

Palestinian Minority in Israel
Between Civic Status and National Security
Concern

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In the context of the relationship between the Arab minority and the state, two basic dimensions that Israel faces and are related to its National Security:

First, the issue of the Israeli-Arab conflict in the broadest sense – with the Arabs, the Palestinians, with the Muslim world and its relations to the presence of the Arab minority in Israel.

Second, the issue concerning the minority-majority relations in divided society, which is also an issue that concerns national security

The Issue as Universal – not unique to Israel

**Canada; Estonia; Lithuania; Northern Ireland; Macedonia;
Turkey; Iraq; Sudan;**

Regarding minorities and the connection to the state, we can distinguish between two major approaches:

An approach that emphasizes the integration, the corporation and the implementation of the essential democracy towards minorities as a way to strengthens the national security and enriches the country life - states sees the need to invest in that direction as a national goal,

On the other hand an approach that emphasizes the need to supervise minorities, control them as part of the national security perception.

Israel, because of internal and external constrains, chose the second approach.

Israel adopts a broad definition of national objectives as a derivative of the national security system

Israel's National Security consists of four dimensions that all have a tight bond with the Palestinian minority:

1 – Preserve its existence

2 – Preserve its territorial integrity – even in territories beyond what is agreed as the Israeli “International Border”.

3 – Preserving and strengthening the Jewish character of the state

4 – Protecting the Jews in the world

The extended approach towards the national security question has grown larger over the years while imagined or real increase in the strength of the Palestinians in Israel. Israel is continuously striving to preserve its being a Jewish state and protecting the Jews in the world, more than ever, including turning the question of character into a main part of the external efforts and its relations with the Palestinians.

Evidence for this change are: **raising the issue in the peace talks; disengagement from Gaza and thoughts of further disengagements including willingness to give up on the triangle, New laws, discriminatory policy, the rise of the extreme right and the legitimacy granted to it.**

This wide perception puts the Arabs in Israel in a national security system and as main part of this system, even growing and becoming more volume than before.

Arabs in Israel and Israeli national security issue

Fundamental factors that intensify the “threat” of the Arabs to the state “national security”:

- 1 - Palestinian identity, Arab and Islamic and being part of a people which is in an open confrontation with Israel, including a direct involvement in this conflict (the question of Jerusalem as an example)
- 2- opposition to Jewish Consensus in key questions, such as: the solution of the conflict with the Palestinians, western orientation , opposition to Zionism; relationship to world Jewry; opposition to American policy in the region
- 3 - Discrimination against Arabs in all spheres of life (with full government consciousness)

4 - The demographic size of the Arabs

5 - Arab concentration in geopolitical areas defined and close to the West Bank.

6 - desire to change the status including autonomy and transforming Israel into a bi – national state

8 - acceptance of the majority of Arabs with their status as citizens and striving to change the face of Israel (being their state) as a result.

9 – resistance to the Jewish character (especially in light of the worsening gap between personal modernization and group modernization).

What is the significance of a Jewish state ? (particularly for the Arabs)

- 1 - the majority are Jews - demographic
- 2 - a state for the Jews – citizens and not citizens, rather than its Arab citizens
- 3 – an obligation to Jewish symbols
- 4 – priority in implementing state policy
- 5 - informal systems and institutions that cares only to the interests of the Jews - even when at the expense of the Arabs
- 6 – ‘ethnocracy’ - half democracy for the Arabs
- 7- an un-neutral state amongst its citizens - is not committed to the principle foundation of modern democracy
- Citizenship

The basic characteristics of ethnocratic regimes:

- Ethnicity, and not citizenship, forms the main basis for resource and power allocation; only partial rights and capabilities are extended to minorities; there is a constant ethnocratic-civil tension.
- The dominant ethnic nation appropriates the state apparatus and shapes the political system, public institutions, geography, economy and culture, so as to expand and deepen its control over state and territory.
- Political boundaries are vague, often privileging co-ethnic of the dominant group in the diaspora, over minority citizens; there is no clearly identified 'demos'.
- Politics are ethnicised, as the ethnic logic of power distribution polarizes the body politic and party system.
- Rigid forms of inter-generational ethnic segregation and socioeconomic stratification are maintained, despite countervailing legal and market forces.

We are in the peak of the two processes \ situations that will determine the future

First, the collapse of the two-state solution

Second, an intensification of the debate over the state's nature and character following the publication of The **Future Vision** and its future implications

The future vision offered a new and alternative perception in a key issues that are related to the meaning of National Security in Israel:

Colonialism

The Jewish State

National citizenship stripped from nationality

Diagnosing the nature of the regime

Democratic character that is desired

The question of historical injustice and repair

Arab identity as Palestinians

Law of Return and the right of return

Support for international engagement in Israeli internal issues

Why did the future vision generates a huge opposition among the Jewish public and elites?

- because the Arabs have raised a debate regarding a different model to the Israeli national security perception
- Undermining the basic concepts used by the majority to establish its narrative (colonialism, democracy, collaborative, etc.)
- An explicit request to change the character of the state, a specific change in policing
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- A requirement to implement international resolutions on refugees
- Displaying broad stance, shared in various sects – an attempt in producing consensuses

What is the solution in this area?

Israel must take the initiative in two levels:

Firstly, the issue of the external conflict with the national Palestinian movement.

Secondly, the minority-majority issue in the divided society – such solution requires systemic change in the Israeli approach to its question on national security that is supposed to include initial and basic commitment to democracy.

Is this possible?? Changing the fundamental concept in Israel – what does the international experience show?