

The Communication Rights of Palestinian Israelis Understood Through the Capabilities Approach

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The consistent underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Palestinian Israelis in Israeli media have been assumed to hinder Palestinian Israelis' ability to realize their communication capabilities. We set out to understand how Palestinian Israeli individuals see their representation in the media as an issue of capabilities' realization and its effect on their right to communicate. Through semi-structured individual in-depth interviews with 20 Palestinian Israelis, we examined which capabilities they wished to realize by using Israeli media as well as what were the enablers and constraints that influenced their ability to realize these capabilities and exercise their communication rights. Findings suggest that Palestinian Israelis are aware of the way they are portrayed by the Israeli media, are bothered by it, fear its implications outside the screen and off the microphone, and although they wish to integrate in society and participate in its activities through the media, they feel rejected, thus consuming less mainstream Hebrew media. This hinders their ability to realize their capabilities through the media.

Keywords: right to communicate, capabilities approach, Palestinian Israelis

With the advent of contemporary media whose unique characteristics allow individuals to personalize the way they use them, an opportunity emerged for many more individuals to actively communicate through them. Concurrently, policy developments have sought to establish and define a "right to communicate," a concept conceived in the 1960s (d'Arcy, 1969) as an extension of the "right to freedom of opinion and expression" introduced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). Although the original right was defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media" (United Nations, 1948, Article 19) and has since resurfaced in different international statements (McLeod, 2018), the exact meaning of a right to communicate has remained vague, and to date, there are no agreed-on definitions or practical applications (Leurs, 2017). The difficulty in defining communication rights and translating them to agreed-on practices derives from the diversity of normative principles different countries and societies cherish (Calabrese, 2017).

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Addressing this difficulty can be achieved by adopting the capabilities approach as a practical tool for the realization of rights (Nussbaum, 1997). Capabilities, what people are able to do or be, are effective in translating moral ideas into measurable opportunities, and offer a moral formula that facilitates diverse wants and needs.

The underlying moral basis to capabilities is the fair distribution of resources in society (Rawls, 1971). However, the traditional Rawlsian argument, the distribution of resources in the form of actual goods, "encounters formidable objections" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 57) as it does not translate well into what people are actually able to achieve. To encounter this challenge, Sen (1993, 1999, 2005) proposes the measurement of opportunities rather than that of primary goods by focusing on "what a person is able to do or be" (Sen, 2005, p. 153) rather than on what a person owns. The capabilities approach thus becomes ideal for promoting the values at the basis of the idea of communication rights and translates them into agreed-on definitions and practices. A society that strives for the fulfillment of individual desires is a society that conforms to principles of justice (Sen, 2005), supports human freedom and well-being (Sen, 1993) and focuses on what the social mechanisms enable rather than only on the subjective preferences of individuals (Kaushik & Lopez-Calva, 2011).

Sen (2005) notes that the "freedom of general communication" is a "very important capability" (p. 160). As media and ICTs serve as a vital social resource enabling the right to communicate (Schejter & Tirosh, 2016), they are vital to individuals' well-being and freedom (Sen, 2005). Indeed, because capabilities are intuitively seen as expressions of needs and wants through positive acts, media scholars need to understand how capabilities are enabled by media whose consumption is mostly passive (Couldry, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 2017, 2018; Jacobson, 2016; Kaushik & Lopez-Calva, 2011). Therefore, to further advance the discourse of communication rights and explore the media opportunities individuals enjoy, we suggest exploring how capabilities can be derived from purportedly passive consumption of mass-mediated content. Indeed, the passive-active dichotomy is both controversial and superficial; however, in the context of the transition from consuming traditional media to using contemporary media, it is a noticeable feature of the changing characteristics of media technologies.

From the point of view of the users of contemporary media, there are four characteristics that provide for a paradigmatically changed experience. Contemporary media offer abundance of content, delivery channels, and storage capabilities; they are mobile; they allow individuals to shape their own media environments (albeit with limitations imposed by the commercial needs of the corporations that design them); and they allow communication using multimediated forms. In that, not only do they differ from the scarce resources-based, stationary, unidirectional, and limited traditional media, but they also create the opportunity for individuals to tailor expression through the media in the ways that fit them most (Schejter & Tirosh, 2016). Our study, however, focused on traditional media and how they, with all their limitations regarding personalization of the mediated experience, play a role in the realization of the individual capabilities of Palestinian Israelis.

We define *Palestinian Israelis* as the ethnic Arabs that are citizens of the State of Israel (as differentiated from Palestinians who reside in territories occupied by Israel). They consist of 1.8 million people and compose 20.9% of the Israeli population (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017), and are predominantly

Muslim (85%; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). Although a heterogeneous group, they present a unique sociodemographic profile that separates them from Jewish Israelis (Cohen, Czamanski, & Hefetz, 2015). Most Palestinian Israelis reside in segregated towns and villages across Israel (Schnell, Diab, & Benenson, 2015).

