JSSE
Journal of Social Science Education

2024, Vol. 23(2)

Edited by:
Mehmet Acikalin
Violetta Kopińska

Article

Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward citizenship education in Israel

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Keywords: civic education, citizenship education, political socialisation, teacher training

- Civic education in Israel is used as a political tool, neglecting broader citizenship education.
- Study examines attitudes of 235 pre-service teachers (PSTs) towards citizenship education.
- PSTs value citizenship education but are confused about teaching methods, goals, and implementation.
- Factors contributing to confusion: resistance to citizenship education, fear of political issues, and curriculum pressure.
- Emphasizes the need for comprehensive citizenship education across schooling levels, fostering active democratic citizenship.

Purpose: Reviewing civic education in Israel reveals that it has been used as a political tool, while the broader field of citizenship education has hardly been examined. This study addresses the gap in the literature regarding PSTs' (PSTs') attitudes towards citizenship education.

Methodology: Questionnaires among 235 PSTs in two colleges were used to examine the significance and value of citizenship education in Israel.

Findings: PSTs recognised the importance of citizenship education but also conveyed confusion regarding teaching methods, long-term goals, and curriculum implementation. This confusion may stem from a reluctance to integrate citizenship education into various subjects, fear of addressing political issues, and pressure from curriculum guidelines.

Research implications: The study emphasises the need for an expanded focus on citizenship education in educational institutions and the integration of citizenship education across different levels of schooling, which can equip students with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for active citizenship in a democratic society.

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Suggested citation: Zvulun, J. Y., & Gindi, S. (2024). PSTs' attitudes toward citizenship education in Israel. *Journal of Social Science Education*, *23*(2). https://doi.org/10.11576/jsse-6609

Declaration of conflicts of interests: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

1 INTRODUCTION

In public discourse, the words ‘citizenship education’ (chinuch ezrakhi in Hebrew) hardly mean anything to most Israelis, and they are usually translated as ‘civic education’ (*horaat ezrakhut*). However, the literature distinguishes between citizenship education and civic education studies, with the former focusing on the public atmosphere and enhancing values and norms and the latter having a commonly defined curriculum and its own discipline. The main goal of citizenship education is to deliver knowledge and understanding of the political, justice and social system in Israel, while citizenship education is aimed at guiding young people to engage in political and social activities by understanding the value of political participation, political knowledge and deliberation (H. Cohen, 2013).

Citizenship education is one of the basic instruments that countries develop during their formation and establishment. Citizenship education is conveyed through official and unofficial institutions. One of the players responsible for educating citizens to understand the meaning of citizenship education is the school (Reichert, 2016). The role of citizenship education teachers at high schools can be effective in children’s and adolescents’ political socialisation, guiding them on how to engage and be part of a democratic community and country.

Citizenship education enhances citizens’ knowledge and values. It requires the development of instruments to educate, participate in, and involve the citizens, as well as nurture values and perceptions such as democratic identity and tolerance for different opinions (Journell, Beeson, & Ayers, 2015). Furthermore, citizenship education is a comprehensive educational process that includes education regarding community involvement and morality.

In this study, we examined the perceived value and meaning of citizenship education through PSTs’ attitudes, examining students who were going to be teachers in different disciplines. First, we explore the meaning and history of civic and citizenship education in Israel, as well as its background and perceptions among teachers, including the paradox of ‘Jewish and democratic’. We then describe our research, the methodology, and the results. We conclude with a discussion.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wide range of definitions and explanations of the terms ‘civic education’ and ‘citizenship education’ in the literature, as well as similar terms. One of the first pioneers who studied the meaning of citizenship postulated three parameters: civil, political and social. The civil parameter described the freedom of the individual, thoughts, and beliefs, the right to be an owner of property, and the right to have a just court hearing. The political parameter was the right to vote or become a candidate for elections, while the social was the right to basic social welfare, financial security, and to be part of the legacy or heritage of your country (Marshall, 1950).

At the beginning of the 21st century, Rowe (2001) argued for three categories of citizenship that support the education system: a cognitive category, an affective category and an experiential category. The cognitive category includes models of patriotism (parental, pluralistic, and legislative). The affective category leads to citizenship education through developing empathy and emotional ties. The third experiential category focuses on value-driven aspects, such as experiences of citizenship that are conducive to education. It also can be called 'education to citizenship for democracy' (Rowe, 2001).

Galston (2001) defined civic education as the ability to have knowledge about your country, develop your own ideas, and the capacity to evaluate the talents, competencies and performance of public officials. Therefore, civic education should be implemented first in elementary schools and later developed in middle schools, high schools, and academia. Moreover, Galston (2001) claimed that as civic engagement declines, it becomes more essential to develop these human capacities, particularly in democratic countries.

All the definitions mentioned have some commonalities, such as focusing on democracy and citizens' engagement. The basic assumption in civic education and education is that living in a democratic state is not an obvious mechanism that citizens should take for granted. It is important that citizens have an understanding of the value of a democratic country and that they need to work hard at implementing and maintaining democratic characteristics (Cam & Palmer, 2008). Therefore, it is important to educate future citizens about the tenets of democracy in their process of political socialisation.

Some evidence from the USA and UK suggests a decline in citizenship education, which influences civic engagement (Estellés & Fischman, 2021; Gagnon, 2003; Gould, 2011; Jamieson, 2013; Journell, 2010; Keating & Janmaat, 2016). Jamieson (2013) finds several interesting characteristics in the U.S. education system in this context. Firstly, the federal government and the states have not made the quality of citizenship education a high priority and "fewer high school civics courses are offered now than were offered in the past." (Jamieson, 2013, p. 66). Secondly, textbooks in schools do not provide the knowledge or skills required to inform citizen participation. Thirdly, the decline is reflected in the budgets, and fourthly, the curriculum is changed to reflect political agendas (Jamieson, 2013).

