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Minority status in an ethnic democracy: the status of the Arab minority in Israel

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Abstract

It is commonly assumed that democracy in deeply divided societies takes either a majoritarian or consociational form. While the state in both types is ethnically neutral, there are some countries that combine viable democratic institutions with institutionalized ethnic dominance. The article introduces this third, so far not recognized, general type of 'ethnic democracy' and demonstrates its utility for Israel in treating its Arab minority. The tensions and contradictions in Israel's dual character as a Jewish democratic state give rise to five Arab demands that the Jewish majority reject: making Israel non-Jewish and non-Zionist, accepting Palestinian nationalism, lifting all restrictions on Arab individual rights, granting Arabs certain national collective rights and incorporating Arabs into the national power structure. Each Arab demand is discussed in detail and the rationale for Jewish objections is spelled out. The problem can be reduced, but not resolved, by establishing a separate Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the Palestinian people and by according Israeli Arabs the status of a Palestinian national minority within the Jewish state. These issues are not unique to Israel but rather common to ethnic democracies. It is concluded that the Israeli experience is becoming increasingly relevant to states which are democratizing but keeping appreciable ethnic dominance.

Democracy in plural societies

Gastil reports the findings from a comparative survey of the political systems of 168 independent states in 1984. In order to obtain a classification of the states on democracy, he assigns each a score of 1-7 on political rights (the existence of opposition parties, change of government through elections, fairness of elections, military or foreign intervention in the political process) and a score of 1-7 on civil liberties (right of assembly and association, freedom of the press, the independence of the judiciary, etc.). He concludes that:

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42% of the people of the world live in 'not free' states, 36% in 'free' states, and the rest in 'partly free'. This means that there are about 51 countries that can reasonably be called democracies. This is a larger number than many suppose, although it is true that many of these states are very small. (Gasitil 1985, p. 165)¹

Some of these democratic states are ethnically or racially divided societies whose democracies can be classified as one of two distinct types: *majoritarian* and *consociational* (Lijphart 1977). In majoritarian democracies, like the US, *ethnicity* is privatized. Although the state does not legislate or intervene in ethnic cleavages, it conducts nation-building, i.e., forges a common language, identity, nationalism and national institutions for its citizens. The state provides the conditions for acculturation and assimilation, but lets ethnic groups keep or drop their subcultures, or live apart or mix. The corner-stone of society is the individual, his merit, achievement, political and civil rights, and the exercise of personal options.

In consociational democracies, like Belgium, ethnicity is accepted as a principle for the organization of the state. Individuals are judged on merit and accorded political and civil rights, but ethnic groups are also officially recognized and granted certain rights such as control over education and allocation of public posts. The state is not identified with any of the constituent groups and tries to reconcile the differences between them. Ethnicity is thus institutionalized and ethnic identities and institutions are usually kept separate. Yet the law provides for individuals who do wish to assimilate or even intermarry. Each group has its own élite, and the state is run by an élite-cartel that is engaged in the politics of accommodation and compromise.

Majoritarian and consociational democracies have in common a set of democratic institutions and an ethnically neutral state. But is it possible to have a democracy in a plural society in which the state sides with one of the constituent ethnic groups? It can be argued that this is a contradiction in terms. This objection holds for some extreme cases, like South Africa till 1990, in which 'Herrenvolk democracies' (van den Berghe 1967) prevail. In *Herrenvolk* democracies, democracy is limited to the master 'race' and forcibly denied to other groups. It is also true that democracy is rare among the large number of states in the contemporary world which are 'ethnic states' – namely, states which are identified with and serve one of the ethnic groups (like Syria, Iraq, Ethiopia and Burma). But can some of these non-democratic ethnic states become democracies and remain ethnic in the main? Such a possibility should not be dismissed, especially if democracy is construed as a continuum rather than as a dichotomy and in view of the democratization process which is sweeping the world today.

In order to understand better the operation of and transition to democracy in ethnically divided societies, I wish to suggest a third type

of democracy in plural societies which could be termed 'an ethnic democracy' or 'a democratic ethnic state'. Ethnic democracies combine the extension of political and civil rights to individuals and certain collective rights to minorities with institutionalized dominance over the state by one of the ethnic groups. Democratization of ethnic states or countries where minority problems abound would not necessarily mean a shift to a majoritarian or consociational system, and it is possible that at least some of them will become ethnic democracies.

Ethnic democracy is not, however, an imaginary type. It is possible that some of the fifty-one democracies are ethnic, including some of those which are at present inaccurately regarded as majoritarian or consociational. One of them is Israel which is assigned a score of 2, instead of 1, on political rights because of its 'definition of the state as belonging to a particular religious or ethnic group' (Gasitil 1985: 163).²

This article aims to illustrate the third type of plural democracies by focusing on Israel as a democratic ethnic state and on the discord as to the status of the Arab minority in it. The Israeli experience may reveal the kinds of problems, tensions and contradictions that ethnic democracies have and how they attempt to deal with them.

Israel as an ethnic democracy

How is the Israeli political system classified? It is very often considered to be unique. As such 'Israel is usually, though not always, omitted from comparative analysis. Moreover, when Israel is mentioned, it is usually as a "most baffling case" or "a case by itself"' (Gutmann 1989, p. 295). The Israeli polity is often portrayed as consociational due to the accommodation with the Orthodox minority and coalition politics, and sometimes it is vaguely regarded as a mixed case.

These classifications are, however, irrelevant for the deep division between the Arab minority (close to 700,000 persons, 15 per cent of the population within the Green Line, excluding East Jerusalem) and the Jewish majority. In this regard Israel does not qualify as an open majoritarian democracy because this means the transformation of the Jewish state into an Israeli state, namely, a state in which ethnicity is privatized, Arabs and Jews are free to merge, and a new, all-Israeli identity and nationalism emerge. Neither is Israel a consociational democracy because to be so, it should become a binational state in which the status of Arabs and Jews is equal and resources are distributed proportionally.

Two attempts to categorize Israel in the context of the Arab-Jewish cleavage are worth noting. Benvenisti claims that post-1967 Israel is a *Herrenvolk* democracy. Israeli Palestinians are second-class citizens because 'their citizenship does not assure them equality in law or even

crucial test of citizenship is military service'. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are actually incorporated into Israel, while their Palestinian inhabitants are denied civil and political rights. For this reason, Benvenisti concludes, that Greater Israel (Israel proper ceased to exist) is 'a dual society and a political system whose technical term, in professional literature, is "Herrenvolk Democracy"' (1987, p. 71). My discussion here is limited to Israel proper which still exists. The problematic status of the Arab citizen does not justify the application of the term *Herrenvolk* democracy to Israel within the Green Line. Moreover, I do not think that this term holds even for Greater Israel because military occupation prevails in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the non-citizen Palestinian population is seeking independence rather than equal political rights as part of Israel.