Palestinian Israelis have been systematically discriminated against and consistently excluded from public resources in all aspects of life throughout Israeli history (Cohen-Almagor, 2015; Schejter, 2008; Yiftachel, 2012), leading to significant inequalities between them and the Jewish Israeli majority (Cohen-Almagor, 2015). They have also been consistently underrepresented and misrepresented in the traditional media (Bar-lev, 2007; First, 2016; First & Inbar-Lankeri, 2013; Laor, Elephant-Lefler, Avraham, & First, 2004; Laor et al., 2006). A recent two-year study found that Palestinian Israelis composed only 4.3% of all interviewees on Israeli public and commercial broadcasters' news and current affairs programs (Shomron & Schejter, 2019c).

In addition, Palestinian Israelis are consistently portrayed in a negative context of crime, violence, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bar-lev, 2007; First, 2016; First & Inbar-Lankeri, 2013; Laor et al., 2006). In the most recent study conducted on Palestinian Israeli portrayals, we found that 51% of Palestinian Israeli interviewees on public and commercial broadcasters appeared in the context of violence and crime (Shomron & Schejter, 2019d). Furthermore, Palestinian Israelis were regularly assigned the blame (64%) for these situations, with many interviews (35%) discussing Palestinian Israeli homicides. In addition, Palestinian Israelis regularly appear in a lower social standing relative to the Jewish Israeli majority regarding employment, education, and profession (Bar-lev, 2007; First & Inbar-Lankeri, 2013; Laor et al., 2006) and tend to appear uneducated and unprofessional (Shomron & Schejter, 2019a, 2019c). For instance, during 2016–2017, more than half of the Palestinian Israeli interviewees had no higher education, were only rarely portrayed as experts (8.6%), and 31% had no discernable profession (Shomron & Schejter, 2019c).

Still, Palestinian Israelis' media consumption habits are characterized by an "extensive use of all available media" (Jamal, 2006, p. 19), including television, radio, and newspapers. This trend also includes the high utilization of the Internet, mobile applications, and social networks to this purpose (Israel Internet Association, 2018). Past studies have shown that Palestinian Israelis feel connected to both Israeli society and the larger Arab world; as a result, they consume media content from both, although they tend to consume more from the latter (Jamal, 2006, 2009). A more recent study found that 37% of Palestinian Israelis regularly watched Israeli Hebrew-speaking television, 33% regularly read Israeli Hebrew-speaking newspapers, 15% regularly listened to Israeli Hebrew-speaking radio, and 31% regularly surfed Israeli Hebrew-language websites (New Wave Research, 2016). However, it should be noted that "in Israel, such surveys [examining Palestinian Israelis' media consumption habits] are not conducted often [and that] the last comprehensive study on the matter . . . was conducted over a decade ago" (Daskal, 2017, para. 1).

Several designated radio and television channels for the Palestinian Israeli population operate in Israel. They include the public radio station Makan, launched in 2017 with the establishment of the Israel Broadcasting Corporation, and replacing the "Voice of Israel" in Arabic, which had been broadcasting since the 1950s; the commercial radio station A Shams, which started broadcasting in 2003; the public television station Makan 33 (also operating under the Israel Broadcasting Corporation since 2017); and the commercial TV station Hala, which has been broadcasting over Israeli cable and satellite since 2012. However, in this study,

we focus solely on the national broadcasters in Hebrew (Galei Tzahal, Kan 11, Kan Bet, Keshet 12, and Reshet 13) as they represent the largest share of the media resource because of their size (measured in ratings and resources) and as they serve both the majority Hebrew-speaking population and the minority Arabic-speaking Palestinian Israeli population. The Hebrew channels also serve as a bridge that can potentially deliver the voices of Palestinian Israelis to the Jewish majority.

The Study

Creating lists of capabilities is controversial among scholars. On the one hand, Sen (2005) argues against the creation of lists, fearing they would be used to limit people's desires, narrowing their opportunities. On the other hand, Nussbaum (2011) considers it beneficial as she hopes it would lead to a more accurate and wholesome understanding of rights. In addition, forming lists of capabilities can help researchers measure the distribution of resources and help policymakers enact policies that solve capability gaps (Nussbaum, 2011; Shomron & Schejter, 2019a, 2019c). Nonetheless, although we use such a list in this study, we remind the reader of the limitations of a list, as the number of capabilities exceeds any list and equals the number of human desires, both infinite.

The list we use in this study is our model of seven media capabilities (Shomron & Schejter, 2019c). This model lists the seven capabilities that can be realized in the media based on the media functions that scholars have attributed to the media and previously identified capabilities. (1) "To be informed" is to have access to reliable and relevant information (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008; Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Shomron & Schejter, 2019b), including "enjoying the freedom to obtain news" (Sen, 1999, p. 10). (2) "To be secure" is to advocate for each individual's safety and security (Nussbaum, 2011) and protect each individual's rights (Jacobson, 2016). This capability is one of the most central capabilities as it protects life itself (Nussbaum, 2011). (3) "Identity and belonging" refers to the way a person is perceived by others and by their selves (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Tuchman, 1979). This capability reflects Sen's (1993, 2005) social and cultural freedoms of social integration and self-respect, as well as the preservation and expression of each person's unique culture and lifestyle. (4) "Identification and imitation" refers to role models that individuals learn from and identify with (Hesmondhalgh, 2018). This capability emanates from the direct goal of capabilities to allow each individual "to do or be" what they aspire (Sen, 2005, p. 153). (5) "Voicing" is to give an account of a person's life and circumstances and to be heard when doing so (Coudry, 2010). This capability reflects Sen's (1999) value of "enhancing the hearing that people get" (p. 10) that allows people to learn from one another. (6) "Civil participation" refers to taking part in social and democratic discussions (Hesmondhalgh, 2017; Jacobson, 2016), stressing the importance of pluralism (Bardoel & d'Haenens, 2008) and free speech (Nussbaum, 2011). This capability is fundamental to a democratic society, as discourse on sociopolitical issues is the foundation of democracy (Sen, 1999). (7) "Pleasurable entertainment" relates to the cultural freedoms of the individual (Sen, 2005), including accessibility to joyous and moving experiences such as literature and music (Nussbaum, 2011).

