“INSIDE OUTSIDERS:” COMPARING STATE POLICIES TOWARDS CITIZENS OF PALESTINIAN AND KURDISH DESCENT IN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by

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Ankara

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To Emre,

Always my brother

“INSIDE OUTSIDERS:” COMPARING STATE POLICIES TOWARDS CITIZENS OF PALESTINIAN AND KURDISH DESCENT IN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Science
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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ABSTRACT

"INSIDE OUTSIDERS:" COMPARING STATE POLICIES TOWARDS CITIZENS OF PALESTINIAN AND KURDISH DESCENT IN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

Elitsoy, Zeliha Aslı

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Israel and Turkey have been regarded as ethnically divided societies where ethnicity represented a fundamental political cleavage between a national majority and ethnic minority. The formation of Israeli and Turkish nation-states simultaneously led to the "minoritization" of those Palestinians and Kurds who constituted the biggest ethnic and linguistic minority by a wide margin in their respective countries. While Israel never considered assimilating its Palestinian citizens into mainstream Israeli national identity, considering Jewishness as its essential and indispensable element, Turkey engaged in assimilation policies vis-à-vis its Kurdish citizens, which met with limited success. Although the two

countries applied different methods of ethnic diversity management, they have converged in maintaining exclusive state identities, Jewish and Turkish, and excluded their Palestinian and Kurdish minorities from political and economic power. Especially in recent decades, both states have been challenged by their Palestinian and Kurdish minorities seeking equal treatment with the Jewish and Turkish majority. Minority demands share common elements: the recognition of their status as a national minority entitled to collective rights and effective inclusion into the political system. However, awarding full citizenship rights has been questioned on accounts of Jewish sovereignty dilution fears in Israel and Kurdish self-determination and partition in Turkey. Failing to distinguish their citizens from their trans-border ethnic kin groups and viewing them as part of trans-national community threatening Israeli and Turkish sovereignty, Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent have been turned into "inside outsiders."

Keywords: Ethnicity, Israel, Kurds, Palestinians, Turkey

ÖZET

"İÇERİDEKİ DIŞARIDAKİLER:" İSRAİL VE TÜRKİYE'DE FİLİSTİN VE KÜRT KÖKENLİ VATANDAŞLARA YÖNELİK DEVLET POLİTİKALARININ BİR KARŞILAŞTIRMASI

Elitsoy, Zeliha Aslı

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis

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İsrail ve Türkiye ulusal çoğunluk ve etnik azınlık arasındaki temel siyasi ayrışmanın etnisite kaynaklı olması sebebiyle etnik olarak bölünmüş toplumlar olarak kabul edilmektedirler. İsrail ve Türkiye ulus devletlerinin oluşumu, bu ülkelerdeki en büyük etnik ve dilsel azınlığı oluşturan Filistinlilerin ve Kürtlerin eş zamanlı olarak "azınlıklaştırılmasına" yol açmıştır. Yahudiliği devletin temel ve vazgeçilmez bir unsuru olarak kabul eden İsrail, Filistinli vatandaşlarını ana akım İsrail ulusal kimliğine asimile etmeye hiçbir zaman teşebbüs etmemişken, Türkiye Kürt vatandaşlarına yönelik sınırlı bir başarıya ulaşan asimilasyon

politikaları uygulamıştır. Her ne kadar iki ülke etnik çeşitlilikleri yönetmekte farklı yöntemler uygulasa da Yahudi ve Türk münhasır devlet kimliklerini muhafaza ederek Filistinli ve Kürt azınlıkları siyasi ve ekonomik güçten dışlama konusunda benzeşmişlerdir. Özellikle son yıllarda, her iki ülkede de Yahudi ve Türk çoğunluk ile eşit muameleye tabi tutulmak isteyen Filistinli ve Kürt azınlıkların siyasi talepleri ön plandadır. Bu talepler müşterek haklara sahip ulusal bir azınlık olarak statülerinin tanınması ve siyasal sisteme etkin bir şekilde katılım gibi bazı ortak unsurlara sahiptir. Ancak bu gruplara tam vatandaşlık haklarının verilmesi İsrail'de Yahudi egemenliğinin zayıflaması, Türkiye'de ise ülkenin bölünmesi endişeleri nedeniyle sorgulanmaktadır. Bu durum, vatandaşlarını sınır ötesi etnik akraba gruplarından ayırt etmeyen ve onları Yahudi ve Türk egemenliğini tehdit eden ulus-ötesi toplumun bir parçası olarak gören İsrail ve Türkiye'de Filistin ve Kürt asıllı vatandaşların "içerideki dışarıdakilere" dönüşmelerine yol açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etnisite, Filistinliler, İsrail, Kürtler, Türkiye

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
Balad	National Democratic Assembly (Brit Leumit Democratit)
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
DDKO	Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Hearts (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları)
DEP	Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
Diyanet	Directorate of the Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı)
DP	Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti)
DSP	Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi)
DTK	Democratic Society Congress (Demokratik Toplum Kongresi)
DTP	Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi)
EU	European Union
HADASH	Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (HaHazit HaDemokratit LeShalom uLeShivion)
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)
HEP	People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi)
İP	Good Party (İyi Parti)

KCK	Kurdistan Communities Union (Koma Civaken Kurdistan)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
Mada	Arab Democratic Party (Miflaga Demokratit Aravit)
Maki	Israeli Communist Party (HaMiflega HaKomunistit HaYisraelit)
Mapai	Workers' Party of the Land of Israel (Mifleget Poalei Eretz Israel)
Mapam	United Workers' Party (Mifleget HaPoalim HaMeuhedet)
MHP	Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
MİT	National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı)
NLL	National Liberation League
OHAL	Emergency Rule Law (Olağanüstü Hal)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PLP	Progressive List for Peace
Ra'am	United Arab List (HaReshima HaAravit HaMe'uhedet)
RAKAH	New Communist List (Reshimah Kommunistit Hadashah)
Shabak	Israeli General Security Service (Sherut Habitachon Haklali)
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti)
Ta'al	Arab Movement for Change (Tnu'a Aravit LeHithadshut)
TİP	Workers' Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)
TKDP	Turkey Kurdistan Democratic Party (Türkiye Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi)
UN	United Nations
WZO	World Zionist Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Turkey's Kurdish question have been among the most controversial issues in the history of the modern Middle East as they have profoundly shaped the political landscape in both countries. There have been several studies in the existing literature comparing Israel and Turkey from different aspects, such as language and script (Aytürk, 2010a), civil-military relations (Heper and Itzkowitz-Shifrinson, 2005), religious politics (Sarfati, 2014; Tepe, 2008), and education (Arar, Beycioglu and Oplatka, 2017; H. David, 2015). Although the two countries have converged in experiencing a lasting and profound ethnic tension with their biggest ethnic minorities, namely Palestinians and Kurds, who constituted a sizable portion of the general

population, there has been a shortage of in-depth qualitative research in the literature that compared majority-minority relations in Israel and Turkey.[1]

Israel and Turkey have been regarded as ethnically divided societies (Peleg and Waxman, 2007; Smooha, 2002), where ethnicity represented a fundamental political cleavage between a national majority and an ethnic minority. Currently, there are 1.7 million Israeli citizens of Palestinian descent[2]

[1] Legal minority status was granted to neither the Kurds in Turkey nor the Palestinians in Israel. In this study, the terms "majority" and "minority" were used entirely to refer to a statistical number of people, not a legal status, and to indicate observable differences among groups regarding their level of exercising power in the social and political realm. Nevertheless, the term minority did not necessarily refer to a numeric minority, while in some cases, such as in Syria, subordinate ethnic groups might constitute a numerical majority.

[2] How one defined the Palestinian minority in Israel had merely political and ideological connotations. There have been various designations for referring to the Palestinian citizens of Israel, such as "Israeli Arabs," "Arab citizens," "Palestinian citizens of Israel," "Israeli Palestinians," "Arab minority in Israel," or "Palestinians of 1948." They have usually been defined by the Israeli governments and Hebrew-language media as "Arab Israelis" or "Israeli Arabs," though 40 percent of Palestinian citizens preferred a Palestinian identity with an Israeli component while identifying themselves. See S. Smooha, *Still Playing by the Rules: Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2013: Findings and Conclusions*, Jerusalem; Haifa, Israel Democracy Institute, 2014. In this study, "citizens of Palestinian descent" have been used to refer to the Palestinian minority throughout the text to emphasize their citizenship status and distinguish them from those non-citizen Palestinians residing in the West Bank under the control of the Palestinian Authority and the Gaza Strip.

(Tessler, 2020) within the 1967 borders of Israel.[3] Unlike Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, they held Israeli citizenship and made up 21 percent of the population. According to various counts, between 14 and 15 million Kurds reside in Turkey, constituting approximately 18 percent of the country's population.[4] The two states were established in the first half of the twentieth century through nationalist projects with strong modernist orientations, namely Zionism and Kemalism, which were carried out under strong leaderships of David Ben-Gurion and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The formation of Israeli and

[3] World Population Review, *Israel Population* 2020a), available from https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/israel-population/

[4] The size of the Kurdish population in Turkey remained disputed since the last census where the people's mother tongue was asked for was carried out in 1965. As in the 1965 census, some 2.2 million declared Kurdish as their mother tongue, and this provided a statistical basis for estimating the number of Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent. In 1990, Mutlu estimated the number of Kurds as over 7 million and constituting 12 percent of the country's population. See S. Mutlu, "Population of Turkey by Ethnic Groups and Provinces", *New Perspectives on Turkey* (12), 1995, pp.49-51. Van Bruinessen estimated the percentage of Kurds in Turkey to be around 19 percent (M. v. Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State : The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J., Zed Books, 1992). More recently, a public opinion survey carried out by KONDA Research Company in 2019 estimated the Kurdish population in Turkey to be 16 percent. M. Yetkin, "Türkiye'de Kaç Kürt, Kaç Sünni, Kaç Alevi Yaşıyor?", *Yetkin Report*. According to the World Population Review for 2020, Kurds make up 18 percent of Turkey's population. World Population Review, *Turkey Population* 2020b), available from https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/turkey-population/

Turkish nation-states simultaneously led to the "minoritization"[5] of those Palestinians and Kurds, who became citizens of Israel and Turkey.

Managing ethnic diversity within the structure of a state depended on policy choices and institutional arrangements. Israel and Turkey have adopted fundamentally different policies towards their citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent. On the one hand, Israel's Palestinian citizens have enjoyed some collective minority rights such as mother tongue education, a semi-autonomous school system, an official status granted to the Arabic language,[6] and religious autonomy; while any expression of a distinct Kurdish ethnic

[5] Sensoy and DiAngelo defined a minoritized group as "a social group that is devalued in society. This devaluing encompasses how the group is represented, what degree of access to resources it is granted, and how unequal access is rationalized. Traditionally, a group in this position has been referred to as the *minority group*. However, this language has been replaced with the term *minoritized* in order to capture the active dynamics that create the lower status in society and also to signal that a group's status is not necessarily related to how many or few of them there are in the population at large." See O. z. Sensoy, Robin J. DiAngelo, *Is Everyone Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education*, New York, Teachers College Press, 2017, p.240. Bozarslan also pointed out that Kurds and Palestinians have been "minoritized" people and argued that minoritized groups were often seen as "the enemy within" by the state. See H. Bozarslan, *Sociologie Politique Du Moyen-Orient*, Paris, La Découverte, 2011.

[6] Arabic has been the second official language in Israel since its foundation. The Basic Law, known as the Nation-State Bill, which was amended by the Knesset in July 2018, abolished Arabic as an official language and relegated it to a language with only a "special status." See: The Knesset, *Basic Law: Israel - the Nation State of the Jewish People* 2018), available from https://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf .

identity, including language, clothing, and names (Gunter, 2004), was eliminated and demands for cultural and linguistic rights were harshly suppressed up until the 1990s in Turkey (Çağaptay, 2006; Uğur-Çınar, 2015; Üngör, 2011). Could one argue that Israel has been much more accommodative and tolerant towards ethnic minorities than Turkey? On the other hand, Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent enjoyed equal rights as citizens and climbed to the upper echelons of the state. Several leading Turkish presidents, such as İsmet İnönü, Cemal Gürsel, and Turgut Özal, were known, at least partially, to be of Kurdish descent. However, Israel has maintained a preference for Jews, regardless of their citizenship, and restricted the access of its Palestinian citizens to power, resources, and land allocation (N. Rouhana, 1998; Yiftachel, 2006). Although they largely refused to join, citizens of Palestinian descent have been exempted from compulsory military service along with ultra-Orthodox Jews (Frisch, 2011). Could one argue that Turkey's state policy has been much more inclusive and participative towards its Kurdish citizens than Israel's policies towards the Palestinian citizens? Both arguments did not provide a sufficient explanation for why these two states have failed in managing ethnic diversity within their borders, although they have followed different ethnic policies.

Peleg and Waxman (2007) defined Israel as an "ethnic state" and Turkey as a "civic state," arguing that the State of Israel pursued policies in favor of the interests of the ethnic majority, while the Turkish state did not promote the interests of the ethnic majority and individual members of ethnic minorities enjoyed full citizenship on an equal basis. They further argued that unlike Kurds in Turkey, who shared a common religion with the majority Turks and a long

history of coexistence, Palestinians in Israel constituted both an ethnic and a religious minority in a non-secular state, and the relations between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian minority have been mainly negative and hostile for generations. Similarly, the literature suggested that how the minority differentiated from that of the majority has also had implications for ethnic management strategies within a state. Primordialist arguments held that the larger perceived "*cultural distance*" between majority and minority, the more likely the minority would be excluded (Berry, 1980; Berry, 1997). Conversely, if groups were similar, the minority would be targeted for assimilation (Mylonas, 2010). Moreover, the research on power-sharing and conflict management also found that identity-related issues such as religion[7] might increase and deepen divisions between groups (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Kaufmann, 1997). Likewise, the Republic of Turkey aspired to assimilate Kurds into Turkish national identity forcibly. For the Turkish political elite, who "*imagined*" a unitary nation-state and society based on Turkish ethnic identity, all non-Turkish Muslim inhabitants of Anatolia were "*prospective-Turks*" (Yegen, 2009) or potential members of the Turkish ethnocultural community. Minority status has been accorded to the three non-Muslim communities (Armenians, Greeks, and Jews), who have often been subjected to discriminatory policies and practices (Akturk, 2009; Gözaydın, 2021). Citizens of Kurdish descent enjoyed equal rights insofar as they had willingly assimilated into the Turkish nation. In contrast, the "Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty of Israel," which

[7] Affirming religion as the sacred source of national identity, Smith defined religion as "a system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful." See A. D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.26.

functioned as the country's *de facto* constitution, has defined Israel as a "Jewish state," thus putting the rights of all non-Jewish within the Israeli polity into question. As a consequence of the Jewish character of the state, governments gave institutional and legal preference to the ethnically and religiously Jewish majority, particularly in the realms of immigration laws, national anthem, holidays, and flag. The state's refusal to establish a singular "Israeli" identity encompassing all citizens regardless of their religion has consequently led to the exclusion and subordination of the Palestinian minority and created tension over their citizenship status (Ben-Porat and Turner, 2008). For this reason, Israel has been defined as a "constitutionally exclusive ethnic state" (N. Rouhana, 1998), and citizens of Palestinian descent have been characterized either as "stateless" (Molavi, 2013) or "citizens without citizenship" (Sultany, 2003).

In light of these views, one could argue that being member of the same religion and adherence to the shared belief has bolstered the assimilation of Kurds into the Turkish national identity in Turkey, while the religious distance between Jews and Palestinians deepened existing social and ethnic divisions in Israel. However, studies have shown that having the same religious belief might not necessarily eliminate ethnic hierarchies and ethnic tension (Kurt, 2019; Sarigil, 2018; Türkmen, 2018) in the Turkish context. Furthermore, in both cases, the state policies led to the widespread securitization (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998) of the biggest ethnic minorities, a policy resulted in the Military Government in Israel that was lasted from 1948 to 1966 in the Palestinian-inhabited areas and the administration of General Inspectorates (*Umumi Müfettişlikler*) between 1927 and 1952 and the Emergency Rule Law

(*Olağanüstü Hal-OHAL*) between 1987 and 2002 in Turkey. Despite mostly sharing the same religion with Turks, Kurdish politics in Turkey has been dominated by an armed organization, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which engaged in violent clashes with the state and terrorist activities in a decades-long ethnic conflict. In contrast, the Palestinian citizens of Israel have primarily pursued a strategy based on nonviolent struggle (Jamal, 2007). Moreover, the Kurds defied the assimilation process through a number of rebellions, especially in the early republican era (Robert Olson, 2000). While Peleg and Waxman (2007) also noted that in both cases, the outcome of these policies had been a confrontation between the majority and minority due to states' failure to adopt an accommodationist approach to managing ethnic diversity, they did not offer an analysis of the possible reasons for the similarity in the outcome.

Citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent of Israel and Turkey shared some common characteristics. Firstly, they have been referred to as homeland minorities since they have had historical continuity with their ancestral territories; in this sense, they differed from "new minorities" who were admitted to a country as immigrants (Kymlicka, 2007). The literature suggested that homeland minorities aspired for more than cultural rights and usually claimed various rights to self-government or collective autonomy over their traditional territory by challenging the status quo and demanding a new political order (Jamal, 2011; Kymlicka, 2007). Secondly, they comprised stateless national groups inhabiting territories spanning across the borders of several states: Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran in the case of the Kurds, Israel, Jordan, Syria,

Lebanon, and Egypt in the case of the Palestinians. They retained social and cultural ties with their ethnic kin groups in neighboring countries, making their relations with the state more complicated.[8] Studies in conflict research suggested that when an ethnic group had cross-border ties to co-ethnics, consequences in one state might have possible "demonstration" or "contagion" effects in adjacent countries (Ayres and Saideman, 2000; Hill and Rothchild, 1986; Horowitz, 1985). Although members of an ethnic group were dispersed across two or more states, their ethnic affiliation served as a conduit for information exchange and represented a potential for mobilization (Bengio, 2017). Thirdly, they numerically constituted the biggest ethnic and linguistic minority by a wide margin in their respective countries. Lastly, they formed nationalist movements to defend their collective rights through an armed group in one case and a civilian-led in another and had a long history of ethnopolitical struggle. Especially in recent decades, they have assertively challenged their respective states to obtain full citizenship rights and equality with the Turkish and Jewish majority and increasingly constituted a key electoral force in national politics. Kurdish demands included a "Turkish and Kurdish ethnic equality based on law" (Kirişci and Winrow, 1997), the "Democratic Autonomy" that involved the establishment of Kurdish self-rule in Turkey's majority Kurdish-populated east and southeast (Gunes and Gürer, 2018), and mother tongue education and worship; while Palestinian citizens of Israel have called for a "state for all

[8] In addition to the Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, around three million Palestinian refugees currently live in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Kurds are divided between four states dominated by other nations too. Iraqi Kurds have a *de jure* autonomous regional government in northern Iraq since 2005 and, since the Syrian war broke out in 2011, Syrian Kurds have established an autonomous political space.

citizens" with full equal rights, equal distribution of resources and services, and the right to self-administration. To put it differently, Kurdish and Palestinian demands have gone beyond cultural and individual civil rights. Instead, they constituted redrawing more inclusive national identities, inclusion into the political system, and the right to self-administration at least matters concerning the community.

In light of these observations, this study aims to address the following questions: What are the boundaries of Israeli and Turkish national identities? Why have the Israeli and Turkish states followed different policies towards their biggest ethnic minorities, yet they converged in denying them equal rights? Constructing national identities has been an essential part of nationalist projects formulating claims for sovereignty over a defined territory. How were the "sovereign people" defined in Israel and Turkey? Starting in the 1990s, Kurdish and Palestinian political mobilization has led to repeated demands of redrawing the boundaries of national identities on a more inclusive basis, something that would result in a more pluralistic political system. How have the Israeli and Turkish states responded to these demands? Why has their response been remarkably similar, although they had followed different policies regarding defining ethnic boundaries?

1.2 Relevance of the Study

As discussed above, analysis within the civic vs. ethnic dichotomy framework could not grasp the complexity of majority-minority relations and

how national identities have been constructed, negotiated, and developed in Israel and Turkey. Therefore, this study drew upon the ethnic boundary-making approach to ethnicity and nationalism introduced by Fredrik Barth. Barth (1969) proposed that "the critical focus of investigation… becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses." The approach has been recently elaborated by Andreas Wimmer (2013). Nationalism assumed that the world was naturally divided into nations who defined themselves in opposition to one another. The ethnic boundary-making approach represented a valuable theoretical framework to improve our understanding of how ethnic and national identities were produced and reproduced and how mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion were shaped since it provided a comprehensive list of boundary-making strategies. It also shifted the focus towards understanding how national categories were proposed, imposed, institutionalized, discursively articulated, organizationally entrenched, and embedded in various forms of government.

For many scholars, ethnic boundaries were key to explaining ethnic or national group formation as they defined who was a member of the in-group and who was the "outsider" (Alba, 2005; Brubaker, 2014; Chai, 1996; Fuller, 2003; Nagel, 1994; Wimmer, 2008). Such an approach assumed that ethnic and national identities were socially constructed due to interactions between actors, power relations, and political processes (Wimmer, 2013). Therefore, they were understood as socially constructed; they were not fixed and immutable but fluid across time, permeable and crossable. In this tradition, ethnicity was not primarily conceived as a matter of relations between pre-defined and fixed

groups, rather as a "process of *constituting* and *re-configuring* groups by defining the boundaries between them" (Wimmer, 2008). If ethnicity was examined as a social boundary system, one might expect shifts in its edge by contextual changes in the criterion of inclusion and exclusion (Wallman, 1978).

For Wimmer (2008), the creation of national majorities inevitably involved the making of ethnic minorities "whom state-building elites or nationalist movements perceived as too alien or politically unreliable for incorporation or amalgamation." Politically salient ethnic boundaries, or to use Alba's terminology "bright" boundaries, unambiguously involved the distinction; thereby, individuals always knew which side of the boundary they were on (Alba, 2005). Consequently, it might be more difficult for minority members to identify with the majority when they perceive a substantial distance between groups. Moreover, salient ethnic boundaries were often associated with ethnic discrimination and exclusion because minority members' access to the resources that the dominant group monopolized was limited (Wimmer, 2008). Therefore, the perceived discrimination and exclusionary policies could negatively affect minority members' motivation to identify with the majority (Diehl, Fischer-Neumann and Mühlau, 2016), and reduced the level of assimilation, the primary strategy for individuals who wished to "shift sides" and "escape a minority stigma" (Wimmer, 2008).

The ethnic boundary-making approach was particularly well-suited to understand the production and negotiation of Israeliness and Turkishness, how

ethnic boundaries became politically salient for identifying the national community in Israel and Turkey, and consequently produced a political system that discriminated against an ethnic minority and interethnic inequalities. For this reason, the ethnic boundary-making approach provided a useful theoretical lens to analyze the nature of majority-minority relations in Israel and Turkey, such as how various boundary-making strategies generated national identities, shaped nationalist discourses, and, hence, changed policy trends towards the Palestinian and Kurdish minorities in both countries. Moreover, such an approach also presented a rich conceptual framework for understanding how Palestinian and Kurdish nationalisms challenged the boundaries of Israeli and Turkish identities by means of demanding more inclusive national identities which they would include them as equals.

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection

This study was designed as a comparative case study (George and Bennett, 2005), aiming to understand the relationship between majority dominated nation-states and homeland minorities with trans-border co-ethnics in order to pinpoint the trajectories of minority incorporation into the national body, and particularly into the power regime and broader political systems. The comparative case study allowed comparing more variables and outcomes about the cases understudy to develop causal explanations for the phenomena (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017; J.S. Levy, 2008). Therefore, this research design provided a multi-dimensional perspective to reveal cross-national differences and convergences. By doing cross-national research in a Middle Eastern context, the

aim was to fill the gap between the more theoretically rigorous field of comparative politics and the empirically rich field of area studies.

To answer the research questions, data analysis was approached in an exploratory manner; therefore, a qualitative research method was employed for this research in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences and interpretations of participants (Flick, 2013). In particular, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for data collection. Wimmer (2013) argued that ethnic boundaries were the outcome of classification struggles and negotiations among social actors. In other words, members of the political elite who operated political power were principal actors in the boundary-making process, as they might shift and modify the meaning of boundaries by redefining insiders and outsiders. Similarly, for Brubaker (1992), political actors with a civic understanding of the nation were more likely to pursue assimilation policies while actors with an ethnic understanding of the nation excluded others. From this perspective, political leaders with a different set of values, the strategies they employed, and the nature of leadership in the context of diversity politics have been essential to obtain information and knowledge about the state's ethnic politics. For this reason, this study has focused on elite interviews as a key method of data collection.

Elite interviewing or elite interview referred to the targeting and access to expert participants chosen because of who they were or what position they occupied (Hochschild, 2009). Scholars used the term *elite* in a relational sense, defining them either in terms of their social position compared to the researcher

or the average person in society (Stephens, 2007), and they generally referred to those who were “highly skilled, professionally competent, and class-specific” (McDowell, 1998). Interviewing elite sources in government has been quite suitable for researchers concerning multifaceted human interaction in the political apparatus since they offered insight into the inner webs of policy and decision-making processes compared to non-elites. Additionally, as insiders, elites provided information that could not be obtained through official government documents or the media and could enhance data validity (Delaney, 2007). Therefore, regarding the main objectives of the research, a criteria-based purposive sampling method was adopted, and relatedly two criteria for the participant recruitment were identified: (1) currently occupying or has occupied a governmental or state position and (2) having various positions, party affiliations, and ideological orientations. In order to have a better understanding of the roles various factions within the state apparatus played in policy and decision-making and how they interacted with one another, the participants were recruited among those who were better able to exert political influence in various positions, such as members of parliament, former ministers, vice-presidents of political parties, diplomats, and national security bureaucrats. Interviews with members of the Israeli and Turkish political elites provided crucial first-hand data since they offered valuable insights into the policy-making process and their perception of national identities. The latter depended on power relations among them and their capacity to impose their vision of identity on the rest of the population.

Interviews initially were organized through personal contacts, primarily through media specialists who have a broad network of politicians and bureaucrats in Israel and Turkey. A snowball technique (Miles and Huberman, 1994) has been applied as each participant was asked to suggest and refer other potential interviewees in the policy network until data saturation was achieved. Various investigations provided different suggestions for the optimal number of interviews for qualitative studies. For example, Adler and Adler (2012) advised that 12 to 60 has been the appropriate number, while Creswell (2014) and Morse (2000) suggested 5 to 26 and 30 to 50, respectively. Initially, 32 interviews with Israeli and Turkish political and state elite members (16 in Turkey and 16 in Israel) were planned for this research. However, due to Covid-19 international travel restrictions, my last trip to Israel to conduct the last four remaining interviews with the members of the Israeli right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu party had to be cancelled. As several attempts to reach out to them via e-mail and phone failed, the qualitative data were collected from a sample of 28 volunteer participants (16 in Turkey and 12 in Israel), purposively selected to take part in face-to-face interviews, which were conducted in Istanbul, Ankara, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa between December 2018 and January 2020. Ten politicians, three diplomats, three national security bureaucrats in Turkey, six politicians, three diplomats, three national security bureaucrats in Israel were interviewed. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of politicians' perceptions and their positions vis-à-vis the biggest ethnic minorities, party representatives were selected from political parties represented in the national parliaments across the political spectrum. For this purpose, members of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-AKP), Republican

People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*-CHP), the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-MHP), and the Good Party (*İyi Parti*-İP) in Turkey; and members of the Likud Party and the Labour Party (*HaAvoda*) in Israel were interviewed. Security bureaucrats were selected among retired top-ranking military and intelligence officers.

The Bilkent University Ethics Committee granted the ethics approval for this study. All interviews were conducted by the author in Turkish and English without a translator and recorded through tape recording following written consent obtained from the participants. It took approximately one hour for each participant. Following a word-by-word transcription of interviews, a 280-page text document obtained from interview transcriptions has been extensively read several times to better engage with the content. The qualitative data obtained from the audio-taped transcripts were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach (Thomas, 2006). The data were first reduced to concepts based on personal statements and their potential meanings. Afterward, these concepts and statements were grouped, and core thematic topics were identified. Initial in-depth analysis of the transcriptions was done manually using a descriptive coding strategy (Saldaña, 2013), and related themes relevant to the study's objectives emerged, which led to the second round of coding. The coding strategy for the second round was focused coding (Saldaña, 2013) using NVivo software, and a total of 210 codes were created. Second-cycle coding thus provided cross-check between first and second-round codes to create 14 related categories built through codes following several reviews based on similarities. Finally, after doing extensive thinking over the categories, three

themes were identified based on their relevance to the overall goal of the study: (1) national identities, (2) majority-minority relations, and (3) securitization of the minority issue.

1.4 Summary of the Findings and Arguments

Israel and Turkey adopted fundamentally different policies towards their biggest ethnic minorities, which led to different treatment of Kurdish and Palestinian citizens, respectively. On the one hand, the Turkish state has forced the inclusion of Kurds into the Turkish national identity by means of assimilation in an effort to homogenize all non-Turkish Muslim groups, though at least some of the Kurds wished to keep their distinct identity. On the other hand, as a "Jewish State," Israel has deliberately excluded all non-Jewish groups from the nation culturally and politically in which they wished to participate as equals. However, although the two states have followed fundamentally different ethnic policies, they both have maintained exclusive state identities, Jewish and Turkish, and excluded a minority systematically from political and economic power to save the dominant group's hegemonic position.[9] In the Turkish context,

[9] Schneckener and Wolff distinguished three different policies towards minorities: elimination, control, and recognition of difference. Strategies of elimination aim to suppress and deny cultural or ethnic differences within a state to achieve homogeneity. Strategies of control pursued the goal of excluding a minority systematically from political and economic power to save the dominant group's hegemonic position without necessarily denying cultural differences or making any attempt to eliminate them. Strategies of recognition implied that the differences between majority and minority were in principle recognized and that both sides were aware that such recognition had to be reflected by institutional arrangements. See U. Schneckener and S.

despite the stated goal of crafting an inclusive civic national identity, the result was the prevalence of exclusionary ethnic definitions of Turkish identity (Goalwin, 2017) and a strong emphasis on Turkish ethnicity and language in the constitutional preambles, legislation, and the courts' jurisprudence (Bayır, 2013). Plenty of primary sources provided first-hand accounts of how exclusionary state policies and practices have created a sense of alienation and discrimination for at least some segments of the Kurdish minority and generated a decades-long armed conflict (Anter, 1999; Cemal, 2003; Diken, 2007; Miroğlu, 2005). A substantial number of studies on the Israeli regime, on the other hand, have described Israel as an "ethnic state" or having an "ethnocratic" regime as reflected in a political system that discriminated against the Palestinian minority and systematically marginalized it (Bishara, 2001; A. Ghanem, Rouhana and Yiftachel, 1998; A.a. Ghanem, 1998; Jamal, 2002; Oren, 2007; Nadim N. Rouhana, 2006).

The literature on conflict resolution and power-sharing in multi-ethnic societies suggested that political representation has precluded minority incorporation into the power regime and the broader political system (Agarin and McCulloch, 2020; McCulloch, 2014). From this perspective, a sustainable democracy could only be achieved through power-sharing arrangements (Noel, 2005), and power-sharing political institutions and legal means to balance interests of minorities and majorities in multiethnic societies might ease ethnic

Wolff, eds., *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

tensions by overcoming self-determination disputes (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003; Horowitz, 1991; Kettley, 2001; Lijphart, 1985). Moreover, Wimmer (2018) suggested that "in order to achieve political integration and national identification, it is crucial to forge political ties between citizens and the state that reach across ethnic divides and integrate ethnic majorities and minorities into an inclusive power arrangement." Nevertheless, as empirically documented, although Israel and Turkey, to some extent, have integrated ethnically diverse groups into the political system by granting them citizenship, they systematically excluded them from power-sharing arrangements, political decision-making processes, and full political representation at the national level (N. Rouhana, 1998; Tezcür and Gurses, 2017). Therefore, both the citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent, regardless of their citizenship status, have been treated as "pseudo-citizens" (Yegen, 2009), not "sovereigns," as they exercised little political power, whereas the research showed that the institutionalized patterns of ethnic exclusion, inequalities, and historical loss of autonomy have been likely to generate widespread grievances among members of disadvantaged minority (Gurr, 1993; Tezcür and Gurses, 2017). Consequently, the two states have been converged in experiencing a lasting and profound ethnic tension with their biggest ethnic minorities who have challenged their respective states by demanding redrawing more inclusive national identities, equal citizenship rights, and effective inclusion into the political system.

The literature suggested that homeland minorities, such as Palestinians and Kurds, have been more likely to aspire for more than cultural rights and usually sought to revitalize historical, national, and political rights by

challenging the status quo and demanding a new political order (Jamal, 2011). Especially since the 1990s, the citizens of Kurdish descent in Turkey, claiming to be one of the constitutive elements of the nation (Kaya, 2013), have pushed for demands of revising and redefining the notion of citizenship by bringing the discussion on "constitutional citizenship" to public debate (İçduygu, Yilmaz and Nalan, 1999) and developing an administrative framework for Kurdish autonomy (Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Jongerden, 2014). Likewise, Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent have called for "a state for all citizens" with full equal rights, equal distribution of resources and services, and the right to self-administration. In short, both citizens of Kurdish and Palestinian descent aspired to be part of the sovereign body as equal partners as they sought to redefine the meaning of national identities through the demands for equal status to that of the majority.

This study has shown that both states resisted such a reform despite the persistent attempts of Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent to claim equal collective and political rights with the respective majority populations. Although they have partially agreed to accommodate some cultural rights, such as publicly speaking one's own language, members of the Israeli and Turkish political and state elite have fiercely opposed the proposals for imagining a more inclusive national community by changing the meaning of existing national identities and granting collective rights to the citizens of Palestinians and Kurdish descent respectively. Furthermore, they have been far from viewing their biggest ethnic minorities as equal partners in administrative matters and strongly rejected establishing

inclusive power-sharing arrangements that guarantee political equality between ethnic groups. Instead, both Israeli and Turkish respondents of this study drew a sharp distinction between individual citizenship rights and collective rights, which involved the delegation of powers to minorities and opposed to bestowing any administrative power to minorities due to the fear of losing territory in the Turkish case and losing sovereignty in the Israeli case. In other words, they perceived minority demands for collective rights as a steppingstone enhancing separate identity, which might be followed by demands for separate sovereignty. Thus, the main findings from the cases explored also supported the argument in the literature that politicians have often been wary of minority rights because of the fear that granting collective rights to minorities might legitimize secessionist claims against states (Sanders, 1991; Thompson, 1997).

This study also suggested that trans-border cultural and social relations of Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent with their ethnic kin have raised concerns and eventually led to their identification with their ethnic kin across the border. The literature on nationalism and ethnic conflict has paid insufficient attention to the transnational aspects of ethnic relations and ethnic kin groups while focusing primarily on country-specific factors by analysing the relations between "nationalizing states" (Brubaker, 1996) and ethnic minority groups as nation-states were independent entities. However, recent studies suggested that the presence of ethnic kin groups or movements in a nearby country might facilitate conflict contagion in another country (Sarigil, 2020) since many ethnic conflicts "display a transnational character, where actors, resources, and events span national

boundaries" (Gleditsch, 2007). Likewise, this study also highlighted the impact of the transnational character of Palestinian and Kurdish nationalisms on shaping the nature of state-minority relations in Israel and Turkey.

Especially since the 1990s, the internationalization of the Kurdish question and outside intervention in Kurdish affairs in neighbouring Iraq and Syria was interpreted by the Turkish political and state elite as pretexts for Turkey's partition and, therefore, a threat to Turkey's national security. This also has led to the perception of Turkey's Kurdish question as a plot of "external power centres" (*dış mihraklar*) conspiring against Turkey's unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. For the Israeli political and state elite, the call for making Israel a "binational state" in which Jews and Palestinians would have equal rights sounded like a threat and act of treason since it has become synonymous with establishing an "another Arab country" giving the demographic dynamics between the Palestinian and Jewish populations in Israel. The fear that a resurgent Palestinian minority could question Israel's Jewishness through democratic means has incited concerns about losing Jewish sovereignty and led to an ethnic-based conceptualization of sovereignty. In that view, sovereignty did not belong to the people of Israel as a whole but exclusively to its Jewish component. Otherwise, it was not the partition of Israel that was at stake, but its eventual implosion and transformation into Palestine.

