

Civic Education in Israel

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Abstract

Civic education in Israel had been set at the focus of an intense public debate in the past few months, which reached its pick when the Knesset committee for education disqualified a new textbook for high school. In this paper we make a comparison between three high schools textbooks in an attempt to extort the different attitudes which derive from the books. We also try to show that there is a connection between different ideas of democracy and conflicting conceptions of civic education, which are reflected in these textbooks. Our methodology is comparative content analysis, which is based on Amy Gutmann's civic education theory and Peled and Shafir's citizenship discourse model.

Introduction

Over the last years we recognize a rise of the debate over contents of civic studies. What should the curriculum emphasize? Should it be an introduction to the democratic institutions and processes so that the young citizens-to-be will become conscious democratic citizens? Or maybe should it emphasize the history of the Jewish people, since it is a Jewish state? Last month, the argument – which usually takes place at the Knesset committees and on the media – has escalated, as minister of education Gideon Saar decided to disqualify a civic studies textbook because of his (and others') reservations to its content (Haaretz, 17.4). The formal explanation for the disqualification was that it contains insulting references considering immigrants ("Olim") from former U.S.S.R – claiming that their reasons for making "Aliya" were financial and not Zionist – but some argue that the real reason for the disqualification was that the book contains far reaching liberal content, and does not emphasize enough the Jewish component of the State of Israel.

Debates over educational contents should not be considered as an extraordinary phenomenon if we consider education as a political act. As Pinson (2005, פינסון) describes it, Michel Foucault has claimed that every educational system is a political mean for preservation or shaping of the discourse of knowledge and on power

relations it carries (Foucault, 1981). At the same time, she continues, Middleton argued that educational systems and schools are the arenas where social discourse is shaped (Middleton, 1998). Therefore, what is being studied in schools, that is to say, the curriculum, is a product of conflicts of different identities and different centers of powers of the society. From this point of view, debates over civic studies in Israel are natural.

We use this approach as our basic assumption and would like to examine how the different types of citizenship discourses were manifested over the past twelve years in Israeli civic studies textbooks. We examine citizenship discourses because we find them to be of a great deal in civic studies. Moreover, citizenship discourse has been a center of discussion in Israeli society and politics (Peled and Shafir, 1998).

We begin our analysis in 2000, when a new textbook, *Being citizens in Israel*, was published following Kremintzer report. For more than a decade this was the only textbook used in classes. Our analysis continues with two recent textbooks, *Going on a Civic Path* and *Government and Policy in Israel*, both were published in 2011, following changes in the curriculum. Our main goal is to observe changes and continuities in citizenship discourses as they articulated in those textbooks. We do so by a comparison of four categories which will be introduced later.

The research field of civic studies in Israel is quite rich. Many of works regarding this field were published in the last decade. Actually, this subject was the focus of "Politika" journal in 2005. The subject of citizenship discourse in particular was also a subject of interest, especially in the work of Pinson (e.g. 2000, 2003 & 2005). Yet, a research that deals with recent developments in civic studies area is yet been written. We hope that this research, which engages with recent developments in a comparative manner, will enrich civic studies in Israel research field.

Our paper begins with a review of a brief history of civic studies in Israel, and a presentation of different forces that influenced the shaping of civic studies curriculum. Next we discuss the three citizenship discourses that usually exist in modern societies and states: the liberal, the republican and the ethno-national. In the methodology chapter we discuss our research's objects – the three textbooks – and the comparison process. At the end of this chapter is an introduction of the four categories we used in our analysis and the themes that represent them in the textbooks. Then, we present our comparison. The last section is dedicated to a discussion of the causes for the changes and continuities in civic education discourses which were manifested in the textbooks.

Civic Studies in Israel

Civics was first studied in Israeli Jewish schools ("Chinuch Mamlachti Yehudi") as a separate discipline in 1976 and in Israeli Arab schools ("Chinuch Aravi") a few years later (2001, איכילוב). During the following years, there were separated curriculums for the Jewish and Arab sectors. Although there were some differences between the two, both curriculums emphasized formal knowledge and democratic procedures. Conflicts among the Israeli society, as well as the problems considering the definition of the Israeli state as democratic and Jewish were left out. Furthermore, as Pedhazur (2001) and Pinson (2000; 2003) claim, civics concept derived from Jewish civic studies textbooks reflects the Zionist narrative, which in turn, considered as unchallengeable. Generally, it seems that Israeli civic studies had offered a narrow concept of democratic citizenship.

