Neo-liberal Governance and the
'New Professionalism' of Israeli Principals

Izhak Berkovich

School of Education, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Israel

Abstract

The Israeli Ministry of Education has recently initiated a program of reform in the training of public school principals that aims to expand state licensing regulations for educational leaders. This article suggests that the principals' training and licensing (PTL) reform should be linked to the attempt by Israeli policymakers to institutionalize evaluative neo-liberal governance in the Israeli education system. To support this suggestion, the article traces the historical development of PTL policies in Israel to set the new centralized reform in its neo-liberal context, and links it to the rise of "new professionalism" in Israeli educational administration. The innovative framework presented here links educational governance and PTL policies together to facilitate a systematic analysis of licensing regulation policies and reforms in other national contexts.

Keywords: Administration; Israel; Licensing; Neo-Liberalism; Training

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, the training and licensing of public school principals in Israel has undergone a major reform led by the Israeli Ministry of Education. The Ministry created a new agency responsible for training and certifying principals. The purpose of this article is to elucidate the change in regulatory policy by placing it within a wider context linked to the growing influence of neo-liberalism on Israel's education governance.

The neo-liberal educational discourse in Israel dates back to the early 1980s and includes two distinct yet overlapping periods. During the first period (1980s–2000) the concepts of "school autonomy," "school based-management," "parental choice," and "accountability" were introduced to the public discourse as legitimized by academic and Ministry professionals (Resnik 2011; Yonah et al. 2008). During the second period (2000 until the present), coinciding with the rise of the "competition state" (Hay 2004), the discussion began to focus on the "gap in inter-state education" as revealed by international testing and interpreted by researchers and policymakers with respect to the future of the Israeli economy (Resnik 2011).

Although these concepts and problems may be viewed in a purely professional light, they are indicative of a broader managerial discourse in which "schools are 'service providers,' students and parents are 'customers,' and education is a 'service' provided by the school" (Yonah et al. 2008, p. 206). Similar descriptions of neo-liberal influence on the hegemonic discourse of educational professionals in academia and the public sphere prevail in the U.S. and England (Hursh 2007; Gunter 2011).

The neo-liberal discourse has influenced Israeli educational policies for over thirty years, and one of its most distinct manifestations has been the regulatory reform on the training and licensing of school principals. This article describes the neo-liberal influences on the shaping of educational governance in Israel and the consequent regulatory policy for school principals' training and licensing (PTL). The conceptual framework provided here links the different forms of educational governance with their respective PTL regulation policy types. Based on this conceptualization, the article suggests that the recent reform in Israeli PTL reform represents a move away from "bureaucratic PTL regulation" toward a "post-bureaucratic" evaluative model of PTL regulation.

2. Neo-liberalism and the Rise of "Post-bureaucratic" Educational Governances

Neo-liberalism and its influence on educational discourse, policy, and practice have been well-documented in a number of institutional, national, and international contexts.[1] In essence, what the neo-liberal agenda calls for is a "minimal state" model (Nozick 1974). Ideally, the neo-liberal state maintains minimal involvement in the funding and provision of social services, intervening only to assure the effective operation of the "invisible hand" of the market (Jessop 1994). Neo-liberal policies involve: "the deregulation of the economy, trade liberalization, the dismantling of the public sector [including education], and the predominance of the financial sector of the economy over production and commerce" (Tabb 2002, p. 7).

Numerous countries around the world have embraced human capital theory, suggesting that a qualified and flexible workforce is crucial for the maintenance of a competitive global economy, thus placing a great focus on education (Francis 2006). Resnik (2011) links the increase of isomorphic pressures on education to globalization trends that show a markedly higher range of activity among international organizations (Meyer et al. 1997), and a growing domination of capitalist interests (Apple 2005). These pressures enhance the homogeneity of educational systems worldwide despite attempts by local agencies to provide a national context for the "imported" policies (Ball 1998). Stephen Ball (2009) further links neo-liberalism with the rise of the "competition state," in which the state "acts as a 'commodifying agent' rendering education into commodity and contractable forms" (p. 97). Some critical scholars have taken this observation a step further and argued that, in practice, neo-liberalism aims to change "how we think of ourselves and what the goals of schooling should be" (Apple 2006, p. 23). In education, as in other public domains, it has been contended that neo-liberal state policies distance the state from the actual provision of services, thus eliminating its responsibility for possible "failures" and transferring it to individuals (Bauman 2005).

The growing popularity of neo-liberal ideas and policies in the West has changed the manner in which educational systems are organized and managed. The traditional "bureaucratic" model of educational governance, highly popular in the 1950s through 1980s, has given way over the last thirty years to new models of "post-bureaucratic" governance. Christian Maroy (2009) identifies two ideal types of post-

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[1] For example, see Apple 2005; Ball 2009; Giroux 2002; Lee 2010; Olssen and Peters 2005; Yonah et al. 2008; Youdell 2004.

bureaucratic models in education: (a) "quasi-market state" model and (b) "evaluative state" model. The quasi-market model originated in English-speaking countries where it gained currency due to the ineffectiveness of the bureaucratic model and the notion that competition would improve educational services (Maroy 2009). Maroy suggests that the quasi-market state focuses on setting system objectives, preparing a core curriculum, and apprising the public of school performance through an information agency. Information is made available to the public to assist consumer choice. He likewise contends that the central state maintains the authority to approve providers, define educational demands (for instance, the age of compulsory schooling), and certify graduates.

The evaluative state, much like the quasi-market state, defines objectives and curricula, allowing local units a measure of autonomy. However, the evaluative state establishes an external system (either private or public) for evaluating school performance and links the results to rewards or sanctions (Maroy 2009). Thus, the evaluative state uses information to maintain its centralistic control.

