

## Citizenship as a Communicative Construct

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In this article, I expand the research on “rhetorical citizenship” to develop the idea of citizenship as a communicative construct. I focus first on the construction of the right to speak and be heard meaningfully in the public sphere as a fundamental right of citizenship (which then becomes tied to other citizenship rights), and second on the ways in which the meanings of citizenship are constructed through communication. By examining Israeli discourse concerning the link between citizenship and military service, which is locally constructed as the epitome of civic participation, I explore how levels of citizenship are hierarchized through differential rights to communicate on matters considered “important” or “unimportant” and through a discursive separation between public and private communication. Critical implications for the relation between communication theory, citizenship, and democracy are discussed.

*Keywords: citizenship, communication, democracy, discourse, Israel, military service, participation*

Over the past two decades, citizenship has become one of the central organizing principles for examining contemporary public life in various academic disciplines (e.g., Isin & Turner, 2002; Kivisto & Faist, 2007; Kock & Villadsen, 2012; Shafir, 1998; Somers, 2008). Studies of citizenship explore diverse fields of inquiry, but if an overarching theme can be found, it is the ways in which the role of citizenship—most commonly in liberal democracies—is continuously evolving as a result of the complex intersections and influences of issues such as increased globalization and immigration (e.g., Benhabib, 2004), struggles over multiculturalism (e.g., Kivisto, 2002), and the effects of neoliberalism and market forces on citizenship and the welfare state (e.g., Somers, 2008). As a result of these interactions, citizenship is seen as simultaneously expanding and eroding, becoming more inclusive and increasingly exclusive, in a variety of interconnected and multifaceted ways.

One specific avenue that has been suggested in this broad field is the understanding of citizenship as a discursive or rhetorical phenomenon, “in the sense that important civic functions take place in deliberation among citizens and that discourse is not prefatory to real action but in many ways

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constitutive of civic engagement” (Kock & Villadsen, 2012, p. 1). This view emphasizes citizenship as a mode of public engagement that is not limited to acts such as voting and volunteering, but is an ongoing and sustainable practice constituted through everyday talk and symbolic expression (Asen, 2004; Hauser & Grim, 2004; Kock & Villadsen, 2012). In this article, I follow this line of research, but attempt more specifically to advance a view of citizenship not merely as rhetorical or discursive but also as a *communicative* construct; that is, to consider how citizenship theory and communication theory are intertwined. This communicative view is meant primarily in two different, but complementary senses. First, citizenship is communicative due to the specific focus on the right to speak, to be heard, and to be respected in public as a fundamental component of citizenship, in line with Marshall’s (1964) and Arendt’s (1966) influential paradigms of citizenship. While not dismissing the significance of other rights of citizenship, from a communication theory standpoint I highlight this right to speak and to be heard—that is, *to communicate*—as both supremely important in its own right, and as inextricably linked to other rights of citizenship, including political and social rights. Second, I consider citizenship as communicative by focusing on the ways in which the nebulous concept of citizenship is itself constructed through communication; in the ways people negotiate its divergent meanings and try to make sense of them. Citizenship, in this sense, is not simply a process of deliberation, but deliberation over the notion of citizenship itself.

I develop this view through an examination of discourse concerning the ties made by people between citizenship and military service in Israel, where serving in the army is mandatory for most Jewish citizens and has thus come to be seen as a fundamental marker of belonging to the Israeli collective and a symbolic signifier of citizenship (e.g., Helman, 1999; Kimmerling, 1993). Although this context is in some senses unique, the ties between citizenship and military service have a long and complicated history throughout Western democracies (e.g., Janowitz, 1976; Kohn, 1997; Moskos, Williams, & Segal, 2000); and, more importantly, I argue that the Israeli context illuminates in explicit and somewhat condensed forms the relations between citizenship and communication in ways that are relevant—if sometimes less explicitly—for democracies more generally.

I begin by discussing the theoretical foundations for thinking about citizenship and military service in the Israeli context, focusing in particular on freedom of speech and the civil rights of citizenship as well as on the role played by the military in Israeli society. I then investigate the nature of discourse about these concepts and the meanings they engender. Finally, I consider more broadly the political and cultural implications of thinking about citizenship communicatively.

### **Citizenship and the Right to Speak and to Be Heard**

Debates over citizenship are much more than disagreements over an individual’s or group’s formal status. Citizenship is fundamentally tied to people’s place in the community and their right not only to political membership and civil-judicial rights, but to inclusion in civil society: “the right to *recognition* by others as a moral equal treated by the same standards and values and due the same level of respect and dignity as all other members” (Somers, 2008, p. 6, emphasis in original). As Arendt (1966) has demonstrated, this right is inextricably linked to both political membership and social inclusion; that is, it cannot be conceptualized as merely a right founded on one’s membership in the human community, but

rather it requires embeddedness, inclusion, membership, and recognition within both the political and social framework.