Following a series of violent incidents in Israeli society and politics during the 1980's, many figures in the ministry of education shared the belief that a democratic education must be at the top of educational agenda (2006, פינסון). In order to fulfill this view, a committee was founded in 1989, during Yitzhak Navon tenures minister of education. The committee finished its work in 1994. One of its main conclusions was the recommendation of adoption of a unified civics studies curriculum for the Jewish and Arab sectors: "The new curriculum offers a wide common denominator for all students... (Therefore) there is no justification for separations" (Ministry of education, 1994: 5-6. Stated in: 2006, פינסון).

A year later, another committee was founded, this time at the order of Amnon Rubinstein, one of the following ministers of education. The committee published its conclusions in 1996, in what is known as Kremintzer report. Its starting point was that civic studies should take in account the democratic and Jewish foundations of Israeli citizenship: "It is advisable to highlight universal democratic values... as they realized in the Jewish tradition as well as in other cultures, especially in such cultures that are relevant to minority groups in Israel" (Ministry of education, culture and sports, 1996: 12. quoted in: 2001, איכילוב).

In 2000 civics studies curriculum was changed. Following Kremintzer report's recommendation, textbooks should have express a wider perception of civic studies, so in addition to the narrow discussion of the institutions of democracy, they will include a critical observation of the state's basic values and of the conflicts

characterize it. The only textbook that was published according to the new curriculum – and therefore the only one that was used in classes – *Lihot Ezrachim BeIsrael* ("Being Citizens in Israel"), was a target of criticism of different kinds. On the one hand, some accused it for not emphasizing the Jewish constituents of the state of Israel, and neither the Jewish history. On the other hand, some had claimed that the new curriculum still contributes to the enrooting of hierarchic civilian structure and of the exclusion of minority groups from the Israeli collective (for example: פינסון, 2005). In summer 2011, a new curriculum was introduced by Gideon Saar, Minister of education nowadays. Two new textbooks were then published and replaced the former one: *Mishtar ve Politica be Israel* ("Government and Policy in Israel") and *Yotzim le Derech Ezrachit* ("Going to a Civic Path").

Discourses of Citizenship

According to Peled and Shafir, three main discourses of citizenship are identified in the tradition of Western political thought: liberal, republican (or communitarian) and ethno-nationalist (Peled & Shafir, 1998; 2005, פלד ושאפיר). The liberal discourse emphasizes individual liberty and private properties, since according to this approach, individuals, as individuals, are the only bearers of rights. Individuals are the sovereign authors of their lives and are not beholden to their community. The function of politics is negative and narrow: It must help the individual exercise its rights and protect him/her from state intervention. In exchange for this protection, the individual assumes some minimal political commitments such as obey the law, pay taxes, vote, etc. In the liberal approach, citizenship, as society, is a mean, not a value. Liberalism's strength lies in its "ability to tolerate religious, cultural and political diversity by creating a self-limiting political realm respectful of individual rights and an institutional framework within, which polarizing disputes are avoided by permitting the political expression of only those conceptions of the good that are not monopolistic"(Peled & Shafir, 1998: 410).

Two Different contemporary discourses challenge the liberal point of view – the republican and the ethno-nationalist approach. Both of those discourses claim that when liberalism treats individuals as subjects with no unique characteristics, it takes

away their identities and therefore takes away their ability to become a community. On the other hand, both approaches differ in their identification of the moral objective of a human community (פלד ושפיר, 2005).

According to the republican, or communitarian discourse, politics is a communal affair, and citizenship is a continual political engagement (Peled & Shafir, 1998). The virtue of participating in the political life of the community and the identification with its characteristics are what make citizens who they are. This discourse emphasizes active political participation as a civic virtue. Active political participation serves as a criterion for determination of distribution of society's moral and material resources. Peled and Shafir claim that the concept of citizenship of the republican approach is aristocracy – biased, since it assumes that only a minority of the population can yield to the greater good, above its own individual interests (שפיר ופלד, 2005).

Ethno-nationalist discourse does not look for a civic culture but for a community of a different kind – the nation, or the ethnic group. In this approach, citizenship is not an expression of individual rights – as in the liberal approach – nor is it an expression of devotion for the greater good – as in the republican approach – but expression of an affiliation to a group of homogenous origin. According to ethno-nationalism, community has no existence outside or above the state. Community is portrayed by the state. Therefore, the tensions between individual and the state, or between the community and the state, which characterize the liberal and republican approaches accordingly, do not exist in the ethno-nationalist discourse. Ethno-nationalism describes nations as entirely different of each other, since they hold different cultural characteristics, such as language, religion and history. Following this view, since nations are inscribed into the identity of their members, ethno-nationalism rejects the idea of cultural assimilation (פלד ושפיר, 2005).