In these new post-bureaucratic models of governance in education, regulation mechanisms are centralized, as models are based "either on the promulgation of baseline norms (promulgation of 'best practice,' training sessions, and accompanying projects), contractualization and evaluation (of processes, results, or practices) or individual adjustment and competition" (Maroy 2009, p. 77). Thus, new post-bureaucratic models of educational governance are expected to focus on regulation "mechanisms of orientation, co-ordination, control and balancing of the system" (Maroy, 2009 p. 71). The neo-liberal state uses regulation in education as an indirect measure of control (Maroy 2009; Thomlinson 2001; Yonah et al. 2008) by: (a) defining system goals; (b) setting unified achievement standards and certificating graduates; (c) formulating a national core curriculum; (d) approving providers; (e) controlling funds; and (f) training and licensing personnel. As a result, the change in educational governance marks a change in the goals, practices, and judgment of educational professionals.

3. Neo-liberalism and rise of the "post-bureaucratic" educational professionalism

Post-bureaucratic educational governances embrace a dualistic approach. On one hand, they relax state control by adopting policies of school autonomy, diversification of the education, and parental choice; on the other hand, they tighten state control by adopting policies of pedagogical control and of external evaluation of schools and school systems (Maroy 2009). Thus, neo-liberal states simultaneously pursue "weak state" and "strong state" practices (Yonah et al. 2008). Moreover, in western countries techniques of control and of self-agency interact because the techniques of self-agency are embedded within structures of coercion and control. Governance is perceived as a balance between techniques of coercion and processes by which the self is constructed (Foucault 1993). Therefore, the neo-liberal state minimizes its active involvement in the provision of social services and at the same time expands its involvement in normalizing inequality within the social order.

Tara Fenwick (2003) identified similar paradoxical conduct on the part of neo-liberal governments and argued that it simultaneously broadens and limits personal freedom. She argued that as freedom expands, control procedures deepen, reflected in disciplinary practices that shape the individual's routine (Fenwick 2003). In this way, neo-liberal governance enlists the freedom of individuals to promote the adoption of a self-perception linked to certain production and consumption modes in thought and behavior.

Neo-liberal governance is no less interventionist than other models of government, involving active and frequent interventions aimed at supporting the market. Market intervention promotes a society that is subject to the dynamics of competition and contributes to the rise of "homo economicus" (Peters and Marshall 1990). The decentralization processes caused by neo-liberal governance coincide with the move from external to internalized control (Foucault 2008).

In his book *The Birth of Biopolitics,* Michel Foucault (2008) described the logic of neo-liberal government. One of the main characteristics of neo-liberal governance is the achievement of social control more by self-discipline and less by external coercion. Foucault (1977) used the metaphor of the *Panopticon* to describe a structure that enables surveillance from a distance, maximizes the individuals' feeling of exposure, which encourages them to monitor and regulate themselves according to legitimized practices. In the neo-liberal state, practices used to instill the market

principles in individuals are the basis of all social interactions and are their principal aim.

Education is perceived as a central arena for the production and reproduction of knowledge and behavior (Morrow and Torres 1994), which in many cases causes the state to introduce controls over educational functions (Zajda 2006). The injection of neo-liberalism into educational discourse and practices has transformed the essence of educational professionalism. The quasi-market neo-liberal model stresses consumer accountability. The belief is that a growing differentiation between schools will lead to competition and improvement. Thus, providers of educational services become accountable as they respond to consumer choices, and information facilitates consumer choice (Ranson 2003). By contrast, the evaluative neo-liberal model emphasizes performative accountability. Specification of the inputs, processes, and outputs of schools in the evaluative neo-liberal model becomes more stringent. According to Ranson (2003), in such a model:

> schemes of work are defined, learning outcomes targets set (especially in "core skills" and at key stages); teachers' work is monitored and appraised; and schools prepare development/improvement plans defining a system of managing performance that head teachers are to lead and are accountable for. (p. 466)

Specification and the increased dominance of evaluative processes serve to change educational professionalism, as "performability replaces the critical reflection and professional judgment" (Codd 2005, p. 24).

Neo-liberal influences have been documented to transform educational occupations. In the area of teaching, scholars have pointed out the rise of the "new professionalism" that accepts the premise that curricular and pedagogical decisions are made outside the classroom, designating teachers as implementers (e.g., Compton and Weiner 2008; Furlong 2005; Tatto 2007). States recognize that the training of new education professionals is an important means by which "policy agendas are realized" (Reid and O'Donoghue 2004, p. 559). The new professionalism increasingly affects teacher education, seeking to "ensure that teachers are prepared to assume their limited roles as educational clerks who are not to exercise their judgment in the classroom" (Zeichner 2010, p. 1545).

Similar processes have transformed the role of principals and the design of principals' education programs. Principals are currently expected to adopt a business

management style and orientation consistent with the introduction of market ideas into education (Eyal and Berkovich 2011). This change in role definition is related to changes in educational pedagogy. Giroux (2007) regarded pedagogy as a form of cultural production that "constructs particular modes of address, modes of identification, affective investments, and social relations" (p. 39). Whereas a humanistic approach values diversity and self-definition of personal fulfillment, neo-liberalism does not encourage diversity in pedagogy (Apple 2001). It has been argued that neo-liberalism uses educational pedagogy to secure legitimacy for neo-liberal hegemony and to promote compliance with neo-liberal practices. Giroux (2007) elaborated on this issue and argued that pedagogical practices complement the neo-liberal state as they teach society to "understand the world via market mentalities and corporate paradigms" (p. 14). Thus, pedagogy is used to normalize "modes of governance, subject positions, forms of citizenship, and rationality" (p. 27). Dale (1989) further elaborated and contended that the neo-liberal ideology seeks to "liberate" individuals only for economic goals while controlling them for social purposes.

It follows that the professional initiatives of neo-liberal governance should be examined critically. The role and training of school principals have changed several times over the past century due to the rise in popularity of scientific trends and social-economical ideologies (Murphy 1998). In this regard, the leading motivation for the restructuring of training programs for principals is often ideological in nature (Isik 2003) and the dominant ideological influence in the west in current neo-liberalism (Eyal and Berkovich 2011).

