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## LOSING CONTROL? A COMPARISON OF MAJORITY–MINORITY RELATIONS IN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

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*This article addresses the question of how multiethnic states can manage the relationship between the ethnic majority and the minority. It identifies a series of alternative strategies and methods and applies this classification to two states, Israel and Turkey. The article compares the approaches the two states have taken in dealing with their largest national minorities, and explains how and why these approaches have differed. The article demonstrates how Israel and Turkey adopted two fundamentally different regimes—a civic regime in the case of Turkey and an ethnic regime in the case of Israel—and two different policies towards the largest minority in their midst, assimilation in the case of the former and marginalization in the case of the latter. In both cases, however, the outcome of these policies has been confrontation between the national minority and the state and its ethnic majority. The article concludes by arguing that this similar outcome is due to both states' failure to adopt a genuinely accommodationist approach toward their national minorities.*

The nation-state—the union of a single nation and a single sovereign political entity—has always existed more in our political imagination than it has in reality. The fact that territorial borders have seldom incorporated only one ethnic or national group has meant that the vast majority of states include significant ethnic or national minorities. Such states face the challenge of managing the relations between the majority and the minority populations. The difficulty of this challenge is all too apparent. Ethnic strife, civil wars, and secessionist movements have torn apart many of the states that emerged after decolonization in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Similar internal unrest and violence has taken place in a number of the newly independent states

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of the former Soviet Union. Nor have long established, well-developed states been free from the dangers of restive minorities in their midst. Western Europe, the home of the nation-state, has contended with an assortment of minority nationalist movements, some of which have employed violence in pursuit of their political goals (such as the Basque nationalist movement in Spain, the Corsicans in France, and the Irish Republican movement in Northern Ireland).

The purpose of this article is to present a theoretical framework for the analysis of majority–minority relations in multiethnic states and apply this theoretical framework to the cases of Israel and Turkey. By analyzing majority–minority relations in Israel and Turkey, this article seeks to offer some general insights into how these relations can be managed in multiethnic states. Using the cases of Israel and Turkey as examples, the article identifies a number of alternative approaches for the management of majority–minority relations.

Israel and Turkey have historically pursued different strategies of control over their ethnic minorities. Israel is effectively an *ethnic state*, in which the ethnic majority (Israeli Jews) enjoys hegemony, and the state pursues policies that are perceived to favor the interests of the dominant ethnic group in regard to immigration, land control, language, education, symbols, and so forth. Turkey, by contrast, is a *civic state* in which the state does not explicitly promote the interests of the majority ethnic group (ethnic Turks), and individual members of ethnic minorities (such as Kurds) can enjoy, as individuals, full citizenship on an equal basis. At the same time, the Turkish state refuses to grant group rights to ethnic minorities, most notably to its large Kurdish minority.<sup>1</sup> Whereas in Israel, members of the ethnic minority have been excluded from the nation politically and socially, in Turkey they have been pressured to culturally assimilate in order to fully join the nation. Thus, while the cases of Israel and Turkey are similar in terms of the state's fundamentally non-accommodationist position toward the ethnic minority, there is a major difference in their approaches to their minorities. This difference, and the historical and ideological reasons for it, will be at the center of the analysis offered in this article.

The next section of this article presents a taxonomy of different approaches for the management of majority–

minority-majority–minority relations. Following this, the rest of the article applies this theoretical framework to the Israeli and Turkish cases. The historical and ideological origins of the Israeli and Turkish approaches to their ethnic minorities will be discussed, as well as the internal and external forces that support continuity in both countries versus those that promote change. Finally, the conclusion of the article will consider the prospects for future changes in Israel's and Turkey's approaches to their minorities, and offer some generalizations that might apply to other cases.

### **Approaches for the Management of Majority–Minority Relations**

In order to study systematically the relations between majorities and minorities in multiethnic societies and the ways in which these relations might be managed, it is useful to distinguish between two fundamentally different strategies on the part of the majority toward the minority. The first is a strategy of accommodation, a conscious effort on the part of the ethnic majority within a multiethnic society to recognize the society's diversity and to act upon that recognition by giving it institutional expression.<sup>2</sup> This institutional expression could be reflected in the establishment of a regime based on recognizing the equality of all individuals (generally known as "liberal democracy"), or a regime that allocates rights to different groups within the society (for example, federal or consociational regimes). Alternatively, the majority could pursue a strategy of "control,"<sup>3</sup> through which it attempts to ensure its effective dominance over the minority. The institutionalization of this strategy of control can have many forms, as this article will later discuss.

Neither Israel nor Turkey is an accommodationist polity in terms of the interethnic strategy adopted by its ethnic majority or by the state institutions they have established. Israel explicitly defines itself as a "Jewish and democratic state."<sup>4</sup> Hence, it is fundamentally an ethnic state, whether one describes it as being an "ethnic democracy,"<sup>5</sup> an "ethnocracy,"<sup>6</sup> or as having an "ethnic constitutional order."<sup>7</sup> While Turkey is a civic state, it has traditionally refused to accept the legitimacy, and even the very existence of ethnic minorities, most notably the Kurds,<sup>8</sup> clearly a non-accommodationist policy. In light of this basic similarity, the strategies of control employed in Israel and Turkey can be

fruitfully analyzed and compared. To do this, we distinguish between different methods of control.

An ethnic majority may achieve control over an ethnic minority through a variety of methods. McGarry and O'Leary, in discussing methods of ethnic conflict regulation, distinguish between methods aimed at eliminating inter-group differences (genocide, forced mass-population transfers, partition and/or secession, integration and/or assimilation) versus methods designed to manage inter-group differences (hegemonic control, arbitration, cantonization and/or federalization, consociationalism or power-sharing).<sup>9</sup> In terms of McGarry-O'Leary's difference-elimination methods, *assimilation* seems to be most applicable to the Turkish case. In terms of difference-managing methods, *hegemonic control* seems to best apply to the case of Israel.

When an ethnic majority pursues a policy of assimilation toward the ethnic minority, its basic goal is to make the minority become part of the majority, that is, to absorb the minority into the majority. It seeks to eradicate the distinct identity, culture, and way of life of the minority, in order to make the minority indistinguishable from the majority in every respect. Unlike a policy of integration which aims at developing a common, overarching identity for all ethnic groups in a society, while recognizing and respecting the society's ethnic diversity (as has been historically pursued in the United States, for instance), a policy of assimilation aims at creating cultural uniformity, in place of diversity. This policy is often pursued through an educational system in which the language of instruction is that of the ethnic majority, and in which the history, culture, and values of the ethnic majority (and it alone) are taught. Another common feature of an assimilationist policy is encouraging the resettlement of members of the ethnic minority into areas predominantly inhabited by the ethnic majority (and vice versa), so as to erase the demographic and geographic distinctiveness of the minority.

Aside from being ethically problematic, an assimilation policy is also often problematic in terms of political stability. When the relation between the ethnic majority and minority "involves assimilation on one community's terms,"<sup>10</sup> it is likely to generate resentment, opposition, and possibly violence, especially when the identity of the minority targeted for assimilation is already well formed prior to the launching of the policy, and when the

minority (or most of its members) lives in its ancestral homeland or parts of it.

In contrast to an assimilationist policy, the purpose of a hegemonic policy in a multiethnic society is not to eliminate the minority by absorbing it into the majority, but to dominate it through marginalization. Marginalization basically means making the minority insignificant or even completely irrelevant in determining the public agenda and public policies. The minority group might be marginalized to such a degree that the majority may act on all issues of public policy and affairs of state as it pleases. Hegemonic control has been pursued not only in authoritarian polities, but also in democracies, sometimes under the guise of majority rule (involving the tyranny of the majority, as de Tocqueville famously described it). While such democracies might be regarded as failing to meet the most stringent demands of a democratic system (such as full equality and the protection of minorities), they can meet more modest demands (such as conducting regular elections and even providing fundamental freedoms for all individuals).

