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State Attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in a Jewish Ethnocracy

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2010

Abstract

This thesis challenges the assumption of Israeli state bias in favour of its Palestinian Christian population. Using ethnocratic and control theories it argues instead that the Palestinian Christians are inextricably associated with the wider Arab "problem" and remain, as a result, permanently outside the boundaries of the dominant Jewish national consensus. Moreover, this thesis argues that state attitudes towards the small Palestinian Christian communities are quite unique and distinguishable from its attitudes towards other segments of the Palestinian Arab minority, whether Muslim or Druze. Despite being considered a relatively modern and secular community, its small size, weak electoral power, extensive external links and its central role in Palestinian Arab national politics have resulted in a basic level of ambivalence towards them on the part of the authorities. This is compounded by Jewish memories of Christian persecution in Europe which have come, to some extent, to be redirected at disconnected local Christian communities and churches. At the same time, the growth of Jewish religious politics in society and particularly within the Israeli political establishment has resulted in a noticeable rise in previous levels of anti-Christian religious antipathy. These factors have combined to produce a visible pattern in the manner in which the state engages with its Palestinian Christian citizens today. This thesis concludes through the use of recent case-studies and a series of semi-structured interviews that Israeli state attitudes towards its Palestinian Christian population are, in fact, best described as being based on indifference and neglect rather than on any other single factor.

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The road which leads to the final submission and examination of any PhD thesis is long and winding, full of as many pot-holes and bumps as it is smooth stretches. While the process is immensely gratifying, it is also deeply challenging. At such times, it is invariably the encouragement and faith of colleagues, friends and family members which keeps the lone researcher "on track". As such, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to all those who have provided me with the support and friendship needed to bring this thesis to fruition.

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I am also very grateful to all the academics, NGO representatives, political figures and church leaders in Israel, Palestine and the UK who gave freely and willingly of their busy time. This research would have been impossible without their cooperation, so I am beholden to them for their uniform graciousness, frankness and hospitality – and for all the cups of tea!

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Introduction

This thesis questions the assumption of a preferential state policy towards Palestinian Christians in Israel and examines the factors which can be said to influence and determine the particular nature of the relationship between a Jewish state and one of its most important non-Jewish and non-Muslim Arab communities. There are several key factors which have motivated the selection of this particular research angle and case-study. To begin with, state-minority relations in Israel represent an obvious source of research interest. The Palestinian Arab minority in Israel is faced with a unique conundrum that has often been overlooked or ignored by both international media and academia. As Israeli citizens, Palestinian Arabs have access to a wide range of democratic rights and material benefits which are otherwise unavailable to the majority of state-less Palestinians forced to eke out a deprived existence either in refugee camps throughout the region or under Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories. As a result, many consider the status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel to be "normal" and unproblematic. However, their Israeli citizenship does little to offset the unique dilemmas which Palestinian Arabs face in a state which was created to reflect and promote Jewish national interests and priorities over and above the interests and priorities of its large indigenous Palestinian Arab minority. Excluded and suspected, their identity and rights both as individual citizens and as a national minority have become a permanent battleground. As a sizable non-Jewish minority, they also pose an important demographic threat to the very existence and future maintenance of the state as a Jewish state for the Jewish people. Described as a potential "fifth column" and as a "threat from within", Israel's Palestinian Arab minority has suffered from negative and biased state attitudes since the creation of the state in 1948 but particularly in recent years with the growth in popularity of right-wing rejectionist elements within mainstream Israeli politics. These factors not only justify further research but, in light of recent worrying trends, demand further examination.

As such, this thesis is, first and foremost, motivated by the need to address both the Palestinian Arab minority and the nature of state-minority relations in Israel.

However, this is not this thesis' only motivation. Analyses of Palestinian Arabs in general, and the nature of state-minority relations in Israel in particular, have tended to overlook the diversity of Palestinian Arab society. While some studies have chosen, with varying degrees of success, to overlook religious differences in their analyses of state-minority relations, others have, consciously or unconsciously, focused their analyses on the largest component of the Palestinian Arab minority – the Muslims. In so doing, their analyses of state-minority relations in Israel have tended to slip into a religious debate premised upon alleged Muslim-Jewish differences and incompatibilities which overlook important structural considerations concerning the nature of the state itself. Despite the fact that the majority of Palestinian Arabs in Israel are Muslim, almost one in five are not. Given an international discourse that is increasingly located within foreign policy concerns and which stresses the so-called "Islamic threat" emanating from the Middle East as well as the alleged "clash of civilisations" between Islam and the "West", there is a marked parallel tendency to oversimplify state-minority relations in Israel along the same axiom. As such, this thesis aims to avoid this slippage by focusing its analysis on one non-Muslim segment of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel – the Palestinian Christians.