Capabilities scholars hold that the purpose of government is the enabling of capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011). As such, they focus on the social mechanisms that enable the realization of capabilities (Sen, 2005) and promote the enactment of policies that solve capability gaps (Nussbaum, 1997). Furthermore, capability scholars tend to focus on "the least advantaged members of society" (Rawls, 1971, p. 13), in line with Rawlsian

justice. Therefore, in this study we examined the media capabilities of Palestinian Israelis in order to understand the opportunities the Israeli media enable for the largest minority group in Israel.

We hypothesized that

H1: The consistent underrepresentation of Palestinian Israelis can limit their opportunities to realize their capabilities (Shomron & Schejter, 2019a, 2019c, 2019d), for example, their ability to encounter role models or voice life circumstances on the media platform (Shomron & Schejter, 2019c).

H2: Negative portrayals and misrepresentation could hinder the ability to realize capabilities (Shomron & Schejter, 2019d). Thus, media content that is limited in scope and negative in tone, lacks diverse voices, and constantly portrays Palestinian Israelis as violent criminals could alienate Palestinian Israelis from the public, as they are conceived to be a violent and dangerous population. This biased representation was hypothesized to hinder the full realization of media capabilities as it could limit the diverse identities and role models encountered, as well as enhance negative social perceptions and hinder Palestinian Israelis' social standing and safety (Shomron & Schejter, 2019c).

We thus set out to understand how individuals from the Palestinian Israeli population actually regard this issue. We asked the following research questions:

RQ1: Which capabilities do Palestinian Israelis wish to realize in the Israeli media?

RQ2: What are the enablers and constraints in the realization of Palestinian Israeli capabilities in the Israeli media?

Method

We conducted semi-structured individual in-depth interviews with interviewees recruited through snowball sampling. A thematic content analysis (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013) was then conducted on the interview transcripts with the help of the Atlas.ti computer program. The content analysis used Shomron and Schejter's (2019c) model of seven media capabilities to understand which capabilities the interviewees wished to realize in the Israeli media as well as the enablers and constraints that influenced their ability to realize these capabilities.

The research population included 20 adult interviewees from the Palestinian Israeli population. The interviewees included 15 women and five men, and as no differences were expected regarding the research premise on gender grounds, and as none were found in the analysis, we did not find it beneficial to add more male interviewees. In addition, although nonrepresentative, for optimal results, interviewees reflected the different geographical residencies of Palestinian Israelis in Israel (including Bedouins). Thus, the interviewees resided in the north ($n = 10$), center ($n = 2$), and south of Israel ($n = 8$), as well as in both cities ($n = 6$), villages ($n = 11$), and unrecognized villages ($n = 3$). The interviewees' ages ranged between 19 and 30 years, consisting of university students and early career professionals. We chose this age group as we hypothesized they would be most likely among Palestinian Israeli adults to have the technological ability to consume Hebrew-

language Israeli media, as they would be characterized by high digital connectivity, which could bridge the technological infrastructure gap that exists in Palestinian Israeli residencies (Abu Kaf, Schejter, & Abu Jaffar, 2019; Schejter, Beh-Harush, & Tirosh, 2018), and high education levels, which would require them to be proficient in Hebrew. The interviews were held at a university office and lasted approximately 60 minutes. They were conducted in Hebrew, although English was used for clarifications, when called for. Interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and were compensated with the equivalent of \$28US.

Findings

In this section, we share the themes that reached saturation as they repeatedly appeared in the interviews. All interviewee names appearing in this chapter have been changed to pseudonyms to protect the interviewees' identity.

The Seven Media Capabilities

All 20 interviewees defined each of the seven capabilities as vital to them in their consumption of Israeli media.

To Be Informed

The capability "to be informed" refers to having access to reliable and relevant information. As Bassam explained, "You have to know what's going on around you, you have to know where you live." The information sought included a general sense of knowing; for example, Sadiya explained, "I know what is happening in the world, what is happening in Israel."

Furthermore, the interviewees pointed out a broad array of topics they wished to be informed about including health, security, politics, and economics. Jabir explained, "How do I know what will happen in my surroundings, like war, you have to go to the shelter?" Most interviewees expected the Israeli media to inform the Palestinian Israeli population and were critical when they felt it did not. For example, when Laila claimed that "many Arabs, especially young people did not apply to higher education," arguing they later regretted it, she blamed the Israeli media for not informing the Palestinian Israeli public about the "importance of higher education."