As is the case with assimilationist policy, hegemonic policy can also prove to be highly problematic. It is likely to generate opposition from members of the ethnic minority, as well as from liberal elements within the majority group itself and the international community at large. This resistance to hegemony can easily develop into violent action as seen, for example, in the case of Sri Lanka over the last several decades.<sup>11</sup>

### **Majority–Minority Relations in Israel and Turkey**

At first sight, Turkey and Israel appear to have little in common. Turkey is a geographically large country with a population of around 70 million, almost all of whom are Muslim. Israel, by contrast, is a small country with a small population—less than one tenth the size of Turkey’s—the majority of whom are Jews. Economically, Turkey remains a developing country, struggling to lift much of its population out of poverty. Israel, on the other hand, has achieved a remarkable level of economic development, attaining a per capita income level equivalent to that of many states in Western Europe (although the distribution of that income, as in Turkey, is highly unequal).

Yet, notwithstanding these differences, both Israel and Turkey have a significant problem with their largest ethnic minorities—Arabs (or “Palestinians,” as many of them prefer to be called)<sup>12</sup> and Kurds respectively. These two minority groups have some important similarities: each constitutes between 15 and 20 percent of the population in its country, and tends to be demographically concentrated in certain regions (although many of their members live outside of “their” areas).<sup>13</sup> Significantly, both groups have a large number of ethnic kin in bordering states, a fact which generates fears in both countries over possible irredentist and secessionist claims on their territory. Unlike Kurds in Turkey, however, who share a common religion with the majority Turks and a long history of coexistence, Palestinians in Israel have a different religion and history from the Jewish majority, and the relations between them have been largely negative and hostile for generations. Furthermore, while Palestinians in Israel mostly live as a separate minority, socially segregated, politically marginalized and economically impoverished; Kurds in Turkey experience virtually no segregation socially, economically or politically; there is extensive intermarriage between Turks and Kurds, and many Kurds have become somewhat or fully Turkified. Yet, despite these differences, in both Israel and Turkey there has been a conflict between the minority and the state and its ethnic majority. Both states now face growing discontent, unrest, and even violence by members of the minority. Moreover, both states have come under domestic and international criticism over their approaches to their ethnic minorities (although this pressure has been much more intense in the case of Turkey).

Why have the approaches of Israel and Turkey toward their minorities led to conflict and confrontation between the minority and the state and its ethnic majority? How have these approaches been similar and how have they differed and why? To answer these questions, the rest of this article will compare both states’ approaches to their minorities and the domestic and international forces that sustain as well as challenge these approaches. The relationship between the majority and the minority in Israel and Turkey can be compared by looking at it, however briefly, in terms of four different aspects:

1. The overall strategy adopted by the majority group for managing majority–minority relations and the reasons for this strategy.
2. The main method used, within the chosen strategy, to implement the strategy.
3. The success of the strategy and method.
4. The forces supporting and opposing change.

### *1. The Strategy for Managing Majority–Minority Relations*

In selecting a strategy for managing relations between the majority and the minority, multiethnic states are faced with a basic and critical choice: do they find ways through various institutional arrangements to accommodate the minority, or do they reject this option and instead find ways to dominate and control the minority? Of course, in practice, many states have alternated between these two strategies and/or combined them in various ways. But some states have tended to consistently pursue one or other strategy. Throughout their histories, albeit to varying degrees, Israel and Turkey have both opted for a strategy of control rather than accommodation for managing the relationship between the majority and the minority. The reason for this choice lies in the ideological beliefs of the founding and ruling elites of both countries—Zionist beliefs in the case of Israel’s political elite, and Kemalist beliefs in the case of Turkey’s. In other words, their overall strategies for managing majority–minority relations were both shaped by their nationalist ideologies.

When the State of Israel came into being in May 1948, it viewed itself as fulfilling the Zionist dream of establishing an independent Jewish entity in the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people. Despite the fact that the country had a mixed population of Palestinians and Jews, even after the departure of the vast majority of the Palestinians during the 1948 war (only 10 percent—roughly 150,000—remained within Israel, comprising about 15 percent of the new state’s population), the ruling political elite established an ethnic Jewish state, rather than a liberal democracy<sup>14</sup> based on individual equality and the neutrality of the state toward all ethnic groups, let alone a bi-national state.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the United Nations’ partition resolution of November 1947 called for the establishment of an “Arab state” and a “Jewish

state” in the area occupied by the British Mandate; gave a certain amount of international legitimacy to the idea of an ethnically defined, Jewish polity.

While in theory, the new state committed itself to maintaining “full social and political equality of all citizens,” in the words of its Declaration of Independence,<sup>16</sup> in reality Arab–Jewish relations developed from the beginning in the direction of majority hegemony over a subordinate minority.<sup>17</sup> The Palestinian minority was not granted any collective political rights, although individual Palestinians received Israeli citizenship and most of the rights and privileges associated with it. Nevertheless, the ideological infrastructure and all the policies of the state were thoroughly Zionist. The state adopted national symbols that were rooted in the Jewish tradition, and the educational system was designed to inculcate Jewish and Zionist values. In its policies, the state committed itself to open immigration for Jews, thus increasing their demographic advantage versus Palestinians in the land; it began to systematically take over as much land as possible, passing ownership from Palestinian hands to Jewish hands;<sup>18</sup> it imposed a military government in areas inhabited by Palestinians in the Galilee, the “Triangle” (along the Israeli–Jordanian border), and the Bedouin in the Negev, giving the state total control over all aspects of Palestinian individual and communal lives.<sup>19</sup>

From the outset, the Palestinian minority was perceived as fundamentally hostile to the state’s *raison d’être*, and treated as such. The continuation of the Arab–Israeli conflict after the 1948 war between Israel and its Arab neighbors placed the Palestinian citizens of Israel in a precarious, volatile and vulnerable position; many Jews viewed them as a fifth column. Nothing signifies the majority’s attitude toward the Palestinian minority more clearly than the creation and maintenance of the military government over the Palestinian population until 1966. It marked the “Arabs” as second-class citizens, and declared them to be an unmeltable, unintegratable minority, the “ultimate other.”<sup>20</sup> The physical separation of the Palestinian minority thus became not merely a fact of political significance, but a reality of far-reaching psychological importance.

Like Palestinians in Israel, Kurds in Turkey were viewed as a subversive and dangerous minority and treated as such. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, initially

favored some kind of regional autonomy for the Kurds and even spoke, in general terms, about “the right of nations [such as the Kurds] to determine their own destinies.”<sup>21</sup> A large Kurdish uprising in 1925, however, changed the Kemalists’ attitude toward the Kurds from accommodating and tolerant to hostile and intolerant. The Sheik Said rebellion (as it became known) was seen by the Kemalist elite as a counter-revolution and a real threat to the territorial integrity of the new Republic.<sup>22</sup> The insecurity that this engendered amongst the Kemalist elite shaped their approach towards the Kurds from the mid-1920s onwards.

Despite inheriting considerable ethnic diversity from the Ottoman state (in addition to ethnic Turks, the new Turkish Republic contained Albanians, Bosnians, Circassians, Georgians, Kurds, Lazs and others<sup>23</sup>), rather than continue the multicultural tradition of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalists resolved to build a nation without ethnic and cultural pluralism. Convinced that ethnic and cultural diversity was a danger to the state’s survival, Kemalists aimed at creating a sense of shared nationhood based on Turkish nationalism.<sup>24</sup> Kemalism’s promotion of Turkish nationalism was encapsulated in the popular slogan: “How happy is he who can say ‘I am a Turk!’” In an effort to foster a common Turkish national identity among the diverse peoples of the Republic, Kemalism stressed uniformity and homogeneity. This entailed the claim that the Turkish nation contained no separate ethnic groups. Despite the population’s ethnic heterogeneity, the Turkish state adamantly refused to recognize the existence of ethnic minorities within its population and strictly forbade the expression of ethnic differences. Thus, in line with Kemalism’s refusal to recognize the ethnic diversity of Turkey’s population, the existence of a Kurdish minority in Turkey was officially denied. Kemalists even attempted to ‘prove’ that Kurds were really Turks who changed their language, popularizing the idea that the Kurds were “mountain Turks.” A distinct Kurdish identity was simply dismissed as a subversive fiction.