While Benvenisti focuses on Greater Israel, Lustick (1980) offers a comprehensive study of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel proper. He finds the two types of democracy inapplicable and suggests a third model of 'control' to distinguish the Israeli case. His central thesis is that the Arab minority is placed under a system of control which severely restricts its political rights and behaviour. In other words, Israeli democracy does not function as far as Israeli Arabs are concerned and in fact emerges as a *Herrenvolk* from the detailed analysis. However, in 1988 Lustick restated his position, conceding that the system of control has largely been dismantled and arguing that Israel is becoming a binational (i.e., consociational or quasi-consociational) state (Smooha 1989, p. 12).

Israel's claim to be both a democratic and a Jewish state is in fact a proclamation of ethnic democracy. Cohen sees this duality as a structural dilemma:

Israel was to be a Jewish nation-state; as a *nation-state*, its fundamental legitimization was conceived in terms of particularistic Jewish national symbols; but as a modern civil nation-state, its fundamental legitimization was conceived in terms of the universalistic precepts of democratic freedom and equality before the law of all citizens. (1989, p. 149)

Israel proper qualifies as a political democracy on many counts. These include universal voting rights, a multi-party system, fair elections, change-over of governments, civil rights, independent judiciary, professional press, civilian authority over the army, and popular and elite support for democratic institutions (Arian 1985a). Notwithstanding the lingering concerns that Israeli democracy is an 'overburdened polity' (Horowitz and Lissak 1989) and that it might not withstand the political split over the Palestinian question (Lustick

1987, p. 168; Arian 1985b, p. 276), it has so far functioned quite well and even passed severe tests, including the poor performance of government in the 1973 and 1982 wars, the change-over of governments in 1977 and more than twenty-two years of occupation and two years of *intifada*. On the other hand, it is also evident that apart from the implications of the Jewish character of the state, Israeli democracy has three weaknesses: the unrelenting prevalence of the Emergency Regulations which give the authorities excessive power to suspend civil and political rights, the insufficient protection of minorities in the absence of a constitution or a bill of rights, and the focused nature of political tolerance (intolerance is directed largely at the left rather than scattered among various target groups, see Sullivan *et al.* 1984).

At the same time Israel is a Jewish state, i.e., a specific case of an ethnic state. As a state of and for Jews, Israel claims to be the homeland of Jews only. The dominant language is Hebrew while Arabic is degraded to an inferior status. The institutions, official holidays, symbols and heroes are exclusively Jewish. The major law of immigration allows Jews to enter freely, excludes Palestinian Arabs, and admits other non-Jews only under certain uneasy conditions. Israel confers a special status on the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund which by their own constitutions cater for Jews only. Land and settlement policies are geared to further the interests of Jews only. The welfare of world Jewry is a major consideration for Israeli foreign policy (Avineri 1986). In many other ways the state extends preferential treatment to Jews who wish to preserve this embedded Jewishness and Zionism of the state.

Israel is an ethnic state also in legislating ethnic endogamy. According to Israeli law every person belongs to a religious community which has full jurisdiction over his or her personal status, including marriage, divorce, wills, custody of children, and burial. While inter-faith marriages are not illegal, they are not provided for by law. This is in contradistinction to all Western democracies, with the exception of Ireland, which do not impose religious affiliation and allow intermarriage. The involuntary separation between ethnic communities and the ethnic endogamy in Israel reinforce the ethnic nature of state.

One finds a wide range of views regarding Israel's dual character. According to the official ideology, Zionism and democracy are perfectly compatible and Israel is equally committed to both. The Declaration of Independence states unequivocally the validity of both principles, promising full civil rights to all citizens in the Jewish state. In a recent ruling of the Supreme Court, a judge who ruled against the Progressive List for Peace to run for the 1988 Knesset elections on the basis of its presumed rejection of Israel as 'the state of the Jewish people', reaffirmed his position that 'there is no contradiction whatsoever between these two things: The state is the state of the Jews, while its regime is an enlightened democratic regime that accords

rights to all citizens, Jews and non-Jews' (Supreme Court 1989, p. 8). This is the stand of all the Zionist political parties in Israel and the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the Jews. On the other hand, Jewish ultra-nationalists like Rabbi Kahane (1987) disagree and hold that the idea of a Jewish state negates democracy, as a result Israeli Arabs are bound to be second-class citizens, and hence they should be excluded from the state.

Many social scientists maintain that in the aftermath of the Six Day War the Jewish-Zionist character of the state has been strengthened at the expense of democracy. For instance, Cohen argues that the delicate balance between universalism and particularism was disrupted after 1967 as the forces of nationalism and religion took over and Revisionist Zionism displaced Labor Zionism. Notwithstanding the rise in religion and nationalism, many measures of political democracy (such as competitive party politics, change-over of governments, freedom of the press and political representation of various population groups) show that Israel in the eighties was much more democratic than it was in the fifties.

Israel within the pre-1967 borders is internationally accepted as a Jewish state. This legitimacy was extended in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, in the 1922 British Mandate to Palestine and, most importantly, in the 1947 UN partition resolution. The latter, which provides the legal basis for Israel's existence, calls for the establishment of two ethnic states in Mandatory Palestine, one Jewish and the other Arab. Yet it is generally assumed that Israel's internationally acknowledged Jewishness should not be allowed to limit Israeli Arabs' right to democracy and equality.

It is evident that the dual Jewish and democratic character of the state renders the status of the Arab minority problematic. Examination of their situation can shed light on the duality and viability of the democratic ethnic state as a general type found in certain plural societies.

The Israeli-Arab conflict presents a complication, however. Israel is able to use plausibly the perceived threat to its survival in order to blur tensions emanating from its ethnic nature and to weather Israeli-Arab pressures to equality and participation. Since Israeli Arabs are part of the Arab world which presumably threatens Israel's existence, restrictions of their rights could ostensibly be justified.

Both Jews and Arabs can use Israel's duality to legitimize their claims. The Jews may draw on the international legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state and on the menace to its integrity for defending a policy that assigns Arabs a status of a non-national minority with restricted rights in an ethnic state. On the other hand, Israeli Arabs may invoke Israeli democracy as a basis for a demand to normalize their status as a national minority in a democratic, non-ethnic state.

The status of the Arabs in Israel raises therefore the most

fundamental issue of Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state, and how to reconcile these features when they clash with each other in circumstances involving the Arab minority. This question will be highlighted below by discussing the five basic claims of Israeli Arabs and the Jewish response to each of them.

My focus will be on the discord between Arabs and Jews on the status of the Arab minority in the Jewish state while ignoring the internal differences within each community. Since I have discussed elsewhere (Smooha 1983; 1989b) the internal factionalism among both Arabs and Jews, its disregard in this article aims to sharpen the overall picture. The main justification for such a line of analysis, however, is the existence of a broad consensus on the issue within each side.

