TYPES OF INTERACTION ON ISRAELI POLITICAL RADIO PHONE-IN PROGRAMMES AND THEIR RELATIONS TO THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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Abstract

This paper typifies the different interactions on Israeli public stations political radio phone-in programmes. Based on general features of the interaction and of the host perceptions, six different types of interaction were found. The different types can be distinguished by two aspects, whether the interaction is based on agreement or disagreement and whether the participants engage each other in the interaction. The most prominent type of inter-action is a two-sided disagreement interaction, in which hosts and callers argue about issues and problems. A simi-lar type is that of the neutral interaction, in which hosts try to avoid expressing their opinions. Other types of interac-tions also occur in the programmes, yet hosts often remark on their occurrence. These remarks serve to explain the interaction to the audience, to justify the hosts' behaviour, and to reprimand or compliment the caller. These remarks also suggest that hosts see these types as non-normative interactions, when compared to the two-sided disagree-ment and neutral interactions. The normative categories go hand in hand with the demands of a public sphere, showing that political radio phone-in programmes in Israel contribute to the public sphere and to its democratic life.

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Introduction

Ever since Habermas's description of the classic public sphere and its demise (Habermas 1989), communication researchers have discussed this concept rigorously. Habermas portrays a public sphere in which equal citizen discuss governments' action. Citizens can participate in the discussions and present their opinions freely. The discussions in the public sphere are supposed to be rational, critical of the government, and to end in a consensus. Though many criticised Habermas's description (cf. Dahlgren and Sparks 1993), most researchers accept Habermas's description as an ideal public sphere. Habermas himself (2006) updates his original theory and set two conditions for a current public sphere to take place in the media: the autonomy of the media and the participation of ordinary citizens. As listening was recognised as central to the public sphere (Lacey 2011), this paper listen to one cite of a public sphere – radio phone-ins (Hutchby 2001) in Israel. In these programmes, citizens call the radio station asking to express their opinion and then talk with a host on the air.[1] This paper presents the various types of interactions that develop in these programmes, based on the analysis of 76 interactions recorded and transcribed from three different programmes. The public sphere is exercised on the programmes by the major type of interaction, a two-sided disagreement interaction, whose participants exchange opinions openly and freely.

Democracy, Conversations and Radio Phone-in Programmes

Dewey (1927) restates the importance of conversation[2] to democracy. He conceives conversation as a vehicle to improve democratic life. Similarly, Tarde (1969) sees conversation as forming a general opinion out of the many private ones. Habermas (1989) sees the golden age of the public sphere as one that was executed through conversations. Wyatt, Katz and Kim (Kim et al. 1999; Wyatt et al. 2000) argue that the more a person converses about politics the more she knows about it. Price, Cappella and Nir (2002) show that in addition to conversations, disagreements are beneficial for democracy. Mutz (2006) accepts this point and finds that exposure to different opinions in conversations also improves political knowledge. Yet in her study, disagreements seldom occurred. Mutz is therefore sceptic with regard to deliberative democracy, a field whose interest lies in citizens' participation in democratic processes (Chambers 2003). When political researchers listen to actual political interactions, they usually listen to interactions between politicians, or that between journalists and politicians. Interactions among citizen are often taken as an independent variable which explains wider phenomena (Kim et al. 1999; Barker 2002). This paper joins the little research that analyses actual discourse (Tracy and Durfy 2007). Thus, this paper discusses how one venue in nowadays broadcast achieves an arena similar to the public sphere in a broadcast system, contributing to the discussion of the role of broadcast to the public (Nyre 2011).

Communication researchers see the media as the place were politics occurs (Ross 2004, 786). Other researchers see the media as the institution whose function is to mediate politics in democratic society (Blumler and Kavanagh 1999). Both views can be seen in political radio phone-ins programmes, since this is a site which allows participation of ordinary citizens in political life (Owen 1997; Pan

and Kosicki 1997, 383). As Katriel argues, radio phone-in programmes were the main arena in the media for civic participation in politics, before the advent of the internet (Katriel 2004, 234). Overall, the discussions in the political radio phone-in programmes combine the importance of interaction and the importance of media to political life.

Dimensions in Political Discussion

The concept of political discussion can be divided to two dimensions. One dimension is the engagement in the interaction. The second dimension is whether agreement or disagreement occurs throughout the interaction.

The dimension of engagement can be perceived as a spectrum, which relates to the equality of the participants in the interaction as well as to the free exchange that exist within it. One side of the spectrum is the two-sided interaction, which resembles the dialogue; on the other side is the one-sided interaction. Fisher (1987) defines dialogue as an interaction in which people mutually engage each other while exchanging messages. This engagement has several aspects: the amount of talk, the amount of turn changes; the responsiveness of the participants to each other; and the control over the situation. In discussing engagement, this paper combines these dimensions with the hosts' meta-communicative comments in the interaction, regarding these elements. A two-sided interaction is one in which the amount of talk is perceived as equal and there are many changes of speakers. When only one side talks and the interaction has very few exchanges I termed it one-sided interaction. One-sided interaction can be a result of a host's decision not to talk, or a caller's taking control over the interaction while preventing the host from talking. In the corpus analysed, there is one interaction that the amount of talk is perceived as equal, many changes of speaker occurs and yet there is little responsiveness. This interaction is termed, by its host, "the dialogue of the deaf,"[3] and will be discusses separately.