The choice to focus on Palestinian Christians is, therefore, influenced by two main factors. In the first instance, the neglect and marginalisation of Palestinian Christians within the social and political sciences has served only to reify generalisations which have traditionally equated Arab ethnicity with the Muslim faith. Furthermore, the significant contribution of Christian Arabs to the development of Arab culture and the crystallisation of both Palestinian and Arab nationalist thought has often been overlooked by studies which focus on church issues or the exclusively religious aspects of Christian identity. The importance of integrating Christian political identities and orientations within any analysis of the Palestinian Arab minority is, therefore, paramount.

This leads on to the next main factor motivating this study's focus on Palestinian Christians in Israel, which is that Palestinian Christians represent an alternative but useful test-case for state-minority relations in Israel. As a non-Muslim Arab community, an analysis of Palestinian Christians in Israel can provide fascinating new insights into the nature of Israeli state attitudes and policies towards its Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. Palestinian Christians have played an

important and high-profile role within the Palestinian Arab minority that is disproportionate to its small size and which is reflected in, among other things, the system of classification used by the state to categorise the nationality of its non-Jewish population. While Christians and Muslims are both defined according to the same state-designated Arab "nationality" as Muslims, the Druze – the only other non-Muslim Arab community in Israel – have been accorded a separate Druze nationality by the state since 1957. Similarly, both Palestinian Christians and Muslims have, on the basis of their shared Arab "nationality", been exempted by the state from performing mandatory military service, while the Druze are subject, together with the majority of Jews, to compulsory service.

The choice to focus on Palestinian Christians is, therefore, a calculated decision. A focus on Palestinian Christians not only liberates this study from the slippery slope associated with many contemporary investigations of Muslims in society, but provides fresh avenues of inquiry through which state attitudes and policies towards Palestinian Arabs as a whole can be analysed. In so doing, it provides a unique opportunity not only to push the boundaries of research into state-minority relations in Israel, but to challenge assumptions concerning the nature of the state itself.

In order to examine Israeli state policy towards Palestinian Christians, this study applies a theoretical framework that borrows heavily on critical theories of state, society and minority policy. To begin with, this thesis is influenced by the important contributions of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge which emphasises the contingency of all ideas, value-systems, power relations and state institutions upon the bedrock of society. As both policy and attitudes are understood to originate in socially-embedded mores and impulses, the ideological premises upon which Israeli society is founded are, therefore, given a central position in this study's analysis. The principles of political Zionism are central to the determination not only of social relations but of the boundaries within which the state is permitted to act on behalf of its Jewish majority. This has, however, led to a number of fundamental contradictions between the aspirations of the state to be both democratic and Jewish. Therefore, ethnocratic theory is used to overcome and reconcile these contradictions, providing a holistic understanding of the nature and structural limits not only of the state but of state-minority relations in Israel. As an ethnocratic state, this study then

explores theories of systemic control which have been elaborated by others in their analyses of state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. A systemic approach, therefore, is one that centralises the fundamental priorities and interests of the state over individual policies which, by themselves, may not sufficiently explain the manner in which the state perceives or engages with its minority. As this thesis' analysis of state policy towards its Palestinian Christian population is located within and subsumed by a broader systemic approach to the state's minority policy, the notion of a separate policy towards Palestinian Christians is considered to be both theoretically superfluous and ideologically redundant. Instead, this thesis identifies and examines a number of prevalent "state attitudes" towards Palestinian Christians in Israel and aims to locate these within the broader context of the state's systemic minority policy.