The overall feeling the interviewees conveyed was one of disappointment in the limited information the Israeli media provided in relation to what they deemed important for themselves to consume, as well as information they wished was shared with the general public regarding their community. Laila summarized,

It [information] does not appear in the [Israeli] media. . . . Only a few people try looking elsewhere for the information they need but most despair, and there is not much awareness at all about the things that exist and the possibilities that exist [that they are missing out on].

Indeed, the interviewees reported that the Israeli media only partially realize their capability to be informed, although they themselves fully expect it to.

To Be Secure

The capability “to be secure” refers to the protection of individuals’ rights and safety. For example, Jabir recounted a violent conflict between two families that occurred recently in his hometown and resulted in six people being killed: “If the Israeli media would have covered it, perhaps a Sullha [peace treaty]” could have been brokered, and lives could have been saved, he complained. Another example is Hadiya who lives in an unrecognized village without electricity and water and blames the Israeli media for neglecting to protect her rights by promoting basic services: “We do not have water, so we steal water, because no one talks about our tribe not having water,” she stated, adding, “Where are the media? Why don’t they come to investigate? . . . We are citizens of the country also . . . [why] can’t we get our rights?” Similarly, Laila complained that the Israeli media refrained from covering stories of Arab women being sexually assaulted, saying that “there are a lot of girls who experienced [sexual assault], and [the Israeli media] did not publish their stories at all.”

The interviewees said that they expect the Israeli media to protect them regarding a variety of issues, including inner-sector risks such as violence, family feuds, so-called “honor killings,” crime, and other infringements of their rights, as well as to protect them from external threats such as missile attacks (that were frequent during the time of the interview in the Israeli South, where they reside). For instance, Asma shared her fear for her young daughter’s life as there are no sirens or shelters in her village: “[My house] is a shack, and if a missile falls far away, my house will be destroyed regardless.” Asma looks to the Israeli media for salvation: “If you talk about it a lot in the media, then the Israeli audience will know what we are experiencing,” she said, hoping that the public’s awareness will bring solutions.

However, the interviewees do not just expect the Israeli media to cover high-risk situations, but also to stop putting Palestinian Israeli individuals at risk by misrepresenting them. When Ghusan encountered students at her university class chanting “Death to the Arabs,” she reasoned they were influenced by the Israeli media’s coverage “because they saw the [terrorist] stabbings in the media, they thought every Arab was a terrorist.” She later admitted that she was terrified to be alone in the classroom with Jews and would only come to the university when the only other Arab student in her class was present. Jabir recalled a similar experience: “The news refers to all Arabs as terrorists,” causing “Jews to hate us, look at us like we are terrorists, fear us.” The culprit in his opinion was obvious: “It’s only in the [Israeli] media. Who said [explained what is] in Arab society? [Israeli] media.”

Overall, Palestinian Israeli interviewees expressed frustration with the Israeli media in the realization of this capability. For instance, when asked whether the Israeli media help him realize this capability, Fahim answered, “I do not feel it at all.” And Inaya sadly noted that there are populations “that are trampled, have no rights . . . and the [Israeli] media do not care.” Palestinian Israelis “just don’t interest them [the Israeli media],” Maha claimed. Relating their high expectations from the media, Omaira explained that “if the media talk about it [a risk], maybe someone will take care of it.” Thus, the interviewees reported that the Israeli media only partially assist them in realizing their capability to be secure, although they themselves fully expect them to.

Identity and Belonging

The capability "identity and belonging" refers to how individuals are perceived, social integration, and expression of their culture. The interviewees expressed their will that the Israeli media provide their society with content regarding their religion, culture, and traditions. As Hadiya explained, "Every citizen in a country should have their identity portrayed [in the media]." For example, Fadilah stated that portraying religious traditions would be beneficial for "people [to] know how to behave in it, even the little ones who begin to know." Another example was related by Maha, who claimed that she wants to see Arab performers in the Israeli media, stating that "they should offer something that relates to us, that we will feel we can listen to."

In addition, the interviewees expressed their desire to view Palestinian Israeli success stories in the Israeli media. For instance, when Jabir recounted that a neighbor from his village had reached the finals in the Lebanese TV show *Arab Idol*, he was adamant that "we have to broadcast it in the Israeli media" as it was "an achievement for the Arab society in Israel." When the Israeli media portray "positive things, acts of success of the [Arab] society," explained Omaira, "we feel that we belong [to the Israeli society]." Barika added that the broadcasting of success stories also contributes to a feeling of pride in the Palestinian Israeli community. These success stories also help fight negative perceptions of Palestinian Israelis: "There is a perception that in the Arab society everyone is handicapped, in resources and what they can achieve," Laila explained, "But if one advertises the successful people, then there is encouragement." For example, "There are many Bedouins who study and work hard to get a degree, and it's really important to know that," Barika said. However, interviewees felt that these success stories are "missing" from the Israeli media and "unusual to see," as Fadilah pointed out.