4. The Debate on PTL Regulation

It should come as no surprise then that with the proactive role taken by policymakers regarding neo-liberal goals over the past few decades (Cerny and Evans 2000), the literature dealing with administrative professionals in education has increasingly addressed the issue of the attitude of the state toward the training of principals (Adams and Copland 2007; Barbour 2005; Hess and Kelly 2005). One can identify two competing approaches in the public debate. The first claims there is a need to strengthen the traditional training and licensing mechanisms for school principals by the application of unified standards. Supporters of the second approach reject the "gatekeeper" notion of the state, which in their opinion promotes only one type of

educational leadership, and seek rather to expand the range of training programs (Hess and Kelly 2005).

Advocates of increased state regulation and involvement in the training of school principals maintain that there is a connection between successful training of principals and students' achievement (Gonzalez et al. 2002). The state regulation movement seeks to promote results-based leadership by developing uniform national standards for training and licensing, on the basis of the hope that standards-based training and standards-based practice will raise student scores (Gonzalez et al. 2002). In addition, they argue that a process of deregulation of training and licensing is dangerous because it will harm the professional level of principals (Hess and Kelly 2005).

In contrast, supporters of the deregulation of training for principals maintain that the state's traditional training does not prepare the trainees well for management roles (Hess and Kelly 2005) and further that it is not possible to mass-produce educational leaders. According to this argument, in the present age and with all the complexity that characterizes it, principals are required to function on many levels and demonstrate various forms of leadership (Hess and Kelly 2005). Supporters of deregulation argue in addition that state training programs and licensing requirements generally reflect a managerial orientation by focusing on financing, budgeting, personnel evaluation and monitoring (Adams and Copland 2007). In their opinion, such technical training cannot produce the social leaders required by schools and communities, or leaders able to address the complex needs at hand (Adams and Copland 2007).

With regard to this debate, it is important to stress that it is not enough to permit variation in training programs without changes in the licensing procedures of principals. Licensing is a process in which the state approves the professional credentials of a particular individual, with the intention of protecting the public and ensuring that this individual will not harm others. Therefore, most states regulate professional certificates requiring a minimum level of knowledge and professional achievement (Adams and Copland 2007).

The licensing process dictates to a significant degree the number of candidates for the position of principal and their characteristics, as well as their selection and the practices that shape the training programs they undergo (Adams and Copland 2007). Therefore, deregulation of training without changing the licensing process will lead

even innovative programs and entrepreneurial organizations to adapt themselves to existing institutional arrangements (Hess and Kelly 2005).

5. Typology of PTL Regulation Models

In an equivalent manner each type of educational governance fosters a specific PTL Regulation. Three policies reflect the contents and practices of training and licensing procedures: bureaucratic PTL regulation, quasi-market PTL regulation, and evaluative PTL regulation.

TYPE 1: Bureaucratic PTL regulation is a characteristic of states with a bureaucratic educational governance exercised through central or local government. States, under this model, use a selection process for entrance to the tenure system (Weber 1952), and thus are highly involved in trainee selection as a form of bureaucratic control. The governments do not typically act, however, as direct providers of training but work in partnership with universities and colleges that enjoy a high level of academic freedom. All training program curricula are required to incorporate governments' administrative rules and regulations. As governments are highly involved in trainee selection, certification is seldom structured as a separate process; if a certification procedure exists, it is usually of a "rubber stamp" variety. This model can operate at the national level in centralized states or at the local level in decentralized regimes.

The model adopted in Czech Republic shows a degree of resemblance to the national bureaucratic PTL regulation pattern. It has a centralized education system (Daun 2006), and despite recent neo-liberal influences, the state retains its welfare model foundations (Saxonberg and Sirovátka 2009). The Czech Ministry of Education partners with universities to provide training. The Ministry controls the contents of the programs indirectly, leaving a broad level of discretion to the training institutions themselves (Brundrett et al. 2006).

Another variation of the bureaucratic model includes states in which the provision of education is decentralized to local units. This pattern can be seen in Canada, which supports cultural diversity in the adopted model of decentralized PTL (Young and Grogan 2008). Ministries in the provinces partner with teacher's federations and universities to provide training programs (Macpherson 2009). Some

provinces in Canada require the certification of school principals whereas others do not (Macpherson 2009).

TYPE 2: Quasi-market PTL Regulation characterizes states having a post-bureaucratic educational governance such as the quasi-market state. This pattern reflects minimal government involvement and under-regulation (Sunstein 1990). State and local units are not involved in training, leaving the field to non-profit and for-profit organizations. Training programs are independent in the selection of trainees. The program contents emphasize the agenda of the provider, the preferences of the candidates, or employer demands. Government certification requirements are general (several years of teaching experience and academic degrees) and in some cases involve a written examination.

The majority of states in the USA adopt this pattern. According to Herrington and Wills (2005), 41 states in the USA require both teaching experience and a graduate degree from a college of education. Among them, 17 states (including New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and others) also require aspiring principals to pass a written examination prior to receiving their certification (Anthes 2004).

TYPE 3: Evaluative PTL Regulation is found in states having a post-bureaucratic educational governance such as the evaluative state. This pattern is manifest in broad and intensive state involvement to the point of overregulation (Sunstein 1990). Such a model includes high state involvement in trainee selection. In many cases, the state assumes control of training and forms a PTL agency. The agency may outsource training to external providers and hold them to a rigid curriculum and unified standards. Training contents usually emphasize neo-liberal managerialism. Often the mandatory training by a state agency is considered as prerequisite to certification and acts as yet another filter of the state.

England, which embraces this pattern, has promoted increased state control of the head teacher role over the past few decades (Møller and Schratz 2008) and produced a state head teachers' training program with mandatory national licensing (Brundrett and Crawford 2008). In 2000, England established the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) with the aim of developing school leaders (Tomlinson 2004). The NCSL promoted the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), which in 2009 became a mandatory requirement for all new aspiring head

teachers (Rhodes et al. 2009). Participation in the NCSL program is required for NPQH qualification.

