***(Add to the introduction/theoretical section)***

The educational system in the Golan struggles with the challenge of being simultaneously a regional system and part of the national system. This raises two central points.

The first is that as a regional educational system serving community settlements, its methods for addressing the issue tend to reflect a community-based worldview. This communitarian approach involves a series of educational agencies, beginning with the nuclear and extended family, through the communities and the educational institutions (see, for example, Arthur, 2000). This continuum is at the core of the communitarian concept, according to which these various circles all affect the students, who are at the center of the educational process. A second aspect of the communitarian approach is that values education reflects community members’ ethos, and their common good (see Hartef 2007; Nowakowski et. al, 1985; Rawls 1971; Sparrow, 2021).

***(Add to the Discussion)***

In the current case study, the communitarian approach is reflected in the connections between the education system and the regional leadership, and in the ways that the education system serves the Golan community.

The education system avoided directly engaging in politics or the controversy in the curriculum. It adopted a practice of avoidance, while expressing the hegemonic perspective in the Golan, through ideological education that the strengthens the sense of belonging to the region as a whole, and pride in this region’s special place as part of the State of Israel (emphasizing building a cohesive 'Golan community', over identification with individual community settlements). The communitarian approach, based on a series of concentric circles, is manifest in the “division of labor” between the communities and the educational institutions. The education system apparently strove to create a secure and safe space, with no direct reference to the dispute over the region, and avoided the highly emotional atmosphere surrounding this issue. However, in practice, the education staff and students were intimately involved in the dispute, and the education system was affected by what was happening in the region. The alleged avoidance was based on the fact that the students were already actively involved in the dispute over the region, and therefore there was no need to bring it into the classrooms.

However, this avoidance was not neutral. The education system maintained a policy that supported students who missed school because they were participating in protests or demonstrations against Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. It even took an ideological stance on the controversy, in a significant way, which corresponded to the hegemonic position in the region.

However, since the regional educational system is part of the national system, their apparent avoidance of the issue had political significance. By refraining from explicitly declaring a position on the controversy or upholding the hegemonic opinion in the region that opposed the state’s position, the regional education system maintained a secure position vis-a-vis State institutions. The regional leadership emphasized that the Golan was essential to the nation, and that its diverse population reflected Israeli society as a whole, and were an intrinsic part of it. At the same time, the education system positioned itself as a branch of the state. This allowed the region to receive financial support from the State, such as additional educational psychologists and educators, who remained there even after the political situation stabilized. Subsequently, they received financial support from the State, and the autonomy to implement regional educational programs. These programs operated under agreed-upon titles such as environmental education or innovative education, but involved, other things, creating a united Golan community and strengthening the students’ sense of belonging to the region.

**Importance of the research topic:**

This case study on the activity of the education system in the Golan as a disputed region during a period of uncertainty connects the pedagogical discussion with the broad political implications of addressing this topic. Previous studies on teaching controversial issues usually referred to the impacts on civic perceptions and “training” future citizens in a democratic system. Using tactics of avoidance can indicate weaknesses in educators’ professional resilience, or in the society’s resilience as a democracy, and its ability to deal with controversial issues.

In the Golan, apparently, avoidance tactics were practiced. However, we would like to point out that this avoidance emerged out of a clear and active ideological position in the region. Education for democracy was derived from the regional leadership and a communitarian approach, which sought to strengthen a certain position in the region, and not to address the controversy or its legitimacy per se.