In the media, two-sided interactions are seldom reached since usually the media person, being a host or an interviewer, has control over the interaction (Hutchby 1996; 1999; Blum-Kulka 2001). However, as Katriel (2004) demonstrates media hosts may aspire to create a free exchange with its dialogic moment. Moreover, these aspirations can loosen the host's control of the interaction and may lead to a perception of two-sided interaction. Hence, there can be attempts in the media to fulfil – or at least come close to – Habermas's demands for a free exchange in the public sphere.

The aspect of agreement and disagreement relate to whether a discussion is based on consent or arguments. Habermas (1989) suggested that the discussion in the public sphere needed to conclude in consensus. On the other hand, Price et al. (2002) found that disagreements in personal social networks contribute to political knowledge, and enrich democratic life. In mundane conversations, however, conversation analysis has established that there is a preference for agreement (Pomerantz 1984). This finding supports both Schudson's (1997) critique of the importance of conversations for democratic life and Mutz's (2006) finding with regard to interactions in American social networks. However, in institutional settings, such as radio phone-in programmes and television interviews (Greatbatch 1988; 1992), there is no such preference. In some settings a preference for disagreement exists

(Blum-Kulka, Blondheim and Hacohen 2002). In television news and journalistic interviews research has shown that interviewers can, and at times should, avoid expressing their opinions in what Clayman (1988; 1992) coins "neutrality." Thus, in the radio phone-in corpus, a three way division can be envisioned for this dimension: agreement interaction, disagreement interaction and neutral interaction, in which the host tries to avoid expressing an independent opinion.

Previous research on radio phone-in programmes did not discuss the nature of the interactions as part of the public sphere. Hutchby (1991; 1996; 2001) describes the interactions as argumentative yet neutral – since hosts try to avoid expressing their opinion, although at times they do express their opinions. This description fits the demand for having a disagreement in the discussion at the public sphere. Furthermore, Hutchby describes a one-sided interaction, in which the caller's monologue is challenged by a few questions before the host summarises the caller's opinion and moves to the next caller. This description suggests that the hosts and callers engage each other superficially and the interaction is relatively one-sided.

The study of Israeli phone-in leads to a different picture, as these interactions are mainly two-sided disagreements, and therefore closer to the ideal public sphere form. This argument is based on a qualitative analysis of 76 Israeli political radio phone-in interactions, averaging about five minutes per conversation and ranging from a minute and a half to fifteen minutes. These interactions were recorded and transcribed from three different programmes, as presented in table 1 below. All these programmes were broadcast on public radio stations. Yet, on commercial stations, radio phone-ins are different, as they resemble the US model, in which the host is the star and his opinion sets the tone for the programme (see Dori-Hacohen, in-press b). In what follows, I first typify the Israeli public stations phone-in interactions. Then the paper presents the largest category among the groups, the two-sided disagreement interactions. This type is the unmarked type, since hosts do not comment on it, and therefore it is the normative type of interaction. Since other types of interaction occur, the paper illustrates them, and presents the hosts' comments on each type. All these types relate to the public sphere, yet the hosts' comments, in the interactions that deviate from the two-sided disagreement interaction, guide the audience to take the two-sided disagreement interaction as the normative type. This normative type comes to accomplish the public sphere in the radio phone-ins in Israel.

Table 1: Programs' Names and Features

Programmes' Name (Acronym)	Agenda set by	Host	Time
There is someone to talk to (TST)	Caller	Changes daily	15-16 Weekdays
Conversation with listeners (CWL)	Caller	Permanent	18-19 Bi-weekly
Friday in the morning (FIM)	Production	Permanent	8-9 Friday

Types of Interaction

As with any interaction, the calls have opening stages and closing segments (Schegloff 1986) which are not discussed below. Furthermore, radio phone-in interactions are flexible. An interaction can move on the spectrum of the dimensions of engagement and agreement. Due to space limitations, I will not present

an interaction that moves on these spectrums. The main part of each interaction was analysed and six different types of interactions were found:

1. One-sided agreement interaction – the caller does most of the talking, the host agrees with him and does not elaborate on the agreement nor engage the caller.
2. One-sided disagreement interaction – the caller does most of the talking and prevents the host from disagreeing with him, leading to the termination of the interaction without engagement between the participants.
3. Neutral interaction – the host refrains from expressing any opinion and lets the caller present his opinion.
4. Two-sided agreement interaction – the caller present his topic, the host agrees with him, adds to the topic and engage the caller.
5. Two-sided disagreement interaction – the caller present his topic, the host disagrees with him, leading to an engaged discussion about the caller's and the host's opinions.
6. The "dialogue of the deaf" – the caller presents his opinion, the host presents his opinion about the same topic but these opinions do not clash and no engagement is created.[4]

As can be seen from table 2 below, most interactions had disagreements in them. Similarly, the majority of the interactions were two-sided. Cross-cutting these two dimensions show that the largest group of interactions was the two-sided disagreement interactions. These results are to be expected. However there are more two-sided interactions than disagreement interactions, showing that the flow of the interaction is more important, in Israel, than its content. A quarter of the interactions are neutral, as the host avoids expressing his opinion, yet in most of the interactions the caller and the audience can learn the host's opinion. The two-sided disagreement interaction is the most frequent type and it is the preferred type of interaction. Next, I present and discuss the two-sided disagreement interactions.