The theoretical framework outlined above has determined not only the manner in which the literature is assessed in this study but also the selection and interpretation of data used to support the argument of this thesis. The basic methodology applied here combines a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The significance of demographic and territorial considerations to the maintenance of a given political order and the formulation of state policy, particularly within the context of deeply-divided and plural societies, has resulted in the necessity to include an empirical profile of Palestinian Christians in Israel that is sensitive to these considerations. This profile draws heavily on data provided by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and, to a lesser extent, on statistical databases and reports produced by governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning in Israel, the Institute for International Strategic Studies and the National Insurance Institute of Israel. However, given that statistics are, by their nature, malleable and subject to diverse interpretations, they cannot, in the context of their political functionality, be entirely relied upon or trusted. A sensitive approach to the statistics can, nonetheless, offer up significant rewards. While offering obvious benefits, the limits and dangers of statistical enquiry can never be fully overcome or neutralised. This does not mean that they cannot be contained. By integrating a qualitative basis to this research, the benefits of quantitative research can be more fully embraced. Qualitative research, by its nature, provides an essential avenue through which all-important social attitudes and behaviours can be integrated

into this study and it is upon this basis that the bulk of this study's research has been conducted. Of all the different types of data-collection possible within the field of qualitative research, the semi-structure interview has been chosen as the best method of data-collection for this study. A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted by the author with 36 respondents from four different segments of society which are, in various capacities, knowledgeable of, or responsible for, matters relating to Palestinian Christians in Israel. The four segments were: academics, church leaders, NGO representatives and, finally, political and governmental representatives. These four respondent segments were chosen in order to acknowledge the potential diversity of views that can arise from differences in occupational and social statuses.

The argument which this thesis puts forward is that, despite their small size and non-Muslim religious status, state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel are as problematic as state attitudes towards Palestinian Muslims, albeit in different ways, thus challenging the common assumption of a preferential state attitude or policy towards them. Initial evidence from both the theoretical and sociological literature supports this thesis' argument that there is no preferential state attitude towards Palestinian Christians. It is, therefore, anticipated that the findings will support the thesis of a non-preferential state attitude and confirm the location of Palestinian Christians within Israel's broader system of control.

This thesis is limited by the undefined scope of this study's analysis which stretches from the creation of the state in 1948 up to the present day and by the inability of this study to adequately integrate changes in state attitudes over time. As a result, the findings presented here have tended to focus on state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in more recent times. This decision was also partly determined by the respondents interviewed for this study who focused their analyses on recent episodes which they felt best demonstrated state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. This contemporary relevance of the findings contributed to a further weakness of this study, which is the dearth of material available covering several incidents of intra-communal conflict which have occurred in recent years and which will be addressed in more detail later. This limitation was, however, overcome to a large extent by online newspaper resources.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter One outlines the theoretical framework upon which this study is based. Theories of society, state and minority policy are discussed within the context of ethnocratic control theories. Chapter Two provides a largely empirical profile of the Palestinian Christian population of Israel which covers, amongst other things, their particular demographic, geographic and socio-economic features. This chapter is particularly useful in that it provides a basis through which both the state's national priorities (revolving around the twin pillars of land and demography) as well various sociological claims regarding Palestinian Christians in particular can be compared and judged. Chapter Three reviews the available literature on the Palestinian Christian population in Israel and isolates a number of the most common themes which have occurred and recurred in these analyses and which, together, provide the basis through which an initial estimation of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians can be made.

Moving on from secondary analysis, Chapter Four provides an overview of the methodology which was applied to this study's data collection, particularly its use of the semi-structured interview process and selection of respondents. Chapter Five presents the first set of independent findings from this study by outlining the various respondents' impressions of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in a general context. The findings are then analysed within the context of the prevailing theoretical assumptions outlined previously. Chapter Six focuses on one instance of intra-communal conflict in Israel which provides a good indication of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. The conflict in question emerged in 1997 between Nazareth city municipality and the local Islamic movement over the proposed development of the city centre in time for the millennium celebrations for the year 2000. By contrast, Chapter Seven describes four additional instances of intra-communal conflict in Israel, all of which have taken place in the relatively recent past in Arab mixed villages. Unlike the case in Nazareth, each of these four conflicts occurred between Palestinian Christians and Druze. Both the roots of these conflicts and the role of the state authorities in dealing with these conflicts were highlighted by the respondents as demonstrating the true nature of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. Finally, the Conclusion will set out and analyse this study's main findings together with the theoretical assumptions of this thesis and provide final

remarks on what it considers to be the nature of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel.

Chapter One:

Society, State & Minority Policy in Israel

1.1 Introduction

The State of Israel was established on the basis of the Zionist principle of national sovereignty and independence so that Jews around the world could finally become "masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State".[1] According to this philosophy, a Jewish state would "normalise" the status of the Jewish people and "restore" to them their individual and collective dignity as a people.[2] However, the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 also introduced important new challenges to the Zionist concept of a Jewish state and to its fundamental principles of transformative and normative justice. The site chosen for the new Jewish state was already home to a culturally rich and diverse indigenous Palestinian Arab society and the creation of the State of Israel, together with the political and military actions which accompanied its creation, devastated the fabric of local Palestinian Arab society, ushering in a new majority-minority dynamic in society which would come, to a large extent, to dominate the public discourse and dictate the future political ambitions and development of the state.