Although both Israeli and Turkish state elites refused to draw more inclusive national identities by granting collective rights to their biggest ethnic minorities for different reasons, Jewish sovereignty dilution fears in Israel and

Kurdish self-determination and partition in Turkey, the outcome in both cases has been the securitization of minorities. For the adherents of the Copenhagen School, security and identity politics have closely been related since how one defined themselves depended on how one represented others. Viewing security as "representations" of danger, they argued that ethnic identities could also be securitized when certain groups were discursively represented as a source of insecurity to an ethnonational community. The securitization of ethnic identity consequently led to extraordinary measures against the "other," ranging from surveillance, control, and policing to the use of violence to secure the group identity.[10] Trans-border cultural and social relations of Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent with their ethnic kin led to their perception of a threat as part of a trans-national community intent on undermining territorial integrity and sovereignty instead of being viewed as equal citizens. Consequently, they were a threat to the nation that could only be tackled with a "security-oriented" state policy towards them. Therefore, this study also aimed to contribute to the existing body of research on ethnic boundary-making by exploring to what extent external factors, such as trans-border social and cultural relations of an ethnic minority, affected the political salience of ethnic identities and their maintenance in multi-ethnic societies.

1.5 The Overview of the Dissertation

The rest of this dissertation has been laid out as follows: Chapter 2 provides the definition of key concepts used in this study and a brief overview of

[10] An informative debate on the Copenhagen School and the concept of "societal security" can be found in B. McSweeney, "Identity and Security: Buzan and the Copenhagen School", *Review of International Studies*, 22 (1), 1996.

studies and perspectives on ethnicity and ethnic boundaries, most specifically, Andreas Wimmer's model of ethnic boundary-making.

Chapter 3 presents a historical analysis of nation-building legacies and their implications on diversity management and different choices of ethnic boundary-making strategies in Israel and Turkey. More specifically, starting from the formative years of both countries, the chapter provides brief historical background information on how state policies towards the citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent in Israel and Turkey evolved.

Chapter 4 features a comparative discussion on minority political activism in Israel and Turkey. It comparatively presents a historical account of how Palestinian and Kurdish political movements have initially formed alliances with the leftist movements in their countries, respectively, and gradually developed their independent, organized ethno-nationalist political movements. It also discusses how the two groups have employed different tactics and strategies, violent and non-violent forms of resistance, and formulated their collective demands throughout the years.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 report the study's main findings obtained from the transcripts of 28 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Israeli and Turkish policymakers, which were analyzed through inductive thematic analysis. The findings are presented in subsections based on three thematic topics raised by the participants during the interviews: (1) national identities, (2) majority-minority relations, and (3) securitization of the minority issue.

Chapter 7 discusses research findings by engaging with the relevant secondary literature. It then explored how the transnational character of Palestinian and Kurdish nationalisms has led to the securitization of the question of collective rights of Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent and, hence, to the relegation to a *sui generis* status: they have been the *inside outsiders* of the Israeli and Turkish polity respectively. Therefore, it suggested that external contextual factors would also influence actors' choice of ethnic boundary-making strategies and the degree of exclusion along ethnic lines in the social field.

Chapter 8 concludes the study by revisiting the main research questions and speculating on future research directions and possible policy relevance.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND ETHNIC BOUNDARY-MAKING APPROACH TO ETHNICITY AND NATION

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Ethnicity, Nation, and Nationalism

Weber (1978) defined ethnic groups as "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration." Following a classical Weberian definition, almost all constructivist definitions of ethnicity emphasized a subjective belief or a myth of common descent, the idea of a common origin, as a sufficient condition in defining an ethnic group (Conversi, 1999; Fearon and Laitin, 2000; Horowitz, 1985; Schermerhorn, 1970; A.D. Smith, 1992; Weber, 1978). Weber (1978) also suggested that ethnicity was not the cause of collective political action, rather it was the consequence of it. In other words, individuals felt themselves belonging to an ethnic group as a result of acting together. Drawing on Weber's argument, Barth (1969) defined ethnicity as a "social organization of culture difference," and he suggested that shared culture, or "the cultural stuff," did not define an ethnic group, rather it

was the ethnic boundary that defined the group. For the proponents of this approach, ethnic membership has been a self-ascribed category in relation to others and ethnic boundaries maintained within this social interaction between groups by emphasizing similarities and differences (R. Jenkins, 1997). Since ethnic identities have been created in relation to non-members of the group, they were relational and situational (Eriksen, 2002). Therefore, ethnicity represented a social categorization constructed by human actions, not objectively given, as it was rooted in social interaction.

Both ethnic group and nation have been defined as forms of categorization and identification that were constituted through similar processes: a group of people who considered themselves different in relation to each other and non-group members.[11] Furthermore, both provided discursive frames and cognitive schemes for "seeing, interpreting, and representing the social world" (Brubaker, 2004). Although both terms referred to group identification, systems of classification, forms of inclusion, and exclusion based on an assumption of putative descent, the main difference was that while a nation implied a form of political organization, ethnicity did not necessarily acquire political expression. In other words, as Smith (1993) put it, the latter stressed political aspects, while the former usually cultural ones:

[11] Berger and Armstrong did not distinguish between ethnic group and nation. On this, see S. Berger, "Bretons, Basques, Scots, and Other European Nations", *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3 (1), 1972 and J. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

> While the *ethnie*,[12] is an historical culture community, the nation is a community with a mass, public culture, historic territory, and legal rights. In other words, the nation shifts the emphasis of community away from kinship and cultural dimensions to territorial, educational, and legal aspects, while retaining links with older cultural myths and memories of the *ethnie*.

A number of definitions of the nation differentiated it from an ethnic group, emphasizing a territorially concentrated group and especially its relation to the nation-state. Hobsbawm (1990), for instance, viewed the nation as "a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state, the nation-state, by stressing the elements of invention and artifact in the making of nation." Therefore, the nation was distinguished from an ethnic group by its high degree of politicization and territorialization. Moreover, since the nation was a politicized expression of ethnicity, it needed ideological support, and nationalism served as a potent discourse for political mobilization. As Calhoun (1997) put it, "nations exist only within the context of nationalism."

Nationalism, as a social and political movement, has been the political manifestation of the nation. Smith (1992) defined nationalism as "a doctrine of autonomy, unity and identity for a group whose members conceive it to be an actual or potential nation." It underlined the cultural similarity of its adherents and drew boundaries vis-à-vis outsiders (Eriksen, 2002). Nations were constituted through nation-building, and nationalism provided a vocabulary for

[12] For Smith, an *ethnie*, or ethnic community, was a "named human group claiming a homeland and sharing symbols and myths of common ancestry, historical memories, and distinct culture. *Ethnie* was also defined by its possession or loss of a historic territory. See A. D. Smith, "Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15 (3), 1992, pp.436-456.

establishing what counted as the people and the popular guidance of government (C. Calhoun, 2002). Therefore, nationalism has been a political discourse in which "the political and the national unit should have been congruent," since each nation constituted a political unity in which the ethnic boundaries were congruent with political boundaries and political leaders, and masses shared a common national background (Gellner, 1983). Therefore, the distinguishing mark of nationalism was the desire for political autonomy and self-determination based on an assumed common ethnicity and to establish sovereignty,[13] "people's rule," over a territory since claiming nationhood was ipso facto to claim political autonomy (Brubaker, 2014). Nationalism gave new political meanings to old myths and symbols through discourse and political activity, claims the right of self-determination, and at least some level of autonomy by reference to "the people" (Breuilly, 1993; Seton-Watson, 1977). Thus, nationalism has been defined as a discourse[14] claiming political autonomy for a group of people, which was *imagined* by its members as constituting a nation, over a territory that it defined as its homeland.

[13] The concept of sovereignty, one of the defining characteristics of the modern state, has been the theme of long debate among political thinkers. For instance, Thomas Hobbes ascribed sovereignty to the state and equated it with the absolute ruler, while Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johannes Althusius developed a normative theory of popular sovereignty by attributing sovereignty to "the people" instead of the ruler, in which the consent of the governed was the primary source of governmental legitimacy. For a brief review of debates on state sovereignty, see E. N. Kurtulus, *State Sovereignty : Concept, Phenomenon and Ramifications*, 1st ed.New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

[14] Both Calhoun and Verdery viewed nationalism as a discourse and rhetoric. See C. Calhoun, "Nationalism and Ethnicity", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 19 (1), 1993 and K. Verdery, "Whither "Nation" and "Nationalism"", *Daedalus*, 122 (3), 1993.

For Tilly (1998), nationalism took two related forms: state-led and state-seeking. On the one hand, state-led nationalism involved the attempt by those who controlled a state and their political allies to homogenize its population by imposing a dominant language and creating an origin myth, symbols, rituals, ceremonies, and membership and educational routines. On the other hand, state-seeking nationalism included the demands for political autonomy and recognition by ostensible representatives of a coherent nation that currently lacked its state. According to Tilly's nationalism typology, Turkey and Israel differed in their state-led and state-seeking nationalisms since Israel was established in 1949 as a settler-immigrant state (Kimmerling, 2002), while Turkey has been a post-imperial core country.

2.1.2 The Construction of National Identities as a State Policy: Nation-Building

In the broader literature, nation-building was considered a collective identity formation and unification process to legitimize political autonomy within a nation-state territory. It involved the creation of common narratives, meanings, symbols, rituals, historical personalities, and events in imagining a shared destiny. If the national and political units were not congruent, the political elite should have created it through nation-building and cultural homogenization. This congruence was essential since the state should have obtained the active support of the majority in a territory in order to maintain its legitimacy (Deutsch and Foltz, 1966).

Nation-building theories have mainly addressed the question of how a sense of nationhood was created in order to exercise a national public authority. In order to construct a national identity,[15] the state adopted policies to strengthen a sense of nationhood. The standardization of public education in a common standardized language, for instance, has been one of the most effective policies in which the modern state has shaped cultural boundaries. Others included adapting national symbols, anthem, flag, official language, and citizenship laws, forming national historiography, building national museums, and creating national media. These instruments were employed to unify members of a given society into one national family (Hall, Held and McGrew, 1992).

Depending on their understanding of nationhood and their capacity to impose their visions, nation-building projects and the impact of their efforts in regulating social order differed in various contexts. In this sense, the literature on the formation of the modern nation-state in Europe has made a distinction between civic (French type) nationalism, in which ethnicity was not considered as a significant component of the nation-building project, and ethnic (German type) nationalism, that defined the nation based on a community of descent. The main distinction was that the former included everybody in a given state, while

[15] Smith defined national identity as the "continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations and the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage." See A. D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations : Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2008, pp.19.

the later included some who shared specific characteristics.[16] For Brubaker (1992), the variance in the conceptions of citizenship was primarily based on the differences between the state-centered and assimilationist French model and the *volk*-centered and differentialist German model. He argued that nation-states varied depending on the way they nationalized the political community and presented three types of nation-building models: civic states in which ethnicity was not determinant; bi-national or multi-national states where more than one core nation coexisted and participated in government together; and nationalizing states in which ethnicity was the fundamental basis of nationhood (Brubaker, 1995). Nationalizing states were not homogenous, rather "ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elite promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, and political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation." The political elite perceived the nationalizing state as an unfinished nation until all non-core groups would be assimilated into the core; therefore, they produced and reproduced the dominant culture through legislation and, by doing this, implicitly defined the "other." For this reason, nation-building could be defined as a system of social classification since the nation-state was considered an internal homogenizer of populations and a producer of differences (Verdery, 1994). Moreover, state practices did not only produce differences but also instituted them in the form of identities. This categorization mainly depended on the power relations and the capacity of one group to impose its categories of

[16] On the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalisms, see E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1983, K. Verdery, "Whither "Nation" and "Nationalism"", and R. Brubaker, "Nationalizing States in the Old 'New Europe' – and the New", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19 (2), 1996.

ascription upon others (R. Jenkins, 1997). Dominant groups generally legitimized their own culture as superior and marked cultural distance and proximity to monopolize privileges regarding access to state resources (Bourdieu, 1984). The dominant *ethnies* furnished the nation with its legitimating myths, symbols, public culture, and conceptions of territory (A.D. Smith, 1991). Consequently, the process of nation-building intrinsically led to a domination/subordination relationship, in which the dominant *ethnie* used its position within the state to impose its vision of nationhood and strengthen ethnic boundaries.

2.1.3 Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?: The Formation of Minorities

The modern nation-state has been considered to represent "the people" who exercised sovereign power over a specific territory. The assumption was that "the world consisted of 'peoples' or 'nations,' each with its way of life based on language and ethnicity, and not to be compared with any other; and each was entitled to form a separate territorial state" (Hobsbawm, 1996). Therefore, nationalism gave claims the right of self-determination and at least some level of autonomy by reference to "the people" (C. Calhoun, 1993). The creation of the modern nation-state, thus, implied a self-determining entity that exercised sovereignty for the well-being of the people, which was "imagined" by its members as constituting a nation, over a territory that it defined as its homeland. As Hobsbawm (1996) observed, however, humanity was never divided into neatly separable pieces of homogenous territory. Therefore it should have been created in the image of the nation, most generally through the mass

expulsion or extermination of other ethnic and/or religious groups (E.J. Hobsbawm, 1990), as a unity constituted by the sovereign citizens that were conscious of its political distinctiveness. Despite systematic attempts to form such homogenous ethnic-linguistic states, no more than a dozen political entities in the world conformed to the idea that state and nation completely overlapped (Hobsbawm, 1996). As Thompson (1997) also pointed out, almost all states in the contemporary world have been multinational or multi-ethnic in makeup and consisted of a dominant group in control of the state, which exercised political and cultural hegemony over ethnic minority groups. In other words, nation-building proceeded as the institutionalization of ethnic rule, or "ethnocracy" (Yiftachel, 2006), in multi-ethnic states when homogeneity did not exist (Brock, 2001). "Established majorities" were not determined through political contestation, rather defined through the politicization of a religious or ethnic majority at the expense of an equally manufactured minority, although the nation-state might call itself a democracy (Mamdani, 2020).

As nation-states often failed to achieve their promise of total national homogenization, it became clear that ethnic differences did not necessarily erode over time, and ethnically diverse societies were more likely to be prone to social tension and political conflict as one ethnic group dominated others in competition over political access and resources (Gurr and Moore, 1997; Horowitz, 1985; Posen, 1993). Bauböck (1998) argued that the production and reproduction of dominant cultures through state legislation, institutions, and policies intrinsically defined other groups as minorities. Within the structure of the modern nation-state, minorities were tolerated in exchange for their political

loyalty, which, in practice, meant “they were tolerated to the extent that they were seen by the national majority as non-threatening” (Mamdani, 2020). However, a nationalization project that ultimately indicated the domination of an identity over others through cultural homogenization might generate bottom-up demands for political autonomy by political entrepreneurs who claimed to constitute a distinct nation within an existing state. As a result, a minority that was self-conscious of its minority status and often had some form of collective voice by which it could express its dissatisfaction shaped the relationship between the dominant majority and the minority. Moreover, as in the case of homeland minorities which have regarded same territory as their historic homeland, such as Kurds and Palestinians, states might face growing minority demands for special representation (Kymlicka, 2007), or for being part of the sovereign body, which consequently might generate ethnic conflict, in which at least one of the parties explained its dissatisfaction in ethnic terms and claimed that its lack of recognition and equality (Wolff, 2004).

In his famous definition, Capotorti (1979) defined minority as “a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members -being nationals of the state- possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.” In contrast, the dominant group has been defined regarding its size and power vis-à-vis a minority. According to Schermerhorn (1970), a dominant group referred to those who had “preeminent authority to function both as guardians and sustainers of the value system and as

prime allocators of rewards," while a minority group "forms less than half of the population of a given society and has limited access to roles and activities central to the economic and political institutions." The domination of state power and resources gave the dominant group the capacity to shape nation-building policies and impose its vision of nationhood on the rest of the population. However, the capacity of states to impose their version of social order varied in different kinds of states according to their histories of state-making, capacities of state makers, and the resistance they encounter (Verdery, 1994). Furthermore, the variation might also exist over time between different ruling elites within the same state.

Connor (1972) suggested that nation-building simultaneously amounted to "nation-destroying" since most states consisted of more than one nation; and there have been difficulties in transferring primary allegiance from nations to states. Consequently, "nations without states," which "maintain a separate sense of national identity generally based upon a common culture, history, attachment to a particular territory and the explicit wish to rule themselves" (Guibernau, 1999), emerged within a nation-state as a response to a nationalization project, which ultimately implied the domination of an identity over rival identities through cultural homogenization. Thus, sometimes the nation might refer to a territorially concentrated subgroup within a larger political unity. It was unnecessary to have internationally recognized territorial boundaries (Chandra, 2012), such as Kurds and Palestinians. Those groups were variously called "autochthonous minority" or "homeland minority." Homeland minorities have been historically settled within a particular part of a country for an extended

time; therefore, they regarded this territory as their historic homeland.[17] They preserved a strong attachment to this homeland and often nurtured memories of earlier self-government over this territory. However, it has been incorporated (often involuntarily) into a larger state or divided between two or more countries (Kymlicka, 2007). For this reason, they have usually claimed various rights to self-government over their traditional territory and the right to use their language and express their culture in its public spaces. As previously discussed, territoriality has been a precondition for a nationalist movement. Members of a nation shared "a desire to control a territory that is thought of as the group's rightful homeland" (Barrington, 1997).[18] Being lack sovereignty over the territory they claimed as their own, sometimes "nations without states" might mobilize around the belief of the right to territorial self-determination through

[17] Kymlicka drew a comparison between homeland minorities, often called national minorities and indigenous peoples, in the sense of their needs and interests. Indigenous peoples referred to the "descendants of the original non-European inhabitants of lands colonized and settled by European powers." They arose primarily in New World settler states, such as the Indians in Canada, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, and the Maori of New Zealand. See, W. Kymlicka, "The Internationalization of Minority Rights", *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 6 (1), 2007.

[18] Hannah Arendt did not view territoriality as a precondition for a nationalist movement. Rather she argued that sometimes a nation might exist without any necessary relation to a specific state or territory. She conceptualized such a movement as "tribal nationalism" and pointed to the case of Jewish people. However, the city of Jerusalem was one of the most profound symbols of Jewish identity even before the establishment of the State of Israel as it expressed in the phrase "next year in Jerusalem," that was a call for the "return to the homeland" at the end of Passover seder. See H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2d enl. ed.New York, Meridian Books, 1958.

political action. Moreover, top-down nationalizing efforts generated bottom-up demands for political autonomy by political entrepreneurs who claimed to constitute a distinct nation within an existing state (Breuilly, 1993).

2.2 Boundary-Making Approach to Ethnicity and Nation

2.2.1 Ethnic Boundary-Making as a Nationalist Project

A collectivity that shared a sense of national belonging and unity has been an essential condition of the nation-state. For this reason, nation-state formation implied creating a political entity consisting of individuals who shared a belief in "we the people" and, consequently, identified those "others" who did not belong to the people. In other words, nation-building has been a process of drawing boundaries that were set for including "us" and excluding "them."[19] Ethnic boundary-making has been a form of group categorization and identification to distinguish the ethnic and national self from the other. Consequently, this differentiation has created inequality because actors, who distinguished between different ethnic categories, treated these categories differently (Tilly, 1998).

Managing ethnic diversity within the structure of a state has been significantly important and depended on how ethnic boundaries were drawn within political structures. According to Wimmer (2008), after the end of the

[19] This process of drawing ethnic boundaries and creating collectivity resulted from a nationalist project and discourse, which often took the form of a claim for sovereignty over a specific territory.

empire, the elite of the most powerful ethnic group took over the new state apparatus. After that, the state aimed to assimilate the subordinated groups through education and language training to create a unified citizenry. However, all nation-states did not aim to assimilate those considered as the "minorities," as the Israeli case showed that sometimes minorities were excluded from the state identity (Jamal, 2011; Reiter, 2009). The variation in nation-building processes explained the initial selection of ethnic policies since differences in state attitude towards ethnic minorities were mainly a product of how ethnic boundaries were initially drawn and maintained. For this reason, the ethnic boundary-making approach has been a useful theoretical framework to develop a better understanding of nationalism and the nation-state in general, and examine state policies towards the citizens of Kurdish and Palestinian descent in Turkey and Israel.

2.2.2 Main Arguments of the Ethnic Boundary-Making Approach

For many scholars, ethnic boundaries were vital in explaining ethnic or national group formation since they defined who was a member of the in-group and outsider (Alba, 2005; Brubaker, 2014; Chai, 1996; Fuller, 2003; Jackson and Molokotos-Liederman, 2015; M.l. Lamont, 2000; Nagel, 1994; Tilly, 1998; Wimmer, 2013; Wimmer, 2008). Conversi (1999) defined a boundary as the "point of contact between different others, the domain -imaginary or real- where in-group and out-group meet and face each other." For Wimmer (2009), boundaries were the "subjective ways that actors establish by pointing specific markers that distinguish them from ethnic others." For this reason, ethnic

boundaries simultaneously indicated “where something stops and something else begins” (R. Jenkins, 1997). Given these definitions, boundaries were considered mechanisms to dichotomize insiders and outsiders and the process of boundary construction as a drawing of contrasts.

The ethnic boundary-making approach has been built upon the legacy of the social anthropologist Fredrik Barth’s ground-breaking work (*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*) that challenged the Herderian paradigm, which proposed that different ethnic groups possessed different, homogeneous cultures. Barth (1969) argued that group identification was not dependent on a shared culture or “the cultural stuff;” instead, it was the ethnic boundary that defined the group. The defining feature of an ethnic group was the maintenance of boundary between groups since the culture of a group might change or be transformed with time (Bail, 2008). Paying attention to people who changed their ethnic identity, Barth’s seminal work emphasized that boundaries were produced and reproduced during the interaction between insiders and outsiders. Thus, they were relational and processual. In other words, ethnic identification could be traced to the interaction between the processes of internal definition (in-group members’ self-identification) and external definition (outsiders’ confirmation) (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007; R. Jenkins, 1997). Ethnic identification occurred when a group of people identified themselves and was identified by others as constituting a different category. For this reason, ethnic boundary construction has been considered as a relational process of inclusion and exclusion.

Focusing on intergroup interactions, Barth's social constructivist approach suggested that ethnic identities were relational rather than mutually exclusive. Moreover, the post-Barthian social constructivist perspective on ethnicity regarded ethnic boundaries as the products of daily social interactions, power relations, and political processes; therefore, they were not fixed and immutable, but fluid across time, permeable and crossable (Alba, 1990; Brubaker, 2004; M. Lamont and Molnár, 2002; M.l. Lamont, 2000; Nagel, 1994; Omi and Winant, 1994; Saperstein, Penner and Light, 2013; Wallman, 1978; Winant, 2000). For this reason, ethnicity should have been conceptualized in relational, processual, dynamic, and disaggregated terms, not as a concrete, tangible, and bounded substance (Brubaker, 2004).

If ethnicity was described as a reaction occurring where two sets of people confronted each other, then the boundary between them involved both difference and meaning put upon those differences (Wallman, 1978). Likewise, ethnic boundaries were drawn by highlighting, or even creating, cultural or other distinctions between individuals and groups, usually based on similarities in the worlds of individuals (Eriksen, 1991). Ethnic boundaries thus were created when multiple sites of difference came to be linked into a single whole. Those differences, also called boundary mechanisms, gave an ethnic boundary concrete significance (Abbott, 1995; Alba, 2005).

2.2.3 The Functions of Ethnic Boundaries

Ethnic boundaries marked differences between groups and created cognitive schemes that divided the social world into "us" and "them." Therefore, they also shaped individuals' everyday actions and mental orientations towards others (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov, 2004). For this reason, a boundary had both a categorical, referring to the social classification and collective representation, and a social or behavioral, referring to everyday networks of relationships, dimensions (Wimmer, 2008).

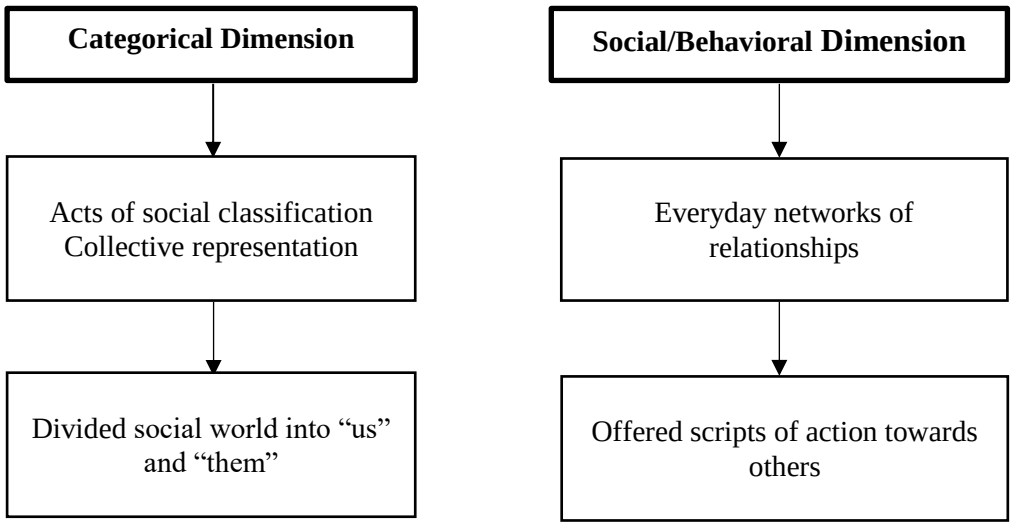

Table 1: *Categorical and social/behavioral dimensions of ethnic boundaries*

Boundaries also displayed both social and symbolic dimensions. Lamont and Molnar (2002) conceptualized symbolic boundaries as "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space," while regarded social boundaries as "objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of

material and nonmaterial resources and social opportunities." On the one hand, symbolic boundaries provided a framework for individuals to make sense of social reality through everyday interactions. In other words, they were regarded as subjective interpretations of reality which actors agreed upon by encountering others to acquire status. For this reason, they were based on social contexts and experiences. For instance, while religion has been an essential symbolic boundary establishing distinctions in some countries, it has been mostly irrelevant in others.[20] On the other hand, social boundaries were more likely to be objectified and institutionalized forms of social categorization revealed classification patterns and manifested in social exclusion or segregation.

Symbolic Boundaries	**Social Boundaries**
Subjective	Objective
Constructed through social interaction	Constructed through social hierarchy
Conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, peoples, and practices	Objectified social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities

Table 2: *Symbolic and social dimensions of ethnic boundaries*

Lamont (1992) primarily focused on the relationship between symbolic and social boundaries and suggested that "symbolic boundaries are a necessary but insufficient condition for the creation or modification of social boundaries."

[20] Zolberg and Woon showed how religion in Europe and language in the United States had been extensively used to construct symbolic boundaries. See A. R. Zolberg and L. L. Woon, "Why Islam Is Like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States", 27 (1), 1999.

Symbolic boundaries, which existed at the intersubjective level, were employed to enforce, maintain, normalize, or rationalize social boundaries by using cultural markers, such as language, religion, and customs (M. Lamont and Molnár, 2002). In order to become social boundaries, however, symbolic boundaries should have been widely agreed upon (Bail, 2008). Thus, they were concretized through standard practices which organized social relations and the allocation of social goods (Fuller, 2003). For example, citizenship laws have been regarded as strict social boundaries constructed through symbolic boundaries to define the borders of citizenship.

The nature of social boundaries could only be understood in the context of symbolic boundaries, which were employed to reframe their meaning. Consequently, social boundaries were situational since shifts in symbolic boundaries affected their size and quality, and their significance varied both with the situation and through time (Wallman, 1978). Social boundaries and their meanings were subject to ongoing negotiations and struggles over social relations (Fuller, 2003). Therefore, they were shaped and changed in response to the strategies of others. Even the most institutionalized boundaries could be redrawn as actors struggled to enact, change or dissolve distinctions. If ethnicity was considered as a social boundary system, then it was possible to account for shifts in its edge by contextual changes in the criterion of inclusion (Wallman, 1978), as proved by the shifts in the politics of inclusion and exclusion towards the biggest ethnic minorities in Turkey and Israel. For instance, in the post-Cold War era, significant attempts were made to redraw the boundaries of Turkish and Israeli national identities. On the one hand, Turkey's reform process that

started at the end of the 1990s to meet the European Union (EU) Copenhagen Criteria sparked a debate on the reconsideration of the boundaries of national identity from a focus on Turkish ethnicity (*Türk*) to the territory of the Republic of Turkey (*Türkiyeli*) (Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, 2007). On the other hand, under the Yitzhak Rabin government in the first half of the 1990s, the Jewish component of the Israeli national identity was simultaneously challenged as Rabin spoke in the name of Israeli citizens rather than the collective Jewish people. Moreover, a similar debate started in Israel as the citizens of Palestinian descent have demanded to transform the Jewish state into a "state for all its citizens," challenging the boundaries of the Israeli national identity (Frisch, 2011).

2.2.4 Politically-Constructed Ethnic Identities and the Nation-State

Brubaker (2004) suggested that while it was agreed that ethnicity was constructed, the focus should have been on practical categories, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, and political projects to analyze how ethnicity was constructed. Ethnicity and nationhood did not depend on the existence of ethnic groups or nations; instead, they existed only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations, and identifications. If ethnicity and nationhood were not things in the world, but perspectives on the world (Brubaker, 2004), so how have those perspectives been shaped and formed?

According to Nagel (1994), the construction of ethnicity has been an outcome of both structure and agency. Ethnicity was constructed by actors who shaped and reshaped ethnic categories and their definitions through social, political, and economic processes. The location and meaning of ethnic boundaries, which determined who was a member and who was not, were continuously negotiated, revised, and revitalized by group members and outsiders. As the state has been the dominant institution in society, its policies significantly shaped ethnic boundaries and influenced patterns of ethnic identification through immigration policies, ethnically-linked resource policies, and political access structured along ethnic lines. Therefore, the nation-state played a crucial role in producing similarities and differences among the population, and nationalism was grounded in its organizational routines (Brubaker et al., 2006; Starr, 1992; Verdery, 1994).

The nation-state required a form of "peopleness" in order to provide a legal framework for its claim of the "state of all the people" (C. Calhoun, 2002). For this reason, the nation was by definition a bounded entity, while nationalism referred to boundary creation. Conversi (1999) defined nationalism as "a process of boundary creation or maintenance propounded by political elites to wish to promote an ideology of egalitarian, yet exclusive, legitimacy, according to which each self-defined nation has the right to its own state and to be governed by in-group members." Such a goal could only be achieved if the leaders were able to determine the criteria of membership and what differentiated an in-group from an out-group. Political leaders attempted to draw sharp distinctions between us and them to define their national community by using the state

power to control the flow of information through compulsory education, universities, and the media.

2.3 Wimmer's Model of Ethnic Boundary-Making

2.3.1 Boundary-Making Strategies

Taking up Brubaker's suggestion that the focus of analysis should have been on how ethnicity was constructed and maintained, Wimmer (2008) distinguished several types of boundary-making strategies: some nation-builders aimed to shift boundaries, by means of expansion and contraction, while others aimed to modify boundaries' meanings and implications, by means of inversion, repositioning and blurring. Expansion referred to creating a new and more inclusive boundary by expanding the range of people included. The opposite strategy, contraction, meant drawing a narrower boundary by excluding certain groups from the in-group to reduce the number of people included to a core population. Wimmer also identified three types of strategies seeking to alter the meaning of an existing boundary: inversion, repositioning, and blurring. Inversion referred to changing the meaning of an existing boundary by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups. There are two subtypes of inversion: normative inversion, in which the excluded group challenged the ethnic category and claimed superiority vis-à-vis the dominant group, and equalization, where the excluded group pursued equality among ethnic categories (Wimmer, 2013). Repositioning might occur on either individual or group level and referred to changing one's social membership by moving from one side of a boundary to another or repositioning one's whole social category. Finally, blurring aimed to overcome ethnicity as a principle of categorization

and social organization by promoting other non-ethnic markers, such as civilizational and religious affiliation.

Despite the solid secular founding ideologies of both states, while drawing the boundaries of Israeli and Turkish identity, religion[21] played a vital role as a constitutive identity marker in Turkey and Israel. This happened through different strategies and consequently led to different institutional arrangements concerning ethnic minorities and their differential treatment. On the one hand, the Turkish political elite pursued an expansion strategy, and Sunni Muslim Kurds were considered Turks because of their common religious identity (Akturk, 2009; Çağaptay, 2006; Yegen, 2009). The Turkish state pursued their assimilation and forced inclusion into the boundaries of Turkish national identity, although this was objected to by a sizeable part of the Kurdish population (Kymlicka, 1995). For instance, Alevi Kurds, a typical example of a double minority, were excluded based on both their Alevi identity. Çiçek (2017) emphasized the historical separation between Alevi and Sunni Muslim people in Turkey in general and within Kurdish society in particular. He argued that Alevi identity has been more critical than Kurdish national identity in the social imaginary of most of the Alevi Kurds. On the other hand, the "Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty of Israel" defined Israel as a "Jewish state," and the Israeli political elite pursued a boundary contraction strategy by means of

[21] Affirming religion as the sacred source of national identity, Smith defined religion as "a system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful." See A. D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* , pp.26.

excluding Palestinian citizens from equal access to power and resources.[22] As Wimmer (2008) noted, however, not all such strategies have been successful. There have been constant Kurdish and Palestinian demands for changing the meaning of existing boundaries through inversion in both Israel and Turkey. In other words, Kurdish and Palestinian citizens have challenged the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups by demanding equalization by means of demanding more inclusive national boundaries, which they would include as equals.

2.3.2 The Contextual Factors and Boundary-Making Strategies

As noted earlier, the cultural and political elite have been the key actors in the ethnic boundary-making process. They have been able to shift and modify the meaning of boundaries by defining and redefining insiders and outsiders. A field perspective on nations and nationalism supposed that ethnic boundaries resulted from classificatory struggles and negotiations between actors situated in the social field. However, actors were constrained by social, political, economic, and historical conditions, specifically, the constraints derived from the structures of the social field within which actors were situated. Wimmer (2013) identified three constraints in a social field: institutional incentives, positions in power hierarchies, and existing social networks. Institutional frameworks, such as the nation-state and the legal structure, specified the historical context of the

[22] This made them seek alternative strategies in their struggle for equality. See N. Rouhana, "Israel and Its Arab Citizens: Predicaments in the Relationship between Ethnic States and Ethnonational Minorities", *Third World Quarterly*, 19 (2), 1998, A. Jamal, "Strategies of Minority Struggle for Equality in Ethnic States: Arab Politics in Israel", *Citizenship Studies*, 11 (3), 2007.

boundary-making process. Thereby institutional environment directly affected actors' choices of drawing certain boundaries, such as ethnic, class, regional, gender, or tribal. By explicitly focusing on the peculiarities of the nation-state that dominated contemporary politics, Wimmer (2013) noted that the change from empire to nation-state provided new incentives for the political elite to pursue ethnic (instead of other types) boundary-making strategies. The principle of ethnonational representation, people's government, and the need to define territorial boundaries in ethnic terms provided the main institutional incentives for state elites to systematically homogenize their subjects, usually by expanding the boundaries of their group.

Field Characteristics	**Impact**
Institutional order	Which type of Boundary (ethnic, social, class, gender, etc.)
Distribution of power	Which level of differentiation and interpretation of an existing boundary (worthy, righteous, dignified, etc.)
Networks	Which individuals would be classified to which ethnic group

Table 3: *Constraints in the social field within which the actors were situated*

An actor's position in the institutional order's power hierarchies also defined his/her interests and which level of ethnic differentiation would be emphasized. For Wimmer (2008), the effects of power were twofold. First, the actor's perception of interest depended on the institutional environment and the

cognitive frames that have already been routinized. Actors were more likely to choose a cognitive scheme appropriate to the institutional environment and conducive to their perceived interest and the script of action most suitable to attain an advantageous position vis-à-vis others. Second, the endowment with power resources determined the consequences of boundary-making strategy for others. For instance, only those in control of the state apparatus could use the census and the law to enforce a specific boundary, though subordinates might also develop counter-discourses (Wimmer, 2008). Lastly, the network of political alliances among actors also determined where boundaries would be drawn, who would be included, and counted as the other. Wimmer (2008) argued that the reach of elite political networks in the early days of nation-state formation was most consequential for determining which groups would be considered part of the national project.

