# Education as a political experience:
# A phenomenology of citizenship education in Israel

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## Abstract

The thesis presents a study of citizenship education, by examining how it is taught in Israel. Its primary aim is to understand the relation between politics and education as it manifests in interactions between teachers and students. The study includes interviews with Israeli teachers about their practice, alongside a philosophical inquiry into the educational requirements of political life. Political phenomenology is introduced as a methodological basis for a new understanding of citizenship education.

The first chapter explores the tenuous relationship between education and politics, and points to the specific dangers it poses in the Israeli case. The second chapter reviews the assumptions concerning pedagogy and politics within different accounts of citizenship education. The third chapter examines how these accounts influence Israeli educational discourse, through analysis of policy documents and educational research into citizenship education. Hannah Arendt's conception of citizenship as political action, as well as her demand that education be separated from politics serves as the methodological and thematic basis for my thesis.

The fourth chapter presents the methodology of my thesis and argues for a new political phenomenology of citizenship education, against two existing research approaches- the institutional approach and the critical approach. It explores how these two approaches lead to different research methodologies. The phenomenological tradition of research is presented as a way of describing a phenomenon by distancing oneself from it, or at least 'bracketing' one's beliefs, thereby allowing a non-ideological account of citizenship education. The fifth chapter elaborates on the process of interviewing that took place in the 2015-16 academic year and demonstrates my method of analysis.

The sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters present three ontological features of citizenship education as a political experience, and constitute the contribution to knowledge made by this thesis. Chapter six defines and presents liminality as a key spatial characteristic of citizenship education. Chapter seven examines the way the concept of responsibility is interpreted and enacted in citizenship education. Chapter eight analyses the way educational discourses treat "controversial issues" to argue for a wider, dialogical notion of controversy, and to offer an 'ethics of encounter' as the pedagogic basis for citizenship education.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 In search of a political philosophy of education

The meaning of political education and the relationship between education and political action first troubled me when I started teaching citizenship in Israel in 2009. The Israeli elections held in February 2009 resulted in a huge win for the Israeli right-wing. For me the election results meant finding a new profession. Until then I had been working as a spokesman for a certain left-wing political party, which was all but eliminated in the 2009 election. And so, following a short and miserable career as a political spokesperson, I found a job teaching citizenship and history in a 'cram school' preparing students for the Israeli matriculation exams.

The school specialised in helping students overcome learning disabilities through intensive teaching in very small groups, and I found myself teaching the exam-oriented citizenship curriculum for long hours in small classrooms, often teaching as few as five students in each lesson. Under these circumstances, it seemed like the political subject matter led to much more than just 'teaching to the test'. In the classroom, theoretical concepts from the curriculum – like 'majority rule and minority rights' and 'equal rights' – became animated discussions about Israeli political life. During these intensive first months, I realised that 'teaching politics' was essentially different from 'doing politics'. Understanding this difference is the central task of this thesis.

During my second year as a teacher, I began studying for a teaching certificate in Citizenship, engaging for the first time with philosophy of education as a discipline of thought. I found it fascinating, especially against the backdrop of a local Israeli and global movement that advocated the notion of 'effective' and 'scientific' improvement of education. Philosophising about education meant considering its aims and methods, thereby analysing and conceivably undermining its theoretical assumptions and thereby implicating moral, social and political issues in education. This philosophical orientation was a crucial part of my thinking about citizenship education; how could we discuss 'teaching standards', 'effective learning' and other educational catchphrases without addressing core questions regarding political life and its demands of education? This was the overarching theme in my Master's dissertation, which was a theoretical inquiry into different concepts of identity and their implications for citizenship education in Israel (Gideon, 2012). It represented my first academic attempt to understand the relationship between education and political life, and it later evolved into this thesis.

Following on from my research for the Master's dissertation, the first task of this thesis was to map out what different positions in political theory mean in relation to the education of citizens. Chapter 2 reviews different theoretical, normative positions concerning the scope, aims and method of citizenship education by extrapolating the educational significance of three approaches to political theory: political liberalism; republicanism; and critical theory. These three normative positions concerning what constitutes political education emphasise different pedagogical features. Each feature corresponds to a respective ideological position in relation to their understandings of the political sphere, political knowledge, and political action. The liberal position locates political learning as a process of realising the virtues of discursive autonomy (Guttman, 1987; Rawls, 1993). The republican position understands political education as a process of revealing the link between the students' identity and the political community (Cohen, 2010). The critical position, derived from a Marxist interpretation of societal relations and from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), generally sees the role of the teacher as one of fostering transformative dialogue, through which the student may gain critical consciousness (Freire, 2005).

The pedagogical insights of these different theoretical positions notwithstanding, the aim of this thesis is neither to argue for any one particular normative account of political education, nor simply to uncover how these ideological notions influence practice. Rather, the aim is to suggest a different entry point for understanding political education – one that would not strictly be a normative argument, or a sociological or comparative study that seeks to locate existing political commitments in education. Instead, this thesis is concerned with the particularity and the uniqueness of citizenship education, as an expression of political life in the educational space of the classroom. This methodological commitment to the particular context and spontaneity of the citizenship lesson requires examining citizenship education in Israel in its unique historical, political and sociological contexts. The political controversy surrounding citizenship education in Israel presents an additional layer of meaning to the subject matter in itself – teachers cannot avoid the fact that the subject matter consistently provokes public debate.

Chapter 3 presents the story of citizenship education in Israel, in order to ground this study in the particular practice of teaching citizenship in Israel. The methods used in current studies of Israeli citizenship education are explored in light of the different ideological positions presented in the second chapter, and considered as expressions of underlying assumptions concerning the relationship between education and politics. This thesis identifies two approaches to the study of citizenship education in Israel: (1) the 'institutional approach', which is basically more optimistic with regard to the prospects of

generating 'democratic values' through citizenship education; and (2) the 'critical approach', which is less optimistic and seeks to expose the ways in which education reifies societal power structures. When I looked to these analyses to understand the 'life of the classroom', these engagements were either 'too normative' – that is, they assumed that 'good citizenship' dictates certain classroom practice – or 'too applied' – that is, they relied on the sociological categories that make up the class, rather than on the specificity of the particular experience.

The biographical opening of this introduction may shed light on the meaning of this 'specificity'. As I researched literature for my Master's dissertation (Gideon, 2012), and later as a part of my PhD research, it seemed to me that the contingent, everyday complexities of teaching citizenship are not represented *fully* in the academic literature about political education. This might be because normative accounts of political education, as well as sociological studies, engage pedagogical aspects of citizenship education from one ideological perspective, assuming a certain political objective or at least a causal relationship between education and citizens' actions in the political sphere. To be sure, it is not my intention in this study just to argue against these two ways of describing and understanding citizenship education. Both are necessary to understand citizenship education. It would be impossible to think about citizenship education without some normative concept of what it means to be a citizen, or to understand the significance of the curriculum in different socio-political and socio-economic settings, without an understanding of the social background in which it operates. However, I argue that these two methodological positions should also be critiqued as particular iterations of the relation between citizenship education and political life, which propose certain political notions and pedagogical courses of action.

Furthermore, as the title of this introduction suggests, I am concerned with articulating a certain position on what could be considered a political philosophy of education. At its heart, philosophy offers a starting point for inquiry which makes a point of not assuming anything and proceeds with a deep awareness of ignorance. In his famous essay 'What is Political Philosophy?', Leo Strauss (1959) presented the basic principles of philosophical thinking about politics:

> Philosophy is essentially not possession of truth, but quest for the truth. The distinctive trait of the philosopher is that 'he knows that he knows nothing,' and that his insight into our ignorance concerning the most important things induces him to strive with all his power for knowledge. He would cease to be a philosopher by evading the questions concerning those things or by disregarding them because they

> cannot be answered … Thus understood, political philosophy will then be the attempt to replace opinion about the nature of political things by knowledge of the nature of political things … The assumptions concerning the nature of political things, which are implied in all knowledge of political things, have the character of opinions. It is only when these assumptions are made the theme of critical and coherent analysis that a philosophic or scientific approach to politics emerges. (Strauss, 1959: 344-345)

For the purposes of this thesis, Strauss' demand that a philosophic approach should expose and critique opinions means that a political philosophy of education should seek to inquire into the political nature of education without assuming a certain 'opinion' on the proper political arrangement, or on the proper educational requirements of citizenship.

Hannah Arendt's political thinking will serve as a methodological and ontological starting point for understanding classroom experience. Arendt has been described as a philosopher of 'natality' (Bowen-Moore, 1989), because of her emphasis on the possibility of 'beginning anew' as a primary characteristic of the human condition. This is of course of great significance when we consider education, and even more so when we consider the relation between politics and education. For Arendt, education is located at a precise and delicate position between the past and the future, tasked with preserving the common human world for future generations, while at the same time holding a special responsibility for 'newness' – the possibility of action that is completely unprecedented. This thesis will also rely on Arendt's understanding of shared responsibility as political responsibility, discussing its educational implications both in the case of students, 'newcomers to this world' who are not yet fully realised adult citizens, and in the case of the teacher who is charged with fostering a care for the 'common world' (Arendt, 1993: 195-196).

Arendt's insight into what the political is and how to derive political meaning from human action and behaviour forms the methodological basis of the thesis. I believe this to be a new contribution to how Arendt is understood in educational theory. Rather than just considering Arendt's famous claims about education, or her defence of human plurality in politics in opposition to the danger of a 'scientistic' approach to social life, I read Arendt's work as a way of conducting political phenomenology. The central assumption that guides the thesis is that politics (and education) can be studied as a phenomenon in its uniqueness, rather than being viewed through a generalised theoretical or ideological prism. One important note here is that Arendt's debt to the phenomenological tradition means that her methodological positioning is often indistinguishable from the themes she engages. The methodological chapter returns to phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophy to access Arendt's political phenomenology from the point of view of citizenship education.

In searching for such a methodological entry point, I encountered the phenomenological tradition – or, more accurately, two phenomenological traditions – of inquiry. The first, philosophical phenomenology, was founded on Edmund Husserl's (2013 [1950]) method of understanding the phenomena around us by focusing on the ways in which they are experienced, in order to locate and analyse aspects that make them different from other phenomena. This appealed to me as a philosophical, ontological and methodological foundation for this study mainly because it allowed me to think about the phenomenon of citizenship education as it is experienced, rather than as it is described or prescribed in educational and political theory. In other words, this study looks at how the phenomenon of citizenship education impresses itself upon experience, in order to understand what it is. However, philosophical phenomenology is notoriously self-contained and difficult to apply as an instrument of research, and arguably does not provide much in the way of understanding the experiences of others.

The 'second' phenomenological tradition, which focuses on researching lived experience, is derived from and related to philosophical phenomenology, but is better understood as a stream of research in the social sciences dedicated to collecting and analysing social experiences of individuals. In introducing phenomenological and hermeneutical research methods in education, van Manen points out that 'the method one chooses ought to have certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator in the first place' (van Manen, 1990: 2). My own experience of teaching citizenship was coloured by the understanding that the classroom creates a special environment, in which political life is echoed and political concepts are interrogated. This environment is both educational and political in a unique way and, more than anything else, it is unpredictable. This unpredictable, spontaneous nature of education is perhaps what the different approaches to studying citizenship education seemed to lack.

The decision to collect experiences from citizenship teachers was therefore directly linked to my own experiences as a teacher. The questions I set out to explore in conversation with the citizenship teachers I approached were the questions I had been asking myself: How does the role of a citizenship teacher interact with his or her political beliefs? What is the political and/or pedagogical significance of classroom discussion? Does the responsibility of the teacher dictate a certain response to offensive or extremist political statements made during the lesson? And if it does, should this response be based on an educational or political aim defined by citizenship education? The way these questions became 'interview questions' and led to the conversations is described in Chapter 5, which also presents the background of the interviewees and synthesises the 'two phenomenologies' described above into an interpretive strategy.

It is interesting and helpful to note that while the teachers I interviewed for this study were all familiar and opinionated with regard to the themes at the core of this thesis, they seldom offered simple answers, or 'textbook solutions' that echo the official language of the education system. Rather, their responses comprise nuanced and sophisticated descriptions of the relationships between politics and education, which through my analysis are presented in this thesis as three thematic chapters. The chapters explore, respectively: the liminality of the citizenship lesson (Chapter 6); the different ways in which responsibility is reflected in the lesson (Chapter 7); and how controversial issues are raised and discussed in the classroom (Chapter 8).

The first thematic chapter, analysing the concept of liminality and the ways in which citizenship education is liminal, presents the key finding of this thesis. When we consider the citizenship lesson itself as a physical manifestation of the connection between politics and education, the reality of classroom life becomes more than just a challenge to the neat 'means-end' dichotomy that rules ideological descriptions of citizenship education. The life of the classroom has political meaning to the extent that we accept it as a 'liminal' space, that is, a space in which given concepts and rules are called into question, identities are flexible and transformations may occur. Conroy (2004) suggests that the liminal features of education should present a normative aspiration in our contemporary 'neo-liberal' or 'late-capitalist' societies. For Conroy, 'liminal metaphors', which this thesis certainly adopts, can play a substantial role in assisting students in 'growing up to see the world somewhat differently from the political center' (Conroy, 2004: 168). Conroy offers the concept of 'liminality' as a new normative horizon for teachers and education researchers, from which resistance to the status quo may be fostered. According to Conroy, liminality is something that is missing from classrooms, and should be promoted in order to foster a kind of 'counter-knowledge' to the normalising tendencies of the current economic-political situation.

This thesis, while adopting Conroy's conceptual analysis, aims to redirect the use of 'liminal metaphors' from a normative aspiration to a descriptive, ontological mode of studying citizenship education. By exploring how political life is intertwined with the educational situations in classrooms, I aim to present the citizenship classroom as a fundamentally liminal space – an understanding that is, as I will argue, absent from most accounts of citizenship education. In other words, Conroy argues that education must 'become' more liminal, while I seek to present the liminality that is already present in the citizenship classroom, and to relate this liminality as it manifested itself in my conversations with Israeli citizenship teachers.

Chapters 7 and 8 both take the liminality of classroom experience as a starting point in order to address two core subjects in citizenship education: responsibility and controversial issues. The seventh chapter examines different notions of responsibility as central aims of citizenship education, and continues to develop the notions of educational and political responsibilities, in reference to Arendt's analysis of the term. The unique political responsibility of the citizenship teacher is examined using the liminal metaphor of the 'trickster', in order to highlight the ways in which teachers act in the classroom, and 'take on' opinions that are not their own in order to invite debate and subvert the obvious.

Chapter 8 seeks to enter a long-standing debate in education studies and educational theory, regarding the nature and meaning of controversial issues. The chapter begins with a review of the literature on controversial issues in citizenship education (and civic education, in the American examples). It presents the different positions within their political contexts to argue that these positions are trapped within existing, a priori notions of political learning. Building on the conceptualisation of liminality and political responsibility provided in previous chapters, the final sections of Chapter 8 offer a new account of controversial issues, which relies on the ontology of classroom interactions, and on the role of dialogue in learning. This new definition will serve as the basis for a hermeneutic approach to citizenship education, centred on the role of political questions in the citizenship lesson. Questions, I argue, represent an educational potential for researching political learning without the ideological presuppositions that underline much of the existing research. The second part of this introduction will present a convergence between a 'postmodern' analysis of the loss of meaning in education, and a unique example from the Israeli context. The hermeneutic approach to citizenship education will be considered as a possible source of political knowledge in a 'post-political' time, which will be described in the second part of this introduction.

One further introductory note is due here, concerning the use of the terms 'political education' and 'citizenship education'. Both terms represent a long history of theoretical and practical engagement, and both will be widely used throughout this thesis. The distinction I have tried to maintain in using the two terms is the following: 'citizenship education' will be used to describe the particular practice of teaching citizenship as a dedicated curricular subject, while 'political education' will be used to refer to a more general sense of the aims of education in relation to politics. In North America, the terms civic education and civic studies are used interchangeably to refer to what I call 'citizenship education', and considering the definition I have just provided, I refrain (for purposes of clarity) from using these terms in the thesis.

## 1.2 The problem of political knowledge in an age of nihilism

The first section of this introduction set out my own position as a researcher, the structure of this thesis and some of the intellectual sources it will rely on. This section introduces the main problem that this thesis identifies in considering citizenship education at this time. It is comprised of two subsections: the first explores changes in how military service is understood and promoted in the Israeli educational system; and the second will argue that a change has occurred in education as a form of knowledge production in postmodernism. The notion of 'knowledge production' as an aspect of the 'postmodern condition' has a significant bearing on how education is understood. By examining the specific case of the promotion of military service, this section will engage with a concrete example of the problem of political knowledge in our time.

As Gur Ze'ev points out, the Israeli educational experience is worth considering philosophically because of how it contains a multiplicity of conflicting epistemic positions and political commitments:

> The Israeli space is an arena where the relevance, vitality, and productivity of conflicting philosophies of education are manifested in a unique clarity. The Israeli educational arena … can offer an important contribution to the general philosophical discourse … [P]art of this uniqueness is due to the fact that the Israeli context accommodates strong parallel pre-modern, modern and postmodern conditions. (2000: 1)

The way military service is perceived by the Israeli public and by teachers and students in schools is exemplary of how a local Israeli practice, due to the history and the convoluted nature of Israeli society, might be useful in understanding how political knowledge has been instrumentalised and what this means for education systems in democracies.

### *1.2.1 The meaning of military service in Israeli education*

One of the harshest realisations I experienced during my time as a citizenship teacher was in relation to the effects of a specific educational culture of assessment and testing on the teaching of citizenship as a curricular subject. This educational culture bears significantly on different aspects of the relation between education and politics. Citizenship education, as one such relation, will be explored throughout the thesis as a theoretical concept as well as an educational practice. However, first, I believe the way this culture has influenced a unique aspect of Israeli education might be useful in considering the problem, or even danger, of the construction of political knowledge in our time.

A good example of the general expressions of this culture in Israeli political reality is revealed in a uniquely Israeli routine concerning the way in which education is covered in news media. The Israeli annual news cycle includes several major events in which schools are featured prominently in newspapers and in digital media. Such events include, for example, the first and last days of the school year, the major matriculation exams (‘Bagrut’) in Maths and English, or the results of international standardised tests like PISA. Another such routine annual ‘media event’ is the publication of the regional and local scores in the national matriculation exams, the ‘Bagrut’. The results, by school achievement, are published as news and analysed as indicators of quality of living and government services in different regions and sectors of society. This public perception of an educational system measured by standardised results is characteristic of many educational systems, and takes different forms in different countries – such as the British ‘league tables’ and the American movement to measure teachers through standardised testing.

Another such media ritual concerning education is related to military service in Israel. Each summer, by law, the Israel Defense Forces enlist all eligible Jewish[1] high-school graduates. This leads to the publication, in news media, of national enlistment statistics to reveal the percentage of recruits from each city and region, as well as information concerning the ‘value’ of each recruit; that is, which high-school graduates were recruited to what units. High schools are then awarded prestige in relation to the ‘meaningful service’ of their graduates in different units: fighter pilots, elite intelligence, combat field units and other military occupations are ranked. Schools that have a high percentage of ‘drop-outs’ who do not enlist or serve in non-combat positions are accordingly ‘scolded’ in the public arena. There is a clear resemblance of this media ritual to the ‘league tables’ that rank schools according to achievement in matriculation exams. On the one hand, as this subsection will demonstrate below, military service is, and has always been, a major aim of the Israeli school system. However, the new language of achievement and knowledge production has changed the way education is understood, and the public attention given to the role of school in prompting ‘valuable’ military service involves more than just a national-militaristic public mindset; it also points to a certain understanding of how political knowledge is produced and measured in an educational system overcome by a culture of measurement.

It could be argued that this media ritual, in which a clear majority of Jewish schools participate willingly and even enthusiastically, simply reflects an emphasis on sacrificing

[1] As well as certain Arab minorities that do not identify as Palestinians, such as Druze and Bedouin.

the individual for the sake of the collective. The moral importance of military service is a central theme in Israeli education, and it is signified in school cultures by memorial plaques on which schools solemnly acknowledge their fallen graduates as well as during the national Memorial Day for fallen soldiers. In her ethnographic study of conscientious objectors in Israel, Wiess describes this deeply moral understanding of the motivation for military service in Israel as a 'sacrificial idiom in Israeli society' (2014: 32). In their military service, young Israelis fulfil an ideological Zionist demand to become soldiers, who are 'both the sacrificial victim and the sacrifier, the one who makes the sacrifice" (Ibid: 32). The variety of military positions in different branches of service, as well as combat and non-combat units and highly specialised roles, means that 'military service entails hierarchies of sacrificial value' (Ibid: 36).

In contrast, Gor presents the militarisation in Israeli education as a more mundane, 'normalising' process, which seeks to make military service an unquestionable fact:

> The education system in Israeli society instills habits of thinking that regard military service among young men and women as a natural, normal, even desired stage. It invests efforts in creating an instinctive desire to join the military without asking questions, without casting doubt or critically assessing the relation between militarization and the political situation, as well as between these two aspects of Israeli society and conceptions of citizenship and gender. (Gor, 2005: 12, my translation)

This description stands in contrast to the highly moralised perception of military service proposed by Wiess, precisely because the educational system does not directly address the meaning of military service. It is neither moral nor immoral; rather, it is simply presented as an 'obvious' part of one's life.

Furthermore, the value of military service is not the same for all high-school graduates. A variety of studies have explored how different social and political sub-groups in Israeli society express different motivations for military service. Kimmerling (1993) explores the way in which social identification among Israeli youth follows the political and social fault lines in Israeli society and heavily affects motivation for military service. Klein (1999) demonstrates how military service intertwines with gender relations and perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Furthermore, as in other countries, military service is often perceived as a possible arena for socio-economic mobility (Levy, 2003; Levy and Sasson-Levy, 2008). In other words, within the current Israeli educational culture, military service is not simply understood as a moral aim of education. The motivations for military service are varied and change according to class, gender and other social determinants.

However, one trend might indicate a general shift in the perception of military service, as well as elucidate the instrumental understanding of the relation between schooling and military service. Levi, Lomsky-Feder and Harel (2007) studied the changing educational meaning of military service in reference to school memorial services and preparation for the military service. Their study found that the significance of military service has shifted from 'subjected militarism', which perceived military service as an unconditional, mandatory national duty, to a 'contractual militarism', according to which 'military service is stipulated on the fulfillment of the individual's ambitions and interests, although it remained a formal obligation' (Levi *et al*., 2007: 127).

When we consider how enlistment to the army is constituted as an aim of schooling in Israel, a more specific problem arises. Could the individualised commitment to a 'meaningful military service', which is advanced by Jewish schools in Israel, be understood as a hollow signifier? Measuring and quantifying 'educational achievement' without reference to what it actually means, morally, politically and socially, has a deep, sinister significance in this case. Schools pride themselves in sending off young men and women to combat service en masse, while the political meaning and context of military service remains untouched and the 'numbers speak for themselves'. To be sure, despite my own inclination on this matter, this is not to say that military service is in itself a bad thing, or even that instilling militaristic patriotism necessarily means that the students have been 'brainwashed'. What this example is meant to demonstrate is the danger of reducing education, and political education at that, to measurement, whereby students are counted as a 'human resource' for the military. This reduction to quantifiable aims and instruments of measurement is a major feature of a certain educational culture within a 'postmodern condition'. This will be further explored below.

### *1.2.2 Political life and 'knowledge production' in the postmodern condition*

The core issues in the philosophical discourse of 'postmodernism' were first presented in the opening sentences of Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge:*

> The object of this study is the condition of Knowledge in the most highly developed societies. I have decided to use the word postmodern to describe that condition. The word is in current use on the American continent among sociologists and critics; it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature and the arts. The present study will place these transformations in the context of narratives. (Lyotard, 1993: 1)

What Lyotard means by 'placing these transformations in the context of narratives' is to define the term 'postmodern condition' as a disillusionment with, or loss of meaning of, grand narratives ('metanarratives') which purport to make action universally coherent. For Lyotard, this means that we can now judge action on the basis of a narrative that is only relevant to a particular field of meaning, a 'language game' (Lyotard, 1993; Williams, 1998). The loss of 'metanarratives' means that we have lost our ability to describe ourselves in stable terms:

> The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements … Each of us lives at the intersection of many of these … There are many different language games – a heterogeneity of elements. They only give rise to institutions in patches – local determinism. (Lyotard, 1993: 2)

The educational implications of Lyotard's claims about meaning, identity and knowledge are demonstrated by Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish in their book *Education in an Age of Nihilism* (2000). Blake *et al.* analyse a study concerning 'the personal consequences of work in the new capitalism' in order to reflect on the meaning of how learning (in this case, professional learning) has been emptied of meaning. Richard Sennett's study describes a transition in the ownership and workforce of a Boston bakery: 'Formally an "Italian" and Italian owned bakery, staffed mainly … by Greek Americans, is now owned by a food conglomerate, and high-tech automation has replaced the hot, noisy, smelly, mildly dangerous hubbub of former times' (Blake *et al*., 2000: 30). The transition from an ethnically homogenous (Greek) 'Italian bakery', to the new, fully automated bakery, has changed what it means to work there. In the past, when the bakery was homogenous, the workers perceived themselves as a part of a shared project and could therefore point to the particular value of their work. Professional work, in this example, has been overcome by 'transferable skills' that hold no intrinsic value.

For Blake *et al.*, the loss of meaning for measurable, and therefore marketable, 'information' is represented in the way schools are perceived in the public eye, as well as by many educators and policy-makers. This instrumental vision of education is represented by the meaningless, 'horse-race' like competition between schools that desperately try to improve their standing in 'league tables':

> Perhaps the most glaring sign of our devaluation of value is the reduction of complex educational aims and purposes, of the whole question of what education is *for*, to a matter of *raising standards*, understood as a matter of children, schools or whole educational systems … moving from lower to higher positions on league tables. (Blake *et al*., 2000: xi)

The current educational environment, according to Blake *et al.*, conceptualises learning as a generalised, interchangeable process that has almost nothing to do with the intrinsic value of the subject matter: '… do we really believe that we can readily ignore indifference to what is being taught? What quality of knowledge and understanding do we expect without commitment to the study?' (Ibid: 51).

The meaning of this 'educational environment' for citizenship education concerns the relation between politics and education. When citizenship education enters the curriculum, it becomes a part of an educational culture which, in the postmodern condition, has lost touch with the intrinsic value of what is taught. When citizenship education is measured and studied as a functional operation, dealing with generalisable skills and quantifiable achievement, it disengages from the actuality of political life. The problems of an instrumental approach to the education of citizens will be engaged throughout the thesis, particularly in reference to Pring's (2001) and Biesta's (2007) criticisms of the current practices of citizenship education.

Biesta argues against the dominant educational culture, in which research is demanded to provide policy-makers and educators with 'evidence about "what works"' (Biesta, 2007: 3). Within this managerial culture of 'accountability', teachers (and students) are required to forgo critical reflection regarding the 'way things are' and 'the way things should be', and focus on 'better results'. Biesta addresses the particular political meaning of this dominant trend, stating clearly the dangers of a 'what works' paradigm:

> I am particularly concerned about the tension between scientific and democratic control over educational practice and educational research. On the research side, evidence-based education seems to favor a technocratic model in which it is assumed that the only relevant research questions are questions about the effectiveness of educational means and techniques, forgetting, among other things, that what counts as 'effective' crucially depends on judgments about what is educationally desirable. On the practice side, evidence-based education seems to limit severely the opportunities for educational practitioners to make such judgments in a way that is sensitive to and relevant for their own contextualized settings. The focus on 'what works' makes it difficult if not impossible to ask the questions of what it should work for and who should have a say in determining the latter. (Ibid: 5)

The understanding that political knowledge requires a turning away from conventional truths, as well as openness to radical and even dangerous ideas, is echoed in Zygmunt Bauman's *In Search of Politics* (1999). Bauman presents the question of what could be considered as political knowledge in an era which seems alienated from grand visions of a better future. Contrary to the Greek polis, in which daily life and political

activities were fused together in the *agora*, Bauman blames the liberal-democratic project for divorcing economic and cultural activities (activities that construct the field referred to as ‘Society’) from the political sphere, in the name of a compromise between the ever-expanding modern state and the freedom of the individual. This disengagement of everyday life from the political, however, has caused the evaporation, or at least the limitation, of individuals’ capacity for political imagination and a ‘generalized conformity and the resulting insignificance of politics’ (Bauman, 1999: 5).

The effects of this process on citizenship education, in light of the themes explored in this thesis, are dire. The assumption that underpins all accounts of citizenship education is that the process of educating young people as citizens involves engagement with political ideas. The following chapters will demonstrate several theoretical accounts of the political, moral and educational values of this process, relating them directly to the way in which citizenship education in Israel has been studied. In these accounts, political knowledge is conceptualised in several ways – as individual rational virtues, as ‘conscientisation’, or as an understanding of ‘what the world is like’. The underlying concern of this thesis is that within the current educational culture, whatever political knowledge is inherent to education risks becoming a meaningless curriculum item, transmitted in the form of citizenship education, received but not understood. This thesis suggests a possible response to this danger by exploring an experiential, ontological account of the citizenship classroom as a phenomenon, to argue that political learning relies on hermeneutic openness to conversation within the liminal context of the citizenship classroom. Citizenship education offers a space for political education, which is to say, political conversation. As will be argued in Chapter 5, it is the responsibility of the citizenship teacher to create these conversations and to destabilise ‘given’ political language that uses terms without respecting the radical questions that they may conceal. This will be explored in the second part of the thesis, which turns to phenomenological analysis so as to understand Israeli citizenship education as a political experience. However, in order to understand citizenship classrooms, and specifically citizenship classrooms in Israel, the theoretical, historical and educational background of this thesis must be presented. The next chapter will review how citizenship has been constructed as the subject of learning to trace its philosophical roots.

## Chapter 2: The problem of citizenship education

> I shall try to persuade first the Rulers and Soldiers, and then the rest of the community, that the upbringing and education we have given them was all something that happened to them only in dream. In reality they were fashioned and reared, and their arms and equipment manufactured in the depths of the earth, and Earth herself, their mother, brought them up, when they were complete, into the light of day. So now they must think of the land in which they live as their mother and protect her if she is attacked, while their fellow citizens they must regard as brothers born of the same mother earth. (Plato, 2007: 414d)

What is the educational process that follows from the relation between the state and the individual? For Plato, as quoted above, education is required to 'naturalise' this relationship – that is, to make our belonging to a certain political community seem natural, unquestionable. Such unquestionable status of the political situation, which Plato describes as the central aim of citizens' education, means that they consider their actions as citizens as predetermined, rather than as a manifestation of a possibility. This entails stripping citizenship from its moral and political meaning. The naturalness, for example, of military service for an Israeli high-school student means that the practice is not necessarily considered as something that is morally good or politically justifiable; it is just 'something to be done'.

Furthermore, and to the extent that this thesis is concerned with education as practice, this means a direct alienation of citizenship education from its subject matter: political life. In Plato's metaphor, education as a transparent process is symbolised first as a relation between the individual and the state (the state becomes the Earth, the mother), and then between the individual and his or her compatriots (the siblings). Since Plato's metaphor for citizens' education is tied to his programme for a harmonious state in which a strict class structure enforces the control of a ruling elite, its relevance could be questioned in terms of citizenship education in states that profess a commitment to equality and liberty as their constitutive political values.

However, it seems that the basic motivation to align future citizens with the goals and values of the state has not disappeared from contemporary education. In the postmodern condition as outlined above, the 'language game' that makes up educational policy and research should be read as a unique blend of concepts derived from bureaucratic, sociological, and normative aims, which are then converted into pedagogical 'instruments'. Criticisms of over-instrumentalisation of citizenship education suggest that even Western democracies share the aspiration to disconnect education from political life, similar to the way in which Plato's ideal totalitarian regime deeply problematises the education of citizens. The second section of the introductory chapter provided an example

of how, in the Israeli context of recruitment to the IDF, over-instrumentalised education may lead to the loss of political meaning.

Another point of convergence between current notions of citizenship education and Plato's educational state-building is the belief underscoring Plato's conceptualisation of citizens' education that the qualities of the individual mirror those of the institutions of state. Consequently, in order to have a 'good state', we need to have citizens who are properly educated to support its institutions. A democracy, therefore, requires 'democratic education' to foster the proper qualities in its citizens. What this means is, of course, a matter of great debate in educational thought, as well as in political life, where the aims and methods of education are decided and acted upon. Furthermore, as the following chapters will demonstrate, the Israeli case presents a convoluted and often contentious relationship between 'democratic' values and the national (or nationalist) definition of citizenship. This tension will serve as a major source of meaning as the thesis progresses and is explored thoroughly in the next chapter.

Before the thesis advances to the local context of citizenship education in Israel, the present chapter will set out a range of theoretical discussions of the educational relationship between the state and the citizen. It will do so in order to understand the tensions arising from different conceptualisations of citizenship. The first two sections will engage with contemporary manifestations of political liberalism, with its notion of citizenship and its educational demands. The first section will focus on the formalist definition of citizenship as a legal entitlement, moving from T.H. Marshall's classic definition to John Rawls' definition of citizenship in political liberalism. The formalist notion of citizenship highlights the way in which liberal suspicion of state power led to a minimalist notion of citizenship education, humble in its normative requirements.

Following this conception, some liberal educationalists (e.g. Callan, Gutmann) have pointed to the normative and pedagogical limitations of a minimal, formal conceptualisation of citizenship. The second section will therefore engage with several positions that return to citizenship as a normative concept, leading to a greater emphasis on the role of citizenship education in establishing and maintaining flourishing democracies. This theoretical position will be tied to the citizenship education movement, which over the past two decades has led to an 'exponential' growth in educational programmes for citizenship and for democracy (Arthur *et al.*, 2008: 5).

The third section of this chapter will present different theoretical positions within this movement to emphasise different aspects of the pedagogical framework of liberal political education. As Plato's metaphor exemplifies in the quotation with which this chapter began, it would be naïve to think that state power over education should not entail suspicion of its

‘naturalising’ tendencies. In the following sections, I will demonstrate how liberal citizenship education, even in its most minimal understanding of the educational requirements of citizenship, involves a normative account of the virtues of the citizen. As an educational programme, this implies consensus over key political and moral issues that are far from being settled in the political world of adults. The fourth section will present the argument for an ‘agonistic’ perception of political life as a challenge to the liberal accounts of citizenship education, and as an alternative conception of its political meaning.

The fifth section will return to the problem presented above as the desire to ‘naturalise’ political education, by engaging with critical pedagogy as an alternative description of the relationship between the citizen and the state – or rather of the relationship between educational practice and political life. Critical pedagogy, as Freire and others have framed it, sees the primary goal of education as that of creating spaces in which students and teachers may resist dominant power relations, and imagine radically different and better political circumstances. In Marxist thinking, education represents a troubling paradox: how could class consciousness be induced in the lower classes by bourgeois teachers and intellectuals? (Avineri, 1967). This paradox has led Freire (2000) to emphasise dialogic practice as an existential and indeterminate process of ‘conscientisation’. The significance of this process as a form of political education will be considered and compared to the liberal notion of political knowledge.

### 2.1 Challenging T.H. Marshall’s definition of citizenship

The first sections of this chapter will explore citizenship as a formal concept, by presenting two definitions of citizenship as a relationship between the state and the individual, from which entitlements and duties are derived. In the following sections, I will engage with T.H. Marshall’s classic account of citizenship as social entitlement (1992), and with Rawls’ notion of citizenship as the application of particular cognitive skills, applied through a minimalist account of institutional knowledge to individual interest (2009).

It is important to note that the two definitions given below share a minimal account of citizenship as a normative concept, since both see citizenship as a predominantly legal arrangement that formalises membership in a polity. This membership, in both cases, does not necessarily entail any disposition towards the state, nor does it imply a commitment to the state, or fellow citizens. Therefore, within these minimal conceptualisations of citizenship, the scope of education for citizenship is definitively minimal, and is only relevant as a measure to equip citizens with the possibility of making use of their

entitlements, by ensuring the bare minimum of skills and knowledge, such as literacy and rudimentary knowledge of political and social practices.

T.H. Marshall's classic *Citizenship and Social Class* (1992 [1950]), provides an early description of citizenship in a liberal democracy as primarily the distribution of equal rights to all members of the state. Marshall describes citizenship as constructed of three spheres of rights – the civic, the political, and the social – with each corresponding to a different historical struggle and marking progress in the equality and the liberty of members of the state. The education of citizens, in Marshall's account, is important insofar as it is conducive to fulfilling the state's redistributive responsibility towards its citizens. Individual rights are maintained through assuring *equality of opportunity* in education, in order to *eliminate hereditary privilege*. Education serves mostly as a minimal requirement for the enjoyment of the different entitlements, rather than holding any intrinsic political significance: 'The right to an education is a genuine social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as the right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated' (Marshall, 1992: 16). Marshall sees citizenship as a relationship between the state and the citizen in which the state is obliged to provide citizens from lower socio-economic classes with as many tools as possible in order to utilise their political rights and the opportunity for social mobility.

Marshall, writing in a relatively homogenous post-war Britain, does not anticipate the changes in the political and social landscape that the second half of the twentieth century would bring. In his book, education of future citizens is not considered to be a major factor in the preservation of a certain political sphere, nor as an instrument for mitigating extreme diversity through personal political attitudes. For Marshall, citizenship is a passive qualification, which does not entail any particular set of dispositions other than a material relation to the state through which a basic standard of living and equal opportunity are assured.

The educational demands that follow from Marshall's conceptualisation of citizenship are surprisingly low by today's standards: '… civil rights are designed for use by reasonable and intelligent persons, who have learned to read and write. Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom' (Ibid: 16-17). So, the first interpretation of the educational requirements of citizenship considers the latter as a formal description of membership of a political entity, from which duties and entitlements in relation to institutions are derived.

In recent decades, the substantial increase in global migration, alongside events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the post-Soviet republics, as well

as the continued development of the European Union, have all highlighted the role of international and super-national organisations in the decline of national sovereignty. This decline sparked a growing interest in citizenship as a political concept (for example, Kymlicka, 1995; Mouffe, 1995; and Miller, 2000), and its possible meaning in a more volatile and diverse environment than the one Marshall had assumed in his work. Cohen (1999) points out that Marshall's concept of citizenship assumed a unity between three aspects of citizenship: '… a political principle of democracy, a juridical status of legal personhood and a form of membership and political identity' (Cohen, 1999: 245). However, 'Globalization, new forms of transnational migration, the partial disaggregation of state sovereignty and the development of human rights regimes have rendered this model anachronistic' (Ibid). In other words, Marshall's concept may have been relevant to the social and political reality of the post-war welfare state, but the perceived decline of the nation state in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, inevitably led to a reconsideration of the complex relation between the state and the individual, and its significance in political, economic and cultural contexts.

Beyond the restricted educational requirements specified by Marshall as preconditions for citizenship – such as literacy and equality of opportunity – the global changes at the end of the 20th century have led to further reconsiderations of what the education of citizens entails (Heater, 2004). These reconsiderations encompass a wide variety of topics and issues in citizenship education. In their introduction to a collection of articles on social studies[2] education, Levstik and Tyson note:

> … research in social studies might be expected to focus on connections among content, method, and civic behaviors with diverse populations and in international contexts, on the challenges of persuasion, negotiation, and compromise in various classroom and community settings and on the complexities of active participation and rational behavior in civic affairs. (2010: 2)

From a normative point of view, and in light of the local and global political changes of the last decades, they ask, 'What experiences prepare students to recognize others' perspectives, or encourage them to care enough to take others' perspectives into account, much less so without abandoning individually or communally important social values?'

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[2] Social studies is a term used in the US in reference to a curricular subject that encompasses many of the issues and themes that citizenship education is concerned with. 'Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school programme, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world' (NCSS Task Force on Standards for Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies, 1993: 213).

(Ibid). This question is an articulation of the central problem facing theoretical accounts of citizenship education. The following sections will present several possible solutions to this question, tracing these solutions to their ideological and philosophical assumptions, and extrapolating their pedagogical significance.