2.1 Civic education in Israel and the paradox of Israeli democracy – Jewish and democratic

Israel was established as the homeland of the Jewish people (Safran, 2005). On the one hand, Israel is considered the nation-state of the Jewish people and gives priority to Jews in many areas, such as immigration and obtaining citizenship. On the other hand, Israel considers itself a democratic state, pledging in its Declaration of Independence that all citizens will be treated equally regardless of race, gender or religion (Sezgin, 2013). The fragile balance that has been hard to justify for many years has been further compromised by the occupation in 1967, the nation-state law of 2018, and the radical right-wing government that was established in 2022 (Bickel, 2023).

Civic education is taught in Israel as a core subject in middle and high school and deals with political and topical education for good citizenship and involvement in public life in the Jewish and democratic State of Israel. This is a mandatory subject for obtaining a matriculation certificate and usually takes place for two years during high school. There has been a growing controversy surrounding the teaching of citizenship in Israel, particularly focusing on its politicisation (Shimshoni, 2020). Political interests have been involved in conflicts over the content of civic education in Israel (A. Cohen, 2017). Gradually, the curriculum has evolved to reinforce a hierarchical concept of citizenship that creates divisions within Israeli society (Galanti, et al., 2020; Geiger, 2009). Changes in the citizenship curriculum made by different ministers of education, such as Gideon Sa'ar and Naftali Bennett, have further contributed to the politicisation of the subject (Levin, 2011).

The politicisation of civic education has resulted in significant changes in pedagogical trends. These changes include frequent curriculum modifications, textbook turnover, and altered indicators for matriculation exams (Kadri-Ovadia, 2022). The appointment of Gideon Sa'ar as Minister of Education led to revisions in the civic education textbooks for secondary education (Galanti et al., 2020). Private publishers were allowed to create textbooks, including 'As a Fresh Citizen' by Menachem HaCohen Austri, which are modified to fit the norms and values of Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel (Kashti, 2023). These textbooks faced criticism, with accusations of political bias and the diminishing of democratic aspects (Galanti et al., 2020; Pinson & Agbaria, 2021). The controversy surrounding the publication of the new edition of 'Becoming Citizens in Israel' in 2013 highlighted the divergent value approaches within the education system.

2.2 Civic and citizenship education in Israel

The civic education history in Israel has gone through different phases. Before Israel was established, during the British Mandate, there was no official Ministry of Education and Zionists[1] in the '*Yishuv*'[2] positioned civic education as 'Zionist citizenship' (Ichilov, 1993). In general, before Israel was established, there were three education streams under the British Mandate: the socialist workers' stream, the liberal general stream, and the religious-Zionist *Mizrachi* stream. The three of them focused on Israel and the Jewish state with different orientations. However, the significant organisation that directed the curriculum was the 'Teacher's Movement of the Jewish National Fund'.

The teachers' main goal was to direct young people to believe in the Zionist cause and the establishment of the Israeli Jewish state. The teachers stressed the love of Israel, the history of the Jewish people, and unity in the service of establishing a new Zionist state for the Jewish people. Jewish heritage was the main focus of Jewish schools' studies, and all the Jewish holidays and the Jewish calendar were emphasised. The civic education aspect was, in fact, indoctrination to the Zionist cause without challenging any of its ideas (Ichilov, 1993).

After Israel was established, the civic education curriculum focused on the basic aspects of democracy, the principles and values of democracy, what it meant to be a citizen in a democratic regime, minority groups, and the Israeli Arab minority people. There was greater emphasis on Israeli law, and the curriculum hardly touched on the paradox (see below) of Israel being both a Jewish and a democratic state (Ichilov, 1993).

In 1985, a special executive director's circular was dedicated to the issue of education for democracy, and it was determined that this would be the main issue in the education system in that school year (Knesset, 1985). The circular applied two significant principles: 1) the liberal worldview, which puts individuals and their contribution to society in the centre; 2) the national principle that expresses the values of the Zionist- Jewish national culture, tradition and history of the Jewish people. The circular determined that teachers should address the paradox of a Jewish Democratic state so that the students are prepared for these tensions in and outside of school and their future civic life.

In 1995, the Kremnitzer Report[3] brought more universal democratic themes into civic education studies at schools. Furthermore, the Kremnitzer Committee emphasised the need for civic education at both the individual and the collective levels. The committee acted on the rationale that civic education is essential for individuals to be able to implement their civic rights in a meaningful way via political and social routes. The committee suggested different activities to enhance citizenship education, such as teachers' continuing education programs, a democratic and Jewish state curriculum, and support for civics teachers.

Presently, the civic education curriculum in Israel's education system includes core topics as well as elective ones, which allow for expansion and deepening based on teachers' discretion and the specific needs of each school. Topics include the structure of the Israeli government, the Jewish world, political parties and elections, local authorities, media, citizen participation and criticism of the government. The suggested approach is to use contemporary examples, discuss dilemmas, and present diverse perspectives on controversial issues to facilitate learning. Furthermore, there is an option to expand civic education to be the students' major, which includes teaching two out of three elective topics: church and state, Arab and Druze citizens of Israel, and economic-social policy. Citizenship education is not mentioned as part of the curriculum (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Davidovitz and Soan (2014) argued that the purpose of citizenship education in Israel is to make students good citizens. Students are exposed to the tension between Israel as a Jewish State and Israel as a Democratic State. These introduce education to good citizenship and the rational aspect in the public atmosphere of the Jewish and Democratic Israel. Schools and colleges are major social agents that provide adequate tools to most citizens.

Avnon (2013) exposed the theoretical structure of the high school curriculum in the field of civic studies compared with older versions. He argued that the focus of the matriculation exams did not contribute to students' understanding of the meaning and value of participating in a democratic country (Zyngier, 2016). Issues that encourage deliberation on democratic practices, discrimination among different ethnic groups, socialisation, the

structure of political participation and successful citizenship, as called for by Banks (2015), are all insignificant in the program (Avnon 2013). In the current program, discourse on democratic principles and the structure of the regime is prioritised over the discourse on disagreements, political behaviour, and legal or sociological perspectives.

