, which views them as a typical contemporary (since 1978) outcome of governance struggles representing the victory of the neoliberal, pro-privatization governance agenda over the public one (e.g., Hill & Lake, 2007; Ichilov, 2009; Speakman, 2007). Then, however, in the following sections (b), (c) and (d), I will present a historical analysis of the roots of CTS hybridity prior to the 1970s and their implications, concluding in section (e) by making a case for an alternative historical narrative giving adequate prominence to the hybrid nature of the developments under discussion.

Before beginning, I would like to emphasize the suitability of the relatively young Israeli case, which has developed only over the course of the last 90 years under the clear influence of Anglo-American education models (Gibton, 2010), to allow me to examine the conflicting narratives at play in a kind of a hastened historical research lab. The historical analysis presented here begins in the 1920s, prior to Israel's foundation in 1948, and ends in the mid-1970s, before the hybridity and privatization period driven by the advent of the neoliberal ideology from the 1970s to the present.

The Dominant Narrative: Charter-Type Schools as a Neoliberal Consequence
As a theory of political economy, neoliberalism presumes that "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). Influential in Western states since the 1970s, this ideology holds the state to be a mere legal regulator of the free market, and the moral considerations it operates under to be merely utilitarian (Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberal ideas of school governance have shaped education policies throughout the Anglo-American world in particular. These policies encompass a range of market models, combining elements of parental choice, public–private partnerships, and varying consumer control mechanisms (Ball, 2007). The common governance narrative tightly link the period of the CTSs' foundation in the late 1970s and the theories and practices of neoliberal governance prevalent from that point to the present with their private–public hybrid character. From this perspective, the Israeli CTSs represent the local version of the Western trend of hybrid schools (Miron & Nelson, 2002, p. 12; Woods, Woods, & Gunter, 2007, p. 238) such as charter schools in the U.S. or academy schools in the United Kingdom, all combining elements of both public and private education. This hybrid character is the main reason why these schools are traditionally associated with neoliberalism and privatization (Beadie, 2008; Ichilov, 2010; Yonah, Dahan, & Markovich, 2008). These schools put emphasis either on a unique curriculum (e.g., arts, sciences, environment) or on a unique ideology or belief system (whether religious, political, moral, or pedagogical). Both kind of emphasis reflect the school's various educational, pedagogical and organizational features. This pedagogical variety challenges the limits of traditional, public-school pedagogy. CTSs also enjoy vast economic and juridical autonomy, as they rely on private funding in addition to their public sources, and run selective enrollment (Bialik, 2012). In the next section, I will try to demonstrate that the above characteristics were present decades before the advent of the neoliberal governance ideology.

Historical Roots of CTSs in Early Public–Private Hybrids, 1922–1948
The Hebrew education of Jewish settlers in Palestine under the Ottoman regime (before 1922) and under the British Mandate (after 1922) laid the grounds for the public education system of the State of Israel, founded in 1948. As early as the 1920s, the Hebrew education system included, alongside an attempt at central state administration, a division into different ideological educational streams, such as a secular stream, an ultra-orthodox stream and a socialist stream (Dror, 2011; Raichel, 2008). In addition to these semi-public streams, some private philanthropically owned schools had operated, serving about 10% of Hebrew-speaking students (Dror, 2011; Yankelevitch, 2004). The diverse organizational and economic affiliations of the Hebrew schools, and the variety of educational ideologies they espoused, were reflected in the *British Mandate Education Ordinance* of 1933, which allowed public support to privately owned schools (Raichel, 2008). In the *Ordinance*, which to this day is one of "the four basic laws, regulating the education affairs" in Israel (Raichel, 2008, p. 91), we can find public governance regulations, as well as regulations recognizing the existence of education characterized by unique ideology, or the existence of private economic support.