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical basis through which the relationship of the Israeli state with a particular segment of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel – the Palestinian Christians – can best be analysed in later chapters. However, in order to do this, a broader understanding of Israeli society, the Israeli state and its minority policy is necessary. This chapter is, therefore, divided into several sections which address these topics in turn. The first section explores the nature of Israeli society and the structural or ideological foundations upon which it is based. The nature of Israeli society is understood to influence not only the range of possible social interactions between groups but also the relationship between state and society as a whole. This approach is inspired by the sociology of knowledge which accounts for the socially-embedded nature of power and the critical role of

[1] See the text of The Declaration of Establishment of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948 available online on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.
[2] For more on this historical origins and political ambitions of Zionism, see: Laqueur (1972), Avineri (1981) and Avishai (1985)

social relationships in the production of ideas and other normative value-systems in society.[3] The second section builds on this notion by investigating the particular nature of the Israeli state and the social and ideological parameters within which it operates. Out of a range of possible state definitions, this study isolates ethnocracy as the most comprehensive description of the nature of the Israeli state. Finally, the third section addresses the particular nature of state-minority relations in Israel through an analysis of Israeli state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. Representing the typical format through which states formally engage with their citizenry, policy also reflects the social values, attitudes and priorities of the state. As such, this section addresses several different approaches to the subject of Israeli minority policy and finds that, given the wider structural limits of society and the state, a systemic approach based on a revitalised theory of control offers the most holistic approach to later analyses of state attitudes towards the Palestinian Christian population in Israel.

1.2 Israel as a Deeply Divided Society

Israel is a multi-ethnic, plural and deeply divided society.[4] That Israeli society consists of a number of diverse ethnic communities is evident. However, the plural and deeply divided nature of Israeli society requires further examination. The literature on plural and deeply divided societies shares a number of characteristics. Both assume the existence of diverse groups possessing competing collective identities and normative value systems. However, in order for a society to be considered plural or deeply divided, these differences must extend beyond the mere existence of diversity into the realm of power divisions and inequalities, as manifested in the existence of particular majority-minority dynamics, as well as with regard to the political sustainability and stability of given social orders. Lustick's definition of a deeply divided society illustrates this point.

[3] Mannheim (1936)

[4] Those who have identified Israel as a multi-ethnic society, include: Al Haj (1985: 105); Zureik (1979: 12); Rouhana (1997: 5); and Ghanem (2001: 4). Those who have used the "plural" society model include: Zureik (1979) and Smooha (1989). Those who have cited Israel as a "deeply divided" society include: Lustick (1979); Peled (1992); Zureik, Moughrabi & Sacco (1993); Yiftachel (1995); Smooha (1997); Al Haj (2002) and Saban (2005).

> I shall consider a society as deeply divided if ascriptive ties generate an antagonistic segmentation of society, based on terminal identities with high political salience, sustained over a substantial period of time and a wide variety of issues. As a minimum condition, boundaries between rival groups must be sharp enough so that membership is clear and, with few, exceptions, unchangeable.[5]

Group antagonism or conflict is, therefore, a defining feature of plural and deeply divided societies. Consequently, not only is the correlation between difference and conflict especially strong within the context of deeply divided societies, but the likelihood of conflict to emerge is particularly strong given the correlation of differences with issues which are deemed to be of particular political salience or relevance to the ruling establishment. As such, not all forms of difference are accorded the same level of political salience in any given society.