Table 2: The Occurrences of Different Categories (N=76)

Form \ Content	Agreement (N=17 22 %)	Disagreement (N=40 53 %)	Neutral (N=19 25%)
One-sided (N=20, 26 %)	3 (4 %)	6 (8 %)	11 (14 %)
Two-sided (N=56, 74 %)	14 (18 %)	34 (45 %)	8 (11 %)

Two-sided Disagreement Interactions

In two-sided disagreement interactions, a caller presents his opinion or problem and the host challenges him or her. This challenge is met by the caller, who can stand by his opinion, reciprocally challenge the host, or at times concede the point. The disagreement is based on the host's opinion and life view as he rejects the caller's position.

In the following interaction, the caller agrees with a governmental committee, whose recommendations were to lay off thousands teachers. The host, using an analogy to the caller's work place, tries to explain why the teachers' union opposes the recommendations.

A. TST, 10/01/05. Host: Arye Maliniak, Caller: Sheli.[5]

1. H: I don't know how many people work in the work place tha::t you work at. (0.7)
          How many people do work there?
2. C: (0.7) ((we have)) fifty people working.
3. H: **are they all superstars**?
4. C: no. **Everyone who is not a superstar goes**.
5. H: you don't say?
6. C: yes.
7. H: all the fifty are superstars?
8. C: ai- ai- **isn't- there is no playing here. ((that's) how it is. Anyone who does
          not work [well**
9. H: **[okay**.
10. C: anyone who cannot deliver the goods, today no no, there are plenty of
          people out there.
11. H: (0.7) one hundred percent. **So from so from fifty people you can still do
          that. When you have fifty thousand, there is no possibility that they all**
          ((continues))

Since the caller argues for firing mediocre teachers, the host tries convincing him that even in his own work place there are mediocre employees. After checking how many people work in the caller's work place (A: 1), the host asks for their quality (A: 3). The caller at first agrees that not all employees are superstars (the "no" at the beginning of A: 4), but then makes it clear that a mediocre employee is fired (A: 4). The host responds with disbelief (A: 5, 7). The caller then backs his statement – since there are plenty of workers in the market, only good employees can keep their jobs (A: 8, 10). The host accepts this claim (A: 9) and then changes his argument (A:11). This excerpt shows that the host and the caller disagree. Moreover, after being convinced, the host changes his line of argumentation in order to continue the disagreement, but from a different perspective.

Hosts use their own world view in the disagreements. In the following interaction, a host argues with a different caller about the same reform. This caller, who is a teacher, rejects the reform, and especially the recommendation to give school principals more managerial power.

B. TST, 17/01/05. Host: Eitan Lifshitz, Caller: Eli.

1. H: what you are actually saying is that yo::u expect a situation in whi::ch,
          uh::m, [principals=
2. C: [No.
          [Because you said
3. H: [principals and teacher ah a will actually forge the u::h forge the situation.
4. C: n- a of <u>course</u>. And a and [that's why.
5. H: **[you say of course**?
          (0.2) **[of course? That is your real response**?
6. C: [listen.
7.   (0.7) of course. [Because
8. H: [why ((do you say)) of course.
9. C: I'll tell [you
10. H: [can't you- can't you imagine, that there will be decent teachers and
          principals.
11. C: (0.8) ah:::a, fine. **Go measure a decent principal**.

12. H:	(0.7) [**that's exactly like**	
13. C:	[listen,	[listen,
14. H:		[**n::o. That's** exactly like that you say that, without, you

know, without a blink of the eye say they will forge ((the grades)) upward to

show achievements. **I do not buy this outcome**.

The host reformulates the caller's argument to create a challenging yes/no question (Jucker 1986; Koshik 2003). Following the lay-offs of veteran teachers, according to the reformulation, principals will falsify novice teachers' results to save money (B: 1, 3). The reformulation is built with the extremely negative term, "forge" (lezayef in Hebrew), which begs the caller's rejection of the reformulation. Instead, the caller confirms the reformulation (B: 4). After some overlaps (B: 5-10), in which the callers reaffirms his stand (B: 7), the host ask another question (B: 9), regarding a decent principal. The caller remains firm in his belief and challenges the host to measure decency (B: 10). Following this challenge, the host shouts at the caller and states overtly that he cannot share this world view (B: 11, 13).[6] Even after these shouting, the caller keeps his ground and bases his opinion on his experience (Hutchby 2001), to reject the host's opinion that the world of education is completely moral. This segment shows how a host uses his own opinion, as well as how a caller can challenge a host, to create a two-sided disagreement that is based on the participants' opinions.

Major disagreements can appear on matters other than topics, facts and opinions. Hosts can reject callers' attempts to speak on behalf of everybody, trying to limit callers' representation. Hosts can also reject certain terms and wordings callers use. As the next excerpt suggests, hosts can reject their appointment as addressees and feign neutrality, as part of the journalistic ethos. In this interaction, the caller suggests rejecting as inadmissible a suspect's confession if it is not supported by other evidence, since such confession might be coerced.

C. FIM, 11/03/05. Host: Gideon Reicher, Caller: Dvora.

1. C:	(0.7) first. What **do you consider** more severe? (1.2) That a person sits-
	[the country will put
2. H:	[Are you asking **me now**? ((snickers))
3. C:	Y- y- n::o. Like what **seems to us as a society** more severe.
4. H:	**I'd think that a** ju::dge, who is professional, who presides, and hears the
	confession and t- and knows how it was taken, and examines an::d th::e
	accused himself is questioned about it etcetera and reaches the conclusion,
	(0.4) that in this certain case, he believes t- t- the confession, and not its
	denial. **In my opinion it is enough.** (0.7) In specific cases.