Contextual factors affecting boundary-making strategies have been the subject of much debate among social scientists. The existing literature has mostly focused on the agency of individuals and the social, economic, and political structures within the social field, which shaped boundary-making strategies (Cornell and Hartmann, 2007; Jackson and Molokotos-Liederman, 2015; M.l. Lamont, 2000; Nagel, 1994). Likewise, Wimmer's model also proposed that boundary-making strategies were subject to strategic interactions and ongoing negotiations between actors who were constrained by the conditions in the social field. Actors would adopt ethnic classification if there were strong institutional incentives to do so and choose the level of ethnic differentiation. Moreover, actors' positions in power hierarchies in the social

field and networks of political alliances were determinants for where boundaries between “us” and “them” would be drawn. However, studies exploring how factors outside the social field, such as trans-border ethnic ties, would affect the contextual conditions, the subjectivities of social actors, and the political salience of ethnic boundaries have been limited.

The boundary-making approach assumed that ethnicity was not immutable but dynamic and constantly changing property of group organization. As discussed earlier, the topography, meaning, and salience of ethnic boundaries might change over time (Chai, 2005; Fuller, 2003). Likewise, nation-states and their institutional incentives have not been static entities or impervious to the impact or pressure of external factors. Mylonas (2012) suggested that the way a state treated a minority group was determined mainly by whether it was allied or in rivalry with its external kin. Therefore, shifting regional balances and alliances, for instance, might influence actors’ strategies in ethnic boundary-making. Political actors might adopt new strategies, alternate or combine them in various ways, or use different strategies to different groups within the state in response to the developments beyond the border. For this reason, this study aimed to contribute to the existing body of research on ethnic boundary-making by exploring to what extent the interaction between the nation-state, ethnic minority, and minority’s external kin affected the political salience of ethnic identities and their maintenance in multi-ethnic societies.

CHAPTER 3

NATION-BUILDING LEGACIES AND A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF STATE-MINORITY RELATIONS IN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

Israel and Turkey have applied different institutional arrangements to manage state-minority relations and followed different boundary-making strategies. Vestiges of the Ottoman *millet* system, a legal and administrative structure in which various religious groups had been categorized into culturally autonomous and self-regulating communities, continued to exist in Israel and Turkey though at different levels (K. Barkey and Gavrilis, 2016). While millet-like institutional arrangements led to a strict and salient separation between Jews and non-Jews in Israel, only non-Muslims transformed from *millet* to a minority in Turkey and various Muslim communities living in Anatolia, including Kurds, have been considered as "prospective Turks" (Yegen, 2009), or potential members of the Turkish ethnocultural community. To put it differently, Turkey deliberately and involuntarily included the citizens of Kurdish descent into the boundaries of Turkish national identity by means of expansion, while Israel adopted a contraction strategy and excluded the citizens of Palestinian descent

from the boundaries of national identity. Consequently, different boundary-making strategies led to different institutional arrangements regarding the biggest ethnic minorities and their differential treatment by the state.

Boundaries of the Israeli and Turkish identities have been the products of the conditions that influenced nation-building efforts in Israel and Turkey. Therefore, nation-building legacies and their implications on diversity management might explain the variation in boundary-making strategies in the two states. For this reason, this chapter addressed the following questions: How were boundaries of the Israeli and Turkish national identities drawn? What have been their implications on state-minority relations? How have state policies towards citizens of Kurdish and Palestinian descent evolved?

3.1 The Boundaries of Turkish National Identity and the Turkish State Policy towards the Citizens of Kurdish Descent

3.1.1 Kurds in the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious polity, and a religion-based hierarchy was one of the essential aspects of its political regime. Subjects of the empire were segregated into the categories of Muslim and non-Muslim and administered separately through the *millet*[23] system, each with its own courts, judges, and code of law governing internal affairs (Bayır, 2013). In comparison with their non-Muslim neighbors, calling themselves the *Millet-i*

[23] The term "millet" was defined as a religious community, reflecting the initial concept of Ahl al-Kitab (People of the Book). See G. Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2002.

Hakime, Muslims enjoyed a superior status in the administrative establishment and social privileges over Christian and Jewish subjects (Aboona, 2008). The millet system ignored all ethnic differences among Muslims. All Muslim subjects, including Kurds, were considered to belong to the same Muslim community (ummah) regardless of their ethnic differences (Oran, 2004; Yeğen, 1999).

The Kurdish emirates, composed of a number of tribes (*aşiret*), both nomadic and sedentary, were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire as early as the sixteenth century. The Ottoman conquest did not result in the destruction but in preserving the emirates, which enjoyed a large amount of local autonomy until the nineteenth-century when the empire had introduced reforms to implement an administrative centralization. These reforms implicitly undermined the accepted semi-autonomous status of the Kurdish emirates and led to a number of revolts (McDowall, 2000).[24]

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, a peace conference was convened in Paris, which resulted in the Treaty of Sévres of 1920. The treaty allowed the Allied Powers to implement the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, which was also anticipated an independent Kurdish state, to divide the former Ottoman territories.[25] Although a Kurdish delegation headed

[24] Successive Kurdish revolts in nineteenth century Ottoman Empire: The Baban revolt (1806-1808), Mir Muhammed of Soran's revolt (1833-1837), the Bedir Khan's revolt (1847), the Yezdan Sher revolt (1855), and the revolt Sheikh Obeidullah of Nehri (1880).

[25] The heavy terms of the Treaty of Sevres had remained in the minds and caused the Sévres Paranoia or Sévres Syndrome that has been used to describe the fear that Western powers would

by Serif Pasha went to the Paris Peace Conference to propagate for an independent Kurdish state, most of the traditional Kurdish leaders who had already committed themselves to the resistance movement of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk sent telegrams to Paris, in which they wrote that Serif Pasha and his friends were not representing the Kurds (Özoğlu, 2004).

During the War of Independence (1919-1922), Islam continued to be an important unifying factor for the Ottoman Anatolian Muslims. When Mustafa Kemal organized a resistance movement and made a call to liberate Anatolia and the sultan caliph, the majority of Kurdish notables, who advocated the protection of Muslim lands, responded positively and supported the resistance movement against the Greeks and Armenians (Mango, 1999). Numerous Naqshbandi Kurds, including Sheikh Said, who later led the first large-scale uprising against the republic, were among the leading supporters of the independence movement (Natali, 2005).[26] For many scholars, Kurds gave their support to Turks because of an understanding that a common Muslim cause existed against Western interventionists and local Christians and that a future Turkish-Kurdish common multi-ethnic state would emerge (H.J.F. Barkey, Graham, 1998; Bozarslan,

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again try to divide Turkey. See H. L. Wagner, *The Division of the Middle East : The Treaty of SèVres*, Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 2004.

[26] The only major Kurdish revolt against Mustafa Kemal's resistance campaign had been the Koçgiri revolt (1920-1921), which was led by the Koçgiri tribe, one of the biggest tribes of the predominantly Alevi Dersim area. See R. Olson and H. Rumbold, "The Koçgiri Kurdish Rebellion in 1921 and the Draft Law for a Proposed Autonomy of Kurdistan", *Oriente Moderno*, 8 (69) (1/6), 1989.

2003a; Eccarius-Kelly, 2011; Ergil, 2000; Natali, 2005; Özoğlu, 2004).[27] Moreover, the Kurdish tribes' support of Mustafa Kemal's resistance movement has formed the basis for future Kurdish demands to be recognized as "one of the nation's constitutive elements" (Kaya, 2013). Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal also stressed the Islamic unity of Kurds and Turks around the institution of the caliphate. He promoted Sunni Islam as a key pan-ethnic identity marker for the future state.[28] For this reason, İçduygu and Kaygusuz (2004) argued that the period between 1919-1923 witnessed the first formulations of boundary-producing discourses, such as the political unity on the territorial integrity of Anatolia and the Muslim majority as an organic totality.

3.1.2 Ethnic Incorporation Policies from 1923 until the 1990s: Assimilation, Denial, and Repression

Soon after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in October 1923, plans for a multi-ethnic state were abandoned, and Turkish nationalism and

[27] Eccarius-Kelly argued that several Kurdish chiefs feared reprisals from Armenian nationalists because some Kurdish tribes had participated in atrocities against the Armenians and the Assyrians during 1915-1918. Sunni Kurds who made up Hamidiye regiments had mainly targeted Christian communities. Kurdish villagers hoped to retain formerly Armenian-held lands and properties they seized if they collaborated with Mustafa Kemal's nationalist forces, and tribal chiefs claimed that Armenian areas had been Kurdish lands. See V. Eccarius-Kelly, *The Militant Kurds : A Dual Strategy for Freedom*, Santa Barbara, Calif., Praeger, 2011.

[28] Atatürk stated that the most important reason for founding the Society for the Defense of Rights of Eastern Anatolia was "defending the historical rights of Muslims against the possible establishment of an Armenian state in the eastern provinces." See M. K. Atatürk, *The Great Speech to Turks in Turkey*, Leipzig, K.F. Koehler, 1929.

secularism became the main principles of the new republic.[29] The status of minorities in the newly established state has been certified by the Lausanne Peace Treaty signed on 24 July 1923 between Turkey and the Allies to replace the earlier Treaty of Sévres. The treaty registered only non-Muslim groups such as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews as recognized minorities. Kurds were not included in Articles 37-44 of Section III of the treaty about minority protection and their right to use their native languages. Hence, following a "path-dependent" logic, the Turkish nationalist elite affirmed "millet-system-like" formulations regarding the ethnolinguistic groups, considering all Muslim citizens as "prospective Turks," and implemented policies to ensure that they regarded themselves as such (Akturk, 2009; Çağaptay, 2006; Yeğen, 1999). While the former Ottoman citizens of non-Muslims have been excluded from the boundaries of Turkish national identity, the Muslim majority composed of various ethnic groups has been considered a single unity. In the 1924 Constitution, citizenship had been equated with Turkishness "without distinction

[29] Scholars traced the origins of Turkish nationalism as a political force to the Young Turk or Union and Progress era in 1908-18 when Islamism and Ottomanism had been replaced by the idea of Turkishness to save the empire. Two intellectuals, Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) and Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935) were influential in developing the ideological basis of Turkish nationalism, even seen as the "fathers of Turkish nationalism." Both Gökalp and Akçura stated the necessity of the religious component in the Turkish identity, which had significant consequences for the newly established Turkish state. See K. H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History : Selected Articles and Essays*, Leiden, The Netherlands ; Boston, Brill, 2002, S. J. Shaw and E. K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. Ii: Reform, Revolution and Republic, the Rise of Modern Turkey 1808-1975*, Cambridge ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976, M. S. u. k. Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution : The Young Turks, 1902-1908*, Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press, 2001.

of, or reference to race or religion."[30] However, the political imagination of the new Turkish nation explicitly excluded non-Muslims (Çağaptay, 2006; Üngör, 2011; Yegen, 2009). For instance, significant numbers of Greeks were forced out of Turkey in 1923, while Gagauz Turks of the Orthodox Christian faith living in Romania and Moldova were not allowed to immigrate to Turkey (Ioannis N.; Grigoriadis and Shahin, 2021). Consequently, the state sought to turn non-Turkish Muslim communities into "secular Turks" through cultural and linguistic assimilation and secular education (Akturk, 2007; Çağaptay, 2006). An assimilatory historical discourse that led to an inclusive but homogenizing identity model was adopted to present the nation as capable of including people from other ethnic backgrounds (Uğur-Çınar, 2015). The nationalist elite expanded the boundaries of the Turkishness to include various Muslim communities living in Anatolia, such as Kurds, Circassians, Bosnians, Albanians, Lazes, and Arabs. In this respect, their vision of Turkish identity had a strong religious dimension and represented a significant continuity with the Ottoman millet system (İçduygu and Kaygusuz, 2004).

The main objective of the new leadership was to create an ethnically homogenous community (Kasaba and Bozdoğan, 2000). Consequently, various social and constitutional devices were employed to achieve this goal. The 1924 Constitution declared Turkish as the official language as well as the language of education. Thus, the teaching of Kurdish was prohibited (Bayar, 2014). Beyond

[30] Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution stated that "the name Turk, as a political term, shall be understood to include all citizens of the Turkish Republic, without distinction of, or reference to race or religion."

the imposition of Turkishness, the secularization policies which aimed to launch a westernization project also alienated Turkey's Kurds and even "created a sharper line of division than ever before" (Saatci, 2002). A number of secularization reforms had been carried out, removing most opportunities Kurdish sheikhs enjoyed. In 1924, the Grand National Assembly abolished the caliphate, "an important religious symbol bounded Turks and Kurds together" (Zürcher, 2004). It passed the Law of the Unification of Education *(Tehvid-i Tedrisat Kanunu),* which led to the closure of madrasas, the last remaining source of education for most Kurds (Natali, 2005).[31] In 1925, no longer tolerating sheikhs and mystics, Mustafa Kemal ordered the Sufi orders officially dissolved.

In the first years of the republic, the abandoned promise of the Turkish-Kurdish fraternity consequently led to widespread resistance among Kurds against the centralized authority and caused a number of Kurdish rebellions: Beytüşşebab in 1924, Sheikh Said in 1925, Ararat in 1926-1930, and Dersim in 1937-1938. After the suppression of the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü (1884-1973) introduced into the assembly the Law for the

[31] The term "madrasa" literally referred to "school" in modern Arabic. In the Islamic tradition, it has been a specific institution where the instruction was devoted to the Islamic religious sciences, especially *fiqh,* or Islamic law. In 1924, madrasas in Turkey were shut down to centralize the Turkish educational system, though some continued to function clandestinely, especially in the Kurdish-dominated provinces. According to van Bruinessen, however, the ban had only strengthened the association of the madrasa with the Kurdish identity. For the traditional place of madrasas in the Kurdish culture, see M. v. Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society*, Istanbul, Isis Press, 2000.

Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*) that gave extraordinary powers to the government and empowered two independence tribunals (*İstiklal Mahkemeleri*) to prosecute rebels. Speaker of the parliament Abdülhalik Renda (1881-1957) and the interior minister Cemil Uybadın (1880-1957) were assigned to write reports on which measures to take in the eastern provinces. They both came out in favor of a policy of assimilation, and their conclusions were embodied in the Report for Reform in the East (*Şark Islahat Raporu*) of 1925 (Üngör, 2011). The report suggested special administrative arrangements for the Kurdish-dominated provinces under an Inspector-General[32] which were responsible for coordinating resettlement policies and "detribalizing the region" with the state's "civilizational" mission (Aslan, 2015). Accordingly, a series of deportation laws were implemented between 1925 and 1927, and more than 20,000 of those "who do not fall under Turkish culture" were deported to the west of the country (Üngör, 2011; Zürcher, 2004).

[32] The General Inspectorates (*Umumi Müfettişlikler*) were regional governorships which were established by the Law on the Establishment of the First General Inspectorate (*Birinci Umumi Müfettişlik Teşkiline Dair Kanun*) in June 1927 in the east and southeast of Anatolia, the Black Sea region, and Thrace. Their authority prevailed overall civilian and military institutions under their domain. The first General Inspectorate was established in Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Mardin, Hakkari, Van, Urfa, Siirt and Bitlis in 1927 and Dr. İbrahim Tali Öngören (1875-1952) appointed as the first Inspector-General. The Kurdish-dominated provinces had been effectively ruled through this particular administrative structure until 1952. Later on, their legacy re-emerged in the 1980s with the State of Emergency Governorate (OHAL) administration to maintain military control in thirteen Kurdish provinces. For a comprehensive overview see C. Koçak, *Umumi MüFettişLikler, 1927-1952*, 1. baskı. ed.İstanbul, İletişim, 2003.

Although the state authorities considered Kurdish rebellions reactionary rather than nationalistic (Mango, 2000), they decided to eliminate anything suggesting a separate Kurdish identity. The Press Law of 1931 prohibited publication in languages other than Turkish (Bayır, 2013). In 1934, the Law on Settlement No. 2510 was put into effect to settle Turkish elements in non-Turkish areas or settle non-Turkish elements in Turkish areas. Turkish culture was the most critical concept of the law, and it was associated with Turkish as one's native language (Ülker, 2008). Although the law was not restricted to them, the great majority who has been forced to migrate were Kurdish citizens. Between 1934 and 1947, 25,831 people from eastern and southeastern provinces were resettled in other parts of Anatolia (Bilgin and İnce, 2015). Moreover, Article 3 of the Surname Law of 1934 prohibited using "certain surnames that contained connotations of foreign cultures, nations, tribes, and religion."

Since the transition to a multi-party system in 1945, Turkey's political regime has been interrupted three times by military coups. Although the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti-DP*), which came to power after the end of the single-party rule in 1950, attempted to incorporate some Kurdish chieftains and sheikhs into the political system by giving them high positions, the suppression of the Kurdish cultural and political rights remained unchanged with each military intervention (Cengiz; Güneş and Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014). Soon after the 1960 coup, for instance, the military introduced a law to change the names of Kurdish villages into Turkish. Following the 1971 military intervention, some discriminatory legislation continued to be in force, and the article 16 of the Population Law prohibited giving Kurdish names to newborns. Consequently,

state repression and assimilation policies encouraged extremism and the creation of the PKK in 1978 by a group of university students led by Abdullah Öcalan. The 1980 military coup provoked further radical reactions among Kurds (McDowall, 2000). The 1982 constitution enacted by the military regime reserved a privileged position for the military as the guardian of the state. Therefore, nationalist policies persisted in the new constitution, such as prohibiting publication, broadcasting, and speaking in the public in "a language other than the first official language of the state recognized by the Turkish state" (Bayır, 2013).[33] Meanwhile, in August 1984, the PKK launched its first attacks against military targets. In return, the OHAL was introduced in the Kurdish-dominated provinces of eastern and southeastern Turkey in 1987 and stayed in effect for almost twenty years.[34]

3.1.3 The Turkish State's Engagement with the Kurdish Question from the 1990s until 2016: Unequal Recognition and Partial Accommodation

Turgut Özal (1927-1993), who stated publicly that his mother was Kurdish, was the first democratically elected prime minister after the 1980 coup and became president in 1989. During his presidency, alternative policy choices

[33] Article 2 of Law No. 2932, which was in effect between 1983 and 1991, prohibited the "utilization of any language in the dissemination, printing, and expression of ideas which is not in the official language recognized by the Turkish state."

[34] OHAL was instituted in 1987 by Turgut Özal and operated in thirteen Kurdish provinces Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Siirt, Tunceli, Bitlis, Batman, Mardin, Hakkari, Bingöl, Adıyaman, Van, Muş and Şırnak which were under the jurisdiction of a regional governor who held extraordinary powers. Although it was lifted in some provinces in the late 1990s, it was in effect until 2002 in Diyarbakır, Tunceli, Şırnak and Hakkari.

"outside the conventional" towards the Kurdish citizens were considered (H.J. Barkey, 2000). This included publicly acknowledging the "Kurdish reality," removing the ban on the Kurdish language, and co-opting the Iraqi Kurdish leadership (Uçar and Akdere, 2017). Furthermore, Özal's successor Süleyman Demirel (1924-2015), proposed "constitutional citizenship" in 1992 to establish an understanding of the nation as a collective of citizens (İnce, 2018). These steps, however, had been accompanied by the opposite legal and security measures, indicating that the state attitude vis-à-vis the Kurdish question, although shifted from denial to the acknowledgement of the issue in its ethnopolitical dimensions, was far from a desecuritization[35] approach. In April 1990, for instance, the powers of the OHAL governor were extended with a decree justified by the government with reference to a "threat to its national security in Southeast Anatolia" (Entessar, 1992). The number of evacuated and burnt villages gradually increased between 1991 and 1993 (Joost Jongerden, 2007). Moreover, in April 1991, the Law on Fight against Terrorism that had a very broad way of defining terrorism was passed by the parliament.

Following Özal's sudden death in 1993, when the clashes between the security forces and the PKK escalated, the Kurdish question became the exclusive domain of the military (Taspinar, 2005). As Ünver (2015) noted, most of the 1990s represented excessive force discourses referred to village burnings, forest destructions, deaths in custody, torture, and forced migration. Pro-Kurdish

[35] Buzan and Wæver defined desecuritization as addressing issues through "normal" political processes outside the sphere of emergency politics. See B. Buzan and O. Wæver, Regions and Powers : The Structure of International Security, Cambridge ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp.56.

political parties[36] were closed down on the grounds of "threatening the indivisible unity of the state," and Kurdish deputies were sentenced to imprisonment. The 1990s also signaled the internationalization of the Kurdish question due to rising foreign interference and the emergence of an active Kurdish diaspora, especially in Europe (H.J. Barkey, 1996).

In 1999, as a result of two critical events, the capture of the PKK leader and the Helsinki European Council decision to name Turkey an EU candidate state, the state started to relax its longstanding assimilationist strategy towards its Kurdish citizens, and this led to an uneven normalization of the relations (Saraçoğlu, 2011). According to Yavuz (2001), this period was also marked by the "Europeanization of the Kurdish problem" as the EU integration process has forced the state to reform its constitutional and political system. Meanwhile, following the capture of its leader, the PKK already entered into a comprehensive process of ideological and organizational restructuring by turning to the radical democracy discourse in which Kurdish demands have been re-articulated as part of demands for equality (Ahmet Hamdi; Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012), providing the government an opportunity to undertake a

[36] Turkey's first legal pro-Kurdish party, the People's Labor Party (*Halkın Emek Partisi*-HEP), was established in 1990. HEP's successors were the Democracy Party (*Demokrasi Partisi*-DEP), the People's Democracy Party (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*-HADEP), the Democratic People Party (*Demokratik Halk Partisi*-DEHAP), the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*-DTP), and the Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*-BDP). They were all banned by the Constitution Court except DEHAP that was voluntarily replaced by the DTP in 2005, and the BDP. See N. F. Watts, "Allies and Enemies: Pro-Kurdish Parties in Turkish Politics, 1990-94", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 31 (4), 1999.

democratization program. Consequently, Turkey's reform process started with the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Partisi*-DSP)-Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-MHP)-Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*-ANAP) coalition government under Bülent Ecevit (1925-2006) to meet the Copenhagen criteria, which included full respect for minority rights (Özdemir and Sarıgil, 2015). In 2001, the 1982 Constitution that prohibited any other language except Turkish in daily life and in disseminating thoughts was extensively amended. The limitations in the constitutional protection of freedom of thought were lifted. In August 2002, broadcasting in languages other than Turkish was allowed, and the death penalty was abolished.

Coming to power in November 2002, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP*) continued the process started by the previous government by initiating further reforms such as abolishing the ban on teaching Kurdish in private courses, giving Kurdish names to newborns, allowing defense in mother language during court trials, and launching the first 24-hour Kurdish language state-run TV channel. The OHAL has been lifted and replaced by civilian governors. Identifying secularism as a cause of division between Turks and Kurds, the AKP has offered its solution, "Islam as cement," to end the societal polarization of Turkey and attempted to blur ethnic boundaries between Turks and Kurds (M. Hakan; Yavuz and Özcan, 2006). Turkey's reform process also sparked a debate on reconsidering the boundaries of national identity from a focus on Turkish ethnicity to the territory of the Republic of Turkey (Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, 2007). Moreover, in August 2009, the AKP administration launched a program of public engagement to develop proposals for the resolution of the

Kurdish question in the context of parliamentary debate, variously named the "Democratic Initiative" or "Kurdish Opening." In addition to legislative reforms, between 2010 and 2011, a procedure involving talks between the PKK and the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı-MİT*) was secretly launched in Oslo to find a peaceful resolution to the armed conflict through negotiations. Grigoriadis (2009) argued that these legislative reforms had been an attempt to "desecuritize" minority rights issue in Turkey. However, the AKP administration did not develop a coherent policy of desecuritization rather oscillated between right-based and security-based approaches (Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2018). In June 2007, for instance, the mayor of the Sur district in Diyarbakir, Abdullah Demirbaş, was dismissed from office by the Council of State and sentenced to jail for "making terrorist propaganda" after attempting to offer multilingual municipal services, including Kurdish.[37] In 2008, during a parliamentary debate, the Minister of Justice Mehmet Ali Şahin responded to a deputy from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi-DTP), emphasizing that "Turkey is an indivisible whole with its territory and nation, and its language is Turkish."[38] Reflecting the state's conventional attitude, judicial decisions and parliamentary debates showed that legislative reforms had had little impact in reality to improve the language rights of Turkey's Kurds. Moreover, state pressure on pro-Kurdish parties was remnant. In December 2009, the DTP was banned by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of having ties with the outlawed PKK, and 37 party members, including

[37] Gazete Vatan, "Sur Belediye Başkanı Görevden Alındı", 14/06/2007.

[38] İnternet Haber, "Mecliste Kürtçe Gerginliği", 11/01/2008.

co-presidents, were banned from politics.[39] Arrests of the pro-Kurdish activists and politicians associated with an umbrella organization acting as the urban arm of the PKK, the Kurdistan Communities Union (*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*-KCK), continued even during the reform process.[40] In short, the Democratic Initiative has failed to enlarge the space for collective rights and resolve the Kurdish question, somewhat has narrowed the political arena for pro-Kurdish politics (Çiçek, 2014). Moreover, the June 2015 general elections, in which the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*-HDP) won around 80 seats in the parliament and prevented the AKP from forming a majority government, and Ankara's fear of Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria[41] that could boost the Kurdish aspirations for independence in Turkey (Özpek, 2018) combined to end the peace process officially. The conflict has been moved from rural areas into urban centers with the escalation of violence in the predominantly-Kurdish southeast (Gürcan, 2016a).[42]

[39] Hürriyet, "Dtp Kapatıldı", 11/12/2009.

[40] Bianet, *30 Ayda Kck'den 7748 Gözaltı, 3895 Tutuklama* 2011), available from http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/133216-30-ayda-kckden-7748-gozalti-3895-tutuklama

[41] After the Syrian war broke out in 2011, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad withdrew his forces from northern Syria and the Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat-PYD), the Syrian offshoot of the PKK, and its military wing People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel-YPG) took control of the area and declared the transitional administration of Rojava.

[42] According to the International Crisis Group, at least 4,869 people have been killed in clashes or terror attacks during the renewed fighting between July 2015 and May 2020. See International Crisis Group, *Turkey's Pkk Conflict: A Visual Explainer* 2020), available from https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/turkeys-pkk-conflict-visual-explainer

3.1.4 The Return of Securitization and "Exclusive Recognition"

Since 2015, the AKP administration returned to the official state discourse that claimed: "there was no Kurdish question, but rather a terror problem."[43] Furthermore, it adopted a more hawkish and security-oriented policy. The government thus expedited a campaign not only against the PKK armed militants but against any Kurdish political presence (Yardımcı-Geyikçi, 2018). The state of emergency rule that was declared after the coup attempt[44] in July 2016 further increased the pressure and culminated in the mass arrests of Kurdish politicians, including HDP's co-leaders, journalists, academics, and activists; Kurdish language courses were closed; optional Kurdish lessons were canceled; Kurdish civil society organizations and media outlets have been shut down, and HDP mayors have been removed and replaced by government-appointed trustees (*kayyum*). This was followed by Ankara's campaign of trans-border military operations against Kurdish groups in northern and northeastern Syria, which also have been intertwined with an increasingly nationalistic rhetoric (Yilmaz, Caman and Bashirov, 2020).[45]

The historical analysis showed that the conventional policy of the Turkish state towards the Kurdish citizens was assimilationist by means of

[43] Sabah, "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Türkiye'de Kürt Sorunu Yok", 20/09/2015.

[44] On 15 July 2016, elements within the Turkish armed forces attempted a coup that failed following widespread popular resistance. Following the coup attempt, a state of emergency was declared on 21 July 2016 across the country and lasted until July 2018.

[45] The Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016, Operation Olive Branch in 2018, and Operation Peace Spring in 2019.

force,[46] based on denial of a separate Kurdish identity and the perception of Kurds as "prospective Turks" rather than exclusion until the 1990s (Yegen, 2009). In other words, the state pursued an expansion strategy and involuntarily included Kurds in the boundaries of Turkish national identity. The 1990s, however, marked by the internationalization and the securitization of the Kurdish question following the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq, the political mobilization of Kurdish diaspora and transnational ties among Kurds, the increasing involvement of European governments and neighboring states in Turkey's Kurdish question, and the intensification of Kurdish insurrection by the PKK. Since the 1990s, there have been two "exceptional" periods attempting to redraw the boundaries of national identity when alternative policy choices outside the conventional towards the Kurdish citizens were considered. The first period was Özal's presidency between 1989 and 1993. For the first time, the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnic group had been publicly acknowledged by the statesmen, and some cultural reforms regarding language rights had been initiated. The second period was between 1999 and 2015, started with the EU accession process and the Copenhagen Criteria, and lasted until the collapse of the Democratic Initiative process. The state adopted a relatively more conciliatory policy to accommodate Kurdish demands through legislative action and constitutional amendments and even initiating direct talks with the PKK. During both periods, however, although Kurdish cultural rights have been partially accommodated

[46] For an opposing argument for integration rather than assimilation, see M. Heper, *The State and the Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.123.

and the assimilationist policies ended, the state did not develop a coherent policy towards Kurdish demands. The securitization of the Kurdish question, the closure of pro-Kurdish parties, and the imprisonment of pro-Kurdish politicians and activists continued. Moreover, both periods have been followed by a heavy blow against Kurdish minority rights and the resumption of the armed conflict.

3.2 The Boundaries of Israeli National Identity and the Israeli State Policy towards the Citizens of Palestinian Descent

3.2.1 The Zionist Movement and the Establishment of the State of Israel

The Jewish nationalist movement, Zionism[47] that emerged in late-nineteenth-century Europe, laid the ideological and practical foundations of the state of Israel (Halpern, 1969). The World Zionist Organization (WZO), the national Jewish assembly whose delegates met annually, was founded during the First Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897. Led by Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), the Zionist movement was an organized political movement dedicated to turning the Jewish diaspora into a sovereign nation and to founding a Jewish state (Herzl, 1988). Initially, Jewish nationalists were split between "territorialists" whose objective was to found a Jewish state regardless of its location and "Zionists" who regarded Zion[48] as ancestral land, thus the

[47] The term "Zionism" was derived from the biblical word "Zion," which referred to a hill of Jerusalem. In its political sense, it referred to the Land of Israel, which was called *Eretz Yisrael* in Hebrew.

[48] As Shelef pointed out, the appropriate borders of "Eretz Yisrael" were initially constructed differently by various Jewish nationalist movements. For Labor Zionism, the initial vision of the homeland included present-day Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, Southern

appropriate location for the state (Shelef, 2010). In 1905, the territorialists lost the dispute when their proposal to establish a Jewish state in Uganda failed.

For the Zionist movement, the creation of a Jewish state would be possible through Jewish migration to Palestine, which at the time had been perceived by many Zionists as "land without a people" (Shapira, 1992).[49] Thus, large-scale Jewish migration, known as *Aliyah*,[50] started in 1882 and intensified by the establishment of the WZO, which organized immigration and laid the foundations for the *Yishuv*, the pre-state Jewish community in Palestine.[51]

Lebanon up to the Litani River, and the East Bank of the Jordan River up to the Hejaz Railway. For their main opposition, the ultranationalist Revisionist Zionist movement, the image of the appropriate borders of the Jewish State constituted both banks of the Jordan River. For the Religious Zionist movement, the homeland referred to the divine promise of the land from "the River of Egypt to the Euphrates." See N. G. Shelef, *Evolving Nationalism : Homeland, Identity, and Religion in Israel, 1925-2005*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2010.

[49] According to Ottoman statistics, Palestine was populated by 602,377 Muslim Arabs, 81,012 Christian Arabs, and 38,754 Jews in 1914. According to J.B. Barron, the first director of the census of Mandatory Palestine, there were 85,000 Jewish residents in Palestine in 1914. See J. McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990.

[50] The Hebrew word *aliyah* (plural *aliyot*) means to ascent or a spiritual going up. It also referred to the Jewish immigration because a Jew who migrated to Palestine (an *oleh*) was ascending to the "Promised Land."

[51] For a discussion on the Zionist immigration and settlement in Palestine as a part of nineteenth-century European colonization, see R. Aaronsohn, "Baron Rothschild and the Initial Stage of Jewish Settlement in Palestine (1882-1890): A Different Type of Colonization?", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 19 (2), 1993 U. Anne, "The Jewish Colonisation Association and a Rothschild in Palestine", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 9 (3), 1973.

Moreover, following World War I, Palestine was placed under the British Mandate by the League of Nations. Article 2 of the Mandate for Palestine[52] and the Balfour Declaration of 1917[53] further facilitated Jewish migration. Consequently, between 1882 and 1948, there were six subsequent waves of Jewish immigrants[54] who founded various proto-state institutions in Palestine that became the main structural foundations for the future Jewish state, dominating Israel's economy and society at least until the 1970s (Rivlin, 2011). After World War II, however, violence between Jewish and Arab populations

[52] Article 2 of the Mandate for Palestine stated that: "The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of a Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion." League of Nations, *Mandate for Palestine and Memorandum by the British Government Relating to Its Application to Transjordan* 1922), available from https://www.wdl.org/en/item/11572/view/1/1/

[53] The Balfour Declaration was a letter written by British Secretary Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930) to Lord Rothschild after World War I, stating British support for the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." See T. A. Project, *Balfour Declaration 1917*, available from https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp

[54] First Aliyah 1882-1903, Second Aliyah 1904-14, Third Aliyah 1919-23, Fourth Aliyah 1924-28, Fifth Aliyah 1932-39, and Aliyah Bet 1933-48.

steadily increased.[55] Britain turned the matter over to the United Nations (UN), which offered to divide Palestine into small autonomous Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem under UN administration (Galnoor, 1995). Neither Arabs nor Jews were satisfied with the plan (Golani, 2009). On May 14, 1948, one day before the withdrawal of the British forces, the Jewish community led by David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973) declared independence. Almost simultaneously, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, called by the Jews the War of Independence (*Milhemet Ha'Atzmaut*), and by the Palestinians, the disaster (*al-Nakba*), broke out.[56] The 1948 War resulted in a 50 percent expansion of Jewish-controlled territory (Danon, 2012) and a large number of Palestinian refugees, almost two-thirds of the population, to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.[57] According to Naor (2013), the war also marked a transition from a local Zionist-Arab confrontation to a regional Arab-Israeli conflict.

[55] For a detailed account on the relations between Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate, see T. Segev, *One Palestine, Complete : Jews and Arabs under the Mandate*, 1st American ed.New York, Metropolitan Books, 2000.

[56] For more on the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, see B. Morris, *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*, New Haven Conn., Yale University Press, 2008.

[57] According to Palestinian sources, approximately 850,000 Palestinians became refugees between 1947 and 1949. According to Israeli government sources, the number was around 520,000. See E. Zureik, "Palestinian Refugees and Peace", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24 (1), 1994.

3.2.2 The Israeli State Policy towards the Citizens of Palestinian Descent from 1948 until the 1990s: Deliberate Exclusion and "Unequal Separation"

Apart from those who became refugees, about 150,000 Palestinians remained within the boundaries of the newly established state and were granted citizenship (A.a. Ghanem, 2016). Although the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel ensured "complete equality of social and political rights for all citizens regardless of race, religion, and sex,"[58] the definition of Israel as a Jewish state by the same declaration automatically excluded the Palestinians from the nation culturally and politically (Rekhess, 2014). This exclusion has led to the preservation of Palestinian religious and communal organizations as in the Ottoman and British Mandate periods,[59] but this administration system further contributed to an "unequal separation" (Abu-saad, 2004) between Jews and Palestinians.

The Jewish nature of the state has also been manifested in using Jewish religious and cultural symbols as the symbols of state and national identity, such as Jewish holidays, the Jewish calendar, the Sabbaths as the official day of rest,

[58] Provisional Government of Israel, *The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel* (Official Gazette: Tel Aviv, 1948), available from https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm

[59] During the Mandate period in Palestine, Britain retained the Ottoman *millet* system, which gave each religious community a limited juridical autonomy to regulate their inter-communal affairs. The state of Israel also maintained this religious jurisdiction system mainly over family law matters, including marriage and divorce. See M. M. Karayanni, "The Separate Nature of the Religious Accommodations for the Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel", *Northwestern Journal of International Human Rights*, 5 (1), 2007.

and the Jewish law and heritage as part of the cultural life of the state. Moreover, the Jewish menorah, the seven-branched candlestick, has been adopted as the state emblem. Although religion has been a component of collective Jewish identity and the state gave Judaism a formal role, as Rabkin (2012) noted, the Zionist movement was predominantly secular and the state they created represented a "revolution in Jewish history" began with the "secularization of the Jews of Europe." The Zionists aimed to minimize the role of religion in the national identity by transforming Jewish society into a secular one (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1981). Thus, the Jewish essence of the state has been constructed as a "civil religion," a system of religious symbols, values, and norms with significant national and political meaning (Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 1983).[60] The secularization of the Jewish life had started in the *Yishuv* with the Kibbutznik[61] ideology that envisioned a new Jewish self-image to make a distinction from diaspora Judaism: secular, socialist, and self-assured (Weissbrod, 1983). For instance, Modern Hebrew, along with Arabic, has been

[60] Liebman and Don-Yehiya defined civil religion as "the ceremonials, myths, and creeds which legitimize the social order, unite the population, and mobilize the society's members in pursuit of its dominant political goals." See C. S. Liebman and E. Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983.