Table 1 below compares the different types of PTL regulation models.

Table 1: Comparison of PTL regulation models

	Bureaucratic PTL regulation	**Quasi-market PTL regulation**	**Evaluative PTL regulation**
Trainee selection	Government units involved in trainee selection	Programs independent in trainee selection	State involvement in trainee selection
Training providers	Government unit may serve as a provider of training (mostly by partnering with academia)	Non-profit organizations and for-profit organizations (without government involvement)	State agency solely responsible for training (may use academia as contract provider)
Training contents	Focus on the relevant government unit (national/local) rules and regulations Pedagogical emphasis on the agenda of the government units	Minimal focus on state certification requirements Pedagogical emphasis on provider agenda or candidate preferences	Significant focus on state certification requirements Pedagogical emphasis aimed at achieving neo-liberal goals
Licensing	Principalship seldom requires certification because governance values selection	Principalship requires state certification	Principalship requires state certification

Note that post-bureaucratic educational governance often manifests in a mixed manner, so that educational policy presents a hybrid picture of the quasi-market and evaluative neo-liberal models (Maroy 2009). Moreover, consumer accountability and performance accountability, which follow from these governance models, act in a mutually reinforcing way (Ranson 2003) and affect professional judgment in education. Centralized educational systems in countries with social-democratic roots are a good example for illustrating the manner in which neo-liberalism transforms post-bureaucratic policies.

The Israeli educational system is such an example, and it provides a good illustration of a system in which policymakers promote a specific neo-liberal model (i.e., the evaluative model) over the other (i.e., the quasi-market model). The Israeli case, therefore, can demonstrate the link between the rise of evaluative educational governance and the formation of an evaluative PTL regulation.

5.1 Methodology

I employ the case study methodology to explore the PTL reform in Israel. Case study involves an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in its context (Yin 1994). Addressing comparative education research, Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) stressed the need to situate the phenomenon at the center of a case study in its social and historical context. Therefore, I adopted a retrospective policy analysis approach that aims to examine how a phenomenon comes into being by exploring its roots. Retrospective analysis requires "mapping out its social and historical context, and how the policy unfolded over time in order to understand its eventual impact" (Walt et al. 2008, p. 314).

I used several types of data in this case study. Having embraced Dye's (1994) argument that public policy reflects the values of those in power and operates in a top-down manner, I focused my analysis on the "context of text production" (Bowe et al. 1992). Therefore, the main data sources are government documents (ministerial circulars, committee reports, ministerial regulations, and other official documents), and documents of the new Israeli Institute for School Leadership (Avney Rosha). To complete the picture about the intentions of politicians, I also analyze the relevant laws and court cases.

6. The Israeli Case

From its establishment in 1948, the Israeli state adopted social-democratic policies to assist in carrying out its melting pot ideology intended to mix Jewish immigrants from different parts of the world (Dorfman et al. 1994). In time, as the centralized policies of the government failed to adequately address social and economic gaps, and as the state became open to international influences, positive social-democratic rights fell out of grace and the status of the social-democratic elites declined in the eyes of the Israeli public (Ram 2004). The rise of the neo-liberal ideology was manifested in the change of the political elite, as the new right took office in the late 1970s. The increasing popularity of neo-liberal educational policies worldwide made neo-liberalism a dominant international trend with the power to influence local policies in education (Meseguer 2005; Tyack and Cuban 1995). As a result, Israeli educational discourse and practice began to change as neo-liberal ideas became popular among Israeli policymakers.

Within a decade, all the major political parties abandoned their commitment to the classical welfare state and incorporated neo-liberal elements in their rhetoric as well as in their government policies, when they were in office (Yonah 2000). In the early 1990s, the neo-liberal paradigm in Israel was accompanied by ideas of left-liberal multiculturalism[2] influenced by waves of Russian and Ethiopian Jewish immigrants and by the Oslo agreements with the Palestinian Authority (Ram 2004; Yonah et al. 2008). But with the new millennium the multicultural approach diminished as internal social conflict intensified between the secular Jewish population and the rapidly growing ultra-Orthodox group. The start of the second Intifada, in the year 2000, marked the renewed Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Yonah et al. 2008) and increased tension between the state and the Israeli Arab population. These trends led politicians and the public to regard the education system as an agent for a solution to the social conflict by forcing the national core curriculum to reinforce the Jewish and liberal democratic values of the state. Additionally, low ranking of students in international tests lent support to the standards movement (Feniger et al. 2012) and to initiating and enforcing a national curriculum.

The reasons described above had much to do with the formation in Israel of "post-bureaucratic" educational governance and the decline of various bureaucratic

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[2] Left-liberal multiculturalism recognizes cultural differences but it diminishes or ignores their interdependence with social and historical circumstances (McLaren 1995).

policies. In the field of PTL as well, for many years Israel followed a bureaucratic approach that prevailed until the recent PTL reform. Below I review the history of PTL policies in Israel prior to the PTL reform.

6.1 Israeli PTL Policies 1948-2008

In the first decade after the foundation of Israel, education was an extension of Israeli politics (Sabar and Mathias 2003). Principals functioned as bureaucrats under great pressure to comply with procedures and regulations established by the central authority. Until recently the common assumption among educators in the Israeli education system was that principalship requires no training. Thus the practice of appointment involved the selection of a teacher to the principal's role and in the hope that s/he would learn on the job (Chen 1999).

The development of training programs was gradual. At first, various optional programs were developed in response to needs in the field. For example, in 1951, the Hebrew University followed demands and offered a summer course for acting principals in order to further develop their skills (Nir and Inbar 2003). In the early 1970s, the need for formal training was recognized by the Ministry of Education, which established within the Ministry, a school for the training of senior educators, as a sub-unit. The school offered a two-year program to help principals acquire basic administrative skills (Nir and Inbar 2003).