The social, political and security realities facing teachers and educators result in massive challenges in coping with political and social issues (Ezer et al., 2007). While there is ample evidence for the importance of discussing controversial political issues (CPI) in class (Ron & Gindi, 2023), teachers in Israel, for the most part, avoid CPI discussions and prefer to be seen as objective and not taking any sides (Gindi, et al., 2021). This results in confusion, avoidance of responsibility, and difficulties in creating a uniform curriculum. Beyond this, Israeli society exists with its everyday tensions and dynamics, such as terror attacks, the occupation of Palestinian lands, and military actions that, alongside Israeli politicians' lack of decorum, have made many youngsters shy away from interest in politics, and the public trust in its officials is at an all-time low (Hermann et al., 2022). At the end of the day, teachers and educators do not practice enough democratic skills, such as reflecting on democracy and engaging in controversial topics with their students (Suiter, Farrell, & O'Malley, 2016).

Arguments regarding the non-liberal character of civic education in Israeli society have been heard long ago (Avnon, 2013; Pedahzur, 2001; Pedahzur & Perliger, 2004). Yet, as Israel's democratic character continues to be compromised, difficulties in civic education are growing as well, with research indicating the way textbooks and policies have channelled civic education to be procedural in focusing on the mechanics of government and one-sided in ignoring competing narratives (Avidov & Reingold, 2016; A. Cohen, 2016; Galanti et al., 2020).

2.3 Israeli teachers' perceptions of civic and citizenship education

Teachers' perceptions of citizenship education must take into account the division of the Israeli education system into different streams: Jewish general, Jewish religious, Jewish ultra-orthodox, and Arab. It is also important to note that most studies examined civic education rather than citizenship education. For example, Ichilov (2003) examined teachers' perceptions of civic education and democracy in the context of the rifts within Israeli society and found disparities between teachers in the different streams. In fact, she found the depth of the religious and national rifts so vast that she concluded that the mission that teachers are expected to accomplish in teaching civic education appears unachievable.

Goren and Yemini (2015) examined teachers' perceptions of global citizenship education in the Israeli context and found that local and international teachers perceived the Israeli context and how global citizenship education should be taught differently. Local schoolteachers felt more intensely affected by the Israeli context, believed that global citizenship was more appropriate for Europeans than for Israelis, and faced barriers due to the Israeli geopolitical situation. Rich and Iluz (2010) examined PSTs in their third or

fourth year at a Jewish religious college regarding their perceptions of the civic education curriculum and found that universal and religious goals of education were considered extremely important, that men attributed more importance than women to religious (*Torah*) aims, and academic intellectual growth was not considered a significant educational goal.

3 METHOD

The methodology of this study is quantitative, focusing on gathering data and generalising it across people to explain a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2010). This research examined the perceptions of citizenship education among PSTs and aimed to understand how these future teachers understood citizenship education, especially in light of the decline in democracy in Israel.

3.1 Research questions

The questions of this study were:

1. What is most important to PSTs in teaching citizenship education?
2. What do PSTs think should be taught within citizenship education in schools, and how?
3. Which contents do PSTs believe should be discussed in schools and in academia that relate to citizenship education?

3.2 Participants

Students in the two colleges were approached both by a research assistant coming to classes (~50%) and through an online questionnaire. Two hundred thirty-five participants from two colleges at the centre of Israel responded to the questionnaire, 130 PSTs in one college and 93 at the other college. 163 (69.4%) identified as women and 72 (30.6%) as men, which is representative of the colleges as well as the teaching profession in Israel. In terms of diversity, both colleges have Jewish and Muslim students. However, the sample included 200 (85.1%) Jewish students and 27 (11.5%) Muslim students, which is less than their proportion in the population (~20%). The rest (8) identified as a-religious. 29 (12.3%) were in their first year of college, 49 (20.9%) second year, 59 (25.1) third year, 68 (28.9%) fourth year and 30 (12.8%) in retraining programs. When PSTs were asked about employment, 113 (48.3%) responded that they worked in the public sector, 65 (27.8%) in the private sector, and 56 (23.9%) did not work.

3.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this research was taken from the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (Torney-Purta, Barber, & Richardson, 2005)[4].

However, the questionnaire has been translated into different languages, including Hebrew (Ichilov, 2003), with satisfactory reliability and validity.

The questionnaire is divided into ten themes and contains 16 questions on a 1-5 Likert scale (1 denoting 'not important at all' and 5 denoting 'very important'), 26 questions on a 1-4 Likert scale ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'), seven questions on a 0-2 Likert scale ('is not taught in schools', 'is taught in schools', 'I don't know') and two multiple choice question. In total, 51 items were related to attitudes toward citizenship education. For example, the first theme, 'How important do you think citizenship education is?' included seven statements such as 'international problems and relations', 'migration of people', 'social welfare', and 'equal opportunities for women and men'. The last theme contained items that asked respondents to rate how important it was to teach certain topics for citizenship education. Sample topics included 'the constitution', 'citizen rights and obligations', 'different conceptions of democracy', and so forth.

The reliability of the original questionnaire was checked with 60 items in 16 countries and was found to be acceptable (Torney-Purta et al., 2005). Furthermore, the international study made efforts to check the reliability and validity when translating it into different languages, including Hebrew (e.g., Ichilov, 1999; 2003).

3.4 Procedure

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, the questionnaires were sent online to students in both colleges either through a distribution list or through a research assistant who approached them at college. In the first phase, it was sent to 650 students, and in the second phase, it was sent to 250. As mentioned above, 130 PSTs replied in the first college (20% response rate), 93 in the second college (37.2%), and 12 answered without writing which college they belonged to. The total response rate for the entire sample was 26.1%.