Interviewees also wished that the Israeli media would share their own identity, religion, and successes with the general population. "Every society should be represented," claimed Jadwa, "their culture, their values." Inaya added, "Who we are, what I do, what my culture is about." When Maha encountered an Israeli program that she felt discussed Islam fairly, she exuberantly called it "a beautiful thing," although she noted that it was a one-time occurrence. All interviewees expressed their disappointment regarding the little knowledge they believe the Jewish Israeli society has regarding the Palestinian Israeli population. "They do not know about the Arab society," Fadilah complained, "but [Palestinian Israelis] also lend a hand to research, to the development of the state, and in all kinds of fields." This knowledge gap influences the way Palestinian Israelis perceive themselves: "If you work all the time and you are successful in your society, but the [Israeli] media and the Jewish society do not look at you, then you did not do much," explained Maha.

However, all interviewees claimed that the Israeli media do not share their identity. As Fahim complained, "The Jews who live here, do not know anything about me, why? . . . The Israeli media have a part in it. You have to know the tradition of the other, the religion, our identity, it's important." Jabir relayed that he had never seen Israeli media discuss Islam and discuss "what happens in [our] holiday." Laila recounted that "many Jews are really surprised by our customs, our things, because they simply do not know about them, the [Israeli] media do not discuss them."

A leading theme that appeared in all interviews was the negative stereotype the interviewees claimed the Israeli media portrayed about Palestinian Israelis. For instance, Fahim recounted the Israeli media referring to his hometown of 80,000 residents "as the terrorist city," claiming that the Israeli media portray Palestinian Israelis "as second-class citizens." Fadilah referred to the Bar Refaeli advertisement that aired October 2018 for the Hoodies fashion brand in which Israeli supermodel Bar Refaeli throws off a Niqab (religious garment that Muslim women use to cover their face) she is wearing to "free" herself to wear Hoodies fashion as an example of media content that "ridicules and disparages [Palestinian Israelis]." Rabia complained that Israeli media portray "all Arabs as the same, everyone is primitive." Sadiya stated that "they always look at Arabs as criminals that have a tendency to kill and do bad, [they] do not think there are Arabs who are successful." Thus, we conclude that although this capability is important to the interviewees, and they expect the Israeli media to help realize it, they feel that the Israeli media let them down and are actually impairing their capability of identity and belonging.

Identification and Imitation

The capability "identification and imitation" refers to role models that individuals learn from and identify with. Role models are needed in the media to "give hope for the future that you can reach something," Kalila said, and "to give confidence to the next generation, as they will see that others did it before them," Jadwa added. "When you encounter a professor, you ask yourself, 'Why can't I be like that?'" Jabir recounted. And Bassam elaborated that when you watch "television and see an Arab medical doctor talking about his life, and what he went through [to become a medical doctor] and I think I'm following in his footsteps, and I want to be a doctor, of course I'll learn from him."

The interviewees listed a variety of role models they wish to see in the Israeli media. These role models include professors, teachers, economists, and medical practitioners. The interviewees uniformly emphasized the importance of higher education as a requisite to be a role model. To this, they added the importance of the role model being Palestinian Israeli: "If she were an Arab, it gives more of a boost," Hadiya noted. Furthermore, they wished the role models to have children, as the interviewees were in similar situations "because I come from this place of being both a mother and want to succeed," Asma explained. Nabila pointed out such an example: a woman who was a clinical psychologist and attended "graduate school when she was married with children." Interviewees pointed especially to the difficulties they have dealing with their social and cultural situations. "You do not have to be a CEO," Rabia declared, "for Bedouin women that need to convince their family they wish to study [higher education], it's a serious problem, and many of these women do not go to college because they fear their family's reaction." In her eyes, any Bedouin woman who attends college and has a job is a success story and worthy of being a role model. Barika also criticized the Israeli media on similar grounds:

You never hear [in the Israeli media] about women, the women in our society must always not work but be at home raising children, but there are many women today who are capable of doing anything, or something big, or something very successful.

However, all interviewees claimed that the Israeli media do not portray many Palestinian Israelis as role models. "I do not see many in the [Israeli] media," Laila noted. And although "it is very important,"

Bassam said, "the [Israeli] media does not do it." Thus, we conclude that although this capability is vital to the interviewees, and they expect the Israeli media to help realize it, they feel that the Israeli media do not portray role models from their minority group.

Voicing

The "voicing" capability refers to people's ability to share their life circumstances and be heard. "It is not just talking about [people] but talking to the people," Inaya explained, adding that the purpose of sharing her story is to let the Jewish Israeli society "know that I exist." Similarly, Fahim emphasized the exclusion of Palestinian Israelis from the public sphere, viewing the capability of voicing as a way to gain recognition. "We live here," he stated, referring to the estrangement he feels, "so of course we have stories and we have to tell our stories."

The topics the interviewees want voiced in the Israeli media revolved mainly around the hardships they encounter as Palestinian Israelis. "I want the [Israeli] media to show more Bedouin people," Hadiya said, recounting the difficulties she encounters commuting from her home in an unrecognized village to school and work. Another example can be seen in Asma, who wishes stories like hers are shared in the Israeli media. Asma related that she was the first woman in her Bedouin tribe to attend university, although her family objected to it and wished her to marry and raise children at the completion of high school as is customary in her tribe. Asma succeeded in attending university through perseverance and by agreeing with her family to delay marriage until she found a future husband who supported her ambitions for higher education.