The caller starts her question with "what do you," (C: 1) thus targeting the host as recipient.[7] The host, in an overlap, makes it clear that he should not be the recipient of this question (C: 2). Therefore, the caller reformulates her utterance, presenting a general question to the society as a whole (C: 3). Based on her prior talk, she presents two options: condemning a person for a crime he did not commit based on a forced confession, or demanding further evidence to corroborate such a confession. The host answers her general question, but he answers it from his perspective, referring to himself twice, at the beginning of his turn ("I'd think") and at its end ("in my opinion"). The host trusts the professional judge to know when a confession is forced and when it is not, and therefore he disagrees with the

caller. Thus, though this host directs the caller not to direct her question at him, his response is personal and he creates two-sided disagreement.

Hosts can demand callers to give real reasons and to create a deep discussion. In the programme that discusses the judicial system following a violent crime wave, a caller demands judges to declare just and firm sentences.

D. FIM, 11/03/05. Host: Gideon Reicher, Caller: Itzhak Mor.

1. C:	there's a need to give the punishments, in the case the judge::s are
	convinced, that the same person is the real accused? Yes? To give the a::h
	[real pu[nishment.
2. H:	[but you got [y-
3. C:	because a lot of times I hea::r,
4. H:	but you got out of it easy. I can also say what you are saying. **"Big deal"**
	((English in original)). (0.7) The court should do the right thing. Come on. **We**
	don't do catchphrases.

At the end of the caller's summary (D: 1), the host overlaps him (D: 2). When the host wins the overlap, he recycles the overlap (D: 4) and demands that the caller not use slogans. The host demands that the caller will give real answers and not state the obvious. This segment shows the hosts' aspiration to create a meaningful exchange and not a banal exchange of obvious truisms.

Regardless of the basis of the disagreement, in two-sided disagreement interactions hosts and callers listen to, try to persuade, and reject each other's arguments. Although such interactions might reach shouting, hosts and callers can still go on arguing, regardless of the tones. Overlaps may occur in these interactions, but they are resolved. As seen above, during such interactions, concessions may be made in order to promote the disagreements (ex. A: 11). In these interactions, ideas and their supporting arguments are clashing. Though the ideas are not always well elaborated, and the arguments at times are not fully formed, a contest of opinion is nonetheless carried out. Furthermore, in these interactions, a lively discussion is created, where both participants speak their mind freely. Since these interactions are interesting and entertaining, many of the hosts see them as accomplishing the goal of the programme. Thus, from a radio perspective, it is easy to understand why this is the largest type on interaction in the corpus.

The radio-phonic aspect is one explanation why two-sided disagreement interactions are the most common. This type is also the preferred type of interaction. The preference is evident not merely from the quantitative measure, presented above in table 2, but from the participants' actions. The preference is to both dimensions of the interaction – a disagreement, and a two-sided one at that. The evidence for this preference can be found at other types of interaction where hosts comment on digressions from this type, as will be elaborated shortly. The preference for two-sided disagreement interaction establishes the view that these programmes are an arena for the public sphere.

The two-sided disagreement interactions enable each participant to present his opinion, while the exchange in the interaction tests, modifies and fortifies opinion. The exchange also enables a critical discussion, as Habermas (1989) suggests with regard to the public sphere. The two-sided interaction is considered by both sides to be free, even though the hosts retain some control over the interaction. The importance of two-sided disagreement interactions (Kim et al. 1999; Wyatt et al.

2000) suggests that the radio interaction can promote public discussion and political knowledge. Furthermore, the audience listening to the programme, and its participants, are exposed to these disagreements. Therefore, according to previous research (Price et al. 2002; Mutz 2006) it is likely that they learn about politics. Therefore, the two-sided disagreement interactions fulfil the demands that interaction in the public sphere must be critical, open[8] and free (Habermas 1989).

The Neutral Interaction

The journalistic ethos establishes that journalists should not express their opinion, as manifested in the neutrality presented in journalistic interviews (Claymen 1988; 1992). Hutchby (1996) demonstrates that in radio phone-in programmes in England, hosts follow this ethos and try to avoid expressing their opinions. He shows that hosts challenge any opinion a caller presents, since they only respond to it without expressing their opinion. In Israel, neutral interactions occur in quarter of the calls as shown in table 2 above. As illustrated above, hosts can feign neutrality, and at times they stress it is not their role to express opinion, as can be seen below.

> E. TSR, 27/12/2004. Host: Eitan Lifshitz, Caller: Alex.
> 1. H: I do::n't **I do::n't express an opinion** about th::e decisions uhm, the judge's
>   decision=
> 2. C: =**why [not**?
> 3. H: [c- first I i- a- I a- fi- first of all, why not? It is very simple. It is not my
>   business here. (0.6) **my business, is to extract your opinion**.

The caller criticised a judge ruling. The host says that he does not express his opinion about the judge's decision (E: 1). The caller then asks why not (E: 2). This demand for explanation suggests callers expect hosts to express their opinions. The host answers with extreme difficulties, as evident from the hesitations and cut offs in his turn (E: 3). Then he declares that his role is not to express his opinion but to get the caller to state his opinion.