Of those three approaches. The liberal one is the most inclusive. However, the introduction of the liberal citizenship is subject contest with alternative approaches that sometimes overshadow it. In most societies, at least two discourses compete over control (Ibid). In the state of Israel, all three discourses represented above coexist (Shafir & Peled, 1998). Moreover, they all existed from the very beginning of the modern existence of Jewish settlement in Palestine ("Yishuv" period).

Methodology

The three textbooks

In order to examine the changes that occurred in civic studies textbooks following the changes in the civic studies curriculum, we used three textbooks. *Being citizens in Israel* was published in 2000, following Kermintzer's report. It was written by education personas Chana Aden, Varda Ashkenazi and Bilha Alferson and was published by the ministry of education. It was designated to high school students of the secular and religious sectors, and had a similar Arabic edition designated to the Arab sector. The designation of the book to all sectors is part of the decision of the ministry of education to have a unified curriculum, discussed earlier. For more than ten years it was the main civic studies textbook used in classes.

The next two textbooks are the only textbooks that were published and approved by ministry of education after the curriculum was changed in 2011. *Government and Policy in Israel* was written by professor of political sciences, Abraham Diskin and was published by Maggie Publishers in 2011. *Going to a Civic Path* was published in 2011 by Reches press. It was written by three education personas: Dr. Bina Galdi, Nisan Nave and Dr. Asaf Matzkin. As far as we know, there are no Arabic editions for of the two books. We chose to examine the two textbooks in order to get a wide comprehension and understanding considering the perceptions that are manifested in contemporary Israeli textbooks. The fact that those books have some inherent differences makes the analysis of both of them of great importance. Comparing those books to the former one will help us to understand the developments that occurred in civic studies textbooks. It is noteworthy that in April 2012, during our research, *Civic Path* was disqualified by the ministry of education, following accusations of some public figures claiming it to distort some incidents in Israeli history. Since we, along with Israeli education and civic studies experts, believe that this textbook has lots of significance in the comprehension of civic studies in Israel, as shall be clearer later in this work, we decided to include it in our research.

Research design

Our comparison of the three citizenship discourses is based on Aviv Cohen's (2008) work. In his paper Cohen examined how civic education is manifested in Israeli

formal curriculums of geography of Israel. Cohen focused on citizenship discourses and compared the liberal and the republican conceptions according to seven categories (see appendix 1). We used this model for our purposes and firstly added another column – the ethno-national conception. In order to distinguish between the categories we merged some of them, and created four categories for comparison: premises considering the state, the good citizen ideal type, the basic analyses unit and the skills expected from the students.

The next step was to read the three textbooks and to find what themes discussed in them may indicate the categories. For each category we matched one or two themes. Categorization and indications of each category will be discussed in the following sub-chapter.

Finally, after our model was ready, we read the textbooks once more in order to find how each theme is represented. We were looking not only for direct references but also for latent ones. For each theme, we began with the older book, *Being Citizens* and then moved to the other two so we examine changes and developments.

Categorization

Premises considering the state

Justification of the Israeli state: The rationale of the establishment and the existence of Israel is presented in the textbooks. We decided to examine this category by focusing on two themes: The first one is *a basic reference to the term state*, a reference that exists in all three textbook, but in a very different manner. According to the theoretical section, a liberal discourse emphasizes the state as a mean of protecting the citizens and ascribe it a narrow function. The republican discourse attributes the state the function of the articulation of public interests, while the ethno-nationalist discourse argues that the state is a device for realizing the nation, and emphasizes the nation constituent in the state. The second theme we chose is history of the *establishment of Israel*, since we believe that through the "historic story" we can learn a lot about the reasons for the establishment of the state, those who took part in this process and those who were absent. We assume that while the republican and the ethno-national present the establishment story as a story of a community, the liberal discourse emphasizes this story as story of human rights. The difference between the

republican and the ethno national are articulated in the introduction of the participants in the establishment process.

Power of the state and its restriction: We mainly use this category in order to identify the existence or the absent of the liberal discourse, since state restriction is one of the main principles of liberalism. The theme we focus here is *state restriction*, a theme that is displayed in all three textbooks, in a different stress. According to the theoretical framework, the liberal discourse emphasizes this principle, its importance and its profit.