The proposal was approved by the ethical committees of the two colleges. The participants were asked to sign an online informed consent form prior to completing the questionnaire. Identifying information was not exposed.

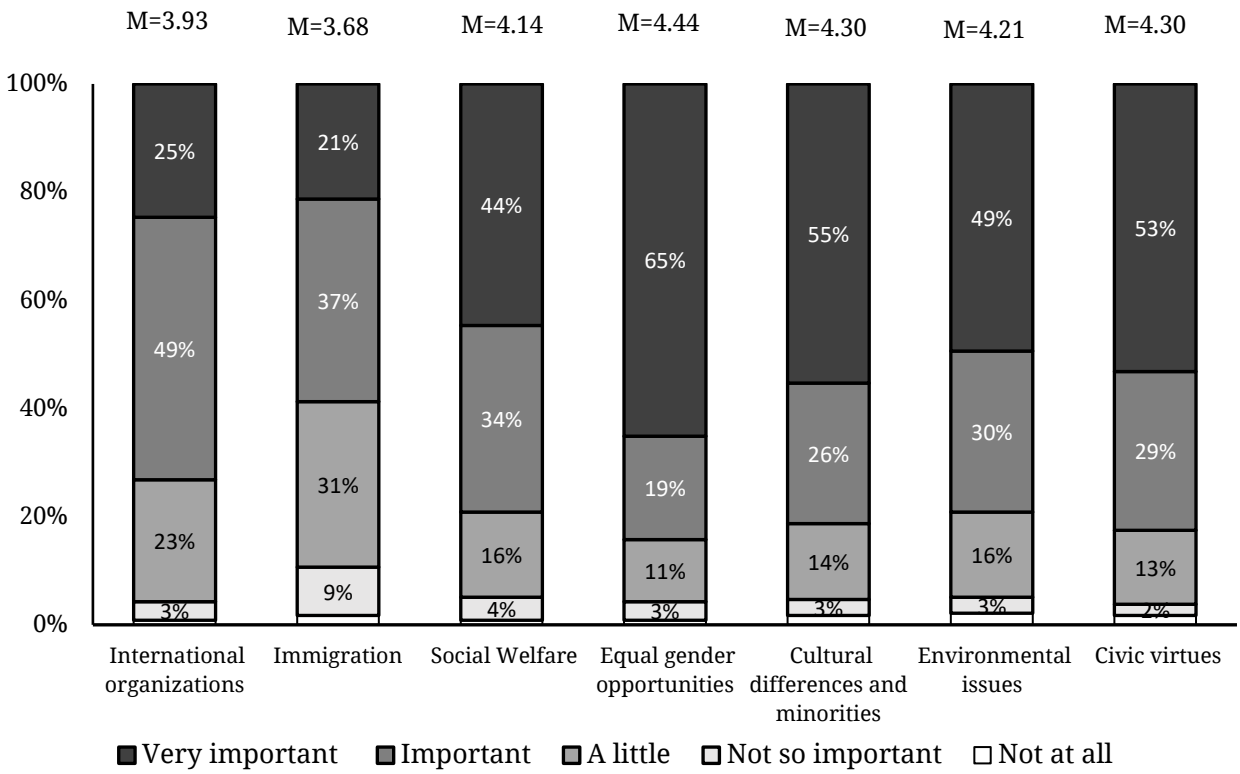
After all the questionnaires were completed and uploaded, the data were analysed using a statistical software package (SPSS, version 23). Descriptive statistics were used to present sample characteristics and responses to the different questions.

4 RESULTS

This section presents the results based on the questionnaire and the statements that participants completed. The results are organised according to the citizenship education subjects and directed to answer the research questions regarding how PSTs perceive citizenship education, what should be taught in citizenship education, and how important citizenship education is in schools and higher education.

PSTs were asked how important it was to teach citizenship education on a 1-5 scale, where 1 denoted it was not important at all and 5 that it was most important. Most PSTs rated citizenship education as important to teach, with 207 participants rating it between 4 and 5. Only 11% thought that it was only somewhat important, and 1% that it was not important. Next, PSTs were asked what topics should or should not be taught in citizenship education. Seven topics were introduced, and respondents were asked to agree or disagree that they are important to be taught in citizenship education: international organisations, immigration, social welfare, equal gender opportunities, cultural differences and minorities, environmental issues and civic virtues. As Figure 1 shows, most of the participants (180-190) rated all topics but one as either important or very important. The only topic that had a lower proportion of endorsement, with 130 participants rating it as important or very important, was immigration.

Figure 1. To what extent do you agree that it is important to include the following topics in citizenship education studies?