[61] The Kibbutz has been an agricultural cooperative. See P. Rivlin, *The Israeli Economy from the Foundation of the State through the 21st Century*, Cambridge ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011, P. L. van den Berghe and K. Peter, "Hutterites and Kibbutzniks: A Tale of Nepotistic Communism", *Man*, 23 (3), 1988, M. Slann, "Tolstoy and the Beginnings of Kibbutz Ideology", *Judaism*, 21 (333-338), 1972.

adopted as the state's official language instead of Yiddish, which had been the daily language of diaspora Jews in Europe.[62]

Ram (1998) argued that as a national movement without a territory, Zionism naturally adopted the ethnic type of nationalism inherited by the state of Israel as an ethnic principle of membership. As a consequence of the Jewishness of the state, Israel's Palestinian citizens have been viewed as "second-class citizens" (A.a. Ghanem, 2016) and often faced segregation, overt or veiled (Shafir, 2018). Moreover, the Jews have been elevated, whether they were citizens or not, into a privileged position over others, and governments gave institutional and legal preference to the Jewish majority, particularly in the realms of immigration,[63] land allocation,[64] and military service.[65] In addition to

[62] For more information on the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language in the *Yishuv*, see İ. Aytürk, "Revisiting the Language Factor in Zionism: The Hebrew Language Council from 1904 to 1914", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 73 (1), 2010b.

[63] The Law of Return of 1950 and the Nationality Law of 1952 granted every diaspora Jew the right to settle in Israel as an *oleh* and obtain citizenship while denying that right to Palestinians who fled in 1948. See Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Law of Return 5710-1950* 1950), available from https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/law%20of%20return%205710-1950.aspx

[64] Semi-governmental organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the National Jewish Fund became the main instruments of land confiscations in Israel. Over half of the Palestinian land has been confiscated and co-administrated by semi-governmental organizations. Although Palestinian citizens represented 20 percent of the Israeli population, they owned merely 3.5 percent of Israeli private land. See Y. Holzman-Gazit, *Land Expropriation in Israel : Law, Culture, and Society*, Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2007, I. Peleg and

that, as an Israeli retired brigadier general and former deputy national-security advisor explained: “Palestinian citizens have been viewed as part of the Arab enemy which has fought against Israel since the beginning and put into an *enemy-affiliated* position.”[66] The perception of Palestinian citizens as part of the “enemy” consequently led to a security-oriented state policy towards them (Rekhess, 2007), manifested in the institution of a military government regime in the Palestinian-populated areas, an administration system inherited from the British Mandatory Emergency Regulation.[67]

The Military Government was applied to all Palestinians living in Galilee and the “triangle” region along the Israeli-Jordanian 1949 armistice line and the Bedouin in the Negev and divided the Palestinian population into three separate administrations. Local military governors who could devise special laws governed these areas through an effective control and surveillance system (Sa'di, 2011). In effect, Palestinian citizens lived under an authoritarian regime that severely restricted their ability to travel out of their towns and villages and open

D. Waxman, "Losing Control? A Comparison of Majority–Minority Relations in Israel and Turkey", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 13 (3), 2007

[65] Palestinian citizens have been exempted from compulsory military service, which provided equal individual rights and important social networks and job opportunities.

[66] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv: 2018).

[67] In 1945, the mandatory government enacted the Defense (Emergency) Regulations primarily to fight Jewish terrorism in Palestine. In 1948, Israel incorporated it into the Law and Administration Ordinance with “modifications as may result from the establishment of the State or its authorities.” Knesset, *Law and Administration Ordinance* 1948), available from http://www.knesset.gov.il/review/data/eng/law/kns0_govt-justice_eng.pdf

business. Travel permits, curfews, and administrative detentions became part of life, and the state confiscated most of their lands (Lustick, 1980). The military government enforced new laws and regulations, such as the Absentee Property Law of 1950 and the Land Acquisition Law of 1953, which closed territory and prohibited Palestinian refugees from returning to their homes and allowed the state to confiscate lands of those who expelled, fled, or left the country. Consequently, those who abandoned their houses during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and were not found there when the general census was held became "present absentees" (Cohen, 2000) or "internal refugees" (N. Masalha, 2005). Moreover, fearing irredentist tendencies, especially in the Palestinian-dominated areas along the borders, the state demolished Palestinian villages and created more than 700 Jewish settlements to absorb new Jewish immigrants.[68] As a result of the heated parliamentary debates during the early 1960s (Bäuml, 2016), the Military Government was abolished in 1966 under Ben-Gurion's successor, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol (1895-1969).

After the abolition of the military government, political activism among the Palestinian citizens increased (N. Rouhana, 1989), which led to the emergence of several organizations, including the New Communist List (*Reshimah Kommunistit Hadashah-Rakah*), the first authentic Palestinian political representation at the national level (Rubin, 2019). Simultaneously, a "Palestinization" process started as they saw themselves as part of the broader

[68] The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel* 2006), available from https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf

Palestinian nation (Rekhess, 2014).[69] In 1987, when the first uprising of the Palestinians within the 1967 borders of Israel, known as the First *Intifada*, broke out, the political and intellectual leadership of the Palestinian minority in Israel expressed solidarity. It actively supported it in various ways, including financial assistance, food and medical supplies, street demonstrations, and strikes. Therefore, the *Intifada* has catalyzed the "Palestinization" process by deepening Palestinian citizens' fellow feeling with their co-ethnics in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Bligh, 2003; Reiter, 2009). Meanwhile, then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir (1915-2012), the leader of the right-wing Likud party, warned Palestinian citizens "not to follow agitators" when they declared a general strike to show solidarity (Asya, 2002). Shamir did not distinguish among Arabs in general, repeatedly saying that "the Arabs are the same Arabs, and the sea is the same sea" and believed that the ultimate aim of "all Arabs" was the destruction of the state of Israel (Shlaim, 2000). Although he continued to make modest policy changes, which started during his predecessor Shimon Peres's (1923-2016) Labor-led government, addressing the problems of the Palestinian minority such as unequal development budgets and educational services, the tension between the Palestinian minority and the state were high due to the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Reiter, 2009). During Shamir's two-year term as prime minister, on the one hand, the Madrid Conference[70] was held in

[69] Rekhess divided the evolution of the Palestinian minority in Israel as a national minority into four phases: accommodation 1948-67, Palestinization 1967-93, localization 1993-2000, and reconstruction 2000 to date.

[70] Shamir was opposed to the conference, but the President of the United States, George H. W. Bush (1924-2018), pressured Israel into participating by making financial support for the absorption of Soviet Jews. During the conference, the Israeli negotiation team headed by Shamir

1991, marking the starting point for bilateral and international talks among all parties related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. On the other hand, in 1992, the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty to "protect human dignity and freedom, in order to anchor in the basic law, the values of the State of Israel as a *Jewish and democratic state*" was enacted.[71]

3.2.3 The Israeli State Policy towards the Citizens of Palestinian Descent from the 1990s until the 2000s: Partial Accommodation and Integration

In June 1992, Yitzhak Rabin (1922-1995) formed a coalition government with the left-wing Meretz and ultra-orthodox Shas parties, which was also supported by the two Palestinian parties, the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (*HaHazit HaDemokratit LeShalom uLeShivion*-Hadash) and the Arab Democratic Party (*Miflaga Demokratit Aravit*-Mada). The 1992 elections that gave the Israeli Left represented by the Labor Party an overall majority opened a new era in Israeli politics in many senses (Arian and Shamir, 1995) and marked the beginning of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. During the election campaign, Labor emphasized the importance of reordering national priorities away from settlements to civil concerns (Rynhold, 2007), and Rabin

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refused to discuss territorial concessions. A joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation represented Palestinians since Israel forbade the participation of PLO members. The Madrid Conference did not make any real progress; however, it contributed to the direct talks between Israel and representatives of Palestinians living in the territories. See C. Mansour, "The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Negotiations: An Overview and Assessment", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 22 (3), 1993.

[71] Knesset, *Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty* 1992), available from https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic3_eng.htm

apologized for the discrimination against the Palestinian minority.[72] In 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed following the secret negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative body of the Palestinian people. The Oslo Accords resulted in an agreement that Israel would recognize the PLO as the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians. In return, the PLO would consent to recognize Israel.[73] According to Rynhold (2007), a cultural shift towards post-materialism, an increased tendency towards individualism and self-expression at the expense of collectivism and organized religion, led to the rise of a new generation Israeli Left with a more liberal outlook who initiated the Oslo Accords. Barnett (1999), however, argued that significant foreign policy changes, including the acceptance of Israel's legitimacy by the Arab states and the end of the Cold War, paved the way for the Oslo Accords rather than domestic politics. A former Israeli Justice Minister and one of the initiators of the Oslo Accords said: "Oslo was about assuring that Israel is a Jewish state and to be recognized as such by the Palestinians. Without a Palestinian state, this would not have been possible."[74] He also emphasized that the PLO representatives did not officially involve the Palestinian citizens of

[72] R. Gerlitz and N. Othman, "Herzog Must Support the Joint List — and Vice Versa", *+972 Magazine*, 01/03/2015.

[73] Rabinovich classified the 1992-96 peace process into four phases: From the Israeli elections of June 1992 to the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993; from then to the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty in October 1994; from then to Rabin's assassination in November 1995; and from then to the Israeli elections of May 1996. For details on the Oslo Accords, see I. Rabinovich, *Waging Peace : Israel and the Arabs, 1948-2003*, Updated and rev., 1st Princeton ed.Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2004.

[74] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv: 2018).

Israel in the Oslo talks and did not speak on their behalf. Therefore, the exclusion of Israel's Palestinian citizens from the Oslo Accords led them to realize that their political aspirations would not have been fulfilled by establishing an independent Palestinian entity and thus marked a new phase in state-minority relations in Israel (Rekhess, 2014). Rubin (2019) described this phase as the "localization of the national struggle" because by ignoring Israel's Palestinian citizens, the Oslo Accords confirmed their political status as a minority in Israel, which the PLO recognized as the Jewish state. Consequently, the political discourse of the Palestinian minority started to focus on a more inclusive political vision, such as demanding "a state for all citizens with full equality."

Under the Rabin government, the Jewish component of the Israeli national identity was challenged as Rabin spoke in the name of "citizens of Israel" rather than the collective Jewish people.[75] He also made significant policy changes towards the Palestinian minority, such as the abolishing of the office of advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, which had effectively marked Palestinian citizens out from other citizens, the appointment of two Palestinians as deputy ministers, the assignment of Palestinian parties to the important Knesset committees, and an increased state budget allocated to the Palestinian community (Peleg and Waxman, 2011). Between 1992 and 1996, the deprivation of the Palestinian minority, especially regarding the budgets of local

[75] Y. Rabin, *Pm Rabin's Speech to the Opening Session of the Knesset - 18-Apr-94* 1994), available from https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/1994/Pages/PM%20RABIN-S%20SPEECH%20TO%20THE%20OPENING%20SESSION%20OF%20THE%20KN.aspx

councils, education, and health, has significantly decreased (Smooha, 1997). However, this process was far from addressing the expectations of the Palestinians and, in practice, left them at the margins of the decision-makers' interest (A.a. Ghanem, 2001).

The May 1996 elections, which were held following Rabin's assassination by a member of the religious Zionist movement in 1995, have signaled a policy shift from those initiated by the Rabin government. The wave of violence in the form of suicide bombings staged by the Hamas and the Islamic Jihad militants prior to the elections was one of the factors that led to the electoral victory of the right-wing Likud Party and Benjamin Netanyahu over the Labor Party and Shimon Peres (Reiter, 2009). During his election campaign, Netanyahu claimed that the Labor Party favored the interests of the Palestinian electorate over the Jews, used slogans such as "Netanyahu is good for Jews," and promised to undermine the Oslo Accords and the establishment of a Palestinian state. The Netanyahu government reversed the previous government's policies of narrowing disparities between Palestinian and Jewish sectors; 51,7 percent of the Ministry of Trade and Industry's funds and 67 percent of the Ministry of Agriculture's fund had been cut off from the Palestinian localities (Reiter, 2009). The implementation of the former government's legitimization of unrecognized Palestinian villages has been frozen. The so-called "illegal" houses belonging to Palestinian families were demolished. Thus, the Palestinian citizens returned to their previous status as marginal opposition (A.a. Ghanem, 2001).

3.2.4 Back to Basics: The Jewish Hegemony in the 2000s

In 2000, when the Second Intifada[76] broke out, the Labor Party leader Ehud Barak was prime minister.[77] Nevertheless, the policy of excluding Palestinian citizens' representatives from the decision-making bodies continued during his term. The government had established a ministerial committee that proposed a program to provide "equal and fair opportunities to Israeli Arab citizens in social and economic areas" (Hitman, 2016). However, the program could not get through the Knesset when violence escalated between the security forces and the Palestinian citizens who staged mass demonstrations to protest the government's reaction to the second Intifada. During the October 2000 events, which lasted for ten days, thirteen Palestinian citizens were shot dead by the security forces, and many more were injured and arrested (Bishara, 2001). Peleg and Waxman (2011) argued that the demonstrations as an act of solidarity between the Palestinians in Israel and the territories have shifted the Israeli-Jewish attention to the "problem of a dangerously radicalized Arab minority." Consequently, the exacerbated perception of the Palestinian citizens as a "fifth column" caused the securitization of the minority issue and thus a series of discriminatory laws passed between 2000 and 2012 as part of a national security

[76] The second Intifada, also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, broke out in response to the visit of right-wing leader Ariel Sharon (1928-2014) to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Sharon's visit led to a violent demonstration by Muslims, and the clashes between protestors and the security forces resulted in the deaths of seven Palestinians.

[77] Before the elections, Barak created an alliance, called One Israel, with the left-wing religious Zionist Meimad and the center-right Gesher parties.

policy, perpetuating the perceived threat posed to the hegemony of the Jewish identity by the Palestinian minority (Olesker, 2014).[78]

Moreover, although a change in fertility rates among Israeli Jewish women versus Israeli Palestinian women showed that the numbers for the Palestinian population were declining, the "demographic threat" debate that referred to the changing demographic balance between Jews and Palestinians has occupied Israeli politics over the last decades.[79] The demographic debate on the numerical balance between the Palestinian minority and the Jewish majority, the fear that a resurgent Palestinian minority could question Israel's Jewishness through democratic means intensified and brought a fundamental contradiction of Israeli democracy to the surface. In 2003, Finance Minister Netanyahu[80] initiated a massive overhaul of the child allowances structure, considering cutting welfare payments and child allowances paid by the National Insurance

[78] Following the October 2000 events, the government appointed a commission of inquiry, known as the Or Commission, after the name of its director the Judge Theodor Or. The commission report documented that educational, economic, and demographic empowerment of the Palestinian population and continuing discrimination and tensions surrounding the land were among the major factors contributing to the riots' outbreak. Haaretz, *The Official Summation of the or Commission Report* 2003a), available from https://web.archive.org/web/20071001144625/http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=335594

[79] For a historical analysis of the demography debate in Israel, see E. Zureik, "Demography and Transfer: Israel's Road to Nowhere", *Third World Quarterly*, 24 (4), 2003.

[80] Netanyahu served as Finance Minister between 2003 and 2005 in the government led by Ariel Sharon. In the February 2001 elections, the Likud Party led by Ariel Sharon won a plurality of Knesset seats, and Sharon formed a government in which he became prime minister.

Institute.[81] Reiter (2009) argued that the policy of reducing child allowances aimed to reduce birth rates among Palestinian citizens. However, cutting in the Israeli welfare system seemed to emerge, to a large extent, as part of Netanyahu's neoliberal political agenda, who argued that the cuts would encourage people to go to work (Nathanson and Weiss, 2020), especially those ultra-Orthodox Jews who tended to have many children and large families.

In the early 2000s, a new phase in the relations between the state and the Palestinian minority began with the Jewish right-wing's rising political power. This new phase, called the "new Zionist hegemony" (Nadim N.; Rouhana and Sultany, 2003), has been characterized by the reversal of certain liberalizing trends initiated by the Rabin government and a significant policy shift towards the Palestinian minority (Rekhess, 2014). The boundaries of citizenship have been redrawn through legislation, government policies, and public discourse, creating a discourse of "citizens without citizenship" (Sultany, 2003) and "stateless citizenship" (Molavi, 2013), and patterns of inequality proved relatively resilient (Abu-saad, 2004).

The response of the Israeli state to Palestinian demands for equality morphed into legislation, emphasizing the Jewish character of the state and imposing restrictions on free and fair contestation for political power, on the equal exercise of fundamental political and civil liberties, and civil society activities of the Palestinian citizens (Rubin, 2019). In the last decade, a number

[81] Haaretz, *Netanyahu Eyes Reform in Child Allowances* 2003b), available from https://www.haaretz.com/1.4879237

of laws aiming to complicate the political representation of the Palestinian minority have been passed by the Israeli Knesset, including raising the electoral threshold from 2 to 3.25 percent as a barrier against entrance of small parties to the Knesset and prohibiting public funding to civil society organizations which used the term "*Nakba*." Moreover, an amendment of the "Basic Law: Israel the Nation-State of the Jewish People," also known as the "Nation-State Bill," that was adopted by the Knesset in July 2018 made it clear that Palestinian citizens could not be incorporated into Israeli identity since the law granted the right of national self-determination exclusively only to the Jewish people.[82] For Jamal (2018a), the law could be seen as a backlash against the Palestinian demands for a state for all citizens since it also viewed such demands as a violation of the law.

In addition to a series of discriminatory laws that directly or indirectly affected Palestinian citizens, right-wing governments have made efforts to encourage economic and business activity within the Palestinian community in the last decades. Consequently, a number of government plans for economic development were put in place. Moreover, these efforts have been institutionalized through the establishment of the Authority for the Economic Development of the Minority Sectors in the Prime Minister's Office[83] in 2007,

[82] The Knesset, *Basic Law: Israel - the Nation State of the Jewish People*

[83] Prime Minister's Office, *Authority for the Economic Development of the Arab, Druze and Circassian Sectors* 2007), available from https://www.gov.il/he/departments/prime_ministers_office

under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.[84] In 2015, the government of Netanyahu, Olmert's successor, adopted a five-year plan to improve socio-economic conditions for the Palestinian citizens and their integration into Israel's productivity enterprise.[85] A senior member of the Likud Party stated that the government headed by Netanyahu had invested 5 billion shekels for the economic development of the Palestinian citizens.[86] However, a former director-general of the foreign ministry added:

> They are part of the economy as much as we allow them… The current leadership of Israel, which is very capitalist, sees Palestinian citizens as a critical workforce; not only cheap labor but as customers and workers… You cannot run the economy without twenty percent of the country. The economy would collapse, so they have to be treated reasonably when it comes to the economy. Politics is a different matter. The government does not want them in politics. They can enter the Knesset but are not considered as coalition partners… There is a wall between how you treat them when you need them in the economy and when you do not need them.[87]

In other words, the integration of Palestinian citizens into the national economy appeared more like a part of a "control strategy" (Jamal, 2011) in which they have not been "fully" incorporated into the Israeli political system.

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[84] In March 2006, Ehud Olmert was elected prime minister after Kadima won the most seats in the legislative elections.

[85] M. Elran, E. Yashiv and A. N. Muhammed, "The Five-Year Plan to Integrate the Arab Population in Israel: A Quantum Leap Forward?," in *INSS Insight* (Tel Aviv, Israel: The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), 2016).

[86] Likud Party Foreign Affairs Director, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Jerusalem (Jerusalem: 2019).

[87] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy (Mevaseret Zion: 2018).

Israel was founded as an exclusively Jewish state based on the Zionist ideology, “a combined political, economic, and social approach to creating a territorial base for a Jewish polity” (Kimmerling, 2008). Consequently, Israel’s Palestinian citizens, those who remained inside the area of the Jewish state and eventually became citizens, have been excluded from the nation culturally and politically. Although they have enjoyed some minority rights, such as a semi-autonomous Arab school system, a community jurisdiction over religious courts and places of worship, and an official status granted to the Arabic language, Palestinian citizens have been disqualified from the privileges that the state reserved exclusively for the Jewish majority in all spheres. Moreover, they continued to be designated as the “enemy within” due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict, which has been resulted in a “security-oriented” state policy towards them. The state’s refusal to establish an inclusive Israeli identity has led to the exclusion and subordination of the Palestinian citizens, putting their rights within the Israeli polity into question. In other words, the Israeli political elite pursued a boundary contraction strategy by excluding Palestinian citizens from equal access to power and resources. Although there were attempts to draw more inclusive national identities during Rabin’s period marked by the Oslo Accords, as the former Israeli Justice Minister stated, “Rabin’s primary objective was to secure Israel as a Jewish state.”[88] Moreover, although successive governments of both the Left and the Right-wing initiated government plans and economic programs to integrate them into the national economy, Palestinian citizens kept their status marginal opposition. Their representatives have continued to be excluded from the

[88] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

decision-making bodies. Distrust remained high and posed a major obstacle to any conflict resolution attempts (Smooha, 2016).

CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGING ETHNIC HIERARCHIES: KURDISH AND PALESTINIAN BOUNDARY INVERSION DEMANDS THROUGH EQUALIZATION

A broader process of Kurdish and Palestinian politicization has taken place almost simultaneously after their "minoritization" through the formation of Israeli and Turkish nation-states. Both citizens of Kurdish and Palestinian descent, who have been a part of a transnational community, initially formed alliances with the leftist movements in their countries respectively and gradually developed their independent, organized ethno-nationalist political movements. Although they have had a long political struggle for equality, they substantially differed in their means. While Turkey's Kurds have been engaged in a decades-long guerilla war against the state; Palestinian citizens of Israel generally challenged the Israeli system from within through peaceful means, such as general strikes and mass demonstrations. However, their tactics to achieve political ends have not followed a linear trajectory; instead, they have shown flexibility and variability over time, in response to challenges and changes in the

socio-political conditions of their respective countries. On the one hand, while Kurdish political activism in the 1960s and the 1970s revolved around legal organizations, associations, and political parties, and used legal, political means, the 1980s, and the 1990s witnessed a Kurdish separatist insurgency. On the other hand, Palestinian citizens of Israel have adopted civil means as their primary strategy (Jamal, 2007); however, there have been occasional violent confrontations with the Israeli security forces, as happened in the October 2000 events.[89]

Jamal (2007) argued that as long as the state did not block civil spheres of protest and left hope for democratization, minority groups tended to use available means and did not adopt separatist or irredentist strategies. If the state eliminated the space of civic protest, minorities might radicalize their strategies. Similarly, McAdam et all. (1996) pointed out that political movements have been shaped by the broader set of political constraints and opportunities unique to the national context in which they have been embedded. In the last decades, both citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent in Israel and Turkey started to challenge the boundaries of Israeli and Turkish national identities through legal, political means. Moreover, research showed that they have tended not to support secessionist claims. A survey in 2009, for example, found that 78,2 percent of

[89] In October 2000, Palestinian citizens organized mass demonstrations in the Galilee and the Triangle Area and engaged in a violent confrontation with the security forces in response to Israel's violence against the Palestinians in the West Bank following the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000. During the October 2000 events, thirteen Palestinian citizens were killed by the security forces. See, N. Shoughry, *"Israeli-Arab" Political Mobilization : Between Acquiescence, Participation, and Resistance*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Palestinian citizens supported Jewish-Palestinian co-existence in Israel (Smooha, 2010b). According to another research, Kurdish support for autonomy in Turkey has been relatively higher than separation (Sarigil and Karakoc, 2016). Both minorities and their political representatives took a more assertive stance in the political arena and became a political force capable of being a player in parliamentary politics. Both groups sought to draw more inclusive national identities, be recognized as national minorities with collective rights, including institutional and cultural autonomy, and effective inclusion into the political system with the right to power-sharing in decision-making.

4.1 Kurdish Political Mobilization and Minority Demands in Turkey

4.1.1 Ethnopolitical Mobilization of Kurds until the 1970s

The first years of the modern Turkish Republic witnessed successive Kurdish revolts due to establishing a fully centralized nation-state.[90] However, following the suppression of the last Kurdish rebellion in 1938, an overt Kurdish political movement was dormant until the 1960s. The period between the 1940s and 1960s has often been described as "quiet years" (Çalışlar, 2013) or "period of silence" for the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. However, according to Bozarslan (2008), this period played an indirect role in forming a codified Kurdish nationalism and its symbols. Only after the 1960 military coup the "real revival of Kurdish nationalism" occurred.

[90] Between 1924 and 1940, there were over twenty Kurdish uprisings in Turkey. See G. Gürbey, "The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s" in Robert Olson, ed., *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, Lexington, Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 1996.

Ironically, the 1961 Constitution, which was drafted under the supervision of the military regime, granted more civil liberties to individuals. However, it prohibited the formation of any political party that threatened Turkey's "indivisible unity of the country and the nation." Therefore, Kurdish intellectuals allied with the Turkish left and joined the Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi-TİP*). Socialism thus played the same unifying role between some segments of Turkish and Kurdish society as the Islamic unity discourse had done during the War of Independence. Although the Kurdish question was then represented as an issue of regional underdevelopment and class conflict rather than ethnic one, the TİP was the first political party represented at the National Assembly to officially recognized the "existence of Kurdish people in eastern Turkey" and brought the Kurdish demands to the public debate (Kaya, 2013). Moreover, the impact of the 1961 Barzani revolt[91] in northern Iraq and urbanization have created a broader political consciousness among Kurds, which led to an increasing Kurdish political mobilization in urban centers (Saatci, 2002). Consequently, in the second half of the 1960s, Kurdish political mobilization evolved into a more organized form with the establishment of Turkey Kurdistan Democratic Party (*Türkiye Kürdistan Demokratik Partisi*-TKDP), a clandestine party inspired by the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party, and the Eastern Revolutionary Cultural Hearts (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*-DDKO), the first legal Kurdish organization. Supported by the TİP, the TKDP organized a series of large public meetings, the Eastern Meetings (*Doğu*

[91] In 1961, Mullah Mustafa Barzani (1903-1979), who founded the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was in full revolt against the Iraqi government. Given the government's weakness in those days, Barzani achieved considerable success and maintained a *de facto* independence.

Mitingleri), between 1967 and 1969 in various Kurdish-inhabited towns and cities, which were considered to be the "pinnacle of Kurdish activism" in the late 1960s (Gunes, 2012). In this period, the main Kurdish demands included economic development, recognition of the Kurds and their rights, and state-sponsored radio and education in Kurdish (Bozarslan, 2008).

4.1.2 The Emergence of an Autonomous Kurdish Movement in the 1970s and the Kurdish Separatist Insurgency in the 1980s

Following the 1971 military memorandum, the TİP, along with the DDKO, was shut down, and their members were imprisoned. All Kurdish nationalist activities were repressed, and the Kurdish intelligentsia faced sanctions by the military acting as the guardian of the national unity and the country's territorial integrity. According to Bozarslan (2008), many Kurdish activists lost their faith in the constitutional and legal framework due to widespread repression in this period. Moreover, the alliance between the Turkish and Kurdish leftists broke down, and numerous underground Kurdish parties actively advocating cultural, linguistic, and political rights for Kurds either through peaceful means or through armed struggle emerged (Joost; Jongerden and Akkaya, 2018). Kurdish movement thus became a more autonomous, potent political force, albeit more radical and revolutionary in its discourse and actions (Gündoğan, 2015). The PKK emerged from this revolutionary leftist movement and became the hegemonic fraction by the 1980s as a consequence of the elimination of many other Kurdish groups either by the state or the PKK.

The PKK was founded by a group of university students led by Abdullah Öcalan[92] in 1978 in Diyarbakır to integrate Marxist-Leninist ideology with Kurdish national aspirations to envision an "independent, unified, and democratic Kurdistan" (Öcalan, 1978). By the beginning of the 1980s, the organization began to train its militants at the Bekaa Valley in the Syria-controlled part of Lebanon, where it shared facilities with the Palestinian groups and later established bases in the mountainous areas in northern Iraq.[93] In August 1984, the group launched its first attacks against military targets in Turkey's southeast. In the 1990s, it also targeted economic and social assets such as railroads, bridges, and tourist sites. Taşpınar (2005) argued that, following the 1980 coup, the military rule's use of indiscriminate violence, particularly widespread arrest and torture, between 1980 and 1983 was the reason behind PKK's success in finding a social base by mobilizing large numbers, many of whom were in Diyarbakır Prison. Additionally, increasing Kurdish diaspora activism in Europe has created a source of human resources and money for the PKK-led insurgency (H.J. Barkey, 2000). The PKK thus managed to maintain its forces in the region and increased its recruitment throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Gunes, 2013).

[92] Abdullah Öcalan, widely known by his nickname Apo, was a student in Ankara in the 1970s and a member of the Turkish socialist movement, involved with the Revolutionary Youth (*Devrimci Genç)* and with another leftist group, the Ankara Higher Education Association (AYOD). See H. Bozarslan, "Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)" in Abbas Vali, ed., *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, California, Mazda Publishers, 2003b.

[93] The central Iraqi government had no control over this territory due to the ongoing war with Iran and the emerging strength of Iraqi-Kurdish organizations.

4.1.3 Pushing the Legal Front: Kurdish Ethnic Mobilization in the 1990s

In 1990, the PKK also pressed forward on the political front, and Turkey's first legal pro-Kurdish party, the People's Labor Party (*Halkın Emek Partisi*-HEP), was established. Similar to the alliance with the Turkish left during the 1960s and early 1970s, the HEP formed an electoral pact with the Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti*-SHP) for the 1991 national elections and gained parliamentary representation. Although the Constitutional Court later shut down the HEP for "threatening the indivisible unity of the state," it was followed by a number of parties committed to advancing Kurdish cultural and political rights. In addition to participation in electoral politics, the PKK also started to use non-violent strategies, such as sit-ins, going out of business, and mass riots called *serhildan*,[94] which gradually spread between 1990 and 1993, mainly in the Kurdish-dominated cities as well as the western metropolises. In 1993, the PKK also abandoned its initial aim of independence and suggested a form of extensive autonomy (Cengiz Güneş, 2014). This was followed by several unilateral ceasefires, showing the PKK's readiness for negotiations and political resolution. The HEP and later the Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi-DEP) declared that the Kurdish question should have been solved through democratic and peaceful means, and Kurdish deputies proposed a "binational state," advocating a "Turkish and Kurdish ethnic equality based on law" (Kirişci and Winrow, 1997).

Both international and domestic factors played a role in the PKK's tactical and ideological transformation. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the

[94] *Serhildan* means uprising in Kurdish.

end of the Cold War in 1991 forced the PKK to reconsider its goals and orientation like many other leftist national liberation movements.[95] Therefore, the PKK searched for a new political and ideological perspective responding to the changing conditions of the post-Cold War (Yeşiltaş, 2015). According to Gunter (2000), another reason was that the idea of an independent Kurdish state lacked international support since it might destabilize the geo-strategically important Middle East. Domestically, while the PKK found itself increasingly defensive due to the Turkish military pressure, the state attitude vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue shifted from denial to acknowledging the problem in its ethnopolitical dimensions (Ünver, 2015). President Turgut Özal and Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel publicly acknowledged that they had come to recognize the "Kurdish reality" (Uçar and Akdere, 2017). This was followed by some legal changes signifying a willingness to try a new approach to the Kurdish question, such as lifting the law banning speaking Kurdish in public. Moreover, following the capture of its leader in 1999, the PKK entered into a comprehensive process of ideological and organizational restructuring by turning to the radical democracy discourse in which Kurdish demands have been re-articulated as part of demands for equality (Ahmet Hamdi; Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). During his trial, Öcalan called for a democratic republic where Kurds and Turks would be united in the way Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had imagined (Marcus, 2007). At the Seventh Extraordinary Congress of the PKK in 2000, responding to Öcalan's call, the PKK leadership decided to focus on political means as the "fundamental form of struggle" to find a peaceful solution

[95] In its Fifth Congress in 1995, the hammer and sickle had been removed from the PKK flag.

to the Kurdish question through transforming Turkey into a "democratic republic" (Gunes, 2012).[96]

4.1.4 Kurdish Movement's Democratic Autonomy Proposals and Demands for a National Identity Based on Citizenship

The proposal for a democratic republic was developed by Öcalan in prison as part of his legal defense to disassociate citizenship in Turkey from nationalism which imposed a homogenous national identity.[97] Öcalan (2011b) defined democratization as "safeguarding measures to protect the rights of individuals from all social strata, regardless of their language, religion, ethnicity, and nationality, as well as their freedom of speech and association against the state." He rejected the idea of the nation-state as a solution for Kurds since it

[96] In 2002, as part of its new strategy, the PKK formally abolished itself and established the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (Kongreya Azadiya u Demokrasiya Kurdistan-KADEK); however, in 2004, it remobilized its armed forces and, in 2005, also returned to the name PKK. For Tezcür, the PKK's resumption of violence was the competition that challenged the organization's political hegemony over its ethnic constituency as a result of democratization; under the dynamics of competition, the survival of the organization necessitated radicalization rather than moderation. For the radicalization argument, see G. M. Tezcür, "When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey", 47 (6), 2010.

[97] Öcalan conceptualized the idea of a democratic republic in a booklet which was publicly published in 2011, entitled "Problems of Democratization in Turkey and Solution Models in Kurdistan (Road Map)." The Road Map was written in prison as a part of Öcalan's written defense to the court and handed into the prison administration in August 2009. The authorities confiscated Öcalan's writings because they had nothing to do with Öcalan's defense, and they were "contrary to the state's interests." The document later was turned in to Öcalan's lawyers following the European Court for Human Rights decision.

was inherently anti-democratic as it was based on monolingual and monoethnic homogeneity of citizens. Instead, he proposed that Turkey's Kurdish question would have been solved only within a democratic republic that entailed the constitutional recognition of Kurdish identity and equal participation for all citizens living together in solidarity (Öcalan, 2011b). A democratic republic would have only been possible through a new and democratic constitution based on a consensus among all citizens and grounded on protecting different groups against the nation-state. With his proposal for a democratic republic, he also conceptualized the visions of "common homeland" and "common nation," which represented a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society in its social composition:

> It is a possibility that people from different cultures may perceive the same geography as their homeland. It is neither fair nor realistic to make it a homeland just for Turks or Kurds (…) similarly, the nation should be considered as a composition of various groups, not just a composition of citizens. Common nation, or nation of nations, refers to the composition of various peoples living in a common homeland. To adopt a more solution-oriented approach, it should be called the "nation of Turkey" rather than the "Turkish nation."[98]

Öcalan later developed an alternative administration system to the nation-state, which he interchangeably called "democratic confederalism," "democratic autonomy," or "democracy without a state" (Öcalan, 2011a). Heavily influenced by Murray Bookchin,[99] he advocated a system of libertarian

[98] A. Öcalan, *Democratic Confederalism*, London, Cologne, Transmedia Publishing, 2011a.

[99] Murray Bookchin (1921-2006) was an anarchist social theorist and political philosopher who argued that present environmental problems were directly related to social problems and the over-centralized state. Therefore, he proposed self-governing and confederated libertarian municipalities.

communalism based on voluntary direct participation and collective consensus. Democratic confederalism consisted of bottom-up self-governing local structures, such as communes in neighborhoods and villages connected to higher entities at the city, region, and national levels.[100] Ecology and feminism were two central pillars of this model.[101] In other words, the project of democratic confederalism has been conceived as a form of decentralized federal policy to propose an alternative institutional framework to the current state system in the Middle East. Moreover, according to Güneş (2012), this loosely united confederal entity "would neither challenge the established and internationally recognized boundaries nor resort to nationalism or establishing a nation-state."

In 2005, the PKK and all affiliated organizations were restructured under the name of the KCK to put into practice democratic confederalism. The KCK organized itself in assemblies from the executive council at the top of the structure, down to a judiciary and centers of economic, political, and social

[100] For a detailed analysis of Öcalan's democratic confederalism model, see A. H. Akkaya and J. Jongerden, "Confederalism and Autonomy in Turkey: The Kurdistan Workers' Party and the Reinvention of Democracy" in Cengiz; Güneş and Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, eds., *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation* London; New York, Routledge, 2014.

