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# Citizenship in Wartime

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# Citizenship in Wartime

## **Abstract**

When a democracy enters a period of war or overt security threats, its citizens' lives are affected in many ways. Their feelings about their country can be transformed; public and political distinctions between "us" and "them" shift; citizens' expectations from the government can be revised in light of what they perceive as their most urgent interests. The public agenda often becomes preoccupied with security issues; the public sphere is rearranged around these newly defined focal points. Many issues, including immigration, criminal law, demography, free speech, and artistic expression, to name but a few, become part of the security discourse. Access to information about some of these matters is constrained accordingly. These changes can broadly be described as a shift from an open, democratic notion of citizenship to a narrow conception of the relations between state and individual, which I term "belligerent citizenship." This chapter will trace some of the basic alterations in the conceptualization of citizenship that occur in times of war or conflict, as a basis for constructing a qualified notion of civic education.

## **Disciplines**

Education

## Citizenship in Wartime

WHEN A DEMOCRACY enters a period of war or overt security threats, its citizens' lives are affected in many ways. Their feelings about their country can be transformed; public and political distinctions between "us" and "them" shift; citizens' expectations from the government can be revised in light of what they perceive as their most urgent interests. The public agenda often becomes preoccupied with security issues; the public sphere is rearranged around these newly defined focal points. Many issues, including immigration, criminal law, demography, free speech, and artistic expression, to name but a few, become part of the security discourse. Access to information about some of these matters is constrained accordingly. These changes can broadly be described as a shift from an open, democratic notion of citizenship to a narrow conception of the relations between state and individual, which I term "belligerent citizenship." This chapter will trace some of the basic alterations in the conceptualization of citizenship that occur in times of war or conflict, as a basis for constructing a qualified notion of civic education.

In democratic countries enjoying more peaceful times, citizenship is a multilayered conception that expresses the legal, social, and cultural relations between the state and its members.<sup>1</sup> Democratic conceptions of citizenship are aimed at coordinating the relations between individual and state, and balancing the state's power with individuals' rights.<sup>2</sup> Deliberative models analyze the communicative processes that allow for large populations to debate a host of topics that correspond with their shared interests; perfectionist theorists examine the core values that should be expressed in the structure of state institutions; multicultural and liberal theorists debate the extent to which the state should transfer decisional powers to subgroups and the ways in which it can still guarantee the protection of individual rights within those groups. Generally speaking, these various theories are concerned with designing processes that would allow individuals to flourish in the context of a democratic order.

Thus, the structure of the relations between the state and its members, as expressed by the notion of "citizenship," is debated by theorists who choose to emphasize one or another of its dimensions. Historically, a lot of emphasis was put on the formal and legal relations between state and individual, as expressed in constitutional and legal procedures of elections and the protection of individual rights. Although these matters are still at the center of many key debates, in the past few decades other aspects of citizenship have received considerable scholarly attention as well. In the 1950s the British sociologist T. H. Marshall defined "social citizenship" as the core of just relations between the state and its members. For him the essence of a just state lies in the allocation of work and welfare opportunities to all members of society.<sup>3</sup> Marshall's depiction of social citizenship as a necessary layer in the commitments of the state to its members is perhaps the most influential deviation from formal conceptualizations of citizenship, and some of its components will resonate in the following discussion. Another contemporary perspective that goes beyond formal relations suggests that solidarity is what amalgamates the complex ties between individual and state.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, few of these discussions relate directly or indirectly to the complexities of democratic citizenship in wartime. Alterations in the popular conceptualization of citizenship, a common social response to war, render most discussions of democratic citizenship less relevant. International conflict, security threats, and a sense of national vulnerability distort the relations of individuals and state, their expectations, their commitments, their rights and obligations. The multilayered relations between individual citizen and democratic state diminish into a narrow relation based on a common interest of endurance.<sup>5</sup> In these circumstances, it is important to reinterpret the relations of individual and state in ways that reflect their changing expectations without abandoning the basic principles that sustain democracy. Let me take a closer look at the changed relations in order to consider which of the reframed aspects requires reiteration and which should be curtailed to preserve democratic values.

## BEING A CITIZEN IN TIMES OF WAR

The multidimensional conception of citizenship loses much of its thickness in times of conflict and security threats, and individuals' multiple affiliations to various aspects of society between the family and the state shrink to fit the proclamation "We are all fellow nationals." As an intermediating entity between the private/communal sphere and the state, civil society can represent nationalist sentiments that coincide rather than clash with democratic values and institutions. Simultaneously, the civil society can embody democratic values, sentiments, and behaviors that go hand in hand with the national goals and perspectives as expressed by the nation-state. Most important, civil society can embody the shared fate of compatriots in its complexity.

Wartime generates a set of social processes that can result in reconceptualization of the relations between individual and state, termed here "belligerent citizenship." This conceptualization of citizenship can be described as a return to a crude Hobbesian model of the state, which was established as a way of protecting individuals' lives from the dangers embedded in the "state of nature" and providing them with an opportunity to live more peacefully.<sup>6</sup> The expectations of citizenship in times of war narrow down to resemble this type of relation with the state, in which government can expect much of its citizens in exchange for their protection from violent death. In a different sense, these narrow relations are a reflection of Maslow's hierarchy of needs,<sup>7</sup> according to which, if one's physiological and safety needs (including expectations of survival) are in danger, the urgent requirement to address those needs trumps all others. In war this focus creates a narrower notion of individual-state relations.