## 2. *The Main Method Used to Implement the Strategy*

The Kemalist attitude of denial vis-à-vis Turkey’s Kurdish minority did not of course mean that Kurdish identity simply ceased to exist. No matter how much Kemalists insisted upon the falsity of

Kurdish identity, they were still forced to contend with it. Thus, the Turkish state made an active effort to completely eradicate Kurdish identity by means of assimilating the Kurds (as well as all other ethnic minorities) into the larger Turkish nation.<sup>25</sup> Assimilation became, therefore, the primary method by which the Turkish state sought to solve the "Kurdish question." This was a very different control method than the one adopted by the Israeli elite.

The assimilation policy of the Republic of Turkey involved wielding a combination of sticks and carrots for the minority. The carrots were reflected in a willingness to be inclusive toward persons of Kurdish descent; the sticks included repressive elements. On the one hand, Kurds who accepted Turkish identity and, equally important, totally ignored their Kurdishness, were given all the opportunities provided by the state. Many were promoted to high governmental positions, but were able to do so only as "Turks"; on the other hand, "those Kurds who were conscious of what they perceived to be a Kurdish national identity were penalized by the state."<sup>26</sup> The assimilatory policy of the state was so oppressive that any expression of Kurdish identity was considered a threat to the unity, and therefore the existence, of the Republic. Kurds were thus prevented from expressing or developing their own ethnicity, culture or language. Even the use of the words "Kurds," "Kurdish," and "Kurdistan" were banned, and it was forbidden to speak Kurdish in public.<sup>27</sup> Kurdish demands for group rights were automatically rejected on the grounds that it was not necessary for Kurds to seek recognition as a minority and the granting of minority rights, since they already enjoyed full and equal rights as Turkish citizens.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the repression of Kurdish identity, the state also "resettled" or deported more than a million Kurds to western regions of the country (e.g., the settlement law of 1934) where they were demographically dispersed among ethnic Turks.

In the case of Israel, assimilation as a method of control was never on the agenda. First, neither the Jewish majority nor the Palestinian minority desired assimilation. Secondly, by the time Israel came into being, relationships between Jews and Palestinians had already deteriorated to a level in which assimilation or even more limited integration was generally perceived, on both sides, to be unachievable. Hence, no attempt was made

by Israel's leaders to assimilate Palestinian citizens of Israel, or even to integrate them into Israeli society. The prevailing ideology of the "melting pot" was not applied to Palestinian citizens. Whilst the state attempted to overcome the cleavages between religious and secular Jews, and between Ashkenazim (Jews originally from Europe) and Sephardim (Jews originally from the Middle East and North Africa), no real efforts were made to overcome the cleavage between Arabs and Jews in Israel. Instead, in view of the fundamental beliefs of Zionist ideology and the hostile relationship between the ethnic groups in the country, the Jewish majority was determined to dominate and marginalize the Palestinian minority. Domination was possible as long as the majority enjoyed a solid demographic advantage. The weakness of the Palestinian minority after the *Nakba* of 1948 facilitated its domination by the Jewish majority. Moreover, the decision not to adopt a constitution meant that the government could implement a hegemonic control policy in all areas of public life, with little or no legal restraints.

Acting through what it saw as its state, the Jewish majority established a set of arrangements, policies and institutions designed to limit the power of the Palestinian minority, to control it, and to marginalize it in all aspects of life.<sup>29</sup> Politically, this policy involved not only the imposition of a military government, but also the establishment of Arab parties linked to Jewish-Zionist parties (such as the Labor Zionist MAPAI and MAPAM), a refusal to allow the emergence of any unified and independent Arab political representation (that would be able to authoritatively negotiate with the majority, the government, or the state in order to achieve, for example, a measure of autonomy or consociationalism), and a refusal by all Israeli Zionist parties to include Arab parties in any coalition government, regardless of their political agenda. Consequently, marginalization of the Palestinian minority has been reflected in practically all areas of public policy, both in terms of the minority's lack of participation in the determination of the policies and in the substance of these policies which responded to the interests or perceived interests of the majority, but not those of the minority.

In addition to establishing and maintaining political domination over the Palestinian minority, the policy of marginalization has also been implemented economically by making Palestinians

in Israel economically dependent on the Jewish majority. Palestinian agriculture and industry has been persistently underfunded and underdeveloped, compared to the extensive effort made to develop Jewish agriculture and industry. Palestinian economic dependency has meant that although Palestinians have enjoyed rising living standards, they have been deprived of an independent economic base from which they could challenge their subordinate status in Israeli society.<sup>30</sup> Particularly important in this respect has been the de-peasantification of the Palestinians. Many Palestinians left agriculture and moved into the non-agricultural, unskilled or semiskilled wage-labor sector. Within this market, Jews filled the skilled and high-paying jobs, while Palestinians occupied lower-level positions.<sup>31</sup> The dependency of the vast majority of Palestinian wage earners on Jews to make a living means that they are economically vulnerable and hence “cannot afford a serious struggle.”<sup>32</sup>

### *3. The Overall Success of the General Strategy and Specific Method*

In general, it seems that the Israeli state has been more successful in its control method—marginalization of the minority—than Turkey has been in its control method—eradicating the minority through assimilation. More than five decades after Israel’s founding, Palestinian citizens of Israel continue to live as a “separate and unequal” minority subordinate to a significantly more powerful majority. Jews and Palestinians reside in segregated neighborhoods, attend different schools, and meet only in the workplace, and even then usually as boss and worker.<sup>33</sup> The differential treatment accorded to Palestinians and Jews in the ethnically-based political order established after 1948 has remained substantially unchanged until today.<sup>34</sup> The inequality between Palestinians and Jews is apparent in a variety of areas such as access to land, governmental services, educational levels, and economic, legal and political conditions.

Israel’s land regime still reflects the situation in the state’s formative years (1948–67), when control over land was determined by ethnic considerations. In fact, in some ways the situation has deteriorated over time. Thus, while the Palestinian population of Israel has increased since 1949 by at least sevenfold, the land reserves available for them have declined significantly due to

massive land expropriation by the state and the systematic transfer of land from Palestinian to Jewish hands.<sup>35</sup> Over half of the land owned by the Palestinians in 1948 has been expropriated by the state. Although they now make up at least 18 percent of Israel's population, Palestinians own merely 3.5 percent of Israeli state land. This scarcity of land directly influences Palestinian housing conditions. There is a severe housing shortage, resulting in high population density, significant unauthorized building in order to accommodate a soaring population, and therefore frequent confrontations between the Israeli authorities and the Palestinian residents.

The state's discriminatory land policy is most evident in the fact that political control over the allocation of land and its use has remained under exclusive Jewish control. By law, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Jewish Agency have had from the early days of the state until today an important role in deciding the use, control, and transfer of state land. Not only are these agencies exclusively under Jewish control, but also their mission and guidelines prohibit them from selling or leasing land to non-Jews. Hence, Palestinian citizens cannot acquire land in some 80 percent of Israel's territory. The net result of this policy has been that while more than 700 Jewish settlements have been established since 1948, the rural Palestinian sector has remained at an almost total standstill.<sup>36</sup> The only Arab settlements built by the state have been those established in order to coerce the Bedouin of the Negev and the northern Galilee to urbanize. These Bedouin towns are among the poorest in Israel today.