The Jewish-Arab divide represents the single most politically salient division in Israeli society.[6] This division is particularly emphasised as several lines of separation, encompassing national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and socio-economic differences, divide Jews and Arabs, with few cross-cutting cleavages uniting them.[7] Beyond this, the political salience that is given to the Jewish-Arab national divide can be attributed to three other main factors. Firstly, decades of political conflict, encompassing seven wars, between Israel and its Arab neighbours have underscored the degree to which the Israeli state has felt threatened or besieged by an enemy which is defined in ethnic terms as Arab.[8] This, in turn, is compounded by a second factor which is Israeli military, territorial and settlement expansion in the occupied Palestinian territories which has inflamed tensions and increased gaps between both groups.[9]

However, the third factor which accentuates the national division in Israeli society relates to the fundamental nature of both the state and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. On the one hand, Israel was created not only as a Jewish state for the Jewish people but as a state in which the future maintenance of a Jewish majority was conceived. As such, the ideological boundaries of Israeli society, which are ethno-nationally defined, and its potential for future development remain exclusively within the hands of Israel's Jewish majority to the exclusion of its Palestinian Arab minority. While Israeli society has been characterised by

[5] Lustick (1979: 325)
[6] See: Smooha (1978: 2 and 1989: 1) and Peled & Shafir (2002: 31).
[7] Lustick (1980: 5)
[8] Rouhana (1997: 7)
[9] Smooha (1989: 77)

some as a "colonial-settler society", the vast majority of analyses accept that Israeli society demonstrates a certain basic level of ambivalence and political intransigence towards the rights and status of Palestinian Arabs.[10] On the other hand, the Palestinian Arab minority, which is a sizable, territorially concentrated, indigenous, non-assimilating and "trapped" national minority, represents, ideologically speaking, a permanent source of threat, if not an implicit source of political destabilisation, to the exclusively Jewish character of the state.[11]

A further distinguishing characteristic of plural and deeply divided societies is the prevalence of unequal and asymmetrical power relations in society. The theoretical perspective provided by structural pluralism, for example, centralises the twin notion of dominance and subordination in inter-group relations as well as the monopolisation of power by the dominant group in society. As such, social differences are understood to become structured, stratified and institutionalised in an attempt to maintain the hegemonic status of one group in society. A focus on social continuity, rather than change, is central to structural pluralism. Moreover, subordination, prejudice, discrimination and ethnocentrism are considered to be fundamental elements in the maintenance of a particular hegemony in society.

Sammy Smooha has contributed a great deal to understandings of structural pluralism within the Israeli context. Based on earlier international formulations of "plural societies", which originally focused on the artificial social and economic structures imposed upon developing countries by European colonial powers, Smooha defines pluralism as "a central structural feature of total societies" wherein two main considerations are centralised: the existence of cultural diversity and social separation.[12] Within the context of Israeli society Smooha identified three major social cleavages which demonstrated the plural nature of society: the *Ashkenazi-Mizrahi* divide; the religious-secular divide and the Arab-Jewish divide. Notwithstanding recent changes in intra-communal Jewish relations, the Jewish-Arab divide is recognised in this analysis as being the most dominant social cleavage in society. As a result, this study accepts both the dominance and the political salience of the Jewish-Arab divide to its understanding of Israel as a deeply-divided society.

[10] Those who have used the colonial matrix to describe Israeli society include: Shafir & Peled (1998); Yiftachel (1999b: 365); Kimmerling (2005: 1). For a discussion of Jewish ambivalence and intransigence, see: Smooha (1989: 17-24)

[11] Smooha (1978: 3; 1989: 2-3); Yiftachel (2006: 99). For a discussion of Palestinian Arabs as a "trapped" minority, see: Rabinowitz (2001b)

[12] Smooha (1978: 13-14)

1.3 Israel as an Ethnocratic State

The State of Israel is synonymously referred to as the Jewish state. But given the multi-ethnic and deeply divided nature of society, what does this designation signify? The roots of the Jewish state label lie in Zionist ideology and the idea of creating a permanent state for the Jewish people. State symbols (such as the flag and national anthem), institutions (such as the Knesset and the Israel Land Administration), laws (such as the Law of Return) and holidays (such as the Jewish Sabbath, Independence Day and Remembrance Day) all reflect the centrality of the particular values and imperatives of the dominant group in society, which is the ethno-nationally defined Jewish majority.[13]

Israel was established not only on the Zionist principle of transforming Judaism "from a religion or civilisation to a national movement, essentially modern and secular" but also on the selective basis of the Jewish biblical promise of "return" to the "promised land".[14] This has led to some confusion as to whether Israel can legitimately be considered to be a secular state at all.[15] Given the close association between ethnic and religious Jewish identities, and the ideological equivalence that is proposed to exist between Judaism and the concept of the Jewish nation, the centrality of religious identity in Israeli society, as manifested in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, and particularly after 1967, has led some to consider Israel to be an ethno-religious state based on an uncomfortable admixture of democratic and theocratic principles.[16] The absence of civic alternatives in matters pertaining to the personal status of individual Israeli citizens and their relegation to the sole jurisdiction of religious authorities (particularly with regard to marriage and divorce); the increasing power of *haredi* (Jewish ultra-orthodox) religious parties and *halakhic* principles (Jewish religious law) in defining the boundaries of the territorial state, the Jewish national collective as well as of various governmental interests and priorities, have added to this scepticism suggesting – democratic "checks" notwithstanding – that an increasing erosion of religion-state boundaries, as well as