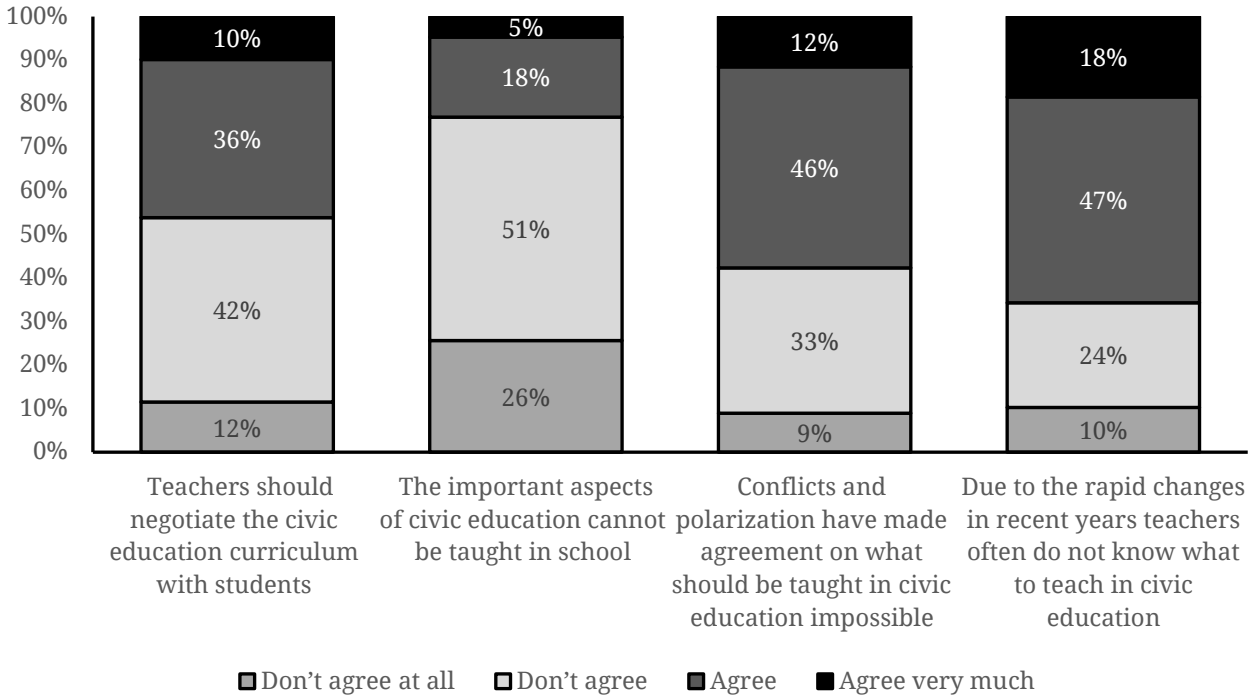


PSTs were asked how citizenship education should be taught. As Table 1 shows, the largest proportion (48.5%) responded that citizenship education should be integrated into all the subjects, 26% responded that it should be a separate subject, and 26% in selected subjects such as geography and law. Participants were presented with several statements regarding the dynamics of the citizenship education curriculum (see Figure 2). Most PSTs agreed that they were confused about the citizenship education curriculum. PSTs agreed that teachers have difficulties and disagreements regarding what to teach in citizenship education and named polarisation and rapid changes as the main reasons.

Table 1. How should citizenship education be taught?

	Frequency	Per cent
Citizenship education should be taught within social science subjects such as history, geography, languages, religion, law and ethics	61	26.0
Citizenship education should be taught as a separate subject	59	25.1
Citizenship education should be taught as an integrated subject within all subjects in a school	115	48.9

Figure 2. The citizenship education curriculum



When asked if several topics pertaining to citizenship education should be studied at school, the teachers endorsed all topics suggested as important, with approval ranging from 68 to 96%. In contrast, when asked what topics are actually studied, the results were much more modest. Figure 3 exhibits participants' responses when asked if seven topics were taught. The topic that participants reported being taught most at school was saving the environment (68%), while the lowest rates were for awareness and care regarding other countries (10%) and for problem-solving in society and community (21%). The other topics received mediocre endorsements ranging between 35 and 52%.

Figure 3. Should the following topics be taught at school?