In terms of the provision of government services to the Palestinian minority, compared with services given to the Jewish majority, a similar pattern of continued discrimination is evident. Arab localities have traditionally received significantly lower budgets for the development of their infrastructure (roads to and inside Arab municipalities, electricity, sewage, etc.). For example, in 2002 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development allocated only 13 million shekels to Arab communities out of a total development budget of 102.7 million—"a drop in a bucket" in the words of one organization concerned with equality.<sup>37</sup> The picture is the same in regard to other governmental ministries. Out of a budget of 2.57 billion shekels designated for housing infrastructure in 2001–2002, only 66.5 million shekels were allocated to

Arab communities, or 2.6 percent.<sup>38</sup> The Arab share of the budget for cultural activities (4 percent), sport (6.2 percent), or research and development (0.7 percent) was also disproportionately low.<sup>39</sup>

A persistent lack of government funding has particularly affected the Arab educational system. Palestinian students at all levels are significantly worse-off than Jewish students. For instance, while 90 percent of Jewish three- and four-year old children are enrolled in kindergartens, only 50 percent of Palestinian children are.<sup>40</sup> By age 15, close to 20 percent of Palestinian students have dropped out of school altogether, compared to less than 2 percent among Jews.<sup>41</sup> While 44.1 percent of Jews pass their high school matriculation exams, only 25.4 percent of the Palestinians do.<sup>42</sup> The situation with regard to higher education is no better. Only 9.6 percent of students enrolled for a first university degree are Palestinians, and the numbers decline for master's and doctoral degrees.<sup>43</sup>

The economic conditions of the Palestinian minority in Israel continue to be inferior to the Jewish majority, a situation that has been perpetuated by state policies based on long-term neglect. Palestinians in Israel significantly lag behind Jews in every area of economic activity. In general, Palestinian towns and villages are at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale in Israel. Their levels of poverty and unemployment are extremely high. Data from 2003 show that 46 out of 47 towns with higher than average unemployment rates are Palestinian towns and that the 25 towns with the highest unemployment rates are all Palestinian towns.<sup>44</sup> An analysis of Israel's labor force indicates that while close to two-thirds of Palestinian men are manual workers, less than 40 percent of Jews are; and while 24 percent of Jewish men are managers or professionals, only 10 percent of Palestinian men are.<sup>45</sup>

In the legal sphere, despite minor changes, discrimination against the Palestinian minority has continued unabated. Both Palestinian<sup>46</sup> and Jewish<sup>47</sup> scholars have demonstrated the systematic nature of this legal discrimination. First, there is direct legal discrimination in Israeli law between Jews and non-Jews in regard to issues such as immigration (for example, the Law of Return) and land purchasing. Second, there is indirect legal discrimination when laws or regulations bestow benefits only to Jews (for example, when rights and benefits are given to new

immigrants or veteran soldiers). Third, there is evidence that there is significant discrimination in the administration of justice, including excessive police brutality toward Palestinian demonstrators and significantly tougher penalties given to Palestinians convicted in Israeli courts.

While Palestinians participate in the electoral process as both voters and candidates, and do have representatives in parliament (the Knesset), they remain politically marginalized. Palestinians have been almost completely excluded from national decision-making. To date, no Arab political party has ever participated in an Israeli coalition government, despite the fact that there have been many occasions when moderate Arab parties had compatible positions to those of leading Zionist parties on the most important issues on the public agenda (such as the Israeli–Palestinian peace process), and their parliamentary votes have sometimes helped keep some governments in power (for example, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s Labor-led coalition government from 1992 to 1995). Thus, an unofficial rule against including Arab parties in government continues to keep them away from any real political power in Israel.

In Turkey’s case, the control strategy and the assimilation method that has accompanied it have been less successful than the Israeli control strategy and its method of marginalization. While many Kurds, as well as members of other ethnic minorities in Turkey, have indeed been assimilated, the overall policy failed to completely eradicate a distinct Kurdish identity. Several factors have worked against a successful assimilation policy in Turkey, particularly in regard to the Kurds. First, the size of the Kurdish minority, currently estimated at 13 million people or even more,<sup>48</sup> has made its complete eradication unlikely. Second, the remoteness of the Kurdish areas and their tribal social structure left them relatively unaffected by the policy of assimilation.<sup>49</sup> Third, while many other minorities in Turkey were immigrants, the Kurds were an indigenous group living in its ancestral land.<sup>50</sup>

The failure of Turkey’s assimilationist policy slowly became apparent over the decades following Turkey’s democratic transition after 1946 (when the first free and competitive elections were held). At first, consciousness of a Kurdish identity was limited to a handful of Kurdish nationalists, but spurred by a proliferation of

Kurdish cultural organizations and publications it slowly spread, first to the educated and urbanized Kurdish youth, and then to the wider Kurdish population.<sup>51</sup> Accompanying the spread of Kurdish ethnic consciousness were increasing expressions of Kurdish identity and a rise in Kurdish political activism. In the 1960s, this was mostly left-wing activism concerned with tackling the poverty and social backwardness (such as the predominance of feudalism) that afflicted the mainly Kurdish southeast region of the country. By the 1970s, however, Kurdish political discourse increasingly shifted away from focusing on the problem of the southeast's underdevelopment, towards more explicit demands for the state to recognize the Kurdish language and grant cultural rights to the Kurds.

The military coup of 1980 initiated a harsh backlash against the growing expression of Kurdish ethnicity. The new constitution of 1982 effectively prohibited the expression of any idea that the authorities could interpret as recognizing the existence of a separate, Kurdish ethnic identity. Political parties that supported activities "in conflict with the indivisible integrity of the state" were forbidden. The following year, a law was passed that banned the use of Kurdish for the dissemination of information (Law 2932).<sup>52</sup> Thus the Turkish authorities, through a series of draconian measures, sought to stem the rising tide of Kurdish consciousness. Resorting to earlier tactics, they also attempted to demonstrate the common ancestry of Turks and Kurds, and deny the existence of a separate Kurdish language. They claimed that the existence of a distinctive Kurdish identity was simply a fabrication made up by Western intelligence agencies and separatist groups who sought to weaken and divide the country.<sup>53</sup>

The propaganda of the Turkish authorities, however, was unpersuasive. Whereas in the early years of the Republic, the state could largely control the flow of information reaching its population, in the 1980s this was no longer possible due to the expansion of independent media outlets in the country as a result of the liberalization of the Turkish economy that began in the early 1980s. By the late 1980s, a growing number of books and publications dealing with Kurdish ethnicity that challenged the official line were appearing in Turkey. More and more journalists, politicians, and citizens were becoming increasingly critical of the official denial of a Kurdish identity. Also responsible for generating

public awareness of Kurdish identity was the violent insurrection that began in southeastern Turkey in 1984 by the armed guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party—better known by its Turkish acronym PKK. In response, the Turkish government launched a massive military campaign. The bloody conflict between the PKK and the state's security forces did more than anything else to put the Kurdish issue front and center in the national and international media, thus contributing to the failure of the assimilation policy.

The traditional Kemalist attitude of denial vis-à-vis the Kurds, therefore, became untenable by the 1990s as the Kurdish issue became a major, and highly controversial, domestic political issue in Turkey. Prime Minister Turgut Özal (prime minister from 1983 to 1991, then president until his death in 1993) was the first Turkish leader to publicly acknowledge the failure of the state's traditional approach to the Kurds, when he declared in 1991: "A policy of repression was adopted with the aim of assimilating them. That was a mistake."<sup>54</sup> In April that year, Özal initiated a new approach toward the Kurds when his government lifted the ban on the use of the Kurdish language.<sup>55</sup> Other politicians quickly embraced Özal's new approach toward the Kurdish issue. Suleyman Demirel, soon after being elected prime minister in October 1991, declared in a newspaper interview: "Turkey's borders, flags, and official language cannot be debated, but ethnic groups' demand to retain their own ethnic identity and culture should not be rejected. They are already using their own language. They have their own history, language, and folklore. If they wish to develop them, let them do so."<sup>56</sup> On a visit to the Kurdish-populated city of Diyarbakir in December 1991, Prime Minister Demirel announced in front of a crowd of tens of thousands of cheering Kurds: "Turkey has recognized the Kurdish reality."<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Erdal Inonu, the new deputy prime minister stated: "The Kurdish citizens' cultural identity must be recognized in full. That is, we must acknowledge the reality that some of our citizens are not Turks but Kurds who belong to the Republic of Turkey."<sup>58</sup> These statements amounted to a blatant repudiation of decades of official policy toward the Kurds. After long denying the existence of Kurds, the existence of a distinct Kurdish identity was finally officially acknowledged. So too, was the failure of the state's assimilation policy.