The Good Citizen Ideal Type

Civic and political engagement: Although civic and political engagement is usually attached to republican discourse we believe that the rationale of engagement that is presented in the textbooks and what is considered engagement according to them may reveal different kind of citizenship discourses. We chose the theme *political participation* that exists in each of the three textbooks as an indicator to discussion of civic and political engagement. We believe that republican discourse introduces a wide range of participation activities and that it refers to those activities as a mean to contribute the community, and as important component of citizenship. In contrast, the liberal discourse claims that participation is important since it is a tool to supervise and the state. In regard to ethno-nationalism, this discourse emphasizes participation as a device for contributing the nation.

Rights and duties relation: Here we were looking for to a mention of the *relation of rights and duties* in the textbooks. We assume that the liberal discourse treats rights and duties as independent categories, while the republican treat the rights as a product of fulfilling the duties. In the ethno-nationalist discourse, both rights and duties derived from belonging to the nation, and because of that, they are not interdependent.

Basic Analysis Unit

This category refers to the extent of which the individual at the focus, as expressed by addressing rights. The issue is whether the individual is on the focus, which is expressed by emphasizing human rights, or whether it is the community and we might find greater emphasis on community and group rights. Concerning ethno-national discourse, we were looking also for an emphasis on the nation, mainly Jewish.

Civic Education and Pedagogy

Here we were looking for the skills expected from civic students. We assume that civic education suppose to develop a "democratic" person i.e. one who recognize rights and duties of democratic citizen, prefer peaceful conflict solutions etc. (גרומן, 65 :2002). Civic education develops few democratic skills, such as acquiring an independent perspective based on critical reading of texts, in class as well as in the media or anywhere else. It should also develop the ability to form an argument and to justify it and finally, it should encourage the student to take an active part in the political arena, by having an opinion and willing to take an action. (Walzer, 1995). This category was examined by analyzing the quality of the exercise questions in the books.

Intellectual Skills. The first aspect we examine is the extent to which the questions require high intellectual skills. Some of the questions are understanding questions, in which the students are required to repeat the reading material, some of the questions demand higher skills and in which the students need to use terms from the discussed chapter in other context. The highest level contains questions in which the student is asked to assert an argument and to justify it using what he had learnt.

Actuality. The second aspect we examine is the extent to which exercise questions are dealing with actual issues rather than hypothesized ones. For example, when studying about the conflicting rights, are the students asked about a certain country with certain groups of people, or they are asked about the Jews and Arabs in Israel and the West Bank. Dealing with political and social reality is also part of civic studies (Walzer, 1995).

Comparative analysis

Premises Considering the State

Justification to the Israeli state

In order to justify the concept of the state one must first answer the question why do we need a state at all. This answer is missing from *Being Citizens in Israel*. Definition of state is also absent. In *Going to a Civic Path* the state is defined as a "social organization that demands and operates an authority that represents the essence of the

society" (p.25).¹ Yet, an explanation of the need of the state does not exist. Both definition and justification we can find in *Government and policy in Israel*. The state is defined as a "social organization that owns a sovereign authority considering a territory and a population" (p.49). Whereas the former definition articulates a republican conception – "represents the essence of society" – the later is more neutral. *Government and Policy* is the only textbook that presents arguments for the need of the states. It does so by introducing the term of "social contract" and three modern western philosophers: Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. The book refers to the different approaches of those three considering the state, yet it emphasizes citizens' protection and interests' reflection as the rationale of the state. It is noteworthy that the discussion of the concept of state in this book is presented at the beginning of the section of "Israel as a Jewish State".

All three textbooks refer to the concept of nationality and nation state widely. Under the subtitle of "different kinds of states", *Being Citizens* counts different kinds of *national* states. Since it does not refer to the basic term of state, it seems like it assumes it is the only kind of state that exists or the only desirable one. This book also dedicates a sub-chapter to nationality. In *Going to a Civic Path* discussion about nationality and the nation state appears right after the definition of state in the same chapter. Those concepts get much more attention than the concept of the state. In a similar way, the discussion of nationality and nation state in *Government and Policy in Israel* also follows discussion of the state. Similar to the two former books it also includes representation of different kinds of nationalities and nation states. Although recognizing the importance of nationality as identity, none of the textbooks states clearly that the nation state role is to articulate the nation values and interests, nor other rationales. Reviewing the books, it seems that nation state's significance derived only from its existence.

Yet, it does not mean that according the books Israel as a nation state does not exists in order to articulate the values and the interests of the Jewish nation. In all three textbooks a whole section dedicated to a Jewish state, its definitions, its articulation and different approaches to this concept exists. In all three textbook an alternative approach to the state – Israel as a state of all of its citizens – is represented.