Thus, belligerent citizenship emerges as a response to perceived threats to national and personal security. As regarded through this narrow lens, the first responsibility of the state toward its members, as it is quickly reconfigured in the public sphere, is to protect their lives. This responsibility overrides the demand for civil liberties, and those are often steamrolled over by the overpowering sense of urgency to fight for survival.<sup>8</sup> The support of free speech diminishes, both through the criminalization of incitement and through the suppression of deviating

opinions via social mechanisms that command unity of voice and subscription to a narrow form of patriotism. Belligerent citizenship is distinctly characterized by a reinterpreted notion of three key components of democratic citizenship, namely, civic participation, unity and solidarity (also known as patriotism), and public deliberation.<sup>9</sup> In times of war these take the form of an emphasis on citizens' contribution to the country rather than on voluntary participation; support for social unity and patriotism over diversity; and consequently, the discouragement of deliberation.<sup>10</sup> In describing these aspects of belligerent citizenship, I point to the contemporary Israeli and American experiences, as characterized both by the media and by scholarly research on the two countries. Pointing out significant differences between the two countries is easy. The differences are presumably due to a number of factors, including the immediacy and persistence of the threat in the Israeli case, the geographic distance of most military operations from U.S. soil, the duration of the conflict, and the greater historical commitment to democracy in the United States. In addition, Israel is unique in mandating universal conscription and decades-long reserve service for most male citizens even in relatively quiet times. Despite these significant differences, similarities can be traced in the responses of both countries to the circumstances of conflict that make the comparison worthwhile. I am not attempting a thorough methodical comparison between the countries, for my aim is more normative than descriptive. The basis of the comparison is the suggestion that both countries, like some other democratic countries in history, are immersed in protracted conflicts. A protracted conflict, with no clear aims and consequently no well-defined attainable mode of achieving victory, casts a different burden on society than other types of war. When Britain and the United States fought against Nazi Germany and its allies in World War II, they did not know when or how the war would end. But the goals were clearly defined, allowing the citizens to assess the acts of their governments and participate in various ways (beyond conscription) in the war effort. The struggle, albeit long, was focused on a clear mission, and although civil society was not invited to participate in all decisions (the nuclear bomb is an easy example, but there are many others), citizens had access to

abundant information about the campaign. A protracted conflict, more blurry in goals and *modus operandi*, creates unique challenges to civil society. I am thus borrowing from the experiences of these two countries to outline some of the most significant social responses to wartime that relate to the evolution of belligerent citizenship.

The focus of civic participation during periods of conflict or security threats shifts from the open and voluntary to the directed and mandated. The measure of civic participation is no longer civic engagement but the readiness to contribute to the war and the survival effort, and possibly to risk one's life for the sake of the country.<sup>11</sup> In Israel where military service is compulsory, volunteering for combat service is considered the utmost civic virtue.<sup>12</sup> The very concept of the "citizen," revered in peaceful times as the cornerstone of democratic practices, is undercut in times of war by its comparison to a more powerful one, namely, "the soldier." The focus of belligerent citizenship on the value of contribution to the war effort makes the citizen second in rank to the soldier, who actively participates in the struggle. The soldier is joined by others who contribute to the security effort or respond to threats: in the United States, firefighters were thus characterized for a while after September 11. In chapter 4 I will suggest that women are often characterized through their traditional gender roles as contributing to the war effort by supporting the fighters. In countries that do not mandate universal conscription, the measures of good citizenship are not derived from active participation (or demonstrated willingness to participate) in the war effort. The expectations of good citizenship are hence related more to compliance and support of the basic needs of society as those are constructed through the lens of security threats. These measures are expressed by patriotic unity and suppressed deliberation.

A second distinctive feature of belligerent citizenship is an overpowering form of patriotic unity. War and perceived threats to national security tend to generate a knee-jerk response of unification. "This is an attack on all Americans," President Bush said in one of his first responses to the September 11 attacks. Three days after the attacks he said, "Our people are together, and we will prevail." A sense of solidarity, unity, and a common cause

are regarded by political psychologists as part of the required attitudes for enduring an intractable conflict. "The purpose of beliefs of unity is to provide a sense that all members of the society support the goals of the conflict and their leaders. They act to strengthen the solidarity and stability. . . . [A] lack of unity, on the other hand, creates polarization and internal tensions that hamper the struggle with the enemy."<sup>13</sup> The ensuing solidarity enables recuperation from the distress that conflict (or an attack) creates, for it strengthens the ability to envision a response to the threat, a positive and active outcome beyond the vulnerability it generates.

The solidarity with fellow citizens is intensified when relating to members of the military. The troops, or "our children," as they are often termed in the Israeli public debate, are to be spared any controversy and given full support because they are the manifestation of the national resolve and unity (as well as the nation's actual protectors in many cases). During the Republican National Convention preceding the 2004 election, the keynote speaker, Zell Miller (D-GA), expressed this sentiment with fervor: "Now, while young Americans are dying in the sands of Iraq and the mountains of Afghanistan, our nation is being torn apart and made weaker because of the Democrats' manic obsession to bring down our Commander in Chief."<sup>14</sup> Some commentators did mention that election-year attempts to offer an alternative candidate for the presidency should still be regarded as legitimate, even though the current president is also the commander in chief. But the public debate seemed to be less than tolerant of attacks on the president or on the Bush administration's decisions, and the Democrats restricted their "negative campaigning" accordingly. The demands for patriotic unity thus quelled the democratic process, and not merely because of a cynical exploitation of these patriotic feelings. The demand for national unity seems to be an authentic manifestation of a social need. The political responses to this kind of constraint or requirement may vary, but an approach to citizenship (and civic education) that aims to remain relevant in times of conflict ought to take them into account—not necessarily foster them, but respond to them.