Marshall's (1964) influential paradigm regarding the historical evolution of citizenship often serves as an introductory framework for organizing the multiple dimensions of citizenship. In his seminal essay *Citizenship and Social Rights*, originally published in 1950, but reaching its scholarly heyday in the 1990s and beyond, Marshall distinguished between three basic components of citizenship—civil rights, political rights, and social rights. In laying out these different components, Marshall (1964) wrote:

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of person, freedom of speech, thought, and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice. . . . The institutions most directly associated with civil rights are the courts of justice. By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The corresponding institutions are parliament and councils of local government. By the social element I mean the whole range from the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely associated with it are the educational system and the social services. (pp. 71–72)

Marshall's central claim is that in the modern era, the three components have become largely separated and occupy relatively autonomous institutional and ideational spheres. Moreover, in line with Arendt (1966), citizenship is conceived here not simply as political membership in the community, but as incorporating this aspect with civil-judicial and social rights. In this article, I focus specifically on the civil rights of citizenship discussed by Marshall, and more specifically still on those rights that are generally associated with the right to speak and to be heard—while highlighting the ways in which these rights are linked to political and social rights.

### Different Traditions of Citizenship

Broadly speaking, one can identify three traditions of citizenship in most contemporary democracies, with each emphasizing different rights and obligations and each offering differing doses of the civil, political, and social rights conceived by Marshall, in line with their different perceptions of citizens' rights and obligations (Kivisto & Faist, 2007; Shafir & Peled, 2002). The *liberal* tradition emphasizes individual freedom and private property and views the individual as a rights-bearing citizen with a relatively minimal array of duties and obligations toward the state and the collective (Kivisto & Faist, 2007; Shafir & Peled, 2002). The *republican* tradition emphasizes citizens' participation and obligations and considers their contribution toward the public good as a criterion for receiving full rights, with active participation in public life being demonstrative of the "civic virtue" that lies at the heart of the community. The *ethnonational* tradition focuses not on civil society or individual rights, but on ethnonational belonging and identity (Shafir & Peled, 2002). According to this tradition, citizenship is founded on belonging to the same ethnic group rather than being grounded in individual rights or

contribution to the collective. Ethnonational citizenship thus generally rejects the idea of cultural or political assimilation, since nations are conceived as unique communities of blood and culture (Brubaker, 1992). The three traditions differ with regard to the types and quantities of rights they confer upon citizens and those wishing to become citizens. The ways in which they operate simultaneously thus establish different regimes of inclusion, exclusion, membership, and participation in the collective community.

Israel provides a particularly interesting case for studying citizenship regimes, because it combines elements associated with the three traditions to form hierarchical gradations of citizenship. Defined since its establishment as, rather paradoxically, "Jewish and democratic," the Israeli State has conferred citizenship rights to the Palestinian-Arab population within Israel while privileging Jewish citizens and discriminating against Arabs in virtually all spheres of public life, including budgetary allocations, land possession, employment, education, religion, and culture (e.g., Gavison, 2011; Peled, 2005; Smooha, 2002). Arabs are also excluded (and generally wish to be excluded) from service in the military, which within the hegemonic Zionist ideology is widely considered to be a cultural signifier of belonging to the collective and contribution to the public good. Meanwhile, ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, who are also mostly exempt from military service, are likewise not afforded many of the symbolic and material benefits associated with the republican ethos of citizenship since they are not seen as contributing equally to the common good, but, unlike Palestinian-Arab citizens, they do enjoy the benefits of ethnonational Jewish identity (e.g., Shafir & Peled, 1998, 2002). Broadly speaking, therefore, a gradated model of citizenship may be identified, with Zionist secular and national-religious Jews enjoying the benefits of all three regimes of inclusion/exclusion, ultra-Orthodox Jews receiving ethnonational and liberal rights, and Palestinian-Arab citizens associated with only the liberal ethos and thus largely seen as outsiders with regard to rights, duties, and privileges (Shafir & Peled, 2002).