¹ The translation from Hebrew to English was made by us – N.W. & Y.T.

Yet in all three cases it is considered as alternative and extreme approach, located far away from consensus.

Another manifestation of the conception of the state of Israel as a mean to the Jewish nation we can find in the review of the historical background of the establishment of Israel displayed in the two newer books. *Civic Path* opens with an introduction chapter that deals with the background of Israel. It begins with forefathers of Zionism as Moses Hess and Judah Alkalai. Then it counts two main factors to the development of Zionism – anti-Semitism and the European trend of nationality. Afterwards it describes the era of the new Jewish settlement in Israel, including the "Aliyot", Balfour declaration and many propositions to settle the Palestinian-Jewish conflict. In *Government and Policy* historical background of Israel begins with British Mandate over Palestine. It includes a profound description of the Jewish political system and of Jewish security organization during that period. A review of the Arab-Jewish (compare with the term "Palestinian-Jewish" of the former book) conflict also exists. It is noteworthy that native Arab (Palestinians) are only mentioned in the context of conflict. Their ways of life and their social structure are absent.

When examining the justification of the state as a political structure it seems that the only textbook refers to this issue, *Government and Policy*, articulates a liberal discourse – the state exists in order to protect the citizens by regulating the public life. Yet, all three textbooks treat the nation state as a given situation and the issue is discussed as part of the discussion of the term "state" generally. The profound considerations of nationality and of Israel as a Jewish state in all three books, as well as the review of Zionist history in two of the three books express an ethno-national discourse.

Power of the state and its restrictions

Being Citizens dedicates a whole chapter to the principle of state restriction. It opens with an announcement that the state concentrates numerous powers in its hands. Then, it lists the kinds of powers: control over economic resources, control over human resources, control over enforcement systems and so on. There is a real concern, it argues, that "the state authorities will take advantage these powers and use it in a negative way and damage democracy and its citizens' rights". Therefore, state must be restricted.

The principle of state restriction is manifested, according to the book, in a wide range of mechanisms. Three main mechanisms – separation of powers, constitution, and democratic elections – get intensive treatment and each are displayed as sub-chapter. For example, in the sub-chapter of democratic elections for example we can find the rationale of election in democratic states, the prerequisites of democratic elections, the right to elect and be elected as a basic right and election methods. The other mechanisms – divided to "formal" and "informal" – are displayed in a third sub-chapter and each gets a detailed reference. Here we can find the parliament, state comptroller, ombudsman, court system, media and public opinion.

Civic Path also dedicates a whole chapter to the principle of state restriction. In a similar way, it also begins with the rationale of this principle. Similarity continues with the introduction of three main mechanisms of state restriction: separation of powers, constitution and democratic elections. Perhaps due to contemporary trends in Israeli society the authors add to the list of other mechanisms: attorney general of government, tribunals of inquiry and non-governmental organizations. Each of the mechanisms is discussed in detail and examples of contemporary issues regarding almost each of them are added.

Unlike these two textbooks, *Government and Politics* does not devote a chapter to the principle of state restriction. Actually, the principle of state restriction is unified with the principle of rule of law and is called "The Rule of Law and Restriction on State and Citizens"(our emphasis). The chapter begins with the statement that "Although the definition of democracy is not so clear, we should bear in mind that democratic rule is subjected to moral and formal restrictions" (p.181). There are no explanations to this judgment or a description of state powers. Next, all of the mechanisms of state restriction are introduced in two sentences, with no detailing. Following this, a more detailed sub-chapter is dedicated to restriction on citizens as part of rule of law.

An interesting addition to the issue of state restriction in *Government and Policy* is the attention that is given to the concept of defensive democracy, that missing in the former two textbooks. According to *Government and Policy*, "tolerance and pluralism have their limits, otherwise democracy loses its vitality" (p.184). The author gives for an example the case of the collapse of Weimar republic. Another concept that is missing from the former textbooks is "a country under siege" which the author attributes to Israel: "Ever since its establishment, many undermine Israel existence".

Therefore, he claims, there are some occasions when basic rights are negatively affected. The complexities of these two concepts and their implications are absent.

Both *Being Citizens* and *Civic Path* articulate a liberal discourse of citizens as they both emphasize the danger of state powers considering human and civil rights. The comprehensive presentation of mechanisms of state restriction indicates the importance that the authors attribute to the notion of state limitation. Conversely, *Government and policy* is missing some of the liberal conception referring this issue. It refers shortly and superficially to the principle of state restriction and does not attribute it a unique significance. The inclusion of limitation of state restriction in the chapter widens the discussion of the principle, yet it seems that in this book it gets more attention than the principle of state restriction itself.