All interviewees complained that the Israeli media refrain from realizing this capability for the Palestinian Israeli society. "I have never seen an Arab person tell about his life in the Israeli media," Sadiya stated. "It is almost never found the Arab voice," Elham said. Indeed, although this capability is vital to the interviewees, and they expect the Israeli media to help realize it, they feel that the Israeli media refrain from enabling Palestinian Israelis to share their life circumstances and be heard.

Civil Participation

"Civil participation" refers to taking part in democratic and social discourse. The motivation to realize this capability in the Israeli media stems from the Palestinian Israelis' identity. As Fahim explained, "We do not live in Syria; we live in Israel. So, yes, we want to participate in Israeli society in everything." Similarly, Maha stated that "we are all citizens of the country."

The interviewees want Israeli media to enable the participation of Palestinian Israelis in all fields and topics, including those that directly relate to their population, as well as general issues relevant to the whole Israeli population. "It would be very impressive if there were Arabs," Laila explained. "We would feel that we are here, not on the sidelines, that our voices are important." Jadwa stated, "There should be participation from the Arab society in such a way that they influence. There are many discussions . . . [if we participate in the discourse] it will be better." The interviewees expressed their dismay at encountering discussions on Israeli media, even when they were directly discussing Palestinian

Israelis, and not seeing any Palestinian Israelis participating in the discussion. For example, Inaya complained, "We talk about health in the Bedouin sector in the Negev, but where are the Bedouin who do not sit in the [media] panel?"

When interviewees were asked about the probabilities of a Palestinian Israeli appearing in a random current affairs panel, all interviewees replied that there is little or no chance they would expect to see one. It does not matter whether the topic discussed is directly related to the Palestinian Israeli population or to the general Israeli public. For instance, Hadiya noted, "I've never seen anyone from the Bedouin diaspora sitting among five people on Channel 2 and talking," Rabia remarked, "I've never seen an Arab there."

Pleasurable Entertainment

"Pleasurable entertainment" as a capability refers to the cultural freedoms of the individual. It should be noted that capabilities can intertwine; thus, pleasurable entertainment was at times instrumental in realizing other capabilities. For example, this capability is instrumental in realizing "identification and imitation" as interviewees view Palestinian Israeli participants in entertainment as role models in addition to the participants' necessary presence for the realization of the pleasurable entertainment capability.

Although most interviewees reported consuming entertainment shows on Israeli media or turning to Israeli media for relaxation, they all complained about the complete lack of entertainment content addressed to their population. This content includes a lack of Palestinian Israeli actors and performers, subtitles or spoken Arabic, and life circumstances that reflect Palestinian Israeli life. For example, Maha noted that "it does not interest everyone [Palestinian Israelis] to hear only songs by Eyal Golan [a Jewish Israeli singer], but they are interested in having an Arab singer." And when Inaya recounted watching an Israeli children's show, she remarked, "I do not remember an Arab girl who came to *Hani's Room*," confessing that she herself badly wanted to appear on the show: "I really wanted to, I wanted my whole life, it was my dream to get to *Hani's Room*." Jadwa, who enjoys watching musical reality TV shows, complained that she rarely sees Palestinian Israeli participants or judges.

Furthermore, the interviewees expressed their dismay at the deprivation of Palestinian Israeli actors and performers: "There are talented [Arab] people here who can write, play and sing, they should participate, and we should see them," Maha complained. A recurring sentiment in the interviews was that Palestinian Israelis wish that Israeli media would try to serve them as well as serving the Jewish population. Jabir stated, "Show us what we want as well."

Capability Enablers and Constraints: Internal Capabilities and Conversion Factors

Realizing a capability derives from the opportunities available to each individual. As a result, two more factors should be taken into consideration: internal capabilities and conversion factors. The former relates to human properties such as traits and qualities that contribute to realizing each capability (Nussbaum, 2011), and the latter relates to favorable external circumstances such as access to technology (Wilson-Strydom, 2017). We divide our findings regarding these two factors into two categories—enablers

and constraints (Shomron & Schejter, 2019b; Wilson-Strydom, 2017)—to understand how they influence Palestinian Israelis' ability to realize their capabilities when using Israeli media.

Enablers

Most interviewees ($n = 18$) reported that they have no difficulty accessing Israeli media. This could result from our purposeful choice of young interviewees (ages 19–30 years) and confirms our assumption that this age group has the technological ability to consume Israeli media. These high levels of technological connectivity are not characteristic of the general Palestinian Israeli population (Abu Kaf et al., 2019; Schejter et al., 2018), whose accessibility levels are lower than those of the Jewish population. The interviewees reported high ownership levels of televisions and radios as well as Internet connectivity and cellular devices, stating that when they wish to consume Israeli media, they encounter no obstacles. The two interviewees who complained about accessibility issues reside in unrecognized villages and related a lack of Internet and television services. Indeed, the connectivity gap of the unrecognized villages has been identified in the literature (Abu Kaf et al., 2019). These high levels of accessibility and connectivity contribute to the interviewees' ability to consume Israeli media content, leading to opportunities to realize their capabilities by using them; however, they may not reflect the connectivity levels of the community.