The third feature of belligerent citizenship is the suppression of deliberation and, consequently, an attenuation of the public



sphere. Deliberation is far less encouraged in a state of war than in other times, or the ideal that democratic models aspire to. Deliberation and disagreement are widely regarded as threats to the security effort, and the more real and pressing the security threat becomes, the narrower the limits of acceptable perspectives in public debate. In situations of a protracted conflict, the public agenda tends to be focused around security issues, and a vast range of opinions is perceived as unreasonable or irrelevant. Hence, fewer subjects are deemed worthy of public discussion, and fewer perspectives are regarded as deserving representation in the public deliberation.<sup>15</sup>

The attenuation of the public agenda ensues from the extensive attention given to issues surrounding the conflict and generates a diminishing commitment to free speech. Whereas in the United States, economic and other social issues still take a central place in the media and in public discussions along with the "war on terrorism," the public debate in Israel focuses almost exclusively on the armed conflict. However, the news media and the processes of legislation in both countries show significant evidence of declining commitment to free speech in the name of public security. The Patriot Act (officially titled the USA PATRIOT Act) has contributed significantly to this trend,<sup>16</sup> while in Israel numerous incidents have been reported in which newspapers were shut down, news stories censored, and public figures deemed public threats, in the name of security and under the Emergency Regulations that have been in place since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. The chief justice of Israel's High Court famously noted that "in a society based on democratic values, human rights can be limited in order to protect human feelings." When the emotional capacity of the public is diminished by the continuous stress of security threats, these "human feelings" become less durable, allowing the public to demand more and more limitations on such "disturbing" rights as freedom of speech and of the press. The public may urge the media to protect its right not to know, not to be intrigued, not to participate.

The most problematic effect from a democratic perspective is not that of formal censorship or narrowing boundaries of free speech (as problematic as those are). The most problematic consequence of the attenuation of the public sphere is self-censorship, the subsiding tolerance in the public for hearing and corresponding with a variety of perspectives, and the silencing

effect of this intolerance. The effects of belligerent citizenship on the democratic public sphere become clearer through the examination of some of the social processes evident in the Israeli and American polities.

### UNITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS: BELLIGERENT CITIZENSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

Israeli citizenship has long been torn between two conceptualizations: liberal citizenship on the one hand and, on the other, a combination of the remnants of republican citizenship associated with the colonial settlement with an ever more religiously defined ethnonationalist citizenship.<sup>17</sup> The latter, which carries a significant similarity to belligerent citizenship, is more likely to take precedence in more acute situations of concern for national security (and consequently for personal safety). The various aspects of belligerent citizenship—the expectation from the government to take more direct responsibility for individual choices and practices, even at the price of losing some rights and liberties; the overpowering sense of patriotic unity; and the narrow focus of the public debate on security issues—push aside those aspects of liberal citizenship that are manifested in quieter times.

The willingness of many citizens to surrender a certain degree of liberty for the sake of acquiring a stronger (sense of) security is evident in the public responses to, among other things, restricted movement for certain groups, roadblocks, and restrictions on free speech in public and via the media. This is also a testament to the limited scope of public debate—what is considered both interesting and important are almost solely matters that directly pertain to personal safety in the context of national security.

Additionally, the perceived existential threat and the uncertain security situation create a tendency in Israeli society to cultivate unity among the Jewish groups within it. The sense of belonging and solidarity is reinforced, and the aspects common to all groups emphasized, under the heading “We are all Jews,” in an effort to minimize the gaps between Jews of different ethnicity or religious convictions. One of the societal beliefs that are necessary for a society to stand firm during a protracted

conflict is the belief in social unity, which is part of belligerent citizenship.

The sense of unity generates alienation among members of groups that do not feel that they are appropriately represented in the public political discourse. Conversely, the belief in unity naturally induces a sense of common fate, belonging, and closeness. The sense of unity broadly encompasses all the citizens of the state of Israel who are not Palestinians. Situations of existential distress in a security context, particularly terrorist attacks and the constant fear of terrorism, strengthen the sense of unity and dispel tensions between the different groups of Jewish citizens.

Yet the thin veil of unity, which obscures social divisions among the Israeli Jewish public, is also a source of tension, particularly between democratic commitments and the sort of patriotism that fuels the unity. A focus on common enemies and formulations such as "We are all Jews" make it difficult to create a meaningful public space. Members of different groups find that the cultural contents that are relevant to them are not reflected in the public sphere because it is mainly devoted to security issues. Dissimilarities between groups that are in fact valuable, as well as problems of certain groups that need to be dealt with on the social plane, are deferred to "better days."

Thus, social unity (or the belief in such unity), which is augmented when the perceived existential threat worsens, has desirable social effects. On the one hand, it mostly fosters a sense of belonging that is regarded as a positive factor in social relations, in addition to supporting endurance through hard times. On the other hand, it carries problematic consequences—primarily the tendency to sweep divisive issues under the rug.

Eliminating potentially divisive topics from the public agenda is problematic both in the short and in the long run. When the conflict still takes center stage, the effects of disappearing social issues may not be significant. But as time goes by, particularly during protracted conflicts, the issues deemed irrelevant or not urgent enough to warrant social attention in times of war could take a toll on minority groups and on society as a whole.

