

Abstract

This research dissertation deals in the educating for civic engagement among youth-council members in Israel, who cooperate as a leadership group to promote the needs and interests of the youth that they represent. The civic engagement of youth has been found to positively impact their civic engagement as future adults. Yet many questions remain unanswered regarding the educational processes that promote civic engagement, the organization within which such activities take place, and the group framework within which the youth are involved. This research strives to overcome this gap in the literature.

The research question presented in this dissertation examined variables that promote civic engagement among youth who take part in group activities. A range of frameworks were examined, including both non-formal education settings and formal youth councils, with the latter including four different levels (school, municipal, district, and national student councils).

A mixed-methods research design was applied, to include both qualitative and quantitative data. A total of 1,168 participants from across the country, both Jewish (n=810; 69.3%) and Arab (n=358; 30.70%), were included in this study. This widescale study helped shed light on the civic engagement of youth in Israel.

The findings of this research are presented through three separate articles. The first article deals in relationships between community resilience, community coherency, and collective efficacy and between the civic engagement of youth who are active in youth councils and in other frameworks. The second article is a comparative study that examines variables relating to the civic engagement of Jewish and Arab youth who are members of youth councils, non-formal group frameworks, or no group frameworks outside of school. The third and final article examines the perceptions of youth-council facilitators in Israel regarding their role in promoting civic engagement and discourse among the youth-council members.

developing their civic engagement, creating ties to their community, and addressing their needs – for the Jewish youth and even more so for the Arab youth. The conclusions of the research also emphasize the need for providing the youth with independence as a means for enhancing their civic engagement. Such independence should be encouraged by expanding the discourse and activities in which youth-council representatives are permitted to partake, and which are dependent on the individual policies of each organization. Moreover, the findings of this research dissertation are in line with previous studies that recommended developing an educational infrastructure that is suited to youth and that encourages their civic engagement in the present – which in turn could positively impact their future civic engagement as adults (Popielarz, 2020).

Finally, this research contributes to the theoretical discourse on relationships between group variables that promote civic engagement and on exposing differences between the civic engagement of Arab and Jewish youth. Additionally, this research presents a novel theoretical model regarding the role of the youth-council facilitator, in line with the given organizational policy. From a practical aspect, these findings can help create an educational infrastructure that encourages citizens, present and future, to be an active member of their community, working together to right the wrongs of their given society.

I hereby declare that any publication of this Dissertation or article included in it or based on it will cite that the Dissertation was written in the framework of doctoral studies at Bar-Ilan University.