#### 4. *The Forces Supporting and Opposing Change*

While both Israel and Turkey have pursued a strategy of control toward their minorities, support for the continuation of the strategy, and the particular method attached to it, seems to be more powerful in Israel than in Turkey. Put differently, the forces supporting the adoption of a genuine accommodationist strategy toward their respective minorities are less powerful in Israel's case than they are in the case of Turkey.

In Israel, the entire Zionist national project is fundamentally concerned with the protection and promotion of the interests of the Jewish majority, and those interests are widely perceived as antithetical to the Palestinian minority's interests. There is, therefore, widespread, albeit not universal, support for the continuation of policies that serve the interests of the Jewish majority, even at the expense of the Palestinian minority.<sup>59</sup> Most members of the majority appear to accept, for instance, the continuing discrimination with regards to governmental services given to the minority, as against those given to the majority.

Opposition to the policy of marginalizing the Palestinian minority has relied heavily on the State of Israel's democratic values and its commitment, reflected in its Declaration of Independence, to maintain "full social and political equality" of all its citizens. But the state's commitment to its "Jewishness," also included in the Declaration, has generally prevailed over the commitment to equality. The struggle over the majority's strategy toward the minority can be viewed as one between nationalist forces and liberal forces. The issue of the state's treatment of its Palestinian minority is merely one issue, albeit a very important one, among several issues at the center of a long-running debate between nationalists and liberals over the nature of the Israeli polity. At the heart of the debate is a competition between universalist values (such as democracy and equality) and particularist ones (that is, nationalism and ethnicity).<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the strength of the majority's commitment to the state's "Jewishness," opposition to the hegemonic majority–minority relations in Israel was weakened by several key factors: (1) Israel's democratic order gave basic civil liberties to all individual citizens, including Palestinian citizens; (2) in addition to individual civil liberties, Arabs as a group enjoyed a number of

rights, albeit non-political ones (notably, the right to be educated in Arabic language schools, recognition of religious courts for Muslims, recognition of Arabic as an official language); (3) the Israeli system was flexible enough to allow individuals and groups to challenge its own rulings in the court of law and in other forums, so that the minority could hope to change the system from within.<sup>61</sup>

While there have been several attempts in Israel to transform the hegemonic majority–minority relations established by the state, these were quickly suppressed either by executive means (such as the detention without trial of rebellious individuals in the early years of the state or the denial of benefits in later years), or by legislative means (such as the passing of laws banning parties that promote changing the character of the state, even through legal and non-violent means). Despite their reputation as bastions of liberalism, Israeli courts have tended to support the government in all or most issues related to majority–minority relations. The courts did not, for instance, prevent the large-scale expropriations of Palestinian lands in the formative years of Israel. When the Arab nationalist group al-Ard (the land) decided to run in the 1965 Knesset elections, the High Court of Justice supported the government decision to deny them the right to do so.<sup>62</sup>

There has, therefore, been opposition throughout Israel's history to the policy of marginalizing the Palestinian minority, but that minority has lost all or at least most of its battles.<sup>63</sup> In terms of the Israeli "land regime," an essential area of conflict between the majority and the minority, the state was determined to gain control over most of the Palestinian lands.<sup>64</sup> By and large it has succeeded in doing so, although large-scale Arab demonstrations in 1976 (Land Day) put a stop to most land expropriations. While the High Court of Justice, in a historic ruling on 8 March 2000 (Qaadán/Katzir), determined that the state's discriminatory laws in regard to the allocation of lands were unacceptable, to date there has not been a reversal of the policy of transferring the control of land from Palestinians to Jews.<sup>65</sup> This has been the pattern in other areas as well. In terms of services provided by the state to the minority (allocation of funds to municipalities, educational facilities, etc.), there has been persistent inequality despite regular opposition via legal action, public protests, lobbying activity by organizations working on behalf of equalizing

conditions, academic research pointing out discrimination,<sup>66</sup> and so forth.

This does not mean, however, that Israel's hegemonic control strategy vis-à-vis its Palestinian minority is stable and secure. The massive protests staged by Palestinians in Israel in October 2000, shortly after the outbreak of the second Intifada, highlight the fragility of this control strategy. The demonstrations and riots that took place in many Arab villages and towns were not simply a display of solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. They were also an angry protest against years of governmental neglect and discrimination, social exclusion and marginalization. The police's violent reaction to the demonstrations—firing live ammunition at the protesters, killing 13 of them—only made matters worse, further demonstrating to Palestinian citizens their second-class status in Israeli society.

The persistent failure of the Palestinian minority to achieve equality with the Jewish majority through parliamentary and other democratic activities is in danger of discrediting such activities, leading to a radicalization of the methods of the Palestinian minority. Already, increasing numbers of Palestinian citizens now believe that their quest for equality with Israel's Jewish citizens cannot be achieved within the prevailing state structure (i.e., an ethnic Jewish state). If their growing demand for a fundamental transformation of the state from a Jewish state to a state for all its citizens is not met—and there is little reason to believe that it will be given the preferences of the Jewish majority—then there is an increased likelihood that more extreme, possibly violent action could be taken by some members of the Palestinian minority. Fears over this potential development have already been expressed within official circles in Israel. Yet, rather than take decisive action to address Palestinian demands for equality, the state, with the backing of much of the Jewish public, continues to pursue its traditional policy of control and marginalization, even in the face of mounting Palestinian alienation and anger.

Support for the traditional policy towards the Palestinian minority has remained strong in Israel, whereas in Turkey support for the continuation of the state's traditional policy toward the Kurdish minority has become much more tenuous over the years.

While many members of Turkey's governing elite (in the state bureaucracy and especially in the military) remain steadfastly loyal to Kemalism and its refusal to grant any group rights or recognition to ethnic minorities, this position has faced a growing challenge from inside and outside the country. Although the existence of a Kurdish minority in Turkey was widely recognized in the 1990s,<sup>67</sup> there was still stiff opposition to the granting of minority group rights to the Kurds on the grounds that granting cultural or political autonomy to the Kurds would lead to the fragmentation of the Turkish state.<sup>68</sup> Not only did Turkish officials fear that allowing Kurdish political or cultural autonomy would only encourage Kurdish nationalism and secessionism, they also believed that the successful demands of one ethnic group may lead to the mobilization of other ethnic groups. Hence, by granting certain rights to one ethnic group, such as the Kurds, they risked provoking demands for similar rights to be granted to other ethnic groups, such as the Laz and Circassians.

Despite this prevailing official attitude, the Demirel government (1991–93) made some cultural concessions to the Kurds during its first few months in office. For example, parents were allowed to give their children Kurdish names, some films and cassettes were taken off the censored list, and a Kurdish newspaper was permitted, as well as a private Kurdish institute in Istanbul.<sup>69</sup> These initial moves toward a more liberal policy toward the Kurds did not last long however. The escalating conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army in the southeast region in the 1990s meant that “national security” concerns increasingly came to prevail over the willingness to grant cultural concessions to the Kurds.<sup>70</sup>

During the course of the 1990s, the military-dominated National Security Council (NSC) came to exercise almost total control over the state's handling of the Kurdish issue since it was perceived to be a serious threat to the “indivisible unity of the state's people and its territory.”<sup>71</sup> The dominance of the NSC over the state's approach toward the Kurdish issue meant that it was treated solely as a security issue. In the NSC's opinion, there was not a Kurdish issue or problem per se, only a problem of PKK terrorism. Moreover, it was believed that this problem could basically be dealt with through a relentless military campaign

against the PKK and severe punitive actions against its civilian supporters.