Moreover, after the end of the conflict, when the need to maintain societal beliefs that enable resilience in the face of threat diminishes, so too will the need for the belief in unity. The neglected social issues could rise into the public sphere with a

vengeance. For one, issues may have deteriorated as a result of the lack of social attention, such as welfare matters, minority group standing, or educational disputes. In addition, in some cases the end of conflict could create a split between those who support the peace treaties and those who oppose them. When what is at stake is of genuine importance to the citizens, this could mark the beginning of a new rift between the "winners" and the "losers." Against the backdrop of a decline in the commitment to democracy that characterizes periods of conflict, this situation could be perilous to social cohesion. In Israel there exists a clear potential that intra-Jewish rifts will emerge after peace comes, especially with the ceding of Israeli sovereignty over occupied territories. Without significant public educational efforts, these rifts could put democracy itself under threat.

In post-September 11 America, strong preliminary evidence indicates some similar processes of emerging belligerent citizenship.<sup>18</sup> The American public shares with Israel and other democracies a propensity to "rally 'round the flag" when the country is involved in an international crisis.<sup>19</sup> This phenomenon of surging support for the president and the administration in times of war has been related to various factors, most prominently to a surge in patriotism.<sup>20</sup> As Rogers Smith indicates in an insightful article, when President George W. Bush began his administration, his conception of America's role among nations more closely resembled "the City on the Hill" conception than an interventionist one.<sup>21</sup> The move from a focus on America as a "promised land" to stressing its role as a "crusader state," or even a "benevolent superpower," coincides with the tragic events of September 11. Internally, this move signifies an emergent protector role for the state, which is beneficial to many (from a psycho-political perspective) and detrimental to some, and it includes the potential for weakening democratic commitments if not properly addressed.

In the aftermath of September 11, the social intolerance toward American Muslims grew significantly. One study concluded that after the attacks, Americans were "rallying around each other, concerned and even distrustful of some groups of foreigners. This is a kind of patriotism of mutual support."<sup>22</sup> In addition, the suppression of deviating opinions was clearly seen in the

American public sphere after September 11. Support for the president surged,<sup>23</sup> and various venues of public debate grew reluctant to criticize the administration's decisions.<sup>24</sup> The new or renewed sense of patriotism, solidarity, and unity, which some cherished as a positive "change of heart,"<sup>25</sup> could also account for a diminished support for free speech, for the reluctance to condemn the loss of civil liberties, and for the low-key public deliberation over the aims and means of the war waged on terror in its first stages.<sup>26</sup>

Some evidence for valuing patriotic unity over free speech could be found in the academic world. In January 2003, the University of California at Berkeley refused to allow a fund-raising appeal for the Emma Goldman Papers Project because the appeal quoted Goldman on the suppression of free speech and her opposition to war (writing during World War I, before she was deported to Russia).<sup>27</sup> Even before the war in Iraq began, the winds of war created much caution on various educational forums: "After complaints that the children of soldiers were upset by anti-war comments at school, Maine's top education official warned teachers to be careful of what they say in class about a possible invasion of Iraq."<sup>28</sup>

The criticism of the war in Iraq intensified as the war turned into a protracted conflict and as it became apparent that the reasons the administration offered the public for going to war were faulty, and that the preparation for the phase of "winning the peace" or nation-building was lacking at best. The fairly unified public sphere turned more divided as the 2004 election neared. However, its narrowed limits remained as such, with security issues dominating both presidential campaigns and the public discourse at large, and with the scope of what could be said about the war, its justification, and its aims still limited. The lives lost made it hard for public figures to express opposition to the war, reflecting the tendency even when opposing the war to stay within the limits of unified patriotism.

This phenomenon is by no means new. In democratic countries, where patriotism is considered to be freely expressed rather than orchestrated by the authorities, wartime promotes a surge in expressions of national sentiments. Such surges, among others, were described in the United States during World War II and the cold war,<sup>29</sup> in Britain during World War II,<sup>30</sup> in Canada

during World War I,<sup>31</sup> and during various eras of conflict in France.<sup>32</sup> The loosely defined “war on terrorism” in which the United States is involved, and the ongoing conflict Israel has endured for most of the half century since it was established, are similar in their effect on patriotic sentiments.

The drawbacks of the belligerent form of citizenship can be further illustrated through the Israeli version of national unity. A closer look reveals that we are not really “all Jews.” Some—over 18 percent—are Muslim and Christian Palestinians; others are of a variety of denominations and national origins. Not all Israeli citizens share the burdens of military service; hence, not all have a chance to be considered good citizens. Israeli belligerent citizenship marginalizes groups that are exempt from military service—such as most Palestinian citizens, religiously observant women, and disabled youth. Conscientious objectors are widely considered beyond the pale of acceptable public discourse and action.