[101] In January 2014, the Kurdish PYD forces established an autonomous administration through local councils in northeastern Syria, often called Rojava, to implement Öcalan's vision of democratic confederalism. For a discussion on whether the democratic confederalism model in northeastern Syria reproduced different modes of identity and/or belonging than that of the nation-state, see P. Dinc, "The Kurdish Movement and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria: An Alternative to the (Nation-)State Model?", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 22 (1), 2020.

fields, which would have operated through sub-committees (Gunter, 2013). Consequently, the Turkish state saw the KCK as an attempt to set up a parallel state structure and accordingly conducted massive waves of arrests between 2009 and 2010, also known as the "KCK operations," in which thousands of KCK members, pro-Kurdish activists, and politicians were arrested.[102]

Meanwhile, by the early 2000s, thanks to the lifting of the OHAL in southeastern Turkey and reforms accelerated by the EU accession process, pro-Kurdish political activists took the opportunity to re-organize themselves into a more functional and legal form and worked within civil society and umbrella organizations (Kaliber and Tocci, 2010). Accordingly, the Democratic Society Congress (*Demokratik Toplum Kongresi*-DTK) was established in October 2007 to develop and implement democratic autonomy proposals. The main objective of the DTK was to create the infrastructure of democratic autonomy through various commissions, such as science, culture, diplomacy, law, and ecology. These commissions created local assemblies at the levels of villages, neighborhoods, districts, cities, and regions. By 2012, claiming to be an "alternative Kurdish parliament" (Fadaee and Brancolini, 2019), the DTK was composed of more than 700 members, including pro-Kurdish political parties, NGOs, associations, and individuals, and had 850 elected delegates (International Crisis Group, 2012). Subsequently, in mid-2011, the DTK's general congress declared democratic autonomy for Kurds in Turkey's southeast, though the decision seemed wildly premature (Gunter, 2014).

[102] Bianet, *30 Ayda Kck'den 7748 Gözaltı, 3895 Tutuklama*

In addition to grassroots organizations, pro-Kurdish political parties also voiced democratic autonomy as their political project in the realm of conventional politics. In line with the idea of self-governance, the pro-Kurdish DTP adopted the free municipalism model (*özgür belediyecilik modeli*) in 2008, intending to establish a bottom-up administrative body in which cultural and national identities would have found freedom to develop (Ahmet Hamdi Akkaya and Jongerden, 2014).[103] Meanwhile, the DTP has been exposed to the AKP government's exclusion policies, which narrowed the political arena for pro-Kurdish parties (Çiçek, 2014). Isolation policies included non-cooperation with DTP municipalities, active non-engagement with DTP members, and court cases against mayors (Öktem, 2008). Later on, in December 2009, the DTP was banned by the Constitutional Court for its ties with the PKK and eventually replaced by the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi-BDP), which managed to increase its parliamentary representation by winning 36 seats in the June 2011 elections.

In October 2011, following the elections, a Constitutional Reconciliation Commission, consisting of three MPs from each of the four parliamentary parties, was formed to study the amendment of the 1982 Constitution. The constitution-making process lasted until the commission's works reached a stalemate in 2013 when the AKP advocated for the adaptation of an executive

[103] In the 2009 local elections, nearly doubling the number of municipalities under its control, the DTP won in 51 districts, seven provinces, and one metropolitan municipality in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Bianet, *Yerel Seçimlerde Partiler Ve Kazandıkları Belediye Başkanlıkları* 2009), available from https://m.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/113476-yerel-secimlerde-partiler-ve-kazandiklari-belediye-baskanliklari

presidency while other parties were opposed to strengthening the president's role.[104] In the meantime, the commission has reached an agreement on 60 articles concerning fundamental rights and freedoms and the administration and public services, out of 172 initially slated for debate for a new constitution. When parties presented their constitutional proposals to the commission, the BDP proposed to replace the term "Turkish society" in the constitution with "society of Turkey," introducing a notion of civil citizenship.[105] Pro-Kurdish politicians claimed that Kurds had been one of "the constitutive elements" of the Republic of Turkey due to their participation in the Turkish War of Independence. Hence, they should have been recognized as such in the new constitution (Kaya, 2013). In other words, they attempted to reposition the Kurdish minority vis-à-vis the Turkish majority by claiming an equal status to that of Turks.

In 2014, in line with the debates on introducing a new civic national identity based on citizenship of Turkey rather than Turkish ethnic descent,[106] the BDP merged with the HDP, a move signifying ceasing to be simply a "pro-

[104] For a detailed account of the failure of the constitution-making between 2011 and 2013 in Turkey, see F. Petersen and Z. Yanasmayan, eds., *The Failure of Popular Constitution Making in Turkey: Regressing Towards Constitutional Autocracy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[105] Hürriyet, *Bdp Anayasa Önerilerini Açıkladı* 2010), available from https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/bdp-anayasa-onerilerini-acikladi-14257650

[106] For more information on the debates on developing a more inclusive primary identity in Turkey, see I. N. Grigoriadis, "Türk or Türkiyeli? The Reform of Turkey's Minority Legislation and the Rediscovery of Ottomanism", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43 (3), 2007.

Kurdish" party (Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, 2016) and the re-embracement with some segments of the Turkish left with a renewed political imaginary towards radical democracy (Yegen, 2016). The HDP was established in 2012 to advocate rights and liberties for all disadvantaged, oppressed, and excluded groups in Turkey (Yörük, 2016). Claiming to represent a more hybrid political entity, the party framed its strategy as "*Türkiyelileşme*" (neither the Kurdish movement nor the Turkish left). By doing so, it presented itself as a progressive and secular alternative to the AKP's increasingly conservative and authoritarian Islamism in an attempt to appeal to a broader constituency (Leezenberg, 2016). The party favored a "plural social life based on equal and voluntary co-existence of differences" in its program. It proposed a democratic autonomy model to empower local administrations through decentralization and citizens' direct participation in the decision-making process to solve Turkey's Kurdish question, and a democratic Turkey at large (HDP, 2012).

To sum up, after breaking the alliance with the Turkish left in the 1970s, the Kurdish nationalist movement radicalized as it turned to the armed struggle. However, in this course of time, the PKK has evolved its ideological underpinnings, tactics, and strategy to accommodate a broader constituency (Watts, 2010). First, the organization created alternative channels to the armed struggle for articulating Kurdish demands by using non-violent action. Consequently, the Kurdish political scene diversified with the emergence of different forms of political activism and hence evolved into a mass movement, signifying the transformation of Turkey's Kurdish question from an intractable armed conflict to multi-dimensional activism. Second, especially by the 2000s,

the Kurdish nationalist movement also turned to the radical democracy discourse in which the subsequent demands for the constitutional recognition of Kurdish identity and culture and greater regional autonomy have been articulated.

4.2 Palestinian Political Mobilization and Minority Demands in Israel

4.2.1 Ethnopolitical Mobilization of Palestinians until the 1960s: Wavering between Accommodation and Resistance

Unlike the majority of the Palestinian population, which was displaced in the 1947-1948 war, approximately 150,000 remained within the Israeli territory and became citizens of Israel. From now on, as Jamal (2007) argued, Palestinian politics in Israel have been deeply influenced by the "trauma of being transformed from a majority in its homeland to a minority in an alien state." Palestinian citizens were eventually placed under a military government regime, and a continuous state of emergency has been declared following the declaration of statehood.[107] The military government and its emergency power thus became a legal instrument of political repression and facilitated the state's control over

[107] Four days after the establishment of the State of Israel, a state of emergency under the Defense (Emergency) Regulations of 1945 has been declared and continuously extended by all Israeli Knessets up until today. For more information on the Israeli model of a permanent state of war and various types of power it granted to the executive, see S. Navot, "Emergency as a State of Mind: The Case of Israel" in Pierre Auriel, Olivier Beaud and Carl Wellman, eds., *The Rule of Crisis : Terrorism, Emergency Legislation and the Rule of Law*, Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2018. For Israel's lasting emergency regime and its impact on the state's mode of governance, especially towards the Palestinian citizens, see Y. Mehozay, "The Rule of Difference: How Emergency Powers Prevent Palestinian Assimilation in Israel", *Israel Studies Review*, 27 (2), 2012.

the Palestinian population, mainly through forced displacement and land confiscation and its further isolation (Lustick, 1980; Mehozay, 2012).

Although Palestinian citizens had been given the right to vote and be elected, their suffrage rights coexisted with severe and systematic restrictions (Lustick and Berkman, 2016). Moreover, finding themselves defeated in the 1948 War, they were devastated and lacked of organization and material resources (Jamal, 2007). For this reason, Rekhess (2007) described the period between 1948 and 1967 as "accommodation" for Palestinian citizens. Nevertheless, as Shoughry (2012) put it, Palestinian political mobilization under the military government possessed a mixed behavior ranging from acquiescence, participation, and even resistance.

Similar to the alliance between the Turkish left and the Kurdish nationalist movement during the 1960s, Palestinian political mobilization gradually developed from within the organizational structure of the Jewish leftist movement.[108] During the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, two major political groupings had dominated the Palestinian political scene in Israel. The first group called the "moderate" camp consisted of those who were associated with the Zionist parties, the ruling Workers' Party of the Land of Israel (*Mifleget Poalei Eretz Israel*-Mapai)[109] and the Zionist left-wing United Workers' Party

[108] For a detailed historical account of the Jewish leftist movement, see Z. Lockman, "The Left in Israel: Zionism Vs. Socialism", *MERIP Reports* (49), 1976.

[109] Mapai was later in 1968 morphed into the present-day Labor Party.

(*Mifleget HaPoalim HaMeuhedet*-Mapam).[110] They mainly focused on the physical survival of the Palestinian population, primarily concerned with the community's daily needs, such as health and education, and consequently adopted an accommodative and pragmatic behaviour that could assure them a decent level of safety and existence (Shoughry, 2012). The second group was the "national" camp which was comprised of those who identified with the Israeli Communist Party (*HaMiflega HaKomunistit HaYisraelit*-Maki), which took an anti-Zionist stance and supported the establishment of a Palestinian state as recommended by the UN partition resolution in 1947. Most of the Palestinian members of Maki were former members of the National Liberation League (NLL), an Arab-Palestinian communist faction founded in 1944, who merged again with the Jewish communists.[111] Over time, Maki provided an alternative for Palestinian voters who could not identify with the Zionist parties and became a legal platform for protest and organization (Sandler, 1995).

In addition to party politics, protest actions, ranging from leaflet dissemination to letter writing to state officials, and grassroots activism, such as

[110] Mapam was one of the predecessors of the current Meretz Party.

[111] The Palestine Communist Party was established in 1923 at the time of the British Mandate and later in 1944 split with Arab-Palestinian members forming the NLL. Following the establishment of the state of Israel, members of the NLL reunited with the Jewish faction under Maki. For more information on the Palestine Communist Party and the Jewish and Arab-Palestinian labor movement in Mandatory Palestine, see Z. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies : Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996 For the NLL's unification with Maki in 1948 see, I. Kaufman, "Communists and the 1948 War: Pcp, Maki, and the National Liberation League", *Journal of Israeli History*, 33 (2), 2014.

organizing large May Day demonstrations,[112] steadily increased among the Palestinian population. As Sa'di (2017) showed, 1,723 protests actions took place between 1949 and 1966, with an annual average of almost 96 events. Moreover, inspired by the pan-Arabism of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) that was spreading throughout the Arab world in the 1950s, the first independent Palestinian political movement in Israel, the *al-Ard* (literally: the Land), was established in 1959 by a group of university students. Al-Ard mainly focused on the issues specific to Palestinians within Israel, such as the right of return, the termination of the military government, ending land confiscations, and the extension of social and economic rights. Later in 1964, the movement requested to be registered as an association with the aim of "promoting equality and social justice for all people in Israel and supporting Arab socialist unity and all progressive anti-colonial movements in the world." However, the court rejected the request on the grounds that its stated aims were to damage the essence of the state as a Jewish state (Dallasheh, 2010). Furthermore, the Minister of Defence outlawed the movement, and its leading members were arrested. Although some of its members later tried to establish a party to run in the 1965 elections under the Arab Socialist List, the Central Election Committee disqualified the list by claiming that it was the continuation of the al-Ard movement (Hitman, 2016). In other words, it was not that the "Palestinians were unable to mobilize or develop coherent collective standpoint

[112] By the end of the 1950s, the General Federation of Labour in Israel (Histadrut) also accepted Palestinian workers as full members, and the number of Palestinians in the Histadrut steadily increased. For more on the Histadrut, see M. L. Plunkett, "The Histadrut: The General Federation of Jewish Labor in Israel", 11 (2), 1958 For the Histadrut and the Palestinian citizens, see J. M. Landau, *The Arabs and the Histadrut*, Tel-Aviv, Ramot Printing Press, 1976.

vis-à-vis the state" (Rubin, 2019) but state policies prevented the emergence of national leadership, and the state authorities forcibly stopped all attempts to establish a party seeking to represent Palestinians in Israel.

4.2.2 The "Palestinization" of the Political Struggle between the 1960s and the 1990s

The 1960s was a decade of significant developments for Palestinian citizens. First, the leftist movement moved towards an ideological split between its Palestinian and Jewish factions due to internal political struggles like the broken alliance of the Kurdish ethno nationalists with the Turkish left at the beginning of the 1970s.[113] In 1965, an internal political struggle within the party led to the formation of pro-Jewish Maki and pro-Palestinian Rakah parties.[114] Second, the military government was abolished in 1966, following heated parliamentary debates (Degani, 2015). Lastly, following the Six-Day War in 1967,[115] Palestinian citizens of Israel reconnected with their fellow co-ethnics in the West Bank and Gaza (Jamal, 2017) and, hence, the consolidation of the

[113] For a chronological order of the events that led to the split within the Maki, see M. Edelstein, "The 1965 Split in Maki and the Cpsu", *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 4 (1), 1974.

[114] For more information on Rakah's ideology, political goals, and strategy, see D. J. Schnall, "Native Anti-Zionism: Ideologies of Radical Dissent in Israel", *Middle East Journal*, 31 (2), 1977.

[115] In June 1967, the mobilization of combined armed forces of the neighboring Egypt, Jordan, and Syria culminated in an Israeli attack on Egypt. Following the war, which lasted for six days, Israeli military forces had occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. A. Shlaim and W. R. Louis, *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War : Origins and Consequences*, Cambridge ; New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Palestinian identity as a national alternative to the Israeli had started, a process which came to be known as "Palestinization" (Rekhess, 2007).

After the abolition of the military government, movement restrictions prevented Palestinians from establishing social movement organizations have been lifted. Consequently, political activism among the Palestinian citizens steadily increased (N. Rouhana, 1989) as they saw themselves as part of the broader Palestinian nation (Rekhess, 2014). During the 1970s, the political empowerment of Palestinian citizens led to the emergence of several organizations, among them the Sons of the Village (*Abna' al-Balad*),[116] which explicitly denied the Jewish sovereignty over all the territory of Palestine, the first Islamic political movement in Israel,[117] and other action-oriented, non-partisan, extra-parliamentary organizations such as the National Committee of Chairman of Arab Local Authorities, the Land Defense Committee, and various student associations.

In parallel with the growing number of Palestinian organizations, the collective political mobilization of the Palestinians has also been marked by

[116] Abna' al-Balad was established by a group of young activists in 1972 to "encourage a sense of local unity and national identity." Its objectives included the return of Palestinian refugees, an end to the Israeli occupation of territories, and establishing a democratic, secular Palestinian state. The group made no distinction between Palestinians in Israel and those in the territories. G. Hitman, *Israel and Its Arab Minority, 1948-2008 : Dialogue, Protest, Violence*, Lanham, Maryland, Lexington Books, 2016, pp.30-32.

[117] Sheikh Abdallah Nimer Darwish from Kfar Kassem founded the Islamic Movement in Israel influenced by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 1971.

vigorous political activism (Rekhess, 2007). The most salient manifestation of this changing nature of contentious political action was the general strike and marches of 30 March 1976, which came to be known as Land Day, in response to government plans to expropriate land for "increasing the Jewish population in the Galilee" (Rekhess, 2007).[118] According to Jamal (2011), the strike, which witnessed the first violent clash between the Palestinian citizens and the security forces, was the first coordinated selective Palestinian action in Israel.

The Palestinian political mobilization on national grounds continued throughout the 1980s and manifested in various occasions, most notably the strike and protest over the Sabra and Shatila massacre[119] in 1982 and protests to show solidarity and support with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza during the First *Intifada* (Sa'di, 2017). In addition to contentious political activism, Palestinians also began to use other channels to challenge Jewish hegemony in the state, such as representation in the Knesset and the media (Rubin, 2019). Palestinian participation in the elections in favour of pro-

[118] In February 1976, thousands of Palestinians in Galilee demonstrated against the government's decision to confiscate land. In March 1976, the Rakah-dominated Land Defense Committee called for a general strike that was eventually turned into a violent confrontation between the Palestinians and the security forces. Six Palestinians were killed, and dozens of Palestinians and security forces were injured. For more on Land Day, see N. Shoughry, *"Israeli-Arab" Political Mobilization : Between Acquiescence, Participation, and Resistance* , pp.37-82.

[119] In September 1982, Christian Phalangist militias in Lebanon killed about three thousand Palestinian civilians in Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in revenge of Bashir Jumayil's death.

Palestinian parties, such as the Progressive List for Peace (PLP)[120] and the Arab Democratic Party (*Mada*),[121] simultaneously increased (Sandler, 1995). The idea of a "national minority" with a strong emphasis on the Palestinian identity and culture (Smooha, 1997) was amalgamated with the demands for Palestinian culture to be recognized as part of national culture. Moreover, the "state for all its citizens," as a legal-political term, had its roots in the 1980s with a change proposed by the PLP members of Knesset to the amendment to the Basic Law adopted on 31 July 1985.[122] The proposal was either to drop the phrase referring to Israel as "state of the Jewish people" or to add to it "and its Arab citizens." The PLP also referred to the need to "recognize the existence of the national Palestinian minority as an equal partner in the state" (Kaufman, 2002).

4.2.3 The "Israelization" of the Palestinian Political Movement

The "Palestinization" of the Palestinians lasted until the Oslo Process in 1993, which has had an extensive impact on Palestinians' political and ideological orientation (Rekhess, 2008). The Palestinian recognition of Israel as the Jewish state and the PLO's acceptance of a two-state solution in the Oslo Accords paved the way for the "Israelization" of Palestinian citizens (Smooha, 1989) and the "localization of the national struggle" (Rubin, 2019), accompanied

[120] The PLP was established in 1984 as a Jewish-Palestinian political partnership and headed by Muhammad Mi'ari and Matti Peled.

[121] The Arab Democratic Party, known with its Hebrew acronym Mada, was established in 1988 by Abd al-Wahhab Darawshah.

[122] Amendment No 9 of the Basic Law: the Knesset stated that a list might not participate in the elections if there was in its goals or actions a denial of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people, a denial of the democratic nature of the state, or incitement to racism.

by a shift in Israel's policy towards them from a security-based to a civil approach (Hitman, 2019). Consequently, the political discourse of the Palestinian minority mainly focused on a more inclusive political vision, dominated by three models: a state for all its citizens, autonomy, and a binational state (Rekhess, 2008). Therefore, the 1990s marked the Palestinians' self-perception as a national minority that deserved collective rights (Rekhess, 2014) and their assertiveness in demanding equal treatment under the law and full access to political power (Peleg, 2004). This increasing assertiveness was reflected in the formation and activities of the National Democratic Assembly (*Brit Leumit Democratit*-Balad), founded in 1995 by a group of left-wing Arab activists, both Christian and Muslim, under the leadership of Azmi Bishara.[123] Promoting an Arab-Palestinian national line, Balad advocated to transform Israel into "a state for all its citizens" to replace the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state and demanded that Israel recognize its Palestinian population, including the Druze, as a national minority with national collective rights and full equality, and grant them cultural and institutional autonomy (Hitman, 2016).[124]

[123] Azmi Bishara was the first Palestinian in Israel who ran for the premiership, competing against Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak in 1999.

[124] The Central Election Committee disqualified the Balad and its members several times from running in the elections on the grounds that they violated the Article 7A of the Basic Law: The Knesset, which provided that "a candidates list shall not participate in elections to the Knesset, and a person shall not be a candidate for election to the Knesset, if the goals or actions of the list or the actions of the person, expressly or by implication, include one of the following: (1) negation of the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state; (2) incitement to racism; (3) support for armed struggle by a hostile state or a terrorist organization against the State of Israel." The Knesset, *Basic Law: The Knesset (Updated January 2003)* 1958), available

4.2.4 The "Future Vision" Documents and Palestinian Demands for a "State for all Its Citizens"

In the 2000s, the "Israelization" of the Palestinian citizens and their demands for "a state for all citizens with full equality" were manifested in three documents, which were collectively known as the "Future Vision" documents, published by Palestinian intellectuals and political elites: Mada al-Carmel's "Haifa Declaration,"[125] the "Future Vision," developed under the auspices of the Committee of Arab Mayors in Israel[126] and the "Democratic Constitution" issued by *Adalah*–The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel.[127]

Emphasizing the Palestinian foundation of their identity that was anchored in their Israeli experience (Rekhess, 2007), these documents signified a "landmark in the development of Israeli Arabs as a national minority that challenges Israel's legitimacy to exist as a Jewish and Zionist state" (Reiter, 2009). The first document, the "Future Vision" that was published in 2006, described Israel as an extension of the colonial West in the Middle East and argued that "Israel cannot be defined as a democratic state" but as an "ethnocratic" state in which the hegemony of the majority prevailed and

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from https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/basic%20law-%20the%20knesset%20-1958-%20-%20updated%20translatio.aspx

[125] Mada-al-Carmel, *The Haifa Declaration* 2007), available from https://mada-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/watheeqat-haifa-english.pdf

[126] The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*

[127] Adalah, *The Democratic Constitution* Shafa'amr, 2007), available from https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/Public/files/democratic_constitution-english.pdf

marginalized the minority."[128] The document also proposed that the state be based on "consensual democracy," comprising the presence of the Jews and the Palestinians and guaranteeing full resource, leadership, and decision-making participation. The second document, the "Democratic Constitution" that was issued in 2007 in the context of the efforts of the Knesset to draft a constitution, was a constitutional proposal, calling for a "democratic, bilingual, and multicultural state." It also called upon the state of Israel to be a democratic state based on equality, to recognize the Palestinian population as a "homeland minority" with collective rights, to adopt principles of restorative justice for past injustices, to withdraw from all of the territories occupied in 1967, and recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.[129] The third document, "Haifa Declaration," published in May 2007, on the other hand, called for the recognition of the Palestinians as a national group deserving collective national rights, including the effective participation in government and decision-making, the right of veto in all matters concerning their status and rights, and cultural autonomy, which included the rights to develop policies for and to administer their own cultural and educational affairs, and distributing resources in accordance with the principles of distributive and corrective justice.[130] In short, all documents represented a firm rejection of the Jewish nature of the state and suggested in its place a Jewish-Palestinian binational state based on the

[128] The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*

[129] Adalah, *The Democratic Constitution*

[130] Mada-al-Carmel, *The Haifa Declaration* , pp.16.

principles of consensual democracy, power sharing, and equal resource allocation.[131]

Contrary to the Palestinian expectations, the general Jewish response to the Future Vision documents was defensive; a reaction resulted in further restrictions on the equal exercise of political and civil liberties and free and fair contestation for political power (Rubin, 2019). Branding the Palestinian citizens as "enemies declaring war against the state," these demands have been perceived by the Jewish majority as a "contradiction to the basic Zionist ethos of the state" (Avnery, 1999), a "provocative attempt to delegitimize the Jewish people's right of self-determination" (Smooha, 2009), and even signs of "separatist intentions" (Rekhess, 2008). This perception consequently led to the securitization process of the Palestinian minority (Olesker, 2014) and, consequently, the "new Zionist hegemony" (Nadim N.; Rouhana and Sultany, 2003), manifested in legislation, government policies, and public discourse. Since 2010 a number of laws aiming to complicate the political representation of the Palestinian minority have been passed by the Israeli Knesset as a part of this securitization process. These included raising the electoral threshold from 2 to 3.25 percent as a barrier explicitly against the entrance of small Palestinian parties to the Knesset.[132] However, the new threshold unexpectedly served as a platform to overcome ideological differences and internal feuds among Palestinian political leaders

[131] For hermeneutical comparison of three documents, see A. Jamal, *Arab Minority Nationalism in Israel : The Politics of Indigeneity*, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, Routledge, 2011, pp.174-84.

[132] The electoral threshold was raised to 1.5% for the 1992 election and 2% for 2003. Toward the March 2015 elections, the new Governance Law would raise it to 3.25%, among other measures. J. Lis, "Knesset Expected to Raise Electoral Threshold to 3.25%", *Haaretz*.

and, in January 2015, led to the formation of the Joint List, an electoral alliance between four pro-Palestinian parties which have participated in Knesset elections for two decades: the Balad, the Hadash, the United Arab List (*HaReshima HaAravit HaMe'uhedet-Ra'am*), and the Arab Movement for Change (*Tnu'a Aravit LeHithadshut-Ta'al*). In the 2015 elections, the Joint List under the leadership of Ayman Odeh, who advocated a positive approach toward the Jewish majority and sought reconciliation and mutual interest (Rubin, 2019), won thirteen out of the 120 seats and became the third biggest faction in the Knesset. Moreover, Palestinian electoral participation that was steadily declining since the half of the 1990s due to a strategy of boycotting elections showed a tendency to cast more ballots in the last decade, showing the Palestinian willingness to take an assertive stance in defending their citizenship rights through integration within the Israeli political system.[133]

Despite being deeply influenced by the trauma of being transformed into a minority in its homeland, which, according to Jamal (2007), has been the underlying dynamic in Palestinian collective action in Israel, citizens of Palestinian descent have been able to develop an increasingly organized,

[133] As an expression of Palestinian disillusionment in the capacity of Israel's political system to represent them, electoral participation of Palestinian citizens declined from 79.3 percent in 1996 to 75 percent in 1999, 62 percent in 2003, 56.3 percent in 2006, 53.6 in 2009, and 57.3 percent in 2013, and then rose to 63.5 percent in 2015. In the special election in 2001, when Ehud Barak resigned as Prime Minister, more than 80 percent of Palestinian citizens boycotted the elections. See, A. Jamal, "Can There Be a Resolution of the Conflict If Palestinian Citizens of Israel Are Not Involved?" in Jamie Stern-Weiner, ed., *Moment of Truth: Tackling Israel-Palestine's Toughest Questions*, London; New York, Or Books, 2018b, pp.259.

collective political struggle for equality. Without losing focus on their Palestinian identity and trans-border ethnic ties, they seemed to balance between their Palestinian and Israeli identities. They developed various strategies in their struggle over time, ranging between passive acquiescence on the one hand and violent resistance on the other (Shoughry, 2012). Nevertheless, they have firmly remained inside the system. Moreover, as an increasing level of voter turnout showed, they became much more integrated into the Israeli political community in the last decades. According to a survey, 87 percent of the Palestinians wished to be involved in the political system and its executive branch (S. Masalha, 2019). This tendency was accompanied by a growing emphasis of the Palestinians' political representatives on their status as a "national minority in its historical homeland" (Jamal, 2007) and a political struggle for collective rights. Challenging the Jewish hegemony, they have persistently claimed to transform the Jewish state into a "state for all its citizens," and the recognition of their status as a national minority entitled to collective rights, including the right to self-government and equal representation in the governing bodies.

CHAPTER 5

THE TURKISH STATE ELITE'S PERCEPTION OF TURKEY'S CITIZENS OF KURDISH DESCENT AND MINORITY RIGHTS

5.1 Identity Politics

5.1.1 Defining the Boundaries of Turkishness: Who is a Turk?

Since Article 66 of the Turkish Constitution equated national identity with being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey,[134] Turkishness has been considered a legal-political status assigned to all citizens, without reference to

[134] Article 66 of the Constitution stipulated that "everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk."

ethnic, linguistic, or religious origin (Yeğen, 2004). Furthermore, this policy was manifested in the statement of Atatürk, who declared "how happy the one who says I am Turk," and became the motto of Republican Turkey. For this reason, Turkish nationalism has long been assumed to be a French-type civic nationalism that was inclusive and egalitarian rather than exclusive and discriminatory ethnic nationalism (Heper, 2007). Anyone who declared herself/himself as a Turk was considered such and included in the boundaries of the national identity.

Defining the Turkish identity in civic terms instead of ethnicity, based on shared culture and language, has been a typical attitude among the Turkish political elite. In parallel to the official state discourse and the constitutional definition of the national identity, all participants of this study, including the members of the far-right MHP, stated that the term Turkish nation had nothing to do with race or ethnic origin but a politico-territorial supra-identity, covering all ethnic groups living in Turkey, such as Kurds, Lazes, Circassians and others. For instance, a retired major general who was publicly known as one of the former leading figures of the nationalist clique within the Turkish military explained:

> Ataturk politically defined Turkishness rather than ethnically by saying that the people who founded the Turkish Republic were called the Turkish nation. There are two types of Turkish nationalism: civic and ethnic. If you advocate ethnic nationalism, you cannot embrace those who do not come from Turkish ethnic origin. Thus, you violate Ataturk's founding principles.[135]

[135] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Istanbul (Istanbul: 2020)

Adopting an inclusive and civic-minded approach of national identity, members of the Turkish political elite, regardless of their ideological orientation, emphasized "bond of citizenship," "common culture," "language," "common territory," "Anatolian civilization, "Anatolian culture," "perceived belonging," "values," "common ideals," "lifestyle," and "folklore" as boundary-markers, bonding various ethnic communities into the Turkish nation. As one of the vice-presidents of the MHP stated, Turkishness was a "feeling of belonging felt by those who rallied around common history, common language, common ideals, and objectives."[136] From this perspective, other ethnicities were not denied but considered as a "folkloric color" that demonstrated the cultural richness of the Turkish nation, rather than a separate national identity:

> There is no denial of her/his identity. One somehow ethnically defines themselves as Laz or Circassian as if it is a national identity. No, it is not a national identity. Ethnic structures come together and constitute a nation, a people. Chocolate contains sugar, cacao, water, and milk, but now its name is chocolate, which has a unique taste. When we taste it, we cannot deny water, cacao, sugar, and milk inside it, but its name is neither milk nor cacao anymore. Its name is chocolate. So the Turkish nation, being a Turk, is such a thing.[137]

Although members of the Turkish state elite made a civic definition of the Turkish national identity without giving a reference to being from a real or an assumed ethnic descent, whether Turkish nationalism has been civic or ethnic or whether the concept of purely civic nation has been a myth remained a debated issue among scholars. Moreover, the ethnic vs. civic dichotomy was

[136] MHP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2020)

[137] Ibid.

very limited to understanding the patterns of ethnic conflict in Turkey (Tezcür, 2009). Firstly, civic states also included ethnocultural elements (Kymlicka, 1995) and have not been neutral when deciding "which ethnic groups' language, culture, symbols and anniversaries to promote at the state level" (Kuzio, 2002). In both civic and ethnic states, language and culture have been used as the primary boundary markers while drawing boundaries of the national identity, which in both cases were generally derived from the dominant ethnic core (Bayır, 2013) and obliged assimilation into the dominant ethnic group's culture and language. Secondly, despite the all-encompassing category of citizenship, only non-Turkish Muslims have been included into the boundaries of Turkishness through assimilation, while non-Muslims preserved their ethno-religious identity at the expense of "endemic discrimination" (Yeğen, 2017), such as barring from being officers in the Turkish army.[138] In other words, although the formal definition of the Turkish nation has been civic, state practices have been ethnic as reflected in the actual practices, such as immigration and refugee policies, which were biased in favor of people of "Turkish descent and culture" and then only as long as such persons were of Sunni-Hanafi background (Kirişci, 2000). Lastly, Article 66 of the Constitution stating that "everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk" has been seen as a discriminatory statement by the citizens of Kurdish descent, who would rather prefer a notion of the "peoples of Turkey (*Türkiye halkları*)" or "being from Turkey (*Türkiyeli*)" (Şengül, 2018). Their inclusion

[138] The prevalence of religion was best manifested in the case of the Gagauz. This Turkic Greek Orthodox community was banned from migrating from Romania to Turkey in the interwar years. On this, see Ö. Duman, "Atatürk Döneminde Romanya'dan Türk Göçleri (1923-1938)", *Bilig*, 45), 2008, pp.38-39.

into the boundaries of the Turkish national identity has been non-voluntary, based on a forcible assimilationist perspective. Former AKP Vice President and Member of Parliament explained that "education, military service, civil service, and mixed marriages have been fundamental dimensions of this assimilation process."[139] Nevertheless, inspired by the republican motto of "how happy the one who says I am Turk," participants of this study conceived Turkishness as a self-ascriptive identity, denoting one's own choice in affiliating with a larger collective or community (L. Levy, 2008), rather than a state-imposed and state-enforced one. They stated that Turkishness had not been related to being of Turkish origin, instead denoted the idea of calling oneself a Turk. However, they ignored the role of state policies in this self-identification process. A member of parliament from the main opposition party CHP, who was also of Kurdish ethnic origin, explained: "identity depends on how a person describes her/himself. For me, ethnic identity is the way how people describe themselves. At the end of the day, there are millions of people in this republic who call themselves Turks."[140] For this reason, one could argue that the state elite has used the official discourse of civic nationalism to justify the forced assimilation policies, although they acknowledged that these policies have been "partially successful"[141] and "many mistakes were made"[142] in this process.

[139] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2019)

[140] CHP Member of Parliament, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

[141] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[142] Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2019)

5.1.2 The Citizens of Kurdish Descent and the Kurdish Question

As shown above, members of the Turkish state elite defined citizens of Turkey as "Turks," regardless of their ethnic origin. This resonated with official policies, which denied the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnic group until the 1990s (Yeğen, 1999).[143] Any demands for cultural and linguistic rights of a different ethnic identity were seen as treacherous and harshly suppressed. In the early 1990s, the official policy of denial has shifted to the acknowledgement of the Kurdish question in its ethnopolitical dimensions (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014). The recognition of the multiethnic character of Turkey was also presented in the discourse of the participants of this study as one of them admitted: "At the end, if a person feels himself belonging to Kurdish ethnicity, then he is a Kurd. He is a citizen of the Turkish Republic. If he speaks Kurdish, then the name of his language is Kurdish. Denying his language is neither humanistic nor civilized."[144] Although the state attitude vis-à-vis the Kurdish question shifted to acknowledging Kurds' distinctive ethnic identity, the denial perspective still pervaded among some policy-makers, albeit to a lesser extent. Only one participant out of 16, a former AKP Vice President and Member of Parliament, implied that Kurds were actually coming from Turkic ethnic origin:

> Especially when you look at Kurmanji (one of the four main dialects of the Kurdish language), this language is composed of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish. There are very few unknown words whose number does not

[143] The official state discourse even referred to the Kurds as "mountain Turks." See C. Sagnic, "Mountain Turks: State Ideology and the Kurds in Turkey", *Information, Society and Justice*, 3 (2), 2010.

[144] Former Senior Bureaucrat from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

> exceed 150-200. It has already been a debate whether they had Turani or Irani origin or another race. There have been claims that they were Meds, but this has never been proven. I invite those who claim that they represent a separate ethnicity to prove their claims.[145]

The same participant also intervened while being asked a question that started with the phrase "Turkey's Kurdish region" and argued that:

> There is no Kurdish region in Turkey. Kurds, Turkmens, Circassians, and Roma live in Diyarbakir. Kurds and Turks live in Manisa (a city located in western Turkey). Therefore, there is neither a Turkish nor a Kurdish region. There are cities and regions. Its name is the Southeastern Anatolia Region.[146]

In parallel to acknowledging Kurdishness as a distinct ethnic identity, almost all participants of this study also acknowledged that Turkey has a "Kurdish problem," and even some of them portrayed it as the "main issue in Turkey" and "Turkey's unresolved matter of the highest priority." Only one participant, former AKP Vice President and Member of Parliament who also denied the Kurdish ethnic identity, argued that there was no Kurdish question in Turkey:

> Today, I think there is no Kurdish problem in Turkey. There is no such thing that a Turk could achieve but a Kurd not. If you say Kurdish problem today, then you may have Circassian or Bosnian problem tomorrow. You may say that Turkey has democratization or human rights problems, but there is no Kurdish problem.[147]

When they were asked about the leading cause of the Kurdish question, their responses included "decades-long assimilation policies," "lack of democratic institutionalization," "economic backwardness," "state's wrongdoings," "the

[145] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

military regime of 12 September," and "provocation by external powers." Nevertheless, the members of the political elite were inclined to view Turkey's Kurdish question as both a "democracy" and "human rights" problem, suggesting that once Turkey's democracy had been fully consolidated, the Kurdish question would be solved immediately. However, as the Israeli case has shown, democratic countries have also been prone to ethnic tension and having a democratic political system might not always lead to minority accommodation.[148]

5.2 Majority-Minority Relations

5.2.1 Common Struggle, Living Together

Members of the Turkish political elite conspicuously emphasized that Turks and Kurds had lived together for hundreds of years since the Ottoman Empire and fought together against "Christians," "Armenians," and the "imperial powers" in the First World War, in the Dardanelles, and the War of Independence:

> They (Turks and Kurds) formed National Forces (*Kuvayı Milliye*) together, and the Anatolian victory emerged from their joint struggle in the War of Independence. This was a movement in which the joint will of both Turks and Kurds succeeded in establishing a common homeland.