The Good Citizen Ideal Type

Civic and Political engagement

In *Being Citizens*, discussion of political engagement is manifested only in the chapter of "Israeli Political Culture". As much of the chapter is dedicated to different kinds of political culture and to the norms of democratic political culture, only a short paragraph discusses political participation. Political participation is said to be important in democracy, since it "strengths the powers of the citizens facing the government and enables them to express their wills more clearly" (p.559). In forms of political participation the book includes – in a short un-detailed list – vote in election, participation in NGOs, interest groups, demonstrations, rallies and strikes and expression of opinions in the media. Following this superficial consideration, discussion turns to the norms of political participation and the danger of political violence.

In *Civic Path*, political engagement is also manifested as political participation as part of the discussion of political culture in Israel. The rationale of political participation is missing here, but explanations to the rise of non-governmental and non-partisan organizations do exist: dissatisfaction toward the political system on the one hand and willingness of the public to be engaged in political action on the other hand. Among the kinds of political participation the authors count: voting in elections, participation in protest movements, creation of protest art like movies and turning to

the supreme court of Israel (Bagatz). A reference to interest groups we can find in the next chapter, "Parties and Interest Groups in Israel" where a description of different kinds of interest groups as well as their strategies presented.

Government and Policy does not refer directly to the terms of political or civic engagement and political participation at all. Yet, we can find indirect reference to civic and political engagement in the chapter of "the Political Game" in the sub-chapter of "Non-Governmental Elements". The textbook considers non-governmental groups as protest groups, interest groups, pressure groups and lobbyists as elements that can influence government policy and describes shortly the means they use in order to do so. The importance of such elements to the society and to democracy is missing. At the same time, this textbook is the only one that treats NGOs not just as a mean of influence the government, but as an articulation of civic engagement in a wide range of domain: religion, education, health, sports, culture etc. Those organizations, it is argued, work toward social and public objectives.

The approach used by *Being Citizens* reflects a liberal conception, since the rational for participation derives from the inner tension between the state and its citizens. Participation is a way to express the citizens' needs and to prevent the state from coercion. In the next two textbooks we can identify a more detailed description of kinds of participation and engagement in public life, yet we cannot find any republican or ethno-national argument there. Engagement and participation are considered as part of the political game, as factors in policy making, but their importance to the citizen/ public/ nation is not mentioned whether directly or indirectly.

Relationship between rights and duties

We find a peculiar attention to the relationship between citizen's rights and his/ her duties in *Being Citizens*. In the sub-chapter "Duties of the Citizen" it is argued that "In a democracy, every citizen must obey and respect the laws of the states". At the same time, few pages later, a limitation considering the sanction of violating this order is made. Relating to the republican arguments such as "a citizen, who does not fulfill his / her duties, does not deserve human rights" and "a man who does not take part in sharing the burden of the social life is not allowed to claim for equal rights" the authors quote jurist David Kretzmer. According to Kretzmer, since human rights are not granted to a person for his/ her good deeds, no one can deny them from him/her

when he/ she do not fulfill duties (be it to respect the law or to take part in the public life). A person must be punished for his/her offense as the law directs, and not by denying his/ her rights.

While in *Being Citizens* we identify a liberal discourse, in *Civic Path* and *Government and Policy* there is no mention to the issue of rights-duties relations. The two books do argue the universality of human rights. In *Government and Policy*, for example, it is claimed that some of the human basic rights are "not depend on the willingness of the state (to assume them), on a kind of government nor on any kind of convention" (p.151). Yet any reference to a situation in which a citizen violets the law or do not fulfill his/her duties and consideration for the status of his/ her rights – be it liberal or republican – is missing.

Basic Analysis Unit

All the books refer to individual rights and community, but with different proportions between the two. Therefore, the comparison is focused on the chapters which deal with different sorts of rights and the connection between them. These chapters are located in the democracy theme.

In *Being Citizens*, under the title "the Principle of the Democratic Regime", human rights are dealt with extensively. The authors introduce the idea of natural rights, those which all human beings deserve and distinguish them from political rights, which address political issues, such as voting etc. The authors assert that "human being is the basis on which state and society are founded, he is autonomous and free, and therefore his freedoms and rights must be protected" (pp.131-132). The authors justify rights by liberal assumption about human nature.