The sense of national unity and solidarity withstands all of these exclusions and maintains such a strong place in the public ethos and debate that it can effectively curtail the claims of excluded groups. The concept of unity functions as a very simple control mechanism over the public debate, as expressed by Andrew Arato in an article highly critical of the Bush administration after September 11: “If he wins this fight, we win. If he loses it, we lose.”<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the main challenge facing democratic theories of citizenship in times of war is the diminishing scope of the public agenda, which tends to be overtaken by security issues and is tolerant of a narrowing range of opinions on these topics. Thus, for example, deliberative models significantly rely upon a presupposition of substantive diversity of opinion. If all or most citizens express the same preferences, the deliberative process loses much of its appeal, as it “associates democracy with open discussion and the exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies.”<sup>34</sup> It relies on the assumptions that the polity offers an open public space, proper means of communication as well as the motivation to communicate, an acceptable range of opinions, and a variety of issues on which to deliberate. “Democratic process,”

Iris Marion Young reminds us, "is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, and claims of need or interest."<sup>35</sup> For Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, the process of deliberation embodies not only procedural but also principled aspects.<sup>36</sup> The model of deliberative democracy is hence based on an assumption of a variety of topics and a vast array of opinions, constrained by democratic values, as background conditions for the successful practice of democracy. When faced with overwhelming agreement, the purpose of deliberation and its value diminish.

In sum, belligerent citizenship is advantageous for a society in times of war because it helps the citizens survive the hard times and respond to them constructively. It fosters a mutual sense of belonging and supports endurance during hard times. However, it comes at a high cost. First, this unity is thin, elusive, and exclusionary, and therefore cultivates intolerance toward various subgroups. It alienates members of groups that are not properly represented in the public political discourse. This cost is borne mainly by minorities, who are either excluded from the national solidarity or refuse to participate in its rites of patriotism. It is also borne by democracy itself. Moreover, this type of social unity and solidarity comes at the cost of political stagnation—an inability to envision and support change in the political circumstances. This stagnation is partly a result of a narrowed public sphere and a public agenda that is so rigorously devoted to security issues that it tends to neglect or postpone other social matters, and partly it is a consequence of the suppression of dissenting perspectives.

When democratic commitments are suppressed by the public's response to perceived threats, there is a growing risk that the democratic ideal will become subordinate to the survival of the state. Belligerent citizenship is not dichotomously distinct from democratic citizenship. The move from one to the other does not happen overnight. Rather it is a gradual closing of options, an uneven process of narrowing down perceptions—a slippery slope, if you will, from the wide-open democratic entrance to the funnel, to its authoritarian closed end.

Hence, wartime creates a special need to protect democratic commitments in a contextual way, responding to the unique social circumstances of war. It creates a greater need to foster and enhance civic relations among members of the nation, to expand

the public agenda, to encourage participation and engagement, and to support an inclusive conception of citizenship. The ways in which civil society and the education system perceive citizenship can affect their ability to endorse these commitments.

The most relevant theoretical tool for the purpose of responding to these challenges can be found in democratic theories that discuss citizenship in relation to notions of nationalism and patriotism.<sup>37</sup> These theories suggest that debates about citizenship are, in essence, debates about nationhood and what it means to belong to a national group.<sup>38</sup> Looking at citizenship through the lens of nationalism and patriotism can help to unfold the layers of expectations citizens and the state have for each other. The analysis of these expectations, informed by democratic (and sometimes liberal-democratic) ideals, reveals the desirable—or at least unthreatening—aspects of citizenship as *amore di patria*. As a preliminary illustration, consider Yael Tamir's suggestion that the concept "citizenship" creates a link between liberalism and nationality. For her, the nation-state is a community, and as such it can require its members to show general civic competence as well as "a competence to act as a member of *this* particular community."<sup>39</sup> Only through the notion of nationalism as communal identity can political associations be understood as a liberal endeavor, she claims. Hence, a further aspect beyond democratic commitments enters the complex picture of citizenship: belonging to a particular national group, with its unique culture, norms, and history. Understanding citizenship as related to membership in a national group is an essential prelude to considering the more problematic aspects of patriotism as the essence of belligerent citizenship. A positive formulation of patriotic citizenship can contribute to the main aim of this book, namely, exploring possible ways of constructively responding to the challenges that wartime poses for the project of civic education. However, this positive notion of national citizenship is often constructed as an identity-related project. A closer look at the relations between nationalism, patriotism, and citizenship is thus needed here, along with a critique of the conceptualization of citizenship as identity.



## CITIZENSHIP AS SHARED FATE (OR DOOM)

Most conceptions of democratic citizenship regard it—directly or by implication—as an aspect of individual and collective identity. This conceptualization produces a few educational drawbacks; before exploring these I will focus on the problematic social consequences of conceptualizing citizenship as a given aspect of individual and group identity. To support democratic inclinations, democratic citizenship should be perceived not only as an aspect of identity but also as shared fate. This alternative concept is more productive and offers a better understanding of the civic challenges democratic societies face both in times of peace and during war. Understanding citizenship as shared fate rather than solely as an identity-related matter can offer a proper basis for understanding belligerent citizenship and for developing a democratic educational response to its challenges.

The formulation of citizenship as identity stems from the notion that it is membership-based, founded on an alliance of an individual with a nation-state. Acquiring citizenship in a nation-state is commonly based on either birthright or formal processes of naturalization, which in turn requires a manifestation of certain forms of worthiness. For various ends, most notably nation-building, affective attachments to the regime and to fellow citizens serve as fundamental prerequisites.<sup>40</sup> Regarding oneself as a member of the nation by identity, and not only by virtue of interest or choice, is conducive to political cooperation among members of the national community. It can support the processes of choosing ends and pursuing them, of constructing a public agenda and deliberating its fulfillment. Additionally, it can enhance mutual cultural (and other communal) practices that maintain justice and a sense of belonging. Eamonn Callan regards the emotional attachment of citizens to each other as a basis for liberal patriotism, which is a condition for liberal justice (and which he claims makes a case for teaching certain forms of patriotism in public schools).<sup>41</sup> In the same vein, Tamir argues that “[s]ince the roots of unity in national communities are outside the normative sphere, they can accommodate normative diversity” and support a pluralistic public sphere.<sup>42</sup> For these and

other liberal authors, conceiving of nationalism as identity is a way of endorsing pluralism, which is maintained even through times of conflict. The pluralism that this notion of citizenship supposedly contains parallels the diversity that a number of other theorists regard as part and parcel of the communal relations that are based on "identity citizenship." Both share an assumption—an unwarranted one, as I suggest—that ethnic, religious, and ideological diversity make up the civil society, and that those features can be accommodated and tolerated through the shared notion of national identity.