[13] Smooha (1978: 105); Rouhana (1997: 32-33)
[14] Kimmerling (1999: 342)
[15] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 114)
[16] Kimmerling (1999: 340-342); Shafir & Peled (1998: 413) and Friedman (1989: 203)

the accentuation of the religious identity of all groups in society as a whole, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, is taking place.[17]

While Israel is a Jewish state in ideological terms, the "nation-state" label which is often proposed to describe it does not stand up to empirical analysis. This is because the "nation" within Israeli Zionist discourse is defined according to particular ethno-national or primordial affiliations rather than on the basis of inclusive and universal civic principles. Given that only 75 per cent of the Israeli population is – according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) – defined as ethnically Jewish, with 20 per cent of the remaining non-Jewish population belonging to the Palestinian Arab ethno-national minority, Israel is clearly not a mono-ethnic state in a descriptive sense.[18]

Nonetheless, the nation-state label is frequently encountered even in critical analyses which see it as the best description of Jewish dominance in society. Some, for example, consider the official ideology of the state to be a nation-state-building ideology known as *mamlachtiut* in Hebrew. *Mamlachtiut* refers to a highly-centralised form of statist rule in which the dominant position of the Jewish nation is enshrined. While it owes its roots to the administrative transition of power from diverse and disconnected pre-state Jewish organisations typical of the *yishuv* period to a centralised state under the charismatic but authoritarian leadership of David Ben-Gurion, the particular etymology of the term reveals a further ideological component. Based on the term *mamlacha,* meaning "kingdom" in Hebrew, *mamlachtiut* encapsulates the need not only to create a Jewish state in Israel, but also the need to create a new, single and unified Jewish nation out of culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse groups of Jewish immigrants. Within this nation- and state-building project, Judaism as well as various Jewish religious principles and symbols, are understood to have become secularised by the state in its attempt to forge the new boundaries of the Jewish collective, thereby transforming it into the new "civil religion" of the state.[19]

As the State of Israel is empirically speaking not a mono-ethnic nation-state, the next assertion that the state is both "Jewish *and* democratic" – which is also often taken for

[17] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 142-144). For more on the accentuation of religious identity in Israeli society, see: Rouhana (1997: 22).

[18] For an elaboration of this confusion between the concepts of ethnic group, nation and state, and the indiscriminate and false usage of the term "nation-state" within the social and political sciences, see Connor (1994: 89-118). According to Connor, there are only 12 states in the world which can justifiably be described as nation-states, whereby a nation-state is "a state that has become largely identical with one people".

[19] See, in particular, Cohen-Almagor (1995: 467-469, 481 n.19); Al Haj & Rosenfeld (1990: 24) and Kimmerling (2001: 101).

granted in analyses of Israeli state and society – is equally problematic. This is particularly so given the ambiguous and overburdened nature of the term "democracy" itself which lacks any clear theoretical definition or defining characteristics.[20] While democracy implies the basic notion of majority rule and majority consensus, several other social and political criteria are necessary in order for a state to be considered democratic, such as: the existence of "an open regime based on free and fair parliamentary elections, protection of human rights, freedom of speech, autonomous judiciary, free choice of political affiliation, universal eligibility for public office, and the right to form and join organisations".[21] Other commonly-cited democratic features include: the provision of various civic rights and freedoms (such as freedom of religion, occupation and movement); gender equality; universal suffrage; political transparency and accountability; freedom of information; an open market economy and a vibrant civil society.