In the following pages, human (or natural) rights are introduced in details. The first one is the right to life, which is defined as a fundamental right and a basis for all the other rights. It is defined as a protection of one's life and safety, which derives the state's duty to secure its citizens' lives (p.135). The right of liberty opens with restrictions on that right, to prevent one from hurting anyone else, the society as whole or him/ herself (p.137). After introducing a list of fourteen types of freedom, the authors deal with few of them separately. Each one of the rights and types of freedom is dealing with the individual as facing society. Rights almost automatically are connected to persons.

Social rights are mentioned as well, but very briefly – a little more than one page (500 words approximately). Among these are the right of life style, the right of housing, the right of health care, the right of education and labor rights. It is worth noting, however, that these rights are introduced not as natural rights, but as subjected to state's policy and even may be cancelled – "These rights are not part of human's natural rights and therefore the state is allowed to change or even cancel them... no minimum or maximum of services supplied by the state were set" (p.155).

Minority rights are also presented briefly (compared to individual rights) but in more detailed, compared to social rights – 1600 words approximately. This passage opens with the assumption that in every society there groups who desire to preserve their identity, culture etc. Politically speaking, minorities' rights derive from human rights – the right of equality. On the other hand, group rights are perceived as derive from human rights since according to the liberal conception of democracy, they do not belong to a certain person but to a group of people who demand recognition. Even though the authors introduce three discourses on minorities rights they do prefer the liberal conception, as we can see from the fact that they deny minority rights on the ground that according to the liberal conception, it these are not natural rights.

In *Civic Path* as well there is an extensive discussion in human rights. The starting point is also the assumption that – "the human being is a thinking creature who is able to decide what is good for him" and that – "all human beings have natural rights simply because they are human beings" (p.55). Here, the social contract is introduced as the starting point of the human right), while in *Being Citizens*, the social contract is a part of the discussion over the two meanings of democracy (formal and essential). The first right is *Civic Path* is right of equality (p.57) while in *Being Citizens* it is the right of life. Except for that, these two books set the focus on individual rights.

Both books do not dedicate much place to social rights, although in *Civic Path* the student is provided with a tablet which highlights the differences between liberalism and social democracy (p. 45). Even so, the books differ in their attitude toward the idea of freedom and social rights, to an extent which expresses the conflicting discourses. Concerning freedom, *Civic Path* distinguishes between "freedom from...", which means the freedom any sort of coercion, and "freedom to..." which refers to the right to act freely. The latter is important in our discussion, since it derives from the assumption that all human beings were born free and have the ability

to reach their goal, whatever they are (pp.68-69). While according to *Being Citizens* rights are attached to a person, regardless his properties, *Civic Path* adds to this idea the assumption that freedom is not just being free from burdens, but also can be described in positive sense, such as expression of one's abilities and skills.

Another difference is the reference of the rights of the child as derive from human rights. This page and a half long paragraph introduce briefly the history of childhood and how it became a legal entity due to legislation and international action. Such a treatment with this issue does not exist in any of the other books.

Government and Politics' treatment to rights is the poorest of the three books. Like the other books, this book also cites the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but unlike them, it does not provide the reader with more detailed explanations. Under the title "natural rights", these rights are mentioned but a great emphasize is set on the fact that these rights are conflicting and therefore limited (p. 158).

Social rights are mentioned in two paragraphs under the same title. The author mentions Jabotinsky's *Five Memos* and introduces those rights but without further explanations. Issues concerning these rights, such discussion on social democracy and capitalism are absent from the book.

Skills Required from the Student

In *Being Citizens*, there is an exercise part at the end of every chapter. The nine questions which exercise human rights require mainly two skills – understanding and implementation. First, the students are asked to read few paragraphs and to write down different issues that appear there, such as specific rights and so on. Second, the students are asked to use what they had learned different context, for instance to determine what is the violated right in a given situation – "Below is a list of statements which describe violation of human rights. Identify the rights and assign each one of them to the right column in the table" (pp. 161-163).

In this chapter the situations are fictional, but the exercise questions of conflicting rights and minorities deal with current issues such as supreme-court ruling in Israel, the new Spanish constitution etc. The questions do not require the highest skills (such as making a personal statement) but do address current issues (to a certain extent) in Israel (pp. 171, 177-178).