Despite the internal differences between the various political streams prevalent among Israeli Arabs, a consensus on key issues of Arab-Jewish relations emerged among them in the late seventies. Arabs who subscribe to this general agreement include those affiliated to the Zionist establishment, the Democratic Arab Party, the Israeli Communist Party, the Progressive List for Peace as well as independents. Only the one-tenth of the Arab population who follow the rejectionist views of the Sons of the Village Movement dissent from the Arab consensus.

Likewise, Labor and Likud are the mainstay of the wide Jewish agreement on the Arab minority question. The religious parties and the Zionist left also conform to a considerable degree, leaving only the radical right and the negligible, radical, non-Zionist left as dissenting on the issue. Exclusionists who reject Arab-Jewish coexistence in a democratic, Jewish state constitute one-quarter of the Jewish population.

Arab demands and the Jewish response

Five demands are at the core of the Arab consensus. These are the wish to make Israel non-Jewish and non-Zionist, to make it recognize Palestinian nationalism, to lift all restrictions on Arab individual rights, to grant Arabs certain national collective rights, and to accept them as a legitimate, power-sharing group. These demands are considered excessive and are therefore rejected by the state and most Jews.

De-ethnicization of the state

Israeli Arabs make a distinction between Israel's existence as a state and its Jewish-Zionist character. They acknowledge Israel's right to exist, respect its territorial integrity within the pre-1967 borders and

documented. A representative survey of the Arab population conducted in 1988, contains some of the evidence.³ While only 13.5 per cent of the Arabs denied Israel's right to exist, a majority of 63 per cent rejected its right of existence as a Jewish-Zionist state. In addition, 92 per cent of them disagreed that Israel is the homeland of Jews only, rather than the common homeland of both Jews and Arabs; 83 per cent objected to the idea that Israel should keep a Jewish majority; 72 per cent favoured the repeal of the Law of Return; and 67 per cent believed that Arabs cannot be equal citizens in Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state and cannot identify themselves with it. When asked directly about Zionism, 70 per cent regarded it as racist, and in response to another question, 1 per cent defined themselves as Zionist, 52 per cent as non-Zionist and 47 per cent as anti-Zionist. All these rejection figures are significantly higher among non-Bedouin Muslims who constitute the large majority of Israeli Arabs.⁴

The disagreement between Arabs and Jews on this fundamental issue of the identity and mission of the state cuts across all political streams. The debate between the two liberal, leftist writers A. B. Yehoshua and A. Shammas who are expected to be very close in their views is telling indeed. Shammas (1986), an Arab writer who is well integrated into the Zionist left, clearly rejects Israel's Law of Return, national anthem, flag, and the very concept of a Jewish state, calling for its transformation to a non-ethnic, Israeli state. On the other hand, Yehoshua (1986), a Jewish writer well-known for his sympathy for the Israeli-Arab cause, insists on keeping Israel as it is and counsels Israeli Arabs who feel alienated from it to satisfy their Palestinian nationalism by identifying with a Palestinian state or by actually moving there. This debate shows that Zionism is embraced by Jews as much as it is repudiated by Arabs.

Arab political leaders, however, sometimes make certain qualifications that mitigate their opposition to Israel's nature. The stand of the Communist Party is a case in point. The party distinguishes between Jewishness and Zionism. According to Israeli Communist leaders, Jews have over the years developed as an Israeli nation and Israel is the country where they constitute a majority and exercise their right to self-determination. It is therefore proper for Israel to maintain a dominant Hebrew language and Jewish culture and institutions. But beyond this acceptable 'factual' Jewishness, the Communists negate as Zionist all other state characteristics (including the Law of Return, Israel's ties with the diaspora, and the notion that Jews all over the world constitute one nation). For them Zionism is a colonial, bourgeois, and racist movement which is responsible for the Palestinian tragedy, the institutional discrimination between Arabs and Jews

and a 1988 survey of the Arab population which would reveal a Palestinian

dignity and provide every Israeli Palestinian with a choice.

From a Jewish viewpoint, rejection of Zionism as an ideology and a force shaping the state is like rejecting the state itself. The refined distinction between the state and its character, and that between its Jewishness and Zionism, are neither understood nor condoned by the Jews. They are not interested in having Israel as a state, but rather as a Jewish-Zionist state (Michael 1988). For this reason Arabs who doubt Israel's right to be Jewish-Zionist are regarded as potentially hostile and subversive.

While it is legal, but not legitimate, in Israel to reject publicly or act against Zionism, according to the 1985 amendment of the election law, one may not run for the Knesset on an election slate which denies Israel as the state of the Jewish people.

Legitimation of Palestinian nationalism

Palestinian nationalism has been on the rise since the mid-sixties. From a population of refugees who depended on the Arab states for salvation, the Palestinians reasserted themselves as a people. The PLO emerged as their legitimate leadership gaining a worldwide recognition. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have been engaging in institution-building and in resistance against occupation. The Palestinian national movement, both in the homeland and diaspora, has gradually shifted its strategy from armed struggle and terrorism to a political fight and diplomacy. The *intifada* is a new stage in Palestinian history, marking a semi-violent, popular struggle for liberation from occupation. It pushed the PLO in mid-November 1988 to renounce terrorism, to acknowledge Israel's right to exist, to accept UN resolution 242, and to declare an independent state on the West Bank and Gaza.

Being a segment of the Palestinian people who were cut off from the mainstream in 1948 but reunited in 1967, Israeli Arabs have been part of the rising Palestinian nationalism. Three components of their nationalism are worth stressing: solidarity with their people, identity and culture.

Israeli-Arab solidarity with the Palestinians is deep indeed. Under the influence of the Communist Party and long before the PLO itself moved in this direction, Israeli Arabs believed that the appropriate solution to the conflict is Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 borders, a redrawing of Jerusalem, negotiation with the PLO, the formation of a

Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza alongside Israel, and the recognition of the right of the Arab refugees to return or to receive compensation. They also believe that the PLO itself, like themselves, has stood for more or less the same position since the mid-seventies. Since the *intifada* erupted in December 1987, Israeli Arabs have expressed their support by general strikes, demonstrations, and by sending relief to the territories. Despite a rise in the number of terrorist acts by Israeli Arabs, it is clear that they have stopped short of joining the uprising.

Another component of Palestinian nationalism is the reaffirmation of a Palestinian identity. Up until the 1967 war, Arabs in Israel saw themselves as Israeli Arabs, Arabs, or Israelis. They were also seen this way by the Israeli authorities and the Arab world. But thereafter they have increasingly become Palestinian, like other parts of the Palestinian people. When asked to select the most appropriate term to describe themselves, the proportion of Israeli Arabs choosing Palestinian identities went up from 45 per cent in 1976, to 55 per cent in 1980, 68 per cent in 1985, and 67 per cent in 1988.