As Levy (2007) and Shafir and Peled (2002) have noted, while this stratification of citizenship remains generally constant, the ways in which the three traditions meld have fluctuated over the years, based on changes in the social, political, and cultural context. In particular, these researchers explore the complex and often contradictory ways in which market forces and discourses of neoliberalism in Israel have eroded republican ideals while clashing with the continued resonance of the ethnonational tradition. While focusing on the Israeli scene, these analyses bear important resemblances to work carried out across the world about how the liberal tradition has gradually been imbricated in, or supplanted by, neoliberal regimes and practices, particularly since the 1970s (Kivisto & Faist, 2007; Somers, 2008). This is most commonly reflected in the continued erosion in those rights conceptualized by Marshall (1964) as social rights, often demonstrated by the decline or virtual collapse of the welfare state. As Somers (2008) notes, the primary force in this assault on social rights is the reorganization of the relationship between the state and its citizens along the principles of market exchange, in what she terms the "contractualization of citizenship" (p. 2). This contractualization, conceived as possessing moral value, "makes social inclusion and moral worth no longer inherent rights but rather earned privileges that are wholly conditional upon the ability to exchange something of equal value" (Somers, 2008, p. 3); it thus enables the creation of internal gradations of citizenship, with some citizens—those who are legally citizens, but lack the economic resources to offer something of equal market value—downgraded to

second-class citizens (Kivisto & Faist, 2007) lacking the fundamental right to have rights, sometimes including, as Somers demonstrates through the example of Hurricane Katrina, the right to life itself.

### **Citizenship and the Military in Israel**

Much research has documented the integral link between nationality and military conflict in Israel. This link has rendered the entire Jewish population, in essence, a "nation in uniform" (Ben-Eliezer, 2003), with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) mythically viewed as "the people's army" (E. A. Cohen, Eisenstadt, & Bacevich, 1998, p. 57). With some important exceptions (most prominently the Palestinian-Arab and Jewish ultra-Orthodox communities as well as national-religious Jewish women), all Jewish Israeli citizens must serve a compulsory term in the military and be available for reserve duty. National defense was thus constructed as the obligation of the entire Jewish citizenry rather than being the role of a select group of volunteers or professionals (S. A. Cohen, 2008). With many Jewish men (and some women) continuing to serve compulsory annual stints in the military reserves, this rendered Jewish Israeli citizens—in the words of former chief of staff Yigael Yadin—"soldiers on 11 months leave" (E. A. Cohen et al., 1998, p. 49). Military service is perceived as an essential component of citizenship, and participation in the military has become the prime signifier of membership in the imagined Israeli civic community. As mentioned, this has also demoted populations not serving to second-class (as in the case of the ultra-Orthodox) and third-class (as in the case of Palestinian-Arabs) citizenship (Ben-Eliezer, 2003; Helman, 1999; Kimmerling, 1993).

Since the 1980s, however, various economic and social changes have led to the emergence of cracks in the formerly taken-for-granted centrality of the military and association between military service and citizenship among certain sectors of society (e.g., S. A. Cohen, 2008; Livio, 2012; Rosman-Stollman & Kampinsky, 2014; Sheffer & Barak, 2010). Although the extent of these cracks should not be exaggerated, evidence does indicate a steady decline in the willingness of young Jewish Israelis to serve in the army as well as a similar decline in the willingness to serve in combat units and in the military reserves (S. A. Cohen, 2008; Rosman-Stollman & Kampinsky, 2014). Despite these changes, however, the military has not been relegated from its eminent position in Israeli public life, and the IDF continues to elicit reactions bordering on the reverent among much of the Jewish population (S. A. Cohen, 2008).

The relation between military service and citizenship throughout Israel's existence has thus been extremely complex. Levy (2007) has charted evolving dominant structures of citizenship in Israel through a focus on role of the military. He argues that the ethos of neoliberalism and the growing force of the market, along with the increased resonance of ethnonational discourse since the turn of the century following the collapse of the peace process with the Palestinians, have "eroded the army's role in defining the social hierarchy" (Levy, 2007, p. 52). That is, whereas military service was for many years the principle claim for access to the rights of citizenship (see also Krebs, 2006), in line with the republican tradition, this has declined as a result of the new dominance of the globalized market society, the fact that service has to some extent been turned into a commodity, and the resulting erosion in the convertibility of service toward material and symbolic rewards (Levy, 2007). A variety of sometimes contradictory sociocultural processes have further complicated this trend. These include the increased participation of ultra-Orthodox Jews in the affairs of the state (including the military) toward which they had previously

been more ambivalent, parliamentary and legal attempts to determine clearer criteria for administrative exemptions to the ultra-Orthodox population, and similar attempts to establish a civic national service alternative to military service that could be extended beyond that which is currently available.

Although the general trend observed by Levy (2007) and others may be accurate, my argument in this article is that such wide-scale structural changes as observed “from above” become much more internally fragmented, fractured, and sometimes contradictory when viewed from ground level—where people make sense of these issues in everyday life. At this level, I identify the continued—and sometimes amplified—resonance of those citizenship traditions that are said to be in decline. While this resonance is certainly to some extent also reflective of cultural backlash targeted precisely at those tendencies eroding the republican tradition, it is also characteristic of a continuous cultural struggle both within and across people and social groups. Thus, I argue that the meanings of citizenship may be much more nuanced and contested than can be identified in wide-scale structural analyses focusing on broad patterns at the institutional level. I focus my discussion on one specific component of Marshall’s (1964) paradigm that is particularly resonant when considering the communicative aspects of citizenship—the right to speak and to be heard—and demonstrate the ways in which this right is negotiated.