[148] Israel has been rated as a "free" country by Freedom House and a "flawed democracy" by the Democracy Index. See Freedom House, *Israel's Country Profile* 2020), available from https://freedomhouse.org/country/israel , The Economist Intelligence Unity, *Democracy Index 2020: In Sickness and in Health?*, 2021).

> Turks, Kurds, and other identities and beliefs have been the constitutive elements of Turkey.[149]

Furthermore, four participants also stated that Turks and Kurds established the state together: “It is like an insult for them (Kurds) if you claim that they call for independence. They say we are the founders of this state. We were in the Dardanelles, in the War of Independence. Shoulder to shoulder.”[150] Consequently, fighting together against the “Christians” or “imperials” made Turks and Kurds like “brothers who became close relatives in the Anatolian soil where a culture of coexistence existed for thousands of years.”[151]

In addition to its role in constructing the national identity, Islam also played an effective means of managing ethnic diversity in Turkey. Although laicism was one of the founding principles of the Republic of Turkey, it did not denote a strict separation of religion and state. However, it implied the hegemonic management of religion, which involved state control and legal regulation (Gözaydın, 2016) in utilizing religion to serve its nationalist goals. Therefore, it also provided a social control mechanism through various institutional arrangements, such as the Directorate of the Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*- Diyanet) and Friday sermons which promoted ideas such as patriotism and obedience to the state as a religious obligation (Gürpinar

[149] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview," ed. Z. Aslı Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2019)

[150] Former State Minister and Founding Member of the İYİ Party, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2019)

[151] Former MHP Member of Parliament, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2020)

and Kenar, 2016). Moreover, particularly following the 1980 military coup, the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis," a combination of Turkish nationalism and Islam, almost became the new state ideology both as an ideological bulwark against the PKK and in the hope that feelings of Muslim solidarity would override any tendency towards ethnic separatism. In the mid-1980s, for instance, posters were hung in village cafes and town squares in the Kurdish-dominated southeast in which the Turkish flag and a picture of a mosque were set as symbols of both the spiritual and patriotic loyalties to the state, with a warning that those who failed to cooperate with the security forces would "become accomplices in the eyes of God in the crimes perpetrated by the separatists" (G. Jenkins, 2008). In the 2000s, the Islamic unity and brotherhood argument, which promoted Islam as a supranational identity in an attempt to blur ethnic boundaries between Turks and Kurds,[152] has been effectively used by the AKP government during the "solution process" as a basis for peace. The PKK leader Öcalan also stressed that Turks and Kurds had lived side by side under the "banner of Islam" for thousands of years.[153]

[152] On the role of religion in Turkey's Kurdish Question and the Islamic brotherhood argument, see G. Türkmen, "Negotiating Symbolic Boundaries in Conflict Resolution: Religion and Ethnicity in Turkey's Kurdish Conflict", *Qualitative Sociology*, 41 (4), 2018 Also see M. Kurt, "'My Muslim Kurdish Brother': Colonial Rule and Islamist Governmentality in the Kurdish Region of Turkey", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21 (3), 2019.

[153] Hürriyet, *İşte Öcalan'ın Mesajı* 2013), available from https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/iste-ocalanin-mesaji-22866213

Stressing Islamic values as a unifying reference was one of the points the participants of this study also emphasized. A former Turkish diplomat, for instance, said that not just religious identity, but the majority of Turks and Kurds also shared the same sectarian identity, which was Sunni Islam: "Good to remember that there is no such distinction like cowboys and Indians here. The intertwinement of Turks and Kurds… As you know, both religious unity, Islam, and sectarian unity, Sunni…"[154] Similarly, the former foreign minister and vice-prime minister of Turkey stated that "first of all, Turks and Kurds are not like blacks and whites in America. Same religion, same skin color, and same sect, which is largely Sunni… There are Alevis too, but mostly so."[155] Arguably, the prevalent discourse of Islamic brotherhood and shared belief in Islam has functioned as an "instrument of governmentality" to maintain control over the Kurdish population and legitimize the state's assimilatory strategies (Kurt, 2019). Moreover, as the failed solution process with the PKK showed, it was insufficient to manage or suppress Kurdish demands for equal rights (Türkmen, 2018) because having the same religious belief did not necessarily eliminate ethnic hierarchies.

In parallel to the "historical coexistence of Turks and Kurds" narrative, participants also emphasized the existence of a high level of "social peace," "social integration," and "social interaction" between the Turkish and Kurdish citizens of Turkey. They specifically stated that "Istanbul has been the largest

[154] Former Turkish Diplomat, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

[155] Former Turkish Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Interview,"

Kurdish city in the world" with its estimated three million Kurdish immigrant residents, without mentioning that the Kurdish internal migration was mainly due to the prevalence of insecurity in the Kurdish-dominated southeast and economic deprivation (Sirkeci, 2000). Turkey's former deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, himself of Kurdish origin, explained:

> When I was the minister of foreign affairs, we were invited by the socialist group in the European Parliament. They harshly criticized the Turkish government. They gave examples of forcibly evacuated villages. Let me not go into details here. As a response, first, I said I am from this region. I said all this is true. I even said that there is much more than you know. The state has also made mistakes like anyone. Nevertheless, I am asking you now, where those people went after leaving their homes and villages. Did they come to you as refugees? No. They went to Adana, İzmir, Antalya, Istanbul, and Aydın because people had no problem. I asked whether you know that Istanbul is the largest Kurdish city in the world. Most hotel owners in Antalya are from the southeast. Where are there more Kurds, in the region or out of the region? Out of the region… There are three to four million Kurds in Istanbul alone.[156]

In order to draw attention to the Kurds' integration into the majority society and the absence of discriminatory and exclusionary social practices towards them, members of the Turkish political elite especially emphasized the existence of "millions of intermarriages between Turks and Kurds,"[157] the absence of residential segregation in western metropolitan areas, especially in Istanbul, and even uttered statements such as, "I have Kurdish friends too."[158] However, they largely ignored the low level of ethnic tolerance between the two groups (Sarigil and Karakoc, 2017) and prejudicial attitudes towards the Kurds (Saraçoğlu, 2011). Furthermore, despite a lack of concrete statistical data, the

[156] Ibid.

[157] Former Ambassador of Turkey, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

[158] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

tendency towards intermarriage has been relatively low (Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits, 2002), and ethnic boundaries might still be reinforced if intermarriage was governed by patriarchal norms (Ozgen, 2015).

5.2.2 Elite Perception of Kurdish Rights and Political Demands

For most of the participants of this study, Kurds have been the equal citizens of Turkey since "they can freely say that they are Kurds" and "speak Kurdish on busses in Istanbul," a development that was called a "great social transformation"[159] by a former senior bureaucrat who served in the ministry of foreign affairs in the 2010s. Ignoring the dismissal of 48 of the 65 Kurdish mayors from their posts, the detention of 72 Kurdish co-mayors, 122 municipal councilors, and the dismissal of 88 HDP municipal council memberships since the March 2019 municipal elections,[160] which openly violated voters' rights, a retired major general also argued:

> If you can participate in political processes in this country, I mean, if you have the right to participate, the right of representation, the right to elect and to be elected; if you are equal before the law, to be a prosecutor or judge as a Kurd, an Albanian, or a Bosnian, then this is the system that the whole world would respect. Nobody should fight with this.[161]

In order to affirm Kurds' status as equal citizens, some participants also stated that "Kurds can be president, prime minister, chief of staff, and president of the

[159] Former Senior Bureaucrat from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Interview,"

[160] For more information on government-appointed trustees in the predominantly Kurdish provinces, see HDP's report, Halkların Demokratik Partisi, *Seizure of Will and Realities on Trustees* 2021), available from https://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/irade-gaspi-ve-kayyim-gercekleri-raporumuz/15108/

[161] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

chamber of industry and commerce."[162] In fact, citizens of Kurdish descent enjoyed equal rights and climbed to the upper echelons of the state insofar as they had willingly assimilated into the Turkish nation. Those who had not voluntarily assimilated became subjects of repression, forced displacement, and expulsion (H.J. Barkey, 2000; Ergil, 2000; Joost Jongerden, 2007).

Participants also considered Turkey's democratic reform process, in which several political and human rights reforms were initiated to bring the Turkish constitution and legislation in line with the Copenhagen Criteria and the *acquis communautaire*, such as allowing broadcasts and private courses in Kurdish and other non-Turkish languages, as significant progress towards the accommodation of Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights. However, despite these steps, there was no redefinition of Turkish national identity along civic lines to accommodate the Kurdish minority: national identity continued to be based on Turkish ethnicity. Therefore, for some participants, these reforms were just a "formality"[163] because "although they have been partially accommodated Kurdish cultural rights, perspective on the problem has not been changed."[164] A CHP member of parliament further urged that:

> The reform process aimed to handle the issue without addressing Kurdish demands, so it only aimed to recognize Kurdish cultural rights without giving them status. According to the government and the state, the Kurds have every right in Turkey. They live like Turks. They have no right to

[162] Former State Minister and Founding Member of the İYİ Party, "Interview,"

[163] Former AKP Member of Parliament, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Ankara (Ankara: 2019)

[164] CHP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

> demand any other thing. If some make such demands, this is because they have bad intentions.[165]

Although a retired Turkish major general stated that people's ethnic identities and cultural demands should have been respected, the majority of the participants (13 out of 16) opposed the recognition of Kurdish collective rights, such as the redefinition of the national identity based on citizenship, drafting a new constitution and being defined as a "constitutive element" in the constitution, local self-government, or mother tongue education. As a former AKP member of parliament for a predominantly Kurdish city in eastern Turkey explained:

> The main problem of Kurds in Turkey has not been living individually as Kurds. The main problem has been their non-recognition as a nation. Their political demands and national rights are not recognized. Kurds have demands as a nation, not as individuals. The AKP and the official ideology completely deny this political demand. We object to this. There are some criteria to describe a nation as a nation. If a nation has history, language, customs, and geography, the Kurds have these characteristics. Their national demands are justified in this regard, but the AKP's logic is that if we give them national rights, the ummah would be divided.[166]

Interestingly, although the majority of the participants acknowledged that Turks and Kurds were two constitutive elements of Republican Turkey as they had fought "shoulder to shoulder" in the War of Independence, they rejected the idea of giving them a constitutional status as constitutive elements. Instead, they defined the Kurdish demands of being recognized as a constitutive element in the constitution, which would give the Kurds a distinctive status in comparison with other ethnic and religious groups, as a "delusion" because such recognition

[165] Ibid.

[166] Former AKP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

"would lead to the division of the country."[167] Similarly, demands for education in the Kurdish language also became a security matter for the members of the Turkish political elite because "education in a language other than the official means dividing the state"[168] and they justified their rejection by claiming that "monolingual education promotes equality among citizens and regions,"[169] and education in a language other than Turkish would lead to the "alienation of various groups within the country."[170]

Kurdish demands for the reconsideration of national boundaries from a focus on Turkish ethnicity to the territory of the Republic of Turkey, shifting the boundary from *"Türk"* to *"Türkiyeli"* (Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, 2007), were also considered by the majority of the participants as an "attack on the first four articles of the constitution."[171] The first three articles of the Turkish constitution defined Turkey as a democratic, secular, social state based on human rights, with Ankara as its capital and Turkish as its language. Article 3 also declared that "the state of Turkey, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity."[172] The first three articles, which gave the spirit of the constitution, have been made bulletproof by Article 4, which prohibited "contemplating any change" to them.

[167] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

[168] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[169] CHP Vice-Chairperson, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Skype (Skype: 2019)

[170] MHP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[171] Ibid.

[172] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasa Mahkemesi, *Constitution of the Republic of Turkey* 1981), available from https://ayam.anayasa.gov.tr/en/legislation/turkish-constiution/

In June 2011, Selahattin Demirtaş, then co-chair of the pro-Kurdish BDP, argued that changing the first three articles had to be the starting point of any constitutional reform attempt.[173] Despite acknowledging that "the problem cannot be solved without drafting a new constitution which the Kurds could also call as 'mine,'"[174] the removal of ethnic references from the constitution by replacing the term "Turkish society" with the "society of Turks"[175] in order to draw a more inclusive national identity were seen as an attempt to "destroy the notion of Turkishness and the consciousness of being a nation."[176] A former senior officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), for instance, considered a redefinition of the concept of nation, independent of ethnicity, religion, or gender, and giving the Kurds a constitutional status as an "attempt to provide the Kurdish identity and Kurdish demands a separatist dimension" and found it "dangerous:"

> Demands such as granting equal citizenship rights in the constitution and legal recognition of the Kurdish identity… However, when you look at the issue today, when you consider conflicts of interest within the global strategies and global powers, you see no change in their goals. When I look at the developments in the Middle East, I can see the persistence of threats. The control of capital, countries, and societies is a priority for them. Therefore, as long as their long-term strategies continue, I find it dangerous to give a special legal status regarding identities and differences of belief even in a democratic constitution, a democratic

[173] Milliyet, *Selahattin Demirtaş'tan Ilk 3 Madde Tepkisi!* 2011), available from https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/selahattin-demirtastan-ilk-3-madde-tepkisi-1403999

[174] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

[175] İstanbul Ofisi, "Bdp Anayasa Önerilerini Açıkladı", *Hürriyet*, 29/03/2010

[176] MHP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

> structure, because they will always exploit this. They will constantly use it and want to create risk.[177]

Only the members of the main opposition party CHP stated that they proposed the notion of "citizens of the Republic of Turkey" to make a more inclusive citizenship definition during the Parliament Constitution Conciliation Commission meetings, which was formed to replace Turkey's 1982 Constitution with a new one. CHP's Vice President explained:

> It was understood in time that everyone bound to the state through the bond of citizenship does not feel her/himself within the concept of Turk. So instead of insisting on using it in this way, the citizenship bond could become more inclusive for everyone. It requires thinking about how to make a new definition. In 2011, CHP's proposal to the parliamentary constitution commission was replacing the relevant article of the constitution with the term "citizens of the Republic of Turkey." Insisting on using the notion of "Turk" for every citizen of Turkey does not mean much to me, especially in today's conditions.[178]

Long-standing Kurdish demands for decentralization through administrative reform and local autonomy, or in Öcalan's conceptualization "democratic confederalism" or "democratic autonomy," were also considered by the participants of this study as an attempt that could ultimately lead to the division of Turkey. Ignoring the PKK's abandonment of the aim of statehood, replaced by an agenda of democratic autonomy, according to a retired major general, the ultimate goal of Turkey's Kurds was to establish a united Kurdish state with the Kurds in Iraq, Syria, and Iran, and then to dominate the region. Therefore, achieving some level of autonomy within Turkey would be the first

[177] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

[178] CHP Vice-Chairperson, "Interview,"

step.[179] He also justified his rejection of the Kurdish movement's "democratic autonomy" proposals by pointing out that the Kurdish population in Turkey was geographically dispersed: "let us say you gave autonomy to a region. So what will you give to the Kurds in Istanbul, Izmir, and Konya?"[180] Only CHP's Vice President stated that they would be agreed on strengthening local administrations with a nuance, "there is a difference between us (CHP) and the HDP regarding the local governments. We support administrative autonomy, while the HDP favors political autonomy. That is to say, our perspective is to give municipalities more power and authority."[181]

Perspectives on the Kurdish demands for local autonomy also showed that the political parties had not been homogenous organizations. They were made up of various individuals representing different, even contradicting, ideas and interests. Former AKP Vice President and Member of Parliament, who

[179] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

[180] Ibid.

[181] CHP Vice-Chairperson, "Interview,"

joined the party in the 2010s, for instance, argued that the Kurdish-run municipalities would pave the way for the self-determination of Kurds, "they want to go for plebiscite in the future by saying look, we are taking over municipalities, winning parliamentary seats. They want to do this through Wilson's Principles, through the right of self-determination, as they did in Kirkuk."[182] On the contrary, another former AKP member, who was of Kurdish origin and served as an MP during the first term of the AKP government stated:

> Kurds are the largest people of the Middle East waiting to become a nation. They have the right to self-determination like any other nation. I spoke to all the officials within the AKP at the time in this respect. The AKP government does not think that the Kurds have such a right to determine their destiny.[183]

The views of the two participants were also significant in representing the two periods of the AKP government, which has undergone a dramatic transformation since it came to power. Its first two terms were between 2002 and 2011 when it acted mainly as an emergent center-right conservative democratic party (Gumuscu and Sert, 2010), and roughly after 2011 when it consolidated its power while Turkey has been going through a process of transformation from a tutelary democracy to competitive authoritarianism (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016). Simultaneously, as Yardımcı-Geyikçi (2018) noted, the AKP administration adopted a more hawkish and security-oriented policy towards the Kurdish question. The views of two participants, one who served during the party's first term in power and one who joined the party after 2010, on the Kurdish political demands also reflected the AKP's shifting stance towards the Kurdish question.

[182] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[183] Former AKP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

5.2.3 The Kurdish Question as an "External Plot"

As Grigoriadis (2008) put it, recognition of minority rights in Turkey has been invariably seen as a "surrender to PKK agenda" and as the "first step toward Turkey's partition." Moreover, minorities were often seen discredited as "tools of foreign interests" and "unreliable, second-class citizens" that did not deserve any special protection. This research also showed that considering the recognition of Kurdish collective rights, such as granting a constitutional status and local administrative autonomy, as "pretexts for Turkey's partition" has still been a prevalent perspective among the members of the Turkish state elite. For the supporters of this view, "imperialist powers and the global capital (*küresel sermaye*) have always 'instrumentalized' the Kurds in the Middle East in order to control energy resources and to ensure Israel's security."[184] A former senior officer from the MIT argued:

> I have constantly emphasized that the Kurds have always been instrumentalized by the imperialist powers to achieve their ambitions and hegemony in the Middle East. These powers, especially America and EU

[184] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

> countries, never wanted democracy in the region because energy resources have always been necessary for the global capital. The Kurds have always been an indispensable part of their struggle with Russia for regional hegemony, and their strategy of ensuring the security of energy resources and routes. Furthermore, establishing a federal or independent Kurdish entity in the Middle East has always been desired for Israel's security. This is happening in Iraq and Syria today, and it will continue to be so afterward.[185]

When participants were asked to define the "external powers," they have made vague definitions stating that these powers have been independent of particular geography and might vary according to the conjuncture and international alliances. Their responses specifically included the United States, imperialism, and Britain as an imperialist power, the EU, the West, Germany, France, Russia, China, and Israel. "External powers" have primarily two regional objectives: "establishing regional hegemony" and "ensuring the security of energy resources and Israel."[186] In order to achieve their objectives, they mainly aimed to weaken Turkey and Iran, two potential regional powers, with coups and embargoes because "weak Iran and Turkey means strong Israel."[187] The ultimate goal of "external powers" was to stop "Turkey's advancement towards the west"[188] and to divide Turkey because "they always wanted to take revenge since Atatürk who made the Turkish nation permanent in this territory by mobilizing them in the War of Independence."[189] They even had designs to establish the "greater Israel" in the "Promised Land" that covered the area

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[188] Former MHP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[189] Ibid.

between the Nile and the Euphrates, including some parts of southeastern Turkey:

> Why is it important for Israel? It is crucial because of the holy, promised lands (*arz-ı mev'ud*). The promised lands extend from Ağrı to Hatay. From today's Israel to the Palestinian lands, Palestine to Syria, Syria to a part of Iraq, and here (Turkey). If Palestine comes into being then, there will be no promised lands. For this reason, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and a part of Turkey should not exist. They do whatever it takes for it.[190]

In other words, the "imperialist powers had enduring designs on the Middle East,"[191] this has been continuous and permanent because the "games of imperialists, especially against the Islamic and Turkish geography, will not come to an end,"[192] and all this had an unfavorable effect on Turkey that had to remain weak to not threaten "foreign ambitions and plans" in the region. Consequently, the "external powers" have played on reinforcing ethnic and sectarian divisions within the country, such as Turkish-Kurdish, Alevi-Sunni, and secular-anti-secular, to weaken Turkey and undermine its political stability.[193] Moreover, they have been using internal collaborators, just as they have done in the past, mainly "separatist Kurdish ethno nationalists and the radical left,"[194] because "fostering ethnic separatism has always been something fictionalized by imperialism in order to achieve its goals."[195] In this view, ethnic or religious minorities seeking equality with the majority were often seen as a potential fifth

[190] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[191] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

[192] Former AKP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[193] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

[194] Former Turkish Special Forces Officer and Military Adviser, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

[195] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

column that could undermine Turkey's stability. They ultimately damaged its national unity in collaboration with foreign powers whose desire has always been to dismantle Turkey as foreseen in the abortive Treaty of Sévres in 1920 (Guida, 2008). The fear of Turkey's partition in a fashion similar to the Sévres Treaty reproduced Turkey's "ontological insecurity" and hampered the recognition of minority rights, as attempts to partition Turkey (Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, 2007), since the granting of certain rights to one group could lead to a reawakening of consciousness of other ethnic groups (Kirişci and Winrow, 1997). For this reason, demands for minority rights and minority struggles for equality were considered connected to a "comprehensive attack" on Turkey's national unity and a part of an external plot against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. Consequently, any democratization attempt was almost automatically regarded as a "national security issue" and removed from the realm of political debate.

5.2.4 Trans-Border Ethnic Relations and Its Impact on Majority-Minority Relations in Turkey

Kurds have been a transnational community living in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Although exact figures were not available and controversial, the distribution of the Kurdish population has been estimated that about 45 percent in Turkey, 20 percent in Iran, 20 percent in Iraq, 5 percent in Syria, 5 percent in Armenia, and last 5 percent were scattered all over the world (Sirkeci, 2000). Bengio (2017) argued that although the enforcement of national boundaries politically separated Kurds after World War I, they remained in contact with one another and were mutually influenced by trans-border exchanges, which

reinforced a Kurdish nationalist discourse. This was despite that the Kurdish population in each country has constructed its own unique identity in relation to the local circumstances.[196] Moreover, starting from the 1990s, the creation of an autonomous Kurdish government in northern Iraq as a consequence of the Gulf War, the emergence of an active Kurdish diaspora, especially in Western Europe, the development of communication technologies that connected trans-border co-ethnics and challenged the state's monopoly of information (Romano, 2002), and the rise of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the PKK's Syrian offshoot, as a critical player in the Syrian war and its increasing presence in the Turkish-Syrian border facilitated the internationalization of the Kurdish question, a development that further complicated Turkey's relations with Kurds both within and along its borders. Moreover, empirical findings showed that Kurds living in Turkey who had close relatives in nearby countries hosting conflicting ethnic-kin groups tended to have stronger ethno-nationalist orientations and claims against the state (Sarigil, 2020). The findings of this study also confirmed that the transnational character of Kurdish nationalism has increasingly affected and complicated their relations with the state. As a former AKP member of parliament for one of the Kurdish-populated provinces stated,

> The situation was different among the Kurds 40 or 50 years ago. However, now it was understood that there is no difference between Kurds from Iran or Turkey because of the rising awareness for Kurds and their struggle against oppression. The idea that the Kurds must achieve a unified struggle and a Kurdish administration is becoming widespread.

[196] For instance, Turkey has forged robust political and economic relations with the KDP and the Barzani family while remaining staunchly opposed to a PYD-controlled autonomous region along its southern border.

> Therefore, Kurds in four countries are increasingly supporting and affecting each other.[197]

The increasing internationalization of the Kurdish question and a rising uniform Kurdish sense of identity have increased the level of threat perception for the Turkish political elite. They deprecated any Kurdish political achievement, not just in Turkey but in Iraq and Syria, and perceived it as an existential threat to Turkey's national security and sovereignty. For a former Turkish ambassador who also served as vice president of the CHP, "since 2002, the AKP government saw the Kurds in Turkey as well as those in Iraq, Syria, and even Iran as a threat, danger, and a terrorist element."[198] Similarly, a former Turkish Special Forces Officer and Military Advisor stated:

> In Ankara's strategic mind, which I call PKK phobia, all Kurds in Syria, Iraq, and Iran are monolithic. We see all structures mobilized by the PKK, such as PJAK in Iran or its various affiliates in Iraq and Syria, as terrorist organizations. That is to say, it does not make much sense if it calls itself by different names in different countries. They are all terrorists. From the state's point of view, in our opinion, it is a terrorist organization if it is connected to the PKK, and it does not matter if it is in Iraq, Syria, or Iran.[199]

Failing to distinguish their citizens from their trans-border ethnic kin groups and viewing them as part of trans-national community threatening Turkish sovereignty, the members of the Turkish political elite supposed that the existence of the KRG in Iraq and now the possibility of autonomous Kurdish self-rule in Syria, backed by the Western support, would inflame the separatist

[197] Former AKP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[198] Former Ambassador of Turkey and CHP Vice-Chairperson, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, İstanbul (İstanbul: 2019)

[199] Former Turkish Special Forces Officer and Military Adviser, "Interview,"

passions among its Kurdish minority. Participants frequently referred to the "external powers," particularly the United States, and their role in establishing the KRG in northern Iraq in 1992 and their support to Syrian Kurds. They also considered the Western support for the Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria as a resurrection of an age-old foreign conspiracy, which would use Turkey's minorities as instruments, against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state:

> They did it in Iraq in the 1990s. Now they are trying to do the same thing in Syria. The possibility of a federal region in northern Syria under the control of the PKK has now become concretized. This will affect Turkey's Kurds, too.[200]

The PYD's control over much of the Syrian side of the Turkey-Syria border in the aftermath of the Syrian war had significant repercussions for the participants of this study. For a retired major general, for instance, the main reason that led to the collapse of the peace process between the AKP government and the PKK was the possibility of an emerging Kurdish autonomous region in Syria, similar to that in northern Iraq:

> When the plans for establishing a Kurdish state, a corridor in northern Syria under American control, were revealed, the state had to take precautions. One way or another, something emerged with the support of the USA, which is directly associated with the PKK. Turkey considers this a severe threat to its national existence and does not allow it and probably will not do so in the future.[201]

[200] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

[201] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

Moreover, according to a former AKP member of parliament, the fighting between the Islamic State (IS) and Kurdish forces in the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane was one of the factors that played a role in HDP's success in winning 13 percent of the votes in the general elections of June 2015, crossing the ten percent threshold and becoming the third-largest parliamentary group:

> The main reason that led the HDP to gain a 13 percent vote share was the Kobane incidents in Syria, which increased the national feelings of the Kurds and united them in that respect. This latest military intervention in the east of Euphrates also caused the Kurds to distance themselves from the AKP.[202]

As the participants of this study pointed out, the presence of ethnic kin groups in neighboring countries and cross-border developments directly affecting the ethnic kin also impacted domestic politics and the dynamics of state-minority relations across the border. The June 2015 elections in which the HDP won around 80 seats in the parliament, preventing the AKP from forming a majority government, and Ankara's fear of Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria combined to officially end Turkey's peace process (Özpek, 2018). Furthermore, Turkey's reluctance to join the war effort against the IS in defense of Kobane has also led to unrest among Turkey's Kurdish minority, who protested against the state's inaction. Consequently, violence escalated in the predominantly-Kurdish southeast, and the conflict moved from rural areas into urban centers (Gürcan, 2016b). The collapse of the Kurdish peace process in 2015 and the resumption of armed conflict throughout eastern and southeastern Turkey dealt a heavy blow against Kurdish minority rights.

[202] Former AKP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

CHAPTER 6

THE ISRAELI STATE ELITE'S PERCEPTION OF ISRAEL'S CITIZENS OF PALESTINIAN DESCENT AND MINORITY RIGHTS

6.1 Identity Politics

6.1.1 Defining the Boundaries of Israeliness: Who is an Israeli?

Scholars usually have described Israel as an ethnic state where the Jewish majority has been given preference over other ethnicities and religious groups regarding specific laws and regulations (A.a. Ghanem and Rouhana, 2001). In

other words, the Israeli State has drawn a narrower boundary and pursued a boundary contraction strategy by limiting the pool of people bestowed to those of Jewish faith and descent. This policy has been manifested in discriminatory legislation towards non-Jews, such as the Law of Return, the institutional form of the Zionist claim to Jewish nativeness (Zawdu and Willen, 2021), which stated that "every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh*."[203] Mamdani (2020) argued that Zionism envisioned not just a Jewish home but a place where Jews could be "returning natives," and sharing the national home with the natives who had never left has not been an option. Therefore, the Law of Return of 1950, and the Jewish nativity it presumed, granted the right of all Jews and their family members worldwide to come to Israel as an *oleh* and become Israeli citizens, including the Mizrahim[204] Jews from Arab and Muslim countries, mainly from former Ottoman territories. The assimilation of those Jews with differing languages and diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds into a unified nation was a precondition for creating an Israeli national identity. In other words, the Israeli state adopted a boundary expansion

[203] *Oleh* meant "one who ascends," and it referred to an immigrating Jew prior to the expiration of twelve months from the date his/her settling in Israel. See Israel, "Law No. 5710-1950, the Law of Return," (1950).

[204] Israel officially classified this group as Mizrahim. Between 1948 and 1951, some 700,000 Mizrahi Jews immigrated to Israel, doubling its Jewish population. There has been longstanding intra-national stratification between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. See, S. S. Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel : White Jews, Black Jews*, London ; New York, Routledge, 2010.

strategy towards the Jews from various parts of the world while pursuing boundary contraction towards non-Jewish natives.[205]

Although the Law of Return refrained from defining Jewishness, the most fundamental question was whether Jewishness should have been defined by religion or ethnicity. Under the Law of Return as amended in 1970, only a person born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism and who was not a member of another religion could be registered as a Jew and entitled to settle in Israel and receive full citizenship.[206] Although religion, as a binding common denominator, has played a substantial role in the emergence of Jewish national identity, according to Mamdani (2020), this definition made Jewish identity a matter of both heritage and religion. Therefore, according to this definition, one might be a Jew and an atheist. Indeed, Israel has been listed among the least

[205] The Israeli nation-building was a project designed by the secular-Western-Ashkenazi elite who sought to "civilize" and "de-Arabized" oriental Jews, particularly Mizrahim, who looked and spoke like Arabs, in order to realize the Zionist vision of Jewish society. Consequently, the Mizrahim, who constituted the majority of Israeli Jews, have been socio-economically and politically marginalized, subjected to prejudice and discrimination, and exempted from contributing to the development of Israeliness. They have been subjected to an assimilation campaign, whose aim was to establish a common ethnonational territorial (Jewish-Israeli) identity and lifestyle based on a reconstructed "imagined" Jewish past and unity. See, O. Yiftachel, "Nation-Building and the Division of Space: Ashkenazi Domination in the Israeli 'Ethnocracy'", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 4 (3), 1998, M. Mamdani, *Neither Settler nor Native : The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020.

[206] Israel, "Law No. 5710-1950, the Law of Return,"

religious countries in the world.[207] Similarly, one of the Israeli participants of this study explained:

> Clearly, for me, the Israeli identity is the modern way of being Jewish. I am a secular person. I even call myself an atheist. Those under the mistaken impression that Judaism is a religion often misunderstand that one of the most incredible things that the modern state of Israel, and the Zionist movement, have done is to create the opportunity of being a very modern Jewish person. Israel is my ability to be part of the Jewish people without any religious aspects. So, it is about the collective experience. This is my national identity.[208]

In light of this definition, one could argue that the meaning and boundaries of Jewishness might change in response to social experience and lived practices that challenged official categories of Jewishness. As Glenn and Sokoloff (2010) put it, whatever the formal historical, institutional, or national definitions of "who is a Jew," the experience of identity has been layered, shifting, syncretic, and constructed. Furthermore, Kimmerling (2001) argued that, under the conditions of globalization and post-colonialism, the concept of Israeliness has been subject to a slow disaggregation, leading to a decline in the strength of the former national identity and opening spaces for more differentiated and pluralistic approaches. However, despite the heterogeneity and variety of cultures in Israel and the decline of monolithic Israeliness (Kimmerling, 2001), the collective Israeli national identity has still been defined by the religious identity, and the Israeli law did not recognize an "Israeli nationality" status. A former senior officer from the Israeli intelligence service Mossad and Arab affairs advisor to the prime minister, for instance, equated Israeli identity with

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[207] Haaretz, *Israel among the Least Religious Countries in the World* 2015), available from https://www.haaretz.com/israel-china-among-least-religious-nations-1.5350737

[208] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv: 2019)

being Jewish descent: “Israeli identity is mainly an Israeli Jew who is a citizen of the state of the Jewish people.”[209] Furthermore, all participants, without exception, pointedly emphasized that Israel is a Jewish state:

> The idea that Israel is a Jewish state is a national idea, not a religious idea at all. It is about the idea of self-determination of the Jewish people. It is the idea that Israel is the only state whose public symbols express Jewish history and Jewish culture.[210]

The participants also highlighted that virtually every state in the world has been nationalistic to some degree, and a homogenous nation governed by its sovereign state was the prevalent idea of modern statehood creation. For an Israeli ambassador, symbols and shared rituals, such as national flag and holidays, served to reinforce nationalist sentiment in every country:

> The independence declaration of Israel declared Israel as the “homeland of the Jewish people.” Therefore, the character of the state is Jewish in its religion, national holidays, flag, Shabbat, etc. Just like Turkey. Britain is Anglican. There is a cross in British and Swedish flags.[211]

A former Likud minister and member of the Knesset further argued that all parties in Israel shared a consensus in defining Israel as the Jewish state: “the notion that Israel is defined, explicitly or implicitly, as the nation-state of the Jewish people is common to all Zionist Jewish parties, including the religious parties which do not define themselves as Zionists.”[212] Moreover, as one of the

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[209] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy (Ramat Hasharon: 2019)

[210] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[211] An Israeli Ambassador, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy (Modi'in: 2019)

[212] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy (Jerusalem: 2018)

former Israeli ambassadors emphasized, besides defining Israel as a Jewish state, the state demanded its citizens of Palestinian descent to recognize Israel as such:

> The problem is that we are not only a Jewish state, but we also demand that the Palestinians recognize us as a Jewish state. This is very difficult for them because we will always have 20 percent or more non-Jews. Imagine that you constitute one of four, and you have to recognize Jewish superiority.[213]

In contrast to their Turkish counterparts, almost all members of the Israeli political elite who were interviewed for this study introduced an ethnic and religious definition for Israeli national identity. They equated Israeli identity with being of Jewish descent. There has been a distinction between nationality (*le'om*) and citizenship (*ezrahut*) in the Israeli context. The Israeli Population Registry Law 5725-1965,[214] like most other laws, was adopted by the state of Israel from the British Mandate for Palestine. Under this law, citizens of Israel must have been registered according to both nationality and religion, as in the case of the Ottoman *millet* system. Israeli identification cards, which citizens have been required to carry at all times, distinguished between Jewish and non-Jewish citizens by registering them, for instance, as "Israeli citizens with Jewish nationality," "Israeli citizens with Arab nationality," and "Israeli citizens with Druze nationality," etc. In 2013, the Supreme Court confirmed that no such status as "Israeli nationality" existed. The court has ruled that identifying citizens as "Israeli" in the national registry would undermine Israel's Jewish character because "there is no Israeli nation separate from the Jewish nation...

[213] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[214] Israel, "Law No. 5725-1965, Population Registry Law " (1965)

composed not only of those residing in Israel but also of Diaspora Jews."[215] Consequently, the classification of citizens according to ethnic affiliation was inherently discriminatory towards non-Jewish citizens because the only nationality conferring automatic status to enjoy all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights was Jewish.