The resurgence of Palestinian nationalism is also expressed in culture. Cultural ties with the Arab world and fellow Palestinians were resumed after 1967. Israeli Arabs have become more aware of their history, heritage, literature and Islam, and they wish their Palestinian culture to be recognized by the state as part of the national culture and as an input in Arab and Jewish education.

Israeli Arabs do not see their post-1967 Palestinianization as conflicting with their equally strong post-1948 Israelization. As a result of the latter process, they have become bilingual and bicultural without assimilating into the Jewish majority. Today they also have high Israeli aspirations and standards, feel resigned to their fate as Israeli citizens, see their future tied to Israel, and look for settlement of their problem within Israel proper rather than by dissociating themselves from the state. Most importantly, as far as Israeli Arabs are concerned, there is no contradiction between their Palestinian nationalism, i.e., solidarity with the Palestinian people, support for the PLO, advocacy of a two-state solution, siding with the *intifada*, the acquisition of a Palestinian identity, and a demand to introduce Palestinian elements into Arab education, on the one hand, and Israeliness, i.e., Israeli citizenship, loyalty, and a genuine desire to be more integrated into the state on an equal footing with the Jews, on the other.

There is some evidence to corroborate the Arab feeling that their Palestinian nationalism and Israeli citizenship are not necessarily mutually exclusive. To cite just the highlights, growing Palestinianization has not caused increasing rejection of the state: Arabs denying Israel's right to exist constituted 20.5 per cent in 1976, 11 per cent in 1980, 18 per cent in 1985 and 13.5 per cent in 1988. If we classify identities into non-Palestinian Israeli, Israeli Palestinian and non-Israeli Palestinian,

we find that the compound, integrated Israeli-Palestinian identity, is gaining ground over the years: from 12 per cent in 1976, to 29 per cent in 1980, 39 per cent in 1985, and 40 per cent in 1988. In contrast, the non-Palestinian-Israeli and non-Israeli-Palestinian identities have declined during the same period. The support for the PLO before 1988 was not accompanied by an endorsement of its use of terrorism: 82 per cent of the Arabs in 1985 thought that Israel should talk to the PLO, whereas only 8 per cent of them favoured PLO terrorist actions against Israeli-Jewish civilians. The fact that Israeli Arabs have not joined the *intifada* is clear evidence that their loyalty to the state overrides their deep commitment to Palestinian nationalism.

Jews take an opposing view. Palestinian nationalism is considered illegitimate and certain aspects of it are even illegal. It is against the law to display publicly any sign of identification with the PLO (such as hoisting the flag and singing the anthem of Palestine) or to meet PLO officials. The authorities and the Jewish public regard Palestinian nationalism as antithetical to whatever they stand for and a threat to their survival. More specifically, for most Jews an Arab claim to Western Palestine is a challenge to their exclusive right to the entire area; support of the PLO is equivalent to an endorsement of terrorism and a struggle to liquidate Israel as stipulated in the PLO National Charter; sanctioning of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza is tantamount to approving a step in a long-term, multi-stage strategy to do away with the Jewish state. The dissent of Israeli Arabs from the Jewish consensus against a two-state solution is considered to be an act of disloyalty, and not merely a disagreement between fellow citizens entitled to hold opposing but equally legitimate views on a certain matter.

The expressions of Palestinian nationalism in the life of Israeli Arabs is equally threatening to Jews. The Jews, following a clear policy of the Israeli government, wish the Arabs to develop a new, local Israeli-Arab identity, completely divorced from Palestinian nationalism. The proportion of Jews who defined Arab identity as Arab, Israeli, or Israeli Arab was 92 per cent in 1980, 85.5 per cent in 1985 and 84 per cent in 1988. It is not only that a very small minority of Jews perceive Arabs as Palestinian but those who do attribute such identity to them tend to be more hard line and anti-Arab than the average (e.g., while the proportion of Jews in 1988 seeing Arabs as Palestinian was 16 per cent in the general population, it was 31 per cent among voters for the liberal religious parties in 1984 but only 13 per cent among voters for the liberal parties Shinui and the Citizens Rights Movement).

The Jews also interpret the shift in Arab voting away from the Jewish parties to predominantly Arab parties as a non-confidence vote in Arab-Jewish coexistence. Indeed, the Arab vote for Jewish parties and their affiliated Arab lists dropped from 84 per cent in 1951, to 77.5 per cent in 1961, 63 per cent in 1973, 49 per cent in 1977, 62 per cent in

1981, 49 per cent in 1984, and a record low of 42 per cent in 1988. Since the predominantly Arab parties stand for Palestinian nationalism and challenge the *status quo* of Arab-Jewish relations, Jews regard the Arab votes cast for them as a turn to politics of confrontation.

From a Jewish perspective, such changes reflect an overall trend of growing identification with hostile, nationalist, Palestinian ideology that would undermine Arabs' loyalty to the state and in time even turn them into an active fifth column. Jews are afraid that the Arab support for the *intifada* marks an alarming intensification of this corrosive process. How can Israeli citizens claim loyalty to the state while siding with a rebellious population that the Israeli army is trying to put down? Many of the Jews who are posing this question see the Arab general strikes in solidarity with the uprising as stabbing Israel in the back. This view is reinforced by the dramatic increase, during the first two years of the uprising, in the number of Israeli Arabs perpetrating, on nationalist grounds, acts of violence, terrorism, and damage to state and Jewish property.

Equal individual rights

In 1948 Israeli Arabs were granted civil liberties, including the freedoms of assembly, expression, movement, worship, voting and standing for elections. Yet these rights were grossly violated in the past, and more importantly, are still inferior to those enjoyed by the Jews.

Large-scale infringements of Arab civil rights took place in three vital areas: administration, citizenship and lands. Up to December 1966 Arab areas were formally placed under military administration, suspending some of the Arabs' basic rights and imposing many restrictions on them. Another major infraction was the 1952 Nationality Law which denied citizenship to a sizeable proportion of Arabs until it was amended in 1980. The government also applied a series of laws and regulations, mostly during the first years of statehood, to confiscate 40 to 60 per cent of Arab land without proper compensation. Although these land laws are still in effect, and although there are still lands in dispute and Arabs are still fearful of further land takeovers, Arab lands are no longer vulnerable to administrative expropriations. This is because of the large amount of lands already taken and because the authorities cannot afford to face vehement Arab opposition.

Arab civil liberties, however, are not adequately protected in Israel for four reasons. First and foremost is the absence of a constitution or a bill of rights with a superior standing over other laws. Thus, Arabs lack an independent legal base to fight unfair treatment. Second, as long as Israel is legally in a permanent state of emergency, excessive Emergency Regulations are in effect. Since the Arabs are officially considered a security risk, these regulations operate mostly against

them. Third, the present implementation of the Jewish-Zionist character of the state carries certain discriminations against Arabs. And fourth, Jewish public opinion not only condones constraints imposed on Arabs but also endorses preferential treatment of Jews. Each one of these factors, let alone the special effect of their combination, is sufficient to downgrade Arabs to a status of second-class citizens.