In *Civic Path*, exercise questions are spread throughout the chapters. Here as well we hardly find understanding questions. Most of them require implementation of the studying material in given situation but unlike *Being Citizens*, the sources are varied. Besides fictional scenarios, the students are asked to look for material in the Knesset website (p. 86) or to analyze a state-service salaries table (p. 61). In addition, quite a few questions are about the students' opinion in different matters, such as the circumstances in which liberty should be restricted, (p. 69) or to create a complicated argument: "Some people say that a democratic state must execute an affirmative action policy and some say that [...] show *your* (our emphasis) point of view in this matter and introduce two arguments which support your position, based on civic concepts" (p.64). In this sense, *Civic Path* is much more varied in the skills it requires. The authors expect from the reader to develop an independent point of view and to be a critical media consumer.

Government and Policy does not offer as much exercise as the other books. The questions are located in one of the last chapters. Most of them are simple understanding questions, such as "what is a ministerial responsibility?", "What are the main two functions of the Knesset" etc. There are implementation questions as well, but far less, compare to the first type. Some of scenarios are fictional and some are real and there is one question in which the student is asked to explain his own opinion pp. 282-288). Generally, this book does not supply the student with great opportunity to perform his/her skills and knowledge and when it does so, most of the exercise requires knowledge of the political procedures, more than implement it on current political or social issues, as the other books offer.

Discussion and Conclusions

Following the comparison between the three books, it seems that the three of them share few perspectives toward civic discourses. All of them express the ethno-national discourse as they relate the Israeli state a Jewish state, whether explicitly or implicitly. They all refer to some part of Israeli-Jewish history but they defer from each other by the proportion and the point of view. Obviously, *Government and Policy* dedicates the largest part to this issue. The three books also do not dedicate much place to the

communitarian discourse, as they share some liberal conceptions such as the social contract and emphasizing individual rights.

However, the books defer from each other in few issues. First, while two of the books assume the state is powerful and therefore should be restricted, *Government and Policy* assume the citizens may endanger democracy and therefore should obey the law. Second, even though all of the books express a liberal conception related to civil society issue, we identified a more detailed treatment to this issue among the two new books. Third, two of the books dedicate considerable space for individual and social rights and freedoms, while *Government and Policy* does it briefly, mainly showing that these rights are conflicting and limited. Finally, while the *Becoming Citizens* and *Government and Policy* offer relatively simple questions for exercising, *Civic Path* expect from the student the highest level of criticism, creativity and personal expression.

These books reflect transition from relatively liberal perspective, which emphasize individual rights and restrictions on the state in two different trends. On the one side a book with more emphasize on the intellectual skills required from the students, as well as more wide scale (though limited) discussion over social and community rights. On the other side, a book which emphasize the ethno-national element of civics, even at the cost of minimizing the parts dedicated to rights and freedom. It is important to mention that this two faced trend is limited to the ethno-national sphere. None of these books challenge the very existence of a Jewish state and its implications. In this sense, Israel civic studies is "national", to the extent it makes an effort to justify the idea of national state. The books address issues of liberalism and democracy within this frame.

We introduced here briefly the public debate over civil education and one may ask whether such a debate is justified. To a certain extent, it seems that it is not. *Civic Path*, which was disqualified, introduces the students the core principles of democracy and civics and provides them with skills for criticism and autonomous thinking, important tools for the "democratic citizen". It also does not neglect the national theme.

However, the differences between the three books, especially between *Government and Policy* and the two others are crucial. While the other books emphasize liberal conceptions and autonomous thought, Diskin's book does not. We

suggest, therefore, that a public debate is justified to the extent that it reveals conflicting ideologies concerning of what a modern state should look like.

In general, it seems that the conflict is between individualist-liberal form of civics, which sets the focus on the individual, his freedoms and his rights, and more nationalist civics which emphasize. The main conclusion is that the public debate reflects conflict over conceptions of civic in an interesting contradiction. The three books justify the existence of a Jewish state, implementing ethno-national discourse, but still they differ from each other by the emphasize they put on this idea. However liberal they are, they presume the existence of national collective and they all ignore the idea of community and individual's duties toward it. It seems that the public debate, however justified it is, should address different issues concerning civics, civic education and the place of individual in the society.

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Appendix 1 – Cohen's Categorization: Characteristics of liberal and republican conceptions

	Liberal conception	Republican conception
Basic analysis unit	The individual	The community
Main cause	Individual's liberties	Shared values
Premises considering the state	The state may try to intervene in its citizens' life	The state represents the values of the public sphere
Perception of the state	Procedural sense	Essential sense
The good citizen	Using civil organizations in order to prevent state intervention	Participation in the public sphere and adopting shared values
Virtues expected from the citizen	Independency; Criticism	Solidarity
Emphasis in the education system	Government activity information; development of critical skills	Historic and cultural information about the background of the state's establishment; endowment of shared values