As the State of Israel demonstrates a number of these democratic criteria and appears to satisfy the general conditions laid out by democratic theory it is often described as being a fully functioning democracy that is not only on a par with other democratic states but "a bastion of democracy in the Middle East" itself.[22] However, despite the easy association and compatibility that is generally implied to exist between a democratic and an ethnic system of governance, these two philosophies are not easy or suggestible bedfellows. On the contrary, deep structural tensions exist between the basic normative values, practical requirements and ideological priorities of both systems which limit and erode the democratic character of the state. Such tensions, which are easily concealed within analyses of individual rights, immediately reveal themselves in analyses of majority-minority relations and collective rights, particularly minority rights. This is particularly relevant given that the measure of democracy in society is also judged according to four additional criteria above and beyond those which have been previously mentioned. These four criteria are: (1) the assumption of a secular and relatively neutral state; (2) the provision of comparable collective rights to groups in society; (3) full equality for all citizens before the law; and (4) the protection of minorities in society. Therefore, the manner in which states relate to their minorities, the range of individual and group rights which they offer them and the level of individual and collective

[20] Kimmerling (1999: 339)
[21] Yiftachel (1992: 17)
[22] Eisenstadt (1985: 158, 169, 186) considers Israel to be "a basic parliamentary democratic State" while Landau (1993: 131) refers to Israel throughout his studies as a "democratic regime". Edelman (1987: 54) refers to it as "a functioning democracy" "comparable to that of other Western democracies," while Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 144) refer to it as a liberal and a parliamentary democracy. More recently, Peretz & Doron (1997: 2) have described Israel as "one of the most democratic countries in the Middle Eastern region".

equality in society are important, if not fundamental, measures of any state's democratic claims.[23]

The democratic characterisation of the Israeli state has been challenged on various structural and legal grounds. Beyond the centrality of exclusively Jewish symbols, flag and anthem, of immediate relevance are several Basic Laws which enshrine the Jewish character of the state and seek to maintain Jewish national and numerical superiority within society. According to the Basic Law of Return (1950), for example, any Jewish person in the world who wishes to immigrate to Israel has the right to do so. By contrast, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs who fled or were forced from their homes during the tumultuous years of 1948-1949 have no such right to return. Similarly, the Basic Law on Nationality (1952) provides any Jewish immigrant, or relative of a Jewish immigrant, immediate citizenship. The same Law, however, stipulates several arduous and, with regard to spouses from the occupied Palestinian territories, quite impossible, conditions which non-citizen spouses of Palestinian Arabs must satisfy in order to become citizens of the state. Furthermore, the Basic Law on Israeli Lands declares that over 90 per cent of land in the country is "state land" and a national resource of the Jewish people, despite the fact that the vast majority of this land was sourced through wide-scale government expropriations and confiscations of Palestinian Arab land. Finally, amendment 7a to the Basic Law on The Knesset (1985) excludes any political party or list from running for office if they in any way negate or challenge the Jewish character of the state.

Beyond particular Basic Laws, the State of Israel provides international Zionist organisations such as the World Zionist Organisation, the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund with official status within the state. Furthermore, the provision of a wide range of social welfare and educational benefits are made contingent upon the performance of military service, a duty which Palestinian Arabs (with the exception of the Druze) are legally exempted from.

How can such obvious infringements of democratic principles be reconciled within pro-establishment discourses which identify Israel as a flourishing democratic state? Interestingly, the vast majority of pro-establishment analyses recognise and accept certain necessary but unavoidable limits to the democratic character of Israel. Such limits are generally understood to originate within the dual character of the Israeli state. The first layer

[23] Ghanem, Rouhana & Yiftachel (1998: 255); Yiftachel (2006: 98)

of state identity concerns a commitment to the Jewish character of the state, with a corresponding set of ethno-national norms, values, priorities, procedures and institutions accorded a central and determining position. The second layer of state identity, however, is understood to be fundamentally democratic, whereby substantively democratic norms and values as well as formally democratic procedures and institutions are understood to underpin and guide state activity and policy, as well as to moderate and offset the ethnic priorities of the state. Within this dual characterisation of the state, each element is presented as having the strength and power to determine the direction of society. And although most analyses within this category treat both elements as mutually compatible, there is a paradoxical recognition that not only are there fundamental tensions and normative contradictions between both elements, but that a particular hierarchical order exists which priorities Jewish national state interests in any instances where conflict between the two may arise. Such "limits", "tensions" or "contradictions" are often explained away with regard to the exceptional thesis of "national security" considerations. Despite a broad recognition that these limits are rooted in structural rather than security issues relating to the nature of the state, the fundamental characterisation of the state as democratic remains popular. In such accounts, democratic limits are usually justified and incorporated within the concept of "defensive democracy". Within this rationale, the preservation of the dominance of the Jewish majority is considered to be "democratically" legitimate both as a result of Jewish historical experience and the regional minority status of Jews in Israel. Furthermore, the majority is understood, according to this perspective, to be entitled or obliged to take proactive measures, even if they appear to be undemocratic, in order to protect democracy which is portrayed as being vulnerable to attack and manipulation by non-democratic forces both internal and external to the state.[24]