All 20 interviewees regard the media and specifically Israeli media as powerful tools that play a major role in society and in their lives. "The media [are] very important and dominant means that affect people," Laila explained. "If not the media, then who?" proclaimed Inaya. The interviewees attributed much responsibility to Israeli media regarding their standing in Israeli society and opportunities in life and expressed high expectations from the Israeli media to play an important role improving Palestinian Israelis' lives. For example, Fahim explained,

We Israeli Arabs want to feel that we are Israelis, that we belong here, that we have a part here. . . . But they [Israeli media] do not let us, they increase the conflict . . . the solutions to the existing situation here are found only in the Israeli media.

Similarly, Hadiya, who lives in an unrecognized village, stated that the Israeli media could play a vital role promoting her community: "If my tribe would have been [in the media], then our life would not be as we are now living." Addressing the difficulties in her village, which include the lack of electricity and water, she added that "the media are very important and can help many people in the State of Israel, so why not help my tribe?" This attitude toward the media can encourage consumption of the Israeli media and participation in it, and therefore contribute to realizing capabilities.

Eighteen interviewees reported regularly consuming Israeli media, naming some of their favorite broadcast shows and hosts. Many reported that they also consume Israeli media content through the Internet and mobile applications. This high level of consumption can contribute to their ability to realize different capabilities through Israeli media.

All interviewees regard themselves as Israelis and expressed their strong wish to further integrate into Israeli society. (This sentiment differs from the general Palestinian Israeli population in which only 55–

58% hold similar views; see Smooha, 2013, p. 42.) "We are a vital part of society," Inaya declared. "I live here, this is my country," Fahim said. This expression of identity and attitude toward Israeli society influence their will to consume Israeli media and to perceive the Israeli media as their own. Furthermore, they said that Israeli media play an important role in their integration efforts. For example, after a Palestinian Israeli woman appeared on the television show *Big Brother*, Hadiya stated her satisfaction that the positive appearance would promote the idea that "there is no difference between Arabs and Jews." In addition, the interviewees reported that they use the Israeli media as a guide to learn about the Jewish Israeli population so that they can "get closer to the society," as Asma explained. These attitudes toward Israeli society in general and the Israeli media in particular encourage their consumption of Israeli media, leading to the potential realization of capabilities.

Eight of the interviewees recounted that one of the reasons they consume Israeli media is to better their knowledge of the Hebrew language. "Sometimes it's good to view in Hebrew, [as] I also strengthen my Hebrew," Nabila explained. Although the Israeli media can improve their Hebrew fluency, this attitude serves an important role regarding media capabilities: Many Palestinian Israelis' levels of Hebrew fluency are limited, with less than half highly fluent in Hebrew, and 20% hardly know any Hebrew at all (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013); consuming Israeli media that broadcast mainly in Hebrew and usually without Arabic subtitles can contribute to their fluency and encourage social integration. Indeed, the goal of improving their Hebrew fluency encouraged eight of the interviewees who reported weaker Hebrew fluency to make an additional effort in consuming Israeli media. This additional effort can lead to a higher connection with the Israeli media, resulting in more opportunities for them to realize their capabilities.

Constraints

All interviewees thought that Israeli media serve the Jewish Israeli majority group primarily or exclusively. "The society is a Jewish society and the media focus only on that part," Elham explained. "They [Israeli media] are only interested in Jews," Jabir noted. This notion was reinforced by the interviewees' feelings that Palestinian Israelis are mostly underrepresented on Israeli media: "You look at the media, and you see only Jews," Maha complained. This underrepresentation was felt by the interviewees regarding all topics from politicians on news programs to participants on Israeli reality TV shows.

This feeling of exclusion from Israeli media also applied to the content itself, with interviewees claiming that Israeli media mainly broadcast content regarding Jewish Israelis. For example, Ghusan related that the Israeli media "cover Jewish holidays a lot, but with Muslims they don't." Jadwa complained they do not voice the political views of Palestinian Israelis.

In addition, all 20 interviewees said they feel that when Palestinian Israelis finally do appear on Israeli media, they are negatively depicted and misrepresented. "It is all negative," Kalila remarked. Sadiya invoked, "There are many good things that happen in the Arab society, so publish those, not just the opposite side." The interviewees recounted that Palestinian Israelis appear mainly as violent perpetrators. For example, Elham noted that if there is a shooting and an Arab suspect is apprehended, the media always

portray him as guilty, but when a Jew is apprehended, "he is [regarded] mentally ill." Jabir complained that they "treat all the Arabs in the news as terrorists."

All interviewees reported feeling that these media norms carried out by Israeli media have harmful implications on their well-being. Those who watch "television or news will hate the Arabs," said Maha. Jabir similarly remarked, "They do that so the Arabs will be hated." The interviewees complained that Israeli media fare makes them feel unappreciated by Israeli society (Maha), stigmatized (Laila), and humiliated (Fahim); that they are viewed as terrorists and feared (Jabir), leading to them to be treated differently than Jews (Jadwa), and altogether unwanted by the Jewish Israeli society (Inaya).