Alongside the Hebrew education system in Palestine, which prior to Israeli independence was semi-public, divided between different Jewish sectors, Muslim and Christian school systems also

operated under the same *Education Ordinance*. As a result of regional wars and the geopolitical and demographic changes that followed the end of the British Mandate, some of these educational streams maintained by different social groups were amalgamated into the public education system of the new Israeli state and became fully government funded, and educationally commissioned. That is while the rest of the schools, (e.g. ultra-orthodox Jewish, Muslim and Christian church schools, or schools of the socialist-workers streams - all schools of different ideological power groups, that struggled in order to keep their unique way of life and educational ideology), were officially accepted as independent streams with vast economic and educational autonomy. Examining the formation process of a public-state education system, constructed under shared governing bodies on the one hand yet ideologically divided and containing various autonomous islands on the other, we can observe the historical conditions leading to the creation of CTSs, as exemplified by the establishment of Kadoorie Agricultural High School near Mount Tabor in northern Israel, during the years 1922–1933. The ideological-educational views underlying the school's activity included specialization in the field of agriculture and manual labor (Yankelevitch, 2004); this ideological-educational specialization represents the same autonomy and educational distinctiveness that would characterize hybrid CTSs later on. Private philanthropic money enabled the school's foundation, together with high tuition fees (for those days) (Shapira, 2004); these two factors, educational and economical autonomy, would persist in CTSs later on. The attempts by formal and official representatives of the pre-state education institutes (the ministry of education of these days) to recruit students among the Jewish population across the whole of Israel, not merely locally, were also characteristic of CTSs later on and are again typical of a private education system in that pupils have free choice about which school to attend.

Historical Roots of CTSs in Public–Private Hybrids, 1948–1968
The education system during the first decades of the State of Israel followed the same outline established in the pre-independence or Settler period: state-based and centralized on the one hand, yet containing considerable elements of diversity, autonomy, and ideological, economic and educational uniqueness on the other hand. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, a unifying public-state ideology, alongside the legitimization of choice and of diverse educational content, which had already made itself apparent during the Settler period, was formalized in the State Education Law in 1953 (Ichilov, 2009; 2011; Dror, 2007; Raichel, 2008) and other laws. In principle, the State Education Law abolished the previous division of schools into streams yet restoring three main streams, one of them a semi-official semi-public stream, like CTS later on (Ichilov, 2011).

Notwithstanding the public private duality within the education system during the first decades following the establishment of the State (especially the 1950s), many autonomous "cracks" in the public-state "wall" were left behind (Ichilov, 2010; Kashti, Shalsky, & Alroy, 2001); these "cracks" also promoted CTS growth later on. An example of these "cracks" can be found in Dror (2010), who describes private bodies that took part in forming the public education system in Israel alongside (and sometimes instead of) the State in its first years. These private bodies he claim belong to the non-state education such as "NGOs, trusts, academic institutions and various projects which had some degree of privatization" (Dror, 2010, p. 4 in Hebrew). The involvement of those bodies, since the Ottoman period, is a good example of the complex trends of Israeli education, which all along have included a mixture of state-based and private schooling.

Historical Roots of CTSs in Public–Private Hybrids, 1968–1976
In 1968, a seemingly problematic decision for the imminent establishment of CTSs was taken by the Israeli Knesset or legislative assembly regarding de-segregation of schools, aiming, among other things, to strengthen the public nature of the education system. Like the similar situation in the U.S. more than a decade earlier following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* verdict ending segregated schools for black and white students, the Israeli government chose to add an important new layer to its declared educational public governance agenda: to advance equal opportunities for disadvantaged groups in society. The order was given to force integration between ethnic groups and socioeconomic classes in post-primary schools (i.e., junior high schools). On the surface, this was a matter of strengthening the public dimension of education governance; yet due to lack of legislation in support of this decision and to the hybrid organizational structures already formed in the education system by 1968, such as schools with hybrid characteristics which were not integrative (e.g., those of the ultra-orthodox Jewish religious population), the reality that would enable the long-term existence and growth of CTSs did not essentially change.

In the early 1970s, post the 1973 "Yom Kippur" war and several related social processes; the Israeli education system underwent a vast decentralization process (Ichilov, 2009; Gibton, 2003). This process, and in its midst the growing push for individual and school autonomy in shaping education, marked a significant deviation from the previous centralized administration and curriculum that had dominated since the passing of the *State Education Law* in 1953 (Ichilov, 2010; Raichel, 2008). These developments involved an intensification of ideas (and corresponding execution) rooted in the education system since the pre-independence Settler period, until then mainly manifested in the various divisions into streams and quasi-streams.