6.1.2 The Citizens of Palestinian Descent

The members of the Israeli political elite put a greater emphasis on the historical roots of Israel as a "Jewish and democratic" state and usually defined it as the "only democracy in the Middle East surrounded by non-democratic countries"[216] or a "villa in the jungle,"[217] in which all citizens, regardless of religion and ethnicity, enjoyed the same equal rights. Foreign Affairs Director of the Likud party stated:

> I define Israel as the state of the Jews and the minorities who were born in this state. Israel is the state of the Jews, but it is a Jewish and democratic state. I want to emphasize that Israel is nationally the state of the Jews, although there are minorities with equal rights within it. We take almost every possible action in order to give them equal rights, economically and scientifically.[218]

Although a former Deputy National Security Advisor admitted that sometimes there might be tension between Jewish and democratic elements of the state, which created the "strongest dilemma"[219] of the Israeli regime, the majority of participants argued that the Jewish and democratic components of the state

[215] T. Goldenberg, "Supreme Court Rejects 'Israeli' Nationality Status", *Times of Israel*.

[216] Former Ambassador of Israel, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Tel Aviv (Tel Aviv: 2019)

[217] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[218] Likud Party Foreign Affairs Director, "Interview,"

[219] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

definition did not contradict each other and excluded others: “Israel is the national home of the Jewish people but also a democratic state, so also gives all rights to all its citizens.”[220] For Ghanem et al. (1998), however, the various democratic features of the Israeli system, such as periodic elections, an independent judiciary, a free press, could not obscure the state’s undemocratic structure, which has been premised on a rigid ethnic hierarchy and lack of inclusive territorial citizenship.

Similar to their Turkish counterparts, the main reason why the Israeli participants did not consider the self-identification of the state (both Jewish and democratic) as a “fundamental contradiction” (Nadim N. Rouhana, 2006) was that they drew a sharp distinction between civil rights, which included a broad range of individual rights and freedoms, and collective rights. From this perspective, Israeli citizens of Palestinian descent might enjoy some individual citizenship rights, such as the right to privacy, access to court, freedom of

[220] Secretary-General of the Israeli Labor Party, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Modi'in (Modi'in: 2019)

expression, press, religion, etc. However, their demands for being recognized as an indigenous national minority with collective rights have been continuously refused by the state on the grounds that it contradicted the Jewish character of the state. As a former senior intelligence officer from the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad explained:

> Israel is a Jewish state, but everyone has equal civil rights, not national rights. The Jewish State does not exclude them from a civil rights point of view. It excludes them only if they demand a separate national definition in Israel.[221]

Similarly, the Foreign Affairs Director of the Likud party stated that although non-Jewish minorities enjoyed equal rights as individuals, the State of Israel has been the national home of the Jewish people as declared by the "Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People,"[222] wherein only the Jewish people have exercised the right to national self-determination.[223] Moreover, for the former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party MK, who acknowledged the exclusionary nature of the Jewish state elsewhere in the interview, the citizens of Palestinian descent have been tolerated as long as they remained a minority and accepted their status as such. Thus, they could also benefit from the "opportunities of the Jewish state," he argued:

> From the beginning, the whole idea of the Jewish state, from the first time this book by Herzl was published in 1896, was that it is a Jewish state and a state for all its citizens. The whole idea of Herzl, which he wrote quite a lot, was that Arabs would benefit as a minority from the Jewish majority. So the idea of the Jewish state does not exclude others, even though it is very close exclusion from the nationalistic point of view."[224]

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[221] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[222] Likud Party Foreign Affairs Director, "Interview,"

[223] The Knesset, *Basic Law: Israel - the Nation State of the Jewish People*

[224] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

This statement reflected a constant feature of the Israeli political discourse, which claimed that improving the material prosperity of the Palestinian minority would cause a decrease in their political demands. In general, the majority of the participants tended to agree with this argument. On the one hand, the participants of this study argued that Israel could maintain its democratic structure by improving the standard of living for the Palestinian minority, thus creating the motivation for them to be a part of the state while preserving its Jewish character.[225] "Taking advantage of the opportunities of the Jewish state," however, required the Palestinian consent to recognize not just their secondary status but also the Jewish nature of the state:

> The state does not exclude citizens who do not belong to the Jewish people. They are very much Israeli. They are citizens of the State of Israel. As part of being citizens of Israel, I think that they also commit that Israel is a state committed to never closing its doors to the Jews. I think, in many ways, this is the fundamental commitment. It is not just about finally governing ourselves, having our public history and its symbols in the public sphere, but also knowing that we have a place, no matter of what, which will not close its doors to the Jewish people around the world, and that is the commitment held by the non-Jews living in the state.[226]

Much like their Turkish counterparts who claimed that the Kurds in Turkey enjoyed equal rights and might climb to the upper echelons of the state, the Israeli political elite also pointed out that the citizens of Palestinian descent have served in various ministerial positions in Israeli cabinets to support their argument that the Palestinian citizens had equal citizenship rights and access to political representation. In fact, in the early 1990s, two Palestinians were

[225] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[226] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

appointed as deputy ministers by the Rabin government. Until 2001, when a Druze politician was appointed as minister without portfolio, however, there had been no Palestinian cabinet members in an Israeli government.[227] In 2007, the first Muslim Arab minister in Israel's history was appointed as the Minister of Science, Culture, and Sport by Labor Party leader Amir Peretz, who called the appointment a "historic moment."[228] Secretary-General of the Labor Party also said that he was very supportive of the idea of having Palestinian representatives in governments and coalitions:

> Amir was the first leader who appointed an Arab Israeli Muslim as a minister. He was the only Arab Israeli Muslim minister in the government and a member of the Labor Party. I am delighted that Amir Peretz did it. Nevertheless, he was the first and the last.[229]

In 2017, Prime Minister Netanyahu also appointed an Israeli Druze MK as minister of communications. Although there were several politicians in ministerial positions from the Israeli Druze community, which has been historically considered "much more loyal to the State of Israel,"[230] there was only one Arab Israeli Muslim minister in Israel's political history. As the former Deputy National Security Advisor stated, the pro-Palestinian parties have never been a part of a coalition government,[231] and all non-Jewish ministers and

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[227] Abd al-Aziz al-Zoubi was the first non-Jewish Israeli politician appointed to a governmental position in May 1971. In October 1971, an Israeli Druze politician, Jabr Muadi, was also appointed as deputy minister of communications.

[228] BBC News, "Israel Names First Arab Minister", 12/01/2007

[229] Secretary-General of the Israeli Labor Party, "Interview,"

[230] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[231] For the first time in Israel's political history, an Arab Party, Ra'am, joined the government coalition led by far-right Yamina and centrist Yesh Atid parties to form the thirty-sixth

deputy ministers were members of Zionist parties.[232] The citizens of Palestinian descent were deprived of their total share of political representation and decision-making positions, exercising little political power, even though they represented in local government and the Knesset, because the "Israeli state had very little interest in sharing power with others or giving up its privileged status" (Migdal, 2006). Moreover, none of the Arab Israeli ministers and deputy ministers served in strategic ministries, such as the defence ministry.

6.2 Majority-Minority Relations

6.2.1 Incorporation without Integration: "The More We Meet, the Better We Are"

Two predominant views on Jewish-Palestinian relations in Israel have been observed among the participants of this study. For some participants, there has always been suspicion and distrust between the Jewish and Palestinian communities in Israel due to the "very complex relationship between the Arab

government of Israel in June 2021. Ra'am is the political wing of the Southern Branch of the Islamic Movement, whose goal has been to "Islamize the Palestinian society in Israel." Contrary to the other Joint-List Arab-majority parties which challenged the Jewish nature of the state of Israel, Ra'am accepted the political reality of a Jewish state in which it aimed to preserve the integrity of a Muslim community. For more on the Islamic Movement in Israel, see A. K. Agbaria and M. Mustafa, "Two States for Three Peoples: The 'Palestinian-Israeli' in the Future Vision Documents of the Palestinians in Israel", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35 (4), 2012; N. 'Ali, "Political Islam in an Ethnic Jewish State: Historical Evolution, Contemporary Challenges and Future Prospects", 3 (1), 2004; I. Aburaiya, "The 1996 Split of the Islamic Movement in Israel: Between the Holy Text and Israeli-Palestinian Context", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 17 (3), 2004.

[232] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

minority and the state because neither Israeli Jews trust the Arabs nor the Arabs trust the Jewish government."[233] The mutual distrust between the two societies has been reflected in the daily lives of citizens to a great extent:

> Let us ay an Arab student at Tel Aviv University went to rent an apartment. It will be much more difficult for him to find an apartment than a Jewish student because some people are more hostile and suspicious towards them. Sometimes they are afraid of them. They look at Arabs as terrorists.[234]

As a consequence, the number of mixed marriages has always been deficient and not welcomed by both societies[235] while a high degree of socio-spatial segregation along ethnic lines has remained stable. Likewise, an Israeli ambassador affirmed that the citizens of Palestinian and Jewish descent in Israel have been socially separated: "you can see which city is Arab and which one is Jewish."[236] The religious differences further deepened the social segregation. A former senior diplomat from the foreign ministry argued: "you do not know who is Turk and Kurd in Turkey, but in Israel, you can identify people just by their names."[237] In addition to exclusionary state policies toward the Palestinian citizens, reciprocal Jewish-Palestinian relations in Israel have deteriorated, political polarization and mutual distrust intensified, posing a severe threat to coexistence and Israeli democracy (Waxman, 2012). Moreover, the ever-present rift between the two populations had widened even further since the events of October 2000, when massive protests and riots took place and thirteen

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[236] An Israeli Ambassador, "Interview,"

[237] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

Palestinian demonstrators -twelve of them Israeli citizens- were killed by the security forces:

> The October 2000 events were more than protesting. No, it was violent. On the main roads where they lived, they threw stones on Jewish vehicles, and in some cases, Jews were apprehensive about them when they came in masses to surround Jewish villages. It was not a case of many victims. I mean, on the Palestinian side, thirteen Arabs were killed. However, the impact of this event in Umm al-Fahm and other places was huge. It brought us many years back to mutual suspicion, which went down tremendously in the 1990s.[238]

The same participant also admitted that it has always been much more difficult to change the public attitude than government policies:

> The question is the main cultural and public attitude towards them. If people do not want to rent their flats to Arabs, which is the case in many places, this is not the Israeli law but the Israeli public attitude, which is bad enough.[239]

While some participants argued that there had been a severe deterioration in relations between the two communities over the past decades, explicitly following the massive protests in October 2000, others claimed that the citizens of Palestinian descent have become more integrated into Israeli society in recent decades. For instance, the General-Secretary of the Labor Party stated that the Palestinian citizens were more willing to be involved in the Israeli society than ever before: "there are a lot of Arab Israelis who wish to be a part of it. Especially in economics, you see it all the time. We live together."[240] Another participant noted that the number of mixed cities, like Illit Nazareth, where Palestinians and Jews have lived together, has been steadily increased. Mixed cities also created workplaces and higher education institutions, such as Haifa

[238] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[239] Ibid.

[240] Secretary-General of the Israeli Labor Party, "Interview,"

University, which might facilitate more positive social interactions and thus fostered intergroup communication in a multicultural environment:

> When I was young, I never met an Arab in high school. I never spoke with an Arab. Now every day, I meet Arabs not only in restaurants but also in professional life. So there is more interaction nowadays. There is more physical interaction because of workplaces. This does not mean that they are socializing. Nevertheless, it is unavoidable, which is why so many elements are fighting against socializing and mixed marriages.[241]

As expressed in this statement, working together and sharing the same workplace did not necessarily mean that employee interaction would increase and improve social cohesion. On the contrary, Darr (2018) suggested that the broader ethnonational conflict in Israel penetrated the workplaces since interaction did not reduce prejudice and racism, instead displaced them to the organizational level. Moreover, even those mixed cities and towns have experienced a continuous trend of high segregation indices. A situation of "neighbours without neighbourly relations" (Falah, 1996) marked the residential reality of Israeli mixed cities.

In another view on social integration, the majority of participants also expressed that the Palestinian citizens have been increasingly becoming an integral part of the country's economy, ignoring that they have been concentrating in blue-collar, less well-paid, and insecure jobs because the state's economic policies were ideologically conceived as representing the "common good of the Jewish majority" (Sa'di, 1995). Interestingly, in the last decades, right-wing governments have made efforts to improve the overall economic conditions of the Palestinian community through long-term development plans and equal financial allocations to Arab municipalities. For instance, the

[241] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

government of Netanyahu has apportioned 15 billion shekels for the Palestinian sector to reduce the societal gaps,[242] and developed a five-year plan that amounted to 1.2 billion shekels for the "underprivileged and underdeveloped Bedouin community in the Negev."[243] Nonetheless, this was largely because of the neo-liberal free-market policies of Netanyahu, whom a former Israeli ambassador described as "American, Republican, and capitalist in his thinking."[244]

The prevalent idea among the political elite was that the state of Israel would be better off economically, and therefore socially, if more groups, especially the ultra-orthodox Jews and the Palestinian minority, would have been integrated into the economy.[245] As former Israeli Deputy National Security Advisor explained, the primary strategy was to "make clear that it is a Jewish state but at the same time to create motivation in the minority to be part of the state because life is good in the Jewish state."[246] However, studies showed that improving the material prosperity of a minority in an ethnic state would not necessarily resolve the conflict between the state and a minority (N. Rouhana, 1998).

[242] Likud Party Foreign Affairs Director, "Interview,"

[243] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[244] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[245] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[246] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

6.2.2 Elite Perception of Palestinian Rights and Political Demands

According to a survey conducted in 2017, 73,8 percent of the Jewish interviewees perceived the Palestinian citizens as having the right to live in Israel as a minority with full citizenship rights, and 62,3 percent regarded the state's policies as either egalitarian or as discriminatory only in certain areas (Smooha, 2017). In parallel to the public view, almost all participants of this study were also agreed that the Jewish character of the state did not exclude non-Jewish citizens, and they viewed the Israeli Palestinians as equal citizens:

> Right after establishing the State of Israel, the Israeli Arabs were recognized as citizens with full rights. We do not have a constitution, and to some extent, Israel refers to the Independence Declaration as a kind of constitution since it states the basic principles guiding the state. The principles emphasize that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, but on the other hand, it is a democracy in which all citizens enjoy the same rights.[247]

As explained by the participant, the State of Israel did not adopt a constitution at its establishment in 1948. Instead, the "Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty," which has protected a person from violations of his/her right to life, body, or dignity but did not enumerate a right to equality, has been considered a mini-bill of rights by Israeli legal scholars (Kretzmer, 1992). Nevertheless, the lack of a formal written constitution and a bill of rights deprived the Palestinian citizens of the right to live as equal citizens in Israel. According to a former Likud minister and member of the Knesset, however, the absence of a Bill of Rights and legislation that imposed considerations of equality stemmed from internal Jewish affairs rather than the Jewish-Palestinian relations:

> The right to equality has never been enacted into law in Israel. This was not because of Jewish-Arab relations but, to a large extent, because of internal Jewish and religious issues. When we enacted the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty in 1992, I was a member of the Knesset at that time. Jewish religious parties refused to add the issue of equality into

[247] Ibid.

> that specific law that speaks about the right of privacy, freedom, etc. For this reason, especially since 1992, the right to equality has been enshrined in our court rulings, especially in the Supreme Court. One can argue that we do not, practically, need an explicit law.[248]

The majority of participants of this study acknowledged that the citizens of Palestinian descent deserved full citizenship rights[249] and further argued, especially in the last decades, the "principle of equality has been cherished and maintained by the Israeli governments which acted in very democratic manner."[250] However, since the 1990s, when their process of "Israelization" has started (Smooha, 2009), the Palestinian citizens have constantly been demanding to be recognized as a national minority with collective rights, as one of the directors of Adalah–The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel explained:

> In addition to cultural rights, the minority rights of the Palestinians in Israel have started to be raised in the aftermath of the Oslo agreement. At that time, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which affected the concept of being the minority. We can define ourselves as a national minority because there is a legal framework. So for the first time, Palestinians started to define themselves as a national minority and consequently raised group rights, such as language rights and cultural autonomy. This was the first time. Those group rights were like that the Arabs have been a national minority, therefore, should have controlled their education system, decided their curriculum, spoke the Arabic language as equal language and, for the first time, they started to challenge the Jewish definition of the state because you have a framework that was connected to what you said, the end of Cold War, the rise of multiculturalism, the fall of the apartheid, etc.[251]

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[248] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[249] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[250] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[251] Director of Adalah – The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy, Haifa (Haifa: 2018)

As Jamal (2005) put it, before the 1990s, the Palestinian demand for equality was based mainly on distributive justice and individual liberty, according to which the state should have integrated them as equal participants in society and state. Starting from the 1990s, however, they have been increasingly demanding collective rights, including self-governance in matters of Palestinian life in Israel such as education, communication, planning, control over resources, social welfare, and development, arguing that collective rights have been the precondition for guaranteeing individual equality. As previously discussed, the participants of this study made a clear distinction between individual and collective rights, and almost all of them, including the left-wing Labor Party members, fiercely opposed the idea of granting the latter to the Palestinian minority. The Secretary-General of the Labor Party said that "I believe there is a difference between individual and national rights. I do not recognize national rights even though, of course, I support and wish equal civil rights."[252] Furthermore, some participants harshly condemned the Palestinian Future Vision Documents, which challenged the Jewish character of the state and introduced a collective position on the nature of the state for the Palestinian minority by establishing a binational state. Calling them as the "so-called documents of vision," a former Likud minister stated that the basis of his rejection of the documents was that they attacked the very foundation of the State of Israel.[253] A former member of the Knesset for the Labor party similarly argued that the purpose of the Future Vision Documents was to cease anything Jewish, ranging from language to state symbols:

[252] Secretary-General of the Israeli Labor Party, "Interview,"

[253] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

> The Arab minority says I will never really feel that this is my country until it ceases to be Jewish. No Jewish history, no Hebrew as the primary official language, no Jewish symbols in the public sphere, and certainly no commitment to Jewish immigration. All that has to go, and only then we can call it our country. This is a document by the Arab High Committee. This is what they call the neutral vision. When Israeli Jews heard that, they were like we did dream, bleed, sacrifice, and fight for this country; but at the end of the day, we will not have one state that we can call our home. The Arab minority will only feel good when we will be basically gone or when we will get back to our proper place as Jews, a minority under Islamic and Arab rule, a minority that I like to say in quotes "plays its nose." So this is something I struggle with.[254]

The research findings showed that the establishment of the State of Israel also symbolized for the participants the shift from being a "persecuted minority" to the people in charge, where the Jewish people finally exercised sovereignty. As Gavison (2003) wrote, "the Jews were a people in exile, foreigners wherever they went; they were everywhere a minority, and in some places persecuted relentlessly; and they had never possessed national sovereignty over any land but the land of Israel." For centuries, Jews have experienced being a "persecuted minority, a people whose fate was always decided by someone else."[255] Therefore, Zionism was not the only solution to the persecution of Jews but the guarantor of their safety. For this reason, while keeping Israel's Jewish character with a sizeable non-Jewish minority comprised mostly of Palestinian Arabs was tolerable for the participants, granting equal national rights to the Palestinian minority implied losing the Jewish character of the state that was historically founded as a homeland for the Jewish people and, hence, losing the national sovereignty. Considering the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in historic Palestine and the broader Middle East, establishing a binational state

[254] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[255] Ibid.

that would offer power-sharing to the two peoples, or a "state for all its citizens" was seen by the participants as a denial of Israel's right to exist, or to "put in discussion the Jews' right to statehood,"[256] because they perceived it as a move that would put the Jews in a minority position again. A former Labor Party member of the Knesset, for instance, argued that given the demography of the Arab-dominated Middle East, Palestinian demands based on equality violated the sovereignty of the Jewish people:

> When Arabs say that we want a neutral state, we know that their vision is an Arab state since the Jews are the smaller minority in the Arab-populated region. The Jewish majority in Israel is trying to get the Arab minority to finally give up on this vision because there is no neutral state in the region.[257]

Similarly, a former Likud minister stated that the demand for a state for all of its citizens was "unacceptable" and added:

> I remember what I heard from Arab Member of the Knesset Ahmad Tibi. He insisted that the State of Israel would be defined as a state of all its nations. Of course, it is not acceptable because, after thousands of years in exile in which we suffered as Jews, there was not even one state on earth where the Jewish people could define themselves as not only a majority but also a sovereign national entity. On the other hand, the Arab nation enjoys self-determination in about 20 or 22 states. It is unfair that there will be another state which would be a Jewish-Arab state.[258]

To sum up, like their Turkish counterparts, the Israeli political and state elite also rejected the idea of "de-ethnicization" of the state by changing the meaning of existing boundaries of the national identity through an inversion strategy because granting collective rights to the Palestinian minority was not seen as reinforcing citizenship links between the state and the minority but paving the way for sovereignty dilution.

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[256] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[257] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[258] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

6.2.3 Trans-Border Ethnic Relations and the Palestinian Minority as a "Security Dilemma"

For some of the participants of this study, the Israeli Palestinians have always been "loyal citizens" of the State of Israel because they never formed an armed militia to fight against the Israeli army.[259] They have pursued nonviolent political struggle within the Israeli Knesset, despite occasional violent clashes between the Palestinian citizens and the security forces as in the Second Intifada, which the former Israeli Justice Minister defined as an event that created an abyss between Jews and Palestinians.[260] Furthermore, a former Advisor to Prime Minister on Arab Affairs and a senior intelligence officer stated that, in fact, the majority of Palestinian citizens have been seen as loyal citizens from a security point of view and added that "generally speaking, we always used to say that most of the Arabs in Israel are loyal to the State of Israel since they never took part in terrorism."[261] However, although some participants, including former security and intelligence officer who worked for many years for the Israeli General Security Service (*Sherut Habitachon Haklali*, commonly known as *Shabak* or *Shin Bet*), acknowledged that the Palestinian citizens of Israel have been loyal to the state in the sense of not taking part in terrorist activities, this has not implied that they have not been perceived as a "security threat" by the state elite along with the majority of the Jewish public. On the contrary, they have been seen as "usual suspects,"[262] "potential enemy,"[263] "potential

[259] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[260] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[261] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[262] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

danger,"[264] "enemies within,"[265] "future bomb,"[266] and "a problem that the security service should cover."[267] In addition to the dominant state perception of the Palestinian minority, the majority of the Jewish public also perceived them as a threat. According to a survey, two-thirds of Jews were reluctant to enter Palestinian villages and towns out of fear, while a majority felt threatened by the Palestinian political struggle against the Jewish character of the state and mass Palestinian rebellion and collaboration with the enemy (Smooha, 2010a).

The perception of Palestinian citizens as a security threat to the state generally stemmed from their cultural, linguistic, and national ties, not to mention family ties, with the Palestinians in the Territories as well as the wider Arab world, which has been generally seen as an existential threat to the Jewish

[263] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[264] Ibid.

[265] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[266] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[267] Ibid.

presence in the region. Consequently, the citizens of Palestinian descent have been "suspicious" because "Arabs were Israel's enemies,"[268] whose ultimate aim was to "throw the Jews out of the region," a former Labor Party member of the Knesset argued:[269]

> The fundamental Arab idea about Israel is that Israel is temporary. The presence of sovereign Jews in the region is temporary. This is what informs the conflict and ideology. Israel's Arab citizens are part of that. They are part of the Arab world. They are not a separate nation or a separate people. They are part of the Arab world, which means that they believe that the Jewish right to self-determination is nonsense and foreign.[270]

The Israeli elite perception of that the Palestinian citizens, as part of the Arab nation which fought against Israel since its inception, were opposed to the idea of the Jewish right to self-determination in Palestine was one of the reasons why they viewed Palestinian political demands with suspicion and considered accommodating minority rights as replacing Israel with another Arab state. For this reason, they supposed that as long as the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, in particular, and the Arab world, in general, remained unresolved, it would have far-reaching implications for Jewish-Palestinian relations within Israel,[271] because, a former senior Israeli intelligence officer argued, "there will always be Arabs in Israel who support the

[268] An Israeli Ambassador, "Interview,"

[269] Former Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[270] Ibid.

[271] Former Ambassador of Israel, "Interview,"

Palestinian side."[272] Besides that, Palestinian citizens' sympathy and support for their Palestinian kin further fostered the Jewish perception that they were betraying the state, as the former Director-General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel said:

> Israeli Arabs want to see a Palestinian state, the Palestinian people to be free. However, they only see the Palestinians are suffering, living under occupation. So they identify themselves with them. But you are Israeli. You live under the State of Israel. You enjoy the health system, public transportation, defense of the Israeli army, and you sided with the Palestinians, so you betray us. This is the public perception.[273]

As a consequence of Palestinian citizens' identification with their ethnic kin across the border, Israel's relations with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and the Arab world substantially affected its domestic politics regarding the relationship between the state and the Palestinian minority. While the perception of the Palestinian minority as a security threat tended to increase in times of conflict with the Arab states, and specifically with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, social and political relations expected to become cordial during the times of rapprochement and dialogue:

> Of course, when there are some signs of peace, it is always better. Here we are right in saying that it is very parallel. When there are signs of peace, Jews and Arabs feel closer. Jews go to the Arab villages, eat at their restaurants, etc. When there is tension between us and the Palestinians, either in the West Bank or Gaza, Jews do not go to Arab restaurants on Saturdays. For example, Acre is a destination for Saturdays. Families go there to see the seashore, to eat in restaurants. However, in times of tension, you see that Acre is empty because Jews

[272] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[273] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

> are afraid of going there. So the political issues have a considerable impact on the relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel.[274]

For most of the participants of this study, trans-border cultural and social relations of Israel's Palestinian citizens have led to their identification with their ethnic kin across the border and thus shaped the state's domestic policies on the assumption that they might cooperate with the "enemy." A former brigadier general and Deputy National Security Advisor of Israel described the domestic implications of these relations for the state's minority policies as a "dilemma:"

> For many Israeli Jews, there is no distinction. Israeli Arabs and Palestinian Arabs are the same. They are enemies outside and enemies within who cooperate to destroy us. After abolishing the military regime, Arab citizens, theoretically, became like any other Israeli citizens without any limitations. Nevertheless, practically, there have always been limitations. Why? Because they are Arabs, they belong to a people who fought against Israel for long years. They have been the enemy. You have a minority ethnically belonging to the same people as your enemies. But Israel is a democracy, and you cannot look at your citizens as a security threat, as the enemies of the other side. How do you deal with this?[275]

Consequently, the perception of the Palestinian citizens as a security threat has manifested in several discriminatory practices and inequalities on the structural level, especially matters concerning the national security, and precisely the state's domestic policies of surveillance, control (Frisch, 2011), and policing the Palestinian minority (Boulos, 2020). The most significant example has been the mandatory military service in Israel, which has required all Israeli, both male and female Jewish citizens, and only male Druze and Circassian citizens over the age of eighteen to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). In contrast, Muslim and Christian Palestinian citizens have been exempted from compulsory

[274] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[275] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

military service.[276] The exemption of Palestinian citizens from conscription in the military was based on distrust of the Jewish state towards them because of their trans-border ethnic affiliations with the Palestinians and with the wider Arab world, since "no one could order them to fight and kill their people."[277] An Israeli retired brigadier general said:

> The fact is that Arabs do not have to serve in the military because nobody invites them. Because you cannot join the army to fight with your brothers since the Israeli army is fighting against the Arab countries. You cannot force a man to fight against his family, brother, or neighbor. All neighboring Arab countries host a considerable number of Palestinian refugees.[278]

The State of Israel drew a clear distinction between its citizens of Palestinian descent, calling them by religious classification, such as Muslim, Christian, or Druze, and set the Bedouin apart; hence, the level of threat they posed. While Israel's mandatory military conscription law was applied to the Druze citizens since 1956 in coordination with the community leadership,[279] the Bedouins, a community native to southern Israel, have volunteered for military duty, which has been seen by many of them as an "employment opportunity."[280]

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[276] Except for the Christian and Muslim Palestinian citizens, ultra-Orthodox Jews, pregnant and married women, current mothers, and those deemed unfit medically or mentally have also been exempted from compulsory military service by law.

[277] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[278] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Former Head of the Budget Division of the Ministry of Defense, "Interview," ed. Z. Asli Elitsoy (Tel Aviv: 2019)

[279] Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, most Druze began voluntarily military service in the IDF, which became compulsory in 1956.

[280] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

In contrast, Muslim and Christian Palestinian citizens have been exempted from military duty since the establishment of the state. However, in recent years the Israeli military has stepped up efforts also to encourage Christian teens to serve in the army voluntarily.[281] According to the Secretary-General of the Labor Party, on the one hand, there have been an increasing number of Palestinian citizens who choose to volunteer for military service:

> There are more and more Arabs who want to serve in the army, though it is not duty by law. I support that there should be a law for all citizens to serve either in the army or in civilian institutions. This should be a duty for everybody, Jewish and Arab.[282]

On the other hand, for an Israeli ambassador, it was not the state, but the Palestinian citizens themselves who decided not to join the Israeli army: "they can voluntarily go to the national services, like helping elderly. Arab parties, however, do not publically recognize Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. So they decided not to go to the army."[283]

As it was evident in the compulsory conscription law in Israel, the Druze citizens, who have been seen as "much more loyal,"[284] have been heavily integrated into Israel's security establishment and sometimes served in high-

[281] It has been reported that currently, an estimated 5,000 Palestinian citizens of Israel volunteer to serve in the Israeli military. For a detailed account of Palestinian soldiers in the Israeli military, see R. A. Kanaaneh, *Surrounded : Palestinian Soldiers in the Israeli Military*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 2009

[282] Secretary-General of the Israeli Labor Party, "Interview,"

[283] An Israeli Ambassador, "Interview,"

[284] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

level military positions and elite units. However, the Israeli state has also distinguished between its Druze citizens. A retired brigadier general indicated that there had been a difference between Israeli Druze from the Golan and Galilee regions on the side of the state: "when we conquered the Golan in 1967, there was a Druze population there. Druze in Golan does not serve in the army, but only those who have been Israeli citizens since 1948."[285] In other words, while the Druze in Galilee, who took citizenship in 1948, has been regarded by the Israeli political elite as having constituted the "most loyal" section of the Palestinian minority,[286] the Druze in the Golan, who has consistently refused to relinquish their Syrian identity despite that the Israeli citizenship has been available to them since 1981,[287] have been viewed with suspicion and as "anti-Israel," because of their ties with the "Arab nationalists."[288] Moreover, Muslims and Christians, who constituted 90 percent of the Palestinian minority in Israel, have been much more equated with their trans-border ethnic kin.

Another implication of the Palestinian minority's identification with Israel's enemies has been the case of nationality-based employment

[285] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[286] For an opposing argument, see E. W. Aboultaif, "Druze Politics in Israel: Challenging the Myth of "Druze-Zionist Covenant"", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 35 (4), 2015.

[287] According to reports, influenced by the unrest caused by the Syrian War, the number of Druze residents on the Golan Heights who applied for Israeli citizenship has increased over the recent years. See, The Times of Israel, "Golan Druze Leader Disputes Un Statement on 'Hardship of Israeli Occupation'".

[288] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

discrimination in Israel (Steiner, 2013), especially government or security-related industrial employment. According to the former Deputy National Security Advisor, the state's employment strategy has been not to employ the Palestinian citizens in the strategic sectors of the economy, such as defense, aircraft, and electricity industries:

> We have problems in employing them in industries related to security, such as defence and aircraft industry, and industries that are not related to defence in definition, but for a long time, Israeli Arabs have not been employed there because of their strategic importance. For example, the Israeli electricity company, a state company, did not employ Arab citizens since it had strategic implications because they could cooperate with the enemy and sabotage the electricity supply.[289]

Moreover, a special department in the Israeli internal security service Shin Bet, which was described by one of the participants as "quite effective,"[290] has been responsible for monitoring and gathering intelligence on Palestinian citizens only. Although the same participant acknowledged that "you cannot look at your citizens as a security threat in a democracy,"[291] these discriminatory policies, especially those related to national security, proved that the state continued to view its citizens of Palestinian descent as a hostile security threat due to their trans-border cultural and national ties. Consequently, the collective demands of the Palestinian minority, including equality with the Jews in Israel, cultural autonomy, and the establishment of a democratic, binational state, have been seen as inconsistent with the Jewish right to self-determination and even further as a plot for bringing about the end of the Jewish state.

[289] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[290] Ibid.

[291] Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

INSIDE OUTSIDERS: TRANS-BORDER HOMELAND MINORITIES AND ETHNIC BOUNDARIES

7.1 Israel and Turkey: "Ethnic" vs. "Civic" State?

Israel and Turkey have historically followed different boundary-making strategies to define the boundaries of their national identities and applied different diversity management policies. For some scholars, the difference was due to the two states' nation-building legacies and differing ways of imagining their national communities. In this view, Turkey was defined as an "anti-ethnic" (Akturk, 2009), inclusive "civic" state (Heper, 2007) in which the state did not promote the interests of the majority and individual members of ethnic minorities enjoyed full citizenship on an equal basis (Peleg and Waxman, 2007), while Israel was classified as an "ethnic democracy" (Smooha, 1997), "ethnocracy" (Yiftachel, 2006), or a "constitutionally exclusive ethnic state" (N. Rouhana, 1998) in which the majority enjoyed hegemony over others. The state pursued policies favoured the dominant ethnic group (Peleg and Waxman,

2007). The two states also differed in their state-led and state-seeking nationalisms (Tilly, 1998), since Israel was established in 1949 as a settler-immigrant state (Kimmerling, 2002) while Turkey was a post-imperial core country which had a long history of coexistence of various cultures, religions, and identities (Bryant, 2016). Likewise, members of the Israeli and Turkish political elite interviewed for this study made national identity definitions parallel with the official ways of imagining the nation and state policies of diversity management associated with them. While almost all Turkish respondents defined the Turkish identity in civic terms instead of ethnicity, an identity based on shared culture and language, almost all members of the Israeli political elite introduced an ethnic definition for the Israeli national identity, equating the Israeli identity with being Jewish descent. However, the civic vs. ethnic dichotomy was very limited to broaden our understanding of why the outcome of these policies has been a confrontation between the state and the ethnic minority in both cases.

For Wodak et al. (2009), the discourse has been the primary means of imagined communities' social construction because national identity "is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture." As this study has shown, the discourse on inclusive civic Turkish national identity, which transcended race or ethnic origin and manifested itself in the concept of Turkish citizenship, has been predominant among the Turkish political elite regardless of their ideological affiliation. However, recent scholarship criticized the representation of Turkish national identity in civic terms (Goalwin, 2017; T.W. Smith, 2005; Tezcür, 2009; Uzer, 2016; Yeğen,

2017). For Kirişci and Winrow (1997), the absence of a democratic tradition in the Ottoman and Turkish polity made it "exceedingly" difficult for decision-makers to pursue a policy based on real civic integration instead of ethnic nationalism. In practice, civic nationalism was not carried out in governmental practices regarding discrimination against non-Muslim citizens, and there has been a strong emphasis on Turkish ethnicity and language (Kirişci and Winrow, 1997). The three Republican constitutions of Turkey (those of 1924, 1961 and 1982) were strongly influenced by the concept of a nation (Soyarık-Şentürk, 2009), putting the Turks among the Turkish citizens in a privileged position (Çağaptay, 2003). Laws and legislations, especially those concerning language, education, and the judiciary, aimed to create a uniform Turkish nation based on the elements of the Turkish ethnicity, depriving the citizens of Kurdish descent of the means to preserve their cultural identity. This resonated with official Turkish policies, which denied until the 1990s the existence of Kurds as a separate ethnic group and "assumed" that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory (Yeğen, 1996). Therefore, nearly all expressions of Kurdish identity in the public sphere were suppressed. Any demands for cultural and linguistic rights were seen as treacherous and were harshly suppressed as they were viewed as constituting treason (Watts, 1999). In short, the declaratory civic understanding of Turkish nationalism based on citizenship, which has been still the prevailing view among the Turkish political and state elite, only served to normalize forced assimilation policies and discriminatory aspects of the state in the name of inclusivity and to legitimize the authority of the dominant ethnicity.

This study suggested that Israel and Turkey have not been culturally neutral, like most other nation-states formed from a single *ethnie*, and consequently applied policies of exclusion and discrimination towards their largest ethnic minorities.[292] In both cases, the state's national identity has been defined along ethnic and religious lines, despite the rhetorically secular nature of both states, and the character of the state has been determined by the language and culture of the dominant ethnic core. In this respect, Turkey has been comparable to Israel as an "ethnic state" with exclusive ethnic concerns overshadowing any formally democratic features of the state (A.a. Ghanem, 2001; McGahern, 2011). Moreover, as Brown (1997) emphasized, "conflict is more likely when ethnic conceptions of nationalism predominate."