Regarding citizenship as a form of identity requires an assumption, as well as a political insistence, that diversity "is kept in its place," in Stephen Macedo's words.<sup>43</sup> Many theorists are concerned mostly with the *containment* of diversity within the polity. For them the definition of citizenship as a form of identity is a helpful response to possible challenges from individuals' affiliation with other subgroups (or supranational groups). The main threat they identify to the desirable forms of civic affiliation and liberal nationalism is diversity, or competing commitments to groups other than the nation. Although individuals are assumed to possess a multiplicity of identities, their national identity is expected by most liberal theorists to trump, ideally, conflicting demands from other identities with which they associate themselves. The affective attachment to fellow citizens, for example, should serve as a barrier to the demands of secession by subgroups within the nation-state. National identity in its desirable liberal form—admittedly not the only form generated by national attachments throughout history—supersedes other forms of identity, to the extent that the various groups and individuals that make up the regime all regard themselves as integral and willing parts in it.

Contrary to this suggestion, in times of war ideological diversity diminishes, and with it tolerance to other forms of diversity. Conceiving of citizenship as an aspect of identity—and inculcating this form of citizenship through state institutions such as the public education system—threatens to further escalate these expressions of belligerent citizenship. In order to preclude the less desirable forms of nationalism including those expressed through belligerent citizenship, some form of diversity is preferable. One of the unique challenges that wartime presents to civic

society is the overarching consensus on civic affiliations, national goals, and proper perspectives. This form of unity supplants diversity and thus creates a new challenge—the need to support and encourage diversity rather than merely contain its existing forms.

When belligerent citizenship evolves, diversity is suppressed for the perceived sake of national survival, generating a need to rethink the conceptualization of citizenship as identity. When citizenship is conceptualized as a source of personal identity, the threat to the nation is more easily conceived of as a personal and existential threat. Moreover, the sense of personal attachment that is the basis of identity citizenship intensifies in times of conflict. If citizens conceive of their membership in the political community mainly as an identity matter, they are less likely to find ways of mitigating the less democratic effects of belligerent citizenship. Even in times of a controversial conflict, when large parts of society do not subscribe to the patriotic unity expected in times of war or fail to join the rally 'round the flag, patriotism is stressed in the public debate more forcefully. The role of the dissenting parties is to prove themselves still entitled to be fellow nationals, and they face an ongoing struggle not to be described as "beyond the pale." Even civic society, heralded by some theorists as a barrier to monolithic, oppressive perceptions of the nation that the government, absent civic institutions, could inculcate, does not always support or maintain diversity in times of conflict.<sup>44</sup> To the contrary, civic institutions may partake in the processes that reflect and promote the narrow, unifying, and exclusive conceptualizations of national group membership.

Most theorists regard the conceptualization of citizenship as identity not solely as a descriptive project but rather as an educational endeavor. Therefore, it is important to note the normative inadequacies of this undertaking, particularly as they are exacerbated in times of conflict. Inculcating civic affiliations in the form of identity through the public school's civic curriculum could unwittingly harm the causes of civic nationalism. Callan, Tamir, Gutmann, Macedo, and many others share an affinity with civic and democratic commitments, and they all believe—as do I—that these commitments should be promoted through the public school system (although they do not all agree on the

specifics of the methods and contents). But these causes can be advanced in schools only if diversity is "kept in its place" not only against rising tides of communal claims, secessionist demands, and manifestations of "politics of difference," as these theorists suggest. They must also be maintained against the stifling effects of mandated national solidarity. Working to preserve rather than contain diversity is an educational aim that can better be met through teaching citizenship as a form of shared fate rather than through presenting citizenship solely as identity.

Melissa Williams suggests that the portrayal of citizenship as part of individuals' personal identity has a number of further relevant deficiencies.<sup>45</sup> She argues convincingly that citizenship as identity can hardly be reconciled with "the egalitarian treatment of citizens from cultural and religious minorities."<sup>46</sup> In circumstances of suppressed diversity and diminished trust, this deficiency can grow into a significant threat to democratic attitudes. This is even more troublesome when coupled with Williams's other point of criticism against the major role given to loyalty in this context. Readily admitting that "a loyal citizenry can contribute to political stability in ways that are fully consonant with democratic equality," she raises the concern that "the valorization of citizen loyalty as a virtue" should be regarded more suspiciously. "The dark side of the claim that we have good reason to trust fellow citizens who affirm their [civic and national] commitment . . . is the implication that we have good reason to *distrust* individuals who refuse to affirm this commitment."<sup>47</sup> Clearly this dark side grows darker when citizens are more easily inclined to distrust individuals and groups within the nation, and when they define their trust in narrow patriotic terms. In circumstances of conflict, the distrustful responses to certain ethnic and religious minorities (such as the responses to Arab Americans after September 11) grow more evident and more violent. Using loyalty and mutual trust as the basis of citizenship (when perceived as identity) generates the immediate risk of blaming "others" for being disloyal or untrustworthy. Wartime creates a demand for unconditional loyalty and "treats everything short of such loyalty as an act of unforgivable treason."<sup>48</sup> The stress and uncertainty of a protracted conflict make such responses more readily available to citizens who were