Hosts present neutrality by using phrases that put the caller's opinion at the centre of the interaction. As Clayman (1992) showed, they use several footing measures to distance themselves from an opinion or a view.

> F. TST, 2/12/2004. Host: Yaakov Achimeir, Caller: Amnon.
> 1. H: Amnon. **You** said, that accordi::ng to the polls, a as **you** bring them, 35 to 40
>   percent of the general public, support the Geneva uhm initiative. (0.6) Do **you**
>   think, tha::t let's suppose in the next election, whether they are in a couple of
>   years, or earlier, it depends on the political developments, do **you** think tha::t (0.5) i-
>   **I can assume what you hope**. But realistically, do **you think** that the major
>   ity of the public will support the ah Geneva initiative. As it will be expressed
>   in its vote to:: parties, or bodies that support it ((the initiative)).
> 2. C: no. (1.2) It will not be expresse::d, (1.2) in the next elections. (0.6) But maybe it
>   will be express:ed, in the election after the next. Or in the next [next
> 3. H: [**Mhm. Mhm**.

In the interaction the caller supports the Geneva initiative[9] and argues that most Israelis share this support. The host challenges the caller by formulating his prior talk. Hutchby shows that using formulations hosts avoid expressing their opinions,

since formulations target the caller's speech (Hutchby 1996, 60-68). Therefore, the host asks if the caller thinks that this support will be expressed in the coming elections. The host stresses that he knows the caller's hopes, but he does not ask about them but about the reality as the caller sees it. This question targets the caller's expectations while allowing the host to avoid expressing his opinion. When the caller answers, the host accepts the answer (F: 3) with continuers (Schegloff 1982) and does not engage or show any substantive reaction to that answer.

The neutral interaction follows the journalistic values. Journalists are professionalised to avoid expressing their opinion and to present an objective and factual world view. In interviewing politicians, they are supposed to let the politicians express their opinion and not to express their own (Clayman 1988). In the neutral interaction, hosts display these values and norms, and they treat the callers like politicians. The neutral interaction does not lead to an open exchange of opinions and therefore falls short of the ideal of the public sphere, showing that at times journalistic values may be detrimental to the public sphere. The neutral interactions differ from the two-sided disagreement interactions, which follow the view of the public sphere as argumentative, open and equal interaction. Although hosts take these interactions to be normative, as illustrated above, callers can request an account for the neutral interaction, thus showing they prefer two-sided interactions.

The Agreement Interactions

Hosts do not just disagree with callers or present neutrality, in 17 calls (22 percent) they agree with them. These agreements demonstrate that hosts do not only create the vibrant and argumentative public sphere, but that the goal of the interaction is not argument for the sake of argumentation. The host can agree in two ways, they can state their agreement without elaborating, creating a one-sided agreement interaction, or they can elaborate on the agreement and create a two-sided agreement interaction. These agreements are taken by the hosts to be out of the ordinary, as can be seen in the following interaction, about the health-care system.

G. FIM, 04/02/2005. Host: Dalik Vulinitz, Caller: Amikam.
1. C: I think that the problem is much more general. (0.8) And we should put our
          mind to it. We've beco:me a sta:te with large ((social)) gaps.
2.   (1.2) People, they have nothing to eat, they crowd the charity centers. (0.7)
          Here I think lies the problem. With all th- uhm- with all the problem in the hos-
          pitals, uhm certainly. (0.7) Which is the current problem. (0.3) In the headlines.
3. H: (0.6) yes. (0.5) Amikam. We uh::m (0.7) you see, I didn't stop you even for a
          moment. There are things [tha::t
4. C: [I don't know if
          [it's because I [spoke to the point,
5. H: [There are-   [no.
          (0.2) [It could b-
6. C: [Or because I said [nonsense.
7. H: [It could be that- I didn't do my job. I just agreed
          with every word. Thank you.

The caller summarises his argument that the problem with the health-care system relates to larger social problems, regarding the social disparity in Israel (G: 1). He reaches an end of his third sentence and stops. After a pause of more than

a second,[10] the caller chooses to continue (G: 2). In conversation analysis terms, the host chooses not to talk in this transition relevance place (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). When the caller continues, he talks in a broken up manner, with long pauses, and adds an increment of talk, "at the headlines," after an increment, "which is …" (G: 2). Ford and her colleagues suggest that when a person constructs his talk by connecting increments he signals his wish to relinquish the floor (Ford, Fox and Thompson, 2002).

After another silence the host decides to talk. He hesitates and after another two pauses he states that he did not stop the caller even once (G: 3). This fact, according to the host's own words, is worth noticing (See Psathas 1995, 47 on noticeable events). The caller also explains the host's noticeable behaviour with two alternatives: either his opinion was to the point (G: 4) or that he said stupid things (G: 6). The host tries to regain the floor (G: 5) and once he succeeds, he explains that he agrees with everything the caller said, and therefore he did not stop him (G: 7).

This segments shows that when a caller talks without any response from the host, it is a noticeable event, meaning a one-sided interaction is a noticeable event. The explanation to this one-sided interaction, as given by the host, is that he did not do his job (G: 7). The host's role, as this host sees it, is to respond to the caller and to create a two-sided disagreement interaction. The lack of a two-sided interaction in this segment, according to the host, is due to his agreement with the caller. This host's remark explains the interaction to the audience and suggests it differs from the norm of the programme, which is the two-sided disagreement interaction. His remark also points out that such agreements are the exception and not the rule.

