



Abstracts

Democracy and Shame – On Vertical and Horizontal Accountability in Israeli Polyarchy

Gal Amir

Over the first nine months of 2023, a significant part of the Israeli public engaged in mass rallies that reflected widespread popular opposition to the government’s plan to make fundamental changes in Israel’s legal system. Two words stood out in these rallies – “democracy” and “shame”. The events of October 7, 2023, sidelined the debate around the legal reform. However, the essential differences of opinion that evoked it continue to exist. Any future Israeli government will have to address them.

The article explores the roots of this crisis by analyzing the two recurring chants – “democracy” and “shame”, and their attribution to the three components of polyarchy suggested by Guillermo O’Donnell – democracy, liberalism, and republicanism. It examines how the two opposing camps perceive these elements and attempts to uncover the roots of the crisis in the Israeli political ethos. To this end, it offers a genealogical-contextual analysis of these fundamental components and their connection to “democracy” and “shame”. I suggest that while the legal reform supporters attach top priority to vertical accountability, i.e., the accountability of elected representatives to their constituents, the reform opponents fear losing horizontal accountability, i.e., the checks and balances without which a polyarchy could deteriorate into a non-democratic and non-polyarchic regime.

Similar to the public debate around the reform, the discussion in this article concerns only the area of Israel commonly referred to as the Green Line.

The article begins by reviewing the fundamental concepts used in the discussion – democracy, polyarchy, liberalism, and republicanism and goes on to examine the place of each component in the founding ethos of Israeli society. The examination's results enable analyzing the process Israeli society has undergone in recent decades.

The Education System's Contribution to the Israeli Democracy Crisis

Irit Harboun

In the past two decades, democracy has come under significant threat in many developed countries, Israel included. In Israel, this crisis culminated in what is commonly known as the "regime upheaval," but its roots go back to decades-long ongoing processes. At their heart lies a growing concern that Israel's Jewish national identity is under existential threat. The steps taken to bolster this identity came at the expense of Israel's democratic foundations, creating a crisis. To explain this process, researchers have used the term "securitization," a concept that denotes disguising a civil issue as a security one, thus justifying taking extreme measures to face a seemingly existential threat. While research studies have investigated the manifestations of the democratic crisis in Israel, they neglected the role of the education system in securitizing Jewish identity. The present study addresses this gap, examining the relationship between securitization and education, with a specific focus on how securitization mechanisms intensify the education system's involvement in exacerbating the democratic crisis in Israel.

The Alternative “Chosen People” Narrative of Abraham Joshua Heschel

Dror Bondi

Surveys have shown that “The Chosen People” narrative is among the most dominant ones in Israeli society at large, particularly in the Israeli education systems. Many interpret it as an indication of Jewish superiority. The article presents an alternative narrative emerging from the thought of Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), a Jewish-American philosopher and an adamant human rights activist. It discusses the discourse Heschel chose to interpret the term in a universal and pluralistic sense.

The Implications of Using ChatGPT in Learning and Teaching

Hagit Meishar-Tal

This paper presents a critical analysis of the potential impact of ChatGPT, a creative artificial intelligence tool, on learning and teaching. The paper examines the affordances and challenges that this tool presents to learners and teachers in various aspects such as writing as a means of learning, strategies for evaluating information, designing learning tasks, and evaluating learners. The analysis indicates that ChatGPT might serve as a performance support system rather than a learning support system. To use ChatGPT for learning purposes, both students and teachers must employ a high level of critical thinking. They should ensure that their use of the tool is intended to enhance their thinking rather than to take a shortcut to producing products that bypass the information processing mechanisms. In learning, the process is just as important as the product.