#### **Method**

The textual examples presented in this article come from a larger-scale project investigating various aspects of citizenship and military service (e.g., Livio, 2012, 2015). They are derived from two types of sources, which I attempt to synthesize. First, the transcriptions of 20 focus group discussions dealing with various aspects of military service were examined for the ways participants talked about citizenship. These focus groups were conducted in Israel and had an average of 5.65 participants (four to nine participants per group, 113 total, all age 18 and older), with 11 of the groups composed mostly of formerly acquainted participants and nine composed mostly of participants who did not know one another previously. Although the sample was not statistically representative of the population at large, it was strategically sampled (see Millward, 1995; Morrison, 1998) to be diverse with regard to the key schisms dividing Israeli society, and included men (51.3%) and women (48.7%); Jews (82.3%) and Arabs (17.7%, 70% of which were Muslim and the rest Christian or Druze); people of different ethnic origins, locations, political leanings, and class memberships; secular (66.7%), religious (29%), and ultra-Orthodox (1.1%) participants; and people who had served in the military (72% of the Jewish participants) or done alternative national service (17.2% of the Jewish participants) and those who did not serve (10.8% of the Jewish participants).

Participants were recruited through various means, including messages posted to relevant online forums and requests sent to different organizations and groups asking them to distribute the call through e-mail contact lists, websites, and Facebook pages. Discussions were carried out in Hebrew in different locations based on convenience and availability (mostly private homes, cafés, and student dorms). At the beginning of the discussion, participants were presented with one of four general topics dealing with a resonant public issue related to military service and citizenship (e.g., a public scandal involving someone who did not serve, the legitimacy of conscientious objection, the necessity of compulsory military/national service) that was meant to serve as a starting point, but participants were encouraged to develop the

conversation based on what they found relevant. I used an interview guide with questions focusing on both general perceptions and individual experience to make sure the relevant topics were addressed, but I remained flexible to the natural flow of the discussion (see Krueger, 1994; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2004).<sup>2</sup>

Second, several strategically selected texts dealing explicitly or implicitly with citizenship and military service that have occupied the Israeli public sphere since the outbreak of the second Intifada in 2000 were identified and analyzed. These include campaigns targeted at increasing levels of service, media texts dealing with the issue of military service and citizenship, and political campaign advertisements addressing this topic.

Both types of textual sources were examined using critical discourse analysis, which seeks to explore the commonly implicit nature of many discursive practices, drawing on critical theory to interpret discursive events (e.g., Fairclough, 2010; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Specifically, the approach to critical discourse analysis used here is based on Reisigl and Wodak's (2009) discourse-historical approach, which is a problem-oriented method that focuses less on micro-level linguistic analysis and more on integrating the relevant context into the interpretation of discourses while employing analytical tools that are specifically suited to the issue being investigated. I particularly focus on discursive strategies of reference (e.g., how people, groups, and events are named and categorized), predication (e.g., how social actors and events are positively or negatively labeled), argumentation (e.g., how attributions and opinions are justified), and intensification or mitigation (e.g., how the force of statements is modified). I present my findings by highlighting those elements that were found to be recurring and most relevant for considering how the meanings of citizenship are constructed as both relating to communication and as constituted through communication.

### **The Right to Speak on "Important Matters"**

The right to speak and to be heard when speaking about substantial issues was one of the most common civil rights discussed, suggesting the centrality of this right within dominant perceptions of citizenship. Such freedom of speech may be conceptualized on both a basic, formal level and a more substantive level, with different implications. On the formal level, it was rare that one's right to speak was constructed discursively as contingent on the completion of military service. When viewed on the more substantive level, however, it became clear that significant differences were constructed discursively with regard to individuals' right to be heard, recognized, and respected in public.

Some of the most illuminating of these differences had to do with the distinction made between the private and public sphere. In the private realm of the family, friends, and acquaintances, the right to speak was constructed as fluid and flexible, depending on the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. As described by some focus group participants, although there are few formal restrictions on this right, in practice individuals who have not served in the military do on occasion find themselves lacking either the

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the focus groups, see Livio (2012).

necessary discursive and cultural resources (e.g., when talk concerns aspects related to military service) or the willing recognition of other citizens to participate meaningfully in dialogue.

In the public sphere that I focus on here, the right to speak and to be heard became more complex and was often constructed as being closely implicated with military service. This tendency worked both ways: Individuals who served in the military earn a privileged right to speak, to be heard, and to be recognized and respected (see Helman, 1999); and individuals who did not serve often relinquish some of these rights at least symbolically.