During the 1980s the principal's status underwent a significant conceptual transformation.[3] In 1983 the Ministry of Education first published a directive requiring every candidate for school management to have pedagogical training or a teacher's certificate, five years of experience in teaching, and a degree in education administration, or a graduate certificate from a training program for principals (Director-General's Circular, Ministry of Education, 1983). Although this directive was not rigidly enforced, it was a turning point in the training of school principals (Nir and Inbar 2003). Following that directive, many two-year training programs were established throughout the country for aspiring and acting principals.

Training institutions offered two tracks: one track featured a university degree and the other track featured a certificate program in both universities and colleges (Chen 1999). In these training programs, the Ministry of Education played a minor

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[3] This transformation is partly the result of international influences involving conceptual changes in the perception of the status and role of principals (see Brundrett 2001; Murphy 1998).

role in determining the topics and contents taught. Whereas universities had the academic freedom to determine the course content and the selection criteria for their candidates in the masters programs (Dror 1998), in the certificate programs the degree of freedom enjoyed by colleges was more limited because the Ministry of Education dictated specific theoretical and practical content (Vurgan 2006).

The involvement of the state bureaucracy in PTL policies was most salient in the bureaucratic procedures of appointment and tenure (Nir and Inbar 2003). When there was a vacant management position in the national educational system,[4] the Ministry of Education (in the case of the primary school system) or the relevant local education authority (in the case of the secondary school system) initiated a tender procedure. The applicant must have five years of teaching experience, a teacher's license and hold a certification granted by a training program for principals or a master's degree in educational administration. Also, there was a requirement of acquaintance with the Ministry of Education rules and guidelines.

The selection committee (appointed by the relevant district manager of the Ministry or by the local authority head) reviewed the candidate's qualifications. Committees overseeing primary school administration tenders included the district manager, a teachers' association representative, and the director of the local authority education department. Committees overseeing secondary school administration tenders included the representative of the Pedagogical Secretary of the Ministry of Education, a local authority education department representative, a teachers' association representative, and a public interest representative. In primary schools, the candidate who received the endorsement of the committee and was recommended by a majority of members must be approved by the Director General of the Ministry of Education. In most cases the approval of the Director General was purely formal. In secondary schools, the candidate was selected by majority vote of committee members.

After a new principal is appointed, s/he was placed under a three year trial period, during which his or her administrative and pedagogical abilities were examined. The principal's functioning was reviewed each year by the school superintendent and the reports were read by the district manager. In the third year, the district manager and local authority representative separately visited the school and

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[4] For details about the structure and legal governance of the Israeli educational system see Gibton (2011).

assessed the performance of the principal. The recommendation for principal tenure
was sent to the Ministry of Education Pedagogical Secretariat, which received the
recommendations and passed them on to the Director-General for a final decision
regarding tenure approval.

 The above historical review shows a decentralized policy approach with
regard to training and licensing that is manifested in relatively broad academic
freedom and institutional pluralism, while simultaneously emphasizing the
bureaucratic involvement of the state in selection and tenure procedures. The new
PTL reform changed these emphases. Before discussing the latest PTL reform, it is
necessary to place it in its ideological context. In the next section I review the neo-
liberal developments in Israeli educational policies.

6.2 Neo-liberalism and Israel Educational Policies 1990-2012
A centralistic control pattern has become the signature mark of all educational
policies formulated and implemented in Israel (Oplatka and Waite 2010). Since its
establishment, Israel has embraced the welfare state model, although over time more
liberal and pluralistic trends have gained support among the Israeli public (Ram
2004). In response, the Ministry of Education made changes that allowed for the
expression of diverse needs. In the 1980s, denominational semi-private schools were
established (Yonah 2000), and regional magnet schools were opened (Gibton et al.
2000). These constituted dramatic changes to the Israeli educational landscape. For
many years state public schools were the only option. The ability of community and
parental groups to establish new schools utilizing public funds together with a level of
operational autonomy created semi-private schools, and semi-private educational sub-
systems (Shamani 2000; Yonah 2000).

 In the 1990s, the Israeli Ministry of Education contemplated the issue of
parental choice (Ministry of Education 1993). Supervised parental choice plans were
gradually implemented in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (Eyal and Berkovich 2011).
Student registration, previously carried out in accordance with local authorities and
based on school zones, now became a matter of consumer choice. In this new reality,
characterized by a quasi-educational market, schools without a guaranteed client base
began to compete and to market themselves (Oplatka et al. 2002). Moreover, a limited

school-based management reform was introduced,[5] giving principals the authority to manage the school budget and raise funds from the community and businesses (Nir 2002). This reform, however, did not involve a significant change in the authority delegated to the school level (Nir 2003).

Neo-liberal social and economic policies have been dominant in Israel in the last decade. During the first years of the century, the Israeli government initiated dramatic cutbacks in the budget of social services (including education), not only in response to the economic crisis but as a means of promoting a neo-liberal socio-economic order (Yonah et al. 2008). The lack of public resources has led to an increasing number of non-profit organizations offering educational programs within the schools, in both core subjects and enrichment programs (Berkovich and Foldes 2012).

The recommendations of the Dovrat Committee, submitted in 2005, included reforms that were similar to neo-liberal reforms found abroad (Resnik 2011), such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2001 in the USA (Hursh 2007). The committee advocated greater autonomy for school principals as well as the following recommendations (Ministry of Education 2005): (a) principals should bear responsibility for the financial, pedagogical, and administrative management of their schools; (b) principals should have authority over human resources, such as the hiring and firing of teachers; (c) principals should be permitted to raise funds from NGOs, corporations, and private donors.

Although the Dovrat report was never formally approved, several of its elements have been implemented, including the establishment of two agencies (Resnik 2011). Prior to the establishment of the Avney Rosha Institute for the training of school principals in 2008, RAMA (Hebrew acronym for the National Authority for Measurement and Evaluation in Education) was established in 2006. RAMA assumed the responsibility for administrating the national achievement tests.