Equating all pro-Kurdish activities, including that by non-PKK moderate Kurdish groups, with PKK activities, Turkish authorities carried out a systematic campaign in the 1990s, through legal and extra-legal channels, to silence Kurdish voices within Turkish society. They sought to eliminate all forms of Kurdish political opposition and dissent, including Kurdish political parties, which were repeatedly banned as the Turkish authorities accused them of being linked to the PKK.<sup>72</sup> These bans, and the arrest and imprisonment of Kurdish parliamentary deputies, alienated and radicalized Turkish Kurds, and increased their support for the PKK, as it claimed that armed conflict was the only viable option for Kurds since peaceful political representation of Kurdish interests was not allowed by the Turkish state.<sup>73</sup> By their harsh response to Kurdish demands, the Turkish authorities increased the PKK's visibility and legitimacy among Turkey's Kurds, turning the once marginal organization into the main vehicle for expressing Kurdish demands. Despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that its political aspirations were not altogether clear (its message varied from separatism to federalism to better political and cultural conditions for Turkey's Kurdish population), the PKK enjoyed "enormous support" among Kurds in the southeast.<sup>74</sup>

As the PKK became the focal point of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, Kurds were increasingly associated in the minds of many Turks with PKK terrorism. The hardening of popular Turkish attitudes toward the Kurds and the Turkish authorities' persistent equation of the Kurdish issue with separatism and terrorism effectively prevented any real progress toward a resolution of the Kurdish issue. Nevertheless, public awareness of the Kurdish issue was greater than ever before. Notwithstanding the Turkish authorities' attempt to represent the issue as "PKK terrorism," depictions of the Kurdish issue in Turkey as a struggle for cultural rights steadily gained prominence during the 1990s. This was largely due to the growing number of non-governmental organizations,<sup>75</sup> academics,<sup>76</sup> and prominent businessmen<sup>77</sup> who began to publicly express their views concerning the Kurdish issue.

Some domestic pressures from elements of Turkish civil society for a different approach to the Kurdish issue than the state's essentially repressive approach became apparent. By themselves,

however, these pressures were easily resistible. As long as PKK terrorism continued, Turkish public opinion basically supported the military's hard-line approach to the Kurdish issue, and demands for a more accommodating approach, though frequent, were hardly overwhelming. At the end of the 1990s, however, two major developments opened the way for a change in the state's approach to the Kurdish issue.

The first was the decline of the PKK following the arrest and imprisonment of its leader, Abdullah Ocalan,<sup>78</sup> and the withdrawal of its fighters from Turkish territory, along with a declaration of a unilateral ceasefire (February 2000). The cessation of the 15-year guerrilla war changed the country's political atmosphere. It finally became possible to pursue a more liberal approach to the Kurdish issue since PKK terrorism could no longer be used by the authorities to de-legitimize all Kurdish political and cultural demands.

While domestic conditions within Turkey became more favorable to a liberalized approach to the Kurdish issue, the most powerful impetus for reforms concerning the Kurds came from outside the country. This was the pressure exerted upon Turkey by the European Union (EU), which Turkey had long hoped to join. Turkey's hopes of becoming a member of the EU were given an important boost at the EU summit meeting in Helsinki in December 1999 when it was accepted as a suitable candidate for membership. This was the second major development that paved the way for a change in the state's approach to the Kurdish issue. Indeed, the prospect of one day joining the EU has served as the greatest incentive for a liberalization of Turkey's policies toward its Kurds.

The conditions that Turkey had to meet in order to attain EU membership were spelled out in the EU's Accession Partnership Document (December 2000). Among its criteria for EU membership were that Turkey grant language and cultural rights to its citizens belonging to minority ethnic groups, most notably its Kurdish citizens. To comply with this meant completely repudiating and reversing the Turkish state's long-standing policy of suppressing and concealing ethnic divisions. Failure to do so would mean abandoning Turkey's long quest to become part of the European club of states. As Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of the Motherland Party, put it: "The road to the EU goes

through Diyarbakir [the largest Kurdish city in southeastern Turkey].”<sup>79</sup>

The EU’s demand for language and cultural rights for minority ethnic groups in Turkey was not well received by many high-ranking Turkish officials and politicians, especially within nationalist circles and the military establishment. The politically powerful military (the self-proclaimed guardians of Kemalism) was especially vocal in its opposition, publicly declaring on several occasions that it was against the recognition of Kurdish cultural rights and claiming that granting such rights would only encourage Kurdish separatism.<sup>80</sup> But despite the military’s continued anxieties, a number of reforms were implemented in order to gain eventual entry into the EU. Thus, in November 2003, the Turkish parliament passed four reform packages concerning a range of issues related to human rights and the protection of minorities. The legislation dealt with freedom of expression, freedom of demonstration, cultural rights, and civilian control of the military. It allowed for the opening of private Kurdish schools and television broadcasts in Kurdish. In their totality, these reforms amounted to an unprecedented departure from the country’s traditional policy toward its Kurdish minority.

Yet, for all the optimism (inside and outside Turkey) these reforms generated that Turkey’s Kurdish issue was finally nearing a positive resolution, the progress that they represented was more illusory than real. The legalization of Kurdish-language television broadcasting, for example, only resulted in a single half-hour Kurdish television program per week, and while Kurdish could be taught in private schools, most Kurds in the southeast could not afford to attend them.<sup>81</sup> Not only was the actual impact of these much-touted reforms quite limited, but also they were still a long way off from more far-reaching reforms such as licensing all-Kurdish television stations or allowing the free use of Kurdish in public schools and universities. In other words, minority group rights for Kurds remained a distant prospect, and still a highly controversial one. This is not to deny the significance of the government reforms enacted in recent years concerning the Kurdish issue. Their primary significance lies in signaling the beginning of a long overdue change in the Turkish authorities’ approach to the Kurdish issue away from repression and toward a more tolerant approach.

### **Conclusion: Toward Accommodation?**

The analysis offered in this article shows that both Israel and Turkey are under pressure to change their approaches to their ethnic minorities. In Israel, the pressure is to move toward a more liberal polity in which equal rights are granted to all citizens as individuals and some group rights for the Palestinian minority are enhanced, however marginally. In Turkey, the pressure is to move toward a more multicultural polity that recognizes the collective rights of ethnic minorities (most notably, the Kurdish minority). It is important to note, however, that the pressures facing Israel and Turkey are not one-sided—while there are significant pressures to liberalize and to further recognize the rights of the minorities within both countries, there are considerable countervailing pressures to maintain the existing order and even to further strengthen it.

The arguments of those in support of the existing order are often couched in terms of the security of the state, its geographical integrity, and even its very survival. Buttressing these arguments in both cases is the fact that both Palestinians in Israel and Kurds in Turkey have a large number of ethnic kin living in bordering states. Turkish fears of Kurdish secession and Israeli-Jewish fears of Palestinian irredentism are real and cannot be easily dismissed. Although at present these possibilities enjoy little public support among Kurds and Palestinians, external developments can easily affect the political aspirations of both groups. The emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq (which is already *de facto* coming into being in many respects) could give new impetus to separatism among Kurds in Turkey. Similarly, the emergence of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza could well embolden Palestinians in Israel to challenge Israel's Jewish status. Conversely, the failure to establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza may lead to increasing Palestinian and international support for a binational solution encompassing Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

The potential impact of such external developments on state–minority relations in Israel and Turkey heightens the anxieties of the ethnic majority in both states and complicates the state's approach to the minority. The linkage between state–minority relations and national security issues and foreign affairs has undoubtedly exacerbated the minority problem in

both Israel and Turkey. Because of this linkage, both states have pursued tougher approaches toward the minority than they might otherwise have adopted, and there is now considerable internal resistance in both to changing their approaches to become more accommodating toward the minority. In addition, in both states, there is deep allegiance to the ideological infrastructure established several generations ago, allegiance that is unlikely to evaporate whatever the pressures. The strategies and methods developed vis-à-vis their minorities by the Israeli and Turkish states are deeply rooted in the ideological infrastructures of those polities and, therefore, they are exceedingly difficult to abandon.