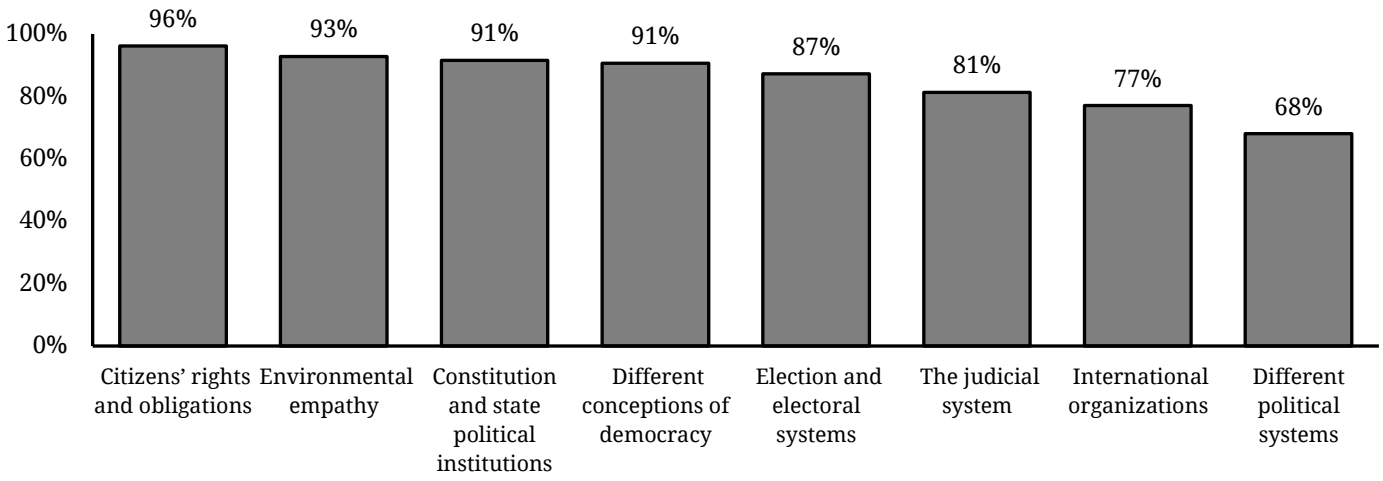
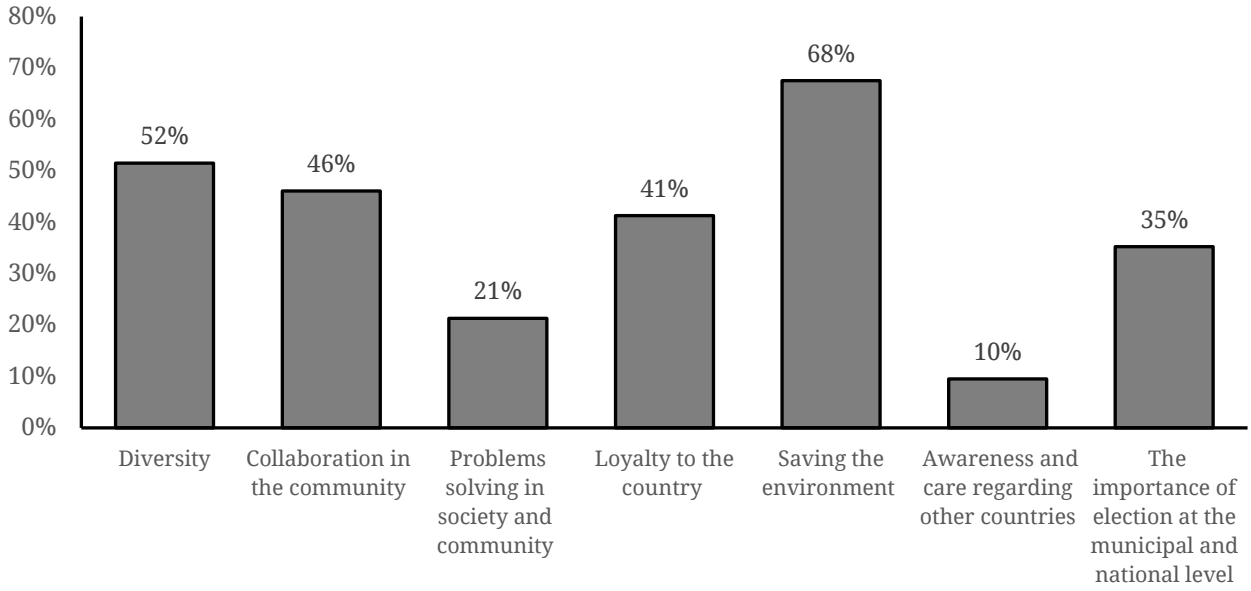
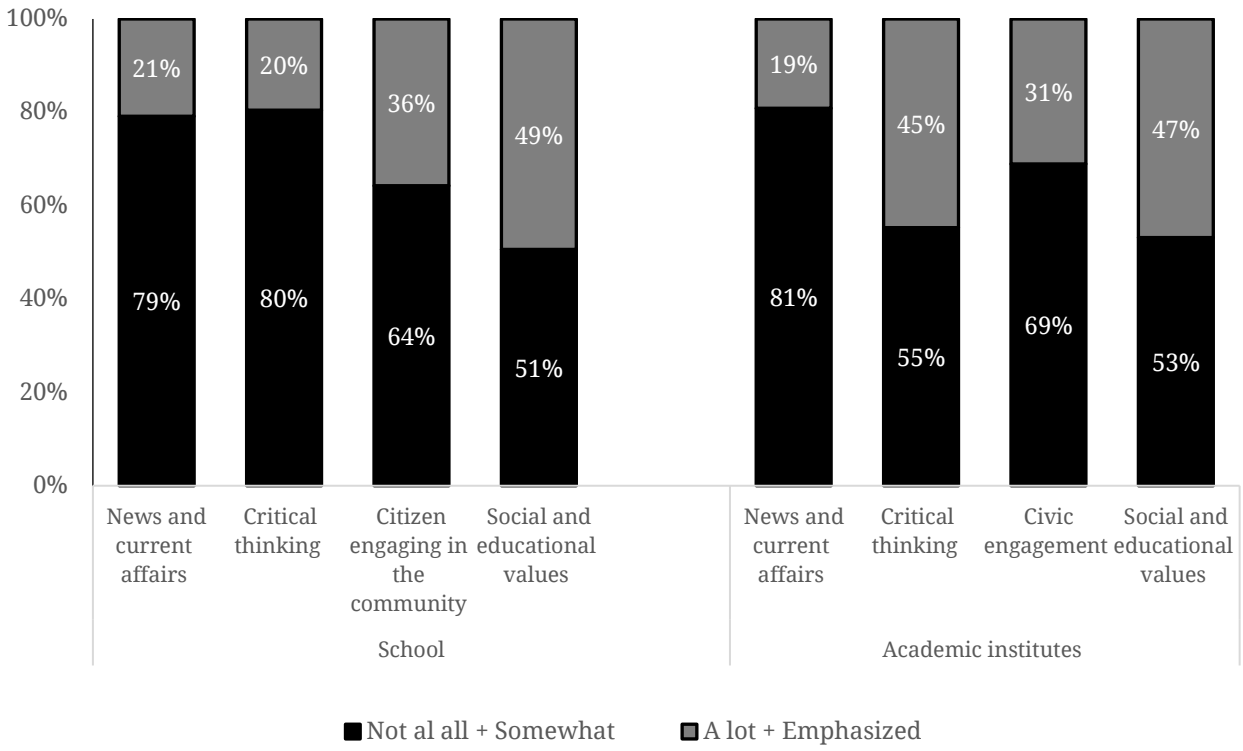


Figure 4. Are the following topics taught at school?



PSTs were asked if several topics were discussed at school and in academic institutes: news and current affairs, critical thinking, civic engagement, and social and educational values. The results were surprisingly similar for school and academia: news and current affairs, as well as civic engagement, were hardly discussed, critical thinking was hardly practised in schools while acknowledged more in academia, and social and educational values were moderately discussed.

Figure 5. To what extent are the following contents discussed in school or academia?



PSTs were asked what the long-term goals of citizenship education were. As Figure 6 shows, participation in elections, rule of law, knowledge of one's country's history, willingness to serve in the military and community involvement were the most endorsed. Long-term goals that were least endorsed by participants were political party membership and respect for government representatives. In another series of statements regarding citizens' role in a democracy (Figure 7), the PSTs agreed that taking part in public discourse, being involved in environmental activities, and being loyal to one's country were goals to strive for in citizenship education. The statement regarding disobeying laws, when they undermine human rights, was more controversial among respondents.