## 2.2 Education for citizenship in Rawls' political liberalism

The changing political and social landscape of the second half of the 20th century was also characterised by a growing plurality of cultures and opinions within Western democracies. Marshall's formal conception of citizenship as a set of legal and social entitlements, along with its minimalistic educational requirements, was based on the assumption of a general ideological consensus in the state and among citizens. The collapse of colonial empires resulted in large-scale immigration and political disparity, and questioned the relations between majority and minority groups, and specifically the extent to which citizens should conform to the values of the majority. While Marshall describes some degree of public discourse on political and social matters as a part of how democracies work, within his perception, citizens are in no way measured according to their participation in politics, nor is education required to foster in them a commitment to act or think politically. Arguably, Marshall did not consider radical cultural and political diversity a central problem when he presented a unified definition of citizenship as an entitlement rather than a set of normative requirements or personal dispositions.

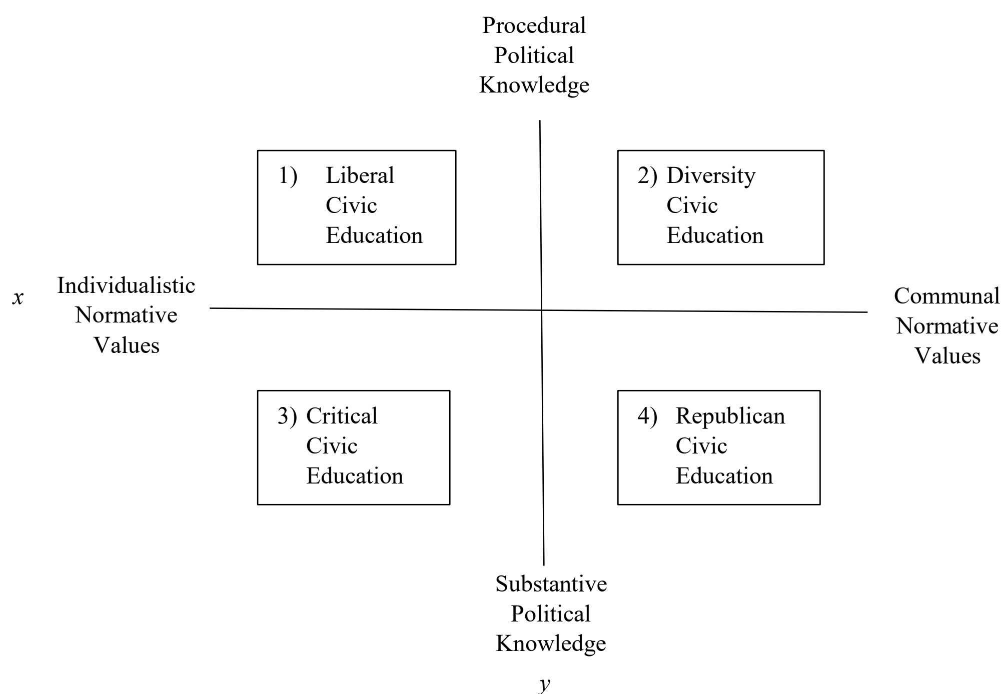
The growing plurality in the public sphere, and the radical discord of the sixties, demanded a reconceptualisation of citizenship. Such a reconceptualisation would necessarily involve a consideration of citizenship as an expression of the shared values of the political community. But how could different political, cultural and ultimately moral outlooks be mitigated into a single conception of citizenship? In order to reconcile the struggle between competing ideological outlooks within the state, Rawls (2009 [1971]) suggests a political structure designed to overcome the centrifugal pull of different visions of 'the good'. To do so, Rawls constructs a minimal and sufficient set of principles to define justice as a procedure of thinking about the social contract. Rawls' famous 'veil of ignorance' depicts a thought experiment in which one sheds all contingent privilege and commitment, in order to imagine the minimal acceptable entitlements the state should guarantee its least well-off citizens. Within this 'original position' justice is constituted as fairness: '… no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like' (Rawls, 2009: 112).

The most basic feature of this original position is the understanding of the separation between 'the right', defined as the principles of justice dictating the rules of political conduct, and the student's primordial notion of 'the good' (which they conceivably encounter at home) and the obligations it may carry. This distinction between the right and the good signified for Rawls a conception of liberalism that is not 'comprehensive', in the sense that it does not carry over assumptions from the moral sphere of conduct into the political realm. Rawls stresses that comprehensive forms of liberalism are too dependent on moral argumentation and would not suffice as a response to the 'fact of plurality'. Political liberalism therefore promotes a 'thin' conception of citizenship education, in which the pedagogical objectives are limited to outlining basic political conduct and entitlement. The significance of this demand for the education of citizens is that the state is responsible for teaching about legal and constitutional structure. Citizens must receive the information necessary in order to be aware of their political rights:

> … children's education will include things such as knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights so that, for example, they know that liberty of conscience exists in their society and that apostasy is not a legal crime … moreover, their education should also prepare them to be fully cooperating members of society … it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honour the fair terms of social cooperation … (Rawls, 1993: 199).

Rawls' educational programme is useful in pointing to the way in which knowledge is constructed as an educational demand within the context of political liberalism. Cohen (2010) analyses different ideological conceptions in relation to the role of education in fostering the knowledge, values and behaviour expected of members of a society. In order to distinguish between four different positions towards civic education, Cohen uses a two-axis table, with one axis representing the form of knowledge emphasised (procedural-substantive) and the other axis representing the dichotomy between an 'individualistic' perception of society and a 'communal' perception of society (Cohen, 2010: 21).

**Figure 1:** Four Conceptions of Civic Education on Two Axes (Cohen 2010: 21)




Within these two axes, Cohen places 'liberal civic education' in the quadrant located between 'procedural political knowledge' on the knowledge axis and 'individualistic normative values' on the societal perception axis. Cohen therefore describes the aim of a liberal civic education as developing in the student 'the individualistic skills needed in order to take part in the political process' (2010: 22). This seems to coincide with Rawls' demand that students have the formal knowledge necessary for utilising their individual entitlements.

Furthermore, as Rawls suggests almost in passing, liberal political education also means instilling *some* virtues in future citizens. For Rawls, the basic political virtue, as exemplified in his fundamental thought experiment concerning the 'veil of ignorance', is achieved through a rational process of metaphysical reflection, in that it requires a movement away from one's contingent life-experience to a theoretical 'original position' which is separate and independent from the interests and possible conflicts of the world. This process assumes individual and independent mental powers of judgement on different moral outlooks, culminating in citizens who are able to disengage themselves from their own self-interested, private notions of the good and achieving a transcendent conception of fairness.

This process of individual objective judgement of the political and social reality is mostly a philosophical 'thought experiment' used to demonstrate Rawls' principles of justice as fairness. However, from an educational perspective, the necessary learning outcome of citizenship education within Rawlsian political liberalism could be described as an embodiment of the metaphoric 'veil of ignorance'. Citizenship education is tasked with developing the students' inherent 'citizen's perspective' of the right, which transcends their private understanding of the 'good'. Once the political 'right', or 'fairness' of the political rules of play has been established through the rationalising process, the students may engage with the existence of different notions of the good, understand the public consensus framed through generalisable interests, and perhaps ultimately revise their own perceptions of the good (Miller, 2000).

From a theoretical perspective, even if it is difficult to measure or pinpoint as a pedagogic practice, this liberal formulation of the requirements of citizenship education underscores political education of citizens in democracies today (Papastephanou, 2005). This means that citizenship education could be considered as a process of disengagement from and transcendence of one's own contingent position and status in the world (which is developed outside the school – in one's family, neighbourhood, ethnic community, etc.). The significance of political liberalism in conditioning the educational requirements of citizenship has prompted several debates about possible educational and political problems that its presuppositions create. The next two sections outline these problems before considering the particular case of citizenship education in Israel.

### 2.3 Liberal citizenship education: negotiating theory and practice

The educational relationship between the state and the individual has drawn much attention in recent decades. The main reason for this is that, for many political theorists, the state is not exempt from suspicion as a provider of citizenship education, especially when we consider the huge resources that go into schooling. This section will consider how liberal-democratic political theorists (namely, Guttmann and Callan) conceptualise the desired educational aims derived from the individualistic, aggregative political principles of liberalism. The problematic meaning of understanding citizenship education as a source of state legitimacy will be presented, and the dilemma of whether and how education should foster political participation (or citizens committed to changing the rules of government) will be explored.

As Cohen (2010) suggests, implementation of political theory in classrooms means necessarily adding a positive normative understanding of the subject matter, as an integral

part of an education programme. The process of turning theory into practice problematises a core assumption of liberal political thought: the neutrality of the state towards a single conception of the 'good'. Different liberal political theorists propose different solutions to this tension, and this section will describe how three theorists in particular have responded to these challenges. The main aim of this section is to demonstrate how liberal political theory translates into practice as an educational programme, thereby complicating the theoretical liberal commitment to minimal intervention in students' perception of the good and implying certain normative and prescriptive accounts of political life as solutions. Each of the theoretical positions towards the scope, aim and method of political education offers a practical solution to the problem of liberal citizenship education.

The Crick Report (1998), a founding document in citizenship education in British schools, exemplifies how the transition from theory to educational practice influences the way in which goals and methods of citizenship are presented. The report, a product of an Advisory Group on Citizenship tasked with promoting 'Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools' (Crick, 1998: 1), presents a conception of citizenship education that is clearly not as minimal as Rawls' 'citizen perspective'. Besides knowledge of formal legal and constitutional entitlements, the report includes several references to 'positive' education in values and social responsibilities as a part of ensuring good citizenship:

> The purpose of citizenship education in schools and colleges is to make secure and to increase the knowledge, skills and values relevant to the nature and practices of participative democracy; also to enhance the awareness of rights and duties, and the sense of responsibilities needed for the development of pupils into active citizens; and in so doing to establish the value to individuals, schools and society of involvement in the local and wider community. (Crick, 1998: 40)

This transition in the conceptualisation of citizenship education exemplifies the tension between the very core of liberal political theory and educational practices. Since the fundamental condition in political liberalism is that the state minimises its interference in citizens' accounts of the good, the provision of education for citizenship is essentially limited in its normative aspirations. Limiting the normative potential of citizenship means that educators face two fundamental problems: an educational, practical question regarding the way citizenship becomes curriculum; and a political question regarding the possibility of political change. In both cases, the liberal framework means that educators must walk a thin line in order to teach with as little 'normative intention' as possible. The educational, curricular problem points to the demand that the subject matter remain as 'neutral' as possible (neutrality and controversiality will be a key theme of later chapters in this thesis).

The political problem, within the context of the ‘knowledge economy’ described in the previous chapter, points to the fact that all the graduates of the school system inevitably become citizens; teaching them what that means might restrict them from experimenting with new, unknown (and possibly dangerous) political possibilities. In both cases, the teacher standing in front of the class is confronted with a normative question (or set of questions) deriving from her responsibility towards the state, as well as towards the students. How could the liberal state manage the tension between the normative expectations inherent to education and the conceptualisation of citizenship as rational autonomy?

The following subsections will present several theoretical attempts to describe the aims of citizenship education when considered through the normative political aspirations of liberalism. Different political models present themselves through the pedagogical demands they make on citizenship education. Each theoretical position demonstrates a different way of balancing the political and educational requirements of citizenship education. Each subsection is dedicated to how theory interacts with practice in the case of three American educationalists. Amy Guttman and William Galston present a political-theoretical solution to an educational problem, while Eamonn Callan presents an educational solution to a political problem.

### *2.3.1 Gutmann’s deliberative model: educating virtuous democrats*

For Gutmann (1987; 1995) and Gutmann and Thompson (2004; 2009), the values of democracy manifest themselves through deliberation between citizens. The deliberative model is based on the assumption that citizens *can* deliberate about issues, referring to established political concepts, or ‘principles that individuals who are trying to find fair terms of cooperation cannot reasonably reject’ (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004: 3). The most important characteristic of being a citizen, for Gutmann, is ‘*reason-giving*’ (Ibid) in open and direct deliberation among citizens in a liberal democracy. This deliberation yields a ‘morality of association’ (Gutmann, 1987: 62), which should be practiced in many arenas of social life, and requires two learning outcomes in the education of citizens: 1) fostering critical reflection on the self and one’s moral assumptions; and 2) nurturing a better understanding of the political arrangement in which they operate. In other words, deliberative citizenship education is ultimately moral education, designed to create citizens who are committed to the political procedure, and have been educated for, what Gutmann calls, a ‘deliberative, or democratic, character’ (Gutmann, 1987: 52). Moral and political virtues coincide in the deliberative model – leading to the conclusion that being a good person practically means having the virtues necessary for good citizenship, which ‘no

amount of political trust, efficacy or knowledge can replace' (McLaughlin and Halstead, 1999: 151).

State schooling of citizens is therefore a central component in the deliberative model of democracy. Gutmann's book *Democratic Education* (1987) begins as an argument against three possible provisions for the education of citizens:

1) *The 'family state'*. In the 'family state', much like Plato's vision, provision of citizenship education is governed by a single, state-sanctioned conception of the good, which cultivates 'a level of like-mindedness and camaraderie among citizens' (Gutmann, 1987: 23).

2) *The 'state of families'*. Provision of citizenship education is maintained solely by families, thereby 'permitting parents to predispose their children, through education, to choose a way of life consistent with their familial heritage' (Ibid: 28).

3) *The 'state of individuals'*. Both the state and families remain neutral in relation to the education of citizens, and leave it for 'educational experts' to determine how best to foster and support a diverse set of perceptions of the good in schools. It should be noted that, in some respects, this is indeed how educational provision is often described in policy.

Instead of these three possible provisions of citizenship education, Gutmann admits that Dewey is her inspiration in envisioning a public schooling system committed to 'conscious social reproduction' that fosters 'the intellectual and emotional preconditions for democratic deliberation among future generations of citizens' (Ibid: 76). The school acts on behalf of the state, equipping the individual students, as future citizens, with the proper deliberative knowledge, skill and virtues. Yet educational space is not a part of the deliberative arenas of 'middle-democracy', defined as 'any setting in which citizens come together on a regular basis to reach collective decisions about public issues – governmental as well as nongovernmental institutions' (Gutmann and Thompson, 2009: 12). Although many aspects of education are determined through a procedural system – in which the state, parents, and educational experts engage in deliberation and share responsibility – the 'conditions of democracy' remain outside the scope of this deliberation.

Education's fundamental place in democracy could also be useful in understanding deliberation as a pedagogical concept in citizenship education. The deliberative process in Gutmann's model is the theoretical exit point for Walter Parker in his book *Teaching democracy: unity and diversity in public life* (Parker, 2003). Parker applies deliberation, defined as a 'discussion aimed at making decisions about what *we* should *do*' (2003: 127, original emphasis), to a wide variety of school activities:

> … a classroom issue (e.g., a kindergarten teacher asks students to decide whether a new rule is needed to remedy a classroom problem; a high school teacher asks students to decide whether tardiness should affect grades), a school issue (e.g., student council members deliberate dress code policies), or community issue (e.g. students decide what stand they will take, as a group, on a non-school public issue) … (Ibid)

The aim of classroom discussion, in all the examples Parker gives above, is to create a pedagogical analogy of the public sphere, in which citizens-to-be articulate and consider moral positions through interaction with others. The deliberative model ensures that citizens are capable of taking part in the democratic process by simulating political deliberation as part of the schooling of citizens – an educational solution to a political problem. This deliberative position on the value of classroom discussion (and, indeed, debates and arguments) will be closely considered in Chapter 6, which presents and analyses classroom experiences of students learning about controversial issues.

So, in ascribing to education a fundamental role in her political theory, Gutmann diverges from Dewey's notion of the democratic processes that should control education. The political responsibility vested in education means that it holds a 'special' political status, since state education is responsible for the continuation of deliberation. Therefore, deliberation *about* the political aims of education and the foundations of reasonable discourse in education must be limited, and some of its aims must remain beyond negotiation. According to Gutmann, this status is required because:

> Citizens and public officials can use democratic processes to destroy democracy. They can undermine the intellectual foundations of future democratic deliberations by implementing educational policies that either repress unpopular (but rational) ways of thinking or exclude some future citizens from an education adequate for participating in democratic politics. (1987: 14).

### *2.3.2 Galston's representative model: necessary political knowledge*

For William Galston, the deliberative educational programme is unjustifiably intrusive and betrays the most fundamental characteristic of liberalism – namely, that politics should be limited in its scope. Furthermore, the idea that education should enact the characteristics and procedures of politics is unacceptable, as it wrongly assumes that all citizens share a universal political identity:

> Because so many types of human association possess an identity not derived from the state, pluralist politics does not presume that the inner structure and principles of every sphere must mirror those of basic political institutions. (Galston, 2005: 2)

This leads Galston to claim that 'states may not seek to promote a one-size-fits-all pattern of human life' (Ibid), as well as that 'politics has an instrumental, rather than

ultimate value' (Ibid). While Gutmann argues that the role of political life is to perfect, through deliberation, democratic institutions, Galston argues for a much smaller normative scope of political institutions. In Galston's 'liberal pluralism', the normative role of the state is only to endorse 'minimal universalism – that is, the moral and practical necessity of organizing public life so as to ward off, to the greatest extent possible, the great evils of the human condition such as tyranny, genocide, cruelty and humiliation, mass starvation and deadly epidemics' (2005: 3).

Galston's educational position is based on a deep suspicion of the moralising tendencies that might follow from citizenship education, as Gutmann understands it. By limiting the education of citizens to a knowledge-based minimum, the educational requirements of students do not generally include evaluating their own ways of life and beliefs, practiced in the students' homes among their families. The insistence that moral questioning should be left outside of the classroom represents the belief that people should be allowed to lead the kinds of lives they find valuable, without fear that they will be coerced into thinking contrary to their values, including being led to question those ways of life that they have inherited.

While the state should not intrude in the moral life of citizens in order to ensure that they are to be virtuous democrats (as Gutmann asserts), Galston does require that citizenship education enable future citizens to make well-reasoned choices in electing officials. Galston asserts that usually the only point of contact citizens have with government policy is through representative institutions – citizens elect officials. In a direct, rather than proportional, representational system – such as the American (and British) political system – electing good officials is especially important. Rather than voting for a political party, which represents a certain ideology or political agenda (as is the case in proportional systems such as those in Israel, Germany and Italy), citizens in the USA and Britain directly elect their local representatives. This means that, more importantly than choosing between competing ideologies, citizens need to develop 'the capacity to evaluate the talents, character, and performance of elected officials' (Galston, 1989: 93). These capacities no doubt involve a moral component – judging the character of others, for example, must be based on some system for understanding good and bad behaviour. These moral capacities, however, are not nearly as comprehensive as the demands of the deliberative model, and rely on a substantially more passive understanding of political responsibility, in comparison to the engaged, deliberative citizens Gutman and Parker envision.

For Galston, this has far-reaching implications for educational practice. Teaching future citizens how to evaluate political leaders 'does not warrant the conclusion that the

state must (or may) structure public education to foster in children skeptical reflection on ways of life inherited from parents or local communities' (Galston, 1991: 253). The political responsibility of the educational system, therefore, should not be about teaching the skills and virtues of deliberation, but instead entail teaching 'the virtues and competences needed to select representatives wisely, to relate to them appropriately, and to evaluate their performance in office soberly' (Galston, 1989: 93).

This position echoes Rawls' separation between the good and the right, appealing to a notion of 'civic tolerance' in which different ways of life are tolerated, rather than deliberatively engaged: 'Tolerance, rightly understood means the principled refusal to use coercive state power to impose one's views on others, and therefore a commitment to moral competition through recruitment and persuasion only' (Galston, 2005: 4). Like Rawls, Galston describes the learning outcome of citizenship education as the knowledge and skills relevant only to the most basic functions of democracy. However, in his description of the ideal learning process in citizenship education, Galston leaves out the reflective critical moment that for Rawls induces theoretical judgement of the current political arrangement ('the veil of ignorance'). This moment of reflection, in which learning is the result of political imagination, will be a recurring theme in this thesis. In the final chapter, it will be explored as the central condition for learning political concepts.

However, as stated above, even in Galston's minimal account, the ability to judge elected representatives must also include some form of critical reflection about the character and the actions of elected officials and candidates. Even when this form of critical reflection is not a part of an 'expansive' account of citizenship education, it remains a feature of liberal political education in its most minimal versions. Kymlicka points out, in reference to Galston's account of citizenship education, that in order to judge the performance of elected officials, 'schools should teach children to be skeptical of the political authorities who govern in their name, and to be cognizant to the danger of the abuse of power' (Kymlicka, 1997: 91). In the process of teaching future citizens to judge their representatives according to these standards, some 'spillover effect' may encourage 'skepticism of political authority which likely encourages questioning of familial or religious authority' (Ibid). So, even though Galston objects to Gutmann's moralising requirements in citizenship education, his account of citizenship education cannot avoid the theoretical reliance on individual critical powers. Because political legitimacy in liberalism stems from a theoretical presupposition of individual consent, these individual powers of criticism and reflection constitute the basic conditions of citizenship in liberal theory. This individualistic educational aspect of liberal political theory underlines both

Gutmann's and Galston's models – in both cases the political system relies on educational practice to ensure that citizens can perform their basic tasks, and engage in political life.

Furthermore, this is arguably an inherent part of any theoretical political structure; for example, the quote from Plato's *Republic* in the opening of this chapter is a part of Plato's argument that the character, and therefore education, of future citizens is a condition for the worthiness of the state. All political theory assumes the motivations and dispositions of citizens to construct a theory of state. In this sense, Gutmann and Galston both begin by describing a political arrangement and then move to its educational aims. Both deploy political thought to solve the educational problem of citizenship – that is, how should citizens be taught about their role in politics? This is an educational question because it deals with the practicalities, methods and goals of the curriculum and pedagogy of citizenship. Levinson outlines how liberal political values manifest in educational practice:

> … the ideal liberal school establishes a plural community whose structure and content are dictated by the overriding goal of fostering the development of children's autonomy – a community instantiated by the norms of critical inquiry, toleration and reflectiveness. Such schools, we have seen, help foster the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, help children develop attitudes of toleration and sympathy toward other people, and provide a reflective environment detached from children's home communities in which their capacities for critical thinking and self-reflection can develop and flourish. (Levinson, 1999: 63)

The dependence of citizenship education (in its contemporary manifestation) on liberal political theory will be further investigated throughout the thesis. Since the educational system is charged with the crucial political role of maintaining the legitimacy of the state, through production of necessary political knowledge, skills and (to varying degrees) virtues, the liberal assumptions regarding citizenship education lead to a positivist, institutional approach towards education. The Israeli context, and implications of this causal understanding of the relationship between educational aims and the political functions of citizenship, will be examined in the next chapter, as well as in the methodological chapter, analysing the way in which this causal understanding is expressed in the methods and assumptions of research about citizenship education.

This leads us to a question concerning the education of citizens that is particular to democratic theory. In a liberal-democratic framework, the relation between the nature of the polity and the character of citizens summons a hotly contested political dilemma: to what extent should education foster in citizens a desire for social change? This is a political question, because it asks whether and to what extent change, as an independent dynamic, is valuable in political life, and not necessarily about how educational goals could be

practically achieved. Only in a democracy does the extent of education for change become a problem – it would be ridiculous to ask this question within the controlled educational systems of totalitarian, authoritarian or clerical regimes, where education is unapologetically an overt instrument of political control. This problem is even more crucial when we consider the essential role of change in liberal political thought – since the state represents the aggregated interests of citizens, when individuals realise that their interests could be better served, liberalism demands that they act to improve the state. This is what Dewey calls 'the democratic conception in education':

> Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group. In seeking this measure, we have to avoid two extremes. We cannot set up, out of our heads, something we regard as an ideal society. We must base our conception upon societies which actually exist, in order to have any assurance that ideal is a practical one. But … the ideal cannot simply repeat the desirable traits which are actually found. The problem is to extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist, and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvement. (Dewey, 2004a: 65)

For Dewey, education must therefore foster and support change, as a requirement of democracy. This commitment to political action varies between Gutmann's and Galston's models of citizenship. In Gutmann's (and Parker's) model, participation is the *sine qua non* of citizenship – it would be impossible to conceive of deliberative democracy in which citizens do not actively participate in every and any decision making process. In Galston's model the implied answer to the question of political participation is that while citizens must know about the processes of government, such as elections, and be aware of their legal entitlements in respect to these processes, their participation should not be valued more than their decision not to participate. Education that promotes political participation presents a clear danger of moralising education. Even if Galston's model accepts that some degree of criticality is a necessary aim in democratic citizenship education, its minimal approach would still mean that students should not be led to understand that political participation is a part of any single articulation of 'the good life'. The next section will present Callan's solution to the political problem of participation as an aim of citizenship education.

### *2.3.3 Callan's liberal patriotism and the problem of participation*

Eamonn Callan's book *Creating citizens: Political education and liberal democracy* opens with a presentation of the problem of participation as an aim of political education in a democracy (Callan, 1997). To make the point that Galston's vision of political knowledge

is insufficient, Callan proposes a thought experiment. He describes a dystopian future in which political practice has been reduced to a formality, a routine that is no longer a vital part of the citizens' moral life:

> … when elections are held, scarcely anyone bothers to vote … Freedom of speech has been reduced to a spectral existence because speech is no longer commonly used to defend a distinctive vision of the good and the right or to say anything that might initiate serious ethical dialogue with another. That is so because citizens are either indifferent to questions of good and evil, seeing the point of their lives simply as the satisfaction of their desires or else they commit themselves so rigidly to one doctrine that dialogue with those who are not like minded is thought to be repellent or futile … [W]hen transactions across cultural divisions are unavoidable, everyone tries to extract as much benefit from the other (or cause as much harm as possible) within the limits imposed by law. (Callan, 1997: 1-2)

For Callan, educating for participation in politics means tackling the issue of autonomy in education, and more specifically in political education (Callan, 1988). Democratic political education is not just a matter of coming to an acknowledgement of one's legal entitlements as a citizen. Callan argues that limiting citizenship education to such a minimal account, and assuming sufficiently comfortable economic conditions, would mean that most citizens might avoid political engagement altogether. Instead, he embraces Gutmann's deliberative model of citizenship and its emphasis on the responsibility of education to foster in future citizens an attachment to their political roles: 'a constellation of attitudes, habits, and abilities …' (Callan, 1997: 2). This virtuous account of citizenship is intended to strengthen future citizens' commitment to political engagement – liberal political education needs to foster those virtues that would support an affective desire for just government.

Callan's account of liberal citizenship education seeks to overcome not only the danger of political apathy and disengagement, but also the risk of social disintegration posed by the centrifugal pull of different comprehensive accounts of the good life. The process of becoming a 'good liberal' means understanding that your own position in the world is contingent and not natural, and that this is the case for everyone else too. In Rawls' political theory, 'burdens of judgement' are those contingent aspects of our personality that account for differences in reasonable judgement between people – our identity as it relates to the political circumstances. Only through acknowledging these burdens of judgement can the individual contingencies, which give rise to 'the fact of diversity' in the public sphere, be mediated and allow reasonable deliberation. In accepting her own contingent burdens of judgement, the citizen is in fact accepting the existence of such burdens in her fellow citizens, and by extension acknowledging the reasonableness of

those with whom she does not share doctrinal belief or heritage. These burdens of judgement are central to Callan's advancement of liberal political education as a moral education aimed at creating good individuals: 'Learning to accept the burdens of judgements in the sense necessary to political liberalism is conceptually inseparable from what we ordinarily understand as the process of learning to be ethically (and not just politically) autonomous …' (Callan, 1997: 40).

Callan argues that education concerned with knowledge of one's political rights could not be separated from engaging, and ultimately embracing, the moral propositions that uphold these rights. To support the development of 'liberal patriotism', Callan turns to 'comprehensive' accounts of liberalism – such as those of Kant and Mill – as moral theories that support individual liberal virtues like reasonableness and moderation. A comprehensive moral theory is defined as embedded within a system: 'A moral doctrine becomes fully comprehensive if it claims to organize all relevant values into a systemic whole' (Callan, 1995: 14). In order to overcome the theoretical difficulties of arguing for moral dispositions as an educational aim set to preserve the liberal public sphere, Callan must pacify (or perhaps replace) Rawls' basic conception of the state as a neutrally fair provider of goods, with the moral virtues espoused by 'comprehensive' theories of liberalism.

Educationally, Callan's return to a comprehensive account of liberalism means that in a liberal democracy, citizenship education should be a process of acquiring the virtues of a *liberal* citizen. This is an important point – liberalism is conceived here as a specific political identity group, rather than a justified system of government. Callan assumes that the political virtues acquired through education are not necessarily ones that would be accepted by citizens who hold fundamentally different visions of the good, as political liberals like Rawls and Galston suggest. Rather than seeking a civic vision with which *as many citizens as possible* can relate, education should be about advancing the moral and political values of liberalism.

Furthermore, Callan does not model political education after the deliberative processes that should govern adult political life, like deliberative liberals such as Gutmann and Parker. In order to maintain a legitimate and just political arrangement, Callan claims, liberal political education should be concerned with nurturing in students an affective commitment to liberal principles, such as equal right and procedural justice, as well to the appearance of these principles in the history and institutions of the state. In other words, this means that the education for political virtue should foster in students a commitment to the philosophical, political and moral tradition of liberalism. This understanding of citizenship education may appear to be pursuing the same political goals as Gutmann's

deliberative education, but it relies on a historical connection to a tradition of thought, from which students may develop a commitment to continuing the process of perfecting liberal practices. Students are educated to become active liberals, not simply active citizens. This, Callan states, means a convergence between moral and political education:

> … to claim ownership of a tradition is to make a claim about one's *moral identity*; it is to commit oneself to continuing a particular story because one thinks it is worthy of continuance. This means that even though ownership entails a sense of history, the history it draws on may have little or nothing to do with ties of blood. The men and women slaughtered in Tiananmen Square were inspired – some would say duped – by principles of liberal democracy that originated in Western cultures, but whether they were inspired or duped, it is grotesque to suggest that they all died for values that were not their own. (Callan, 1997: 125)

Furthermore, educating *liberal* citizens, rather than simply citizens who can proficiently elect good officials, or take part in the deliberative process, means fostering an affective bond to the students' country and to fellow citizens: 'ties of affection and loyalty that link the individual to the cross-generational political community that sustains a just regime over time' (Callan, 2004: 71). Callan's account of political education focuses on cultivating in students an affective bond with the state and its institutions as manifestations of the liberal tradition, thereby promoting a kind of 'liberal patriotism':

> Suppose our children learn to think of their nation as an open venture of collective self-rule, in which the right and wrong we do together is as much a matter of how we deal with those who are not compatriots as of how we deal with those who are. Then their patriotism will be proof against the temptations of chauvinism. Such patriotism is not an alternative to cosmopolitan morality but its ally (Callan, 2004: 80)

Educating citizens without guiding them towards political participation runs the risk of a loss of state legitimacy – the liberal state derives it legitimation from a common consent. Liberal patriotism is Callan's way of reconciling individual autonomy, the cornerstone of political legitimacy in liberalism, with the normative imperative of education (the notion that education must conceive of the 'good'). However, this understanding of citizenship education relies on a basic assumption that the political sphere that is already in place is essentially just, and though it perhaps requires reform or revision, the state (or the given rules of political conduct) is virtually legitimised through history. This reliance on an imagined historical consensus is a basic feature of liberal political thought, which has been elucidated by its critics (for example, Mouffe, 2000; Brown 2009). This consensus, or 'social contract', at the heart of liberal political thought is generated through a theoretical, primordial agreement on the rules of play, which precedes

the state.[3] Even in states with a long tradition of liberal democracy, the consensual foundations of liberal political theory have been criticised for not being realistic in their treatment of political discord. The next chapter will present the history and political context of citizenship education in Israel to demonstrate the meaning of liberal citizenship education in a deeply conflicted society. The deep existential conflicts that dominate Israeli political life make it extremely difficult to argue that the notions of liberal citizenship education presented thus far are relevant to realities of Israeli education. The following subsection will explore a notion of citizenship education based on an 'agonistic' or conflictual understanding of politics, which will perhaps provide some useful concepts for the Israeli reality.

## 2.4 Beyond liberal consensus: the agonistic public sphere

The various perceptions of good citizenship and its educational implications, presented above, are not always mutually exclusive. Although they differ in their emphases and their prescribed educational programmes to promote virtue and affective dispositions in political education, their conceptualisation of what makes up political life apparently stems from liberal presuppositions about what constitutes the political sphere. These assumptions about political life underlie almost all policy and curriculum documents regarding citizenship education.

Frazer states that most accounts of citizenship education generally follow the way 'democrats and political liberals' (2000: 88) outline its aims and methods. This means that they all share a belief that state-controlled education in the form of schooling could induce positive change. The next section will present the critical position on the relation between the state and education, which argues the absolute opposite – that the stabilising effect of schooling is a form of societal repression. Pring (2001) worries that the creation of 'citizenship' as a curricular subject matter relies on a consensual notion of the political aims of education, thereby leading to an 'instrumentalisation' of political knowledge. This instrumentalisation is, to my understanding, a crucial issue in citizenship education, and will be discussed in length in the conclusion of the thesis, following the presentation of the key findings.

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[3] The source for this liberal assumption is often considered to be John Locke's notion of the social contract that precedes the formation of any political arrangement. 'The only way whereby anyone divests himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the bonds of civil society, is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it' (Locke, 1988 [1689]: 163).

In addition to the danger of an 'instrumentalist' conception of citizenship education, all liberal conceptions of citizenship education rely on the individualistic understanding that education could bring about citizens who act morally. Moral citizens thereby advance the state, through deliberation or by electing good officials, towards a more just arrangement. Citizens are educated under the assumption that individual knowledge, skills, and virtues govern political conduct, and through cultivating these individual capacities towards 'democratic' or liberal dispositions, society is able to overcome irrational, violent tendencies that threaten to pull it apart. This is a reflection of the liberal belief that the political structure is founded on a historically or theoretically conceived primordial contract between individuals. It is therefore rarely disputed that some sort of moral development plays a substantial role in political education. In the examples of liberal-democratic theory outlined above, even the most minimal account of citizenship includes the development of moral powers of judgement as a political aim of education. This has led Frazer to question the extent to which liberal accounts of citizenship education involve engaging the reality of political life:

> Normative models of politics are often built on the ideal of cooperative relationships, the dominance of rationality over feeling, of reason over violence, and the constraint of power by right. This emphasis on non-violent conciliation can, however, give the illusion that politics is less 'agonistic' than it really is. Of course, real political societies are full of friction, of power games, of emotional difficulties and the like. (Frazer, 2000: 100)

An example from Israel could demonstrate this point: liberal thought assumes that all members of society could potentially become equally good citizens, regardless of their identity. The strains of power relations in society can, at least theoretically, be alleviated by individual discursive abilities and by an appeal to traditions of peaceful resolution of political conflict. In the Israeli case, presented at length in the next chapter, this is markedly not the case – the definition of Israel as both a Democratic and Jewish state leaves non-Jewish citizens at a clear disadvantage. A key feature of this thesis is therefore to locate this misalignment between normative political theory and educational practice, as it appears in the case of citizenship education in Israel.

Frazer's conclusion is that democratic political education must not stem from or enforce a consensual understanding of 'good citizenship' as a preliminary condition for good government: 'it is not the case that getting the politics right is simply a matter of getting the values right' (Frazer, 2000: 100). As Mouffe points out, this demonstrates a failure to unite liberalism and democracy: 'in their attempt to reconcile the liberal tradition with the democratic one, deliberative democrats tend to erase the tension that exists

between liberalism and democracy and they are therefore unable to come to terms with the conflictual nature of democratic politics' (Mouffe, 2000: 5). The significance of the conflictual, or agonistic, nature of democratic life is central to Mouffe's conceptualisation of the political sphere, and therefore the process of learning about politics. By equating the moral with the political, Mouffe argues, liberals predetermine the limits of legitimate debates and implicitly advance a certain political identity, or at least some basic political convictions, as conditions for political discourse (Mouffe, 2005).

As shown above, this identity might be 'fleshed out' when relying on a comprehensive account of political virtue, such as suggested by Gutmann and Callan, or left as a 'thin' concept as in Galston's account. In both cases the contingent identities of the students strain the limits of liberalism, when a democratic education of citizens is articulated. To overcome this tension, Williams offers a notion of citizenship based on difference, rather than a single political identity: 'the idea is not that membership entails a shared identity with any particular content, but comes by virtue of being entangled with others in such a way that one's future is tied to theirs' (Williams, 2003: 209). The idea that citizens are members of a polity who share a future together is appealing, especially when it is utilised to move past primordial – national, ethnic and religious – identities in guiding the aims of education. However, as a normative proposal, this account of citizenship bears substantial resemblance to Gutmann's 'deliberative citizen'. While some theoretical distinctions can be made between the two models, Williams' suggestion has not, so far, influenced practice.

This critique of deliberative democracy is the point of departure for Ruitenberg's (2009) argument against the liberal models of citizenship education proposed above, and specifically Callan's 'liberal patriotism'. For Ruitenberg, citizenship education that promotes any single account of politics and the virtues of citizenship diminishes the very essence of political life. Instead of constructing political education around a liberal consensus, democratic political education should foster 'political adversaries'. This means that citizenship education should be about uncovering and even strengthening different strains of conflicting identities, rather than an anodyne account of 'reasonable deliberation' provided by political liberalism:

> … when citizenship education takes into account the nature of the political as necessarily conflictual and constituted by power, it must seek to augment the limited treatment of disagreement in the deliberative approaches on which it is often based. In order to prepare students for active participation in the public realm … radical democratic citizenship education must recognize and educate political emotions, and foster an understanding of the role of power in the political, as well as of the

fundamental differences in the interpretation and implementation of equality and liberty proposed by the political 'left' and 'right'. (Ruitenberg, 2009: 280).

Following from Mouffe's analysis of the centrality of contingent conflict in democracy, Ruitenberg's 'radical citizenship education' emphasises the significance of fundamental political disagreement in education. Ruitenberg criticises the deliberative approach for assuming that politics represents some basic agreement, and proposes that citizenship education should be about the 'big disagreements' that define the political culture of 'left' and 'right'. While Ruitenberg is unique in her insistence that the major learning outcome in citizenship education should be instilling in students a sense of political partisanship, much of the literature agrees that controversy is a central part of learning in citizenship education. Chapter 6 will analyse how citizenship teachers in Israeli schools expressed their experiences of controversy in the classroom, focusing on the meaning of controversy in the process of learning about politics.

However, even in Ruitenberg's understanding of 'radical citizenship education', the schools and the citizenship teacher are entrusted with the education of citizens. Similar to the liberal accounts that locate education as a condition for the proper functioning of the state, Ruitenberg does not dispute the fact that schooling should prepare citizens for their participation in politics. The overarching learning outcomes of such a position towards citizenship education are concerned primarily with 'diversity', and aim that students understand 'the ways in which the different social groups that compose society may receive recognition and take part in the national field' (Cohen, 2010: 22). Nevertheless, how could the state support a 'radical' education? This is a relevant question specifically in relation to Ruitenberg's position, which, if adopted, would enable and even support the articulation, in schools, of some dangerous ideas about what the state is, and what it should be. One response to this question is analysed in the next section, which focuses on the development of a critical position in relation to political education. The next section presents a conceptualisation of political education as an emancipatory process in which students come to realise their interests as part of a group.

### 2.5 Becoming politically conscious: critical pedagogy

The previous section presented a position that emphasised, against the consensual assumption of political liberalism, the significance of an agonistic public sphere to the education of citizens. However, even the agonistic position understands the process of schooling as holding some potential for a more just future. The idea that schools, and

citizenship education in school, may play a substantial role in improving the political system relies on the assumption that schooling is somehow separate from the institutions and practices of society, and that power relations, biases and injustices of the adult world are not a part of the life of the school. Furthermore, all the positions above accept that citizenship education could eventually influence the political sphere, and reduce these injustices. This section will present a tradition of thinking about politics and education that does not accept that schools could interrupt the processes of social reification. Instead, it sees education as an integral part of social reification, the process that reproduces oppression and class structure.