The decentralization of the education system, which would deepen significantly under the overtly neoliberal educational regime of the 1980s and 1990s (Gibton, 2003; Manzer, 2003), went hand in hand with ongoing neoliberal reforms such as cutbacks in public education budgets. Furthermore, interwoven social processes intensified such as the disappointment of parents with the level of education provided in public schools (Kashty, et al., 2001). The wide criticism of the state education system and the search by parents for educational alternatives led to the adoption of two main courses of action by the education system in Israel and by groups of parents who decided to take matters into their own hands. The first course of action, mostly adopted by the formal education system, was an attempt to reform the public education system from within by applying innovative pedagogic and organizational ideas such as making schools autonomous and innovative. Importantly, this course of action has been taken by the formal governing bodies without conclusive data regarding student educational outcomes in the existing hybrid schools in Israel or worldwide (the data are in the Israeli context and to a large extent, remain inconclusive to this day). The second course of action was apparent isolationism and renouncement of the formal system (Inbar & Choshen, 1997). This second track was taken by groups of parents, mainly belonging to the upper middle class, who no longer agreed to settle for merely choosing which educational stream their children would be placed in; instead, they decided to adopt a pluralistic educational direction. This attempt led to a seemingly new, grassroots CTS model (Gibton, 2003; Raichel, 2008; Goldring & Shapira, 1993). Yet the ability to take this innovative

educational action was, among other things, dependent on hybrid models that already existed within the system.

Lessons from the Historical Case Study

My main goal in this paper was the identification of the early historical roots of hybrid public–private CTSs in Israel, which appeared a long time before the advent of the neoliberal governance agenda beginning in the 1970s, with which these schools are associated. The historical analysis shows that Israeli schools had a diversity of educational approaches and ideologies as early as the pre-independence period and a widening spectrum of economic and organizational ownership arrangements, both public and private. These findings demonstrate that hybridity did exist in educational governance in Israel prior to the foundation of the CTS model, and further, that this public–private hybridity is from earlier times to the present a solid foundation of Israeli educational governance rather than simply a contemporary developmental stage, part of the neoliberal hybrid "new governance" (Ball, 2012, p. 114).

The main limitation of these analyses is that one could mistakenly conclude that this transition is merely linear and dichotomous when, indeed, it is substantive; it is relatively easy to demonstrate using quantitative data (e.g., percentage of public school growth/decline over the years), that there has indeed been a measurable transition from public to neoliberal (private) governance, and that the change is chronologically linear and dichotomous (for example: Addi-Raccah, 2010; Levin & Belfield, 2003). The thesis I have tried to reinforce is not quantitative or linear in its nature but "substantive": the simultaneous existence of public and private characteristics has been inherent to educational governance ever since the beginning of public education in Israel. In fact and bearing in mind that the U.S. and Israel differ in history, politics and culture, as Nancy Beadie (2008; 2010) has argued regarding the U.S. case, one of the foundation stones of U.S. public education governance and of the complex relationship between the state and education, from its beginning to the present day, has been public–private hybridity, and Israel is no different in this aspect.

The complex public–private hybrid relationship sketched in this alternative narrative raises two possible follow-up research questions of scholarly importance: First, what are the functions of hybridity in public education governance and design? Second, why, in spite of the clearly existing hybridity in Israeli educational governance from its very outset, has the research tendency been to examine governance from this or that exclusive outlook within the public–private axis? Why is hybrid public–private governance being to a large extent silenced? I would like to conclude by remarking that the thesis I have tried to reinforce in this paper and the knowledge enhanced from answering the above research questions could assist policy makers in designing a more holistic governance agenda. A hybrid governance agenda should be based upon the effort to combine the moral and practical dimensions of the two agendas through open and sincere public discourse rather than on the ongoing effort of the two existing agendas to undermine each other.

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