In the early 2000s, Israel initiated a national assessment test, the *Meitzav* (Hebrew acronym for Growth and Efficiency Measures of Schools) in primary education and junior high schools (Director-General's Circular 2003/10(c), Ministry of Education, June 1, 2003), emulating foreign policies (Zehavi 2011). Since the

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[5] The recommendations of the Ministry of Education school-based management steering committee, advising to increase the principals' authority in matters of personnel management and to establish school governing bodies, were postponed and not implemented (Nir 2012).

establishment of RAMA, national testing has become institutionalized. Currently all public schools in Israel (which comprise the majority of the Israeli education system, excluding only the ultra-Orthodox subsystem and a handful of private Arab and Jewish schools) are obligated to participate every year in national testing. The tests are either administered by the school and used for internal evaluation or else externally administered by RAMA in an alternating cycle (Director-General's Circular 2011/1, 4.1, Ministry of Education, 2011).

Furthermore, despite the strong resistance of teachers (Berkovich 2011), the Ministry of Education has initiated two mini-reforms based on collective wage agreements with the teachers' unions: *Ofek Hadash* (i.e., New Horizon) in primary education (initiated in the school year of 2008-2009 and now fully implemented); and *Oz Letmura* (i.e., Courage to Change) in secondary education (initiated in the school year of 2011-2012 and only partially implemented). These reforms increased both the teachers' workload (focusing mainly on individual needs and small groups tutoring) and their salaries.

Note that despite changes in the Israeli welfare state design, the quasi-market educational system in Israel is relatively underdeveloped compared with other educational systems worldwide. Despite a long-standing informal policy of turning a blind eye to additional funding of public education by the parents (Inbar 1989), since the beginning of 2000 the Israeli Ministry of Education has enacted formal policies that appear to be aimed at fighting the expansion of the phenomenon.[6] The Ministry limited the number of new magnet schools and of special programs funded by parents and conducted in public schools (Ministry of Education 2002).[7] Additionally, as demand for semi-private schools increased, in 2009 the minister amended directive 3(A1) of the regulations governing recognition of educational institutions, allowing ministry officials to deny semi-private status to non-integrative schools by using selective procedures (Nesher 20 July 2012). The formal position of the Ministry was appealed in the Havruta school dispute, and the court dismissed the position of the

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[6] The Ministry of Education has been sharply criticized for its ambivalence regarding the privatization and marketization processes, because in some cases it allows (some say, encourages) privatization and on other cases it attempts to restrain it and decrease its negative effects.

[7] During 2000-2011, 176 semi-private schools were authorized by the Ministry (Nesher 20 July 2012). Since 2003, only 34 public and semi-private schools received permission from the Ministry to act as regional magnet schools, and only 115 public schools received authorization to initiate special programs or classes founded privately by parents (Vurgan 2011a). Findings of a survey published recently indicate that the scope of the phenomenon may be wider than formally acknowledged (Bialik and Kafri 2011).

Ministry, ruling in favor of parental rights in child education (DC 52641/10). The Ministry also objected to the publication of the national achievement test results, but the court mandated the publication of test results (Nesher 23 September 2012; HJC 1245/12). Moreover, parental choice of schools is limited and available only in few municipalities; most municipalities still utilize registration zones, so that the education market in Israel can be broadly characterized as low in diversity and choice.

From an international perspective, the Israeli education system is under-evaluated, especially when compared with the US and UK systems. But the policies described above mark a shift in local governance toward the evaluative model, and should be understood and interpreted in their historical context. The latest PTL reform represents another step in this change of governance.

6.3 The New PTL Regulation Policies

In recent years, the subject of the training of school principals has been the focus of much attention in the Israeli Ministry of Education. Policymakers' dissatisfaction with the Israeli education system was underscored by the low ranking Israeli of students in international achievements tests. This has led to the establishment by the government of a National Task Force (i.e., the Dovrat Committee) aiming at reforming the educational system. The Dovrat Committee proposed structural changes in the educational system in the spirit of managerialism, based on a globally informed approach (Feniger et al. 2012). Based on the findings of the Dovrat Committee, which recommended a comprehensive reform in the education system including training for principals (Ministry of Education 2005), the Israeli Ministry of Education established an agency to oversee all authorities involved in the development of educational leadership. In 2008, the Israeli Institute for School Leadership was founded as a partnership between the Ministry of Education and a third-sector philanthropic foundation (i.e., *Yad Hanadiv*). Named *Avney Rosha* (i.e., Keystones), the agency was granted all the Ministry's authorities and responsibilities regarding the training, licensing, and development of school principals.

According to Michal Almog-Bar and Ester Zichlinskey (2010), half the representatives on the board of Avney Rosha are from the Ministry of Education and the other half from Yad Hanadiv. The Minister of Education serves as Chair of the Board, but the partnering philanthropic foundation appoints the Vice Chair, and the

consent of both the Chair and of the Vice Chair is required to finalize governance decisions.

Currently, 12 academic institutes operate the Avney Rosha training program as service providers (Director-General's Circular 72/1(a), 8.4, Ministry of Education, September 1, 2011). The Avney Rosha certification program rests on the following pillars (Director-General's Circular 72/1(a), 8.4, Ministry of Education, September 1, 2011): (a) the improvement of teaching and learning; (b) the design of future schools; (c) team leadership and professional development; (d) evidence-based management; and (e) budget and resource management.[8] Additionally, the new certification program includes field-based internships and mentoring (Avney Rosha 2009). Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, only principals holding the Avney Rosha diploma will be eligible to submit their candidacy to open principalship positions (Director-General's Circular 72/1(a), 8.4, Ministry of Education, September 1, 2011).

One of the seven indicators of the successful development activities initiated by the Avney Rosha Institute is the extent to which they contribute to the formulation of an evaluative culture by school principals (Avney Rosha 2011). According to the Avney Rosha's 2011 annual performance report, the institute conducted 117 development programs for principals in regional formats focusing on teacher evaluation.