This section will introduce the roots of critical theory in education, in order to gain insight into critical perspectives on citizenship education. It will briefly outline the critical tradition as it developed out of Marxian Materialism to the cultural critique of Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, and finally as an educational programme in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The criticisms of these thinkers challenged the optimistic relationship between education and politics presented in some of the positions described in the previous section.

The theoretical and pedagogical analyses presented here will be used in the following chapter to locate the philosophical assumptions and political commitments of 'critical' research within citizenship education. In Israel, these critical positions generally subvert the optimistic conception of citizenship education by pointing to its limits in producing political consciousness among students from minority groups (Agabaria, 2016), as well as by overlooking non-democratic and oppressive instances in Israeli history (Peled-Elhanan, 2012). This section seeks to present the genealogical development of the critical position in Israeli educational research, from which certain themes will later be used in the analysis of interviews of Israeli citizenship teachers.

### *2.5.1 Historical materialism and political understanding*

For Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the key to understanding social life lies in analysing concrete economic relations in society, the method they name 'historical materialism':

> The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production of the means to support human life and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produced, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view, the final causes of **all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in men's better insights into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange.** (Engels, 1901: 65, my emphasis)

A historical-materialist position towards education would therefore point to the danger of schooling as a way of sustaining existing power relations. Education, while potentially playing a crucial role in creating the class-consciousness necessary for wholesale revolutionary social change, remains an expression of existing power relations in society. From a classic Marxian position, the political knowledge, skills and virtues that citizenship education is supposed to induce in students are not a means of creating a more just society, because, as Marx famously stated: 'It is not consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness' (1970: 92).

So while liberal political thinking envisions the process of becoming a citizen as one in which critical reflection allows students to reassess the society they are entering, Marxist critique sees political identity – including the knowledge and virtues that it dictates – as the outcome of societal structure. Educationally, this means that students should learn how to identify the roles assigned to them by the power structure that rules society, only to repel these roles and resist the dominant power structure. The paradoxical nature of this statement within classical Marxism will be explained shortly, but first it is important to note the role of 'critical consciousness' in the context of a materialist philosophy; in order to criticise the society into which they are entering, these students must become conscious of their own position within that society. To some extent this is a reversal of Rawls' 'original position' – whereas political liberalism demands the student become aware of her citizenship as having equal political standing in institutions of state, historical materialism claims that the political role of citizenship in itself is a practice of concealing the structure of society. This deterministic conceptualisation of becoming citizens does not mean that education is useless as a part of social change. As Avineri (1967) points out, it is not just *being,* but *social being* that determines one's consciousness. Being a part of a social process is not enough – developing consciousness of one's place in political-economic relations is a crucial element in creating progress.

Marxism solved the problem of political education of citizens not by an appeal, as in liberal theory, to the individual powers of rationalisation, but by a process of becoming aware of 'actual' class interests in society. In order to create the desire for social change, education needs to make students aware of the power relations in society, and of the oppression that keeps them from progressing socially and politically. Educationally, fostering this critical awareness means that students need to question and eventually reject the ideas and practices that justify the current societal structure. The role of ideology in justifying social, political and economic control is therefore an accepted staple of much of

modern social theory. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1970 [1845]) define ideology as the justification of existing social relations: 'The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make one class the ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance' (1970: 64). Giddens, for example, follows this notion of ideology, as 'shared ideas or beliefs which justify the interests of dominant groups (1997: 83). This process of becoming politically aware will return as the essential educational moment in Paulo Freire's conceptualisation of critical pedagogy.

### *2.5.2 'Hidden Curriculum', hegemony and counter-hegemony*

Culture, and implicitly education, holds a paradoxical significance in classic Marxian thinking. Education is simultaneously viewed both as a process of reification and as a potential source of liberation, as long as it contributes to the creation of class-consciousness. The materialist interpretation of cultural domination seems largely to limit the potential for personal development outside the deterministic order of society, and therefore holds a pessimistic outlook on educational intervention as a source of radical social and political change. This theoretical problem has led 20th century Marxist theorists to turn their attention to the role of culture in society. Beyond its role as a force of reification, these 20th century Marxists sought to explore the possibility of subverting, through cultural work, dominant power structures in order to create 'counter-culture' and 'counter-education'. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist dissident, pointed to the structure of cultural rule as a possible opening for this sort of 'counter-education'.

Following Marx and Engels, Gramsci accepted that the way in which the ruling classes maintained their dominance is through the promotion of an ideology suited to reinforce their rule. But while ideology is often considered a form of oppressive dominance that explicitly limits discussions of political alternatives, Gramsci's notion of hegemony implies a finer, perhaps more insidious, form of control. For Gramsci, hegemony represents the subtle ways in which groups establish their dominance not only though explicit ideological assertions, but also, and primarily, through an overarching explanation of reality. Gramsci's hegemony marks a shift from classical Marxism because it assumes that societal control is established not through overt coercion of the lower classes, but rather through 'spontaneous consent' or even loyalty to the dominant ways of describing societal power relations (Cammet, 1967).

The significance of power relations and hegemonic knowledge in educational practice has been explored in a wide range of studies. Anyon's (1980) classic ethnography of the relation between class and education demonstrated the concept of hegemonic

knowledge through the notion of a 'hidden curriculum'. Anyon describes the pedagogic practices in five New Jersey schools that represent, according to income and professions of the parents in the school community, four different socio-economic classes: 'working class'; 'middle class'; 'affluent professional'; and 'executive elite'. Within each school, Anyon identifies a relation between the roles the parents of the students play in economic life and the way in which students are expected to study. Life in schools, she argues, should be understood as:

> tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way. Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work (Anyon, 1980: 92)

How each curriculum subject is taught should therefore be considered in light of a specific economic power structure and as efforts for its self-preservation. Different classes are therefore taught differently. When the curriculum is related to political and social issues – for example, as it is in social studies – the differences in teaching methods are revealing. In the working class schools, 'Social studies … is also largely mechanical, rote work that was given little explanation or connection to larger contexts. In one school, for example, although there was a book available, social studies work was to copy the teacher's notes from the board' (Anyon, 1980: 71). From Anyon's description, knowledge of political and social issues is transferred to the working class students through rote learning and copying, suggesting that the students are taught to accept the political and social situations they encounter in life with little imagination or resistance.

By contrast, political and social concepts in the 'affluent professional school' and 'elite executive' schools are introduced in a different manner: 'Social studies also involves almost daily presentation by the children of some event from the news. The teacher's questions ask the children to expand what they say, to give more details, and to be more specific. Occasionally she adds some remarks to help them see connections between events' (Ibid: 89). In the 'elite executive school', '[s]ocial studies work is most often reading and discussion of concepts and independent research. There are only occasional artistic, expressive, or illustrative projects' (Ibid: 91). In both cases, it could be argued that students engage with political concepts, and are presumably more aware of their significance in the context of their own lives. In a second classical account of the same five-school study, published a year later, Anyon sets out the basic argument of a critical approach to education: 'By situating school knowledge in its particular social location, we can see how it may contribute to contradictory social processes of conservation and

transformation. We see the schools reproducing the tensions and conflicts of the larger society' (Anyon, 1981: 38).

The critical approach presented above will be further examined in later chapters in its Israeli context and as a methodological position. Liberal citizenship education, which focuses on preparing students for the role and characteristics of being individual citizens, should be treated realistically as a manifestation of particular, though admittedly complex, power structures. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, it is true that citizenship education operates largely within a liberal political framework, emphasising individual learning outcomes, as opposed to inducing 'real consciousness'. In its most basic manifestation, liberal citizenship education aims to introduce students to citizenship as the *equal standing* of all members in society before the institutions of the state. Education committed to a materialist understanding of societal power structures would turn students' attention to their actual positions within current society, foregrounding inequality and limitations on freedom by pointing to examples such as institutional racism, invasive policing, or the predetermined economic roles of the different social classes.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony as cultural control also includes the possibility of creating 'counter-hegemonic' practices that challenge the way things are. By counter-hegemony, Gramsci means not only practices that challenge the existing hegemonic power structure, but also 'a creation of an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society in preparation for political change' (Pratt, 2004: 331). In terms of citizenship education, fostering counter-hegemonic ideas entails going beyond the notions of citizenship prescribed by the curriculum and envisioning alternative political situations. By acknowledging that things do not have to be the way they are, that is, the contingency of the current structure, the students (and teacher) become aware of their respective situations. The emphasis on the pedagogic moment of becoming aware is a fundamental feature of the tradition of critical pedagogy, which originated in the work of Paulo Freire.

### *2.5.3 Freire: political education as 'conscientisation'*

The practice of educating for radical social change therefore requires a radical reconceptualisation of the relation between education and political action. Instead of relying on education to prepare future members for the requirements, both institutional and cognitive, of citizenship in the current political structure, radical education subverts this relation by inducing critical reflection on the existing social structures and mechanisms. It seeks to prepare students not for the existing political community, but for the radical changes required for the coming community to be free of oppression. Education as an act of liberation is the core concept in critical pedagogy, an educational movement that

originated in the seminal book by Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005 [1968]). Freire proposed an understanding of education that was committed to a Marxist reading of societal power relations, and yet also relied upon existentialist and dialogical pedagogical thinking in order to overcome the inherent difficulties of achieving political consciousness in Marxist thought (Roberts, 1999).

> The struggle for humanization, for the emancipation of labor, for the overcoming of alienation, for the affirmation of men and women as persons … is possible only because dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed. Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. (Freire, 2005: 44)

Freire's conception of social liberation through educational intervention does not shy away from the revolutionary responsibility attributed to the process of consciousness-raising in Marxist thinking. However, instead of relating consciousness merely to one's social identity by equating it with economic and cultural properties, Freire embraces a dialogical approach to teaching and learning. Guilherme and Morgan point to the striking similarities between Freire's and Martin Buber's dialogic philosophy of education: 'both found their systems on dialogue and emphasize the importance of dialogue for education and for the community as a whole' (2009: 572). Dialogue in Buber and Freire is intended to subvert the notion that the relation between teacher and student is hierarchical, by describing educational practice as being dependent on both teacher and learner (Gordon, 2011). Through dialogue, Freire's conception of critical pedagogy overcomes the paradox of 'conscientisation' implicit in the classical Marxist understanding of the role of the teacher as a bourgeois intellectual responsible for fostering revolutionary sentiment among the proletariat. Chapter 4 will propose an analysis of citizenship education as a 'liminal' pedagogic moment, in which political life is present and meaningful but is also the subject of 'playful' and imaginative extrapolations in and through which identities are uncovered as flexible and circumstantial. Within such 'liminal' situations, Freire's critical pedagogy is no less relevant – while my 'liminal' interpretation of the relation between the pedagogic and the political abandons the directedness of Freire's liberationist education, it nonetheless rescues the volatility and 'danger' implied in critical pedagogy.

Freire's work as an educator influenced his perception of the role of pedagogic relations in political education. For Freire, liberationist education means abandoning a

hierarchical understanding of teaching and learning, in favour of dialogical practice. In order to achieve 'spontaneous political consciousness', political education should not rely on what Freire calls the 'banking concept':

> The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration – contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give significance. (2005: 257)

This significance, Freire continues, is lost when the teaching involves the teacher speaking *to* or even *at* the students in a one-directional and hierarchical interaction. This conception of learning as a meaningless transmission of knowledge bears a close resemblance to the way in which Anyon portrayed social studies in the 'working class school', where social, legal and political issues were taught through rote learning and copying from the board (Anyon, 1980; 1981).

The 'banking concept' of education cannot overcome Gramscian hegemonic language, and is therefore doomed, despite the teacher's best efforts, to reproduce oppressive societal relations. In order to foster critical consciousness, the teacher-student relationship needs to break through hegemony – by using a language that is constructed as an expression of local communities and their immediate concerns. This in turn shifts education into a form of political organisation where:

> … individuals can review the problems faced by their communities within local and informal settings that are less intimidating than the formal and official settings from which they feel effectively excluded, encouraging them to organize, to forge pressure groups, to encourage community ties, to ensure that their rights are not ignored or breached and to fulfil their duties as citizens, such as voting in elections or standing as candidates. (Guilherme and Morgan, 2009: 574).

The concept of teacher-student dialogue will be central to Chapter 6, which explores the role of controversy in the citizenship classroom. While liberal conceptions of citizenship education rely on classroom discussions about 'controversial issues' as learning methods to foster deliberative skills, I propose looking at controversy as a consistent feature of political education. This section has presented a radical educational position through a review of the critical tradition in educational and political thinking. Building on this critical position, I suggest that all political concepts are controversial when seen through the prism of the actual personal circumstances of the students.

Within the rising interest in citizenship education over the last few decades, it seems that Freire's call for 'critical pedagogy' was almost 'too successful' in advocating the need

for criticality as a part of education. Edelsky and Cherland argue that the term 'critical literacy' is 'overextended, and is used in connection with ways of teaching that do *not* involve a critique of systems of injustice … [and therefore] the alternate vision of education for genuine participatory democracy that "critical literacy" has pointed to, is lost' (2006: 18). While the terms 'critical thinking' and 'active citizenship' are often used in curricular policy documents, these do not necessarily carry the transformative meaning intended by Freire. Johnson and Morris (2010) helpfully map out the different uses of the term 'critical thinking' in relation to citizenship education. By relating the aims of citizenship education to four essential elements of Freire's thinking, namely, 'ideology, collectivity, subjectivity and praxis' (Johnson and Morris, 2010: 21), Johnson and Morris distinguish between critical pedagogy as transformative political education, and a 'more abstract, technical notion of critical thinking' (Ibid).

At the heart of Johnson and Morris's criticism of much of the current practice and literature that comprise citizenship education, is the argument that the standardisation of citizenship education has steered practice away from political action. For Biesta, the attempt to formulate a general, assessable and controlled educational programme has led to an individualised, technical notion of citizenship, in which the system prioritises institutional, measurable and quantifiable goals, over the indeterminacy of 'political consciousness'. In his critique of the liberal mindset that produced the current understanding of citizenship education, Biesta argues:

> the 'production' of the democratic person … entails an individualistic approach to democratic education, one in which the educational efforts are focused on equipping individuals with the proper set of democratic knowledge, skills and dispositions, without asking questions about individuals' relationships with others and about the social and political context in which they learn and act. (Biesta, 2007).

This turn to a standardised, institutionalised account of political knowledge, devoid of any firm grasp of the social context and the inherent paradoxes of political education, has led to an educational agenda that this thesis will refer to as the 'institutional approach'. In contrast, the critical position towards citizenship education, which emphasises the contextual nature of learning and seeks to uncover the power relations inherent in educational practice, will be referred to as the 'critical approach'. The next chapter will explore both of these approaches to citizenship education by analysing how they are manifested in the study of Israeli citizenship education.

# Chapter 3: Three research positions on citizenship education in Israel

Following the theoretical exposition in the last chapter, this chapter will situate the thesis in the context of Israeli citizenship education. It will begin by briefly presenting the historical background of citizenship as a curricular subject, focusing on its latest incarnation as it was instated in the 1990s, which considered citizenship in very similar terms to the contemporary global citizenship education movement. The political background of this project will also be briefly discussed, in order to explain the political volatility of the subject and its significance as a source of public controversy over the years. The third section will turn its attention to the 'educational background' of citizenship education. The objective of this section is to consider practice as the starting point of this thesis – what should constitute the foundations of research in order to understand the meaning of citizenship education? Two current positions in educational research will be outlined as possible points of entry into the subject: the institutional approach and the critical position. Both positions represent varied and comprehensive attempts to understand the normative and pedagogical meaning of citizenship education in Israel. However, as I argue in this chapter, both positions rely on some form of a priori ideological commitment with respect to the relation between education and the political. The final section will present an analysis of Hannah Arendt's work on the nature of political life, and her argument for a fundamental distinction between education and the political. Arendt's political thought and her relatively modest contributions to educational thought were marked by a clear demand that politics should be examined independently of ideological normative assumptions or goals. I argue that this is a result of her implicit commitment to phenomenology as a way of thinking about the social and political world. By thinking with Arendt about the relation between politics and education, we may gain insight into what citizenship education is, and what precisely the two research positions presented above cannot achieve on account of their ideological prisms.

In Israel, these questions represent the core of the perpetual controversy surrounding citizenship education. Grounding their position in the conceptualisation of democracy as a moral practice, Israeli liberals view citizenship education as a vehicle for making Israeli society more equitable and less prejudiced. On the other side, those who believe that citizenship education should instil in future citizens a sense of national pride and patriotism, based on the shared Jewish identity of the majority of Israelis, argue for a citizenship curriculum aimed at instilling nationalist particularistic values. Such a nationalist, ethnically based notion of citizenship stands in strong contrast to the liberal

suggestions above, with the exception perhaps of the narrow, formal notion of citizenship set out in the first section. For the large Palestinian minority in Israel, citizenship education represents a tense relationship with the Jewish majority about political education in disenfranchised communities, who feel oppressed by the majoritarian sentiments.

### 3.1 Historical review of citizenship education in Israel

The state of Israel was founded in 1948, following a war (alternatively known by Israelis as the War of Independence and by Palestinians as the Nakba) and as part of a UN resolution to establish two new nation states in the land of Palestine – one Jewish and one Palestinian (United Nations, 1947). An Arab refusal to negotiate a partition of the land, as well as Zionist territorialism, led to an armed conflict over the historical land of Palestine and to a massive dislocation of the Palestinian population from the future Israel to other countries as refugees (Morris, 1987). The Palestinians who remained in Israel received Israeli citizenship but were subject to martial law until 1966. In 1967, as a part of the 'Six-Day War' the Israeli military occupied and placed under martial law the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Old City of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. As full Israeli sovereignty was never established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian residents of these territories were not given Israeli citizenship, while Jewish settlers have gradually established villages and towns in these territories, mainly for ideological and religious reasons.

Establishing and controlling the national narrative in relation to the Arab-Jewish conflict has always been a major objective of the Israeli school system (Podeh, 2000), and it remains a major aim of some curriculum subjects such as history and geography (Peled-Elhanan, 2012). Citizenship education in Israel has historically been a fluctuating concept that has undergone several transformations through the decades (Ichilov, 2013). In the second half of the 1990s, citizenship education took on a universalistic set of values, in part due to increased Western influence and an unprecedented optimism regarding the prospects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The founding document of citizenship education in its current form is the Kremnitzer Report drawn up by the Committee on civic education, which convened in 1996. Its recommendation was to 'develop a comprehensive programme for the inculcation of citizenship as a common value and behavioural framework for all Israeli citizens' (Ministry of Education, 1996). Following the global trend towards citizenship education, the report presented the concept of citizenship as a way to mediate social tensions, primarily between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Israelis, by offering a form of political identity transcending ethnic and religious divides. This

understanding of citizenship is inherently tied to the specific concept of citizenship as a learning outcome resulting in appropriate knowledge, skills and virtues. This conception of citizenship education is firmly rooted in political liberalism, as presented in the previous section, and its implication for educational research is further discussed in the next chapter.

The committee's report served as the basic policy document in citizenship education, with the committee actively supporting the implementation of its recommendations under four different education ministers between 1993 and 2000 (Kremnitzer, 2013). In 2000, the collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the related ascent of right-wing governments brought the appointment of a new education minister who wished to emphasise Jewish-National values in citizenship education (Agabaria, 2016). In a recent reconsideration of the committee's work, Kremnitzer admits that the overall optimism of the 1990s may have caused the committee to 'not pay sufficient attention to the structural and normative elements that make the civic effort especially difficult and at the same time imperative' (Kremnitzer, 2013: 34). Kremnitzer then continues to specify three such elements (Ibid: 34-36):

1) The definition of Israel as a Jewish nation state places the Arab-Palestinian citizens in a position incomparable to other minorities in democratic states. While being a part of an ethnic minority does not mean one cannot become (say) British or French, there is no Israeli nation and the national identity of Israelis is Jewish, and therefore Arab-Palestinians have no real opportunity to join it.

2) The continued Israeli military control over territories and residents who are denied citizenship (and are members of the same Palestinian national group, in some cases even family members of Palestinian-Israeli citizens) erodes the democratic basis of political life in Israel. Kremnitzer argues that this is the case both for the Palestinian citizens who hold the state in perpetual suspicion for its actions in the occupation, as well as for the Jewish citizens, who must operate in an essentially non-democratic environment.

3) The Israeli education system is an essentially segregated one, as school provision is distributed through four different systems: a secular-Jewish-Zionist mainstream; a religious-Jewish-Zionist system; an Arab-Israeli; and an Ultra-Orthodox non-Zionist Jewish minority, which is not committed to the general core curriculum. For Kremnitzer, this separation is a concern as it leads to a situation in which schools rarely face essentially different worldviews and therefore do not prepare the students for encounters with 'Others'. While there is a certain bias in Kremnitzer's account, as Arab Israelis (and to a lesser extent the Ultra-Orthodox) clearly encounter the dominant mainstream culture in their everyday life, surveys of young people's attitudes toward Others are nonetheless a

cause for concern.[4] As noted earlier, for Kremnitzer, these obstacles to citizenship education are also arguments in favour of its implementation, with its basic task being to establish a sense of equal standing and reciprocity among different groups.

### 3.2 An ideological critique of citizenship education in Israel

Following the universal, generalisable interpretation of citizenship in the Kremnitzer Report, and the particularistic-nationalist political backlash of the last decade, debates over the aims and practice of citizenship education have become increasingly representative of the ideological debates in Israel. The arguments concerning the aims and scope of education for citizenship echo the existential political questions at the basis of the two major political ideologies within the Jewish majority of Israel. The political right, in accordance with its general political aims, advocates more emphasis on the 'Jewish' national narrative in the curriculum, while the left argues for substantial 'democratic', inclusive principles as the basic knowledge of all citizens (Ichilov, 1999). For the left, the main point of contention is the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the way in which citizenship education should address the political rights of minorities. For the right, citizenship education should foster a sense of patriotic belonging to the collective, implying a preference for Jewish students.

These two conflicting understandings of citizenship education manifest themselves practically in curricular choices and emphases. As demonstrated above, the left relies on the basic tenets of political liberalism to argue for teaching Israeli citizenship as a set of universal political principles of democracy. Furthermore, the argument for teaching these principles as the inherent value of democracy is charged with social urgency in recent years, as it is perceived by the left as a way of retaining the 'democratic' foundations of Israel and combating a rising trend towards intolerance and racist attitudes.

On the right, the perceived dominance of the liberal agenda in citizenship education has led to right-wing education ministers wielding their political power in order to secure the Zionist narrative in education, and to strengthen 'Jewish identity'. Alongside actions regarding the official curriculum and appointments in the education system, in recent years there has been an unprecedented increase in non-government organisations entering the education system with Jewish heritage, and Zionist identity programmes. This has been

[4] There are several examples that point to a trend of liberal-democratic attitudes losing ground to particularistic nationalist attitudes, particularly among young people. In 2010, a comprehensive attitude survey commissioned by the German Friedrich Ebert foundation found that Jewish Israeli youth are increasingly intolerant and suspicious towards Arab citizens of Israel, and that the democratic value of non-violent conflict resolution is losing ground to Jewish majoritarian sentiments (Hexel and Nathanson, 2010).

supported by a small yet vocal stream in Israeli educational thought that criticises the ‘over-emphasis’ on liberal principles in citizenship education, and argues for a more nationalist curriculum.

The following subsections will engage with these two conflicting political ideologies concerning citizenship education, by pointing to how they are both reliant upon a single unified political discourse that stems from the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. In both cases, this leads to a preoccupation with the meaning of citizenship education for Jewish students, leaving out the political experiences of Palestinian students in the Israeli school system. This is not to say that educationalists on the in the Israeli liberal left ignore the oppression of the Palestinian minority in Israel. In fact, liberals often see the core task of Israeli education as being that of reconciling opposing factions in Israeli society and reducing racism and discrimination against minorities.

The nationalist position that follows from the political right is also, though to a lesser degree, apologetic regarding the political education of minorities. By appealing to republican and communitarian political theory, nationalist educationalists attack the universal principles that guided the composition of contemporary Israeli citizenship education. Nationalists therefore propose a form of Israeli citizenship education that is more connected to ethnic and national identity. In both cases, what is ‘offered’ by the concept of citizenship education to Palestinian students is some kind of recognition by the Israeli government, which identifies their political situation as a problem. Jabreen and Agberia highlight how this recognition has been and is translated into policy and eventually ignored, condemning it as ‘politics of contempt’:

> After years of – in the best case – ignoring Arab education and in the worst case actively working to weaken it, the government is increasingly admitting openly that there are problems in need of solutions. On the face of it, well-meaning initiatives are being proposed and national authorities are consulting with communal leaders. But, when it comes to approval of changes, allocation of budgets, initiation of new and more egalitarian policy, and transfer of authority to the Arab Palestinian minority, the facts on the ground tell a different story. Rather, the response is foot-dragging, the rejection (or indefinite shelving) of seemingly promising initiatives, the initiation of new programs which further sideline or disenfranchise Arab education and political changes which roll back advancements made. While ideas come and go, central government policy which leaves Arab education ‘on hold’ has been consistent over the last six decades … Such activism has gained significant force over the past decade. Years of broken promises, neglect, and dialogue which only goes in one direction, have communicated to Arab educational leaders that the government regards the Arab minority as minor players which can be disregarded at whim. This is the politics of contempt. (Jabreen and Agberia, 2013: 21-22)

The next two subsections will develop the educational meaning of Jabreen and Agberia's grim conclusion, by pointing to the ideological mechanisms of the liberal and nationalist positions. The liberal position will be examined through its treatment of patriotism in Israeli citizenship education, and the nationalist through the way it uses the republican tradition of political thought to conceal its ethno-centric goals. Once these are uncovered, the critical position towards Israeli citizenship education that Jabreen and Agaberia allude to will be further explored.

### *3.2.1 Patriotism and liberal values in Israeli citizenship education*

Within the liberal conceptual framework, the educational tension between fostering a patriotic political identity and nurturing good liberal citizens is difficult to bridge. How can the universal principles of liberalism be compatible with the particular commitments of the patriot, which are limited to the boundaries of the state? Callan's 'liberal patriotism', presented in the previous chapter, is one example of how some liberals justify educating for patriotism within the context of liberal democracies: 'love of country blurs the distinction between self-interest and the interests of compatriots in a way that makes action to support the creation of just institutions less costly' (Callan, 2006: 543). But even within the political assumptions of liberal democracies, this kind of patriotism has come under fire, most famously from Nussbaum (2010) in her argument for cosmopolitanism. Since liberal principles are based on the universality of moral rules, claims Nussbaum, it follows that a liberal educational commitment must be directed towards all fellow men and women, rather than just to compatriots. 'If we really do believe that all human beings are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights, we are morally required to think about what that conception requires us to do with and for the rest of the world' (Nussbaum, 2010: 160). Hand argues that promoting patriotism in school would interfere with the 'practical rationality' that is required of citizens:

> in so far as we are committed to rational emotional education, to advocating emotional adjustments only where we can supply pupils with good reasons for making those adjustments, we ought not to promote patriotism in schools. We can make pupils aware of the benefits of patriotic attachment, but, because it has a drawback of comparable force, this will not count as supplying them with good reasons to be patriotic. (Hand, 2011: 344)

In the context of the volatile and conflictual Israeli political reality, these arguments against patriotism place Israeli citizenship education in a paradoxical situation. Israel is defined as a Jewish and democratic state, a definition that puts it at odds with the liberal

principle of universality and equality before the law, particularly in relation to its Arab Palestinian minority.

Educationally, this means that teaching citizenship must include a response to rights and duties of citizens in light of the relations between the Jewish ethnic majority and the Palestinian minority. The educational programmes of the political left and those of the political right both acknowledge the importance of this issue. However, the way in which both ideologies make their argument demonstrates the extent to which they apparently agree on core principles. While the political left and right each emphasise one aspect of the two defining values of Israel – democratic and Jewish – at the expense of the other, both the left and the right do not perceive citizenship education as a 'zero-sum game'. The rhetorical importance of a 'middle ground' between the two competing conceptualisations of citizenship is revealed in attempts on both sides of the political debate to 'reclaim' the virtues of the other side.

Both ideological responses to the educational problem of majority-minority relations in Israel reveal a commitment to Jewish nationalism. While Israeli liberals on the left are apologetic about the 'national values', nationalists on the right justify their proposals through an appeal to a civic-republican political vision in order to justify the inclusion of more such 'national values'. One example of the left's national values underlining the liberal argument can be found in the preface to Tamir's *Liberal nationalism* (1995). Tamir acknowledges that her study was developed as a vindication of the left's 'moderate version of national commitments as a legitimate Zionist approach' (1995: ix), in response to its vulnerability to the criticisms of both liberals and nationalists. Conversely, Israeli nationalist educators rely on republican political theory to present their educational programmes as a kind of democratic political theory – one they claim is overlooked in the policy and curriculum of citizenship education. The two conflicting views of citizenship education in Israel will be surveyed below in two following subsections, in reference to the way these approaches identify the problems and challenges of the Israeli political reality, and the philosophical and political tradition through which each approach responds to these problems and challenges.

Yael Tamir's 'liberal nationalism' represents an effort in political theory to reconcile the moral principles of liberalism with the political reality of nationalism (Tamir, 1995). It is interesting to note that Tamir is a professor in philosophy of education, and that at the peak of her political career she was the Minister of Education between the years 2006-2009. Working within the framework of Tamir's 'liberal nationalism', Ben-Porath (2009) similarly seeks to reconcile liberal morals with Israeli political reality. Ben-Porath's comparative analysis of Israeli education during the second Intifada (2001) and the

American educational response to 9/11, explores the tension between patriotism and universal liberal values, specifically addressing how existential threats such as war and terrorism influence political education. This is pertinent to majority-minority relations in Israel, because of the identification of the Arab minority as Palestinian – a national group contesting the Jewish-Zionist legitimacy of the state of Israel – and the continued armed conflict over the future of the Occupied Territories.

Ben-Porath accepts the normative claims of the liberal model of citizenship education, in which education should foster moral responsibility for certain principles and institutions of the state (along the lines presented in the previous chapter), but argues that citizenship education has a special role in times of existential threat. In such times, the spaces for deliberation and voluntary participation in democratic practices are diminished in favour of 'belligerent citizenship', which 'emerges as a response to perceived threats to national and personal security' (Ben-Porath, 2009: 11). This form of citizenship emphasises 'citizens' contributions to the country rather than … voluntary participation; support for social unity and patriotism over diversity; and, consequently, the discouragement of deliberation' (Ibid: 12). In such times, citizenship education aims to rally citizens 'around the flag' and the rational, deliberative model of the 'citizen' is replaced by the obedient, sacrificial 'soldier'.

For Ben-Porath, when facing an existential threat, the liberal state may practically suspend universal claims in the education of citizens. Principles concerning human rights and freedom of expression, which underlie the liberal commitment to diversity, do not support 'belligerent citizenship': '[D]iversity is suppressed for the perceived sake of national survival …' (Ibid: 25). This suppression of diversity may turn 'stability into rigidity … when the notion of citizenship narrows down to a demand to identify … and contribute to the cause of national survival' (Ibid: 27). Patriotism cannot be avoided at times of war, claims Ben-Porath, because existential threats present themselves as superior to ethical claims. But when the war ends and the existential threat disappears, liberal citizenship education must be reinstated. In Ben-Porath's account of political education in times of war, existential threats lead to a transition in the emphasis of education – from liberal universal rationality to particularistic values such as patriotism and nationalism, a dynamic in which the body politic 'closes its ranks' to protect itself. But the notion that this transition is a temporary condition is itself contentious. The introductory chapter remarked on the significance of military service in the Israeli education system, and argued that the way in which motivation for military service is conceived and measured has become over-instrumentalised and depoliticised. The militarism that characterises Israeli education, especially in the mainstream Jewish and religious Jewish educational systems,

works against Ben-Porath's claim that liberal citizenship education could be reinstated following the rise of 'belligerent citizenship' in times of existential crisis. Ben Porath's attempt to reconcile universal ethics with the unique Israeli political and educational realities is ultimately unsuccessful. However, the basic impetus guiding Israeli liberals who seek to apply liberal, universal, ethical principles as the foundation of Israeli political education will be explored later in the thesis in order to understand how citizenship teachers understand the ideological foundations of their own practice.

Furthermore, critics of liberal, universal ethics undermine the assertion that any ethical basis for political life is even viable. Carl Schmitt (2008) presents one of the most important analyses of the relationship between the performances of sovereignty, such as war, and liberal political ideology. Famously claiming that 'the political suspends the ethical', Schmitt's critique of liberalism was formulated in his 1927 book *The Concept of the Political*, which problematised the idea of a consensual public sphere. In Schmitt's 'decisionist' description of politics, the 'state of exemption' that defines those times and people that remain outside the liberal normative convention, is in fact the very essence of the political. Schmitt describes political liberalism as an attempt to reconcile universalistic ethical claims with the agonistic nature of the political, by formulating a fictional account of the state, in which it acts only as an instrumental negotiator between rival factions in society. This anodyne conceptualisation of the liberal state is at odds with the political, according to Schmitt, which always presents itself as a quelling of plurality by the power of collective unity.

Therefore, if liberalism is to foster any commitment, the values of the liberal state must be internalised and recognised on the basis of individualistic ethics structured around the notion of a pre-existing social contract. Since this pre-existing order could not refer to exclusionary ethnic and religious identities, the liberal state's recourse to individual liberty and equality – values that are expressed economically – and the rights of the citizen (as in the case of Marshall's account of citizenship, presented in the previous chapter) are no more than socio-economic entitlements. This understanding of liberalism has been used to highlight the paradoxical relationship between democracy and the normative claims of liberal morality by agonistic political theorists such as Mouffe (1999) and Brown (2009).

The most basic claim made against the universal rational citizenship assumed by liberalism is that democracy requires a frontier, a 'line in the sand' which marks the members of its community as equal, and those outside of it as unequal. According to Schmitt, the liberal justifications for war all culminate in an 'economic view' of citizenship, leading him to present the normative requirements of the state in a darkly sardonic tone: 'To demand seriously of human beings that they kill others and be prepared

to die themselves so that trade and industry may flourish for the survivors or that the purchasing power of grandchildren may grow is sinister and crazy' (Schmitt, 2008: 9). The role of citizenship education is therefore to foster political commitment by emphasising the feeling of affiliations between the individual and the state. This demand is the basis for the Israeli right's argument for a more patriotic citizenship education.

### *3.2.2 Nationalism and quasi republicanism in the Israeli right*

The nationalist position towards citizenship education in Israel is presented in a policy paper by Geiger (2009), written under the auspices of the Institute for Zionist Studies, a right-wing think tank. The policy paper renounces the unified citizenship curriculum put forward by the Kremnitzer Report for neglecting to represent the republican position on citizenship education. The Kremnitzer Report relies on liberal values of citizenship in order to promote political reconciliation between the different groups that make up Israeli society, and primarily between Jews and Palestinian citizens. Geiger argues that this emphasis on liberal political education as a catalyst for reconciliation is out of touch with the reality of political life, and that rather than reconcile different parts of society, this liberal emphasis alienates future citizens from political engagement:

> … the uniform teaching of civics does not allow the various sectors of Israeli society to deal with the unique challenges they face in a way that they are comfortable with, rather it forces them to deal in a way that one specific group sees fit … The Kremnitzer Report should be shelved, because of its weak connection to Zionist values and because of its over-emphasis of the liberal component of democracy. It is in the State's best interest to create core programming and new curricula that properly incorporate Zionist, nationalist, republican and communal viewpoints, and allow for the Jewish political tradition to be expressed. (Geiger, 2009)

In recent years, following a succession of right-wing governments in Israel, this position towards citizenship education has gained serious ground against the liberal conception described above in relation to the Kremnitzer Report. Recent administrations (since the 2006 elections) have led the Israeli education system further than ever into incorporating the nationalist narrative into citizenship education and away from the universal claims of political liberalism. This is evident both in changes in the curriculum designed to emphasise the Zionist and Jewish narrative through the dissipation of 'official knowledge' (Agbaria *et al.*, 2015) as a part of the curriculum and changes of top level personnel in the Ministry of Education, including the firing of the head of citizenship education in 2012 (Nesher, 2012). The political left in Israel, seeing itself as committed to a universal political heritage, describes the nationalist campaign for a more particularistic narrative in

citizenship education as a threat to the very essence of democracy and Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel.[5]

Geiger refers to republican political theory among the possible alternative viewpoints to the 'over-emphasis' on the liberal component in democracy, relating it to 'Zionism, nationalism and communal viewpoints', which he claims are not sufficiently expressed in Israeli citizenship education. Abandoning the liberal presuppositions of citizenship education, Geiger argues, is required so as to 'respond to the highly complicated citizenship education [in Israel], which demands many delicate balances that were not considered – a certain uniformity on one side and the possibility of difference on the other' (Geiger, 2013: 104, my translation).

However, this appeal to republicanism in order to justify a more nationalist curriculum is not necessarily true to the way republicanism is presented in political theory. The republican conception of citizenship education has been defined as dealing primarily with nurturing in students 'a feeling of belonging and solidarity to the national entity' (Cohen, 2010: 22). Although these feelings of belonging and solidarity appear interchangeable with patriotism, as was presented above, and may be seen as support for nationalist citizenship education, the long tradition of republican political thought also contains a robust vision of political action, which Israeli nationalists manifestly do not support.

Republicanism traces its roots to Aristotle, who believed that human beings are by nature political and that they could fully realise this nature only through political participation and taking an active role in shaping the laws that govern them. This means that the value of participation in the affairs of the community is defined not only according to the interests and aspirations of individual citizens, but also as the result of their relationship with each other and with the history and culture of their community:

> Republican politics is concerned with enabling interdependent citizens to deliberate on, and realise, the common goods of an historically evolving political community, at least as much as promoting individual interests or protecting individual rights. Emphasising responsibility for common goods sets republicanism apart from libertarian theories centred on individual rights. Emphasising that these common goods are politically realised sets republicanism apart from neutralist liberal theories which exclude substantive questions of values and the good life from politics. Finally, emphasising the political construction of the political community distinguishes republicans from those communitarians who see politics as expressing the pre-political shared values of a community (Honohan, 2003: 1)

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[5] As suggested by the *New York Times* editorial 'Israel's Embattled Democracy' (2012, July 21): 'One of Israel's greatest strengths is its origins as a democratic state committed to liberal values and human rights. Those basic truths are in danger of being lost'. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/22/opinion/sunday/israels-embattled-democracy.html?_r=2&ref=opinion&

Republican citizenship education therefore ‘stresses the communal meanings of citizenship in society and the affiliation of the individual to a larger social group such as a community or the state’ (Cohen, 2010: 21). However, Honohan’s definition also defines republican citizenship as committed to a deeply political understanding of belonging, rejecting the implication in nationalism that the ‘primordial’ nature of ethnic and religious bonds means that these bonds are ‘pre-political’. This commitment to political activity as preceding ‘primordial ties’ stands in direct opposition to the nationalist aspirations of the Israeli political right concerning citizenship education, both in theory (as in the case of Geiger) and in practice (as in the policy of right-wing education ministers). The nationalist position wishes to stress the importance of the ‘primordial’ ties between Jewish citizens both to each other and to the historic land of Israel, seeing the basic requirement for good citizenship as a commitment to the Jewish national narrative represented in Zionism, while a republican position on citizenship would emphasise citizenship as the promotion of the common good through political participation. The educational meaning of this ‘deep’ commitment to politics as the highest end of human activity will be explored in following sections in relation to Hannah Arendt’s understanding of political life, and in later chapters it will be analysed in relation to its practical, everyday manifestations in Israeli citizenship education. First, however, this ‘ideological critique’ will be completed by way of an exploration of how the post-colonial position on Israeli citizenship uncovers the commonalities between the liberal and nationalist understandings of citizenship education.