A critical review of laws and statutes by Kretzmer (1987) reveals considerable discrimination against Israeli-Arab citizens despite the prevalence of the legal principle of equality in Israel. A substantial digression from this principle is caused by the special legal status accorded to the Jewish Agency and Jewish National Fund. They perform quasi-governmental functions such as planning and funding of new rural localities, support for cultural enterprises, provision of assistance to the elderly and other disadvantaged groups, and development and leasing of lands. Yet by their own constitution, these powerful institutions are obliged to serve Jews only. At the same time Arabs are prevented from setting up their own fund-raising organization abroad, parallel to the United Jewish Appeal, because of the penalty for receiving money from hostile or terrorist bodies. Discrimination is also embedded in the Jewish Religious Services Law which provides for publicly funded religious services to Jews only.

Most of the discrimination is, however, rather covert. The extensive use of military service as a criterion for the allocation of benefits is very striking because most Jews serve in the army whereas most Arabs do not. It is normal to give certain benefits to ex-soldiers within the first three years of their discharge. But in Israel entitlement to the extra allowance for large families and to easy terms of loans for housing is extended to anyone who has ever served in the army or any member of his or her immediate family. Unfair allocation of funds and extension of unequal services by governmental offices are quite common. For example, the subsidies that Arab local councils receive from the Ministry of the Interior average only about a third of the subsidies that comparable Jewish local councils receive. With minor exceptions, the various projects to close the ethnic and social gaps exclude Israeli Arabs who would qualify according to a universal criterion of need. These include tax breaks given to development towns to encourage investments and residence there, numerous programmes of compensatory education and cultural enrichment, and Project Renewal.

Inappropriate use of security considerations to restrict Arab freedoms is also common. From time to time the authorities employ the emergency regulations to restrict the movement, to detain, to refuse the incorporation of associations and to ban publications of Arabs. Some Arabs are also refused clearance to work as school teachers. For similar security offences Arabs tend to be tried in military courts.

whereas Jews are tried in civilian courts (e.g., the Jewish underground). Of course, any visible threat to or disruption of internal security deserves prosecution, but the authorities often treat legitimate political dissent as an act of subversion. To illustrate: in 1980 a congress of various Arab organizations scheduled to meet publicly in Nazareth was banned by the government on the pretext that it might be under the influence of the PLO.

The most significant legislation pertaining to the status of Arabs in Israel and to their civil rights was enacted in July 1985 as an amendment to the election law. It prevents from participation in Knesset elections any list that denies the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, denies the democratic nature of the state, or incites to racism. From the Israeli-Arabs' viewpoint, the provision that Israel is the land of Jews all over the world, but not necessarily of its citizens, degrades them to a status of invisible outsiders, as if Israel were not their own state. Furthermore, it turns the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state into what Kretzmer rightly calls 'an incontrovertible fact'. In this way illegitimate dissent is unduly expanded from negation of the physical integrity of the state to a denial of its special character. In fact, a party that proposes to de-Zionize the state by peaceful, legal means is banned from parliamentary elections, and the Speaker of the Knesset may block the presentation before the Knesset of a bill with such intention.

It is worth noting the aborted attempt to disqualify the Progressive List for Peace from participating in the 1988 Knesset election because it supposedly denies Israel as the state of the Jewish people. After long deliberations and a vote of 19 : 18, the Central Election Committee approved the PLP. The question was then appealed to the Supreme Court that decided in a vote of 3 : 2 to let the PLP run.

The PLP was charged with implicit or explicit endorsement of the following ideas: Israel is a state of its citizens (viz., not necessarily a state of the Jewish people), it should be a binational (Arab-Jewish) state, it should be a democratic-pluralistic-humanistic state, it should be a democracy like all democracies and without according any advantage to the Jewish people, absolute equality should prevail between Arabs and Jews, all regulations and policies that give Jews preferred status should be abolished, Israeli Arabs are entitled to national institutions like Israeli Jews, and the ties between Israel and the diaspora are historical and spiritual (i.e., not necessarily political and national) in nature. These views were interpreted as amounting to PLP's denial of Israel as the state of the Jewish people.

The majority opinion was, however, that the evidence against the PLP is not sufficiently unequivocal and overwhelming to justify the denial of the basic right to stand for election in a state, like Israel, where this right is granted to parties (e.g., the Communist Party and the religious parties) that seek a radical change of the regime. The

ruling in favour of the PLP was based on one or more of the following grounds: the PLP takes rather an ambiguous position on the issue of Israel as the state of the Jewish people (it issues contradictory statements in this regard), its anti-Zionist stance is secondary to its preoccupation with the struggle for a two-state solution, and it does not present a clear and immediate danger to the state.

The PLP case clearly shows that Israel is a truly democratic ethnic state. The Central Election Committee and the Supreme Court oscillated on the question of which of the two components in its character takes precedence. Although the PLP finally won, it barely made it. It managed to pass mostly by its systematic engagement in 'constructive ambiguity': blurring its anti-Zionist ideology and distorting the attitudes of its Arab constituents. One of the judges branded this tactic as a despicable way to win admission to participation in election, instead of fighting for the repeal of the legal restriction. Despite the majority vote in favour of the PLP, four of the five judges interpreted the meaning of the criterion 'denial of Israel as the state of the Jewish people' rather widely to correspond with the above views attributed to the PLP.⁵ The law forces Arabs who wish to take part in Knesset elections to come to terms with Zionism, to misrepresent their position, or to give up their right.

The Jewish public is understandably more ethnocentric than the Jewish legislators, policy makers and administrators. In the 1988 survey, 74 per cent of the Jews said that the state should prefer Jews to Arabs, 43 per cent favoured the denial of the right to vote to Israeli-Arab citizens, and 45 per cent supported, without reservation, the outlawing of the Israeli Communist Party which has been seated in the Knesset since 1948. In addition, 40 per cent of the Jewish respondents agreed that Israel should seek and use any opportunity to encourage Israeli Arabs to leave the country, 37 per cent had reservations about such a state policy towards fellow citizens, and only 23 per cent objected. It is no less telling that 74 per cent of the Jews were unwilling to have an Arab as a superior in a job. These attitudes should be understood against the foil of another set of beliefs that the Arabs are not trustworthy, do not assume equal duties, and are generally less desirable for being non-Jews in a Jewish state.

In view of these public opinions and state policies, it is no wonder that informal, daily discrimination against Israeli-Arab citizens abounds. It is particularly widespread in hiring for white-collar jobs in the Jewish economy, in housing rentals, and in treatment by the police.