In an earlier tender for educational providers, in 2009, the institute published curricular demands in which evaluation was mentioned only incidentally, as one item on a list of topics associated with improving teaching and learning (Avney Rosha 2009). In 2012 the institute published a second tender, for programs starting in the 2013-2014 school year, stating that a significant part of the curriculum (about 25% out of the 400 hours of the program) will be dedicated to: (a) school pedagogical diagnostic issues (with specific focus on analyzing internal and national test results); (b) teacher evaluation issues; and (c) evidence-based management in schools, using various types of evidence (Avney Rosha 2012, p. 10).

Additionally, the 2012 tender mentions the introduction of a mandatory national graduation task for aspirant principals. At the time of writing this article the task was being developed in collaboration of the Ministry of Education, RAMA, and

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[8] Interestingly the two latter pillars are only mentioned in the Avney Rosha documents (Avney Rosha 2008; 2009). This discrepancy may indicate the distance between rhetoric and intentions in the neo-liberal discourse.

Avney Rosha, and it was intended to serve for the licensing of aspirants. Furthermore, the performance of the graduates on the task will serve as an indicator of the success of the program and may be taken into account in future contracting.

In Israel, the overwhelming majority of principals are employed directly by the state (by central or local government). Therefore, PTL regulation reform within government can also be seen as an attempt of one arm of the state to constrain another arm. In 2010, the Knesset (Israeli parliament), in coordination with the Ministry of Education, discussed amending the National Education Act of 1953 to formalize the status of the central government in appointing principals to secondary schools owned by local authorities. The stated rationale for the bill is that the central government needs to have a final say in the appointment of principals to secondary schools in order to monitor the management of the schools, the principals, and the teachers.

As shown above, Israel has embraced an evaluative PTL regulation model. This latest PTL reform is linked to the move of the Israeli government in a neo-liberal direction and to the adoption of the evaluative model over the last decade. Table 2 below summarizes the recent reform in Israeli PTL regulation policies.

Table 2: The reform in Israeli PTL regulation policies

	1990-2005 PTL regulation policy	**2005-2012 PTL regulation policy**
Training selection	Universities and colleges (MA programs) were independent in trainee selection The state was involved in trainee selection in college certificate programs	State involvement in all trainee selection
Training providers	Universities and colleges supplied MA programs The state partnered with colleges to supply certificate programs	State-formed PTL agency: the Avney Rosha Institute Universities and colleges serve as suppliers by state contract

Training contents	Minimal state standards and broad academic freedom and institutional variance	Detailed state standards in all aspects of the program (defined in a contract with the provider)
Licensing	Principalship required either an MA degree from a university or a degree from a college certificate program No licensing requirement because the state was involved in appointment and tenure decisions	Principalship requires state certification Licensing will be mandatory before appointment

To fully assess the PTL reform, it is necessary to take a closer look at the current nature of the principalship in Israel.

7. The "New Professionalism" of Israeli Principals

Current developments in the Israeli principalship demonstrate how the interaction between the "liberating" and regulative-evaluative policies is restructuring the principalship in Israel in the service of the neo-liberal agenda. This change is manifested in the goals transmitted by the Ministry to acting principals in the field, the authority delegated to them, and the supervisory procedures initiated in their regard.

The main goals of the Ministry for the years 2011-2012 included strengthening the status of principals (Ministry of Finance 2010). To this end, the Ministry made considerable efforts to promote the delegation of important managerial authorities to principals. As part of these efforts, the Ministry restarted the site-based management pilot that this time granted broad operative authority to principals. As of 2011, 180 schools have joined the site-based management pilot (Vurgan 2011b). On March 13, 2011, the Israeli government accepted the suggestion of the Minister of Education to expand budgetary and pedagogical autonomy of the principals by adopting site-based management as a systematic goal (Government Decision no. 2981, Israel Government, 13 March, 2011). The current site-based management reform allows

principals to hire teachers in addition to the tenured staff through local authorities, NGOs, or private contractors (paying a lower hourly rate than that received by tenured teachers, and without social benefits), or to outsource educational programs (Ministry of Education 2011). The authority to hire teachers through intermediary organizations was previously controlled centrally by the state; it includes approximately 1.5%-6% of the Israeli teachers' workforce (Vurgan, 2011b).[9]

Additionally, the Ministry published a Director General's Circular concerning the expanded flexibility of principals in the employment of teachers through labor agreements (2009/2, 8.5, Ministry of Education, September 1, 2009), allowing principals to easily dismiss new teachers and even terminate the employment of tenured teachers, which was previously impossible to do using a shortened procedure. Moreover, the Oz Letmura labor agreement states that secondary school teachers will be evaluated by principals and receive their promotions and financial bonuses based on exemplary performance (Vurgan 2011b).

One of the most detailed and concrete goals of the plan of the Ministry of Education for 2009-2012 is improving academic achievements on the national Meitzav test and on the international tests (PISA and TIMSS), and increasing the accountability of principals and teachers (Ministry of Education website). The strategic plan of the Ministry specifies the number of ranks by which the ranking of Israeli students needs to advance on international achievement tests. The Ministry's strategic plan involves initiating a differential reward system for schools and providing additional budgets based on the assessment of outcomes.

Despite the Ministry's detailed plan and goals, principals perceived it as focusing on improving measurable academic achievements, with little regard to in-depth educational processes (Avgar et al. 2012). Starting with the 2011-2012 school year the Ministry produced the *Matana* (Hebrew acronym for Planning, Management, and Deployment Package) to inform the educational middle management rank, including school principals, about the strategic goals of the Ministry. The Matana includes a mandatory curriculum design for schools. Principals wishing to follow a different pedagogical vision are rebuked by superintendents if they fail to implement the directives to the letter (Avgar et al. 2012). Thus, in a reality of limited resources

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[9] It is important to distinguish these from teachers employed by secondary educational networks such as Ort and Amal, which grant their employees work conditions and wages similar to those of secondary teachers employed by local authorities.

and teaching hours, the leeway principals have for pedagogical innovation is greatly restricted.