A fascinating example of this phenomenon was the case of celebrity nonservers—mostly members of Israel's artistic and popular culture establishment who have avoided military service for what is generally perceived as an interest in maximizing their commercial potential during crucial formative years. As popular celebrities, these nonservers are in the public eye and thus can obviously be heard as a result of their popularity, which grants them easy access to the media. At the same time, the fact that they did not serve renders them potentially dangerous, in the sense that their words and behavior may "pollute" the public sphere. Indeed, discourse surrounding these celebrity nonservers often invoked the fear of social contagion. Thus, for example, a scandal erupted in 2006 when it was revealed that Jacko Eisenberg, the winner of the fourth season of *A Star Is Born* (the Israeli version of the reality show *American Idol*) had not served in the military. Journalists and other public figures explained why Eisenberg should be publicly boycotted and not be allowed to speak or perform in public, because his words would have powerful negative effects. As one columnist argued:

Any novice advertiser knows: messages broadcast by "famous people" are absorbed in our consciousness more easily. . . . This young harmful man . . . is a powerful relay station distributing negative messages: contempt for the IDF, contempt for democracy, and in favor of drug use. (Avneri, 2006, para. 5)

Eisenberg, in this case, is labeled negatively as a "harmful man" spreading "negative messages" and is metaphorically compared to a "relay station," thus simultaneously intensifying his power and reach and dehumanizing him—particularly when this technological apparatus is contrasted with a first-person plural human group ("our consciousness") that "absorbs" messages uncritically. Moreover, by juxtaposing the three types of messages allegedly distributed by Eisenberg (and labeling two of them as "contempt"), the columnist suggests that there is an essential similarity between contempt for the IDF, contempt for democracy, and favoring drug use—thus equating criticism of the military with criminal activities and with derision of democracy. Likewise, Eisenberg's right to speak was questioned in an article documenting an attack on Eisenberg during a performance, in which an anonymous soldier in attendance was quoted as saying, "It isn't reasonable that while we're fighting and our friends are being killed, he, who evaded the army, will come and deride us" (Souissa, 2006, para. 5).

Although such calls to boycott these celebrities clearly interfere with their right to speak on the substantive level, they did not go unchallenged. Those critical of boycotts and social ostracism sometimes explicitly drew on the notion of free speech as a basic right of citizenship in making their arguments. Thus, for example, one columnist wrote about Eisenberg:



True, his statements about the military . . . are not music to my ears, [but] we live in a country that considers itself democratic, and as long as Jacko's words are not libelous or inciting to murder—they have a right to be said and heard. (Rosenthal, 2006, para. 4)

More common among those who were critical of the calls to boycott and shun nonservers, however, were arguments for a separation between what are considered to be private and public activities and roles. Thus, for example, a popular blogger wrote that "We forget that this is a young musician with no media experience, and not the Israeli ambassador to the UN" (Shargal, 2006, para. 6), and a popular TV personality explained: "We, the simple people, don't care about Jacko's political opinions or his unimportant ruminations. We care about the music" (Azar, 2006, para. 3).

In the last three examples, the writers use the first-person plural pronoun *we*, albeit in different ways (see Dori-Hacohen, 2014). The first ("we live in a country") and third ("we, the simple people") are both speaker-inclusive and addressee-inclusive and thus construct the sense of an intimate bond between writer and audience (Mühlhäusler & Harré, 1990; Wales, 1996), intensified by the self-inclusive reference to "the simple people" in the last quote. Conversely, in "we forget that this is a young musician" the *we* is speaker-exclusive and is used to mitigate the implied criticism of the audience by performing nominal, "cosmetic" inclusivity that masks the writer's claim to deeper understanding and knowledge (Skelton, Wearn, & Hobbs, 2002). In all three cases, the attempt to construct a community that (allegedly) expresses the same beliefs serves to symbolically exclude Eisenberg from this community; while seemingly defending his right to speak, the importance of listening to what he says is diminished.

The same goal is also accomplished through the discursive construction of an implicit separation between different spheres of public life—that of popular culture and that of politics. This depoliticizes the sphere of popular culture, thus constructing it as less important than politics. The right to exclude oneself from participating in the practice of military service thus entails the surrender of the right to speak about matters perceived as being more important—that is, political discourse, where Eisenberg's opinions are labeled "unimportant ruminations." By maintaining a separation between "serious" political matters and "shallow" popular culture, a fundamental component of citizenship becomes inextricably tied to military service. Interestingly, virtually all commentators on the Eisenberg scandal also noted that they themselves had completed military service—thus signaling that their own right to speak was constituted through their service. Apparently, the right to talk about the military—even if to support nonservice as an option—is often considered to be dependent on the speaker's own service.