### *3.2.3 A post-colonial view of Israeli citizenship*

The two previous subsections have presented the two opposing positions concerning the scope and aims of citizenship education in Israel. The two positions have been scrutinised and their basic conceptualisations presented as ultimately seeking to sustain, through different ideological mechanisms, an exclusively Jewish ethnic-political vision. This subsection will complete the ‘ideological critique’ of citizenship education in Israel by presenting the critical, post-colonial understanding of Israeli citizenship that follows from this analysis. In both the liberal and the nationalist conceptualisations of Israeli citizenship, the two main values that jointly define Israeli political institutions are Jewish national aspirations and democracy. The nationalist position openly suggests that the definition of Israel as a Jewish state is the fundamental source of the required patriotic political identity that citizenship education must promote. The liberal position on citizenship education is more apologetic about the conflict between the two values (Tamir, 1995), although liberals concede that the military conflicts and existential threats faced by Israel elicit a degree of patriotism as an aim in citizenship education (Ben-Porath, 2009).

Post-colonial and critical positions on Israeli social life propose a different understanding of the conflict between the Jewish and democratic core values in Israel. In his introduction to an edited volume on colonialism and post-colonialism, Shenhav (2004) lists three aspects in which post-colonial discourse is relevant in considering Israeli social life. Firstly, it can help us understand aspects of Israeli society that are connected to its colonial history. Secondly, Shenhav points to the ongoing occupation of the West Bank as a situation of 'unambiguous colonial occupation' (2004: 11). Thirdly, post-colonial thought may be useful in supplying a 'critical perspective on colonialism, past and present' (Ibid). This critical perspective locates the construction of identity within a specific social setting and power relations, demonstrating how various Israeli groups stand in relation to the 'centre' and 'periphery' of Israeli society.

This position therefore describes the professed neutrality of the liberal notion of citizenship as a manifestation of the invisibility of 'Others' in the Israeli experience. These 'Others' include social groups that have been excluded from the mainstream Zionist narratives such as Ultra-Orthodox Jews, Palestinians, and Jews from Arabic speaking countries. The suppression of these identities in the Israeli public sphere has been linked to the colonial historical moment in which 'the west imposed on the rest of the world its interpretation regarding the state, nationality, citizenship, science, technology and literature, and presented itself as a universal perception conceived in terms of progress and modernity' (Hever, Shenhav and Motzafi-Haller, 2002: 10, my translation).

In their post-colonial analysis of Israeli citizenship, Shafir and Peled (2002) argue that 'the Jewish-democratic dichotomy glosses over the way in which these two principles have been encompassed by … the colonial character of the Zionist state … It is not possible to set apart Israeli citizenship and, therefore, Israeli democracy from its colonial beginnings and continued colonial practices' (Shafir and Peled, 2002: 1). The underlying agenda of 'Judaisation' in Israeli political life has led Yiftachel (1999) to suggest the term 'ethnocracy' as a description of the Jewish-Zionist hegemony in Israel. Israel is best described as an ethnocracy, argues Yiftachel, because membership in the state is based on 'membership in the Jewish people, not citizenship in Israel' (Yiftachel, 1999: 96). It therefore follows that 'Israel's regime structure makes equality between Arab and Jew impossible in practice and in theory' (Ibid).

This critical analysis of Israeli citizenship renders the democratic versus Jewish debate irrelevant, because Palestinian citizens of Israel cannot participate wholly in political life as citizens of equal worth. Even when emphasis is placed on Israel as a democracy, as in the accounts of citizenship proposed by the Israeli political left, the analysis presented above of 'liberal nationalism' (Tamir, 1995) leads to the conclusion

proffered by Nasser: ‘in the Israeli case, citizenship and nationhood converge … [T]his convergence of citizenship with nationhood excludes Palestinian citizens from the Israeli collective’ (2013: 256). The impact of this fundamental exclusionary nature of the dominant Israeli perception of citizenship will be further investigated in the concluding discussion of the thesis, exploring its meaning in a technocratic, efficiency-oriented educational policy.

### 3.3 Research positions on Israeli citizenship education

The previous section outlined the political and philosophical tensions posed by citizenship education in Israel, by reviewing different positions on Israeli citizenship. This section will present these ideologies as the basis for educational research, in order to propose an alternative research position in the next section. In general, following the critical analysis of the liberal basis of citizenship education in Israel, it is now possible to say that there are two distinct conceptualisations of the relation between education and political life. One position accepts the assumption that education could and should improve the ethical dimension in political life. Such improvement is assumed to stem from proper and efficient citizenship education, and therefore leads to an institutionalised, positivist inclination in research, which I will call the ‘institutional approach’. The second position seeks to uncover and analyse societal power relations as they appear in education practice. I will refer to this as the ‘critical approach’.

Alexander, Pinson and Yonah (2010) argue that research into citizenship education must take into account the ways in which social conflict manifests itself in Israeli educational practice. This means examining citizenship education beyond ideological terms that rest within the liberal conceptualisation of citizenship. This is because the two major measurable factors that define the liberal position in researching citizenship education are efficiency in promoting participation in politics, and the fostering of responsibility for fellow citizens *as* members of the same political community. However, Alexander *et al*. point to the importance of ‘the impact of power relations and deep social difference on how young people understand themselves as citizens’ (2010: 5) for understanding political education. The division between the liberal and critical positions in researching political education will be explored in the following section, specifically in relation to the Israeli educational system. In the sections that follow, the two research positions alluded to by Alexander *et al.* will be presented in the context of research into citizenship education in Israel. The significance of each of these positions will be demonstrated with reference to educational research, highlighting the limitations they pose.

Furthermore, from a methodological perspective, both positions direct research into political education toward preconceived notions of evidence. Understanding of political education is constituted through existing political commitments, either aligned to or resisting the current power structure. The final section will then turn to Hannah Arendt's phenomenology of the political in order to provide an alternative research position on citizenship education.

### *3.3.1 The institutional approach*

The institutional approach to educational research is based on the premise that in order to study the political aspects of educational practice, the researcher should utilise the institutional tools at hand. The underlying assumption here is that the relation between the educational system and political life is readily apparent and could be understood by examining the overt objectives and outcomes of the educational system. This position is therefore concerned with the ways in which certain curricular subjects and educational practices promote values and skills deemed necessary for political life in Israel. Citizenship education is prioritised as a crucial element in preserving and protecting the core values of Israeli society, whatever these may be. Methodologically, this approach relies on the collection of data to determine the efficacy and efficiency of citizenship education, in order to improve institutional and pedagogic aspects of the system (Barak and Ofarim, 2009). This positivist methodology is connected to the liberal assumptions that underscore citizenship as a curricular subject (Papastephanou, 2005), and reflects the Kremnitzer Report's description of teaching citizenship in Israel. The institutional paradigm focuses on analysing correlations between the teaching and learning of citizenship and 'democratic' attitudes and skills among students (Ichilov, 2007), looking to improve its efficiency in accordance with an aim that often goes unstated and undefended: to protect, promote and deepen a certain commitment to democratic values in Israeli society.

The main emphasis in the institutional approach to political education is on fostering motivation for political participation in existing political institutions. The first chapter discussed the philosophical reasons for this emphasis on participation and social cohesion, in relation to several liberal positions on political education. As a research paradigm for citizenship education, this emphasis on political participation has been translated into an effort to revive the field of study known as 'political socialisation', which was popular in the 1950s and '60s (Niemi and Junn, 1998). Political socialisation, as a research field, examines the ways in which students are prepared for their adult responsibilities as citizens, by utilising methods to determine 'the impact of citizen knowledge on the exercise of citizenship and in formal civic education as a component of political

socialization' (Galston, 2001: 220). The important underlying assumption here is that formal educational programmes and explicit political knowledge are significantly correlated to participation in, and an affective attachment to, the political sphere. This is especially true in comprehensive, expansive accounts of citizenship education such as Gutmann's 'deliberative citizenship' (1987) and Callan's 'liberal patriotism'. The methodological implications of this position will be further discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, pointing to the problems it poses specifically in research about the relation between education and the political.

However, when we consider the Israeli context, the institutional approach's emphasis on formal political knowledge also presents a problem. Pinson's qualitative empirical findings, for example, present a more complex picture of the construction of political identity in Israeli citizenship education (Pinson, 2010). The study examined the practice of citizenship education in Israeli state schools by analysing how educators in those schools described its aims and methods. The qualitative approach discloses experiential and practical dimensions that are often overlooked in the language of standardised curriculum and formalised accounts of political knowledge. Through interviews with educational practitioners, the study examined how citizenship education is described in three educational settings: a Jewish-Secular (general) school; a Jewish-Religious school; and an Arab school.[6] What clearly emerges from the interviews is that while the curricular requirements appear similar, the three schools foster radically different 'civic visions' in relation to what learning to be an Israeli citizen means.

As noted in previous sections, the introduction of citizenship education in the 1990s could be understood as a liberal project, to the extent that it cultivates a political identity that tries to transcend different perceptions and interpretations of the good as they are defined by different groups. Citizenship education is therefore perceived within the institutional approach as a circular process, in which civic attitudes and knowledge are derived from the curriculum, and then measured in relation to existing political institutions – the institutions that in fact control and mandate the curriculum. This circular process is made possible by one of the key ideological components in political liberalism – namely, that state institutions are seen as neutral and unbiased in relation to the distribution of goods. In the context of the global citizenship education movement, one of the effects of

[6] The Israeli state school system is divided into four sectors: 1) 'general' or secular-Jewish schools, serving the majority of the population; 2) the Religious-Zionist, serving the 'modern-Orthodox' communities; and 3) Arab, serving the Arab citizens of Israel who comprise 20% of Israel's citizens. The fourth sector was not included in the research, as it serves the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community, and does not teach 'secular studies' such as citizenship. Pinson notes that the 'position different groups have within Israeli society has a direct bearing on the level of resources and educational autonomy that the different sectors enjoy' (Pinson, 2010: 239).

this notion of 'neutrality' as the main pedagogical position in citizenship education means that controversy is considered a helpful instructional tool, so long as it assists the teacher in fostering 'reasonable attitudes' that suit the already established consensus. Chapter 6 will discuss the way in which citizenship teachers experience controversial issues in Israeli classrooms, arguing that the nature of teaching and learning in citizenship invokes a different understanding of how controversial issues operate in political education.

The institutional approach emphasises that the very act of learning to be a citizen is a process in which otherness loses ground and consensual versions of political identity are demanded and reaffirmed. As Ichilov states, the primary aim of citizenship education for minorities in Israel is that 'youngsters must learn to reconcile their diverse and sometimes conflicting identities (e.g. Muslim, Palestinian, Arab and Israeli)' (Ichilov, 1999: 392). This educational imperative is perceived as constituting the same task for any Israeli student, regardless of ethnicity or religious and political inclinations. Comparative perspectives on the Israeli experience, such as the one expressed by Torney-Purta *et al.* (1999), offer an account of how this is achieved as an institutional and curricular aim. Like other educational systems in deeply conflicted societies, citizenship education in Israel is only deemed appropriate to the extent that it is depoliticised, in the sense that it is 'de-ideologised' and steers away from controversy: '[t]he depoliticization of the school system was accompanied by strict instructions that politics and ideological controversies should not enter the schools … Civic education focused on the structural and legal characteristics of state institutions' (Ichilov, 1999: 374). The result is a formal notion of citizenship education, which disengages itself intentionally from real political life in Israel precisely because of its volatile nature.

The fostering of a 'non-political citizen' emerges most clearly in Pinson's finding from the Arab school, as the price paid in Arab communities for standardisation of citizenship education. In the Arab school, citizenship education is perceived only as a curriculum subject and as a part of the mandatory educational requirements for passing the matriculation exams at the end of high school. It is not seen as part of the schools' nor the Arab community's political vision. Avoiding any substantive political education, Pinson names the practice in the Arab school '*education about citizenship*'.[7] When asked about the educational implications of this thin notion of citizenship, the Arab citizenship teacher condemns the hypocrisy of an Israeli citizenship curriculum based on liberal values: 'The theoretical material they learn is not applicable to their reality … You teach about

[7] This is parallel to the way in which Anyon describes social studies in her study of class and school practices. The 'working class' school is shown to teach social studies through rote learning and copying from the board (Anyon, 1980; 1981). It is interesting to note that Anyon's study was conducted in the late 1970s in New Jersey, while Pinson's study was conducted in recent years.

democracy and minorities' rights and when you look at the case of Israel, there is a contradiction' (Pinson, 2010: 253). It could be argued that the liberal aspiration to flatten out difference for the benefit of the perception of formal equality, at least in the Israeli case, masks a deep preference for a certain presupposition about the political arrangement in the state. By committing the public, general, government-sanctioned school system to this notion of citizenship education, the state is enforcing a particular status quo and promoting passivity in the form of the non-political citizen. The next section will explore the research position derived from this critical statement.

### *3.3.2 The critical approach*

It is important to note that the decision to depoliticise education, in the sense of separating the objective of citizenship education from the controversies of political life, does not imply neutrality towards the existential questions at hand in the Israeli public sphere, as Nurit Peled-Elhanan (2012) points out in her analysis of the representations of Palestine and Palestinians in Israeli textbooks. The ideological inclinations in Israeli history and geography textbooks accept official accounts and justifications of Jewish sovereignty as beyond discussion, and are hardly ever questioned either at the policy level or as subjects of discussion in the public sphere. The dominance of the Zionist narrative over Israeli educational policy has led to the exclusion of Palestinian group identity, instead treating Palestinians as an 'aggregate of individuals entitled to selective individual liberal rights, but deprived of collective rights of self-definition or collective claims over the nature and distribution of public goods in Israel' (Agbaria *et al.*, 2014: 149).

This critical position is even more relevant when we consider how political identity is formed in the general, Zionist-secular schooling system. In Pinson's study of citizenship education, the 'secular-Jewish school' represents the mainstream of Israeli education. In the case of the particular school surveyed by Pinson, the professed educational ethos places much emphasis on education for 'meaningful', involved citizenship. The values that drive this vision could generally be described as conforming to the liberal language of the citizenship education curriculum in their professed statements. However, when Pinson inquires as to what universal values are embedded in Israeli citizenship, the deputy head teacher of the mainstream school seems flustered: 'We are Jewish Israelis and our students as well … citizenship as a curriculum subject does refer to things beyond being Jewish. You expand your discussion and you talk about everyone being equal, being citizens, and having rights. But the emphasis is still on the Jewish Israeli' (Pinson, 2010: 244). In the case of the religious school, the limits of Jewish community are even more expressly defined, with educators describing their main goal as nurturing a political and moral

commitment to ‘all Jews’. Pinson states that ‘this school saw the boundaries of Israeli society as those of the Jewish community’ (2010: 247). In both cases, despite the liberal principles that underpin the citizenship curriculum, the world of meaning dominating civic identity in the Jewish schools surveyed by Pinson does not raise questions regarding Jewish dominance in the political sphere, and its engagement with democratic principles focuses on citizenship education as an expression of the ‘functional role of democracy in Israeli society’ (Lemish, 2003: 60).

The similarity of the political-educational ethos in the two Jewish schools suggests that citizenship education offers far less than the Israeli left perceives, even when the focus is only on Jewish students. In both cases, the political identity of the desired graduate of the school is based not on universal, rational powers of ethical deliberation promoted by the various liberal positions presented in the first chapter, but rather on the ethnocratic foundations of Israeli political life. Students are not expected to question the dominant power relations in Israeli society but rather to conform to the roles derived from these power relations. Beyond the criticism of liberal rhetoric in what could be described as a manifestly illiberal political culture, the critical position also entails a revision of research into citizenship education as a relation between education and political life. Study of the relationship between political structures and education could not be limited to surveying political knowledge and participation, or measuring political literacy, as both are complicit with existing power relations. Instead, a critical position involves uncovering the ways in which these power relations are expressed and enforced in educational practice through the ‘hidden curriculum’. Accordingly, critical studies of Israeli political education do not accept the assumption that the relation between education and politics could be interrogated by examining only the apparent and overt aspects of educational practice.

In the Israeli critical tradition of research, the education system is not perceived as an agent of change, but as a force of reification of class structures. Svirsky, a leading social researcher in the critical tradition, pointed the way for such studies: ‘the school is important in creating and further developing inequality in Israeli society’ (1990: 7). This approach strives to reveal dimensions of inequality as they appear in educational practice, by exposing power relations based on national, class, ethnic, gender and other distinctions (Dahan and Yonah, 2007). Furthermore, this approach is sceptical about the potential of educational intervention to create ‘liberal’ citizens in the sense of commitment and adherence to universal rules, given the national and ethnic inequalities inherent to Israeli life (Pinson, 2007). Instead, citizenship education is conceived as a political instrument of control, in which liberal language conceals, rather than questions, the current Israeli political arrangement. Critical accounts of citizenship education therefore concern

themselves with ways in which educational practices reproduce social and political inequality.

But this understanding of critical research into education only partially follows from the tenets of critical pedagogy presented in the previous chapter. Although the materialist and liberationist notions of education are similarly committed to exposing and undermining unjust practices, their culmination in Freire's critical pedagogy represents a further commitment to the existential dimension of educational life, as a source of meaning undetermined by the political power structure. When education is seen as a determinant of the existing power structure, its uniqueness as a human activity of becoming, the core of Freire's notion of conscientisation, is left undiscovered. Hannah Arendt's analysis of the limitations of sociological thought points to the problem of using social determinants as a starting point.

### *3.3.3 Arendt and the limitations of sociological descriptions*

Supporters of the institutional approach believe that the school represents the promise for a more just society, while the critical approach claims that school is merely a product of societal power structures. Both research positions rely on a causal perception of the relationship between education and politics, aiming to create valid descriptions of citizenship education by locating, isolating and measuring courses of action taken by educators and policy-makers. In the institutional approach, these actions are measured with respect to the curricular demands of citizenship as participation in existing institutions, while the critical approach aims at exposing the mechanisms of control inherent to Israeli political life.

In both cases, the learning process is understood in relation to a theoretical determinant. This way of understanding social existence is criticised by Arendt in her essay *Philosophy and Sociology* (1994). In her essay, Arendt analyses the metaphysical and ontological commitments of sociology. For Arendt, a comparison with philosophy, and particularly with the radical ontology of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, reveals the underlying problem of sociology's focus on the determinants of thought:

> Whereas philosophy inquires into the 'Being of the What Is' (Heidegger's Sein des Seienden) or into 'existence' (Existenz in Jaspers) dissociated from everyday life, sociology does just the opposite, inquiring into the 'What Is' that underlies our 'interpretations of existence'; that is, sociology focuses on the very thing that philosophy deems irrelevant. (Arendt, 1994: 29)

By focusing on aspects of 'What Is' rather than on attempting to understand the existence of 'What Is', sociology can only describe human experience in relation to

historically established categories. Arendt's description of the main task of sociology echoes the aspirations of the critical research approach presented above. In sociology, historically established categories are analysed and interpreted to reveal mechanisms of which subjects are unaware: 'Sociology uncovers the determinants of thought, in which thought itself takes no interest, and suggests at the same time that thought's passion for the absolute is simply an unacknowledged forgetting of the conditional' (Ibid: 37). This means that sociology always describes the question of being, or ontology, through ideology, limiting the possibilities of thought and action: 'unmasking ontology as ideology means that ontology as such can arise only because of limits to perception imposed by the What Is itself' (Ibid: 30). Several of the following chapters address the conditions of thought and action in Arendt's writing, and specifically the centrality of newness, or natality, in her thought (Bowen-Moore, 1989; Schell, 2002).

For Arendt, overcoming the ideological trappings of sociological thought becomes the main task of political and social thought. The meaning of Arendt's and Heidegger's commitment to ontological questions will be explored in the next chapter, to provide the methodological foundations of my thesis. First, however, the political and educational meanings of Arendt's position will be developed, to offer an interpretation of her 'political phenomenology' as an alternative approach to citizenship education.

### 3.4 Arendt's political phenomenology

In this thesis, I argue that the danger represented by the institutional and critical positions towards citizenship education is that what is meant by 'political education' is overcome by the language of educational policy (in the institutional approach), or of ideological commitments that reduce the experience of classroom conduct (in the critical position). Following from Arendt's critique of sociological thought, I argue that many sociological analyses of Israeli education overlook a key feature that is integral to both education and politics; that both remain unpredictable to a fault. Within the sociological methodology of the critical position, understanding citizenship education means understanding how it sustains and services the dominant power structures.

Both positions are concerned with producing a mass of evidence to fit the question at hand, thereby projecting on their analysis a predetermined understanding of what citizenship education means. This has been described as a major difficulty in current educational research: 'The vocabulary of contemporary educational research – of policy and practice also – makes it difficult, if not impossible, to think differently about these matters. It is then a severe curtailment of the possibilities of research and of the potential of

education' (Standish, 2001: 514). The methodological implications of rejecting both positions will be discussed at length in the next chapter, which presents my methodology. However, in order to complete the philosophical background for this study, this section will establish an account of the relation between educational practice and politics by referring to Arendt's distinction between the two. By entering the discussion with a clear understanding of how politics and education bear on each other as human activities, in this section I will attempt to break through standardised language in considering citizenship education in Israel.

Methodologically, I understand this commitment to experience as inherently tied to a phenomenological understanding of research that sees education as 'something that we "undergo"' (Friesen *et al.*, 2012: 1). In the case of citizenship education, the understanding that underpins, and to some extent dictates, classroom experience is that it is in some respect an educational manifestation of political life. What kind of experience does the citizenship classroom provide? By posing this question, the phenomenological research position sets itself apart from the two research positions described above, seeking to understand citizenship education as an experience, rather than as a precursor to political engagement (as in the institutional approach), or as a manifestation of existing power relations (as in the critical approach). But in order to interpret, it is necessary first to establish its setting and premise: in what way is education *about* political life (the curricular premise of citizenship education) also *a part of* political life?

Arendt's political and philosophical works are widely recognised as cornerstones of 20th century thought, and while she expressly recognised that education was not one of her central concerns, her engagement with education deals directly with the relation between politics and education from a unique and challenging perspective. Thinking with Arendt about political education implies a conjunction of two paths in Arendt's own work and works by her readers; on one path, the relation between politics and education necessitates a close reading of her thoughts on education and its political role – this will be the subject of the remainder of this section. Her work on the conditions of political experience, as well as on the role of education in politics, offers a perspective on how political education and more specifically citizenship education could be studied, and highlights several key themes in understanding education as a political experience. A second, perhaps less trodden path, involves drawing on Arendt's methodological position to point the way to a phenomenological approach to studying political education. The next chapter will locate Arendt's project in the phenomenological tradition, as a basis for this study's methodology. First, however, Arendt's thinking will be positioned in contrast to the two

previous research positions, as a way of overcoming their respective difficulties and to understand citizenship education as a political experience.

Typically for Arendt, her first engagement with education was highly controversial. In her essay ‘Reflections on Little Rock’ (1959), she analyses the events following the U.S. federal government’s forceful intervention in the desegregation of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. Arendt presents a challenging distinction between political power and governmental force, which questioned the way in which some liberals demanded federal action against segregation. More pertinent to this thesis, ‘Reflections on Little Rock’ offers an initial glimpse into Arendt’s conception of education and its role in political life. Arendt’s analysis of segregation and its causes remain controversial, attracting writers who wish to expose Arendt’s ignorance, or even latent racism (for example, Burroughs, 2015). Whether or not these critics are right, the ultimate paragraph in Arendt’s essay ends with a commonsensical proposition:

> Because the many different factors involved in public education can quickly be set to work at cross purposes, government intervention, even at its best, will always be rather controversial. Hence it seems highly questionable whether it was wise to begin enforcement of civil rights in a domain where no basic human and no basic political right is at stake, and where other rights – social and private – whose protection is no less vital, can so easily be hurt. (Arendt, 1959: 56).

From an educational perspective, this sentence seems to contradict much of the theoretical background of the first chapter, as well as to seriously curtail the political aspirations inherent in citizenship education in the Israeli context. In her essay, Arendt systematically undermines the notion that the education of children should be considered as an instrument in solving political problems. The idea of using schools as instruments of desegregation means ‘to burden children, black and white, with the working out of a problem which adults for generations have confessed themselves unable to solve’ (Ibid: 50). Furthermore, by entering forcefully into education, the federal government intrudes into the protected realm of childhood:

> Children are first of all part of family and home, and this means that they are, or should be, brought up in that atmosphere of idiosyncratic exclusiveness which alone makes a home a home, strong and secure enough to shield its young against the demands of the social and the responsibilities of the political realm. (Ibid: 54)

What makes the private realm a safe place is precisely the fact that from a ‘first person perspective’ it does not extend to all members of society, it is a place restricted to friends and family. Education is therefore defined as a juncture where private families

share a social space, where children are protected, rather than asked to carry the weight and possible price of political decisions. The distinction between the private and public realms was the locus of Arendt's most important book, *The Human Condition* (1998 [1958]). In it, Arendt offers a clear analysis of political action as a unique human activity distinct from the two other spheres of conduct – labour, which is aimed at sustaining life and is characterised by the activity of consumption and reproduction (1998: 93), and work, which is characterised by the activity of manufacturing and reification of lasting objects that constitute and preserve the shared human world:

> [M]en [sic], their ever changing nature notwithstanding, can retrieve their sameness, that is, their identity, by being related to the same chair and the same table. In other words, against the subjectivity of men [sic] stands the objectivity of the man-made world rather than the sublime indifference of an untouched nature (Ibid: 139)

Following her categorisation of the spheres of human activity, education is not easily compatible with any single activity specified by Arendt. Educational practice, especially with younger children, often complies with the natural processes of production and consumption that enable life, thereby resembling labour. Education also represents a form of work, if we consider the task of educators as one in which something is manufactured through reification. However, these do not fully explain the meaning of education as an activity through which social practices are maintained and the 'commonality of the world' is passed along to new generations. The political aspect of education represents a fine and elusive line of argument in Arendt's thought, and following it through will establish the position from which this thesis will proceed to explore political education in Israel.

Although education shares certain features with the realms of labour and work, Arendt categorically opposes understanding education as a political action. The reason for this has to do with the way Arendt conceptualises the preliminary requisites for political action. Political action requires a 'space of appearance' in front of others, as well as a fundamental commitment to the equal political standing of all citizens. It is therefore action alone, rather than labour or work, that allows individuals to reveal their uniqueness in the eyes of others who are equal and free (Arendt, 1998: 186). This act of revealing one's uniqueness through speech and action in public inherently means exposure and sometimes even self-endangerment. This understanding of political action as exposure is the reason why Arendt demands complete separation between the political sphere and education. The understanding that education should be shielded from political practice, rather than utilised for its purposes, does not necessarily mean that education does not have political significance. Arendt in fact imbues education with a primary role in fostering care

for the common world which the students are bound to inherit. The separation between education and politics that Arendt demands will be the focus of Chapter 4, which will argue for a liminal conceptualisation of citizenship education. This means that the political subject matter of the citizenship lesson is conceived as a process of learning about the concepts and institutions that make the adult political world. Learning about 'the way things are' inherently leads to some interpretation of why this is the case, as well as to alternative modes of thinking about politics.

Arendt conceives education as a form of introduction to the world, rather than an attempt to actively change it: 'the function of the school is to teach the children what the world is like and not to instruct them in the art of living' (Arendt, 1993: 195). While this proposition has been interpreted as conservative in its emphasis on divorcing education from actual political action, a different emphasis could also read this as a call for an educational cosmopolitanism that recognises humanity in its best, but also in its worst: 'the idea of humanity itself must include human limits as well as human possibilities and needs to be read in relation to the very violence and antagonism that inheres in specifically human interaction' (Todd, 2009: 9). In teaching children 'what the world is like', education is charged with fostering care for the common world, in the form of shared responsibility (Arendt, 1993: 170-193). Education must therefore be distinguished from the public realm where adults are considered fully responsible for their actions and utterances, in order to prepare newcomers for their responsibility in a sheltered environment, where no exposure is demanded. The way responsibility is understood in relation to citizenship education will be explored in Chapter 5, which will focus on the responsibility of the teacher at the conjunction of education and politics.

Directly relating Arendt's claims to current practices of citizenship education, Topolski (2008) criticises citizenship education for reducing public practices into a single conceptualisation of citizenship. Education should not be charged with solving political crises, because that would mean 'instrumentalising' the process of political learning that children undergo in schools. Instead, education must provide 'access to the past, to tradition, to our roots, to stories, and examples that, we can only hope, will deter the cynicism of the political and inspire us to judge and act when we are welcomed, as adults and equals, into the *polis* (Topolski, 2008: 280). The necessary education in 'what the world is like' means not only acknowledging our own place in it, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, that the world is dynamic and ever-changing. Our involvement in the shared world changes it constantly through our actions and speech, and as students mature into adulthood they must come to assume their responsibility as co-creators of the common world. Smith (2001) points to the ways in which this introduction to the world

develops the imagination and responsibility required to participate in public deliberation: ‘In order to think critically and, hence, make good judgements by imagining the perspectives necessary to woo others, young people require explicit, intentional exposure to diverging perspectives so that they *learn how* to think representatively’ (Smith, 2001: 80).

Compared to the institutional approach to researching political education, which emphasises performance within structures, Arendt’s interpretation of the relation between education and politics is inherently radical insofar as, in it, education is not perceived in a stable ‘causal’ relationship with the political world. When researchers of political socialisation aim to determine the efficiency of a certain programme of citizenship education by measuring ‘political participation’, they assume an instrumentalist notion of education, in order to determine a cause-effect relation between educational practice and certain (political, social, cognitive) behaviours. The desired outcome, ‘participation’, then dictates the contents and methods used, and the indeterminate and imaginative features of learning ‘what the world is like’ are lost. The critical approach to research into citizenship education does not tie the expected behaviours of future citizens to educational programmes. Rather, it aims to prove that no educational programme could overcome the determining factors of race, gender, religion or ethnicity within the oppressive political reality. But in doing so, it abandons the dialogic commitment inherent to Freire’s liberationist pedagogy, in which classroom interaction serves as an anti-hegemonic pathway to overcome the structures of political meaning dictated by existing power relations.

The theoretical background supplied by the first two chapters of this thesis was intended to point to a third possibility of researching political education. By committing to the indeterminate, non-instrumental features of the citizenship lesson, this thesis proposes a way of understanding citizenship education as a political experience. The next chapter will present the methodology used for collecting and analysing these classroom experiences, by relying on Arendt’s (as well as others’) phenomenological commitment.

# Chapter 4: Methodology

The previous chapter demonstrated how ideological notions influence different conceptualisations of citizenship education. However, following Arendt's phenomenological research position, we may be able to abandon the attempt to categorise 'political education' in order to explain it either conceptually or functionally. This chapter will develop a methodology designed to enable understanding of the relation between education and politics without an appeal to ideological and normative philosophical assumptions. This methodology relies on descriptions of lived experience of Israeli citizenship teachers in order to uncover features of political education in Israel, which ideological and normative accounts of citizenship education could not.

The first section of the chapter will therefore establish an epistemic and ontological commitment for engaging with political experience in educational research. The previous chapters have argued that most research positions on citizenship education in Israel presuppose a notion of 'good citizenship' and thereby lead to preconceived notions of evidence. By pointing to the insufficiency of research into citizenship education and its focus on political knowledge/literacy, the first section will present some of the criticisms that have been directed toward conceptualisations of education as a 'citizen-producing' activity and their methodological consequences.

The second section will then locate the methodological orientation of the thesis in a tradition dedicated to the study of experience and the understanding of its meaning – namely, the phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition. It will begin by describing the ontological foundations of this tradition and then engage with its implications for social research and, more specifically, for educational research.

The second and third parts of the chapter will synthesise the two previous sections by developing a plan of research designed to describe and interpret experiences of political education. By relating the phenomenological tradition in educational research to the study of political experience, this thesis will be opening a new direction of research into citizenship education.

## 4.1 Epistemic position and ontological commitment

This section presents the operating principles that guide the thesis in its apprehension of the relationship between education and political life in Israel. It will relate the epistemic positions of studies on citizenship education to their political commitment. I argue here

that these studies construct knowledge within particular ideological and normative conceptions of political life.

Two epistemic positions are thereby presented in the next sections, followed by an ontological analysis of the phenomenological tradition. The first position surveyed is arguably the dominant epistemic position of studies on citizenship education as a curricular subject. Rooted in a commitment to liberal assumptions about political life, these studies demonstrate an individualist-cognitivist epistemic position. Such a position limits the scope of the evidence for studies concerned with political life, as the tools of measurement are confined to individuals' learning outcomes, interpreted through a rationalist view of political action. In contrast, a different political outlook might lead to social constructivism as the epistemic basis for studying citizenship education. Social constructivism supplies the researcher with tools to study the social world, which are not explanatory, but rather aim to describe and understand social life as webs of meaning. This intersubjective position will provide an important backdrop to the methodological design of this research. Finally, to state the ontological position of this thesis, I will turn to the phenomenological tradition to suggest a more radical commitment to the subject matter, arguing that political life is a unique and sophisticated phenomenon that demands from the researcher attention of a different sort. Accordingly, the final part of this section will propose a political phenomenology of education.

### *4.1.1 Epistemic assumptions of citizenship education research*

Educational research concerning citizenship education as a curriculum subject, while covering a wide and varied list of themes (Osler and Starkey, 2006), is ultimately concerned with 'political literacy' and 'political knowledge' as educational aims – the outcome of both understood as a mastering of key political concepts, skills and dispositions beneficial for collective life in a democracy (Pring, 2001). These dispositions promote a commitment to the collective, as well as to the values of liberal democracy. Galston's (2001) minimal account of citizenship (discussed in the first chapter) places political knowledge at the centre of citizenship education. The 'average citizen' should be equipped with the 'appropriate' level of necessary knowledge – inferior to that of a 'policy expert', and yet 'a level of basic knowledge below which the ability to make a full range of reasoned civic judgments is impaired' (Galston, 2001: 219).

Educational researchers often assume this notion of political knowledge in designing their research, thereby directing their research questions to measuring and determining the best way to induce such knowledge through educational intervention. This results in studies that aim to determine whether citizenship education within school and classroom

settings is effective in fostering the knowledge, skills, and values needed to function effectively within the students' cultural communities, nation states, regions, and the global community (Banks, 2007).

One major example of this trend is the massive International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, 2002), which surveyed 90,000 14-year-olds in 28 countries to determine their civic knowledge and skills, concepts of citizenship, attitudes toward governmental and civic institutions, and political actions. The conclusion of this research was that 'schools can be effective in preparing students for engagement in civil society by teaching civic content and skills, ensuring an open classroom climate for the discussion of issues, emphasizing the importance of voting and elections, and supporting effective participation opportunities such as school councils' (Torney-Purta, 2002: 210). Hahn (1999) proposes that while different political cultures create vastly different conceptualisations of political life, education that includes political content positively influences the students' interest in politics. The study concludes that: 'In those contexts in which civic education includes political content and opportunities for students to explore and express opinions on public policy issues, and to engage in decision-making, young people (ages 15-19) appear to be more interested in the political arena than in those contexts in which they do not have such experiences' (Hahn, 1999: 231). The importance of different contexts to the accumulation of political knowledge is also a conclusion of the IEA multi-national study:

> An examination of predictors of civic knowledge and of the likelihood of voting indicates that schools have a role to play: first, by teaching civic knowledge; second, by teaching the importance of elections and voting; third, by providing a community of respect in which young people can discuss their views; and fourth, by giving students opportunities to participate in organizations such as school parliaments (Torney-Purta, 2002: 139).

Both studies conclude that the context, as well as the educational settings and the political culture in the class and school, are dominant factors in successful citizenship education. However, in both cases, such factors are only important to the researcher insofar as they inform an explanation of the process of learning, and its outcomes as the acquisition of 'political knowledge'. Both studies also share the assumption that one of the central aims of citizenship education, if not in fact its sole purpose, is to promote participation in institutions of the state. The preceding theoretical chapters have explored the genealogies of educational and political concepts of citizenship education to argue that the educational emphasis on promotion of participation is a result of the liberal political basis of citizenship education.

However, from a methodological perspective, these studies share a similar point of departure for their educational research agenda in the assumption that measurable and transferable political knowledge, in the form of a citizenship curriculum, predicts participation in democracy. The studies are therefore framed by an epistemic position that underpins their accounts of its transmission and reception, as well as the ways in which they seek to measure it. These assumptions are inherently related to the construction of political concepts such as 'citizenship' which denote the relation between individual and state institutions. The explanatory aspirations of these studies mark their epistemic origin in a positivistic/empiricist position that emphasises a methodological commitment to research, that the previous chapter has named 'the institutional approach'. This position produces knowledge that is valued for its predictive efficiency – 'research is the making of knowledge claims in the form of generalizations from which predictions can be made and events and phenomena controlled' (Scott and Usher, 1996: 13).

Furthermore, the institutional approach's conceptualisation of the process of learning to be a citizen is derived from a liberal understanding of the demands of citizenship. The liberal approach, as shown in previous chapters, is individualistic and rooted in an instrumentalist approach to education in a democracy. Biesta specifies three components that this approach emphasises:

> (1) to teach about democracy and democratic processes (the knowledge component), (2) to facilitate the acquisition of democratic skills such as deliberation, collective decision making, and dealing with difference (the skills component), and (3) to support the acquisition of a positive attitude toward democracy (the disposition or values component) (Biesta, 2006: 120).

The important point here is that all three learning outcomes are presented as individual mental acts which, when measured, are considered as explanations of the relation between education and political life. This position that 'regards the outer (acts, behaviour) as being in need of explanation and the inner (mental acts) as explanatory' (Marton and Booth, 1997: 12) is shared by both individual constructivism (the explaining of acts through the actor's interaction with her environment) and cognitivism (the explaining of acts by reference to an internalised representation of concepts). In the examples above, both epistemic positions (individual-constructivist and cognitivist) are applicable – both assume that by identifying the mental acts of individuals, as outlined by the curricular demands of citizenship education, the relationship between education and political life could be explained.

### *4.1.2 Constructivism and political life*

However, as the evidence and conclusions from the studies quoted above clearly show, political identity is not formed through curricular instruction alone – social-political contexts also play a substantial role in the creation of future citizens. Becoming a citizen often involves experiences that do not produce explicit knowledge, but rather induce an implicit understanding of daily life within the school and the political community. Consider the experience of a student participating in the annual ceremonies of her school, such as religious or national holidays, or in a national drawing competition about a historical figure or event as a part of art class. At least some part of these educational experiences would presumably contribute to the student developing her own political identity in the way they assume a relationship to the nation's history or to some particular cultural heritage, or (at least) to her immediate community. The issue here is that the explicit knowledge that could be measured in relation to the students' experience, such as the historical facts that have led to these ceremonies, is situated within a larger, implicit context.

Because social context plays such a big role in the formation of political identity, researching the relation between education and political life should therefore look to study more than political knowledge that is explicit. In order to explore this relationship, the researcher's 'toolbox' consists of not only methods focused on measuring individuals' performance of mental tasks, but also the significance of these tasks in the individual's environment as they manifest value within a tradition. The liberal position, in which citizenship is conceptualised as an individual commitment to universal rationality, is left wanting in respect of substantial realms of meaning that are irrational in the sense that they are the 'background' of individual actions.

In order to achieve meaningful knowledge of the relation between political life and education, the epistemic position of my argument will have to move from a cognitivist position that relies on an individualist methodology, to a research position that strives to locate meaning through interaction within social practices. Adopting such an epistemic position represents a fundamental choice between two aims of inquiry – 'explanation' and 'understanding'. This distinction was first presented as a part of the hermeneutic philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey (1989 [1883]), who sought to outline a plan for human sciences that purports to understand the human world, rather than explain it by appealing to the methodological language of the natural sciences.