raised to regard themselves as Americans by identity, and to trust those (or only those) who identify themselves similarly to a satisfactory level.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, the promise of political stability that is supposed to stem from the concept of citizenship as identity can turn sour in times of war. Political stability, often a desirable factor,<sup>50</sup> can signify in times of war an unwillingness or inability to support change. Stability can easily turn into rigidity, or stagnation, when the notion of citizenship narrows down to a demand to identify with a common perception of national goals, and to contribute to the cause of national survival. Hence, citizenship as identity can be problematic from the liberal perspective as well as other democratic perspectives in peaceful times, and more significantly so in times of war.

An alternative understanding of citizenship is based not on interpretations of identity but rather on ties among the members of the community and the mutual effects of their political choices. Democratic societies are better served by a public and educational focus on what the citizenry shares as related to individuals' fate rather than to their personal and communal identity. Members in a democratic society share a commitment to the social contract that unites them; they share a voice in the choice of representatives and in those representatives being held accountable to them as a citizenry. They share access to public institutions and a commitment to (at least) some basic symbols of their national group as expressed in the democratic processes and the basic structure of their society. Conceiving of national affiliation as an aspect of identity marginalizes these issues while focusing on what is conceptualized as "essential," namely, those matters that are derivative of nationalism as identity. Conceptualizing citizenship as shared fate offers a more persuasive understanding of citizenship as well as a more promising educational endeavor. Citizenship as shared fate can be based on a shared cultural identity (much like citizenship as identity), but it can also be based on many other features, among them institutional linkages (such as a representative government), material linkages, and "seeing our own narratives as entwined with those of others."<sup>51</sup> In a broader discussion, Rogers Smith examines a

similar descriptive and educational endeavor of constituting citizenship based on historical perceptions rather than naturalistic ones.<sup>52</sup> Naturalistic understandings of citizenship are easily equated with conceptualizations of citizenship as identity, in particular in cases in which this identity is portrayed as given rather than as a historical notion that can be revised, criticized, reinterpreted, and amended by the individuals and groups that make up the national community. The historical understanding of national affiliation transforms citizens' conception of themselves as belonging to a group, and helps them own it in a more active way, as they see themselves as individuals (or members of specific groups within the nation) who are responsible for the reinterpretation of their national group over time. This understanding also supports deliberative aims.

The conceptualization of citizenship as shared fate, or as a historical rather than a natural endeavor, is echoed in contemporary discussions on citizenship. Some of the recent writings on multiculturalism and citizenship rely to some extent on this notion. The suggestion that the institutional linkage creates a unique obligation or associative duty to our compatriots can be traced to the claim for prioritizing the interests of our fellow citizens because our political choices will result in laws that they too must obey. More broadly, the officials we elect together will implement policies that influence all of our lives, whether we voted for them or not. Therefore, the shared fate can be partially described as part of the aggregative model of citizenship, based, as an educational endeavor, on an argument from mutual effect.

In addition, economic factors play an important role in describing citizenship as shared fate. From Ernest Gellner's historical analysis of nationalism as an economic project,<sup>53</sup> to more recent discussions of local and global environmental effects, the resources we share with our fellow citizens are a fundamental part of what unites us.

In the conceptual realm, Williams's suggestion that the narratives that we share with others are what turn us into compatriots in the fuller sense is close in spirit to Anderson's description of an imagined community. "Having a sense of ourselves as members of a community of fate entails telling ourselves (true) stories

about how we came to be connected," she writes,<sup>54</sup> echoing Anderson's contention that the imagined community is what turns a group of unaffiliated individuals into a nation.

Some interpret the shared fate argument as having a communitarian strike, a suggestion that raises a host of criticisms directed against this trend of thought. The heart of the critical argument against shared fate is expressed in Dana Villa's claim that the "encumbered self" represented in this approach should be viewed as the exemplar of the unexamined life, and thus should be rejected as the root of personal immorality and social injustice. For him, any group affiliation, and the reliance on conventional thought that ensues from belonging to a group and appreciating its traditions, stands in the way of critical thought and thus is opposed to the ideal of philosophical citizenship (or the idea that one should express her civic affiliation through the political questioning of her society's beliefs, traditions, and mores). For Villa, the cultivation of shared affiliation is what induces "moral slumber," the source of uncritical and thus unjust state of affairs in society.<sup>55</sup>

Note that although the argument here supports the communal affiliation expressed in citizenship as shared fate, it converges more closely with Villa's constructive suggestion than with the communitarian approaches he criticizes. Citizenship as shared fate does not describe social membership as "evident" but rather as an individual and communal interpretative project that is a central aspect of civic life. The objective of this process is not the unquestioning endorsement of one's nationality. To the contrary, it is the understanding of the open, flexible, and contingent nature of national and communal affiliation as a shared project. Social life, communal perceptions, and the understanding of oneself as a citizen are all contingent upon the constant construction and reinterpretation of the shared aspects. It is thus a calling not for a blind acceptance of historical "facts" or myths, or of membership as a pillar of one's identity. Rather it is the demand for an active participation in the construction of a historic community that is not constrained by a final vision of the good social life or the common good. True, those conceptions would be affected by social circumstances, and it is possible that they will tend to become less tolerant or less critical in times of conflict. The cure for that, however, cannot be trusted

on the appearance of a Socratic “gadfly” who would wake the nation from its dogmatic slumber (as Villa seems to suggest). Rather, the cure must be the continual, institutional commitment to diversity, debate, and challenges to “evident” views. This aim can most significantly be supported by a civic education committed to active engagement and participation in the construction of national affiliation as shared fate.