### **The Normalization of Military Service and Accompanying Communicative Rights**

This privileged right to communicate by those who have served found its expression in many other circumstances. One interesting example of this was the discourse surrounding Israel's selective refusal movement—soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories or under other specific circumstances to which they conscientiously object. This refusal is a political act of protest in which the right to speak and be heard is of the utmost importance; unless it is vocalized and enters public discourse, the act of protest remains inconsequential. At the same time, the fact that selective refuseniks are unwilling to serve in the military complicates their right to speak on "important matters." Selective

refuseniks navigate this problematic by using their military past as a resource for legitimizing their claim to moral authority and the right to speak. Military service thus functions as a civil resource in the political sphere (see Burk, 1995).

Many studies have demonstrated the use made by members of various peace movements of their military past to justify their claims (e.g., Feige, 1998; Helman, 1997). In the case of selective refuseniks, this finds its expression most commonly in the discursive employment of narratives emphasizing personal experience during military service to both lay claim to authenticity and utilize these stories as a source of wisdom, knowledge, and moral authority (Livio, 2015). The legitimacy of this experience as a moral compass is based on the fact that it is founded on actual, physical contact with military reality. Refuseniks' right to speak is contingent on the ability to lay claim to having close personal knowledge of what they are speaking about. In addition, selective refuseniks situate their right to speak as contingent on military service using more formal symbols, such as repeatedly referencing their military unit and rank. Similar strategies have been employed by members of protest movements such as Breaking the Silence, who legitimate their call to end the occupation of the West Bank on their own record of service and their role as witnesses to, and sometimes participation in, immoral conduct by soldiers (Helman, 2015; Katriel & Shavit, 2011). Military service thus functions as the primary means through which the right to express oneself ideologically is constructed. The fact that these various protesters indeed received much media coverage and were often offered the opportunity to present their positions at length (even if through a critical frame) appears to indicate that the relationship between service and citizens' right to speak, be heard, and be respected is indeed significant.

The relation between military service and the right to speak is sometimes rendered even more implicitly, as a recent social media event demonstrates. In December 2016, former IDF brigadier-general Ofek Buchris was convicted of a prohibited sexual liaison with a junior female officer under his command, as part of a plea bargain in which 3 counts of rape and 13 counts of other sex crimes against two women were dropped. Buchris was demoted to the rank of colonel, but received no jail time. As part of the public protest that arose in response, people were invited to post on Facebook cases in which they had received harsher sentences than Buchris for much less serious military offenses, using the hashtag #More\_than\_Buchris. Within hours, thousands of posts using this hashtag could be found, and the flood continued over the next few days (e.g., Bohbot & Druckman, 2016). Unmentioned in this widespread protest, however, was the fact that participation was contingent on military service; having a military past was normalized, and the fact that the symbolic right to communicate a feminist message about the lax punishing of sexual offenders was implicitly limited to former soldiers went virtually unnoticed among most Jewish citizens. Not surprisingly, where it did come up more often was in posts by those who were excluded from the conversation, primarily Palestinian-Arab citizens. As one Arab activist wrote:

How did you get to such a belittling campaign that focuses on the army? A reminder, the issue here is not the stupid stuff you got punished for in the army, and not bragging about what you did or didn't do in the army. "I went to pee and got more than Buchris"??? . . . The issue here is sexual violence, . . . and this campaign just horrifies me. (Khamis, 2016, para. 3)

This normalization of the relation between military service and the right to communicate finds its expression in many arenas. With regard to the Arab population, it is perhaps most clearly illustrated in patterns of inclusion and exclusion in mainstream media. As many reports have documented (e.g., Persico, 2016), Arab citizens in Israel are significantly underrepresented in media coverage, customarily appearing in only 3% to 4% of items—far less than their proportion in the citizenry (about 20%). No less importantly, Arab citizens are allowed to communicate almost exclusively on topics related to the Arab population (e.g., Persico, 2016). Although these are often considered important matters, because they are usually associated with security concerns, they construct Arabs as limited citizens who pose a security threat and have nothing to contribute to the “common good” or to say about Israeli society as a whole. (Conversely, Jewish Israelis appear in the media with regard to both general affairs and issues concerning Arab citizens.) This pattern is noticeable, if less extreme, with regard to the ultra-Orthodox population as well—members of which are generally allowed to communicate mostly on matters related to their own community. In these cases, too, however, it is virtually impossible to find a news item online in which ultra-Orthodox citizens’ talk is not followed by a maelstrom of comments explicitly denying or questioning these citizens’ right to speak on general affairs as long as they do not serve in the military.