Overcoming the flattening effect of the methodological language of the natural sciences on the human sciences was a major part of the project of American pragmatism. In an essay devoted to exploring this aspect of the pragmatist philosophical tradition,

Richard Rorty (1982) points to the different aims represented by the two modes of inquiry. These positions denote fundamentally different relationships between the researcher and the object of research. An 'explanation' is a claim strictly about the object of research, as it denotes an unveiling of a systemic predictability in its actions, while 'understanding' is generated when the object is 'read' as a text, and its intersubjective nature is made apparent through interpretation of its relations with other objects, as well as with the researcher herself.

In the context of the current project, this means that the first research programme, which addresses the relationship between education and political life by researching citizenship education from a positivist and individualistic perspective, would seek to *explain* how young people become politically active by distilling from their education a statistical predictability. The second research programme, which seeks to *understand* political education, rather than explain it, would stem from an epistemic position that locates meaning in the political and social relations that form education as an experience, encompassing the 'social life' of concepts.

Educationally, the centrality of the social environment to experience is the core of another American pragmatist's argument for a revision of the educational process, and therefore of the way in which we ought to measure its success. John Dewey argues for a transition from a 'traditional' theory of knowledge, which sees education as the transmission of measurable and accountable forms of learning derived 'from custom and established routines' (Dewey, 2004a), to education that places the experience of interaction with one's environment as the foundational concept in human development. To explain how experience informs development, Dewey describes the way in which an infant comes to know the surrounding world:

> the infant reacts to stimuli by activities of handling, reaching, etc., in order to see what results follow … what he learns are not isolated qualities but the behaviour which may be expected from a thing, and the changes in things and persons which an activity may be expected to produce. In other words, what he learns are connections. (Dewey, 2004a: 200)

From this experiential account of learning, an important methodological point could be derived and considered for educational research – the process of learning what things are is not disconnected from the process of learning what I am in connection to each of those things; in fact, the two processes are one and the same. The study of educational practice is therefore never fully coherent when considered only as a static transaction of given knowledge between student and teacher, or curriculum. Nor, from a socio-political point of view, can it be tested in relation to established institutions without reflecting on

the meaning of these institutions for the learner, the relationship that is already in place between the student and the society about which she is being taught.

Therefore, in contrast to the 'institutional approach', this explicit knowledge of politics is only intelligible within the larger, or social context. One way of understanding this social context is based on the sociality of learning environments, or the way in which learning relies on social situations. This sense of the social context of learning is the main focus of the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), who rejected the cognitivist notion (for example, Piaget's theory of cognitive development) that learning can be separated from social interactions. For Vygotsky, all meaning is constructed through interaction, and therefore learning does rely on cognitive development, but is rather the condition through development is made possible: "…learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (1978, p. 90).

Rejecting the initialized, cognitivist account of learning also bears on the ways in which the social world may be studied. Marton and Booth (1997) describe 'social-constructivism' as a research orientation that emphasises 'what surrounds the individual, focusing on relations between individuals, groups, communities, situations, practices, language, culture and society' (Marton and Booth, 1997: 11). Studies that employ such an epistemic point of departure explain action, 'not in terms of an individual's or several individuals' mental states, but in terms of what goes on between individuals, and between individuals and situations' (Ibid).

Taking a social-constructivist epistemic position, studies of the social meaning of citizenship education are concerned with examining relationships created between the learners and the political concepts they encounter through curricular requirements, in order to explain the socio-political setting of the school and the community in which it is located. This position represents a move from the empirical studies on citizenship education, which were presented above. The studies presented regard the efficiency of curricular instruction as the primary object of research. Even when the political context is mentioned, it is important to the researcher only insofar as it is presumed to help or hinder the implementation of political learning as a set, uniform process across communities, marked by transferable learning outcomes. On the other hand, a social-constructivist position pays attention to the significance of assuming the role of citizen. The process of becoming a citizen is not explained by reference to individual mental acts but rather to social interactions that comprise a complex web of meaning. Returning to the examples given above about a student participating in her school's religious and national holidays, a social-constructivist position would seek to determine how the historical, cultural traditions

represented in the school schedule bear on the educational intervention necessary for the creation of citizens.

Pinson's (2012) study explores the social context of citizenship education in Israel, and presents a good example of social constructivism: the curriculum is considered only as the 'surface' of the practice of citizenship education. In order to understand 'the social life' of the curriculum, it is necessary to inquire into its social and political context. The Secular-Jewish school does not induce the same understanding of 'good citizenship' as the Religious-Jewish school, and the experience of studying citizenship in both Jewish schools differs vastly from the experience in the Arab-Israeli schools. By analysing interviews with educators in these schools, Pinson highlights the way in which curricular concepts in citizenship education – such as 'democracy', 'human rights' and 'equality' – are interpreted within different socio-political contexts. The constructivist position in researching political education problematises the epistemic assumptions of positivist empirical research by locating meaning at the intersection of language and social context. This understanding of social meaning is the focal point of study for the symbolic-interactionist tradition of social research. But the aims of the critical approach to researching citizenship add a normative claim to this research agenda – to unveil the oppressive features of practice. In the context of Pinson's work, this means demonstrating the limitations of the citizenship curriculum in achieving ideological aims – especially in the political context of the Arab-Israeli school, thus constructing the political meaning of education practice out of historical, social and ideological frameworks. This echoes Arendt's criticism of sociological thought as a limiting way of thinking, entrapped in historical and ideological descriptions of being, rather than relying on the unique potential for newness inherent in each human interaction, and specifically in classrooms. The following section will further explore the difference between a social-constructivist epistemology and phenomenological ontology, in order to provide the basis for this study's 'political phenomenology' of citizenship education.

### *4.1.3 From epistemic to ontological questions*

In contrast to the social-constructivist position, the final section of the previous chapter argued for a non-ideological research position into citizenship education in Israel, and suggested phenomenology as its methodological foundation. Van Manen points to the tendency of social research to create explanatory knowledge about the social phenomenon studied. Constructivist research questions into the social meaning of educational processes are modelled in response to social and political problems, as perceived by the researcher. The study of citizenship education is always therefore a result of the way political life

*should* be, leading to a certain preconceived notion of evidence. Van Manen points to the disagreement between the constructivist and a phenomenological understanding of evidence, in his consideration of research as construction of knowledge:

> The question of the meaning of practice raises primarily an issue of intelligibility. Practice, in its social constructionist version, is not only meant to mean something, practice is supposed to make it possible to explain, interpret or understand the nature of the phenomena within its scope. But from a phenomenological perspective, constructionist approaches to practice too easily involve reifying what escapes reification, thematizing what cannot be thematized, and bringing practice within the reach of objectivistic technological thought. (Van Manen, 2007: 18)

The hermeneutic-phenomenological position in educational research does not seek pedagogical knowledge that is 'generalizable, true for one and all', in which 'actions and interventions, like exercises, are seen as repeatable; while subjects and samples, like soldiers, are replaceable. In contrast, phenomenology is, in a broad sense, a philosophy or *theory of the unique*; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable' (Van Manen, 1990: 6-7). Overcoming the technical, oversimplified, 'scientistic' account of knowledge about the social world is the central theme of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1989 [1960]). Gadamer turns to the aesthetic domain, to art, in order to break through the methodological structures prescribed by the natural scientific revolution of enlightenment as the superior method for understanding humanity:

> … the experience of truth that transcends the domain of scientific method wherever that experience is to be found, and to inquire into its legitimacy. Hence the human sciences are connected to modes of experience that lie outside science: with the experiences of philosophy, of art, and of history itself. These are all modes of experience in which a truth is communicated that cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science. (Gadamer, 1989: xxii)

It is important to note a key difference between the two interpretive strategies presented here as social constructivism and phenomenology. Social constructivists aim to explore social phenomena by studying them from an 'insider's perspective'. This understanding of social research is directly criticised by Gadamer, who claims that true understanding of social phenomena does not involve 'the empathy of one individual for another nor subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other' (Ibid: 305). This means that a researcher must readily accept that interpretation may involve layers of meaning not included in the author's original intention:

> Because in the writing of the text so much is simply taken for granted, skilled hermeneutic inquiry has the potential to uncover meanings and intentions that are, in this sense, hidden in the text. Interpreters may end up with an explicit awareness of meaning and especially assumptions that the authors themselves would have been unable to articulate. (Crotty, 1998: 42)

In an educational setting, the significance of ontological responsiveness to the task of the researcher is twofold: first, it requires a familiarity with the historical, linguistic and cultural traditions in play in the specific time and place of the phenomenon studied (similar to the responsibility of the ethnographer to her respondents' worlds). However, beyond the epistemic qualifications of knowledge *about*, the researcher must also grapple with ontological questions that surface when the questions turn to the nature of the phenomenon, the *what*. This ontological position requires a consolidation of meanings that transcend those intended and proposed by the actor, but also could not rely on the epistemic assumptions of the researcher.

Phenomenological research is therefore an act of interpretation and understanding phenomena. Rather than the 'scientistic' meaning in which human action is perceived as an 'object of study' by which useful knowledge (as predictability) could be created and used to manipulate the future, the researcher must come to the phenomenon with a methodological openness to the indeterminacy that makes the human world. The basic stance of phenomenological research is described by Van Manen:

> The methodology of phenomenology is such that it posits an approach towards research that aims at being presuppositionless; in other words, this is a methodology that tries to ward off any tendency toward constructing a predetermined set of fixed procedures, techniques and concepts that would rule-govern the research project. (Van Manen, 1997: 35)

### *4.1.4 Phenomenology as ontology*

This section will engage with the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology and how it has developed as a way of studying social ontology, by exploring the way in which Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Gadamer describe the relation between knowledge, subjectivity and the ontological assumptions of my research. For Heidegger, the scientific tendency to search for predictability in social research springs from the scientist's aspiration to reveal the object of inquiry separately and independently from the inquiring subject. Heidegger presents a critical analysis of Husserl's notion of bracketing, by pointing to the way in which it is reliant on a scientific objectivity that itself represents a presupposition concerning knowledge. The assumption of scientific objectivity, developed within different professional contexts, allows the formation of 'disciplines of inquiry' in which the rules of

argumentation and the objectiveness of a certain predestined 'truth of the matter' are set, thereby initiating science as the quest for predictability:

> The real thus becomes surveyable and capable of being followed in its sequences. The real becomes secured in its objectness. From this there result spheres or areas of objects that scientific observation can entrap after its fashion. Entrapping representation, which secures everything in that objectness which is thus capable of being followed out, is the fundamental characteristic of the representing through which modern science corresponds to the real. But then the all decisive work [*arbeit]* that such representing performs in every science is that refining of the real which first in any way at all expressly works the real out into an objectness through which everything real is recast in advance into a diversity of objects for the entrapping securing. (Heidegger, 1977: 168)

This passage puts forth the basic Heideggerian critique of scientific explanation – a form of controlling reality by limiting our view of it to a representation of its predictability, a representation which is then recast as a generalisable form on reality.

If we accept the dominant status of this tendency in modern science, overcoming it would require inquiry to become a process of reflection on the object *as well as* its representations, as these appear to the researcher. In line with Heidegger's critique of the hidden assumptions of modern science, phenomenological research requires a preliminary disavowal of naturalising scientific schemas in order to clear the way for the wholeness of experience. Merleau-Ponty explains: 'I cannot conceive myself as a part of the world, as the simple object of biology, psychology, and sociology, nor shut myself up within the universe of science. All of what I know of the world, even through science, I know on the basis of an experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless' (2007: 56). The implication of this position for research is that inquiry must keep in check the scientistic tendency to narrow and flatten the data gathered, in order for it to comply with the 'symbols of science'. Phenomenology's reply to this is to delve into the essences of things by investigating their uniqueness as it appears through experience.

The task of understanding phenomena in their uniqueness implies a radical shift in the basic ontological position of the researcher. Instead of relating to what is studied by separating it from the consciousness of the researcher, it undermines the epistemic foundation through which research 'objectifies' the subject of study. The core of Heidegger's ontological radicalism is an argument against the use of 'subject/object distinction in all domains' (Dreyfus, 1991: 49). This means that the most basic epistemic assumptions about how we know and use things, our 'mastery' of things around us, is placed in question: 'Knowing is an exemplary subject/object relation, so that if one makes knowing basic, one is from the start locked into an intentionalistic picture of human beings as subjects with

beliefs (justified and unjustified) about objects and states of affairs' (Ibid). In other words, when we see ourselves as distinct and superior in our knowledge of things, we exercise a form of control over them, by placing them in categories and subjecting them to an 'objective' perception of their existence. This is the core concern of Heidegger's *Being and Time:*

> Heidegger shows that this subject/object epistemology presupposes a background of everyday practices into which we are socialized but that we do not represent in our minds. Since he calls this more fundamental way of making sense of things our understanding of being, he claims that he is doing *ontology*, that is, asking about the nature of this understanding of being that we do not *know* – that is not a representation in the mind corresponding to the world – but we simply are. (Dreyfus, 1991: 3)

This commitment to the everydayness of knowledge represents the movement from seeing knowledge as an epistemic question to seeing knowledge as an ontological question. The relation of the person to the social world is not known explicitly (and therefore could not be expressed epistemologically), but only in its impression on our own being (an ontological question). Dreyfus gives an example of this unknowing relation, by presenting the way we know how to stand in a proper distance to others: 'Distance-standing practices are simply something that we do. Of course, learning to do it changes our brain, but there is no evidence and no argument that rules or practices of beliefs are involved. Moreover, this is not an isolated practice; how close one stands goes with an understanding of bodies, intimacy, sociality, and finally reflects an understanding of what is to be human' (Ibid: 19).

This non-propositional background of understanding is the basis for phenomenological research, which is initiated by a desire to engage with the world more fully by uncovering a universal understanding of the world 'as we experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it' (van Manen, 1990: 9). Van Manen continues to describe how the phenomenological tradition in educational research owes to Heidegger a sense of thoughtfulness, an orientation towards the subject of research: 'this phenomenological interest of doing research materializes in our everyday practical concerns as parents, teachers, teacher-educators, psychologists, child care specialists, or school administrators' (Ibid: 12).

Phenomenology puts into question the relationship between practice and theory. No longer simply perceived neatly as a separation between aims and method, research is always initiated by questions arising from experiences of real, life-world practice: 'in the human sciences … one does not pursue research for the sake of research. It is presumed that one comes to the human sciences with prior interest of, for example, a teacher, a nurse, or a psychologist' (Ibid: 2). In educational research, this also highlights the contingency of

the questions that prompt research. Once these questions are no longer perceived by an appeal to a 'universal' scientific 'entrapping representation', educational research starts not with our epistemic reliance on how the world works, but rather on the volatile, unprecedented realm of human experience. Van Manen offers the notion of 'grasping the world practically' as an alternative to epistemic knowledge as the aim of research:

> The pathic dimensions of practice are pathic precisely because they reside or resonate in the body, in our relations with others, in the things of our world, and in our very actions. These are the corporeal, relational, temporal, situational, and actional kinds of knowledge that cannot necessarily be translated back or captured in conceptualizations and theoretical representations. In other words, there are modes of knowing that inhere so immediately in our lived practices – in our body, in our relations, and in the things around us – that they seem invisible (van Manen, 2007: 22)

This commitment to experience rather than formal knowledge bears special significance when the aim of the researcher is to understand political life and its constituents. The political phenomenology of Hannah Arendt, although she herself very rarely discusses her methodological approach, is especially important in its ontology of political life. Arendt stresses that politics is constituted through human plurality, because it depends on the fact that every person holds a unique potential to act and to speak beyond what has been laid down by others before her. In order to produce and preserve a meaningful understanding of the human world under this condition of human plurality, Arendt emphasises the potential for newness, or natality, it holds. She does this by considering our contingent situatedness as the promise of unprecedented action: 'In Arendt, the contingency of events, acts, and states of affairs does not only refer to the fact that they did not need to happen at all, or not in the way in which they happened. The contingency of events, acts, and states of affairs, also, and more importantly means that they may be new or introduce something new in the world' (Vasterling, 2011: 506).

Political phenomenology, inasmuch as it is concerned with the political, will focus on the innate potential for unprecedented action and speech. Inasmuch as it is a phenomenology, it must bracket the given subject/object understanding of political life, looking to understand rather than explain phenomena and to find out how phenomena are enacted as unique 'ways of being'. In order to create meaning in the realm of human affairs and understand the unprecedented nature of human action, the researcher must 'reconcile' with factual reality through mechanisms of narrativity, or story-telling, which are used to 'teach acceptance of things as they are' (Ibid: 509). I will return to this emphasis on narrativity as a way of conveying factual reality in the next section when the interpretive strategy is discussed in relation to the main subject matter of this thesis.

## 4.2 Research design

### *4.2.1 Bracketing in political education*

'Bracketing' is a concept proposed by Husserl as a way for phenomenological human sciences to respond to the natural sciences' claims of absolute objectivity, by renouncing the researcher's previous assumptions about the topic of research. In social research bracketing has been seen as a way 'to mitigate the potential deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project' (Tufford and Newman, 2012: 81). The potential of bracketing has been revisited and 'put in its place' by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty who argued that it is impossible to completely disavow, or reduce, former preconceptions: 'The most important lesson which the reduction teaches us is the impossibility of a complete reduction … that radical reflection amounts to a consciousness of its own dependence on an unreflective life which is its initial situation, unchanging, given once and for all' (Merleau-Ponty, 2007: xiv). In other words, it is impossible for the researcher to completely disavow her prior acquaintance with the phenomenon. At the same time, phenomenological observation requires of the researcher to be conscious of prejudices with which she is approaching the phenomenon and to engage with it by way of her own experiences. This is perhaps the meeting point, in phenomenology, of philosophy and social life; it is through our experience of the world that philosophy is awakened, and philosophical engagement is a necessary component in locating meaning in social life. In bracketing, the task of the researcher is therefore not to artificially renounce who she is, but to engage philosophically with her experience. This point of philosophical reflectiveness is central to Merleau-Ponty: 'True philosophy consists in relearning to look at the world' (Ibid: xxiii). This process of reflection is then explained: 'It lies in the perpetual beginning of reflection, at the point where an individual life begins to reflect on itself. Reflection is truly reflection only if it is not carried outside itself, only if it knows itself as reflection-on-an-unreflective-experience, and consequently as a change in structure of our existence' (Ibid: 74).

In terms of educational research, such a self-reflective research position would rule out tools that aim to measure curricular success, whether on an individual, class or school level. A hermeneutic position, however, dictates a suspicion of language, and particularly of the entrapping mechanism of 'naturalised' professional language which is philosophically transparent to itself. This makes dealing with policy papers (and some academic reports) a more difficult, yet perhaps more rewarding, task, as the researcher is called on to actively disavow herself from the presented aims and objectives, methods and

findings of policy papers in order to transcend them or to include them in a descriptive narrative.

Another entry point into researching lived experience is describing the way it appears in order to gain access to pre-reflective experience without the objectifying, explanatory gaze of the natural scientist. For the study of political education in Israel, the descriptive method will rely on observing how educational practice corresponds with political symbols, by identifying their presence in temporal and spatial representations. In a different study, I provide an example of how this could be by exploring the ways in which an Israeli high school commemorates Israeli Memorial Day, a day immediately followed in the Israeli calendar by a festive celebration of Israeli Independence Day. In describing these ceremonial days in the educational calendar, the meanings it produces will surface through the language used and the symbols employed (Gideon, in press). This, in line with classic phenomenological studies, such as the ones of the Utrecht school (van Manen, 2007), potentially leads to a description of the 'felt meaning' of these school days.

In their descriptive ambition, the methods deployed here will bear some resemblance to political ethnography, a method that utilises the sociological and anthropological tools of ethnographic research, to explore sites of political experience. While much of the work in this atypical field of political research is focused on documenting institutions that are seen as operating strictly in the political field, such as political parties and movements, Baiocchi and Connor point to other possible sites of research, such as: 'Sporting events, ritual, religious groups for women, and even life in a factory and its housing all provide sites away from the state and traditional social movements/civil society to show how deeply the politics of a nation imbues its subjects with certain discourses and practices' (2008: 148). Schools could easily be added to this list, and carefully documenting the school's relation to political discourses will prove helpful not only in understanding politics, but also, perhaps even more so, in understanding the pedagogical significance of politics. However, it is important to note that this kind of political ethnography is essentially reliant on an explanatory mode of social research, which this thesis rejects: 'Studying other kinds of events, institutions, or actors altogether, that while invisible from non-ethnographic vantage points, are of consequence to politics in some way (e.g., apathy, or nonparticipation in social movements) … we call this the lived experience of the political' (Ibid: 140). The practice of political ethnography is helpful insofar as it locates the political dimension in everyday life, and its methods are therefore valuable. At the same time, by bracketing, or making apparent the limitations inherent to the ethnographers' impulse to explain and problem-solve or predict political 'behaviour', I will take an independent path to understanding political education.

### *4.2.2 Sources of information*

The 'lived-experience' which serves as data for this thesis has been gathered using four methods of collection. Within the tradition of phenomenological research, information about the phenomenon may be collected from a wide variety of sources.

#### *4.2.2.1 Personal experience*

For the purposes of this research it is important to note that I am both a graduate of the Israeli education system and have worked as an educator in it. The experiences of being a pupil in the system, and of working as a history and citizenship teacher have shaped my view of it and have played a crucial part in the formation of my research interests. In recalling and attempting to bracket these experiences, I cannot make a claim of absolute objectivity, as in the natural sciences; rather they reveal the always-already situated nature of knowledge and beliefs. The educational questions that prompted this research are best served when they are traced back to their origins as the unreflective wonderings arising from the everyday practices of a citizenship teacher in the general Israeli education system. Furthermore, my own personal experience will enable a careful consideration of educational practices in Israeli public settings, such as the above consideration of Israeli memorial day/independence day. These notions of practice will also inform discussions of artistic representations of education, in film and literature, which might provide further insight, or at least a perspective on the language of education. For example, Chapter 5 will open with a discussion of a short story by Ursula Le Guin, in order to investigate the ontology of responsibility in citizenship education.

Van Manen calls the personal experience of the researcher 'the ego-logical starting point of phenomenological research' (1990: 54). It is through the experience of the research that the phenomenon becomes tangible and presents itself. Van Manen emphasises that in describing the personal experiences, 'I try to describe my experience as much as possible in experiential terms, focusing on the particular situation or event. I try, as Merleau-Ponty says, to give a direct description of my experience as it is, without offering causal explanations or interpretive generalizations of my experiences' (Ibid). While these fragments of memory are not meant to increase understanding or explain situations, their un-reflective nature provides suitable material for phenomenological examination of the themes that they evoke: 'To be aware of the structure of one's own experience of a phenomenon may provide the researcher with clues for orienting oneself to the phenomenon and thus to all the other stages of phenomenological research' (van Manen, 1990: 57).

*4.2.2.2 Interviews*

The themes and structures derived from personal experience directed the dialogical encounters with respondents. Once initial, pre-reflective questions surfaced, the research identified educational practitioners who are involved with, or have reflected upon, the political significance of education. Hycner (1985) notes that in phenomenological research, the process of locating the participants should be dictated by the phenomena studied. This method of participant selection is often referred to as 'purposive sampling' (Tongco, 2007), a method of selecting individuals who by virtue of their occupation, social status, or geographic location could inform the subject studied. Interviews were therefore conducted with educational practitioners who are involved in supporting or promoting the development of citizenship among young people. This included teachers of citizenship as a school curriculum subject, but also teacher-educators and Education Ministry officials. It should also be noted that, at least to some extent, this criterion for selection did not narrow the pool of potential respondents – as informal conversations with educationalists (as well as several qualitative studies) have highlighted the fact that in most schools some sort of overarching civic vision is included as a part of the school's ethos.

Collecting lived experience, for the purpose of this research into the relation between political life and education in Israel, meant different things in different interview situations. The basic aim of the interviews was to collect impressions and recollections of Israeli educators – moments in their career as educators, or as students, which held some meaning for them and helped them convey some aspect of the political significance of education. The importance of these impressions in gaining an understanding of social life is that they provide descriptions of 'experience that we live through before we take a reflective view of it' (van Manen, 2014: 42).

This is an important interpretive note: when reading the descriptions provided by the respondents, what matters is not their normative opinions about citizenship education, but rather their pre-ideological descriptions of experiences of classrooms. These will be treated in my analysis as a form of what Husserl calls 'imaginative variations' (2013 [1950]), through which different perspectives on the object of inquiry may be revealed and used in order to 'seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions … [d]escribing the essential structures of a phenomenon' (Moustakas, 1994: 97).

The interviews were recorded to ensure the convenience and flow of the story-teller and to allow a personal atmosphere. Van Manen emphasises the importance of staying as

close as possible to the personal experience of the respondent: ‘As we ask what an experience is like, it may be helpful to be concrete. Ask the person to think of a specific instance, situation, person or event. Then explore the whole experience to the fullest. Naturally, it is impossible with ready-made questions’ (van Manen, 2014: 67). Instead, the aim of the interview is for the researcher, in the interview itself, to ‘co-create the findings with the participant through an engaged conversational process’ (Vandermause and Fleming, 2011: 370).

In such encounters, the notion of the political dimension of education could prompt one educator, for example, to talk about the awakening of her own political awareness, or a time when a classroom situation led to a special moment of discourse. Unique importance must be given to the free flow of the conversation and to an atmosphere of trust, which enables an honest and direct retelling of these experiences. Vandermause and Fleming (2011) suggest four main characteristics of a hermeneutic interview that ensure its flow and encourage the development of a meaningful narrative:

1) Setting the reflexive and open tone of the interview: the interview starts with an open-ended question that is intended to act as an invitation for the participants to tell their story freely. The open and reflexive tone is maintained throughout the interview.

2) Using incomplete sentences: in order to refrain from leading the participant in their story, or directing them to an intended theme, the interviewer uses linguistic gestures that often do not even compose full sentences in order to free the conversation from their own expectation.

3) Looking for assent: throughout the interview, the researcher confirms his or her own understanding of the story by seeking the affirmation of the participant. This is to ensure that the story presents itself to the reader as a ‘skilled elicitation rather than an acquisition of responses to leading questions’ (Ibid: 373).

4) Returning the participant to the narrative: the researcher is committed to keeping the participant to the original narrative, listening carefully to ensure that the full narrative is unfolded, through this commitment, allowing the participant to expose some parts of the story that were not previously available.

*4.2.2.3 Policy papers and curriculum analysis*

The experiential themes that arose from the interviews were also analysed in light of the curriculum and the way in which it is described in policy papers. The language of policy papers is often vague, especially in the highly contentious terrain of citizenship education. This has drawn philosophers to criticise policy papers and demand conceptual clarity when describing the methods and aims of education. While this sort of analytic philosophy of

education is not the intention of this thesis, I will consider how policy papers (and indeed some analytic philosophers of education) assume the relation between education and politics. This is because the theoretical 'background' to these concepts' usage can be fruitfully contrasted with the experiential themes proposed in the chapters that follow.

Furthermore, critical analysis of the curriculum may lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the educational experience when it points to controversial issues that the language of policy or the curriculum may be concealing. One important example of how political reality shapes curricular language can be seen in the study of Israeli history, and particularly the 1948 war. The Israeli education system has, by and large, never presented an alternative narrative of the 'War of Independence' which includes or even mentions the Palestinian 'Nakba' (the forced removal of Palestinians from their homes and lands by Jewish armed forces). Curricular analysis points to the way in which this completely 'other' recounting of the violence goes unmentioned, while the dominant Zionist 'War of Independence' is promoted. Peled-Elhanan notes that this tendency permeates the entire curriculum: 'Israeli school books of history, geography, civics, literature and even science and grammar, promulgate in one way or another the Zionist grand narrative …' (2008: 6).

These sorts of descriptions of the political meaning of the national Israeli curriculum are crucial for an account of the relation between political life and education in Israel. However, their relevance is not in committing to a certain political agenda, but in shedding light on the controversial meaning of the curriculum as a political issue in Israel. When policy papers and critical analysis of the curriculum are compared to the experiences of teachers, the genealogy of political concepts may present itself in contexts and in specific meanings that are not intended. For example, Chapter 5 engages with controversial issues arising in the classroom by comparing the notions of controversial issues in policy papers concerning citizenship education. These descriptions are then discussed in light of how citizenship teachers describe controversial issues in the classroom. Furthermore, by identifying the institutional and critical positions on political education in policy and curriculum analyses, certain theoretical conceptualisations of political education may be isolated and examined as the 'background' that invokes the practical, everyday experience.

### 4.3 Analysis/extrapolation of interviews

Hycner warns against the misuse of the term 'analysis' to describe the researchers' treatment of the data collected through interviews, since it 'usually means a breaking into parts and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon' (1985: 300). Instead, Hycner recommends the term explication, rather than analysis, for the process of

producing meaning from the interviews. While a phenomenological position requires a methodological openness to the phenomenon studied, several steps in the process of bringing the data to the reader should be considered:

- transcription;
- breaking down of meaning units;
- consolidation of themes;
- listening to the interview for a sense of the whole.

*Transcription*

The interviews with Israeli educational practitioners were recorded with an audio recording device (in the December 2013 trials, my own mobile phone proved sufficient when I used an audio recording app). One apparent ethical issue in the process is the translation of the transcription, from which quotes and concepts were extracted. In places where the translation might be considered tricky, or where there is a double meaning in Hebrew which might hint toward a thematic structure, I have either included this in the analysis itself, referred to it in a footnote, or considered it in my own research diary. To increase the validity and robustness of the translation, I consulted a friend, who is bilingual and proficient in academic writing, to go through my translation in order to point out cases in which I might have misrepresented the intention of the participant or strayed from the best translation available.

*Breaking down of meaning units*

The transcription of the interview was then 'broken up' into sentences and phrases. Hycner describes these units as: 'words, phrases, non-verbal or para-linguistic communications which express a unique and coherent meaning (irrespective of the research question) clearly differentiated from that which precedes and follows' (1985: 282). At the first stage, all meaning units were extrapolated, regardless of their relevance to the subject of political education. Once the transcription of the interview had been broken down into its 'meaning units', the research question was related to the meaning units to 'delineate unit of meaning relevant to the research question' (Ibid).

*Consolidation of themes*

Once the meaning units relevant to the research question had been identified, different stages of the interview were clustered together as relating to similar notions and perceptions of political education. These emerged in correspondence with the theoretical background discussed in the first two chapters of the thesis, which allowed meanings to be created and consolidated into themes. Chapters 6 to 8 will engage with the theoretical background, and consolidate the themes that emerge from the interviews, outlining key features of the phenomenon of citizenship education in Israel.

Van Manen describes this process as follows: 'In order to come to grips with the structure of meaning of the text, it is helpful to think of the phenomenon described in the text as approachable in terms of meaning units, structures of meaning, or themes. Reflecting on lived experience then becomes reflectively analyzing the structural or thematic aspects of that experience' (1990: 78). Chapters 6, 7 and 8 explore such structural and thematic aspects of citizenship education. Chapter 6 analyses the way in which citizenship education is structured as a political experience, by utilising the concept of liminality. Chapter 7 explores different manifestations of responsibility in citizenship education. Building on these two chapters, Chapter 8 develops a hermeneutic-phenomenological notion of political learning. Generally, I seek to locate these points, shedding light on experiences in educational practice which previous empirical research has failed to elucidate, as these themes are woven into philosophical discussions presented in earlier sections of the thesis, in order to open new and possibly innovative fields of inquiry.

*Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole*

The preceding stages describe the process of extrapolating meaning out of the interviews in a rather technical way. This seems odd when we consider that the impetus for phenomenological social research is precisely to steer away from the overly technical, scientistic language of positivist social research. It is therefore important for the researcher to remain responsive to the contextual significance of the interview, the atmosphere and general mood of the interview, or the characteristics of the location of the interview. Relevant current affairs of the specific day on which the interview was taking place may shed light on the respondents' choice of words or their emphasis on certain aspects of political life rather than others. Again, depending on context and importance, I have presented this detail as part of the main text, as a footnote.

## Chapter 5: The interview process

Previous chapters have all dealt with different iterations of research into citizenship education and political education. Liberal, republican, and critical research positions have been described in detail. Each of these positions is based on a normative understanding of the methods and aims of citizenship education, and each could potentially serve as a basis for formulating interview questions about citizenship education and political life. However, previous chapters (primarily Chapter 4) have also demonstrated how the ideological structure of each research position traps possible meaning within a respective causal or correlational understanding of citizenship education and political life. For example, working within a liberal normative understanding of citizenship education, may lead the researcher to leave out questions that evoke critical or republican themes, or to interpret a participant's response within the theoretical conceptualisations of a particular research position.

In contrast to the limitations of the three major ideological positions on citizenship education, the final section of the second chapter and the methodology chapter suggested phenomenology as a commitment to the ontological aspects of learning. Arendt's political phenomenology is especially pertinent as a methodological entry point, because it emphasises the new, the unpredictable and the unique as a way of understanding political life without resorting to ideology. As a research position into education, phenomenology deals with experiential aspects of knowing and learning. Phenomenological research collects and analyses the way in which social phenomena are experienced not only from the point of view of the individual researcher, but also (and perhaps primarily) from the point of view of others: 'The initial phase of the process in phenomenological research begins with acknowledging that there is a need to understand a phenomenon from the point of view of the lived experience in order to be able to discover the meaning of it' (Englander, 2012: 16).

In light of the importance of interviews as a way of accessing points of view about the phenomenon studied, this chapter will describe the actual interview process that took place for this study. It will contextualise the participants' words and progress the thesis's commitment to lived experience. The first part of the chapter will briefly describe how participants were chosen for this study, as well as their professional and personal background, in order to make some observations about the validity and generalisability of this study. The second section will describe how the interviews were conducted – the main questions and themes that characterised them, as well as the mood and general research

disposition that guided me in my interaction with the participants. The third section will present a 'close reading' of part of an interview. Elucidating the way in which particular words and phrases were interpreted and 'distilled' in order to reveal meaning will disclose the interpretive strategy employed throughout the remainder of the thesis.

## 5.1 The participants in this study

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the method used for finding participants relied on the concept of 'snowballing' as a way of sampling, i.e. reaching out to new participants through existing contacts. However, since the number of participants is limited to six, it would be productive to explain how I came to interview each participant. This section will briefly present the participants interviewed in the study by describing my contact with them, their professional and political profiles, and general impressions from each interview. The next section will provide more information on how I approached the interviewees, and the questions I asked, as well as some thoughts on their significance *as* conversations. The purpose here is not to analyse or even to present the findings, but rather to introduce each participant, and provide some general remarks on the setting of the interviews themselves. The main objective here is to provide background for the use of quotes from the interviews in the next chapters, by contextualising them in personal and political terms.

In order to identify the participants interviewed for this study, and in light of the ethical commitment to anonymity, I have assigned each a pseudonym in reference to the original line-up of the most important rock band of the 20th century, The Velvet Underground and Nico: Lou Reed (lead vocals and guitar); John Cale (electric bass and electric viola); Sterling Morrison (lead guitar); Maureen Tucker (drums); and Nico (lead vocals). The sixth participant will be referred to as Andy, after the band's mentor and producer, Andy Warhol.

### *Maureen and Lou*

The first two interviews included in this study were held in December 2013, in an early stage of my research. In contrast to the other participants in the study, the two participants interviewed in 2013 are not citizenship teachers but are involved with citizenship education on the policy level and as teacher-educators. The first contact I made was with Maureen, who was a pedagogic instructor when I studied for a teaching certificate in citizenship education. She is a senior teacher-educator, who leads a team of content developers and accompanies student citizenship teachers in their practical integration into

the job, often accompanying them to their training placements and facilitating weekly reflective sessions during their training. In the process of consolidating this research, I approached her to be a part of a preliminary study intended to locate specific questions and themes concerning theory and practice in Israeli citizenship education. During our conversation, I asked her to suggest further participants who could contribute to the study, and she put me in contact with Lou, a former high-level official in the Ministry of Education. After four years as the subject head for citizenship in the Israeli Ministry of Education, he was abruptly fired in 2012, adding to the heated public debate (explored earlier in the thesis) about the content and aims of citizenship education. When a right-wing education minister refused him tenure as a subject head in the Ministry of Education, political controversy ensued and led to accusations of politicisation from both sides of the political map (Nesher, 2012). While I was not personally acquainted with him, I was aware of his story.

These two interviews, held with policy-level practitioners in the wake of a great deal of public attention, were naturally focused on the politically charged criticisms they were facing individually. Both were personally identified by their critics with the left, and both were unapologetic about endorsing and promoting a liberal-democratic basis for citizenship education, referring to their own experiences as 'outsiders' in the education system. Both participants emphasised the conflictual nature of educational policy-making and the practical significance of a liberal conception of citizenship. Following the policy-level orientation of the conversations in the two preliminary interviews, I decided to focus on classroom experiences as understood by citizenship teachers. The four other interviews were held during the 2014-2015 school year, with practicing citizenship teachers in Israeli high schools.

***Nico***

The third teacher I interviewed was recommended for this study by a friend. It is therefore no coincidence that in many ways her background and motivation for teaching resemble my experiences as a teacher. While she was working on a PhD in History, she began teaching in a well-regarded high school in central Tel Aviv. Her teaching duties were tailored to a unique new programme called 'International Relations in a Globalized Era', in which she teaches what she called 'critical thinking about the Israeli reality, and Israeli identities, which allows me to address many many [sic] subjects that make them [the students] think differently about where they live' (Nico, page 1, lines 30-33). It should be noted that, unlike the other teachers interviewed, the lessons Nico teaches are not defined as citizenship lessons, but as lessons about 'Israeli society'. However, from her

descriptions of the classroom assignments and discussions, it seemed like the issues covered by these lessons were similar, if not identical, to the citizenship curriculum. The classroom discussions centred around similar themes of politics and identity, and the students' engagement with the material seemed to me to bear a close resemblance to the dynamics of citizenship lessons. The special educational programme in which Nico teaches was designed to expand and deepen the scope of the material taught, especially in humanities subjects such as history, citizenship, and literature, and focused on developing critical thinking and engaging with the political context of the subjects taught in the regular high-school curriculum. She described the school's headmaster as very supportive of engaging political issues, a claim that is supported by this specific headmaster's media appearances and public profile – he is a leading educational figure who is not afraid to express leftist views and publicly challenge common educational notions. Unlike other interviews, this was the only one held in a café rather than in professional settings such as an office in the school, the teachers' lounge, or the library. This led to a more casual, even friendly, conversation and, at about an hour and a half, was also significantly longer than the other interviews. This is probably why Nico shared her political views so openly, and professed to being 'very left-wing' (Nico, page 14, line 35). Her self-identification as a committed left-wing radical was a major part of the conversation, and she often referred to it as the reason for her choice to become a teacher.

***John***

As opposed to the familiarity that characterised the way Nico was 'recruited' and interviewed for this study, John was a high-school citizenship teacher who answered a message I had posted to an online citizenship teacher forum, and agreed to be interviewed at his office in his school. A veteran teacher, John has been working at a boarding school for gifted youth for the past 25 years, and in many ways he identifies with the unique environment in which he operates. The personal professional narrative that John used to describe his practice is linked to this unique educational environment, where the students spend many hours at school, in academic or social activities. The link between the ethos of the unique school and John's self-perception showed itself during the interview in several ways, for example in his own description of his professional development as an educator – he joined the school when it was founded, and worked there in its first years as a social instructor, and when he gained his own professional teaching credentials, he became the leading citizenship teacher. His understanding of the role of the citizenship teacher was, to a great extent, also a part of this ethos of uniqueness – he often referred to famous graduates of the school (especially to one famous Palestinian-Israeli author) and to

ongoing communications he has with graduates of the school. The plurality of cultural, social, and political identities that make up the student body at this school leads to interesting observations about the performance of identity in citizenship lessons, which will be explored in this thesis as a part of the chapter about controversy in the classroom. John's political opinions, to the extent that he shared them, were centre-left, although he made a point of stating that he had become disenchanted with the political potential of the Israeli left, and that over the years his views had become more moderate.