Though agreements are marked, hosts can create two-sided agreement interactions. In these interactions, hosts agree with the callers and mark that the subjects they raise are important and worthwhile. In the following interaction, the caller complains about the cartel in the motorbikes insurance market.

H. TST, 20/01/05. Host: Ya'akov Achimeir, Caller: Yaakov.

1. C:	when you are a small person, and an ordinary citizen, you have no one to talk to.[11]	
2. H:	mhm.	
3. C:	(0.8) there is no one to talk to.	
4. H:	mhm.	
5.	(1.3) [very serious.	
6. C:	[and maybe through you just a::h	
7. H:	uh listen, this issue is **really uh public.** This is a government that believes in privatization? It believe- she[12] believes in free market, in co::mpetition. And there should be a competition. ((7 turns are omitted))	
8. H:	I do not know if u::h, there will be th-, if you are helped, but may- could be that the committee for the economy of the Parliament she will discuss this. And she will express her opinion on the: (0.8) [this issue.	
9. C:	[if it reaches her.	
10. H:	(0.8) if it reaches her. Yes. (0.6) But maybe, you can initiate some sort of a motion, you and your friends, the owners of motorcycles dri::ving schools.	

When the caller finishes his complaint, the host agrees with him that it is a serious matter (H: 5). The host says it is a public concern and that the government contradicts its policy in this issue (H: 7). Then he suggests a solution to the caller's problem (H: 8) – a discussion at the relevant parliament committee. Since the caller

does not think the committee will discuss it (H: 9), the host urges him to organise his colleagues and file a petition to the committee (H: 10). The host expands on the caller's topic and tries to help him with his justified problem. Thus, both the caller and the audience learn that serious public concerns are addressed on the programme, and when they are justifiable, host will agree on their importance and may join the callers in looking for their solutions.

In two-sided agreement interactions, hosts accept and agree with the caller's complaints and claims. On top of this agreement, hosts may compliment the callers for their attitude and then try helping them with their problem. This agreement is based on the mutual engagement of both participants with the topic at hand. Thus, a dialogue evolves around the caller's issues and this dialogue is based upon agreement between the two participants.

One-sided and two-sided agreement interactions share some radio-phonic benefits. Agreements in interaction lead to a smoother interaction, which is easier to manage, therefore these interactions are convenient for the hosts to manage. However, from radio-phonic perspective such calls might create boring undramatic discussions and turn away the listeners. This boredom explains why both types are not frequent.

These agreements are not frequent and are somewhat surprising, yet they have benefits to the public sphere. Their occurrence is surprising because of the perception of Israelis and Jews as argumentative (cf. Blum-Kulka, Blondheim and Hacohen 2002). Yet these agreements show that hosts do not feel obligated to create disagreement for entertainment reasons. Unlike what was described in the United States (Goldberg 1998), the entertaining goal in these programmes in Israel is secondary to the conversational goal. These agreements also show that the institutional setting does not necessarily influence the interaction. If hosts can agree, it means that when they disagree, their disagreement is not solely grounded in their institutional role. Therefore, both hosts' agreements and disagreements are based on their opinions as persons and citizens.[13] This brings the interaction to closely resemble interactions between free and equal citizens, since these interactions can end in a consensus, as required in the public sphere (Habermas 1989), instead of being just argumentative and entertaining programmes.

The One-sided Disagreement Interaction

Hosts can lose control over conversations, as happens in one-sided disagreement interactions. In these interactions, the host cannot express his disagreement with the caller because the caller does not let him talk.

In the following interaction the caller speaks about the then upcoming Israeli evacuation of the Gaza strip. The caller opposes it fiercely.

I. CWL, 09/03/2005. Host: Jojo Abutbul, Caller: Iris

1. C: they deliberately want to do desecration. [they deliberately
2. H: [**can I**-
3. C: [want to desecrate the [name of Israel.
4. H: [**can I give**-   [**can I give you another theory**, Iris?
5. C: (0.6) now another thing that [relates to that.
6. H: [no no no.
         [**I want**
7. C: [wait a second. I'll let you ((talk)). The thing of the settlements ((continues))

In this interaction, the caller accuses the Israeli leaders (they) of desecration, for wanting to pull out of the Gaza strip (I: 1). The host tries to ask the caller a question. He starts the question four times (I: 2, 4, 6), and uses various attempts to suggest a question, as it his is role to manage the interaction and to pose questions to caller (Dori-Hacohen 2011a). Throughout his attempts, the caller continues talking, and eventually she wins the floor. The caller deceits the host by saying she will let him talk (I: 7) and then continues to her next argument until the host finishes the interaction.

J. CWL, 09/03/2005. Host: Jojo Avutbul, Caller: Iris.

1. C: [a Jew that wa[nts to   [settle the land
2. H: [Iris?   [**you do not [want to let me talk**,
3. C: is a **criminal**.
4. H: **so thanks**.=
5. C: =and mrs. Talya Sa[sson,
6. H: [**fi::ne, [but Iris**
7. C: [and all [that
8. H: [**Iris learn-**
9. C: crazy and stupid gang, tha-
10. H: **(1.0) I::- since you do not have a culture of conversation, so naturally the culture of your words are not supposed to enter my ears. So I say good evening to the next listener.**

The host tries again to ask the caller a question by summoning her ("Iris", J:2, See Schegloff 1968). When the summons fails, he says that she does not let him talk (J: 2). Therefore, the host moves to close the interaction (J: 4), but then tries again to talk to the caller (J: 6). He asks her to learn (J: 8), probably intends that she learns to listen. Since the caller continues talking, shouts (J: 3, 5, 9) and uses extreme language (J: 9), the host disconnects the caller. The disconnection is evident from the cut off of the caller in the midst of her talk and then the silence (J: 10).