Freedom of speech and the right to communicate also came up in focus group discussions, and the complex relations between this right and the military were clearly in evidence. For example, in one focus group, the following discussion developed with Eli,<sup>3</sup> a 54-year-old former combat soldier and current volunteer in the reserves:

Eli: The son of a friend of mine, who is now of conscription age and is doing all he can not to be conscripted, this guy is a sportsman and an athlete. His thing is windsurfing, and he’s losing his best years of windsurfing if he goes to the army now. That’s his only consideration. Not conscientiousness, because he doesn’t have any conscience. . . . I’m not judging him. Me, personally, I actively volunteer in active reserve service even after I could have been discharged. . . . The judgment, the lynching [of nonservers], it troubles me here, but I think this kid is not okay, and in any ideological argument I have with him I tell him, “You shut up, because you’re a parasite who thinks only of himself.” But I won’t deny him the right to go abroad to competitions, and I’m sure the entire country will be happy when he brings an Olympic medal sometime.

Moderator: Okay, so what do you think should be denied him?

Eli: What do I think? First of all I’m totally conflicted over this for several months now. And . . . he shouldn’t be denied anything. We should compensate those who do [serve].

Moderator: Okay, but you just said, for example, that when you talk to him, you tell him, “You shut up, because you’re a parasite.” So that means you are denying him something, you’re denying him some right.

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<sup>3</sup> All names are pseudonyms to protect the participants’ anonymity.

Eli: With me, with me, with me, with me. I'm not denying him any right because talking with me is not a right.

Moderator: Okay.

Eli: No, seriously. Like, voting in the elections is a right. Getting a mortgage I think should be a right for anyone who was born in Israel, [whether he or she] served in the army or didn't serve in the army.

As Eli acknowledges, he is torn between his feeling that avoiding service for personal benefit is morally wrong (he describes the nonserver as having "no conscience") and his discomfort at the social "judgment" and "lynching" of nonservers. While not willing to deny his friend's son any explicit political or social rights, however, with regard to freedom of speech and political expression, he presents a somewhat more conflicted viewpoint, although he quickly backs off once his position is framed as a denial of a basic right, jokingly stating that "talking with me is not a right," unlike "voting in the elections" and "getting a mortgage." This minimal construction of citizenship rights as limited to acts such as voting has been critically dissected by Asen (2004). In this sense, Eli's denial of the youngster's right to speak—if only with Eli—is problematic because it is specifically situated in the realm of an important "ideological argument" and is founded on his being labeled a social parasite as a result of not having served.

Similar to the critics of celebrity nonservers and selective refuseniks cited earlier, Eli too casually and seemingly unrelatedly mentions his own military service and the fact that he continues to volunteer even when not obligated to, thus constructing what Van Dijk (1998) refers to as an "ideological square"—opposing clusters of positive and negative associations that are built up around social actors through the use of lexical terms and connotations without necessarily using explicit judgments. In fact, Eli states that he "is not judging" the nonserver, but then refers to him as lacking conscience, "not okay," and "a parasite"—thus indirectly constructing himself (who did serve and continues to serve) as the opposite of all these traits. This is then translated into symbolic practice: While no formal civil, political, or social right is completely relinquished here, recognition as a moral equal "due the same level of respect and dignity as all other members" (Somers, 2008, p. 6) is certainly diminished as a result of nonservice; there is no outright exclusion, but the hierarchization and stratification of the right to speak based on participation in military service is unmistakable.

### Discussion

As the examples presented in this study demonstrate, citizenship, viewed communicatively, is a multilayered, complex, and often contradictory concept. Beyond its obvious legal and political definitions, it acquires its cultural meanings from the everyday discourse engaged in by citizens, from the discourse in publicly circulating media texts and from the complicated interplay between locally situated discourses stemming from political and historical contexts and more globally infused discourses that continually infiltrate local discussion. In the specific Israeli case, it has been shown that the fundamental communicative aspects of citizenship—the right to communicate meaningfully in the public sphere—remain closely linked, albeit not in simple deterministic fashion, to perceptions regarding the centrality of military

service as an indicator for membership in the Israeli citizenry and cultural collective. Within a culture characterized by an integrated model of citizenship encompassing a variety of components of fluctuating levels (liberal, republican, ethnonational), different conceptions of citizenship and its inherent communicative rights are themselves negotiated discursively, in ongoing cultural dialogue. The various competing components are assimilated in discourse along with their tensions and fissures, and individuals and groups use military service flexibly to lay claim to, or to disown, competing claims to the rights associated with citizenship.