***Sterling***

Sterling was another teacher who answered the online post calling for participants in my study. He is an experienced teacher, entering his fifth year as a history and citizenship teacher in the school. I interviewed him in the small library room at the Kibbutz where he lives. He lives in the same Kibbutz where he was born, and teaches in the same high school he attended. He described his involvement in educational practice as something that accompanied him throughout his life, and really 'took form' during his mandatory army service as an artillery commander, when his duties included mentoring novice soldiers (Sterling, page 1, lines 9-14). At university, which he calls his 'personal renaissance', he studied history and politics for a Bachelor's and Master's degree. He described his decision to teach in the same high school he attended as 'a little snobbish', and he describes his Kibbutznik heritage as a bit of a 'bubble' (page 6, line 18), where he does not have to face the expressions of racism and political de-legitimation that face citizenship teachers in more difficult school districts.

***Andy***

Andy was the last teacher I interviewed, and was recommended for the study by an acquaintance who urged me to interview his 'legendary' citizenship teacher from high school. It should be noted that his school is located about ten minutes' walk from my home in a northern suburb of Tel Aviv. We met in the open-space office shared by all teachers in the relatively new high school in which Andy has been employed for the past eight years (since the school was founded). The most experienced teacher interviewed for this study, Andy has been teaching citizenship and social studies for twenty-one years. His perception of being a citizenship teacher is entwined with a commitment for 'modelling good citizenship, he [the citizenship teacher] should express the virtues of society' (Andy, page 2, lines 19-22). Although he referred several times to his family's political affiliation with the Israeli Labor party, Andy did not tie his own political views to his professional identity. Of the participants interviewed, he is the one who seemed to put the most emphasis on the

citizenship teacher's responsibility to be neutral and to promote 'civic virtue' that is not situated within a specific political agenda. This may be a personal character trait, or the result of his seniority and many years of experience, which 'eroded' his ideological 'zeal'. His statements about the professional identity and responsibility of citizenship teachers will be considered in the chapter engaging with political responsibility in citizenship education.

Several things could be said in general about all the participants of this study, in terms of the sociological and educational environments in which they work. All participants work in the mainstream, secular-Jewish educational system. All participants work in schools that are predominantly upper-middle class (with the slight exception of John, whose boarding school accommodates students from a wider variety of backgrounds, though most students are secular-Jewish). All the participants, like myself, could generally be described as politically left-leaning, and as part of the cultural mainstream (secular Jews of European descent). Since the aim of this thesis is not necessarily to focus on a certain sociological sub-group of teachers or schools, such a homogenous group could be seen as hindering the validity of this study. Furthermore, it could be said that the process of recruiting participants, which was based on the concept of 'snowballing', has led to a problem in the generalisability of the findings. However, it should be noted that for the purposes of this thesis as a phenomenological study (as laid out in the methodology chapter), the sociological 'identities' of the participants are not a source of 'validity', but rather a source of possible meanings. In other words, it was never my intention to recruit a representative sample of citizenship teachers from any specific social group in Israel, let alone a representative sample of *all* Israeli citizenship teachers. The purpose of the interviews was to collect descriptions of citizenship teachers' experiences from classrooms. Englander addresses the issue of sample size in phenomenological research, in his article about interviews:

> … it is essential to understand the common misconception that a large sample size is a prerequisite for being able to generalize the results to the population at large … if a researcher has a qualitative purpose and a qualitative research question, he or she seeks knowledge of the content of the experience, often in depth, to seek the meaning of a phenomenon, not 'how many' people who have experienced such phenomena. Hence, one can clearly see that the different purposes of the research (being quantitative or qualitative phenomenological) also determine the differences in procedures for evaluating the generality of the results in relation to how many participants are needed for a study. (Englander, 2012: 20-21)

The fact that the teachers all share some sociological features may be of interest for research that aims at achieving sociological knowledge about a certain aspect of teaching

citizenship. However, this study seeks to understand the teacher's experience in the most general terms, by reducing to a minimum the given sociological context. In his article, Englander further demonstrates how phenomenological interviews are centred around the most basic understanding of the experience they evoke, as a 'search for the essential structure of the phenomenon … [through] the use of imaginative variations and the phenomenological human scientific reduction in order to achieve nomothetic, descriptive results, that is, the invariant meaning-structure for the phenomenon' (Ibid). In other words, phenomenological interviewing is a process of gathering specific experiences from different people and then eliciting from them an understanding of their basic structure. The next section will describe the interviews themselves, by presenting the process through which I designed the interview questions, and how these questions appeared in the interviews.

### 5.2 Conducting the interviews

The methodology chapter presented the ontological and epistemic foundations of this thesis, and interviews were listed as one source of meaning for further analysis. The uniqueness of phenomenological interviews was introduced but not developed or described in relation to the actual interviews conducted. This section will demonstrate the meaning of these interviews by describing how they were set as conversations and how their analyses advance the purpose of this thesis. In order to understand the interviews, the process will be separated into three stages, enabling an analysis of the relation between the theoretical themes presented in previous chapters and the actual conversations held with the participants.

The process of setting these conversations will be addressed in relation to the following stages: 1) how the interviews were planned as a way of examining the themes of the thesis, and the questions chosen for this purpose; 2) how these questions were presented to the participants within the context of the conversation; and 3) the way in which these questions elicited different responses from the participants. This section will focus on the first and second stages, through description of my own preparation for the interviews, to show how the themes of this thesis were translated into questions. The actual questions I used in the interviews will then be analysed in the next subsection, in light of the preparation for the interviews, and the context of the different conversations.

Van Manen suggests that phenomenological analysis relies on 'appropriate phenomenological questions … If a question lacks heuristic clarity, point, and power, the analysis will fail for lack of reflective focus … [P]henomenological analysis needs

experiential detail, concreteness, vividness, and lived-throughness, [if these are not present] then the analysis will fail for lack of substance' (2014: 297). Questions therefore need to focus on the lived experiences of the interviewed participants, leading them to talk about actual events that may be then analysed as 'a human phenomenon' (Ibid). Remembering this aspect of phenomenological method is especially important in researching citizenship education as a political experience, because its political subject matter makes it very easy for the conversations to become 'abstract, theoretical, conceptual' (Ibid) by focusing on 'explanations, perceptions, views, or interpretations' (Ibid).

Phenomenology, on the other hand, seeks to explore a phenomenon as a human experience, rather than in order to formulate a social scientific law:

> it does not aim for empirical or descriptive generalizations; it does not test a hypothesis; it does not ask for people's opinions, view, perceptions, or interpretations of an issue or phenomenon; it does not aim at psychological, ethnographic, or other types of explanations; it does not aim for theory development; it does not ask for moral judgment; it does not describe specific (empirical) ethnic, cultural, or social groups of people; it does not anticipate codified categories for analysis. (van Manen, 2014: 298-299)

Phenomenological questions should therefore be structured to elicit a certain experience, and keep the conversation focused as much as possible on specific descriptions of events that may be later explored in order to understand the defining themes and structure of the experience (Ibid: 299). To do so, it is important to formulate the proper phenomenological questions so that they invoke experience rather than theoretical or conceptual consideration on part of the participant. Questions that are phenomenologically promising are focused 'on a single and concrete moment that the experience was lived through or took place' (Ibid). In the context of this study, such questions would open the experience of teaching citizenship as an experience, and should elicit the meaning of this experience as a part of the life-world of the participant.

In preparing for the interviews, I assembled several key questions intended to serve the phenomenological purposes presented above. This following paragraph is a note that I prepared in advance of the interview held with Nico, which was the first interview. It later served me in preparing for all the other interviews. It is copied here verbatim from a digital file that I named 'preparation for interviews':

> *The proper phenomenological question in the case of this thesis would therefore stem from the LED (lived experience descriptions) of educators.*
> 1. *Describe the first time you felt like a citizenship teacher.*
> 2. *Are there political discussions in the teachers' lounge? In staff meetings?*

> *3. Describe the circumstances that brought you to become a teacher? How did your political conviction relate to your decision (this is perhaps a conceptual question in a way, but it might raise specific lived experiences of becoming a teacher)?*
> *4. Can you remember a political discussion in the class? Describe what happened. What did you do? What did you say? What did you think?*
> *As noted in the method section, the interviews will be open-ended, and will aim to engage the respondents' worldview and their own understanding of the subject matter. The questions will therefore deliberately serve as the opening to deep thinking and wide discussion. The interviews are planned for about an hour, with the focus being on a conversational 'back and forth', which is impossible to plan. While the questions relate to the general theoretical themes of the project, the intention is for the respondents to answer by accessing their own experience and belief.*
> (Preparation for interviews, research note)

In writing these words, my assumption was that, like me, all the participants were acutely aware of the political reality in Israel and specifically of the ongoing public controversy concerning citizenship education. A conversation about the relation between citizenship education and political life would have almost inevitably led to a conversation about political concepts – such as democracy and the rights of citizens – and to certain Israeli political positions on the matter (both of which have been surveyed in earlier chapters). The questions were therefore designed to take the teachers back to particular experiences, avoiding theoretical and conceptual musings that could easily become 'pitfalls' for phenomenological analysis. In preparing the questions, I relied on my own experiences as a citizenship teacher, focusing on instances in which I remembered feeling that whatever was happening was unique to a citizenship lesson and would not have transpired anywhere else. In the interviews, I wished to prompt from the interviewees some notion of citizenship education as a unique practice and of the special responsibility of the citizenship teacher in relation to politics.

To understand the practical meaning of these questions within the interviews, it is important to note how these questions were raised during the interviews, and their role in advancing the conversation. The questions I had prepared in advance were not treated as if they were 'scripted', and I suggested them at different instances within the interviews, in response to the context and flow of the interview. This fluid dynamic, which made the interviews more open and 'conversational', should be considered as a significant attribute of phenomenological interviews. This is because phenomenology, as a way of understanding experiences through subjective iterations, requires dialogue between the researcher and the participant. Relying too heavily on 'scripted' material, in which the researcher 'uses' the questions that were prepared before, may lead to a more structured and organised interview transcript for the purposes of later analysis, but it also risks reducing the 'human' potential of 'unscripted', indeterminate conversation. In philosophical terms, this means that the relationship within the interview should not

become one in which a ‘subject’ (the researcher) investigates a certain ‘object’ (the knowledge, opinions, or experience of the respondent). Rather, a key element in the ‘mood’ or dynamic of the interview is that the intersubjective nature of the interview is preserved as a powerful source of meaning:

> Phenomenological, human scientific researchers tend to choose the interview due to their interest in the meaning of a phenomenon as it is lived by other subjects. Collecting descriptions from others is also an attempt at a discovery of a human scientific meaning of a particular phenomenon. Phenomenologists have always argued for the importance of examining not only how a phenomenon appears to an individual subject but how the phenomenon is present to an intersubjective community. (Englander, 2012: 15)

In order for useful phenomenological analysis to take place, it is important not to confuse ‘concrete experiential accounts’ which are pre-reflective, with ‘interpreted experiential accounts’ which may include ‘views, opinions, beliefs, perceptions, interpretations, and explanations of experiences’ (van Manen, 2014: 299). To invoke these pre-reflective accounts in interviews, van Manen proposes evoking modes of human experiences that are ‘existential’ in that they are universal and could be used to describe everyone’s life-world. These existential experiences include: ‘lived relation (rationality), lived body (corporeality), lived space (spatiality), lived time (temporality) and lived things and technology (materiality)’ (Ibid: 302). A good example of the way in which the interviews were directed to collect experiences was the first question I had asked in the interviews. I was aiming to begin the conversation with a personal recollection that would encourage the participant to talk in first-person, experiential detail, so I began by asking questions about how they became a citizenship teacher. This, I hoped, might also lead them to talk about their experiences at their schools and in classrooms. The opening question sometimes varied in wording, but it was always directed to elicit the teacher’s personal development as a citizenship teacher. Below are three examples of the first questions from different interviews:

> *Nico: ‘So let’s start with how you became a teacher, it’s always an interesting story.’*
> *Andy: ‘OK, so I would really like to hear about how you started as a teacher and how you became a citizenship teacher. There is always a story that brings people to citizenship.’*
> *Sterling: ‘OK, hi. I want us to start, if that’s OK, with the background. How did you come to work in education, how you came to teach citizenship, anything like that.’*

It is interesting to note the similarities and differences between the questions that were written in January 2015 immediately before the first interview (with Nico), and the opening questions I had used in the interview with Sterling and Andy that were conducted in April 2015, and were the final interviews. How the questions themselves changed, even though the changes were not necessarily very big, reflects a certain 'loosening' from the scripted nature of the way the questions were worded in the preparation document. The first question I had planned to open with, *'Describe the first time you felt like a citizenship teacher',* seemed a little 'out of context' as an opening question, and I decided to begin the interviews with a more narrative question, aiming to engage the teachers on an emotional, personal level, early in the interviews. There is also a development of the question from interview to interview, the first question in the Nico interview was shorter, and did not specifically ask for the 'story' that brought her to become a teacher. In the two later examples, by asking for the participants' personal story, and adding that '*there is always a story*' and that '*it is always interesting*', I was 'making room' for their personal experience as the centre of the interview, 'making it about them'.

Another difference between the first opening question and the latter two is the separation, or addition, I made. Rather than just asking for the story of how the participant became 'a teacher', I added another question asking for details about how they became 'citizenship teachers'. This was meant to indicate that there is something unique about the role of the citizenship teacher, and to allow the participants to address this uniqueness. It proved a productive way to address the issues at the core of this thesis, as it led to experiential descriptions that focused on what it is that sets citizenship teachers apart, as well as descriptions of the uniqueness of citizenship lessons. The next chapter will analyse this uniqueness of citizenship lessons as a way of understanding the relation between politics and education.

The process of 'becoming a citizenship teacher', which was often brought up in the interviews, is significant because it clearly indicates how personal beliefs interact with the responsibilities of the citizenship teacher. This is the central theme of Chapter 6, which seeks to understand the political responsibility of the citizenship teacher. It should be noted that all teachers interviewed for this thesis expressed clear political commitments, and as noted in the previous section, some even mentioned how these commitments translate into Israeli party politics. Furthermore, such commitments to a certain political position are often described in terms and concepts that make it hard to distinguish them from the way in which the teachers describe political responsibility, even though none of the teachers expressed a desire to convince students that a certain political position is superior to the other. In other words, the teachers interviewed for this study all feel that their

responsibility as citizenship teachers involves, to some degree, their personal political beliefs, and yet they do not perceive their role as teachers as involving political persuasion. The final section will inquire into this apparent paradox, offering an explanation that incorporates the teachers' words with an analysis of the historical background and theoretical-ideological inclinations of citizenship education in Israel.

### 5.3 Interpreting the interviews

The first section of this chapter introduced the participants in this study, the process through which they were recruited and their background as teachers. The second section analysed how the interview questions were formulated and how they were raised during the interviews. This section will present the way in which the participants' responses to my questions were analysed and how the meanings that arose through this analysis will be used in subsequent chapters. The phenomenological commitment to experience will be explored, addressing the difficulty inherent to achieving such pre-reflective meaning in relation to the themes of this thesis, and presenting a possible interpretive strategy in the form of Ference Marton's notion of 'Phenomenography'. The interpretive strategy regarding direct and indirect experiential accounts will be explained as a precursor to the following chapters, which will centre around the themes arising from the interviews.

Phenomenological research, as indicated in Chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, is concerned with understanding the structure of particular human experiences as they present themselves 'pre-reflectively'. The significance of the 'pre-reflective' experience is crucial, as van Manen asserts that 'the best materials for conducting phenomenological analysis are direct descriptions of the experience, rather than accounts *about* the experience … Opinions, perceptions, or beliefs are only helpful to the extent that they lead or give access to the lived experiences that lie behind these opinions, perceptions, or beliefs' (2014: 299-300). However, in my interviews, I found that it was a near impossible task to distinguish between the relevant experiences that the participants described, and their thoughts about these experiences.

This is precisely the starting point of a tradition within phenomenological educational research, which will be useful now in understanding how I read the interviews. By distinguishing between 'first order' and 'second order' perspectives, Marton (1981) offers an interpretive strategy that he labels 'phenomenography', designed to create a way of overcoming the demand for pre-reflective experience made by phenomenology. According to Marton, taking a 'second order perspective' in human research means

orienting ‘ourselves towards people’s ideas about the world (or their experience of it)’ (1981: 178):

> … forms of thought in terms of which people interpret significant aspects of reality … Conceptions and ways of understanding are not seen as individual qualities. Conceptions of reality are considered rather as *categories of description* to be used in facilitating the grasp of concrete cases of human functioning. Since the same categories of description appear in different situations even if individuals move from one category to another on different occasions. (Ibid: 177)

Marton readily admits that Phenomenography should be seen as a supplement to phenomenological or experiential research, which allows for a more sophisticated understanding of how people describe their relations with the world around them (Marton, 1981; 1986; Richardson, 1999).

In order to demonstrate the intricate web of meaning evoked by the interviewees, I will now turn to a rather long quotation from the opening minutes of Andy’s interview. The conversation includes a detailed account of several key experiences that echo Andy’s professional lifeworld, that are no doubt meaningful in understanding citizenship education as a political experience. However, it is also true that in this passage he speaks very little of classroom experience or of citizenship education at all. Following the quotation, I will turn to a certain iteration of phenomenological research to develop an interpretive strategy.

*Q: ‘OK, so I would really like to hear about how you started as a teacher and how you became a citizenship teacher. There is always a story that brings people to citizenship.’*

*A: Yes, good, first of all I* [grew up] *am in a family with a mother who is an educator, grandmother who is an educator. That means a family in which education was a very very central thing in home. And I was, for ten years, a member of Hashomer HaTzair youth movement.*[8] *I was an instructor and later a ‘komonar’,*[9] *I was very socially involved, through the movement as well. It’s somewhat political so I was exposed to politics. I think today of my grandfather who was active in Mapai,*[10] *I know, Labor party. So on the one hand the issue of education and instruction that I saw and knew and loved very much, especially the youth movement. And I was interested, I think from a very young age, in the*

[8] Hashomer Hatzair is a Zionist youth movement founded before the World War I in Eastern Europe on the basis of Socialist Zionism. It played a major role in the Zionist settling effort of Jews in Israel, and is historically and politically identified with Israeli Labor party.
[9] Within the Israeli youth movement, “komonar” is a common term referring to high-school graduates who postpone their military service for a year in order to organize and instruct in local sections of the youth movement.
[10] The Israeli predecessor of the Labor party between the years 1930 and 1968.

*political reality and the political situation. It's very funny because I have an eight year old girl who is very very concerned whether Bibi will manage to form a government,*[11] *and generally with questions about coalition and what it means, and she asked me whether Lieberman*[12] *staying out of the coalition would mean that he is in the left now. And I don't understand where she brings these things from. I mean, it must be something genetic to god knows what. Or that she sees, that she very much lives what citizenship talks about. But I think it's from there.*

*Q: And after you worked in the Shomer Haztair for ten years you got to citizenship, is that the first thing you did as a teacher?*

*A: I studied for a BA in Informal Education at Beit-Berl teacher's college, which is like the non-formal aspects of instruction and group leading that I love very very much, and I also did a teaching certificate to make ends meet. And I thought I was going to go for the informal direction, but they told me, 'Listen, as a career, teaching is a career, not informal education'. And I actually graduated when I was 24 and went straight into teaching. I mean I taught citizenship and social studies, to this day.*

*Q: How long is that?*

*A: Twenty Years.*

*Q: Wow.*

*A: From 1994. Twenty-one maybe, I don't know.*

*Q: From 1994?*

*A: Yes.*

*Q: So you must have seen a few things in…*

*A: Yes, sure, sure. I was even a second year teacher when Rabin was assassinated.*

*Q: And how was that?*

*A: It was a very complicated experience… not as a citizenship teacher, as an educator. As a first time form teacher on his third month, directly after the holidays,*[13] *you know, you don't yet understand your role, that it required gathering… there were no clear instructions on exactly what we should do with the students all day. It was very hard, very complicated, and I worked according to intuition. I said, 'Ok, it is necessary to be there… look, it happened in the middle of the night, we had no time to prepare. Just talk and cry and give it free time', and we survived that event.* (Andy, page 2-1)

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[11] The interview was conducted three weeks after the March 17, 2015 elections, Bibi is Benjamin Netanyahu.

[12] Avigdor Lieberman, leader of the right-wing " Yisrael Beiteinu" (Israel homeland) party.

[13] The Israeli school year begins in September, usually about a month before the three week Jewish holiday season (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succoth)

Andy twice begins his professional story as a citizenship teacher at home, within his own immediate family. His mother and grandmother were both teachers, sparking his admiration of the profession. His grandfather was a political activist, influencing his interest in politics. A reference to his young daughter closely follows his description of his own childhood, ending with a string of questions about the possible source of her (perhaps echoing his own) fascination with politics. His time growing up into a young adult in the youth movement is given much attention, and its seems as if he retains a deep longing for the work he did there, which is expressed in the description of his decision to work as a teacher rather than in informal education.

His recollection of being a young teacher who must help the students to process and to understand the assassination of the Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 is very vivid and emotional, and ends with a deeply existential description of 'being there' with students. In describing his experience, Andy describes a general feeling of 'not knowing'. Intuitively, he decided to '*Just talk and cry and give it free time*'. In Chapter 2, citizenship education in Israel was presented as a programmatic response to challenges of a deeply conflicted society. Through curricular intervention, citizenship sought to foster a common political language and moderate dispositions, through which the disparate sections of Israeli society might 'reduce the flames'. In the account of his experience as a teacher directly after the Rabin assassination, Andy demonstrates the limitations of planned educational interventions. Although an admittedly an extreme example, I believe it points to a crucial characteristic of citizenship education – its instructional, curricular aims are always in danger of being subverted and intruded upon, either by external events, or by the fact that classrooms are a plural space, where many opinions are expressed. The plurality of classrooms might also be related to the deep sense of 'being-with-others' that Andy's story reveals. The assassination represents a manifestation of the adult political world about which the teacher could not 'teach' – the responsibility of the teacher is purely to be with the student and talk. The following chapters will explore the ontological, hermeneutic and ethical significance of this existential description of education.

# Chapter 6: The liminality of citizenship education

The core theme of my thesis is the relation between education and political life. The first two chapters presented several normative positions on citizenship education that, often implicitly rather than explicitly, appropriate education and analyse it as an inseparable part of political life. Within the assumptions of these positions, educators and policy-makers are tasked with equipping future citizens with the best skills and virtues required in order to perform as ‘active citizens’. The literature on citizenship education, both in the Israeli case (Avnon, 2013) and in theoretical analyses (Gutmann, 1987; Callan, 1997), demonstrates that this direct, causal relation can also be reversed, so that political problems are laid at the feet of education. The underlying conclusion from this causal relationship is that education has a substantial role to play in solving political problems and may be blamed when it fails to do so. This conclusion was also shown to be the methodological starting point of comparative empirical studies on citizenship education in Israel (Torney-Purta, 1999; Ichilov, 1999).

The final section of the second chapter presented a possible alternative to this causal explanation of the political significance of education. Hannah Arendt’s analysis of political life, as presented in *The Human Condition*, led her to demand that education be considered on its own terms (as Arendt argues in her essay ‘The Crisis in Education’, 1993 [1961]), rather than as a political instrument. The methodology of this thesis is based on Arendt’s demand, and turns away from causal-explanatory modes of study in order to propose that we understand the phenomenon in itself and not simply as a result of a certain political situation, or as producing some political action, skill or virtue. The task is therefore to understand education as a political experience.

To this end, this chapter will develop the notion of liminality as a central feature of the experience of citizenship education. By definition, the concept of liminality, or ‘thresholdness’, offers a location in-between, where established identities and well-trodden roads cannot offer clear and precise understanding. In education, this will be understood as allowing expressions and thoughts that would not normally be accepted where set political rules and conventions apply. The main argument of this chapter is that citizenship lessons often constitute such liminal spaces. The significance of liminality is central to the thesis and will also be explored in following chapters. Chapter 7 analyses how the teacher’s responsibility is perceived vis-à-vis the liminal nature of the lesson. Chapter 8 examines the extent to which these liminal spaces are addressed directly through curricular planning, by analysing the role of controversial subjects in citizenship education. Liminality, in this

thesis, is therefore considered to be the central concept that emerges out of the study of citizenship education as a political experience.

In light of the centrality of this analytical position on liminality and education, this chapter has two goals: first, to conceptualise liminality as it pertains to social and educational research; second, to apply this concept in order to uncover the ways in which liminality operates in Israeli citizenship classrooms. These two goals mean that this chapter will deviate somewhat from the traditional 'findings chapter' scheme. The chapter will begin with a short introduction to the concept of liminality as it was developed within the anthropological tradition. The second section will return to some of the assumptions of citizenship education, in order to outline the relationship between theoretical accounts and the practical experiences of citizenship lessons.

The third section will consider the particular ways in which citizenship education summons this liminality in Israel, both in curricular planning and in actual classroom practice and explore the political meaning of citizenship lessons in Israel. It will be argued that two levels of political meaning could be derived from the lesson, one pertaining to the practice of teaching and the other to the political aims of citizenship education as curricular demand, and that the lesson is itself *between* these two meanings. The relation between the two will be further described, to demonstrate how political meanings in the classroom are unpredictable and often contingent to the 'life of the classroom'. The two final sections will rely on interviews with Israeli citizenship educators, in order to identify some of the themes that emerge from the liminality of citizenship education – the relation between the lesson plan and the actual life of the classroom, and the relation between the classroom and the political reality that surrounds it.

### 6.1 Exploring liminality as a form of social enquiry

Although this chapter is the first to analyse my findings, it also presents an additional methodological moment in the thesis. In describing the political experience of citizenship education as liminal, the thesis employs a certain understanding of social enquiry which requires some elaboration. This understanding developed in the first half of the 20th century within anthropological studies of social processes. The appeal to the tradition of cultural anthropology marks only a slight detour from the phenomenological tradition, which is at the heart of the thesis. In fact, the two intellectual traditions share many commitments; indeed, both may be viewed as being concerned with meaning in human experience.

The use of the term liminality as a defining feature of social practices was first coined by Arnold Van Gennep (2011 [1909]) to describe the central stage in a process of transition from one social status to another. Van Gennep himself does not go into the etymology of the term or explain why he chose this particular term over any other. However, returning to the Latin source may provide some insight as to its appeal for Van Gennep: in Latin, '*limen'* means 'threshold', indicating a moment of transition where one is neither in the original position, nor in the destined position. Van Gennep, an anthropologist and folklorist, arrived at the crucial significance of liminality to social processes through a comparison of initiation rituals: forms of social regeneration through which practices preserve their meaning. The population of a society belongs to multiple groups, some more important to the individual than others; these groupings are found within the familial (for example, parents and children), occupational (apprentice and master) and political-social statuses that make up that society. Moving from one group to another involves a ritual that signifies leaving behind one's former status and taking on the new status. The structure of these rituals, claims Van Gennep, follows a universal, tripartite structure in which the subject undergoes three stages: separation; transition; and incorporation.

For Van Gennep, these social transitions, or 'rites of passage', are not merely a factor in understanding societies, but comprise the very core of the human condition: 'Transitions from group to group and from one social situation to the next are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's [sic] life comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood [sic], advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization, and death' (1909: 3). Van Gennep then proceeds to categorise different rites of passage in relation to the actions they require of the actors involved and in respect of the expected outcomes. A ritual may be perceived to have direct or indirect results (initiating a certain process), and may be negative (refraining from a certain action), or positive (performing a certain action). The different classifications serve to demonstrate the comprehensive nature of these rites in social situations. Such 'rites of passage' are classified according to their social meaning as 'rites of separation', 'rites of initiation' and 'rites of incorporation'. These three categories represent for van Gennep three stages of change, respectively: 'preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of initiation) and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation)' (Ibid: 11). The next section will inquire into the process of becoming a citizen as a representation of the transition, or rite of passage, into political life.

## 6.2 Citizenship lessons as liminal spaces

Van Gennep's notion of the liminal stage in social transitions was not taken up systemically in academic writing until the work of Victor Turner in the second half of the 20th century. Turner (1969) placed heavy emphasis on the liminal stage, in which things and people have already left behind their previous identity, but have not yet arrived at their new one. Van Gennep and Turner both point to the transitional dimension in social practices in which individuals transform their social belonging or identification. Van Gennep particularly describes the way in which *religious* rites of passage rely on *religion* to provide an explanatory structure through which the ceremony 'makes sense', due to its place within an understanding of how the world works. Rites of passage represent practical manifestations of theories that accompany social life. Citizenship education, within both the liberal and critical theories presented in the opening chapter of this thesis, could be considered as a transformational setting in which young people turn into citizens. Of course, different normative understandings of political life will offer varied descriptions of this process, but for our purposes it is the process itself, its conditions and its structure that are of most interest.

For Turner, liminality serves a crucial and special function in containing the potentially disastrous ramifications of social change, precisely by allowing a moment of seemingly boundless volatility:

> By verbal and nonverbal means of classification we impose upon ourselves innumerable constraints and boundaries to keep chaos at bay, but often at the cost of failing to make discoveries and inventions: that is to say, not all instances of subversion of the normative are deviant or criminous. Yet in order to live, to breathe, and to generate novelty, human beings have had to create – by structural means – spaces and times in the calendar or, in the cultural cycles of their most cherished groups which cannot be captured in the classificatory nets of their quotidian, routinized spheres of action. These liminal areas of time and space – rituals, carnivals, dramas, and latterly films – are open to the play of thought, feelings and will; in them are generated new models, often fantastic, some of which may have sufficient power and plausibility to replace eventually the force-backed political and jural models that control the centers of a society's ongoing life. (Turner, 1969: vii)

According to Turner, it is an 'antistructural' feature of liminal situations that unexpected discoveries are made and normative assumptions transgressed:

> The antistructural liminality provided in the cores of ritual and aesthetic forms represents the reflexivity of the social process, wherein society becomes at once subject and direct object; it represents also its subjunctive mood, where suppositions, desires, hypotheses, possibilities, and so forth, all become legitimate. (Ibid).

The previous chapters have demonstrated how different political theories describe a certain model of the education of a 'good citizen', for example Gutmann's 'deliberative citizen' (1987) and Callan's 'patriotic liberal' (1997). From these normative models of citizenship, desired educational actions are derived, and accordingly they include a structure of experience through which they can be understood. In other words, political theory *explains* classroom conduct and curricular decisions. In these accounts of citizenship education, the process of creating citizens is derived from a political idea concerning the most valuable kind of citizenship, and presented in the form of curricular and pedagogic plans which explain what is needed from schools, and particularly from teachers in classrooms in the creation of citizens.

The task of this thesis is not to *explain* classroom practice, but rather to describe it phenomenologically, that is, to make present its impression on human consciousness in order to understand w*hat it is*. However, to understand education as experience, it nonetheless seems crucial that these theories of citizenship education be considered as sources of some knowledge. This is an important methodological note, because the educators interviewed for this study all expressed a commitment to perceptions of how citizenship education relates to political action. In analysing their descriptions of classroom experience, these perceptions offer explanations of their pedagogical decisions and vocational commitment. At the same time, the explanatory potential of these theoretical accounts is limited. When the relation between education and politics remains in question and is not presupposed, the focus of phenomenological study of political education changes. Rather than measuring the effectiveness of certain curricular or pedagogical choices, citizenship education is studied as the experience of the teachers and students. While pertaining to the political, this experience is neither explained by political situations, nor is it instrumental in creating progress and solving political problems. Both the liberal and the critical theoretical frameworks for political education offer only a limited view of what the lessons mean. This is because subjects in liminal situations are:

> often ritually, symbolically, or metaphorically separated from the collective so that they do not threaten the social order. Although the ritual separates the individual, this separation also represents a certain power – the potential to challenge and disrupt established norms. This potential represents a positive, creative possibility as well as danger; those in a liminal state are never secure: their position is never fixed but instead constantly shifting and vulnerable. (Cook-Sather and Alter, 2011)

The lesson is therefore a place where the political is in some way suspended so that dangerous, controversial, or unpopular ideas may be exchanged and discussed. The interviews analysed later in this chapter are therefore considered as a source of meaning

for exploring the 'life of the classroom'. This ontological commitment includes events that interfere with the curricular plan of the lesson – interruptions, moments of boredom or awkward silence, and heated arguments – as central to understanding citizenship education. Understanding the liminality of citizenship education is therefore a commitment to understanding its 'antistructural' features.

This is the main point of contention between the research position of this thesis and methodologies based on notions of citizenship that rely on a liberal political 'structure'. In much of the academic, curricular, and policy-oriented literature, the citizenship lesson is conceptualised as a process through which the virtues of citizenship are achieved. It makes little difference here whether or not these virtues are specifically oriented towards a 'representational' (Galston, 1999) or 'deliberative' model of citizenship (Gutmann, 1989), since, in both cases, the learning outcome is determined by a normative theoretical framework. These normative frameworks, as reviewed in the opening chapters, have a significant influence on research into the effectiveness of citizenship education. Accordingly, both normative and empirical studies into citizenship education focus on questions that assume the relation between education and politics. Some examples of research questions of this sort might include: Does the curriculum include the 'right' political concepts? Are the methods employed in classrooms fostering the virtues of good citizenship? But these research positions apply political criteria that overlook key experiential aspects of being-in-school: 'the distinctive space of the school is compromised where its particular characteristics and concerns are occluded or extinguished by the encroachments of the bounded spaces of either side – that is, childhood and adulthood' (Conroy, 2004: 50).

In the following sections of this chapter, the relationship between political structure and educational practice will be considered by looking at how the public debate concerning citizenship education has itself influenced teaching and learning. The next section will point to two levels on which citizenship education in Israel could be considered as carrying political meaning: the curricular level, which draws from accounts of democracy and citizenship in political theory, and the classroom level, where these accounts are first interpreted and imbued with meaning through practice, and are seen publicly as instruments of political education. I will analyse these two levels using interviews conducted with practitioners involved in citizenship education through teacher training, policymaking, and curriculum design.

### 6.3 The duality of citizenship education in Israel

In the Israeli case, the confusion and anxiety around teaching citizenship is entrenched in the political discourse – a battleground between two ideological perceptions of how Israel should define itself. When the aims and methods of citizenship education are brought up in Israel, it seems impossible to avoid consideration of the public anxieties regarding the entitlements of Palestinians (Palestinian citizens living in Israel, as well as Palestinian non-citizens living in the occupied territories), and the proper legal, political, and cultural balance between two prominent sources of political identity in Israel: Judaism and Democracy. As mentioned in the second chapter, Israel is paradoxically defined as a Jewish and Democratic state – institutionally leaning toward an ethnic-based notion of citizenship, rather than a civic-republican one (Yiftachel, 1999). The ethnic base of Israeli citizenship is supported by legal frameworks, for example, citizenship and immigration laws clearly expressing preference for Jews,[14] as well as national symbols like the flag and the anthem that rely on Jewish traditional religious symbolism.

The rift between the National-Jewish and the liberal-democratic foundations of citizenship education has been explored in previous chapters. In relation to the theme of this chapter, however, it should be noted that according to partisan accounts, citizenship education should instil a certain perception of the Israeli citizen, and of Israel as a political arrangement. Any curricular changes in citizenship education are therefore understood as bearing on political life and moving the state in a certain direction. This is apparent in the work of the Kremnitzer Committee on citizenship education in Israel (1996), which sought to utilise education in order to overcome ethnic and religious divides through political education. Due to this political volatility, citizenship textbooks and the professional committees dedicated to overseeing their implementation are highly politicised, and are scrutinised by politicians, intellectuals and others.

Furthermore, the citizenship teachers and educational policy-makers interviewed for this study often referred to their work as bearing on the Israeli political landscape, accepting the responsibility inherent in the understanding that the way they teach citizenship will influence Israeli political life (this responsibility will itself be explored in the next chapter). So the significance of citizenship education as an influence *on* and as a result *of* Israeli politics appears in all the interviews, often several times.

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[14] Under the Law of Return (1950), Jews are given a special immigration visa when arriving in Israel, as an automatic transitional stage before citizenship. This means that all Jews are automatically potential citizens of Israel, a situation which Palestinians and others decry as discriminatory and anti-democratic.

This means that citizenship education, as a social process, is understood as political not only by reference to its curriculum, but as a pedagogical practice. In other words, the educators see teaching citizenship as a political activity in itself. The assertion that citizenship lessons are educational manifestations of political life is therefore true on two different levels: the curricular subject, which represents concepts from political theory to explain the political system and cultivate 'good citizens', as well as the political context, in which these concepts are a constant source of debate between two (or more) conflicting views of the state. These two levels of political meaning, as well as the public controversy concerning the curriculum and pedagogy of citizenship education presented in earlier chapters, were often reflected in the responses of interviewees. Each of the six participants interviewed actively mentioned the political rift between a liberal, universalist account of citizenship, and the 'republican', Jewish-nationalist account.

Two participants in the study were not active teachers, but were involved with citizenship education on the academic and policymaking levels, one as a teacher-educator and the other as a former head of the subject committee in the Ministry of Education. In both interviews, the main issue was the political controversy around the subject in recent years, the participants both siding clearly with the liberal 'democratic' side in the debate regarding the subject. For them, the teaching of citizenship should involve acquainting students with different positions regarding political questions, in order to foster certain deliberative and affective democratic dispositions. For example, the teacher-educator, who specialises in preparing citizenship teachers, described the role of citizenship education in this way: 'you educate students to understand the complexity of social or political situations. You educate them to see how important it is to understand the different positions in society, even if they don't agree with them' (Maureen, page 1, lines 25-27). This point is also central to how Lou described the difference between two competing perceptions of citizenship education:

> It is between conservatism and openness, between something unified and communal and something that has diversity and differences and tensions … I don't think that anyone will say that we shouldn't teach about the fact that there are political disputes. The question is what one teaches about it [the political disputes] and how it is taught. Do they [the students] experience disagreement or are [they] just told it exists? Is the initial guiding assumption that there is one correct answer, or that there is no single correct answer? (Lou, page 6, lines 17-22)

The answers given by these two practitioners, both involved in designing the citizenship curriculum and preparing citizenship teachers, reflect the controversial nature of the political role of citizenship education. They both present a theoretical-normative

political claim (about diversity), and derive from it a certain desired classroom behaviour (respecting different opinions expressed in the classroom). The comments above exceed *what* is taught and suggest a certain *how*. The two practitioners tie the theoretical meaning of the subject of citizenship with its pedagogical practice. This link between theory and practice points to the way in which citizenship education opens a space in which normative assumptions are tested within the practical, plural classroom.

Building on the definition of liminality presented in the previous section, it could be argued that citizenship education presents precisely a situation which is in-between; despite its political subject matter, it is not politics. Considering the citizenship lesson as a liminal space means examining how political 'structure' is undermined by the 'life of the classroom' as an 'antistructure' (in Turner's terms). The formal 'structure' of the lesson could also be attributed to the lesson plan, as opposed to the 'antistructural' moments in citizenship education. The subject matter of the lesson is therefore reliant on the way the lesson transpires, thus providing the condition for interpretation and understanding.

Different conceptions of citizenship that create the subject matter should not be understood as the theoretical justifications identifying definite learning aims, but rather as the source of fundamental political questions that summon classroom engagement. The lesson is therefore bound to provoke discord and reflect the public controversy surrounding citizenship in Israel. This is an important argument that will continue to be examined throughout the rest of the thesis, and it is the central concern of the eighth and final chapter, a hermeneutic account of citizenship education. Liminality anticipates the move to a hermeneutic account, in shifting the focus to the indeterminate features of classroom interaction. Furthermore, the concept of being-with-others underlines the final section of Chapter 8, which argues for an 'ethics of encounter' as the relationship between teacher and students. Being-with-others is represented in Turner's thinking about liminality by the concept of 'communitas', explored in the next section.