Hence, in general we do not believe that a fundamental change in the approaches of either the Israeli or Turkish states toward their minorities is likely to occur in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, we predict some changes in both countries in a liberal direction. In the case of Israel, the state's traditional policy is now being challenged domestically by the Palestinian minority as well as by "liberal" Israeli-Jewish politicians, judges, journalists, activists, academics, writers and artists. Civil rights organizations in Israel and members of this liberal coalition have succeeded in bringing greater public attention to the issue of the rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel and placing it higher on the domestic political agenda. There are already signs of slow liberalization suggesting that although fundamental changes in the character of the state are unlikely, continued liberalization is likely, especially concerning individual-based (not group-based) equality. However, the nationalist forces within Israeli society that are opposed to the equalization of rights for Israel's Palestinian minority continue to effectively resist this, and the continuation of the conflict with the Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular plays into the hands of those supporting the existing order.

More significant changes are possible in Turkey than in Israel due to the external pressure upon Turkey from the EU. The possibility of joining the EU is an extremely powerful incentive for making further reforms concerning the Kurdish issue, including granting group rights, a major deviation from the tenets of Kemalism. Civil society groups in Turkey have increasingly linked up with the EU and confronted the Turkish state via the EU. Business groups in Turkey have also become more vocal in

favor of further liberalization as part of Turkey's efforts to gain membership in the EU. The combination of external pressure from the EU and domestic pressure from civil society and business groups in Turkey has already led to a softening of the Turkish state's approach to its Kurdish minority. These pressures, however, also run the risk of generating a domestic, nationalistic backlash, which could lead to greater repression of the Kurdish minority.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, if Turkey's longtime quest to join the EU stalls or fails altogether, this could bring an end to further reforms concerning the Kurdish issue and even the retraction of previous reforms.

The persistent pressures in both Israel and Turkey to revise the existing strategy of control—whether it is implemented through marginalization (Israel) or assimilation (Turkey)—indicate that this strategy and those methods are, at best, highly problematical and significantly destabilizing. They create resentment and resistance, and often open conflict and even massive violence. While Israel has largely avoided such violence (the worst state–minority violence was the ten days of Palestinian rioting in October 2000 in which 12 Palestinian citizens were killed, and the “Land Day” riots which occurred on 30 March 1976 which resulted in the death six of Palestinians); in Turkey, over 30000 people have died in the war between the PKK and the Turkish state that first started in 1983 and has now recently resumed. The fact that Palestinians in Israel, unlike Kurds in Turkey, have almost completely refrained from the use of violence is a testimony to the effectiveness of the Israeli regime of control in dealing with the “Arab problem” (it may also be due to the fact that the violence between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has deterred Palestinians in Israel from launching their own violent struggle against the Jewish state and encouraged them instead to support their national brethren in the occupied territories). Although Israel's control strategy has so far been successful in preventing large-scale violence in Israel and in ensuring stability, it has also created a deep and enduring division between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel that poses a long-term threat to the state's security and even survival.

A strategy of control, however judiciously and effectively exercised, may well guarantee short-term stability, especially if the power of the majority group is pronounced, but the likelihood

of long-term stability is low. The minority group will not submit indefinitely to the dominance of the majority. It will eventually challenge this dominance, whether through peaceful or violent means, and the state will have to resort to either repression of the minority or accommodation. Accommodation can take a variety of forms (federalism, consociationalism, autonomy, etc.), and the appropriate method depends upon each country's circumstances. To be sure, increasing accommodation is not without its risks. It may encourage members of the minority to increase their demands and give them more freedom to pursue far more ambitious goals. For Israel and Turkey, a strategy of accommodation poses real risks that cannot be ignored. Israel's status as a Jewish state could well come under greater attack from its Palestinian minority, and Turkey could face a major secessionist challenge from its Kurdish minority.

While these future scenarios are by no means far-fetched, their occurrence is no less likely if both states continue with their existing strategies of control. A strategy of accommodation, on the other hand, offers the prospect of greater political stability over time, not to mention greater equality and justice. It does not guarantee inter-ethnic harmony, but it is at least a possibility; whereas controlling a minority will, sooner or later, result only in growing tensions between the majority and the minority, as the cases of Israel and Turkey demonstrate.

### Acknowledgement

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### Notes

1. On Turkey's majority-minority relations see Ercan Argun, "Universal Citizenship Rights and Turkey's Kurdish Question," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1999), pp. 85-104; Dogu Ergil, "The Kurdish Question in Turkey," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2000), pp. 122-35; Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: An Example of Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

2. William Safran, “Non-Separatist Policies regarding Ethnic Minorities: Positive Approaches and Ambiguous Consequences,” *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994), pp. 61–80.
3. Sammy Smootha, “Control of Minorities in Israel and Northern Ireland,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1980), pp. 256–80; Ian Lustick, “Stability in Deeply Divided Societies: Consociationalism vs. Control,” *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1979), pp. 325–44.
4. Alan Dowty, “Is Israel Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the ‘Ethnic Democracy’ Debate,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1999), pp. 1–15; Ruth Gavison, “Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the ‘Ethnic Democracy’ Debate,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1999), pp. 44–72; Ilan Peleg, “Israel between Democratic Universalism and Particularist Judaism: Challenging a Sacred Formula,” Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies (2003), pp. 7–25; Sammy Smootha, “A Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2002), pp. 475–503.
5. This concept was introduced into the literature by Sammy Smootha, see for instance “Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype,” *Israel Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1997), pp. 198–241. The concept was adopted by other analysts such as Yoav Peled, “Ethnic Democracy and Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, No. 2 (1992), pp. 432–43.
6. Oren Yiftachel, “Democracy or Ethnocracy? Territory and Settler Politics in Israel/Palestine,” *Middle East Report*, No. 207 (Summer 1998), pp. 8–7. See also Oren Yiftachel and Asad Ghanem, “Understanding ‘Ethnocratic’ Regimes: The Politics of Seizing Contested Territories,” *Political Geography*, Vol. 36, No. 6 (2004), pp. 647–76.
7. Ilan Peleg, “Transforming Ethnic Orders to Pluralist Regimes: Theoretical, Comparative and Historical Analysis,” in Adrian Guelke (ed.), *Democracy and Ethnic Conflict: Advancing Peace in Deeply Divided Societies* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 7–25.
8. See for example, Svante E. Cornell, “The Kurdish Question in Turkish Politics,” *Orbis*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2001), pp. 31–46.
9. John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 4–37.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
11. Neil DeVotta, “From Ethnic Outbidding to Ethnic Conflict: The Institutional Bases for Sri Lanka’s Separatist War,” *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2005), pp. 141–59.
12. In numerous surveys of the Palestinian minority in Israel conducted over many years, the majority consistently define themselves as Palestinian, rather than as “Israeli Arab” or even “Palestinian Israeli.” Although the state and Israeli-Jewish society continues to use the label “Arabs” in reference to Palestinian citizens of Israel, this article will generally use the term “Palestinian” since this accurately represents the self-identity of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