Most Jews even fail to perceive the above differential practices as discrimination against Arabs. They consider them rather as preferences rightfully accorded to them as Jews in a Jewish state. Furthermore, most Jews think that the Arabs do not deserve equal rights inasmuch as they do not fulfil *emotional duties* (i.e. do not come in

the army. Finally, as long as most Jews continue to regard the Arabs as a potential fifth column, all the restrictions imposed on the Arabs appear to be unavoidable and even justifiable.

National collective rights

The Arabs in Israel constitute both an ethnic and a national minority. They are entitled to special, collective rights as distinguishable members of a minority, in addition to individual rights as indistinguishable citizens. In Israel today the Arabs enjoy a status of an ethnic but not a national minority.

The state recognizes the Arabs as a religious, linguistic and cultural minority. Like the Jews, they are organized in religious communities which administer all matters of personal status. The Muslims, Christians and Druzes enjoy freedom of worship and receive partial funding from the government for their religious services. Yet the Muslim community is not on an equal footing with the dominant Jewish community in a number of areas. It lacks institutions such as a supreme religious council, local religious councils, and religious training seminaries, and it is devoid of control over the *Waqf* property (religious endowments). With the growing Islamic consciousness and fundamentalism among the Muslims in Israel, rectification of these inequities will increasingly be pressed as a demand.

Arabs are also entitled by law to have schools in Arabic and there are Arabic channels in the state radio and television catering for Arab needs. Furthermore, Arabic is Israel's second official language and that fact permits anyone to use it in official dealings with governmental bodies (the courts and bureaucracy).

Nevertheless, Arabic is much inferior to Hebrew in its status. It is not actually used along with Hebrew in the public domain, especially in street and locality signs, and it is not a required language in Jewish schools as Hebrew is in Arab schools. Yet the Jewish public shows a remarkable willingness to promote the use of Arabic. In the 1985 survey while 83 per cent of the Jews supported the continued dominance of Hebrew in state institutions, 48 per cent favoured making Arabic a required language in the public display of names of streets and localities, and 50 per cent went so far as to endorse the teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools at a level equal to English even if this necessitated cutting down on other subjects. These favourable views were even more popular among the special sample of political leaders in the study.

Arabs function well as a cultural minority. Their considerable culture retention is the result of the right to maintain a publicly funded separate system of Arab education, the freedom to preserve and cultivate their Arab culture, the leeway to hold cultural ties with other Palestinians and with the Arab world, and their residence in three

geocultural regions (90 per cent of the Arabs live in the Galilee, Triangle and the Northern Negev). In consequence, the Arabs have become a bicultural minority (namely, they have adopted some patterns of the Israeli culture in addition to their main Arab culture) rather than turning into an assimilating minority. It is also evident, however, that the Arab culture is a minority culture, not part of the national culture, and even looked down upon.

With all that is still lacking, the Arab status as an ethnic minority is not basically problematic. As a matter of fact, it is as much part of the national consensus to keep Arabs as a non-assimilating minority as it is to keep Jews as a non-assimilating majority. As long as Israel remains a Jewish-Zionist state, Jews will definitely have a vested interest in sustaining Arabs as an ethnic minority in order to reduce the danger of assimilation and intermarriage as well as to prevent the transformation of Israel into a truly open, pluralistic society.

The real problem lies in the denial of the status of a national minority to the Arabs. It is self-evident that they qualify as a national minority by being part of the larger Arab nation and the territorial Palestinian nation. At the same time they are part of neither the wider Jewish nation nor the non-existent Israeli nation. If they are not part of the Israeli-Jewish nation but are part of the Palestinian nation, why does Israel not recognize them as a national minority? Such a recognition implies acknowledgement of the Arab right to certain expressions of self-determination, and this is objectionable on several grounds. First, Jews feel that conceding national rights to the Arabs would invalidate the exclusivity of their own claims to the land. Second, recognition of Israeli Arabs as a Palestinian national minority would for many Jews define them as part of the enemy, supposedly strengthen their ties with the belligerent Palestinian people and push them to undermine the state. Third, national minorities are inclined to demand rights to autonomy and even secession. Irredentism is feared in particular because the bulk of the area in which Israeli Arabs live today was earmarked in the 1947 UN partition resolution for the state of Palestine but was seized and annexed by Israel in 1949.

Since the Arabs are fearful of Jewish reactions, they are prudent in pursuing the goal of a Palestinian national minority status. It is quite clear that most of them have abandoned any desire or hope to secede to a Palestinian state. In fact, at present there is no political movement among Israeli Arabs demanding the right of secession.⁶ In the 1988 survey, 60 per cent of the Arabs agreed that the Galilee and Triangle should remain integral parts of Israel as against 40 per cent who disagreed.

Arab political organizations also refrain from making an explicit demand for autonomy. It seems that they have either not formed a policy on this matter or are deliberately vague in order not to antagonize the authorities. It is, however, abundantly clear from both

their actions and the support lent to them by the Arab masses that since the mid-seventies the Arabs have been seeking and building autonomous institutions. They set up numerous independent organizations to serve Arabs and demand official recognition as representative bodies of all Arabs. The organizations have mushroomed in almost every sphere, including lands, education, local authorities, welfare and health. This is true, for instance, of the Arab Student Committees of each campus and nationally, and of the most powerful Committee of Heads of Arab Local Councils (Al-Haj and Rosenfeld 1988). The Jewish response has uniformly been official reluctance accompanied by expedient willingness to talk to them unofficially. The Arabs have also managed to form the Progressive List for Peace, the Democratic Arab Party and the Islamic Movement in addition to the Communist Party as predominantly or exclusively Arab political parties or movements.

Arab public opinion favours institutional autonomy. In the 1985 survey, a majority of 65 per cent agreed that Arabs should become organized independently, like Orthodox Jews, in order to advance their vital interests. In addition, 71.5 per cent of the Arabs favoured the assumption of control over their system of education, and overwhelming majorities supported the formation of independent Arab institutions: 85 per cent an Arab trade union, 86 per cent an independent Arab press, and 88 per cent an Arab university. They were, however, divided on the question of Arab self-rule in the Galilee and Triangle: 34 per cent were in favour, 35 per cent had reservations and 31 per cent were opposed. On the other hand, most Jews object to Arab institutional autonomy. For instance, in the same survey only 25 per cent of the Jews favoured an Arab trade union, 23 per cent an independent Arab press, and 25 per cent an Arab university.

Active participation in politics

At first glance Israeli Arabs look well integrated into the mainstream of Israeli politics. Their participation rate in the 1988 Knesset elections was 73 per cent as compared to 80 per cent among the Jews, and in the 1989 Histadrut elections 58 per cent and 55 per cent respectively. In these elections the Arab vote was split between predominantly Arab and Jewish lists, and Arab candidates were elected for office. The Arabs also maintain a large network of independent political movements and organizations which represent and fight for Arab interests. They are engaged in mass politics, mostly through demonstrations and general strikes, in a struggle for both equality and peace.