### 6.4 Communitas and citizenship education

The previous section has pointed to the way political language represents the curricular and pedagogic requirements of citizenship education. These requirements are often translated into 'lesson plans', which take the curricular subjects and apply them through pedagogic-instructional methods into a plan. This section will present another source, the classroom experiences of citizenship teachers. It will reflect on the discrepancies between the 'plan' and the actual occurrences in lessons, as a way of understanding the 'antistructural', or liminal features of citizenship education. For Turner, the 'antistructural' features of liminal

rites represent a deep distinction from the 'ordinary' social setting. What differentiates the participants in these rites from society, creates an alternate way of being together:

> It is as though there are two major 'models' for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men [sic] in terms of 'more' or 'less'. The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of a society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. (Turner, 1969: 360)

The sense of equality shared by the participants in the ritual reveals 'an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no* society' (Ibid, original emphasis). This antistructure will be explored here in studying how students come to be together in the class, as expressions of lessons losing structure, or 'falling apart'.

The differences between the lesson plan and its actual implementation were a major theme in many of the interviews, and should be understood as a major, 'everyday', practical concern of teachers. The limited assurance supplied by the lesson plan is echoed in the way this citizenship teacher describes her preparation before lessons, and the ways in which this planning often 'falls apart' when classroom discussion becomes heated and students talk out of turn:

> It's a space where we learn together and think together about all kinds of issues. Obviously I am the one that has prior knowledge and obviously I prepare the lesson and obviously I have some progression in mind - but often this just falls apart and that is OK … [The teacher needs] to be open, to keep a dialogue open with them and not dictate, not to have tests but to work with a method based on discussion … [Y]ou have to learn to deal with this noise because they also continue talking among themselves. It's not noise that comes from boredom, it's noise that is caused because they don't know how to stop and listen to someone else, they speak their turn and then they continue to talk to their friends. (Nico, page 8, lines 9-15)

The teacher expresses an ambivalent attitude towards classroom discussions becoming emotional, argumentative and even 'chaotic' at times (line 15), admitting that it is extremely frustrating, while acknowledging that these debates are inherently linked to the core of citizenship education. The structure of political meaning in citizenship education, as shown in the quote above, indeed refers to classroom discussion as a form of 'preparation' for the deliberative virtues of liberal citizenship. For example, the educational significance of respecting the other students' points of view is described as a precursor to cultivating respect for and tolerance of other views in the political sphere. But, as described above, social processes are liminal when structure is put in question –

certainty is questioned and possibilities are invoked, some of which may be radical. In the case of the example given above, the structure that emphasises and promotes rational deliberation between citizens as a key pedagogical aim is undermined by the 'chaotic' nature of classroom discussion (which perhaps hints at the agonistic conceptualisation of public life).

One result of the 'falling apart' of classroom discussion is the appearance of alternative political structures as possible explanations for classroom practice. In the Israeli case, for reasons elaborated above, a recurring alternative structure relies on the identity of the student. The politically sensitive nature of the curriculum in the Israeli case means that students find themselves in classroom arguments that implicate their identity, their religious and ethnic origins, and their deeply held beliefs. This often leads to them assuming certain corresponding roles in classroom discussions. When the discussions become passionate, the students commit to a certain point of view, often channelling the way the adult world perceives their identity. The classroom debate becomes less about learning the skills necessary in order to reasonably convince others and the ability to consider and judge their argumentation, and more about positioning oneself within the context. A citizenship teacher from a uniquely diverse boarding school, which draws gifted students from all parts of Israeli society, reflected on the ways in which the lesson often becomes a model of the conflict of identities in Israeli society. The teacher spoke sympathetically about some of his past students, recalling a class where two of the most antagonistic political identities were represented by two students, a girl who is a Palestinian citizen of Israel and a boy who lives in a settlement in the occupied territories, a 'Settler':

> I had 'M' from Bu'eine Nujeidat [a Palestinian village in Israel, whose residents are Israeli citizens], and 'Y' from Tkoa' [a Jewish Settlement in the occupied territories] and it was during the suicide bombings of buses in Jerusalem, I remember lessons that started with screams and tears and him accusing her of being a representative of all the Arabs that want to kill us, and her accusing him that the settlers are the epitome of 'fascist evil' and so on. (Andy, page 10, lines 10-14)

An interesting feature in this example is the 'representative' nature of the positions – the two students are called upon, by the teacher, their peers, or their own sense of belonging, to 'represent' their expected positions. This is a feature of citizenship lessons, in which students' identities are heavily implicated by the subject matter, and according to these identities, they are required to 'play their roles'. In the interviews with Israeli citizenship teachers, the borderline between politics and educational practice was often described as a source of tension manifested in representational, imaginative thinking. In

the case of the first teacher quoted in this section, this summoning of representational thinking is inherent in the lesson and creates a radical possibility for suspension of structure:

> I keep trying to make them think about how everything is changeable, nothing is predetermined, it's in your hands, you can change anything, don't accept anything as if it's natural, there is no such thing as human behaviour. You need to make them understand that so that they understand that it is in their hands, their life. I always tell my students: 'You don't have to adopt your parents' way of life, you can build your own way of life' … It's not only high politics it is also an attempt to make them rebel, is what I always tell them. (Nico, page 9, lines 10-20)

The indeterminacy presented in the teacher's quote is not only a statement of how adults should think about politics, reflected through an educational prism. It also hints at a basic feature of classrooms as protected spaces, in which expressions and interactions are judged differently from how they would be outside the educational situation.

### 6.5 The un/worldliness of the classroom

This section will deal with the difference between political and educational expressions, by exploring the relation between the classroom and the 'world'. This relationship has been previously presented in the thesis through Hannah Arendt's distinction between political action and education, and this section will briefly return to Arendt's analysis in order to progress to the analysis of interviews with Israeli citizenship teachers.

For Arendt, a key condition of political action is a 'space of appearance' within the world. The space of appearance allows a time and place in which people reveal themselves to others, for the sake of expressing their own opinion and changing the world (Arendt, 1998: 208-209). The stakes in political action are defined by the actual risks of putting one's person in the public and demanding it be reckoned with. So while the classroom invites the student to the world, it does not afford the exposure that political action requires. Quite the contrary, education and educators must shield the students from the harms of the world, both in a literal way in the sense of physical safety, as well as metaphorically, throughout a process of gradually acquainting them with and to the world, its beauty and horror.

Young people are granted not only a gradual process of acquaintance with the world but also a certain protection from being exposed to the world – Arendt's assumption being that their political opinions are still 'immature' and therefore should not be judged as if they were adult citizens. Beyond the fact that students are both legally and socially not

citizens, and could therefore not assume full political responsibility, in the pedagogical space of the classroom one is expected to try to express his or her opinion without the consequences that typify the adult world. Conroy articulates this position in his analysis of Arendt's essay *The Crisis in Education*:

> Children as students were not properly equipped to deliberate on or offer much to the political process, since they had had neither the requisite experiences, nor were they in a position to carry the burden of responsibility for any decisions that might be made with respect to conduct of the polity (Conroy, 2003: 45)

Mistakes, wrong answers and second thoughts are not only allowed but are encouraged as a way of deepening one's understanding of the subject matter. One interesting result of this 'shielding' is exemplified in the role of the teacher, who is expected to preserve a particular sort of 'neutrality' in her teaching as reflection of the pedagogical demands of the subject of citizenship. The responsibility of the teacher, as represented in theory, as well as in its practical manifestations within the liminal space of the classroom, will be examined in the next chapter.

The protective characteristic of citizenship education is constructed through the relation of the classroom and the world. The classroom is where, at least in the case of citizenship education in Israel, most of the activities pertaining to education take place. It is recognisable by the corporeal discipline enforced by its structure, the placing of the desks and chairs as well as the location of the teacher. The modes of being in a classroom are a major factor in becoming a student, and discipline plays a central role in the day-to-day life of teachers. The classroom is not a part of the adult, public world; it is a liminal space in the sense that it represents the world and yet does not claim to be a part of it. This is why teachers put time, effort and thought into the decorations and graphic information they put up on the walls of the class. While the class is almost never anything but a walled room, these posters offer glimpses of the world. The iconic globe on the teacher's table constantly reminds us that this place is at once a specific location – in the school, the neighbourhood, the city, the country – and at the same time it aspires to open the world for the student, to allow her to be elsewhere in thought. This is why students in citizenship lessons are, as shown in the quote above, encouraged to consider different, often radical, political possibilities in classroom discussions.

The assumption that the world must make an appearance in the citizenship lesson seems to permeate many of the stories of the teachers interviewed for this study. In fact, some teachers explicitly include in their teaching, methods of bringing the world into the class:

> I have this method I use with all my classes, I stop the lesson on the hour and put on the news. It's a part of the citizenship lesson. The pupils love it, they become 'addicted' to the news. If I'm really anxious to get the material for the exam covered, they say – OK we will study this by ourselves, put the news on. Now why is that? So that we bring the outside into the classroom. (Andy, page 4, lines 16-19).

The role of current affairs is at the same time to inform the students of 'what is going on', and to enable them to look beyond the headlines and into the debates that form the Israeli political landscape. In the classroom these debates become, to some extent, a performance. The teacher may take a side with which she vehemently disagrees, or even switch the opinion she presents mid-lesson.

In the classroom, political opinions, like the posters of geological layers of the earth or of historical figures and timelines, are representations intended to open imaginative play and interaction with the world, and yet to distance the students from real engagement. As a location of real-world political discussions intended to progress the political debate or solve the political situation, the classroom is almost completely without purpose. Arguably, nothing practical would ever come out of a political argument in the classroom, nor could the fluctuating opinions of the young students serve as a revelation of the personality of the student. However heated and passionate the arguments in the classroom, their sole purpose is 'playful' – the students rehearse their own thoughts against each other and against the world as it is represented in the classroom.

Following Arendt's thinking on the political significance of education, I do not assume that the relationship between the world and the classroom should be considered in instrumental terms, or judged as if they were iterations of adult citizens. This means that although the normative questions that arise from different accounts of citizenship are often discussed in class, it would be a mistake to consider this as an indication that students are somehow politically responsible. Students graduate into their adult responsibilities and only then do they assume responsibility for their community and their world. The next chapter will explore responsibility as a prominent concept in citizenship education, considering the effects of the liminality of citizenship education on the conceptualisation of political responsibility.

## Chapter 7: Citizenship Education and political responsibility

Ursula Le Guin's (1975) science fiction parable, *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,* opens with a depiction of a fictional city in a state of uninterrupted tranquillity, a picture of cultural and spiritual flourishing. Only after the utopian condition of the city has been fully acknowledged does Le Guin smash this image by introducing the terrible price paid by the city for the enduring peace and flourishing. A young child, imprisoned in solitude from birth, is the tribute the city must endure to sustain its glorious condition. The short story does not indicate how the imprisonment brings about the city's success. What matters more, it seems, is that the atrocity is no secret to the citizens. In fact, every citizen's education includes a mandatory visit to the catacomb holding the young child. The story ends with a description of the small minority who, having witnessed the price Omelas pays for its happiness, leave the city:

> At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas. (Le Guin, 1975: 259)

In the literary example above, responsibility is fused into a profoundly political educational moment. Le Guin, as good authors of speculative fiction often do, uses the absurd to uncover meanings we may be overlooking in social practices. The narrative conceit in this parable hinges on an educational institution, the educational visit to the child-prisoner, which is a mandatory part of one's education. Considering the educational meaning of this visit points to a core aspect of the way in which political responsibility is passed on to a new generation through education. In the story, the description of this visit remains technical and dry, as if to enhance for the reader the momentary glimpse of deep injustice that students must experience. The people of Omelas may accept or reject their responsibility for the immoral tradition of the city, in the form of a choice between staying and leaving. But the moment in which the students acknowledge the nature of their community is also one in which they learn about their identity, at least in the sense of identity as something that one is born into.

Different ideological approaches to citizenship education emphasise different pedagogical aspects of responsibility. The liberal approach considers the development of individual responsibility to be a key aim of citizenship education, while republican approaches emphasise the fostering of shared identity as the source of responsibility (such as national or ethnic). The following sections will analyse these positions, pointing to their pedagogical interpretations. Following this analysis, the chapter will return to the liminality of classroom life presented in the previous chapter. The politically liminal space of the citizenship classroom means very different things for teachers and students. Arendt's phenomenology of responsibility will guide us to an ontological understanding of political responsibility, and the way in which political responsibility is validated by shared identity. Students, as they are not yet citizens, are undoubtedly free from certain responsibilities attached to political membership: they do not vote, are legally and punitively less liable, and are mostly not seen as responsible for the consequences of the state. By analysing the interviews held with citizenship teachers, I will argue that learning how to be politically responsible involves, in the liminal space of the classroom, playing with the cross-sections of identity and political opinions. In contradistinction to students, both educational and political responsibilities bind teachers. The meaning of the liminal space for the citizenship teacher's work will be explored using the metaphor of the 'Trickster'.

The previous chapter explored liminality as a feature of citizenship education, by relating to everyday practice and the 'life of classrooms'. This chapter will engage with responsibility as an aim of citizenship education, by analysing how it is conceptualised in professional literature. The educational implications of the two notions of responsibility will be explored in the second section by referring to two foundational documents in citizenship education: the Crick Report (1998), which laid the basis for citizenship education in Britain; and the Kremnitzer Report (1996), which did the same for Israeli citizenship education. The role of identity in political education, which was presented in the earlier chapters, will serve as a way of understanding the relation between contingency and responsibility. The chapter will then turn to an analysis of responsibility as a part of political life, relying on Hannah Arendt's conceptualisation, which emphasised the difference between responsibility as moral obligation and responsibility as an impetus for political initiative. Arendt's insistence that responsibility *stems* from identity will be the basis for the third section, which considers the political responsibility of citizenship teachers. The first section starts by focusing on how responsibility plays a part in the everyday practice of teachers.

## 7.1 Responsibility in citizenship education

The rationale for this chapter is that in any iteration of citizenship education, a central demand of citizenship education is nurturing responsibility in some form. What this means, and how it could be done, depends on how one conceives of responsibility. This section will analyse how responsibility is conceptualised in policy documents concerning citizenship education. It will highlight the centrality of responsibility in the Crick Report (1998) for citizenship education in the UK, and then compare it with the descriptions of responsibility in the founding document of the current citizenship curriculum in Israel, the Kremnitzer Report, from 1996. The choice to compare the Israeli and British examples will highlight how responsibility is interpreted in different instances of citizenship education, pointing to the similarities and differences in their conceptualisations of 'social responsibility'. The comparison also seems appropriate because of the similar historical roles of the two documents, and similarities in their premise and scope. Both policy documents set out to define and promote citizenship education in their respective educational systems, and tie the practice of teaching citizenship to basic values and norms in the political sphere. The section will conclude with a critical examination of the way in which 'social responsibility' is conceptualised, pointing to the political significance of responsibility.

### *7.1.1 Individual responsibility*

The Crick Report (1998) outlines three major aspects or 'strands' of citizenship that should be addressed in education: 'social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy' (1998: 8). Responsibility, as a virtue of citizenship, is given a very prominent place in the report and is mentioned over a hundred times throughout the document. Although the terms 'responsibility' and 'social responsibility' are not defined in the document, the writers stress that pedagogically, social and moral responsibility means:

> … children learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other. This learning should be developed … we believe it to be near the heart of the matter. Here guidance on moral values and personal development are essential preconditions of citizenship. Some might regard the whole of primary school education as pre-citizenship, certainly pre-political; but this is mistaken. Children are already forming through learning and discussion, concepts of fairness, and attitudes to the law, to rules, to decision-making, to authority, to their local environment and social responsibility etc. (Crick, 1998: 11-12)

If we consider this passage in light of Arendt's distinction between personal and shared responsibility, it clearly describes moral, personal responsibility rather than political responsibility, since it is concerned with conditioning the behaviour and actions of the individual. The role of citizenship education in fostering responsibility is in educating the students about their obligations to society and creating in them the proper moral dispositions for good citizenship.

The emphasis of the Crick Report on personal responsibility relates to the liberal approach to citizenship education, which has been described in earlier chapters of the thesis. In the liberal approach, citizenship education prepares students for their role as citizens by emphasising their place as individuals (Cohen, 2013). Furthermore, it focuses on the virtues of the 'good liberal' as the key condition for good citizenship (Callan, 1998), which infuses political actions with moral meaning. The liberal-moral interpretation of citizenship considers the development of this kind of individual responsibility to be the key component of political education.

In an analysis of the 2004 Scottish policy document *Curriculum for Excellence*, Biesta (2008) warns against undermining the political possibilities in learning by over emphasising personal responsibility, which:

> [r]uns the risk of depoliticizing citizenship by seeing it mainly as a personal and social phenomenon. It also runs the risk of not doing enough to empower young people as political actors who have an understanding both of the opportunities and the limitations of individual political action, and who are aware that real change – change that affects structures rather than operations within existing structures – often requires collective action and initiatives from other bodies, including the state (Biesta, 2008: 50)

Earlier chapters have demonstrated the educational limitations of a liberal conception of citizenship. In this case, the notion of political responsibility, in the sense of understanding one's membership in a community as an already established fact, represents a real challenge to liberal educationalists. The idea that some responsibility is contingent upon the fact that one has been born as a part of this community rather than any other, challenges the synchronicity of moral and political agency in liberal political thought. This challenge is heightened in Israel, where the liberal foundations of citizenship education are faced with an overarching ethnic-national conception of citizenship, which does not assume an egalitarian constitutional or legal framework of citizenship.

### *7.1.2 Social responsibility*

The Israeli parallel of the Crick Report, the Kremnitzer Report (1996), places more emphasis on responsibility as a form of social involvement or volunteering – that is, citizenship education should encourage students to take part in activities that contribute to the community. This is perhaps because of the more antagonistic political circumstances in Israel, or as a result of the ethno-republican basis for the notion of Israeli citizenship (Shafir and Peled, 2002): 'The motivation to be actively involved might be based on the aspiration to fulfill one's "self" … or on a feeling of **responsibility to the public or to a certain part of the public** … The active citizen sees himself [sic] as bearing responsibility to what happens in his [sic] community and country' (Kremnitzer, 1996: 13, my emphasis). The republican basis for the Israeli report's conceptualisation of responsibility is also evident in the way it describes 'civic engagement and initiative' as something that 'should be expressed in the school itself through tasks that require taking responsibility and seeing it through' (Ibid: 21). The responsibility that citizenship education seeks to promote in students is not only individual responsibility for their own actions, but (and more importantly for the writers of the Kremnitzer Report) also responsibility for the collective.

The Kremnitzer Report thereby echoes themes in republican and critical approaches to education that emphasise citizenship as a tool for promoting reciprocal collective responsibility, or social responsibility. This section will engage with the concept of social responsibility by analysing the way in which these approaches interpret education, pointing to specific examples from Israeli citizenship education. Following Aristotle's assertion that citizens are, first and foremost, 'those who share in the holding of office' (1982: 1275a8), the republican model of citizenship is based on membership in a community, and 'good' citizenship means participating in the political process, where social responsibility is an important virtue. The critical approach to citizenship likewise emphasises the social context of education, and seeks to promote critical consciousness towards action. For Freire, this process of 'conscientisation' is inherently tied to responsibility for the social and economic circumstances of the community:

> I was convinced that the Brazilian people could learn social and political responsibility only by *experiencing* that responsibility, through intervention in the destiny of their children's schools, in the destinies of their trade unions and places of employment through associations, clubs and councils, and in the life of their neighborhoods, churches, and rural communities by actively participating in associations, clubs and charitable societies. (Freire, 2005: 32)

Both the republican and critical meanings of the concept of 'social responsibility' could be found in the Kremnitzer Report, but most evidence suggests that in the Israeli

case the republican interpretation is more significant in relation to the actual practices of citizenship education. Since the Israeli republican approach relies on an ethnic group as the source of political legitimacy, it is easy to speculate why the limitations of this collective responsibility might follow closely the ethnic and political fault lines. Pinson (2010) identifies this tendency in her critical analysis of the 'civic vision' that drives practices of citizenship education in three schools. Her analysis demonstrates that students in an Arab school hardly feel responsible for the wellbeing of a Jewish community that deprives them of equal access to goods. Conversely, the degree to which the Jewish schools in Pinson's study describe their 'vision' as inclusive to non-Jews may indicate how they teach their Jewish students responsibility for citizens of different ethnicity and religion. In support of Pinson's findings, Sabbagh and Resh's study comparing ethno-republican and liberal orientations among students, found that 'As expected, ethno-republican orientations were more salient among religious Jewish students than among either secular Jewish or Israeli Arab students. Secular Jewish and Israeli Arab students tend more strongly to endorse the liberal orientation' (Sabbagh and Resh, 2013: 1).

However, the limitations of social responsibility as an educational aim transcend the particular manifestation of ethno-republicanism in the Israeli case. In his analysis of the Scottish policy document *Education for Citizenship* (2002), Biesta points to the way social responsibility may lead to the same 'depolitisation' of citizenship education:

> … the emphasis on the more political dimensions of citizenship begins to be replaced by a conception of citizenship as having to do with inclusive and participatory ways of social interaction in a range of communities, but not necessarily or explicitly in the context of political and democratic practices and processes. Here, citizenship begins to veer towards active involvement in environmental projects and community service – a form of 'good deeds' citizenship – where the political dimension and purpose seems to have become largely absent. (Biesta, 2008: 45)

Social responsibility, as an aim of citizenship education, necessarily equals political responsibility. In the Israeli case, it marks a limited reciprocal sphere reserved for Jewish Israelis, rather than a general commitment to transformative political action. In the wider context, presented above through Biesta's critique, it excludes the political dimension of citizenship in preference for 'good deeds'. Section 7.2 will present Hannah Arendt's phenomenology of political responsibility as a way of understanding the ontological meaning of responsibility, or the 'life of the concept', as it appears in citizenship classrooms. However, before the particularity of political responsibility is examined, I will briefly consider one more kind of responsibility, based on the existential features of education.

### *7.1.3 Dialogic responsibility*

In his book *Between Man and Man,* Martin Buber (2003 [1947]) engages with the existential features of the classroom, focusing on the relationship between a teacher and his or her students. In the following excerpt, he demonstrates the primary significance of acknowledging the 'other' for classroom practice:

> For the first time a young teacher enters a class independently, no longer sent by the training college to prove his efficiency. The class before him [sic] is like a mirror of mankind, so multiform, so full of contradictions, so inaccessible. He feels: 'these boys – I have not sought them out; I have been put here and have to accept them as they are – but not as they now are in this moment, no, as they *really* are, as they can become. But how can I find out what is in them and what can I do to make it take shape?' And the boys do not make things easy for him. They are noisy, they cause trouble, they stare as him with impudent curiosity. He is at once tempted to check this or that trouble-maker, to issue orders, to make compulsory the rules of decent behavior, to say No, to say No to everything rising against him from beneath: he is at once tempted to start from beneath. And if one starts from beneath one perhaps never arrives above, but everything comes down. But then his eyes meet a face which strikes him. It is not a beautiful face, not particularly intelligent; but it is a real face, or rather, the chaos preceding the cosmos of a real face. On it he reads a question which is something different from the general curiosity: 'who are you? Do you know something that concerns me? Do you bring me something? What do you bring?' (Buber, 2003: 133)

The teacher in the above paragraph is initially tempted to rely on the pedagogical knowledge acquired in his training. However, since this is the first time he is faced with a class outside of the instructional and evaluative environment of teacher training, the presence of the students appears something new. He is forced to acknowledge them in a way that remains elusive in the paragraph itself, but that suggests a responsibility towards them that is based on dialogue.

Following Buber, responding to the face of an 'other' is the primary source of ethical responsibility in the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas (Gordon, 2004). For Levinas, one's response to other human beings as they become present through their faces makes accessible a possibility of infinite responsibility: 'a world I can bestow as a gift on the Other – that is, as a presence before a face' (Levinas, 1979: 50). Biesta describes the educational meaning of this kind of dialogical ontology: 'Levinas is a teacher who asks questions and in doing so invites, summons and perhaps even forces the student, the learner to respond … While for Socrates questioning is, in that sense, a dialectical process, Levinasian questioning can – indeed – be called a truly dialogical process' (Biesta, 2003: 66).

Aldridge develops the model of Socrates as a paradigmatic 'dialogical teacher'. It is the responsibility of the teacher to come into the classroom without presuming any epistemic or moral superiority:

> But in [Socrates'] dialogic procedure – the recognition of the aporia as a starting point, his claim to know nothing and his willingness to learn from his interlocutor, his valuing of dialogue and mutual enquiry – it is the virtues of a student or enquirer that Socrates (or at least the mythic Socrates) is modelling. His authority and status as a teacher are derived from no external source and from no privileged epistemic access to the subject matter, but solely from this: the recognition that his interlocutors learn from him in dialogue. (Aldridge, 2015: 117)

The significance of this dialogical process will be examined closely in the next chapter, which will explore how controversial issues appear in citizenship classrooms. By addressing the significance of dialogue, the next chapter will establish a hermeneutic position towards citizenship education, as a response to the ethical demands of teaching political issues.

### 7.2 Political responsibility and identity

For Arendt, political responsibility should be understood in contrast to individual responsibility. In her essay 'Responsibility and Judgment' (2005), Arendt points out that collective responsibility does not equal guilt. Collective responsibility is based on contingency – the fact that one was born at this place and time and to these parents could not possibly be used against her as evidence in support of any guilt: 'in contrast to the moral actor, the political actor never knows what is right to do' (Arendt, 2005: 146). Guilt is a legal and moral notion which 'singles out' the actions of an individual, while collective responsibility is not based on moral imperatives or legal cooperation. When individual responsibility is involved, it is in relation to clear moral or legal obligations – one could choose to act immorally or illegally, but her responsibility is her own. This is of course not the case with collective responsibility. Personal responsibility is considered on the basis of one's own actions, and is therefore understood in terms of guilt and ultimately punishment. This distinction between personal and collective responsibility is pivotal in Arendt's account of political life.

The separation between moral and legal responsibility and political responsibility stems from Arendt's assertion that political responsibility relies on membership: 'Two conditions have to be present for collective responsibility: I must be held responsible for

something I have not done, and the reason for my responsibility must be my membership in a group (a collective) which no voluntary act of mine can dissolve, that is, a membership which is utterly unlike a business partnership which I can dissolve at will' (Ibid: 147). In other words, responsibility is political because it stems from belonging to a group which one has not chosen, or acts which one has not done, and for which one is therefore not *guilty*. In her essay 'Collective Responsibility', Arendt stresses her argument for separating guilt from responsibility: 'What I am driving at here is a sharper dividing line between political (collective) responsibility, on the one side, and moral and/or legal (personal) guilt, on the other' (Arendt, 1987: 46).

On the one hand, this may sound quite similar to the way in which the republican position on social responsibility relates membership to responsibility. However, a closer look at the implication of Arendt's notion of political responsibility may seem infuriating: just like the sons and daughters of Omelas, we do not choose to be born a part of this community or another, and yet we must assume responsibility for actions taken on part of the community all the same. The alternative, as Le Guin's ending demonstrates, is to leave. But Arendt reminds us that leaving will still not relieve us of responsibility altogether: 'We can escape this political and strictly collective responsibility only by leaving the community, and since no man can live without belonging to some community, this would simply mean to exchange one community for another and hence one kind of responsibility for another' (Ibid: 150). The ones who walk away, while choosing to abandon the cruelty of Omelas, cannot altogether disclaim responsibility as members of some community (as Aristotle pointed out, we are, after all, political animals, *zoon politicon*).

Furthermore, it is safe to assume that most people would not up and leave their country in reaction to intolerable acts. This is of course historically evident, and indeed Arendt's work could be interpreted as an attempt to respond to the variety of political catastrophes wrought by the 20th century. Arendt's lifelong preoccupation with the meaning of political responsibility originated with her early thinking about guilt and responsibility of German citizens during World War II. In her inquiry of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Arendt raises the disturbing idea that complying with laws may actually be an excuse for *not* taking responsibility. So contrary to the republican position, political responsibility for Arendt should be understood as reserving a possibility for resistance within the polity, rather than just compliance. Herzog (2004) eloquently describes this point in Arendt's thought: 'Some people will not comply, she says; in other words, some people will take upon themselves the responsibility to act and change the human world – the actual situation and the meaning of membership itself' (Herzog, 2004: 49).

This notion of political responsibility and political action as a possibility, rather than an obligation, plays a crucial role in Arendt's political thought, and particularly with the centrality of the idea of newness, or natality (Bowen-Moore, 1989; Schell, 2002). In *The Human Condition*, Arendt defines action as inherently tied to the possibility of bringing something new: 'the new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting' (Arendt, 1998: 9). The importance of responsibility to action could therefore be understood as the source from which this newness could emerge:

> I am responsible in acting because I share a collective responsibility with my fellow-citizens. I am therefore responsible for my acts as they are determined by an existing group of people to whom I belong and for whose previous actions I am also responsible, and then I am responsible for beginning something radically new based only upon my own initiative. (Herzog, 2004: 43)

So political responsibility is based on unanticipated possibilities for action that directly relates to the contingency of the political situation. This, for Arendt, is the difference between moral actions and political actions: an action is moral when there exists an obligation, when it could not be contested as the right choice of action. Political action, however, is defined as an expression of something new, and therefore could not be judged in terms of what preceded it. The educational significance of political responsibility presents a tense and perhaps paradoxical relation between moral and political education: while it is perhaps possible to instruct students in their individual decisions concerning moral problems, political problems are, by definition, not reliant on a single individual's decision. In other words, while we may teach how to avoid guilt legally (and perhaps morally), political education means teaching precisely about those things in which personal guilt is not the issue and one's individual actions could hardly alleviate damage.

Returning to Le Guin's parable, the metaphorical meaning of the visit to the imprisoned child of Omelas is quite relevant. The students who visit the catacomb may feel responsible for the child, even though they were not the ones who imprisoned him. Educating for political responsibility is then understood as a process of understanding what we are burdened with by past generations, and acting upon it with a new expression. Only then can the action in response to the injustice be considered political:

> I am responsible when my free doing stands for other others; when I accept my link to a particular community, to its traditions; when my acts are the continuation of the fate of members of that community. When, through my initiative, I challenge my specific community and its traditions, because such challenges affect the whole humanity. My responsibility fills the gap between my community and the world. (Herzog, 2004: 52).

In the next section, this process of affirming the relation between responsibility and identity will be considered in light of the experience of Israeli citizenship teachers. It will highlight how the liminal features of citizenship education shape and influence the citizenship teacher's role as a teacher and as a citizen.

### 7.3 The political responsibility of Israeli citizenship teachers

How are teachers responsible politically? Is their responsibility identical to that of other citizens, or does the educational setting of their work mean that it is somehow different? The role of the citizenship teacher in Israel uncovers a volatile and ambiguous discourse regarding the relation between political action and education. This tension is exemplified in the way responsibility is conceptualised in descriptions of the role of the teacher. In the striking final lines of Dewey's manifesto *My Pedagogic Creed*, the social responsibility of the teacher *as a teacher* seems to be almost all encompassing:

> I believe, finally, that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life.
>
> I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.
>
> I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God. (Dewey, 2004b: 23)

Dewey's words may seem somewhat hyperbolic, or even threatening in the sheer scale of responsibility they put on teachers to 'maintain' the social world and 'secure' 'right social growth'. While all adults have, to some extent, a moral responsibility related to the upbringing of children, teachers are also charged with a responsibility endowed upon them by society to the collective welfare and continuance of the community. The citizenship teachers interviewed for this study seem to be aware that in the classroom, they represent more than their own individuality:

> A citizenship teacher, I think, is someone who expresses the virtues in society, both as role model but also in his values. That means, he should not be racist, he should not be immoral, he should not … that means, we often talk about the fact that in government, we see a lot of corruption. I say the citizenship teacher should be the exact opposite. But he should also be neutral and not impose his opinions. (Andy, page 1, lines 22-29)

At the same time, Dewey's demand suggests that the teacher is a 'social servant', whose work as a teacher differs from political action as a free and equal citizen, but is

performed in service. This notion of service is perhaps the background for the final sentence of the quote from Interview 7, tying the teacher's 'calling' to a practical commitment not to impose opinions and to remain neutral. The teacher's neutrality, in this interpretation, is the manifestation of his or her political responsibility.

But this neutrality is a difficult thing to pin down conceptually – whether and how a teacher has transgressed this neutrality is a matter of dispute, and views from different political positions may have opposite interpretations of a teacher's practical decisions. It seems the practical assessment of particular instances will always depend, to some degree, on the intention and interpretation of the individual 'making the call'. Furthermore, the demand for neutrality is often condemned as an attempt to silence uncomfortable and even dissident opinions. The controversial and paradoxical role of citizenship teachers in Israeli society is described by Yael Tamir as follows:

> Teachers are stationed in the front line, torn between different ideological camps. They have their own opinions, but at school they are required to remain neutral. Unfortunately, neutrality, especially in Israel, is an imaginary location from which no-one can speak. In Israel, like other places, neutrality is a euphemism indicating things that are uncontroversial. As public debates proliferate and deepen, neutral territory shrinks and the ground drops from underneath the teachers' feet, who can't help but find themselves in the eye of the storm. (Tamir, 2013: 292)

Since the citizenship teacher is located at the heart of the controversy, the question of whether or not teachers should express their own opinions was often brought up by teachers as a central question that arises from practice. In the interviews, teachers expressed different positions concerning whether and how they should express their own views in front of the students. The teacher in the third interview presented a deliberative approach, which sees his own position as a possible starting point for classroom discussion. His method of engaging his students in discussion is by inviting them to recognise that he *has* an opinion: 'I tell my students, dear friends, you will understand my political position in three minutes. I do not hide it. I do not hide it from you' (Sterling, page 4, lines 11-12). However, relying on his own position to spark classroom discussion also means some degree of control over, or playing with, what each particular class permits: 'Very quickly, I assess what I can say in which class. How open I should be with them and how provocative I can be …' (Sterling, page 5, lines 5-6).

The significance of self-control is also central to how Andy described the responsibility of the teacher as a commitment to neutrality: 'Even though you have an established political view, in class you need to refrain from leading the conversation to a single opinion. You should be very neutral, respect the other side also, you shouldn't judge

students according to their opinions. I saw very left-wing teachers who taught right-wing students, and had a hard time with this … No, you need to keep a kind of neutrality, and yet to really expose students' (Andy, page 2, lines 29-35). The 'kind of neutrality' this teacher suggests implies that rather than arguing for his own positions, the teacher's responsibility is to present political questions in order to 'expose' the students. This often means the teacher 'adopts' a position in the classroom in order to enable a dialogic discourse. This process is described a little later in the seventh interview:

*... I try to represent both sides in all kinds of situations… Sometimes I even take more pleasure in representing the position I don't support.*

*Q: Why?*

*A: Because it's nice to be in that place… it's like playing for a minute, a game in which you enter the other side and see what it feels like.*

*Q: Does that ever change your opinion?*

*A: In general, my positions have become more moderate, in light of the [political] reality.*

*Q: In light of the reality or in light of teaching?*

*A: In light of the reality.* (Andy, page 3, lines 16-23)

This performance often involves instigating discussion by adopting contrarian views that challenge the class, as another participant remarked: 'My experience of the classroom requires me to "step into someone else's shoes", that the entire class disagrees with' (John, page 11, lines 17-19).

In the classroom, teachers are within and without the political – representatives of the world and the community, who enact political positions. For some, these political positions rely on those of the teacher to a certain degree, and are controlled according to the requirements of the class. All the teachers interviewed mentioned instances in front of the class when they had argued for views that were not their own. In Dewey's manifesto cited above, the notion of the teacher as a 'social servant' is also related to the teacher being 'set apart'. It is not clear from Dewey's words whether this is a normative demand to set teachers apart somehow, or a description of how teachers actually function. In any case, following the previous chapter on the liminality of citizenship education, it seems that teachers are, in effect, 'set apart'.

## 7.4 Citizenship teacher as 'trickster'

The discussion role of the citizenship teacher in the previous section uncovers a key feature in the practice of citizenship lessons. The political responsibility of the citizenship teacher is manifested in presenting different, conflicting political (even publicly outrageous) opinions to the students. The final section of this chapter will understand this practice as a part of the liminality of citizenship education, by relating it to the metaphoric role of the teacher as 'trickster'. The trickster is a figure that cultural anthropologists have related to the liminal stage in rituals (Turner, 1974), and it has been studied as a source of meaning for educational practice (Garrison, 2009; Conroy, 2004).

According to Hyde (1998), the trickster figure in religious mythology is associated with the creation of language or its interpretation. Examples of such trickster figures include Krishna among the Hindu, Monkey among many Chinese, and Myrddin among the Celts. Among the Greeks and within the tradition of Western thought, the trickster is portrayed by the god Hermes, whose name is the source of the word hermeneutics. The archetype of the trickster is characterised as an essentially 'homeless' being, who is therefore most comfortable in liminal situations, that are 'neither here nor there'.

The previous chapter argued that the classroom, and specifically the citizenship classroom, is a politically liminal space that is characterised as being in-between. The liminality of the classroom means that the teachers are allowed access to the social structure at any number of points. The trickster may transgress borders, penetrating the social structure at will, but he cannot stay within society. This is one way of understanding Dewey's notion of teachers as being 'set apart' from society, which he designates as inherently related to the teacher's tasks. Being 'set apart' means that the teacher as trickster can enter and exit the identities that make up society in many places, appearing to be something and reappearing as something else. The educational significance of the element of surprise in the metaphoric understanding of the teacher as trickster is crucial in challenging social conventions: 'Tricksters create portals that allow the ostracized to come streaming back, thereby reinvigorating the social order' (Garrison, 2009: 79).

Turner (1974) points to the part of the trickster in ritual ceremonies, often officiating the liminal time of the ceremony through his capacity as a figure that controls and distorts the normalcy of the everyday through play. These ceremonies '*play* with the factors of culture, sometimes assembling them in random, grotesque, improbable, surprising, shocking, usually experimental combinations' (Turner, 1974: 71). Conroy has employed the metaphor of teacher as trickster in order to explore precisely this responsibility of the teacher 'as duty bound to a certain discursive openness that runs counter to the prevailing

impulses of government and corporation. Interestingly, the trickster's moral responsibility is primarily to the students and through them, to society' (Conroy, 2004: 112). Conroy agrees with Dewey then, namely, that the responsibility of the teacher is to society, but he adds an understanding of the immediacy of classroom interaction as a defining feature of the liminality of the lesson. It is the teacher, acting as a trickster of sorts, who spurs students to think beyond what is acceptable, in order to understand the way the world works.

The teachers quoted above all recounted experiences in which they 'performed' for their classes political views aimed solely at invigorating the discussion. This is another feature of the liminal nature of classroom discussions: the possibility to transgress 'expected' and 'normal' accounts of political concepts and events. For the teachers, this possibility also invokes a responsibility to challenge and to a certain degree 'disorient' the students, in the hope of leading the class into unknown political questions. I argue that for the students this discursive 'openness' represents the process of learning in the citizenship lesson. This process could be understood by studying the way in which controversial issues arise and are discussed in classrooms.

This chapter has explored the role of responsibility in citizenship lessons. It has drawn out the differences between different kinds of responsibility, pausing to reflect on what political responsibility means. The relation between political responsibility and identity led to a consideration of how teachers share their own views with the class. As the interviews demonstrated, the way in which teachers enact political views in class cannot simply be characterised as 'neutral' or expressing their 'personal views', but rather as a performance within the liminal space of the classroom. The chapter closed with a brief presentation of the metaphoric significance of the teacher as trickster. The next chapter will continue to explore this notion of 'discursive openness' by understanding the ways in which controversial issues are raised and discussed in citizenship lessons.

# Chapter 8: Hermeneutics of citizenship education

The Crick Report (1998), analysed in previous chapters, is a founding document in the citizenship education movement. Its writers, aware of the dangerous terrain of classroom discussion about political controversy, address the possible contributions of these discussions, as well as recommendations concerning how to manage such discussions. The report sees controversial issues as inherent to citizenship education, and points to their importance in a democracy: 'We must recognize that teaching about citizenship necessarily involves discussing controversial issues. After all, open and informed debate is vital for a healthy democracy' (Crick, 1998: 8).