As noted above, the internal Meitzav test scores are supposed to be confidential, and available only to school principals for purposes of pedagogical improvement. In practice, however, they seem to function exactly as the external Meitzav test scores. Principals report that internal test scores are also used as an instrument of surveillance by district directors, who demand that principals account for the scores achieved by students in their schools (Avgar et al. 2012).

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with RAMA, has initiated a principals' evaluation procedure to determine eligibility for tenure and promotion, and to enable systematic learning (Yakov 2012). The evaluation procedure includes self-evaluation by the principal and external evaluation by superintendents. During the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years, 1,400 primary and middle school principals participated in the procedure. The external evaluation process includes reviewing documents, conducting observations, and interviewing the evaluated principal. The future implications of repeated low evaluation scores on pay and employment are still unclear because the Ministry is reluctant to specify them (Yakov 2012).

The neo-liberal policies and discourse have changed the culture of the education system, and some educational professionals have embraced the neo-liberal mentality. The neo-liberal ethos dismisses collective claims and suggests that individuals bear responsibility for their status, thereby promoting a meritocratic system of accountability. Recent findings indicate that this ethos has spread among Israeli principals who dismiss the relevance of ethnicity and class background to academic tracking (Mizrachi et al. 2009).

8. Conclusions

Israel slowly has embraced the characteristics of post-bureaucratic governance in education observed in other Western countries. Although the move made by the State of Israel toward the neo-liberal model was affected by local social and economic conditions, it is first and foremost part of an international trend. Kai Alderson (2001) suggested that international normative diffusion is manifested in "state socialization," as states internalize expectations and patterns of behavior. He elaborated and argued that this outcome is the result of three processes: the first occurs at the individual level and involves a change in belief; the second occurs at the interpersonal and group

levels, as ideologically-driven actors persuade others and use political power to promote policies inspired by foreign examples; the third occurs at the structural level and involves institutionalization, as long-term policies and institutes are formed that have the power to operate and reproduce values and practices without the active involvement of actors. The present article demonstrates that Israel has started the institutionalization stage of neo-liberal socialization.

The post-bureaucratic governance model usually translates into the promotion of increased regulation in some operational fields and deregulation in others. This can be seen as the attempt by the state to simultaneously liberate and enslave (Hoggett 1996). Neo-liberal states choose to be the "weak state" in some domains and the "strong state" in others (Yonah et al. 2008). It has been claimed that state regulation is on the rise with regard to developing and enforcing curricula, as well as the achievement of standards (Yonah et al. 2008). Israel is more inclined today than in the past to adopt evaluative governance characteristics. The present article shows that PTL in education is a salient domain in which the evaluative state attempts to maintain control, a finding that is consistent with Tomlinson's (2001) claim that the state refuses to yield its control over the workforce in the post-welfare age.

The present article sheds light on the Israeli PTL reform in its historical and social contexts, and links the PTL reform to the strengthening of the neo-liberal agenda in educational policies and administration. Findings are consistent with the claim that political, social, and economic elements significantly influence the formulation of the role of school principals and the training they receive (Isik 2003). The findings elaborate and support the claims that the Israeli education system appears to be in the midst of a process of transformation from a bureaucratic control system into a regulatory control system (Yonah et al. 2008).

The decision of Israeli policymakers to increase the regulation of training and licensing for principals and to adopt an evaluative PTL regulation model is evidenced the establishment of the Avney Rosha Institute. The initiative of the Israeli Ministry of Education to establish the Avney Rosha Institute can be viewed strictly as a professional change, but the emphases of its training program and the rise of policies marking the new professionalism among Israeli principals are not a good sign. Kevin Leicht and colleageus (2009) argued that transformations in the dominance of technical institutional environments together with the rise of neo-liberal ideology can alter professional contexts. The transforming effects of neo-liberalism on the nature of

educational professionalism and on the training of professionals have been documented in the UK and the US, mainly among teachers (Furlong et al. 2000; Zeichner 2010).

The mechanism that creates this "new professionalism" is linked with neo-liberal policymaking operating in a recursive manner, so that when neo-liberal policies lead to problems, supporters "simply claim that they have not gone far enough" and advocate further use of neo-liberal policies (Leicht et al. 2009. p. 600). The main difficulty with neo-liberal policies is that they end up exercising a transformative effect on social-psychological culture, as culture becomes saturated with neo-liberal mentality (McGuigan 2005). Where neo-liberal "structural alignment" techniques (i.e., formal and informal policies, practices, and procedures) are emphasized, a "tight" culture emerges (Gelfand et al. 2004).

Despite this somewhat pessimistic, albeit highly probable chain of events, the situation described above is still only one of possible future scenarios. Individuals in states such as Israel, which currently are only beginning to institutionalize neo-liberal policies, can influence the process. A system with a neo-liberal orientation does not necessarily imply the rise of new professionalism. When there is strong unity and agreement between multiple stakeholders concerning professional ideas of improving service quality, classical professionalism can still prevail (Leicht et al. 2009). Thus, the challenge is to promote "democratic professionalism," which can serve as an alternative to increased neo-liberal control, without limiting the judgment of educational professionals responsive to the needs of students and emphasizing collaborative work between educational professionals and stakeholders (Apple 1996; Sachs 2003). Such suggestions support the development of educational professionalism as an "inherently non-routine activity," which can be adopted and contextualized in accordance with the complex student and community needs (Furman 2003; Reid and O'Donoghue 2004). Naturally, this does not mean relinquishing professional accountability. Evidence and evaluation are important in educational administration, but in the debate about the accountability of educational professionals there is a need to "reappropriate" evidence that introduces a wide range of experiences and cultural knowledge instead of that emphasized by monocultural neo-liberalism (Shahjahan 2011).

Focusing on models of educational governance and PTL regulation policies, I have attempted to advance the analytic understanding of current neo-liberal

influences. The framework and analysis that I present here may be relevant to other national contexts. Follow-up analysis in other contexts may demonstrate the ecological validity (see Crossley and Vulliamy 1984) of the framework and of the claims presented here, and elucidate the different policies and their effects on aspiring principals and on their performance.

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