Maynes (1993) defined an ethnic state as a polity that provided a national home to the dominant ethnic group and essentially preferred ethnic affiliation as the criterion for treating its citizens, giving preference to one ethnic group over others. For Shulman (2002), the main difference between an "ethnic" and a "civic" state was that the former endorsed the majority's language and culture and favored one particular ethnicity, while the latter (ideally) also endorsed minority ethnic cultures and did not encourage assimilation. As a consequence

[292] A number of studies have challenged the notion of a neutral state, arguing that the state could not be ethnically neutral because the supposed neutrality implies the imposition of the dominant culture of a national majority. For the discussion on whether a state could be ethnically and culturally neutral see, T. Kuzio, "'Nationalising States' or Nation-Building? A Critical Review of the Theoretical Literature and Empirical Evidence", 7 (2), 2001, S. Shulman, "Challenging the Civic/Ethnic and West/East Dichotomies in the Study of Nationalism", *Comparative Political Studies*, 35 (5), 2002, M. Seymour, "On Redefining the Nation", *The Monist*, 82 (3), 1999.

of the ethnic nature of the state, members of the dominant ethnic core were elevated into a privileged position over others, and governments gave institutional and legal preference to the national majority. However, the major difference between Israel and Turkey was that while Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent had the option of being assimilated into the national majority as a way to take part in the greater polity since Jewishness has been an essential and indispensable element of Israeli national identity, Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent have been automatically excluded from the polity. This also had implications for the different treatment of the biggest ethnic minorities in both states. While Israel's Palestinian citizens have enjoyed some minority rights such as mother tongue education, an official status granted to the Arabic language, and a limited autonomy primarily in religion and education, they disqualified from the privileges that the state reserved exclusively for Jews whether they are citizens or not (Yiftachel, 2006). In contrast, Turkey aspired to assimilate Kurds into Turkish national identity forcibly; therefore, as the majority of participants of this study emphasized, they enjoyed equal rights and even could become president, prime minister, and chief of the staff insofar as they had willingly relinquished a political Kurdish identity and assimilated into the Turkish nation.

7.2 The Citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish Descent: Equal or "Pseudo" Citizens?

The majority of participants of this study argued that the Israeli and Turkish states did not give preferential treatment to the dominant majority. Instead, Palestinian and Kurdish citizens have been treated as equal citizens.

Emphasizing the social harmony and a high-level social interaction between the ethnic majority and minority, they further asserted that communities have lived together on a day-to-day basis and rejected the existence of discriminatory and exclusionary policies and social practices. Despite the coexistence narrative, however, the Turkish political elite often ignored the low level of ethnic tolerance between the two groups (Sarigil and Karakoc, 2017), how the Kurds became the subjects of social exclusion (Saraçoğlu, 2011) and mob violence (Bora, 2008), and continued to experience economic and educational inequalities (Sirkeci, 2000; White, 1998). Similarly, their Israeli counterparts neglected a high degree of socio-spatial segregation along ethnic lines (Falah, 1996)[293] and ethnic prejudice in workplaces (Darr, 2018), although they acknowledged that the degree of tension and social distance tended to increase in times of conflict with the Arab states, specifically with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They also disregarded that most Jews (79 percent) preferred preferential treatment by the state (Pew Research Center, 2016).

7.3 Inconsistency between Discourse and Practice: Individual Citizenship Rights vs. Collective National Rights

The primary reason for the contradiction between the political elite's discourse and practice lay in their perception of individual and collective rights. As previously discussed, both Israeli and Turkish respondents of this study drew a sharp distinction between individual citizenship rights, which included a broad

[293] Except for some "mixed cities," including Haifa, Acre, Lod, Ramle, and Nazareth Illit, Israel has been divided into Jewish and Arab localities. About 90 percent of the Palestinian citizens have lived in around 139 Arab towns or villages, with the remainder residing in the mixed cities.

range of rights and liberties granted to citizens, and collective rights, such as a *de jure* recognition proclaimed by the state, full political representation, participation in decision-making, and local administrative autonomy, and full equality in distribution of resources. As Kymlicka (1995) emphasized, a liberal democracy's most basic commitment has been to the freedom and equality of its citizens. Individual rights refer to those that guarantee fundamental civil and political rights to all individuals, regardless of their group membership, to pursue their self-interest without interference from other individuals or the government. These included the right to life, liberty, and security, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In contrast to individual rights, collective rights seemed more concerned with the status of groups than with that of individuals. From this point of view, individuals have been treated as the mere carriers of group identities and objectives, rather than as autonomous personalities capable of defining their own identity and goals in life (Kymlicka, 1995). Therefore, collective rights mainly concerned the "protection of some group characteristics, which distinguish groups as a whole from other people" (Galenkamp, 1991).

Kymlicka (1995) suggested that indigenous peoples and homeland minorities were considered natural candidates for collective self-government rights, inspired by the legal discussion on the right to national self-determination. Though the theoretical debate on the rights of collectivities has a long tradition dating back to George Sabine's classic *History of Political Theory*, with the end of the Cold War and the break-up of multinational states, growing attention has been paid by the international community to the protection of

minority rights in order to manage the "minority problem" in post-Cold War Europe (Roter, 2001). As Jones (2016) suggested, group rights, or "group-differentiated rights" as coined by Kymlicka (1995), are held by a group as a group rather than by its members severally. For this reason, they were accorded to a particular group but not to the larger society within which the group existed. For Sanders (1991), groups suffering discrimination were more likely to assert a collective character simply as part of the struggle. While economic and social forces and state policies tended to promote assimilation, the leaders of cultural minorities often looked for protection or autonomy as the means to ensure their distinct group survival.

The objective of minorities was to protect and develop their particular cultural characteristics. For this purpose, Kymlicka (1995) argued that they might demand one of the three kinds of collective rights (self-government rights, polyethnic rights, and special representation rights). Each type helped protect a minority from the larger society's economic pressures and/or political decisions. Self-government rights referred to the delegation of powers to national minorities so that they could not be outvoted or outbid by the majority on decisions that had particular importance to their cultures, such as education, immigration, resource development, language, and family law. Polyethnic rights were "intended to help ethnic groups and religious minorities express their cultural particularity and pride" (Kymlicka, 1995) by allowing group members to continue particular cultural practices. Special group representation rights served to place the interests of a national minority within the power-broking institutions of the larger state to ensure their inclusion in decision-making

processes. In other words, they aimed to establish shared sovereignty between all national groups within the polity. Kymlicka (2007) proposed that homeland minorities often tended to have stronger claims to internal self-government and special representation than immigrant minorities and their descendants. In international law, only ethnic minority groups could claim collective rights. The restriction of minorities' status to ethnic groups excluded numerous other groups, for instance, collectivities defined by gender and sexual orientation, from collective rights considerations (Thompson, 1997).

As previously discussed, an ethnonational minority that sought inclusion on an equal basis inevitably faced a dilemma in its relationship with an ethnic state (N. Rouhana, 1998). Nation-building institutionalized ethnic rule by reproducing dominant culture through legislation, institutions, and policies (Bauböck, 1998) in multi-ethnic states where homogeneity did not exist. Nationalizing states have been "necessarily discriminatory" and "contradicted with liberal equality" (Jamal, 2011). This simultaneously led to the "minoritization" of other ethnic groups and hence created power inequality. Minorities were not allowed to achieve collective control over their affairs and a fair share of power at the state level, thereby remaining subjugated to the majority (A.a. Ghanem and Mustafa, 2018). For this reason, ethnically diverse societies were more likely to be prone to social tension, and political conflict as one ethnic group dominated others in terms of competition over political access and resources (Gurr and Moore, 1997; Horowitz, 1985; Posen, 1993). Consequently, the outcome of the arrangements that regulated the competition

among the various groups and policies of exclusion necessarily conflicted with the demands and needs of the minority at the individual and group levels.

7.4 Challenging the Hierarchical Ordering of Ethnic Categories: Palestinian and Kurdish Demands for Equalization

As the Israeli and Turkish cases showed, despite pursuing different ethnic boundary-making strategies, both states failed to adopt an accommodationist approach towards their biggest ethnic minorities (Peleg and Waxman, 2007). Gurr (1993) argued that ethnic groups in such states engaged in the political struggle to attain equality. Likewise, Israel and Turkey have been challenged by their Palestinian and Kurdish minority respectively by means of inversion strategy, which refers to changing the meaning of an existing boundary by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups (Wimmer, 2008). There were two subtypes of inversion: normative inversion, in which the excluded group challenged the ethnic category and claimed superiority vis-à-vis the dominant group, and equalization, where the excluded group pursued equality among ethnic categories. Wimmer (2013) explained equalization as a "less radical way to challenge the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories to establish moral and political equality -rather than superiority- with regard to the dominant group." In both Israel and Turkey, especially in recent decades, there have been constant Palestinian and Kurdish demands for changing the meaning of existing boundaries through inversion. In other words, Palestinian and Kurdish citizens, who sought full citizenship rights and equal treatment with the Jewish and Turkish majority, have challenged the hierarchical ordering of ethnic

groups by demanding more inclusive national boundaries in which they would be included as equals.

In principle, both Israel and Turkey invited their citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent to participate in the larger polity; however, they maintained the superiority of the dominant majority in all fields and did not offer them equality (A.a. Ghanem, 1998). On the one hand, citizens of Kurdish descent enjoyed equal rights as citizens. They even managed to climb to the upper echelons of the state insofar as they had willingly relinquished a political Kurdish identity and assimilated into the Turkish nation. Nonetheless, since the early 1990s, the state abandoned the denial policy while acknowledging Kurds' existence as a separate ethnic group (Yeğen, 1999; Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014). In the early 2000s, when the EU harmonization packages were introduced, a comprehensive reform process was launched regarding Kurdish minority rights, including topics such as education and broadcasting in Kurdish,[294] an initiative that was considered by a large number of respondents of this study as "an important progress towards the accommodation of Kurdish rights."[295] On the other hand, several quasi-collective rights were anchored in Israel's legal system regarding the Palestinian minority, such as mother tongue education, an official status granted to the Arabic language, and religious autonomy. Although both groups were granted individual citizens' rights, they were not offered collective

[294] While the "teaching of" minority languages is now possible as elective courses, the constitution bans "teaching in" minority languages, demanding that Turkish remains the language of education.

[295] CHP Vice-Chairperson, "Interview,"

rights, legal-formal recognition, full political representation, and equal access to power and decision-making.

Dahl (2006) argued that a substantial number of persons, such as the working classes, women, and racial and ethnic minorities, were denied equal citizenship and excluded from political participation. Their interests were not adequately considered and protected by those who were privileged to govern them. Wimmer (2017) further claimed that demographic minorities tended to identify less positively with the national community than majorities. The demographic size was not a determining factor in itself. Instead, it was political status, the extent to which an ethnic group was represented in the national government, determining who identified more positively with the national community. He also showed that when the state reached across ethnic divides and integrated ethnic majorities and minorities into an inclusive power arrangement, and when most ethnic communities were represented at the highest levels of government, it would be possible to achieve political integration and national identification (Wimmer, 2018). Likewise, Tezcür and Gürses (2017) argued that the support for Kurdish ethno-mobilization and recruitment into the Kurdish insurgency remained low in Kurdish localities with greater representation in the echelons of political power.

As the Israeli and Turkish cases have shown, however, the biggest ethnic minorities, regardless of their citizenship status, have been systematically excluded from power-sharing arrangements, political decision-making processes, and full political representation at the national level, since the state

served the national goals of the dominant ethnic group only. In other words, they have been treated as "pseudo-citizens" (Yegen, 2009), not "sovereigns" as they exercised little political power; since belonging to the dominant ethnic group determined the extent of services and privileges that the state bestowed on the individual and group level, citizenship was relegated to a secondary status (N. Rouhana and Ghanem, 1998). In Turkey, the closure of pro-Kurdish parties by the Constitutional Court,[296] the systematic dismissal of the pro-Kurdish mayors and municipal council memberships, the mass arrests of Kurdish politicians, journalists, academics, and activists, and shutting down of Kurdish language media outlets and pro-Kurdish civil society organizations pointed at an increasing assault on the fundamental rights of the minority and a continued political and legal repression on the Kurdish political movement. In Israel, although there have been rare examples of party closures,[297] anti-Zionist or non-Zionist Palestinian parties have played the role of a "permanent opposition" (A.a. Ghanem, 1998) and have not received the same budget allocations and governmental investments. They have systematically been excluded from the critical Knesset committees (such as Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Defense), and their members never served as ministers or deputy ministers, while the occasional Palestinian ministers were members of Zionist parties (A.a. Ghanem,

[296] At the time of the writing, the latest pro-Kurdish party HDP found itself subjected to investigation by the prosecutors, facing possible closure by the Constitutional Court, and its co-chairpersons were under criminal investigation. See, BBC News, *Turkey Moves to Ban Pro-Kurdish Hdp Opposition Party* 2021), available from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56438070

[297] Despite rare examples of party closures, Israeli Knesset's Central Elections Committee occasionally bans Arab parties and candidates from running in elections.

1998). As Mehozay (2012) showed, the Israeli state has refused to allow Palestinian political associations that espoused nationalist views or challenged the Jewish character of the state to organize or run candidates, even if their programs were non-violent. In both countries, pro-Palestinian and pro-Kurdish parties, which are committed to advancing minority cultural and political rights, have not been accepted as part of the government coalitions, except for politicians of Palestinian and Kurdish descent who belong to the mainstream national parties. Moreover, both citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent have been subjected to "emergency-rule" regulations for many years (Bezci and Öztan, 2016; Mehozay, 2012; Navot, 2018; Whiting and Kaya, 2021). Their politically excluded status and the minimized influence they exercised over government policies in several aspects of the community's life, such as education, communication, planning, and control over resources, created a growing sense of discontent that was heightened as its level of political and national awareness increased. Consequently, both citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent in Israel and Turkey have had a long history of political struggle accompanied by a growing emphasis on their status as a "national minority" entitled to collective rights. As discussed earlier, in both cases, Palestinian and Kurdish demands have gone beyond cultural and individual civil rights. Rather, they constituted redrawing more inclusive national identities, inclusion into the political system, and the right to self-administration at least matters concerning the community. In short, both citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent aspired to be part of the sovereign body as equal partners as they sought to redefine the meaning of existing national boundaries through the demands for equal status to that of the majority, administrative autonomy, equal

representation in the governing bodies, and full equality in distribution of resources.

This study has shown that although Israel and Turkey have followed different boundary-making strategies, they have converged in denying full citizenship rights to the members of their biggest minorities. The majority of participants of this study have fiercely opposed the idea of drawing more inclusive national identities and granting collective rights to the citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent, respectively while acknowledging that they deserved equal rights as individuals. For instance, in principle, both citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent have had the right to elect and be elected, respectively; however, their political representatives have been excluded from governmental bodies and decision-making. Although they have partially agreed to accommodate some cultural rights, such as publicly speaking one's language, they rejected the idea of "de-ethnicization" of the state by changing the meaning of existing boundaries through an inversion strategy. Instead, they perceived minority demands for collective rights that involved the delegation of powers to minorities as "delusion,"[298] "dangerous,"[299] "unacceptable,"[300] attempts to "destroy the notion of Turkishness,"[301] a "denial of Israel's right to exist,"[302] and

[298] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

[299] Former Senior Officer from the National Intelligence Organization of Turkey (MIT), "Interview,"

[300] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[301] MHP Vice-Chairperson and Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

[302] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

an “attack to the very foundation of the state.”[303] On the one hand, although they frequently emphasized that Turks and Kurds had fought “shoulder to shoulder” in the War of Independence and established the state together,[304] for instance, members of the Turkish political and state elite rejected the idea of giving the Kurds a constitutional status as a “constitutive element of the state” on the grounds that it would lead to the division of the country.[305] Long-standing Kurdish demands for decentralization through administrative reform and local autonomy were also considered as pretexts for Turkey’s partition. On the other hand, for the Israeli political elite, granting equal national rights to the Palestinian minority implied losing the national sovereignty since it contradicted the Jewish character of the state. Establishing a “state for all its citizens” or Palestinian demands based on equality was seen by the Israeli participants as a violation of the Jewish sovereignty and denial of Israel’s right to exist because they perceived it as a move that would put the Jews in the minority position again in the Arab-dominated Middle East. Drawing more inclusive national identities and awarding collective rights, which involved the delegation of powers to minorities to protect them against policies and decisions enacted by the dominant group, have been questioned on accounts of Kurdish self-determination and partition in Turkey and Jewish sovereignty dilution fears in Israel.

[303] Former Likud Minister and Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[304] Former State Minister and Founding Member of the İYİ Party, "Interview,"

[305] Turkish Retired Major General, "Interview,"

7.5 Trans-Border Ethnic Ties as an External Factor Shaping Actors' Choice of Boundary-Making Strategies in the Social Field

The reason for the refusal of equalization demands was common in both states. As this study has shown, the Israeli and Turkish political and state elite refused to distinguish their Palestinian and Kurdish citizens from their trans-border ethnic kin groups, viewing them as "*inside outsiders*" instead of equal citizens, and have opted for securitizing[306] (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998) their equal citizenship rights. Kibaroğlu (2002) defined Israel and Turkey as "national security states" whose domestic and foreign policy choices were substantially shaped by security concerns. The existence of a large number of ethnic minorities with trans-border ethnic affiliations further deepened security concerns and have generated fear in both Israel and Turkey over possible irredentist and secessionist claims on their territory (Peleg and Waxman, 2007). Consequently, their identification with their ethnic kin across the border has led to the perception of the Palestinian and Kurdish minorities as the "enemy within" (Bozarslan, 2011).

The findings of this study confirmed that the transnational character of Kurdish nationalism, the establishment of the KRG in northern Iraq as a consequence of the Gulf War, and the increasing presence of the PYD in the

[306] Buzan et al. defined securitization as an "issue presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure." Securitizing actors included political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, and pressure groups. On the Copenhagen School concept of securitization, see O. Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization" in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed., *On Security*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. d. Wilde, *Security : A New Framework for Analysis*, Boulder, Colo., Lynne Rienner Pub., 1998.

Turkish-Syrian border as a result of the Syrian war has increasingly affected and complicated Turkey's Kurdish citizens' relations with the state and increased the level of threat perception for the Turkish political elite. They deprecated any Kurdish political achievement, not just in Turkey but in Iraq and Syria, and perceived it as an existential threat to Turkey's national security and sovereignty. Partition fears were linked to the "Sèvres Syndrome," the irrational and often conspiracy theory-based fear that foreign powers would use Turkey's minorities as instruments for Turkey's partition (Guida, 2008). Having its roots in late Ottoman history, when the violation of the right of non-Muslim minorities often served as a pretext for foreign interventions, the syndrome was named after the 1920 short-lived Treaty of Sèvres, which partitioned the Ottoman Empire, recognizing the right of self-determination to Anatolia's Armenian, Greek and Kurdish communities. While the Treaty was aborted on the battlefield by Mustafa Kemal's military forces and was replaced by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, this fear persisted, even though the non-Muslim minorities of republican Turkey amounted to a tiny part of the population. While the demographic weakness of Turkey's non-Muslim minorities and Turkey's growing economic and military power did not suffice for the obliteration of such fears (Nefes, 2015), Turkey's Kurds joined non-Muslim minorities and rose to the most threatening alleged agents of Turkey's partition. International concerns about the state of human rights in Turkey and the oppression of the Kurdish minority was interpreted as pretexts for Turkey's partition, in a renewed effort of the "external powers," whose ultimate aim was to stop "Turkey's advancement towards the west,"[307] to reintroduce the Treaty of Sèvres to divide Turkey.

[307] Former MHP Member of Parliament, "Interview,"

In the case of Israel, citizens of Palestinian descent were viewed as "usual suspects,"[308] "potential enemy,"[309] "enemies within,"[310] and "future bomb,"[311] due to fear about their possible collaboration with the "enemy" (Golan and Orr, 2012; Smooha, 2010a), which referred to the "Arab world," the subject of Israel's most potent memory of wars and terrorism (Kam, 1994). The series of Arab-Israeli wars led to further securitization of Palestinian minority rights in Israel. The perception of Palestinian citizens as a security threat generally stemmed from their cultural, linguistic, and national ties, not to mention family ties, with the Palestinians in the Territories as well as the wider Arab world, which has been generally seen as an existential threat to the Jewish presence in the region (S.R. David, 2009) because of "persistent and endemic existential fears of annihilation" (Yair, 2014). The occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip brought millions of more Palestinians under Israeli jurisdiction and complicated the position of Israel's Palestinian citizens.[312] So did the outbreak of the Palestinian *Intifada* in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. As one of the participants of this study stated, while the perception of the Palestinian minority as a security threat tended to increase in times of conflict with the

[308] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[309] Former Ambassador and Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, "Interview,"

[310] Israeli Retired Brigadier General and Deputy National Security Advisor, "Interview,"

[311] Former Senior Intelligence Officer from the Mossad and Arab Affairs Advisor to the Prime Minister, "Interview,"

[312] A political conflict between the two main Palestinian factions, the PLO and Hamas, has dominated Palestinian politics since 2006. While Israel recognizes the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people and holds diplomatic relations with it, it engages in an armed conflict with the Hamas-led Palestinian government in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, social and political relations expected to become cordial during the times of rapprochement and dialogue.[313] Moreover, the growing demographic weight of Israel's Palestinian minority vis-à-vis the Jewish majority amplified these concerns, bringing a fundamental contradiction of Israeli democracy to the surface. The fear that a resurgent Palestinian minority could question Israel's Jewishness through democratic means led to an ethnic-based conceptualization of sovereignty (Abulof, 2014). In that view, sovereignty did not belong to the people of Israel as a whole but exclusively to its Jewish component. Otherwise, it was not the partition of Israel that was at stake, but its eventual implosion and transformation into Palestine.

To the extent that most Kurds refused to assimilate into the mainstream national identity in the case of Turkey, and most Palestinians refused their status as a minority benefiting from "the opportunities of the Jewish state"[314] in the case of Israel, their citizenship rights came under question. Instead of being viewed as co-citizens, they were perceived as a security threat, part of a trans-national community intent on undermining territorial integrity and sovereignty. Recognizing equal rights was not seen as reinforcing citizenship links between the state and the minority but paving the way for partition and sovereignty dilution. For this reason, external factors outside the social field, such as trans-border social and cultural relations of an ethnic minority, could be conceived as additional environmental factors that influence boundary-making strategies,

[313] Former Israeli Justice Minister and Labor Party Member of the Knesset, "Interview,"

[314] Likud Party Foreign Affairs Director, "Interview,"

shape the political saliency of ethnic identity, and exclusion along ethnic lines that characterized particular ethnic boundaries.

Field Characteristics	Impact
Institutional Order	Which type of Boundary (ethnic, social, class, gender, etc.)
Distribution of Power	Which level of differentiation and interpretation of an existing boundary (worthy, righteous, dignified, etc.)
Networks	Which individuals will be classified to which ethnic group
Environmental (External) Factors	*Which degrees of social closure, political salience, historical stability, and exclusion along ethnic lines*

Table 4: *The impact of environmental (external) factors on the social field*

Although Wimmer (2013) identified the constraints within the social field that shaped actors' choices of boundary-making strategies, he paid insufficient attention to the external factors outside the social field. As in the case of ethnic groups with transnational ethnic connections, such as the Palestinians in Israel and the Kurds in Turkey, however, the transnational character of a minority political movement, the presence of ethnic kin groups in neighboring countries, and cross-border developments directly affecting the ethnic kin also had an impact on the contextual conditions in a particular social field and, notably, the subjectivities of actors who determined who would be included and excluded from the ethnic categories around which boundaries were drawn. As this study has shown, when actors viewed their citizens as part of a trans-national community threatening the state, they were more likely to

perceive them as a security threat and, hence, securitize their equal citizenship rights. Consequently, they resisted the minority demands for drawing more inclusive boundaries and establishing equality among ethnic categories by means of inversion and refused to modify the existing boundaries' meanings and implications.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The difference in boundary-making strategies in Israel and Turkey has affected the ethnopolitical landscapes in the two countries. Both, to some extent, integrated ethnically diverse groups into the political system by granting them citizenship. Nonetheless, this happened through different strategies, exclusion and separation in one case, forced inclusion by means of assimilation in other, and consequently led to different institutional arrangements regarding ethnic minorities and their differential treatment by the state. Religion was a constitutive identity marker for constructing Israeli and Turkish national identities and shaped incentives for different boundary-making strategies. On the one hand, the Turkish state has imposed assimilationist policies and pursued the strategy of boundary expansion to homogenize all non-Turkish Muslim groups into Turkish national identity. Thus, Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent have been deliberately and involuntarily included in the Turkish nation because of their common Muslim identity, although this was objected to by a sizeable part of the Kurdish population. Any demands for cultural and linguistic rights and

expression of a different ethnic identity have been suppressed until the 1990s. On the other hand, the "Basic Law of Human Dignity and Liberty of Israel" defined Israel as a "Jewish state," and the boundaries of the Israeli identity, which identified the limits of proper citizenship, have been drawn through the strategy of boundary contraction by limiting the pool of people bestowed to those of Jewish faith and descent. Consequently, Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and other non-Jewish groups have been deliberately excluded from the nation culturally and politically.

While Israel and Turkey have followed different boundary-making strategies, as far as their biggest minorities were concerned, both states have maintained exclusive state identities, Jewish and Turkish. As Bauböck (1998) suggested, nation-building institutionalized ethnic rule by reproducing dominant culture through legislation, institutions, and policies in multi-ethnic states where homogeneity did not exist. Similarly, this study proposed that, despite the Turkish political elite's civic discourse of national identity, which transcended race or ethnic origin, both Israel and Turkey have not been culturally neutral, like most other nation-states which have been formed from a single *ethnie*, and consequently applied policies of exclusion and discrimination towards their largest ethnic minorities. Israeli and Turkish national identities have been defined along ethnic and religious lines, despite the rhetorically secular nature of both states. The state has controlled the cultural patrimony as it was determined by the language and culture of the dominant ethnic core. In this respect, Turkey has been comparable to Israel as an ethnic state, where ethnic affiliation represented the criterion for the treatment of citizens and determination of their

rights. As a consequence of the ethnic nature of the state that legitimized its discriminatory policies, members of the dominant ethnic core were elevated into a privileged position over others, and governments gave institutional and legal preference to the national majority. The striking difference between Israel and Turkey was that Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent might have become "favorable citizens" thanks to their shared religious identity with that of the majority Turks, and enjoyed equal rights insofar as they had willingly relinquished a political Kurdish identity and assimilated into the Turkish nation. In contrast, Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent have been automatically excluded from the polity since one's Jewishness has been an essential and indispensable element of Israeli national identity. Moreover, both Palestinians and Kurds, regardless of their citizenship status, have been subjected to "emergency-rule" regulations for many years, and their political representatives have been systematically excluded from power-sharing arrangements, governmental bodies, and decision-making since the state served the national goals of the dominant ethnic group only. In other words, they have been treated as "pseudo-citizens," not "sovereigns," as they exercised little political power over government policies in several aspects of the community's life, such as education, communication, planning, and control over resources. Consequently, the outcome of these policies has been a lasting and profound ethnic tension between the ethnic minority and the state in both cases.

Palestinians and Kurds have been referred to as homeland minorities as they regarded a particular part of a country in which they historically settled as their "historic homeland." The literature suggested that homeland minorities

usually claimed various rights to self-government and/or collective autonomy. Moreover, they tended to view themselves as "nations" and to form nationalist movements in defense of their language rights and collective autonomy (Kymlicka, 2007). Likewise, especially in recent decades, both the Israeli and Turkish states have been challenged by their Palestinian and Kurdish minorities who sought equal treatment with the Jewish and Turkish majority, respectively. While Kurdish demands have ranged from being recognized as "a constitutive element" to decentralization and political autonomy, Palestinian citizens of Israel have called for "a state for all citizens" with equal rights. In other words, Kurdish and Palestinian demands have gone beyond cultural and individual civil rights; instead, they constituted redrawing national identities in which they would be included as equals and the right to self-administration, at least matters concerning the community. By doing this, both groups have demanded to change the meaning of existing boundaries of national identities and challenged the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories in their respective states through an inversion strategy, which implied establishing equality across ethnic categories.

As a historical analysis has shown, Israeli and Turkish state policies towards the largest ethnic minorities have not followed a linear trajectory but exhibited variations. Especially during the post-Cold War era, when the challenges of a unipolar world have been forcing profound changes on state behavior worldwide, both the Israeli and Turkish state elites initiated democratic reforms regarding minority rights in response to the challenges and changes in international and domestic socio-political conditions. Consequently, both countries had "exceptional" periods when alternative policy choices outside the

conventional towards the Palestinian and Kurdish minorities were considered. However, these attempts were far from addressing the Palestinian and Kurdish demands. Neither state developed a coherent policy to establish more inclusive national identities and power-sharing arrangements to guarantee political equality between ethnic groups. The securitization of minority rights continued along with various forms of political and legal repression.

The majority of the participants of this study rejected discriminatory and exclusionary state policies towards the citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent and argued that they had been treated as equal citizens by their respective states. The inconsistency between discourse and practice, however, seemed to be derived from the different perspectives on individual citizenship rights, which included a broad range of rights and liberties granted to citizens, and collective rights, such as a *de jure* recognition proclaimed by the state, equal access to power and decision-making, and local administrative autonomy. As this study has shown, Israeli and Turkish state elites drew a sharp distinction between individual citizenship rights and collective rights. They have fiercely opposed the idea of granting collective rights to Palestinian and Kurdish minorities, respectively, while acknowledging that they deserved equal rights as individual citizens. Both Israeli and Turkish state elites perceived the formulation of collective minority rights demands as a challenge to the ethno-nationalist basis of the state, though for different reasons. While for the Turkish state elites, these demands were interpreted as a resurrection of an age-old Western conspiracy against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Turkey, for the Israeli state elite demands for equalization undermined Israel's founding

principle as an essentially Jewish state and, therefore, posed a dilution threat to Jewish sovereignty over the state of Israel. On the one hand, the Turkish state elite considered long-standing Kurdish demands for decentralization through administrative reform and local autonomy, which involved delegating powers to the Kurdish minority, as constituting treason because this would lead the country to its disintegration. Therefore, these demands have been automatically regarded as a "national security issue," which led to a deadlock between "more than cultural rights" and "protection of Turkey's indivisible unity." On the other hand, establishing a "state for all its citizens" and Palestinian demands based on equality have been utterly intolerable for the Israeli state elite. These demands were interpreted as a move that would put the Jews in a minority position in the Arab-dominated Middle East. Therefore, Palestinian demands have been seen as violating Jewish sovereignty and denying Israel's right to exist. Otherwise, it was not the partition of Israel that was at stake, but its eventual implosion and transformation into Palestine.

Awarding collective rights to ethnic minorities has been questioned on accounts of Jewish sovereignty dilution fears in Israel and Kurdish self-determination and partition in Turkey. The reason for the refusal of equalization demands was, however, common in both states. This study has shown that the Israeli and Turkish state elite refused to distinguish Palestinian and Kurdish citizens from their trans-border ethnic kin groups. Instead of being viewed as equal citizens, they were perceived as a security threat, part of a trans-national community intent on undermining territorial integrity and sovereignty. In both cases, the level of perceived threat posed by the ethnic minority tended to

increase with social unrest. For instance, the events of October 2000, pro-Intifada demonstrations organized by Israel's Palestinian citizens to show solidarity with the Palestinians in the West Bank, and the 2014 Kobane protests organized in Turkey in solidarity with the Syrian Kurds have raised concerns and led to their further identification with their ethnic kin across the border. For this reason, recognizing collective rights was not seen as reinforcing citizenship links between the state and the minority but paving the way for sovereignty dilution and partition. Consequently, the securitization of the collective rights of Israel's citizens of Palestinian descent and Turkey's citizens of Kurdish descent led to the relegation to a *sui generis* status: they have been the *inside outsiders* of the Israeli and the Turkish polity, respectively.

This argument was illustrated through the empirical examination of cross-border developments directly affecting the ethnic kin, such as successive intifadas in the West Bank, the so-called Great March of Return demonstrations of 2018-2019 in the Gaza Strip, the official recognition of the KRG in 2005 following the US invasion of Iraq, and clashes between IS militants and Kurdish armed groups over the Syrian town of Kobane in 2014. The findings from the cases suggested that states, or more specifically state elite, perceived national security to be threatened by the consequences of instability across the border, even when there was no direct physical threat to the state. For instance, the idea of a Kurdish self-administration in Syria, even without modifying the current borders, has exacerbated the concerns of the Turkish state elite, who have been fearful of Kurdish separatism, that this might have a spillover effect on Turkey's Kurdish citizens and ultimately led to Turkey's partition. Their fear became

more apparent whenever an outside intervention in Kurdish affairs took place in neighboring countries; because foreign powers whose ultimate aim was to stop "Turkey's advancement towards the west" would use Turkey's minorities as instruments for Turkey's partition.

In the case of Israel, citizens of Palestinian descent were viewed as existential threats due to fear about their contribution to diluting Jewish sovereignty in the state of Israel. Their presence within the borders of Israel was something that some Jewish nationalists would consider "an accident." Unlike the majority of the Palestinian population, which was displaced in the 1947-1948 war, approximately 150.000 remained within Israeli territory and became citizens of Israel. Since its inception in 1948, Israel has been in a state of war with the Arab states and is currently engaged in an intractable conflict with the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This situation has exacerbated the perception of Palestinian citizens as "usual suspects," a disloyal minority attempting to undermine state security. Moreover, the growing demographic weight of Israel's Palestinian minority vis-à-vis the Jewish majority amplified these concerns, bringing a fundamental contradiction of Israeli democracy to the surface. The fear that a resurgent Palestinian minority could question Israel's Jewishness through democratic means has led to an ethnic-based conceptualization of sovereignty and prevented the political assimilation of Palestinian citizens into Israel's democracy. Israel was "owned" by its ethnic Jewish citizens, and Israel's "ethnic democracy" could not challenge this.

In both cases, the consequence of being perceived as a security threat undermining territorial integrity and sovereignty, instead of being viewed as equal citizens, has been an effective blockade on Palestinian and Kurdish ability to participate in shaping policy. In this view, minorities were "folklorized" in the name of diversity. As long as they remained a minority and accepted their "pseudo" citizenship status without sovereign standing, in other words, to the extent that they were seen as non-threatening to the domination of the national majority, they were "tolerated." In principle, both Israel and Turkey invited their citizens of Palestinian and Kurdish descent to participate in the larger polity. Furthermore, governments might make efforts to integrate them into the national economy. As the Israeli case has shown, however, improving the material prosperity of the minority would not be enough to meet their political demands. To the extent that Palestinians refused their status as a minority benefiting from "the opportunities of the Jewish state" in the case of Israel, and Kurds refused to assimilate into the mainstream national identity in the case of Turkey, their citizenship rights came under question. Minorities were not allowed to achieve collective control over their affairs and a fair share of power at the state level. State and political elites were reluctant to support minority demands for collective rights and establish inclusive power-sharing arrangements to guarantee political equality between ethnic groups since they persistently perceived these demands as a severe security threat. Consequently, they resisted desecuritization attempts to address minority rights through the political process rather than the security agenda. Fears of "Western power-supported partition" in Turkey and "diluting sovereignty" in Israel have not been limited to Palestinian and Kurdish citizenship rights, respectively. They have had a toxic effect on

Israel's and Turkey's democratic regimes. Suppose a democratic regime only claims to reserve full respect for human rights to its "constituent" ethnic group. In that case, it cannot guarantee human rights protection even to members of that group that fall out of favour with the government.

This dissertation aimed to contribute to the research on ethnic boundary-making by investigating the boundary process in the case of nationalizing states and trans-border homeland minorities by looking at the wider environment and integrating the impact of the transnational character of minority nationalism. This analysis provided theoretical explanations for how the presence of ethnic kin groups in neighboring countries, as additional environmental factors, affected the contextual conditions in the social field and, notably, the subjectivities of actors who determined who would be included and excluded from the ethnic categories around which boundaries were drawn. As this study has shown, when actors viewed their citizens as part of a trans-national community threatening state security, they were more likely to perceive them as a threat and securitize their equal citizenship rights. They resisted the minority demands for drawing more inclusive ethnic boundaries and establishing equality among ethnic categories by means of inversion and refused to modify the existing boundaries' meanings and implications. For this reason, external factors outside the social field also reinforced the political salience of ethnic boundaries and exclusion along ethnic lines. As a future research agenda, the argument developed throughout this dissertation can be applied to other cases of trans-border ethnic minorities. Both Palestinians and Kurds comprise stateless national groups inhabiting territories spanning across the borders of several states. The

argument of this dissertation could also be elaborated by investigating cases where a minority has a kin state in which their ethnic kin comprise a majority and act as the protector of ethnic co-nationals abroad.

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