A deeper examination, however, would detect three major problems with Israeli-Arab politics. First, independent Arab organizations are denied official recognition and governmental and quasi-governmental offices refuse to deal with them directly. The Arabs expect the authorities to recognize their organizations as representative, to be

heard and negotiated with, and to make headway. Most Jews, on the other hand, feel that the Arabs are accumulating too much power, presenting nationalist and unreasonable demands, and unjustifiably tipping the delicate balance of Arab-Jewish relations.

The other disagreement hovers over Arab extra-parliamentary politics. The Arab use of general strikes and demonstrations has become rather commonplace. For instance, during the first years of the *intifada* Israeli Arabs held three, well observed, general strikes: on 21 December 1987 in solidarity with the *intifada*; on 30 March 1988 on Land Day; and on 15 November 1988 in protest against the demolition of fifteen illegal buildings in Ta'beh. The Arabs feel that it is their democratic right to make any lawful act of protest. Although the Jews are no longer alarmed by these strong measures and the authorities no longer threaten or intervene, they continue to consider them illegitimate and counterproductive. To quote from the 1988 survey, 74 per cent of the Arabs as compared to only 20 per cent of the Jews favoured Arab general strikes, and 67 per cent and 18 per cent respectively approved of Arab protest actions abroad. The Arabs believed in the effectiveness of demonstrations (79 per cent), shutdowns of local councils (79 per cent), and general strikes (81 per cent) by Arabs to effect change, while Jews would be rather sceptical if they were asked.

Along with the strategy to build an independent power base to mobilize the Arab masses for protest, and to force the authorities to negotiate and make concessions, the Arabs would like to shift from being outside protestors to being actual participants in coalition politics and in decision making. The formation of the Arab Democratic Party by Darawshe in 1988 was explicitly intended to achieve this goal. The popular support for the inclusion of Arabs in power coalitions is overwhelming. In the 1985 survey, 87 per cent of the Arabs (compared to 39 per cent of the Jews) favoured participation in coalition government of existing or new political parties that truly represent the interests of Arabs in Israel. Similarly, 73 per cent of the Arabs (22 per cent of the Jews) favoured in principle the possibility, created after the 1984 Knesset elections, of forming a Labor government supported by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the Progressive List for Peace.

Arabs have so far been excluded from national power coalitions because they reject the Jewish national consensus on retaining the Jewish-Zionist character of the state, preventing the formation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and keeping the *status quo* of Jewish dominance.

The exclusion of the Arabs from national power and the unsettling fate of their representative organizations as permanent opposition parties present Israeli democracy with the severe problem of 'the tyranny of the majority'. Such a problem causes tension and unrest

among subordinate minorities as shown in the case of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland.

Trends in and options for Arab-Jewish accommodation

Israeli Arabs are unsettled about their status as a minority. In the 1988 survey only 36 per cent of them reported satisfaction with their lives as Arabs in Israel, much less than the 69 per cent of the Jews who were pleased with their lives as Jews in Israel. Arabs are discontented not because they reject their position as a minority but because they find the current terms of coexistence with Jews unfair and their desire for change thwarted. The Jews, on the other hand, feel that the Arabs are undermining the *status quo* and hence making life in the country difficult for everyone.

While most Arabs accept the territorial and political integrity of Israel proper and their status within it as a minority, they want to change the system. Their agenda consists of two main items: peace and equality. By peace they mean the establishment of a PLO-headed, Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, coexisting peacefully with Israel. Their conception of equality entails even more far-reaching implications for the state. For most Arabs, equality implies bringing their individual and collective status up to par with that of the Jews. This can be achieved by abolishing the Jewish-Zionist character of the state, the elimination of any preferential treatment of Jews and any discrimination of Arabs, and expanding their present collective rights as an ethnic minority to collective rights as a Palestinian national minority. These demands are branded as radical, illegitimate and subversive by Jews who claim exclusive collective rights to Israel as a state of and for Jews.

The discord over the Arab status in Israeli society reached a point of crisis in the eighties. Two explanations are commonly suggested for this development. According to one explanation, tensions have intensified due to growing Arab radicalization, namely, the Arabs have become increasingly hostile to Israel as a result of a real rise in their modernization and Palestinianization since 1967. Another interpretation faults the Jews for intransigence, i.e., they have become more and more religious, hawkish, nationalist and ethnocentric during the same period, turning Israel into a more ethnic state and ignoring reasonable Arab claims for greater integration and equality.

While both explanations are partly valid, the major sources of the crisis are misplaced. Modernization and Palestinianization are components of a broader process of politicization that the Arabs have been undergoing, making them more conscious of their inferior position, and more knowledgeable about the ground rules of the system, and more active in a struggle to effect change. But they do not intend to hurt the state or to discriminate themselves from it but rather to improve their lot

in the society. The more Arabs realize that they are bound to remain a permanent minority in the Jewish state, the more they care about their status as Israelis and the less they accept the present patterns.⁷

Similarly, it is not Jewish intransigence which underlies the growth in Arab-Jewish frictions but paradoxically the growing democratization of the state within the Green Line in the seventies and eighties. With Israel's shift from the entrenched rule of a dominant party to more competitive politics, various disadvantaged groups have emerged and managed to promote their causes. The Arabs are one of the emerging non-dominant groups. The Arab condition has not worsened by a growing ethnicization of the state or by an increasing backlash among the Jewish population but rather by their partial responsiveness to Arab demands. The Jewish reaction could not be too accommodating because the Arab demands are too radical by Israeli standards (as judged by the moderate demands made by Oriental Jews or by the population groups that supported the Democratic Movement for Change in 1977).

Israel has so far managed the Arab minority problem quite effectively, and the question is whether it can accommodate the Arab demands without doing away with its ethnic democracy. We find among the Arabs those who believe that Israel is a colonial society, all Palestinians are dispossessed by Jews, and Zionism is the culprit. They maintain therefore that true coexistence between the Arab minority and the Jewish majority can only come about through full democratization and de-Zionization of the state. Among the Jews we find those who believe that the burden of adjustment in ethnically divided societies is assumed by the minorities and hence expect Israeli Arabs to come to terms with Israel as it is or with certain minor reforms.

These and related views are not realistic. Many options are closed for Israel. Since Israel will not abandon Zionism at this historical juncture of rising nationalism in the Middle East and elsewhere, it will become neither a secular-democratic Israeli state nor a consociational binational state. It is also difficult to imagine a restoration of control over the Arab minority. Continuation of the *status quo* means prolongation of the crisis situation. Yet the current version of Likud-Labor Zionism cannot adequately handle the Palestinian question both within and outside Israel proper because it claims exclusive rights to the land and rejects the Palestinian right to self-determination.