Conceptualizing citizenship as membership in a community of shared fate carries some valuable implications. Most notably it supports an ahierarchical notion of community, as all can participate in its construction, a thin layer of identity that promotes trust among a wide variety of subgroups, and practical reciprocity in the continual process of shaping the meaning and implication of membership. Those implications are beneficial in any period of a nation’s existence; along with others, they can be proven crucial in times of war, in their ability to offset the undemocratic consequences of belligerent citizenship. First, “the idea of citizenship as shared fate does not presuppose that all individuals’ or groups’ understandings of their place . . . need to be the same as those of all others.”<sup>56</sup> Espousing a communal structure that is open to various interpretations can support and validate an open-minded response to a vast variety of conceptions about the community. Fostering shared deliberation, skills of critical reasoning, and reflection are all civic virtues that arise from conceiving citizenship as shared fate, and all of them are potential reinforcements to democracy in times of war.

Conceiving of citizenship as shared fate is thus a productive addition to its conceptualization as identity, in peaceful times and even more so in times of conflict. But in order for it to provide a substantive response to belligerent citizenship, we need to consider some further aspects of this notion, most prominently the suggestion that “good citizenship is something we know from individuals’ *acts* rather than from their *beliefs*.”<sup>57</sup> This suggestion is aimed at countering the emphasis of “citizenship as identity” notions of loyalty as a set of emotions, positions, and beliefs, and the dangers that this emphasis poses to democratic liberties. That individuals develop a perception of themselves as participants in a shared project, judged by their acts rather than by their beliefs, is Williams’s cure for this difficulty.



But employing this notion of citizenship as shared fate to societies in times of war, in the service of countering belligerent citizenship, creates a new difficulty. Because belligerent civic conceptions are based on a narrow set of possible acts of loyalty, namely, acts that contribute to national survival, this aspect of citizenship as shared fate can be proven obstructive to the aim of preserving democracy in wartime. In other words, if we judge civic loyalty through an individual's acts, we may not face the privacy and liberty issues that arise from judging loyalty based on one's beliefs, but we may face further issues of excluding those members who fail—or refuse—to act according to consensual demands for action. For example, if in Israel citizenship prescribes active military service as proof of one's loyalty and as an entry card to the national mainstream, disabled citizens who are not conscripted may be left outside the realm of good citizenship. At least as disturbing is the fact that the acts of those who oppose the political-military endeavors in the occupied territories and declare themselves selective conscientious objectors are considered manifestations of withdrawal from the domain of Israeli citizenship. The Israeli example can be generalized to other democracies in conflict, in which those who do not demonstratively participate in the strict rites of good belligerent citizenship are regarded suspiciously by their fellow nationals.

Hence, in order to implement the notion of citizenship as shared fate to the context of a democracy at war, particularly to serve as the basis of an educational project, it needs to be adapted to circumstances whereby the shared fate turns into a perceived shared doom. The inculcation of democratic civic commitment through public institutions, most notably the public education system, is the first and foremost path to maintaining desirable notions of citizenship in society. But considered against the background of belligerent citizenship, societies facing a protracted conflict should devote more attention to preserving democracy than they usually do, through civic education and other means. Belligerent citizenship creates a unique set of challenges to democracies, among them a growing sense of patriotic unity, a growing support for security measures even when they conflict with civil liberties, and a reduced tendency for deliberation. To counter these tendencies without ignoring the emotions that inform them, some form of merging the notions of citizenship as identity and citizenship as shared fate

would be helpful. A proper response to belligerent citizenship would be based on an endorsement of beliefs related to membership in the group, along with various acts that express and construct communal shared fate. In other words, although there is room for far more emphasis on the shared destiny of members along with stressing the importance of critical appraisal, alternative narration, or multiple perspectives on what constitutes this fate, it is crucial to acknowledge at the same time the moral reality of many individuals' perception of themselves as members of a nation by identity. This acknowledgment, mitigated by the notion of shared fate, is the basis of the educational endeavor termed here "expansive education." It is based on the sense that the moral realities of belligerent citizenship deserve the attention of scholars and policy makers committed to democracy. Such attention could help support the preservation of democracy, through the continuing process of amending the conceptualization of citizenship. This process is necessitated by the critical endorsement of those aspects of belligerent citizenship that support endurance without threatening democratic values. Various public institutions should partake in the effort to preserve democracy in times of war—elected officials, the courts, and the media all share the responsibility of balancing the needs of a society in conflict with the enduring requirements of a democratic polity. I choose to focus on the role of the public education system in preserving democracy in times of conflict because it is the one public institution that can most effectively foster the positive aspects of the social responses to war while cultivating the necessary attitudes and capacities to challenge the destructive ones and to preserve democracy. I consider the challenges that this system faces in the next chapter and build upon them a constructive response to belligerent citizenship throughout the remainder of the book.