The final chapter of the report provides guidance on how teachers should address controversial issues. When engaging students with key political, social and moral concepts, the writers accept that it is impossible to 'shelter our nation's children from even the harsher controversies of adult life' (Ibid: 56). Within the report, these 'controversies of adult life', however, remain (perhaps intentionally) remarkably obscure. The first two sections of this chapter will analyse how educational theory and policy documents concerning citizenship education define and address 'controversial issues'. Controversial issues represent a central concern for researchers and policy-makers in citizenship education; theoretical analyses of such issues, as well as proposals for pedagogical responses to classroom 'controversy', portray specific understandings of the subject matter and aim of citizenship education. The two sections present the epistemic and instrumental notions of learning that underlie current definitions of controversial issues, and the value of addressing such issues in learning citizenship.

In the Crick Report, the aims and conditions of the learning process derived from addressing controversial issues are only described in reference to the actions of the teacher, rather than as a political or ethical 'encounter' or in reference to the actual 'subject matter' of the discussion. The third and fourth sections of this chapter will present the ethical significance of political controversial issues in citizenship lessons, within the framework set out previously.

Earlier chapters have argued for an understanding of citizenship classrooms as 'liminal' spaces, in which students and teachers engage with issues that dominate the political sphere outside, and yet their experiences are bound by the educational setting. This liminality enables imaginative 'play' in relation to the political issues summoned by the curriculum. The preceding chapter analysed how liminality shapes the ethical and political responsibilities in the classroom. Following from these characteristics of

citizenship lessons, this chapter presents a hermeneutic account of learning in citizenship education. By studying the relation between the students, teacher and the curriculum, it will argue for a dialogical conceptualisation of the 'subject matter' of citizenship education. This hermeneutic commitment implies a certain understanding of ethical practice in the classroom, explored in the final section of the thesis.

The concept of dialogue has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, as an ethical iteration of the responsibility of teachers towards students. This ethical relation underpins dialogue as a condition of understanding – as in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. The third section of this chapter outlines a phenomenological-hermeneutic conception of learning to propose an alternative, ontological account of controversy in the classroom. It argues that since the meaning of political concepts can only be achieved by questioning them, understanding these concepts means allowing the classroom to engage in a radical education of students' political imagination The fourth section presents the ethical significance of this hermeneutic position on learning, and particularly on political learning, by appealing to the dialogic 'ethics of encounter', by engaging the concept of dialogue in Buber, Levinas and Gadamer.

### 8.1 Defining controversial issues

In teaching about the political system and the questions of public life, it is unavoidable that many contested arguments are raised in the classroom, provoking students to engage in debate. In fact, as argued in the previous chapter, it is the responsibility of the citizenship teacher to create discussions regarding the political by provoking the students, alternating opinions and acting as a 'trickster'. This section will look at how these 'issues' are deemed controversial in accounts of citizenship education.

In the accounts below, the notion of 'controversial issues' describes situations when political discourse 'from the outside' enters the citizenship lesson. Such situations allow the 'political' into the classroom and often provoke public scrutiny of what issues are taught in citizenship education. This scrutiny represents political 'controversy' and therefore requires special attention. Controversial issues evoke two overarching sensitivities that prompt caution in the mind of the policy-maker: selecting which political issues may or may not enter the classroom, and the role of the educational system in addressing these issues, which leads to descriptions of appropriate educational and pedagogical responses. This section will address the first question by displaying the political limitations of the 'epistemic criterion' (Hand, 2008: 213) for defining a controversial issue. The next section will present a different understanding of controversial

issues, stemming from the 'deliberative' model of citizenship (Hess, 2004), which focuses on the pedagogical value of classroom discussion.

The Crick Report distinguishes between issues that should be treated as if there were no single 'correct' answer, and ones that require the teacher to 'take a stand'. In controversial issues, the teacher should cultivate an 'open discussion', and bring as many 'sides of the argument' as possible into the discussion. However, the report maintains that some issues require that the teacher take a clear stand and make no concessions for classroom debate: 'to be completely unbiased is simply not possible, and on some issues, such as those concerning human rights, it is not desirable' (Crick, 1998: 56). The Crick Report does not address, perhaps consciously so, how exactly we can tell which issues should be deemed 'controversial' and which are beyond controversy.

Some thinkers (Dearden, 1984; Hand, 2008) offer an 'epistemic criterion' for determining whether an issue should be regarded as controversial. This position rests on the assumption that '[t]o teach something as controversial is to present it as a matter on which different views are or could be held and to expound those different views as impartially as possible. It is to acknowledge and explore various possible answers to a question without endorsing any of them' (Hand, 2008: 213). A controversial issue, according to the 'epistemic criterion', should be taught neutrally by the teacher, or 'non-directively', as opposed to issues that should be taught 'directively', by 'teaching the problem along with the solution' (Ibid: 216).

Hand uses racism as an example in order to demonstrate the damage caused by a muddled distinction between controversial and non-controversial issues in teaching about racism. Although it is publically identified as a controversial issue, and could therefore be considered controversial according to the 'behavioural criterion', racism is clearly an issue that could not be reasonably defended, and should therefore be taught directively: 'What possible justification could there be for commending nondirective teaching on the matters of prejudice and racism?' (Ibid). Since directive teaching means teaching the solution along with the problem, Hand regrettably omits the 'solution' that should be taught for racism.

Hand's pedagogic position on the teaching of controversial issues could therefore be situated in a consensual understanding of the public sphere. This consensus, as argued in earlier chapters, undergirds a liberal approach to citizenship as individual powers of reasoning, which affirm and legitimise the state. Since this position constructs the limits of legitimate politics according to a public account of reason, only questions that fall within these limits, and do not challenge the consensual public sphere, are ones about which the teacher should be 'neutral'. Questions, problems and positions that are 'unreasonable' are

taught as illegitimate, requiring the teacher to enforce a ‘correct response’. However, following the previous chapter, it could be argued here that the limits of legitimate discourse that define the adult public sphere do not necessarily apply to the classroom.

Racism is not only a theoretically and morally indefensible position towards difference; it is also a pressing political problem manifested in many social practices. When racism is socially contextualised, a pedagogical presentation of its ‘solution’ seems both naïve and practically unlikely. A more nuanced understanding of the ‘pedagogy of racism’ would focus on the question of racism, rather than on its solution. Citizenship teachers often face ‘the worst of it’, when issues of pluralism and minority rights evoke extreme and racist remarks (in Israel and quite likely many other countries). The role of the teacher in such cases is unclear – should racist comments in the classroom be tolerated? How would one best create the understanding that racist expressions are not legitimate in the public sphere? One option would be to enforce limits on classroom discourse through disciplinary measures against students who express racist views. In his interview, Andy addressed this question specifically, arguing for a more sophisticated approach:

> I think that if you leave it as a racist remark and not do some process with it then you miss something. I think that you don’t need the disciplinary action right when it happens, but definitely stop everything for a minute, and understand what happened here. What the expression means. I really believe in the educational process, I mean, not in… some teachers throw [the student] out of the classroom. You didn’t solve it, on the contrary, you are losing the student. The student will stay racist, he [sic] won’t listen to you, you will not be a meaningful figure for him… now, I try not to educate on the street or in society and so on, even though I really feel like it sometimes. (Andy, page 5, lines 1-10)

In Hand’s example of racism as a non-controversial issue, the omission of a solution which should be taught together with racism reveals a misunderstanding of how political questions present themselves in the classroom. In the case of racism, the teacher’s responsibility could not be summed up solely as instructing (or indeed disciplining) the students that racism is simply bad; learning about racism also relies on a deeper understanding of what it means. Since it is hard to imagine that one would identify herself as racist, the question faced by the teacher and the students is not only whether racism is a reasonable response to social diversity (obviously it is not), but also *what* it is. In order to talk about racism within an educational process, it must be ‘narrated’, that is to say, contextualised and located as a part of the world.

The students are not fully citizens and their expressions should be considered as a part of a process of learning the meaning of political practices and concepts. Furthermore, the previous chapter showed how the teacher’s political responsibility is often ambiguous

and fluid with regard to how issues are taught. The teacher may enter the political debate from a wide variety of positions. In this chapter, I argue that this means that political controversy holds a deep significance in the political classroom. In other words, in the citizenship classroom both the teacher and the students actively pursue controversy in order to learn and teach. The limits of expression in the classroom are different from those of the public sphere because they are a part of a learning process; the teacher's responsibility is not to enforce the correct expressions, but rather to subvert and transgress the obviousness of opinions the students may propose. The third section of this chapter sets out political hermeneutics as a possible description of a dialogical, open learning process. The following section will engage with the question of what is learned in this process, by examining the instrumental value of classroom debate in the deliberative tradition of educational thinking.

### 8.2 The instrumental value of controversial issues

The previous section challenged the 'non-directive' approach to teaching controversial issues, arguing that the process of learning involves more than reaching an epistemically sound moral conclusion. In talking about a politically contentious issue, the students must contextualise it to understand how it affects them. This section explores the way in which the deliberative model of citizenship education considers controversial issues as a part of the learning process.

The deliberative approach to political education could be traced to Dewey's pragmatist account of learning. For Dewey, enabling a process of learning through engagement is the only necessary aim of education (2007: 78). To be directed in learning, claims Dewey, is to miss the whole point of education as a process of continued growth:

> To talk about an educational aim when approximately each act of the pupil is dictated by the teacher, when the only order in the sequence of his [sic] acts is that which comes from the assignment of lessons and the giving of directions by another, is to talk nonsense. It is equally fatal to an aim to permit capricious or discontinuous action in the name of self-expression. An aim implies an orderly and ordered activity, one in which the order consists in the progressive completing of a process. (Ibid: 79)

Within this model, and unlike the 'epistemic criterion' proposed by Hand, controversial issues in the classroom present a political and a pedagogical opportunity that transcends their 'epistemic solution' as moral issues. The significance of discussing controversial issues, for deliberative democrats, is that through these discussions students can learn *how* to deliberate about public issues, and not which positions are epistemically

sound. By encouraging deliberation, the teacher fosters 'effective' and 'participating' citizens. Controversial issues are therefore considered instrumental to the cultivation of the skills, knowledge, and dispositions required for citizenship, if the teacher adequately manages the classroom discussion and attention is paid to fair classroom conduct.

The deliberative model, presented in earlier chapters, focuses on the process of deliberation as the main aim of democratic education (Gutmann, 1987; Hess, 2004). Public schools, according to this model, should be seen as primary locations for deliberation about the 'good life and the good society' (Gutmann, 1987: 44), because of the plurality of opinions that public schooling creates in schools. This diversity is unique, and could not be found in other locations of social gathering, which are usually more homogenous (Hess, 2004: 258). The classroom and the school are sites where students and teacher may encounter opinions and identities that differ from their own, perhaps even ones that radically challenge their views. As such, by participating in classroom discussions of controversial issues, students exercise the deliberative skills necessary for citizens, in a plural environment.

A deliberative position does not rely on the moral concreteness or epistemic soundness of arguments regarding contested issues in order to determine which issues should be taught as controversial. Instead, it values the discussions it creates within the classroom to the development of discursive and analytic skills. The Crick Report accepts the value of controversial issues for equipping students with these skills: 'an understanding and an ability to recognize bias, an ability to recognize and evaluate argument, an ability to weigh evidence put before them, and to look for alternative interpretations, viewpoints and sources of evidence' (Crick, 1998: 60).

The skills and dispositions that teaching controversial issues is purported to cultivate are often referred to in academic literature, as well as policy language, as 'critical thinking skills'. In the citizenship education movement, many of these skills have been gathered under a notion of critical thinking skills, which has become a 'buzzword' indicating the ability to rationalise and consider problems creatively (Johnson and Morris, 2010: 77). From a critical position, the process of judgement implies a practical political commitment or a new awareness of the problem, perhaps stemming from Freire's concept of 'conscientisation'. Critics of the 'critical thinking skills' discourse therefore claim that by reducing educational aims to observable 'learning outcomes', the political dimensions of learning are lost: 'the distinction between critical thinking skills and political thinking, is a false distinction' (Ibid: 82). The hegemonic dominance of the 'critical skills' discourse in citizenship has been described by Gur Ze'ev in terms borrowed from classical Marxism: 'the hegemonic system effectively distributes an illusion of a liberated consciousness that

serves as an agency to improve its own reproduction. In light of its deprivation of human dialogue and reflection potentialities, it might be called false consciousness' (2011: 32).

Williams (2013) offers a comparison of two philosophical accounts of thinking – Ryle's and Heidegger's, in order to argue against an 'impoverished view' of thinking as a 'skill', or as a 'knowing how' (Williams, 2013: 53). In her article, she demonstrates how both philosophers seek to problematise generalised accounts of learning to think as processes of acquiring discipline in one's mental acts. Both argue that relations between thought, language and our experience of the world are multifaceted, and 'attempt to provide an account of thinking that does justice to its engaged and embedded nature' (Ibid: 69). The 'impoverished' notion of thinking that Williams decries relates to the instrumental approach to learning in which thinking is depicted as an 'outcome'.

In citizenship education, 'critical thinking skills' overlook the fundamental conflict that inheres in political life. In both the epistemic and deliberative positions towards controversial issues, as described above, the teaching of controversial issues is bound to a notion of political life that is characterised as a relatively stable, concrete practice, for which students are prepared. The following sections will step back from this assumption to consider what controversial issues might mean when we consider political life as agonistic.

The agonistic conceptualisation of political life sees citizenship education as the process of becoming acquainted with the world as it is (Ruitenberg, 2009). This means committing to the open-ended and often volatile nature of human plurality as the fundamental element of political life. Rather than rule out 'illegitimate' controversy or harness and manage this controversy for its learning outcomes, the agonistic perception of citizenship education accepts controversy as the constitutive basis of political life. In other words, in the agonistic position, all political meaning is controversial. Educational theory is therefore charged with presenting: 'a theoretical framework that faces directly the difficulties of living in a dissonant world' (Todd, 2010: 213).

Theorising classroom discussion as planned curricular schemes, in order to derive 'learning outcomes' from controversial issues, overlooks the significance of political imagination in education and risks aligning the engagement with these discussions to contemporary orders of 'political correctness'. Thinking, as Arendt said, is always dangerous. The sections that follow propose a dialogic, hermeneutic conception of controversial issues, in order to construct an ontological account of learning in the citizenship lesson.

### 8.3 Political questions in the classroom

This section outlines a phenomenological account of controversial issues, in order to look beyond the epistemic and deliberative notions of controversial issues. A phenomenological account of education involves seeing learning 'from a broader ontological perspective, as a moment that occurs in dialogue or relation rather than the achievement of an individual subjectivity' (Aldridge, 2015: 124). In light of this dialogic conception of learning, the role of controversial issues changes. This section will propose that when we consider the 'truthfulness' of a political question as it is constituted through dialogue, we must understand it as essentially controversial. The educational value of controversial issues is not achieved through their 'resolution', either epistemically or as a 'learning outcome'. Rather, this section focuses on the potential such issues hold as a 'transformative encounter'. This shift in focus entails a reconceptualisation of how controversial issues present themselves in classroom experience, what there is to learn from these controversial issues, and the radical priority of questions in citizenship education.

When we adopt a phenomenological account of learning, the liminal nature of citizenship education offers an opportunity in the form of a breach in the existing political and social order. Because education is shielded from the actual danger of political life, talking about political issues in the classroom enables students to imagine and to express situations that are far-reaching and even absurd, in contrast to the limitations posed on political speech and action in the adult world. It is important to note that this does not mean that there are no limitations on what can or cannot be said in the classroom; I am not arguing here for an 'anything goes' view of classroom discussion. The responsibility inherent in classroom interaction is an ethical one, derived from the encounter itself, and not an epistemic one, which is preordained in accordance with the political arrangements of the adult world.

The necessity of an 'anarchic', or 'pre-figurative', moment in political education is encapsulated in Suissa's anarchist philosophy of education. For Suissa, education should become 'pre-figurative practice', in order to consider political and social life without relying on the way things have already been established – a process of (re)consideration of the very existence of the state: 'On the anarchist view, as we do not and cannot know the form of the ideal society, it is essential to enable the free interplay of human imagination and experimentation as far as possible' (Suissa, 2014: 148). It seems to me that citizenship education, in contrast to how it is normally framed in literature, presents precisely this opportunity. Of course, the concept of citizenship assumes membership in some political entity, namely, a state. However, in learning what this membership means, the state itself

must be summoned into the discussion, not as a definite, natural phenomenon, but as a question. In the process of learning what political concepts mean, students and teachers must address the controversies that dominate political discourse as questions, rather than as answers.

The learning process is therefore presented here as engagement with the radical possibilities inherent to political life. This means that the political concepts with which teachers and students engage must be, in phenomenological terms, ‘bracketed’ in order to be understood. Previous chapters have shown how, within the liminality of citizenship education, entrenched assumptions and political identities may be subverted and called into question. In this sense, a condition for learning about and understanding one’s relation to the state means necessarily considering its actual existence and non-existence as possibilities among others – a manifestly radical moment.

The dialogical process of learning is conditional upon questions that lead students to imagine other possibilities, to withhold one’s assumptions, with the teacher as ‘trickster’ subverting opinions and identity in the liminal space of the classroom. The lesson is an encounter between the teacher, the students, and the curriculum, from which various kinds of questions may arise. The transformative potential of a question is determined by its ‘truthfulness’ – its authenticity within the conversation.

Aldridge explores this commitment to the priority of questions in learning, asserting that one characteristic of ‘truthful’ questions is that they are ‘constituted in the event rather than prepared or given in advance’ (2013: 71). The spontaneity of the questions creates a ‘necessary tension between learning and the curriculum or scheme’ (Ibid). This transformative possibility is dependent upon the authenticity of the question, as demonstrated in its capacity to disrupt the horizon of the interlocutors:

> Questions always bring out the undetermined possibilities of a thing. That is why we cannot understand the questionableness of something without asking real questions, though we can understand a meaning without meaning it. To understand the questionableness of something is already to be questioning. (Gadamer, 1989: 368)

In other words, in citizenship education, the controversiality of political concepts and issues is preceded by how they are framed as questions. It could be argued that several accounts of citizenship education, in its liberal and republican iterations (e.g. Callan, Galston, Gutmann), attempt to supply answers, rather than questions, as the foundation of teaching citizenship. The authors of the Crick Report, perhaps because of the practical nature of their report, add a list of guiding questions as a way of learning about controversial issues. The basic requirement is that the teacher should provide sufficient

‘background facts’ and enable a ‘beneficial’ classroom discussion. It is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that all aspects of the issue are ‘covered’ and that no opinion is ‘left out’, thereby averting the ‘risk of bias’:

> ■ What are the main features and probable causes of this issue?
> ■ How, where and by whom are these matters normally resolved?
> ■ Are there other ways in which this issue might be resolved?
> ■ What are the main groups involved in this issue and what do they say needs to be done and why?
> ■ What are their interests and values? What are the likely consequences of their policies?
> ■ How can people be persuaded to act or change their minds?
> ■ How can the accuracy of the information be checked and where can additional evidence and alternative opinions be obtained?
> ■ How does this issue affect us and in what ways can we express our point of view and influence the outcome? (Crick, 1998: 40)

The role of questions here is to help the teacher ‘manage’ the controversy to its resolution, not as a moral issue as in Hand’s account, but as a rhetorical aid leading to an expected learning outcome: the generalised knowledge or skills that are the implied result of teaching controversial issues. But by assuming the answer before the questions, the list suspends the indeterminacy in which new questions arise from the interaction. I argue, with Gadamer, that this is to miss the transformative value of questioning in dialogue: ‘In order to answer the question put to us, we the interrogated must ourselves begin to ask questions’ (Gadamer, 2004: 367).

Learning together means opening the conversation to interpretive horizons, rather than curricular determinacy. Aldridge highlights this: ‘The open-ended nature of this hermeneutic account of learning puts the logical priority of the question in tension with the concept of a curriculum, or a prescribed progression of content’ (2013: 82). Furthermore, a dialogical approach to educational relationships locates the transformative educational moment in an encounter that does not conform to a certain curricular destination. No question could be answered before ‘students are “called into question”, and thus transformed, by the object of study’ (Ibid).

The tension between the curriculum and learning could be presented using an example provided in a previous chapter. Earlier in this thesis, I gave the example of learning about electoral systems as an issue that appears technical in the curriculum, but opens a radical possibility of thinking when it is brought up in classroom discussion. In light of the significance of authentic questions to understanding, this process can now be described in detail, to show how a mundane typology of elective systems may lead to fundamental, ‘truthful’ questions in the classroom.

The Israeli citizenship curriculum dedicates a short section to learning about different elective systems (Adan *et al.*, 2000: 371-373). Knowledge of the elective system is presented in a list of existing electoral systems from around the world in comparison to that of Israel. This typology of elective processes offers comparisons between countries that hold regional elections (such as the UK) as opposed to Israel's nationwide elections, or between personal elections (as in the UK and the USA) and the proportional party system used in Israel, or between direct democracy (as in Switzerland) and indirect, representative democracy. The curricular material supplies the basic concepts and variations of democratic elections, but the meaning of these systems is reliant on understanding them through dialogue. The questions that this material may summon are endless, but it is possible to consider several 'directions' in which classroom discussion may develop.

When we talk about existing elective systems, we discuss existing countries, their history and their meaning in relation to our own experience as citizens. Talking about other countries may lead a student to recount a family holiday in one of these places, or a coincidental fact about them. This suggests the role of current affairs as a supplementary source of knowledge about politics in these conversations. One example is Syria, which (until recently) has been a favoured example of Israel citizenship teachers, since it is a country that holds elections but is not democratic. In a similar vein, would it be possible to talk about the American electoral system without evoking the tall shadow of Donald Trump? To discuss the pros and cons of referendums without referring to Brexit? As in Gadamer's quote above, each new question calls for further questions and other contexts.

However, international current affairs are not the only source of questions summoned by learning about electoral systems. In Israel, citizenship itself is a contested concept. Not all citizens share political power equally: Palestinian citizens, and their parliamentary representatives are not considered by mainstream Jewish political parties to be legitimate participants in the democratic process.[15] There are many examples of continuing efforts to limit the actions of Palestinian politicians in the Knesset,[16] as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu's pitiful remark during the latest election day, that 'Arabs are thronging the voting stations', aimed at increasing the Jewish right-wing vote. The Israeli election system could not be studied without taking into account existential political questions that are implicit in how elections are conducted in Israel. I argue that it would be impossible to understand the electoral process as a part of any political system without engaging critically and radically with the meaning of the system in place.

[15] This includes the Zionist left. No Israeli coalition government has ever offered an Arab-Palestinian party the opportunity to join it, therefore leaving Arab parties in 'eternal opposition'.

[16] For example, efforts to legislate conditions for impeachment aimed directly at Arab-Palestinian members of Knesset.

In terms of elections in Israel, this might lead to questions and expressions that are 'beyond the pale' in adult political life, for example regarding voting rights of Palestinian citizens of Israel. With the increase in racist discourse in the Israeli public sphere, teachers encounter students who do not believe that Palestinians should be allowed to vote (or worse, even to live in Israel). This seems to be the point of the quote presented earlier, from the interview with Andy: when a racist or violent statement is made during a lesson, the teacher is confronted with an ethical responsibility to understand it, by engaging the student within the situation. In Andy's words: 'I really believe in the educational process, I mean, not in… some teachers throw [the student] out of the classroom. You didn't solve it, on the contrary, you are losing the student. The student will stay racist, he [sic] won't listen to you, you will not be a meaningful figure for him… now, I try not to educate on the street or in society and so on, even though I really feel like it sometimes' (Andy, page 5, lines 6-10).

This suggests that teachers should engage with these expressions through the ethics of encounter, derived from the teacher's dialogical responsibility. The ethical consequences of this hermeneutic account of education are discussed in the next section and in the conclusion.

### 8.4 Citizenship education and the ethics of encounter

The previous section pointed to the radical priority of questions in citizenship education, by referring to learning as a process of achieving understanding through dialogue. This, as implied in the previous section, is a hermeneutic approach to learning. The previous section drew on hermeneutic sources to develop a conception of citizenship education as an encounter. It argued that understanding the meaning of political concepts and procedures is an event in dialogue, and particularly in the encounter between the teacher, student, and curriculum. The significance of this observation for practice will be explored in this section, through an analysis of its ethical underpinnings.

The section will therefore present conversation between teacher and students in its ethical context. To do so, it will move from an epistemic account of conversation to an ontological account. R.S. Peters analyses the epistemic structure and value of conversation, in order to describe its significance for learning:

> In a conversation lecturing to others is bad form; so is using the remarks of others as springboards for self-display. The point is to create a common world to which all bring their distinctive contributions. By participating in such a shared experience much is learnt, though no one sets out to teach anyone anything. And one of the things

> that is learnt is to see the world from the viewpoint of another whose perspective is very different. (Peters, 2010: 15)

Peters' description of conversation as a non-hierarchical practice bears close resemblance to Hand's claim that (epistemically) controversial issues should be taught 'non-directively' (Hand, 2008). By opening up the issue through conversation, the students may be exposed to a variety of views and are not 'directed' towards any particular resolution of the controversy. However, according to Peters, conversation should also be considered an aim of education, rather than simply one of its constitutive elements: 'To be able to take an active part in a real conversation is, of course, an achievement. It is not possible without knowledge, understanding, objectivity, and sensitivity to others' (Peters, 2010: 15). The commitment to 'knowledge, understanding, objectivity, and sensitivity to others' corresponds with the skills and dispositions that the deliberative position aims at when teaching controversial issues. The pedagogical logic of this position is that through open deliberation about political issues, students develop the required deliberative virtues of good citizenship, and become able to participate in conversation.

But the kind of learning Peters attributes to conversation also suggests an ethical commitment, since it is non-directive, and could therefore be described as an exercise in being-with-others, which results in creating a 'common world'; Peters' notion of 'sensitivity to others' implies an ethical relation to the interlocutor. According to Peters, a constructive conversation demands two main features of its participants. First, it demands a commitment to a 'shared experience' of the conversation – no one is perceived as being above the other in terms of what is discussed. In education, this ethical relation is inherently connected to the dialogic process of questioning, explored in the previous section. The possibility of understanding here represents a possibility for transformation, but also an ethical commitment to the Other:

> We come into dialogue because there is something about which we want to know the truth and we recognize that our interlocutor has something to teach us about it. Acknowledging the value of our partner means being open to the possibility that the dialogue will proceed in a direction that we had not anticipated, that we will discover something new or come to realize the inadequacy of our initial understanding – we will be 'transformed' by the encounter. (Aldridge, 2015: 82)

The notion that something is 'at stake' is especially present when we consider citizenship education in the Israeli context. When we talk about the most fundamental questions of political life, participants in conversation are engaged on not only an epistemic level, but also an existential level, with their political commitments and identities 'thrown into the mix' and called into doubt. Political questions summoned in

citizenship education represent a moment in the classroom in which options are opened before the classroom precisely because neither the teacher, nor the students, nor the curriculum could fully respond to them alone. This encounter is a hermeneutic condition of understanding, but it also entails an ethical demand.

In an essay about the ethical significance of the teacher-student relationship, Martin Buber depicted the following scene, in which a novice teacher encounters for the first time his geography class. The teacher, unsure as to how to begin, opens with a faltering question:

> 'What did you talk about last in geography? The Dead Sea? Well, what about the Dead Sea?' But there is obviously something not quite usual in the question, for the answer he gets is not the ordinary schoolboy answer; the boy begins to *tell a story*. Some months earlier he had stayed for a few hours on the shores of the Dead Sea and it is of this he tells. He adds: 'And everything looked to me as if it had been created a day before the rest of creation.' Quite unmistakably he had only in this moment made up his mind to talk about it. In the meantime his face has changed. It is no longer quite as chaotic as before and the class has fallen silent. They all listen. The class, too, is no longer a chaos. Something has happened. (Buber, 2003: 134)

The novice geography teacher's inexperience might be the reason for his ambiguous phrasing of the question concerning the Dead Sea. Perhaps it is the character of the student that leads him to portray so poetically the image of the Dead Sea. Either way, the surprising exchange between the teacher and the student presents an example of the way in which educational meaning in the classroom is inherently unpredictable. The classroom – students and teacher alike – suddenly confronts a dimension of meaning that was certainly not in the lesson plan. The anecdote also reminds us that the role of the teacher should be considered carefully not only as a vehicle of instruction, but also as a person, standing unsure and insecure in front of a sea of noise, drawn to an ethical responsibility towards the students in front of her. Buber reminds us that classroom life, despite the best efforts of pedagogic instructors and educational measurement, consists of moments that do not give themselves up to epistemic certainty or learning outcomes.

This ethical responsibility in pedagogical practice is encapsulated in van Manen's notion of 'pedagogical tact' (1991; 2008), used to describe the ability of teachers to encounter their students: 'an improvisational pedagogical-didactical skill of instantly knowing, from moment to moment, how to deal with students in interactive teaching-learning situations' (van Manen, 2008: 13). The encounter therefore constitutes the ethical meaning of teaching: 'teaching is not only governed by principles of effectiveness, but also by special normative, ethical, or affective considerations' (Ibid: 6). The improvisational

aspect of teaching is related to both the political responsibility of the teacher and to her ethical responsibility as it is manifested in the presence of the student.

This presence, in the classroom moment Buber describes above, revolves around the face of the student. It is the experience of encountering another face, Levinas claims, that makes the Other present to us in the form of an ethical commitment; the face is '[t]he way in which the other presents himself, exceeding the idea of the other in me' (Levinas, 1979: 50). In *Ethics and Infinity*, Levinas describes the universal demand manifested in the face of the Other:

> … access to the face is straightaway ethical … There is first the very uprightness of the face, its upright exposure, without defense. The skin of the face is that which stays most naked, most destitute. It is the most naked, though with a decent nudity. It is the most destitute also: there is an essential poverty in the face; the proof of this is that one tries to mask this poverty by putting on poses, by taking on a countenance. The face is exposed, menaced, as if inviting us to an act of violence. At the same time, the face is what forbids us to kill. (Levinas, 1979: 85-86)

For Gadamer (1989), encountering the other is not only a condition of understanding; it also dictates an authentic abandoning of the assurance of what is known, and an acceptance that there is something unknown. Gadamer turns to the seemingly frustrating, circular conversations in Platonic dialogues in order to demonstrate the difference between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' dialogue. The professed ignorance of Socrates is therefore seen as an ethical commitment to the interlocutors, and what distinguished him from the Sophists:

> To someone who engages in dialogue only to prove himself [sic] right and not to gain insight, asking questions will indeed seem easier than asking them. There is not risk that he will be unable to answer a question. In fact, however, the continual failure of the interlocutor shows that people who think they know better cannot even ask the right questions. In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, and that means knowing that one does not know. (Gadamer, 1989: 371)

Gur Ze'ev points to the radical implications of dialogic responsibility for political education. In assuming one's responsibility for the other, or rather 'respond-ability' for the Other: 'A true response to the infinite, uneducable otherness of the Other and a worthy response to the richness and meaninglessness of Life unite here in a new, Diasporic kind of responsibility' (Gur Ze'ev, 2010: 33). Gur Ze'ev gives an account of a 'diasporic counter-education' as 'responsible response to humans' being-in-the-world as becoming-toward the world' (Ibid). In the context of political learning, this might mean that instead of making use of existing categories for relating to the world – such as one's nation, ideology or tradition – our 'diasporic existence' is manifested as an act of ethical commitment to the

improvisational acts of teaching and learning: ‘The mature diasporic improviser … creates each moment anew as enduring ecstatic improvisation that manifests respond-ability and response-ability. This is the never paved way toward mature improvisation’ (Gur Ze’ev, 2011: 113). The process of learning therefore discloses ethical meaning from political concepts: ‘the situatedness of the ethical within the framework of the political’ (Gur Ze’ev, 2010: 34), but ‘only to overcome the political and to transcend the historical moment – not to enslave one’s life to the imperatives, limits, and possibilities of the political’ (Ibid).

This chapter has argued that controversiality is unavoidable in learning about politics. This is especially true when we consider the political sphere as agonistic, in which no prior ethical or moral demand precedes political encounters. The political, following Carl Schmitt’s claim, suspends the ethical (Schmitt, 1985). But in citizenship education, this is reversed and the ethical suspends the political. The encounter between teacher and student is dictated by responsibility and tact, which defy expected outcomes and destined conclusions. In this way, the citizenship classroom remains secluded from the pressures and possible violence of the world, and is allowed to engage with thinking about politics.

## Conclusion

The problem of citizenship education was presented in the first chapter in two sections, as an introduction to the broader scope of this thesis. The first section described my own experience as a citizenship teacher, and my wonderment at the strange political meaning of classroom discussion. The second section presented the problem of teaching political concepts in a postmodern condition. Both sections were set against a backdrop of a certain 'discourse of effectiveness' that dominates educational practice and, to an extent, educational research. The danger of losing political meaning in citizenship education was conveyed through the quote from Plato's *Republic* that opened Chapter 2:

> I shall try to persuade first the Rulers and Soldiers, and then the rest of the community, that the upbringing and education we have given them was all something that happened to them only in dream. In reality they were fashioned and reared, and their arms and equipment manufactured, in the depths of the earth, and Earth herself, their mother, brought them up, when they were complete, into the light of day. So now they must think of the land in which they live as their mother and protect her if she is attacked, while their fellow citizens they must regard as brothers born of the same mother earth. (Plato, 2007: 414d)

In Chapter 2, I presented several theoretical responses to the totalising dynamic of Plato's citizenship education. The liberal position on citizenship education relies on individual powers of judgement to overcome the coercive potential of state power over education. The critical position, and especially Freire's 'critical pedagogy', understands education as a process of becoming aware of the political and social structures that constitute oppressive practices. Both positions define the political meaning of educational situations in relation to political aims outside the classroom. However, as Arendt claims, the relation between education and the political sphere should not be considered solely as instrumental in producing a desired future, but also as preserving the possibility of newness in the world. This means that the task of education is not instructing students in the 'art of living', but 'introducing them to the world' (Arendt, 1993).

Chapter 3 introduced citizenship education in Israel in its historical and political contexts. The liberal and critical positions were understood as methodological commitments that roughly translate into 'institutional' and 'critical' perspectives on education. The final section of the chapter suggested Arendt's political phenomenology as an alternative methodological approach, and a way into citizenship education as a political experience. The methodological core of the thesis was set out in Chapter 4, which developed the epistemic and ontological distinction between the three approaches outlined

previously, and described my method of collecting and analysing information in my study of Israeli citizenship education.

Chapter 5 introduced my interlocutors and explained the process of interviewing within the context of the phenomenological strategies of meaning-giving. The background and perceptions of the teachers interviewed for my study were presented, not as sociological data but as experiential descriptions of the life-world of citizenship education. This focus on the world(s) of citizenship teachers therefore became a study in the political meaning of the classroom, rather than an account of the best citizenship education, or an observation of Israeli politics. I believe that this provides a methodological contribution to the field of education studies, and provides useful insight for political theoretical theorists, philosophers, and sociologists of education.

Conducting phenomenological research means focusing on the phenomenon at hand in order to articulate its unique meaning in universal terms. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 presented the features of citizenship education discovered through my research. The sixth chapter introduced a fundamental notion of the thesis: the liminality of citizenship education. Through an interrogation of liminality, the chapter developed Arendt's phenomenology of education as a human activity, and explored its meaning in the context of classroom interaction. Chapter 7 built on the notion of liminality to conceptualise responsibility. It recounted the way in which responsibility is described in current citizenship education texts, and showed what separating education from the political sphere means in terms of the political responsibility of teachers and students. The final section of the chapter explored the liminal metaphor of the 'trickster' in relation to citizenship teachers, who necessarily represent various political and social positions in the classroom. By relating political responsibility to the liminal space of the classroom, I hope to have contributed to an ontological account of teaching as a practice, in which meaning is derived from educational encounters.

Chapter 8 discussed the nature of controversial issues in citizenship education, and their value to learning. It engaged with two accounts of controversial issues in education – an epistemic moral position and a deliberative position. I then proposed a hermeneutic account of citizenship education, in which understanding means engagement with the radical possibilities inherent to political thinking. From this commitment to dialogue stems an ethic of encounter between teacher and student. The culmination of my argument was that in the citizenship classroom, the ethical suspends the political. The dialogical responsibility inherent in the lesson means that while the questions of the political world are the subject of the conversation, the limitations and possible sacrifices of the adult world are inhibited within the liminal space of the classroom. The ethical significance of

teaching, as I demonstrated, is connected to a hermeneutic tradition – a tradition that, I believe, represents a frontier in educational thinking. Within this tradition, this thesis offers a possibility of thinking about political learning.

To teach is to take responsibility for the newness that each child represents. Rather than stifle this newness with the ideologies and commitments that designate our world, the world of adults, we must create in the classroom a space and time that support thought, even when it is ridiculous or dangerous. The Socratic ignorance, mentioned in the final paragraphs of the thesis, is not merely a didactic choice; it is an ethical demand. One crucial meaning of this ethical demand is that we confess a truth to our students: that we do not know, and cannot control, the future. This seems like an odd point to make, but educational discourse, in both practice and theory, often appears to overlook this fact. We cannot and should not aspire to control the future though educational policy. The political role of education is to acquaint students with this world, a role I argue is best achieved through conversation – this is the political responsibility of the citizenship teacher.

In recent years, I started working as a citizenship teacher-educator in Israel. In the current academic year (2016-2017), I teach a course titled 'Pedagogic Knowledge in Citizenship Education'. In teaching this course, I often wonder whether citizenship teachers are 'found' or 'created'. From my encounters with them, I think the student-teachers all understand the complexity of citizenship education in Israel, and some are even drawn to the subject because of this complexity. They place themselves at the heart of public and educational controversy, and aspire to teach. Preparing them for this, considering the conclusions of this thesis, is a fascinating task. It involves stepping into the story of citizenship education in Israel and coming to terms with its conflicting sources of legitimation. But it also means entering into a conversation about political concepts, which the students will hopefully carry on in classrooms. This conversation is called 'education' to the extent that it is transformational. The transformational moment in citizenship teacher education bears some resemblance to the description of learning offered in Chapter 8. However, some attributes are essentially different: the students' ages and life experience, their choice to be there, and the different teacher-student relationship in higher education. Teaching this class inspired me to develop the thoughts presented in the thesis, and invoked the theoretical and phenomenological notions on which I had been reflecting. Engaging these themes in a classroom with student-teachers was a powerful experience. As I continue teaching this course in the future, I hope to further develop my initial resources to better understand the relation between education and political life.

My recent experiences in teacher education have also led me to consider the conclusions of this study in relation to the use of digital media in teaching. The way in

which technological interfaces create ways of discussion may be directly connected to the technical language of policy, and similarly dangerous when applied to teaching political concepts and political narratives (in history, geography, or literature, for example). The mechanisms of these technologies seem wondrous when presented by the salesperson or the educational technology enthusiast, but most applications overlook the significance of 'authentic conversation' to learning, instead presenting the student with limited, un-nuanced and under-contextualised knowledge. This is exemplified in the use of ICT learning software (for example, www.icivics.org, where the student plays the role of president) and how it presents political knowledge in the form of closed or binary questions. This reduction is, I believe, inherent to the way learning technologies represent political knowledge, and I hope future research might explore these claims in more detail.

The methods, findings and conclusions of this thesis may serve as the basis for continued reflection and research on the political meaning of education. This is especially pertinent in Israel, where educational discourse seems to alternate incoherently between over-technical, instrumental language that reduces learning political concepts to 'making the grade', and a perception of citizenship education as an arena in a battle of persuasion between right and left. In order to understand citizenship education, neither the technical nor the ideological account is sufficient. Neither takes into full consideration the tensions that exist between the 'plan' and the authentic and unexpected encounters in classrooms. Neither sufficiently represents or honours the heated arguments in classrooms that may instantly transform into moments of understanding. In my thesis, I have tried to make sense of these moments and feelings, as a way of thinking about citizenship education as an experience in political life.

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