After this silence, the host talks to the caller, although he knows it is not in a dialogue, since she is off the air. His turn targets not only the specific caller, but the entire audience, as potential callers. The host educates them that callers should listen to the host and should have a "culture of conversation" – participating in a dialogue and listening to the host as well as stating their position. Furthermore, this remark explains to the audience why he disconnected the specific caller, an action which is seldom taken and which hosts try to avoid. Since the caller is not willing to participate in a two-sided interaction, the host explains that he disconnected her. This remark shows that the host demands a two-sided interaction, and if this demand is not met, he terminates the interaction. The host's inability to create a two-sided interaction illustrates that even though he is the host he does not have the ability to control the interaction. The only additional power the host has is the ability to disconnect a caller.

As the next caller shows, however, even the power to end a conversation is not solely the hosts'. In another Israeli-Palestinian conflict centred interaction, the host and the caller struggle over the floor. The caller wants a stricter policy toward the Palestinians. When the host wants the caller to elaborate which measures he wants, the caller does not answer.

K. TST, 16/03/05. Host: Eitan Lifshitz, Caller: Shlomo Shloush.

1. H: you **run away** from the question I asked you.

2. C: really I am not running away.

3. H: you are running away all right. You do not even remember what I
[have [asked.

4. C: [listen [not only am I not running away, **I wish I had enough ti::me,** to
[come and tell you everything.

5. H: **[what kind of a time problem do you have.(0.3) [What**

6. C: [but your arguments, and
your words, (0.8) they are **like the media**. Unfortunately.
(0.7) **[and that's what we have**.

7. H: [**Wha::t**

8.   **[what kind of a time problem do you have**?

9. C: **[and here I thank you very much**.

10. H: (0.3) **[what kind of a time problem do you have**?

11. C: **[thank you and good bye**.

12. H: (0.7) **mister Shloush is running away**. (0.7) Who is now?

The host states that the caller avoids his question, using a marked term "run away" (K: 1). The host, not in so many words, says that the caller does not engage him in the interaction. The caller rejects this statement, explaining he does not have enough time to answer the question (K: 4). The interaction continues with overlaps, in which the host tries to understand what kind of a time constraint the caller has (K: 5, 7-8, 10). The caller disregards these questions and closes the interaction (K: 7,9, 11).

After the caller closes the interaction and gets off the air the host defines his behaviour as "running away" (K: 12). This definition is done for the audience benefit, in order to reprimand the caller for his behaviour. It also suggests that the caller violated the norms of the interactions, and that the host behaved as he should. This remark highlights the programmes norm, that callers should answer hosts' questions and create two-sided interactions. This interaction shows a caller who avoids the host's questions and does not let him ask questions. In spite of this remark, this caller, by terminating the call, takes away the ability the host is supposed to have – to manage a caller's speech. Like the previous interaction, the host reprimands the caller after the call is terminated.

In one-sided disagreement interactions, callers refuse to have a two-sided interaction with the host. They get on the programme in order to express their opinion, but whenever hosts challenge it, they dismiss the challenge as irrelevant or disregard it. Hosts' attempts to create a two-sided interaction usually fail in a contest of overlaps and shouts. This failure leads to the termination of the interaction, usually by the host. Thus, one opinion is expressed, but it is left uncontested, due to hosts' inability to challenge it.

The inability to create two-sided interaction and to control the interaction explains why hosts do not favour such interactions. When a host cannot win the floor and cannot manage the interaction, he has two options, either to continue trying to control the caller or to terminate the interaction. Terminating the interaction is easier. Yet, such terminations are rare, since hosts try to negotiate the ending of the calls and succeed in closing them with most the callers (see G: 7). In addition, these interactions are problematic since often the hosts and the caller talk in an overlap

and compete over the floor. Then, the audience cannot hear the interaction which creates bad radio.

The one-sided disagreement interaction can be perceived as a malfunction of the public sphere, though this view disregards their caller's perspective. Taking Habermas's first position on the public sphere, one can argue that a consensus should control the public sphere. Callers who talk and create one-sided disagreement interactions think their opinion is the correct one and thus should not and cannot be refuted. Moreover, many of these callers see the media as a left-wing institution which shuns the opinion of the right-wing (see K: 6). Therefore, they feel that they compensate for this leftist bias and present the voice of the silenced counter-public (Warner 2002). This explanation is evident from their behaviour and at least one host also suggests it (Achimeir 1997). Thus, even the one-sided disagreement interactions, at least from the participants' perspective, contribute to the public sphere, though it looks undemocratic and goes against the perception of the classic and ideal public sphere.

The "Dialogue of the Deaf" Interaction

There is one interaction which the host defines as "the dialogue of the deaf," a Hebrew idiom for a conversation with much talking and little to none listening. This interaction is full of disagreements, yet, unlike the one-sided disagreement interaction, the host expresses his opinion. It lasts about eleven minutes, in which both the host and the caller speak freely and lengthily, at times overlaps occur, but the participant are able to continue the interaction. It seems to be a two-sided disagreement interaction. However, unlike the two-sided disagreement interactions, the host states that there was no mutual engagement in the interaction, and therefore defines it as "the dialogue of the deaf."