Figure 6. PSTs' long-term goals in citizenship education

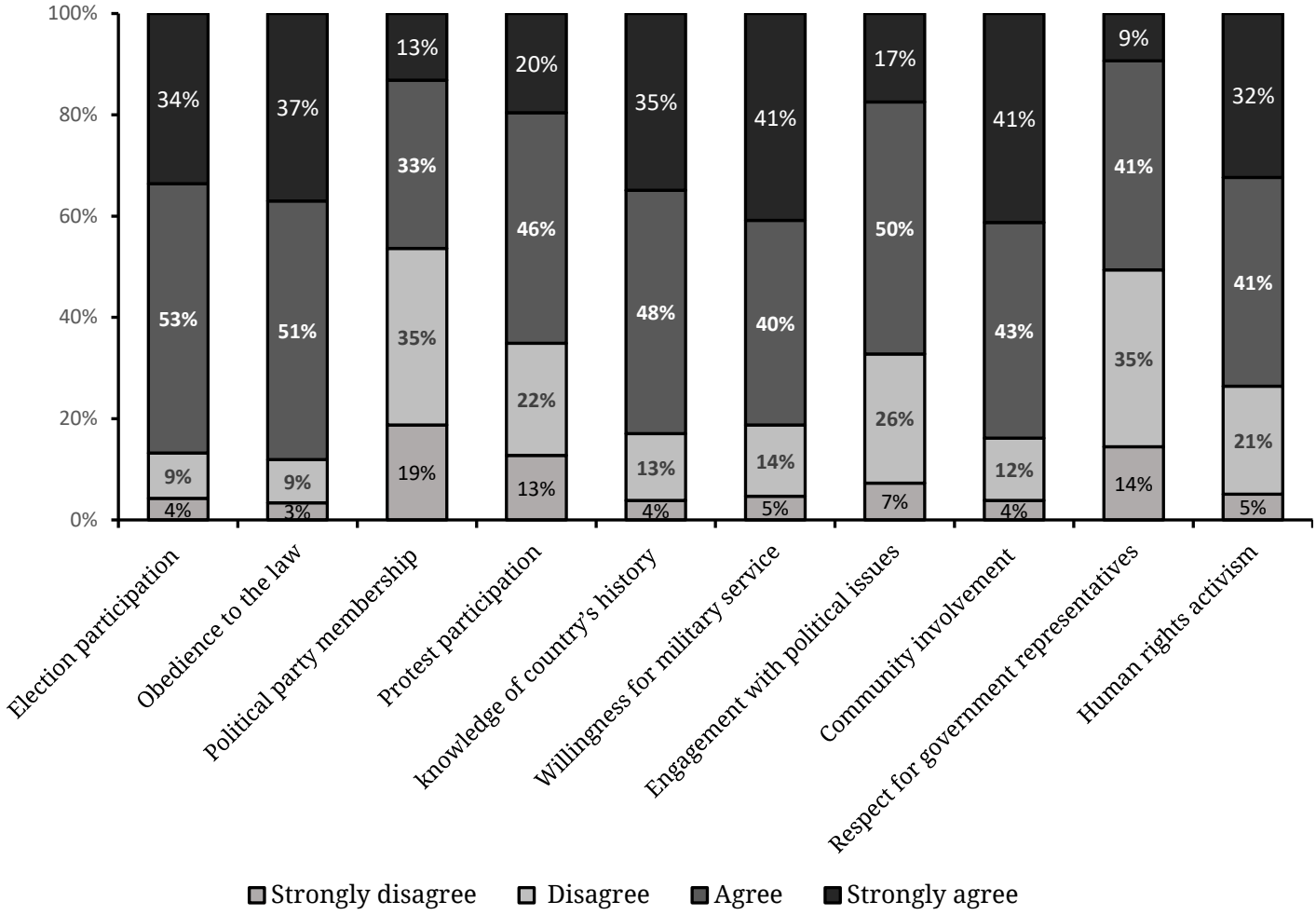
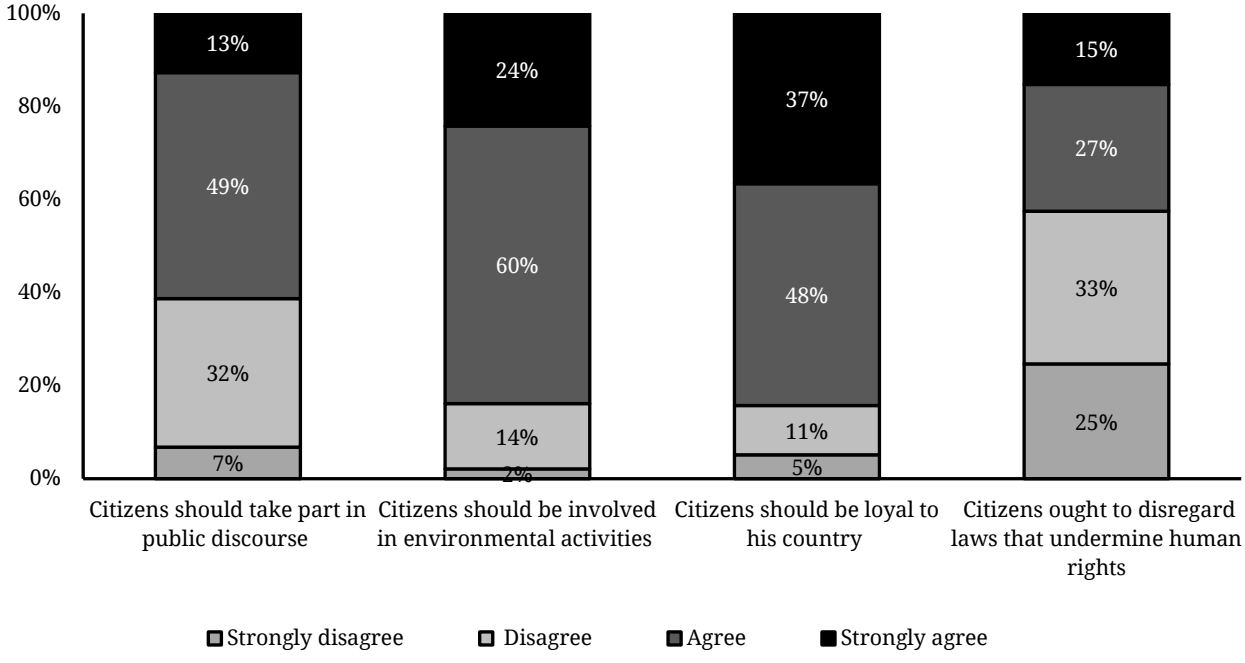