Nineteen interviewees complained about the language barrier when consuming Israeli media. Many Palestinian Israelis have low levels of Hebrew fluency, and the Israeli media are broadcast solely in Hebrew and rarely with Arabic subtitles. "Language is a big obstacle," Inaya said. "They do not know the language [Hebrew], just a few words, and so they do not have the ability to watch the Israeli media," Asma explained. "If they [Israeli media] really care, and want to address the Arab society, they should simply do it in [our] language," Rabia concluded.

These constraints lead to fewer opportunities for the realization of Palestinian Israeli capabilities using Israeli media. Furthermore, these constraints lead to feelings of estrangement from Israeli media that in turn lead to less consumption of Israeli media and sometimes to a preference for consuming alternative Arab media. Sadiya explained, "I would watch more . . . if you fixed those things." Hadiya recounted, "Why do I watch less? Because I am sick of what I have seen."

Further aspects that influenced the interviewees' avoidance of Israeli media include language barriers. Laila explained, "If there was translation, then there would be a higher viewing percentage." In addition, this avoidance is influenced by the absence of Palestinian Israelis on screen and in the studio. Jadwa noted, "If they involved more Arabs, I would watch more." Overall, interviewees complained that the Israeli media do not try to accommodate their society. Maha proclaimed, "It is not mine, it is not me, because it is a different language, it is other people." This led seven interviewees to consume alternative Arab media sometimes. "Arab channels talk more about things that are related to my society," Maha explained. Laila recounted watching television shows on foreign Arab channels, stating the advantage of their being in Arabic. Ghusan reported consuming news on both foreign Arab and Israeli media as she feels that by doing so, she receives a better understanding of current events. Similarly, six interviewees recounted consuming alternative Arab media when they want to be informed about happenings in Palestinian Israeli society, and consuming Israeli media when they wanted to be informed about general Israeli issues.

Discussion and Conclusion

Communicating is a capability. It is required to participate in political, cultural, social, educational, and commercial life, and it is essential to promote one's belonging to a collective. In contemporary liberal societies, speech is perceived as a fundamental right, over which there is widespread agreement. The capabilities approach thus provides us with the tools to justify it and design policies to make it happen.

As Palestinian Israelis compose the largest minority group in Israel, characterized by exclusion, discrimination, and high levels of inequality, their situation is highly influenced by their ability to use the media for realizing their capabilities in general and the positive right of communicating in particular. This goal of advancing their well-being should be secured by defined communication rights. The road to the institutionalization of capabilities-enabling policies passes through the recognition of rights (Sen, 2005). One avenue for realizing such rights is through the establishment of minority channels; minority media channels can be beneficial as they can provide "collective self-representation, [and] challenge the often debilitatingly narrow and stereotypic representations of the mainstream" (Sreberny, 2005, p. 445).

However, four points should be considered when weighing minority media channels as a desirable replacement for mainstream media: The first is the simple notion that minorities do not wish to be confined to designated or alternative media, but instead wish to use the mainstream media for their needs. This notion arises clearly from the Palestinian Israeli interviewees in this study, as well as from studies regarding minorities around the world (Sreberny, 2005). Second, many minority members consume mainstream media, as the interviewees in this study reported and as the data regarding media uses among Palestinian Israelis demonstrate, and are thus affected by the lack of opportunities they receive from them. Furthermore, the general public consumes mainstream media and is thus affected by them regarding the way it perceives minorities and that perception hinders the realization of the minorities' capabilities. Thus, the existence of minority media channels does little to alleviate these effects. Third, the media are important social resources, and as such, should serve everyone in society fairly without discrimination. Indeed, minorities should be guaranteed accessibility to every public resource, including mainstream media, and not confined to segregated media channels. Last, when examining minorities' opportunities, we deem minority media channels insufficient in realizing capabilities relative to mainstream media channels. How are minorities to be heard if they cannot voice their life circumstances to the general public? How are they to participate in the democratic and social discourse when they can only debate each other? And how are they to raise awareness, gain support, and bring about social change when they can only address their own minority group members? Thus, although minority media channels are beneficial, they cannot serve as a replacement for mainstream media in the realization of capabilities.

Therefore, although policymakers can indulge in strengthening minority media channels, their first and foremost obligation is to enact policies that enable minorities to realize their capabilities in mainstream media. Communication rights are essential for individual well-being as their development contributes to participation in society; they cannot thus be limited to be realized in segregated forums.

This study demonstrates that Palestinian Israelis are very aware of the way they are treated by Israeli media, are greatly bothered by it, and fear its implications off screen and away from the microphone. Although they wish to integrate and participate, they feel rejected and react by consuming less, hindering their ability to realize their capabilities through the media. These findings confirm our hypotheses that underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Palestinian Israelis in Israeli media hinder their ability to realize their capabilities. This situation is detrimental to Palestinian Israelis' well-being, quality of life, and human freedom. Policies that enable all minorities to realize their capabilities through the use of mainstream media are thus the desirable path to follow.

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