The interaction is between the host Gideon Reicher and Amir, a Palestinian caller from Ramallah. Though the interaction begins with some agreements, the caller then presents his opinion. Yet after he does the host says: "can you explain one thing to me." With this utterance, the host does not engage with the caller's opinion and set up a new agenda. Once the host finishes, the caller responds: "OK, what I wanted to ask, is one thing." Similar to the host, the caller disengages from the host's talk and sets up a different agenda. This pattern continues throughout the interaction, and each side uses disjunctive utterances in order to avoid responding to the other. The lack of substantive continuation between the speakers causes the host to define the interaction as "dialogue of the deaf" (for further discussion see Dori-Hacohen 2011b).

This interaction demonstrates the inability of pure discussion to create common ground between its participants. It might be taken as an evidence of the failure of the public sphere. However, the public sphere is tightly connected to the nation-state (Habermas 1989), and is rarely described as an arena of negotiations between different societies and nations. There are some discussions regarding a "global public sphere," yet it is unclear if such a concept exists or if it is a helpful one (cf. Sparks 2001), and usually these discussions overlook national conflicts. Therefore, the "dialogue of the deaf" should not be interpreted in relation to the public sphere, though it takes places in the same arena. This interaction demonstrates the limitations of talk and interaction in this arena.

Conclusion

This paper presented the types of interaction on Israeli political radio phone-in programmes. The largest category is the two-sided disagreement interactions. As evident from the hosts' remarks in other types of interactions, this type is also the preferred type. This type meets the demands from a discussion in a public sphere (Habermas 1989). It has a free exchange of opinions, tests them and enables a critical discussion. Therefore, the leading category of interactions suggests that this programme promotes a public sphere. Moreover, this type does not only meet the need of the public sphere but also those of the radio, since it is the most interesting type. Therefore, at least in this case, there is no inherent contradiction between the media goals and those of the public sphere. Since prior research has shown the benefits of disagreement to political knowledge (Price et al. 2002; Mutz 2006) it is likely that this type also contributes to the political knowledge of its audience.

Other types of interactions also occur in the programmes. Each type has its own rationale and has some relations to the public sphere and its functions. Neutral interactions, in which hosts avoid expressing their opinions, follow the journalistic norms, yet they limit the open and free discussion in the programmes. Agreement interactions occur when the host agrees with the caller. When agreeing, hosts have an easier time managing the programmes. Agreements also validate the discussions as ones that are based on the hosts' beliefs and opinions and not purely on their institutional role. The one-sided disagreement interactions are based on the ability of the caller not to give in to the host's control. These callers often present what they think is the silenced truth while ignoring the hosts' "leftists" challenges. The "dialogue of the deaf" exposes the limits of the public sphere, especially when crossing national boundaries, as happens in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The variation on the type of interactions in the Israeli programmes is different from the strict structure these programmes have in England (Hutchby 1996). It is most likely to be different from other phone-ins and talk-back radio elsewhere, though this need to be studied in future research. This specific types and their frequency is likely the result of the openness and flexibility of Israeli communication patterns (Katriel 1986; 1991), which is also manifested in other media (Weizman 2008). The preference for a two-sided disagreement interaction goes hand in hand with the Israeli argumentative cultural features (Blum-Kulka et al. 2002). In addition, the variation of the interaction types and the preference for two-sided disagreements leads to a free and critical discussion that enables a public sphere. Therefore, radio phone-in programmes are part of a functional public sphere (Habermas 1989; 2006) and can contribute to a vibrant democracy.

Notes:

1. On the production of these programmes and its relations to the public sphere see Dori-Hacohen (in-press a).

2. This paper cannot discuss the differences between "interaction," "talk-in-interaction" and "conversation." Radio phone-ins are institutional interactions (Hutchby 1996) yet they are the closest to mundane conversations (Kress 1986).

3. The dialogue of the deaf is an idiom in Hebrew, as will be discussed below.

4. Since this is a single interaction and since many of its features resembles the two-sided disagreement interaction, in the quantification of the data it was classified as part of that category.

5. I present the data using Jeffersonian transcriptions (Jefferson 2004). The translations are simplified for readability reasons. I marked in **bold** the elements that are discussed.

6. This segment might suggest otherwise, however this call lasts about 15 minutes, and ends with the host thanking the caller for an interesting talk.

7. In Hebrew there is a distinction between the second person singular, "ata," and the second person plural, "atem." Furthermore, the caller's "ata" could have been perceived by the host as a generative form – "one."

8. The openness is limited, as these broadcasts go through a production process, which lead to selection among the different callers (Dori-Hacohen, in-press a).

9. The Geneva Initiative is an initiative to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

10. Jefferson (1989) demonstrates that a pause longer than a second is a noticeable event in interactions.

11. This turn demonstrates that the programme achieves its goal, as this caller has someone to talk to – the programme's name.

12. The government and the Knesset committee are feminine in Hebrew, therefore the host repairs the pronouns (turn 7).

13. In TST the hosts changed daily so they were not the stars of the programmes. This feature also loosens the power hosts have in the interaction which increases its equality.

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