Figure 7. Responses to statements regarding citizens' role in a democracy



5 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This study aimed to investigate the significance and value of citizenship education in Israel, focusing specifically on PSTs' perceptions. The initial contribution of this study is that it is the first to examine the terrain of citizenship rather than civic education in Israel, at least among PSTs. The findings reveal a twofold outcome. On the one hand, they underscore the importance of citizenship education among PSTs, highlighting their recognition of its relevance within the educational context. On the other hand, the results point to a notable level of confusion concerning the optimal approaches to teaching citizenship education, the establishment of long-term goals, and the effective implementation of citizenship education within the curriculum.

The reluctance of many teachers to integrate citizenship education into various subjects and seize every appropriate opportunity, as suggested by Avnon (2013), may stem from a broader confusion among this generation of educators regarding the handling of political issues in the classroom (e.g., Hess, 2009; Ron & Gindi, 2022). The complexity and sensitivity surrounding political topics generate apprehension among teachers, leading them to shy away from engaging students in discussions about such matters. This hesitancy might arise from concerns over potential conflicts, ideological differences, or even fear of controversy (Erlich Ron & Gindi, 2023). Additionally, teachers face pressure from various sources, such as curriculum guidelines or school policies, which emphasise a more prescribed approach to citizenship education, limiting its integration across subjects. Consequently, the PSTs might be more inclined to confine citizenship education to specific subjects, such as governmental procedures, avoiding the potential challenges and uncertainties that come with addressing political issues in a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary manner (Avidov & Reingold, 2016; A. Cohen, 2016).

While the participants acknowledged the importance of speaking about different topics in citizenship education, they reported that the values of citizenship education are hardly discussed in schools or in academia. They reported that critical thinking was hardly practised or discussed in schools compared to a slightly better yet unappealing figure in academia. These findings support the growing notion that considering the weakening of democracy in Israel, citizenship education in Israeli education is waning as well (Galanti et al., 2020; Pinson & Agbaria, 2021).

PSTs' perceptions regarding the long-term goals of citizenship education provide an interesting reflection of the historical processes as well as the changes in recent years. The long-term goals reflect the paradox of the Jewish and democratic state – a vast majority of PSTs endorse the importance of willingness to serve in the military alongside the importance of human rights. The long-term goals that received the lowest support from PSTs included encouraging students' respect towards government representatives and membership in political parties, which coincides with the public atmosphere of deteriorating political trust (Hermann et al., 2022).

The first implication of this study is the necessity for an intensified focus on citizenship education within educational institutions and the integration of citizenship education into

the curriculum. Since citizenship education is a fundamental instrument (Reichert, 2016), it is crucial that schools play a significant role in educating citizens about its meaning and importance by incorporating it into different subjects. Particularly in high schools, students should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and values to actively engage in their communities and contribute to a democratic society (Avnon, 2013).

The study also highlights the role of prospective teachers in recognising the value of citizenship education. Despite the declining trend in civic engagement, it is essential not to overlook the significance of these values and subjects that promote solidarity within Israeli society. By instilling democratic identity, tolerance for diverse opinions, and a sense of community involvement, citizenship education nurtures the cognitive, affective, and experiential aspects of citizenship (Journell et al., 2015). Therefore, citizenship education should be implemented at various educational levels, starting from elementary schools and progressing to middle schools, high schools, and academia, to develop the necessary capacities for active citizenship (Galston, 2001).

This study explored the perceived value of citizenship education through the attitudes of PSTs, who represent students aspiring to become teachers in different disciplines. By examining the meaning, implementation, and background of citizenship education in Israel, as well as conducting a comprehensive analysis of our research methodology, results, and discussion, we aim to contribute to the understanding and promotion of citizenship education in the educational system. The integration of citizenship education into the curriculum can enhance students' knowledge, values, and abilities to actively participate in democratic processes and contribute to the betterment of society (Rowe, 2001).

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ENDNOTES

[1] Zionism is the Jewish national movement which was established in the 19th century with the goals of establishing a Jewish homeland and bringing as many Jews there as possible. The Zionist movement developed against the backdrop of religious beliefs about the Jewish people returning to their ancestral homeland, anti-Semitism in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, and European nationalism.

[2] Jewish population of Israel prior to the establishment of the Israeli State.

[3] Against the backdrop of significant signs of racism in Israel, Professor Amnon Rubenstein, the Labour Party Minister of Education, decided to establish a committee headed by law professor Mordechai Kremnitzer to provide a new curriculum with more democratic roots and empathy to human beings. This report addresses education in Israeli civic life and defines the goals of education to citizenship, such as imbuing understanding and the capacity to analyse and judge different social and political questions and issues, creating commitment and responsibility to a democratic regime, and the ability to be an actively, involved citizen.

[4] This organisation has been researching the subject of civic education since 1975 in different countries. The main topics were identified in their research regarding countries: democracy and citizenship, national identity and international relations, and social cohesion and diversity. Their research covered 16 countries (including Israel) with around 50,000 participants (16-18 years old) taken in 1999.

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