Whereas previous studies have argued for the importance of considering the importance of rhetorical deliberation as a fundamental component of citizenship (e.g., Kock & Villadsen, 2012), this study develops a communication-centered view in which communication is not simply a way of negotiating and/or examining citizenship (that is, it is not only a tool—although it is certainly *also* that) but also a constitutive cornerstone of citizenship in the sense that meaningful communication (both the right to speak and the right to be listened to) is inextricably associated with perceptions of what it means to be a citizen and what rights this entails.<sup>4</sup>

Although my focus on the Israeli context—and specifically on the ways in which citizenship and communication are tied to military service in a country where such service is mandatory—is clearly limiting, from a communication theory aspect, there are nevertheless significant implications that extend beyond the specific case study. Countries differ in their institutional arrangements regarding military service, but republican ideals linking the rights and duties of citizenship to perceptions of contribution to the common good exist in most societies, albeit in different manifestations (e.g., Somers, 2008). The specific link to military service as the epitome of citizens' expected civic virtue and participation may manifest itself differently in other national contexts, but this link between forms of participation and perceptions (or gradations) of citizenship may certainly be relevant in such contexts as well, possibly in less explicit fashion. In this sense, the Israeli case provides an extreme case study that brings to the forefront explicitly those problematics of the various notions of citizenship that may be found in other locales.

The findings of this study, while locally situated, thus encourage communication theorists to consider the relation between citizenship and communication more broadly—and perhaps in more potential realms of influence—than is commonly done. When considering citizenship (or more broadly, democracy) and communication, scholarship has traditionally focused on the ways that communication is central, indeed crucial, for the functioning of modern democracies: communication as enabling and facilitating democracy through the work of the media as a “watchdog” of political processes,

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<sup>4</sup> To illustrate, a 2010 survey by the Israel Democracy Institute (Arian et al., 2010) found that 43% of secular Israelis and 49% of national religious Israelis supported denying the right to vote and be elected to citizens who had chosen not to serve in the military or complete national service (compared with 23% of Arabs and 13% of ultra-Orthodox). Results of a similar 2015 survey (Hermann, Heller, Cohen, & Bublil, 2015) were even more extreme, but are difficult to evaluate since the service requirement was conflated with a requirement to pledge allegiance to Israel as a Jewish state.

communicative deliberation as the cornerstone of democratic participation, and communication free from limitations and censorship as enabled by a democratic regime (e.g., Asen, 2004; Kock & Villadsen, 2012). I suggest that the relationship should also be considered more generally: citizenship as intricately tied to fundamental communicative concepts such as speech, discourse, and representation. All of these concepts came up both in discussions and in media texts as related to conceptions of citizenship, and were central in the negotiation of the meanings of citizenship as an ongoing *communicative practice*.

While the popular view of military service as the epitome of civil engagement certainly goes beyond the Israeli case (see Marvin & Ingle, 1999, for the American case), the degree to which this view pervades Israeli society represents something of an anomaly in the traditional developmental trajectory of most contemporary democracies. Historically, military service among most democratic nations has evolved so that the function of the soldier has become increasingly specialized, with the military increasingly detached from the civil sphere (e.g., Janowitz, 1976; Kohn, 1997; Moskos et al., 2000). This warrior function has always been seen as necessary, but in modern-day democracies it is no longer considered to be coterminous with that of the citizen, and this is in fact part of what enables the pacification of the domestic civil sphere (Kohn, 1997; Moskos et al., 2000). Within Israel, however, the perception of an existential crisis appears to have forestalled the specialization of the function of the soldier to at least some degree, with many Israelis essentially continuing to equate citizen and soldier. The result is not only the militarization of the domestic sphere but also, potentially, an antidevelopmental democratic impulse that may find its expression in realms of citizenship seemingly not linked directly to military service. Indeed, the recent waves of "purification rituals" carried out in the name of patriotism and targeting groups as diverse as foreign immigrants, Arab citizens, Israeli human rights activists, left-wing protest movements and political parties, and individuals and groups who do not serve in the military have often put military service and the IDF at their center, with those individuals and groups alleged to have potentially harmed the military (e.g., by exposing human rights violations or making accusations of war crimes) being first in line for attack. This, too, has been noted in other contexts, including the United States (e.g., Alexander, 2006), and, of course, during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections.

Considered critically from a communication theory perspective, it appears that the centrality of military service (in Israel) or other forms of participation (elsewhere) may be associated with both civic and communicative limitations. With such forms of participation functioning as convenient rules of thumb for judging and evaluating civilian identity, one is seldom required to consider or communicate, to the self and to others, what being a "good citizen" means. This would by no means be a simple task under any circumstances; the meanings and practices of civil society, the civil sphere, and citizenship are inevitably complex, ambiguous, and contentious, built as they are upon components of both individualism and social solidarity (e.g., Alexander, 2006; Marshall, 1964). Yet with republican notions of participation occupying such a central cultural position in the construction of citizenship, there is little need to engage in imaginative, deliberative thought on this topic. From a standpoint emphasizing the importance of communication for democratic life, this may be worrying indeed.

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