13. Although mainly residents of Turkey's rural south-east, throughout the years Kurds have migrated to Turkey's Western cities as a result of the state's dispersion policies and the search for better economic opportunities. Palestinians in Israel also tend to live in certain areas, but there are Arab communities in several Israeli cities.
14. Jonathan Shapiro, "When Has Liberalism Disappeared in Israel?" *Zmanim* (Winter 1996), pp. 92–101 (Hebrew).
15. Only a small number of Zionists supported bi-nationalism as a solution for the conflict between majority and minority.
16. See Ian Bickerton and Clara Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 4th Edition (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2005), pp. 113–15.
17. Peleg, "Transforming Ethnic Orders to Pluralist Regimes," pp. 7–25.
18. Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).
19. Ilan Peleg, "Israel's Constitutional Order and Kulturkampf," *Israel Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1998), pp. 230–50.
20. Ilan Peleg, "Otherness and Israel's Arab Dilemma," in Laurence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (eds.), *The Other in Jewish Thought and History* (New York: NYU Press, 1994), pp. 258–80.
21. Quoted in Andrew Mango, "Ataturk and the Kurds," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1999), pp. 1–25.
22. Kirisci and Winrow, pp. 97–8.
23. Servet Mutlu, "Population of Turkey by Ethnic Groups and Provinces," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 12 (Spring 1995), pp. 33–60.
24. S. D. Salomone, "The Dialectics of Turkish National Identity: Ethnic Boundary Maintenance and State Ideology, Part Two," *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1989), p. 238.
25. Mustafa Saatci, "Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish–Kurdish conflict," *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2002), p. 557.
26. Kirisci and Winrow, p. 113.
27. Gülistan Gurbey, "The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since the 1980s," in Robert Olson (ed.), *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p. 13.
28. Turkish officials maintain that the minorities policy of the Turkish government is strictly based on the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, which refer only to the rights of non-Muslim minorities in Turkey—Armenians, Greeks and Jews. No ethnic or national minorities are recognized in the treaty, only religious minorities.
29. For a detailed analysis of Israel's "machinery of control" over its Arab minority see Smooha, "Control of Minorities in Israel and Northern Ireland," pp. 270–74.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 270–71.
31. Elia T. Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 131–41; Michael Shalev, "Jewish Organized Labor and the Palestinians: A Study of State/Society Relations in Israel," in

- Baruch Kimmerling (ed.), *The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 93–134; and Joel S. Migdal, *Through the Lens of Israel: Explorations in State and Society* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 176.
32. Smootha, “Control of Minorities in Israel and Northern Ireland,” p. 271.
  33. Migdal, *Through the Lens of Israel*, p. 179.
  34. See Nadim Rouhana, *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State: Identities in Conflict* (New Haven: Yale, 1997); Asad Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948–2001* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001); Ilan Peleg, “Jewish–Palestinian Relations in Israel: From Hegemony to Equality?” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2004), pp. 415–37.
  35. See for example Oren Yiftachel and Alexandre Kedar, “Landed Power: The Making of the Israeli Land Regime,” *Theory and Criticism*, Vol. 16 (2000): pp. 67–100 (Hebrew).
  36. See Dan Rabinowitz, Asad Ghanem and Oren Yiftachel (eds.), *After the Rift: New Directions for Government Policy toward the Arab Population in Israel* (November 2000), p. 17.
  37. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
  38. Shuli Dichter and As’ad Ghanem (eds.), *The Sikkuy Report 2001–2002: Monitoring Civic Equality Between Arab and Jewish Citizens of Israel* (Jerusalem: Sikkuy, 2002), p. 16.
  39. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
  40. See Adalah website, <http://www.adalah.org/eng/index.php>.
  41. *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2001* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001), Table 8.11.
  42. *Ibid.*
  43. Adalah website.
  44. *Ibid.*
  45. Cited in Rabinowitz et al., pp. 48–9.
  46. Examples are Ghanem, *ibid.*; Rouhana, *ibid.*; Zureik, *ibid.*, are examples.
  47. See, for example, David Kretzmer, *The Legal Status of Arabs in Israel* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).
  48. Ahmet Icduygu, David Romano and Ibrahim Sirkeci, “The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: The Kurds of Turkey,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 6 (1999), pp. 991–1010; Mutlu, *ibid.*; *The Economist*, 12 June 2004.
  49. Ergil, p. 125; Saatci, p. 113.
  50. Cornell, p. 35.
  51. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 402–3.
  52. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
  53. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
  54. Quoted in Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), p. 62.
  55. The repeal of Law 2932, by which the military regime had banned the use of the Kurdish language in 1983, was, in fact, a rather limited gesture. It

- allowed Kurdish to be spoken in everyday conversations and used in folkloric music recordings, but it still could not be used in official agencies of the state, publishing, broadcasting, or teaching. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
56. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 66.
  57. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 67.
  58. Quoted in *ibid.*, p.
  59. In the 1990s much attention in Israel and abroad focused on the rise of “post-Zionism” and its demand for Israel to become a “state for all its citizens” rather than a Jewish state. In reality, even at the height of its influence in the late 1990s, post-Zionism lacked popular support in Israel and was confined mostly to academics, writers, artists, etc. For different perspectives on post-Zionism see, Ephraim Nimni (ed.), *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2003).
  60. This competition emerged from the very beginning of the Zionist movement. While the Zionist Right under Zeev Jabotinsky chose nationalism from the start, the leftist Labor movement, split into a variety of parties, promoted socialism along with nationalism. Yet, MAPAI, the largest of all the parties on the Left and Israel’s leading party from 1948—to 1977, ended up abandoning its commitment to socialism even before the establishment of the state. Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).
  61. For example, in the 1950s a newspaper of the pro-Arab Communist Party, *Kol Ha’am*, successfully challenged its closure before the High Court of Justice.
  62. Jacob Landau, *The Arabs in Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).
  63. For example, when a military government was first imposed on Palestinian populated areas, and especially when it was continued after the 1948 War, strong opposition emerged inside and outside the government of David Ben-Gurion, but it was ignored.
  64. Yiftachel and Kedar.
  65. HCJ 6698/95 Qaadani v. ILA, Katzir and Others; Alexandre (Sandy) Kedar, “A First Step in a Difficult and Sensitive Road: Preliminary Observations on Qaadani versus Katzir,” *Israel Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (2000), pp. 3–11.
  66. See, for example, Kretzmer, *The Legal Status of Arabs in Israel*.
  67. Only the right-wing Nationalist Action Party continued to deny the existence of the Kurdish people.
  68. Kirisci and Winrow, p. 122.
  69. Gunter, p. 67.
  70. *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4.
  71. According to the 1982 constitution, the NSC was responsible for the protection and defense of “national security” against internal and external dangers, and the “definition, determination, and application of a national security policy” based on the principle of the “indivisible unity of the state’s people and territory.” Quoted in Gurbey, p. 12.
  72. An explicitly Kurdish political party emerged for the first time in Turkey in June 1990 with the formation of the People’s Labor Party (HEP). Its alliance with the Social Democratic Party (SHP) prior to the 1991 general

elections enabled it to enter the National Assembly under the SHP umbrella. The party, however, was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1993 on the grounds of “separatist activities,” as was its successor the Democracy Party (DEP) on the same charges the following year.

73. Gurbey, p. 28.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
75. For example, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation and the Turkish Human Rights Association.
76. For instance, in August 1995 Professor Dogu Ergil published a much-publicized study entitled *The Southeast Report: Diagnoses and Remedies*. Cited in Aram Nigogosian, “Turkey’s Kurdish Problem: Recent Trends,” in Olson (ed.), *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s*, pp. 45–6.
77. For instance, the industrialist Halis Komili, chair of the influential Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (TUSIAD), openly advocated granting cultural rights to the Kurds. Kirisci and Winrow, p. 150.
78. Ocalan was initially sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to life imprisonment in 2002 after Turkey abolished the death penalty the previous year.
79. *Milliyet*, 19 November 1999.
80. Dov Waxman and Ersel Aydinli, “A Dream become Nightmare? Turkey’s Entry into the European Union,” *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 649 (2001), pp. 385–6.
81. “Kurds in Turkey: The Big Change,” *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (2006).
82. The authors thank one of the anonymous referees of this article for this observation.

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