A more realistic option to manage the conflict is to reform Israel's ethnic democracy. For this end an ideological change is necessary. A new Zionism that accepts Palestinian rights in historical Palestine as being equal to those of the Jews can provide a radical remedy while keeping Israel democratic and Jewish-Zionist. The new brand of Zionism will reduce the inherent contradiction between Zionism and Israel's survival as a Jewish state in the Middle East on the one hand, and the formation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza

and a favourable response to most of the demands of Israeli Arabs, on the other. More specifically, by granting Arabs the status of a Palestinian minority with certain national rights (perhaps some autonomy, but of course not the right to secession), removing discrimination against them as individuals, expanding the limits of political tolerance to accommodate their dissent, and letting them also share power, Israel will not necessarily become less Jewish nor Jews lose control. If Arabs are a national minority, then Jews are a national majority. However, the new deal will not make the Arabs totally equal to the Jews but it will make them much more equal than they are today, and instead of eliminating the problem it will make it manageable.

Many fear the possible destabilization of Arab-Jewish coexistence by a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. They indicate as main reasons for the troubles irredentist appeals by the Palestinian state and continued deprivation of Israeli Arabs by Israel. Both sources of unrest seem, however, unlikely because a Palestinian state will not be established before both Jews and Palestinians develop new paradigms of mutual acceptance which would appreciably reduce the grounds for hostility between the two nation-states.⁸

Paradoxically, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will probably be a mirror image of Israel, namely, an ethnic state that strives to institutionalize democracy as well. Parallel to Israel, Palestine's *raison d'être* will be to serve as a state of and for all Palestinians and to have a law of return. In order not to undermine its legitimacy as an ethnic Palestinian state, it will have to recognize the legitimacy of Israel as an ethnic Jewish state. Furthermore, to keep good relations with a powerful and suspicious Israel, the state of Palestine will probably urge Israeli Arabs to accept Israel as a Jewish state and to assume an active role of a lobby for the Palestinians.⁹

Conclusion

The Israeli case demonstrates the viability of ethnic democracy as a distinct type of plural society. In such states the dominance of a certain ethnic group is institutionalized along with democratic procedures. As a result contradictions arise between the two principles in the organization of the state. The areas of conflict are the features of the public domain (language, symbols, emblems, holidays, etc.), equality of individual rights and duties, the kind of collective rights extended to the minority, and the opening of the power structure for the minority. In ethnic democracies minorities are disadvantaged in all these spheres but they can avail themselves of democratic means to negotiate better terms of coexistence. The crucial test is whether a reform can be effected through the use of democratic procedures. If democracy and ethnic dominance are conceptualized as continua,

then there are infinite combinations of variations of them. For instance, once the Palestinian question is settled, one can envisage the elimination of restrictions over Arabs, Arab willingness to serve in the army, and recognition of Arabs as a national (and not just an ethnic) minority. Since these reforms can be extended from current arrangements, they can be negotiated and implemented without presenting an unbearable threat to the Jewish majority. The change is possible because democracy in Israel is as basic and robust as Jewish dominance.

Ethnic democracies must be distinguished from *Herrenvolk* democracies in which democracy is denied to the subordinate group. The latter are extreme and rare states which are unstable because of their blatant double standards, as shown by the diminishing case of South Africa.

The democratization of ethnic states will no doubt also reduce ethnic dominance but it will not necessarily phase it out. Some of these states will institute universal social and political rights but will not become majoritarian or consociational democracies because of their ability and desire to maintain structured ethnic dominance. If these states lack previous experience in democracy, as the situation is in many of them, the transition to an ethnic democracy will be rather problematic. Israel's relative success in dealing with the Arab minority is due to its pre-state experience in democracy and its growing democratization in the post-state period.

As democratization proceeds in presently non-democratic ethnic states, the addition of the third option of ethnic democracy to the typology of democracies in plural societies will prove to be a necessity. But to make this analytical tool useful, there is a need to generalize it further, to differentiate it from the other established types, and to speculate about the conditions and processes that give rise to it. This conceptual task should also integrate generalizations made by comparativists of ethnically divided societies.¹⁰

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Notes

1. All Western countries are classified as free, as are the populous states of Argentina and India.
2. Gastil also puts Fiji in the same situation, but in the meantime it ceased to be democratic.

3. Throughout this article, figures are quoted from four public opinion surveys of the Arab population and from three public opinion surveys of the Jewish population. They were based on personal interviews with state-wide, representative samples of men and women, aged 18 or older, and living in Israel within its pre-1967 borders. The surveys were conducted in 1976 (Arabs only), 1980, 1985 and 1988, and they are comparable across time. They are reported in full in Smooha (1984, 1989c and forthcoming).
4. The representative national sample of the Arab population within the Green Line consisted of 9.6% Druzes, 14.7% Christians, 8.1% Bedouin and 67.7% non-Bedouin Muslims.
5. Only one of the judges adopted a minimal definition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people to consist of a Jewish majority, a preference for Jews as immigrants and a mutual relation between Israel and the diaspora (Supreme Court 1989, p. 34).
6. Even the Sons of the Village Movement which stands for a Palestinian or a secular-democratic state in all of Palestine instead of Israel does not demand the right to secession for Israeli Arabs. The Israeli Communist Party demanded this right till the early sixties as part of its support for the full implementation of the 1947 UN resolution to establish also the State of Palestine along with the State of Israel.
7. For a more detailed critique of the Arab radicalization thesis, see Smooha (1989a).
8. The Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Study Group presents two scenarios with regard to the possible effect of an independent Palestinian state on Israeli Arabs: greater accommodation if Israel opens more opportunities for them, the radicals among them are contained and the Palestinian state does not incite them to irredentism; greater radicalization of Israeli Arabs is predicted in the absence of these factors (JCSS Study Group 1989, pp. 96-8). These forecasts are based on the doubtful assumption underlying the entire JCSS Study Group report that Israeli Arabs have been undergoing a process of radicalization since the Six Day War.
9. This scenario is not far-fetched. Faesal al-Husseini, the most prominent Palestinian leader in the West Bank, called on Israeli Arabs to show that Arab-Jewish coexistence is feasible and desirable, not to join the *Intifada* and to lobby for peace among the Jews. He also declared that if a Palestinian state were established, he would recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish-Zionist state. (These statements were made in a public interview with the author on 5 January 1990 and in a public appearance reported in *Ha'ir* on 12 January 1990).
10. For instance, Horowitz (1985, pp. 661-5) generalizes that policies to prevent bifurcation of politics instituted at the right time are more promising as a strategy of managing ethnic conflicts than partition or international regional integration. Connor (1989) suggests paying greater attention to the psychological-emotional dimension of ethno-national identity, acting on the assumption that ethno-national demands are essentially political rather than economic, and that solutions should address the needs and desires of the masses and not just the élites.

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