However, considering these acknowledged structural tensions, the democratic claims of the Israeli state require further examination. Democratic states generally fall into one of the following two types: liberal democracies and consociational democracies. The characteristics of both, and the differences between them, are outlined succinctly by Smooha:

> In a *liberal democracy*, such as the United States, ethnicity is privatised. The state does not legislate or intervene in ethnic cleavages, but forges a homogenous nation-state by setting up uniform language, identity, nationalism, and national institutions for its citizens. It provides conditions for acculturation and assimilation, but also allows ethnic groups to remain socially separate and culturally distinct, insofar as they are prepared to

[24] Jamal (2006: 7); Cohen Almagor (1995: 463)

> pay the cost of separate existence. The cornerstone of society is the individual, personal skills, achievements, political and civil rights, and self-fulfilment.
>
> In a *consociational democracy*, such as Belgium, ethnicity is accepted as a major principle in the organisation of the state. Individuals are judged on merit and accorded civil and political rights, but ethnic groups are also officially recognised and granted certain rights, such as control over education and allocation of public posts on a proportional basis. The state is not identified with any of the constituent groups and tries to reconcile the differences between them. Ethnicity is thus institutionalised and ethnic identities and institutions are usually kept separate. Yet it is not illegal to assimilate or even to intermarry. Each group has its own elite, and the state is managed by an elite-cartel that allocates resources according to the principle of proportionality and pursues compromises between the ethnic groups.
>
> Liberal and consociational democracies share a set of democratic institutions, an extension of equality and citizenship for all, and an ethnically neutral state.[25]

For Smooha, it is clear that Israel does not fulfil the necessary requirements to be considered either a liberal or a consociational democracy.

> It is not a liberal democracy, because the state recognises ethnic differences, accords some collective rights, and fails to treat all citizens and groups equally. It is not a consociational democracy, because the state is not ethnically neutral; rather it is owned and ruled by the majority, while the minorities do not enjoy autonomy and power-sharing.[26]

This basic contradiction between democratic and ethnic principles has led some to describe the Israeli state as a fundamentally undemocratic, authoritarian and dictatorial regime in which a "tyranny of the majority" exists.[27] Rodinson, Zureik and Kimmerling, for example, have all described Israel as a variant of a neo-colonial or settler state.[28] Benvenisti and Kimmerling have proposed that the Israeli state, post-1967, is more correctly described as an example of a *Herrenvolk* democracy, while Davis has described it as an example of an apartheid state.[29] However, more common are theories which promote Israel as a type of "partial" democracy susceptible to a number of unique structural limitations. One of the first proponents of this approach was Smooha who described Israel as an "ethnic democracy". This approach recognises the central role of Jewish ethnicity and the Jewish character of the state in determining certain limits to the democratic character of the state and the rights of the minority.

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[25] Smooha (1997: 199)
[26] Smooha (1997: 200)
[27] The "tyranny of the majority" is understood to be an abuse of the democratic concept of majority rule. Yiftachel (2006: 98)
[28] Rodinson (1973); Zureik (1974: 99-100); Zureik (1976: 40, 64-66); Zureik (1987: 4) and Kimmerling (1999: 341, 348).
[29] Kimmerling (2006: 39, 143); Benvenisti (1987: 199); Davis (2003:37). *Herrenvolk* – which means "ruling people" in German – was originally used to describe the system of apartheid rule in South Africa. It is generally understood to refer to the restriction of democratic rule, rights and citizenship to a dominant group.

> *Ethnic democracy* is a system that combines the extension of civil and political rights to individuals and some collective rights to minorities, with institutionalisation of majority control over the state. Driven by ethnic nationalism, the state is identified with a 'core ethnic nation,' not with its citizens. The state practices a policy of creating a homogenous nation-state, a state of and for a particular ethnic nation, and acts to promote the language, culture, numerical majority, economic well-being and political interests of this group. Although enjoying citizenship and voting rights, the minorities are treated as second-class citizens, feared as a threat, excluded from the national power structure, and placed under some control. At the same time, the minorities are allowed to conduct a democratic and peaceful struggle that yields incremental improvement to their status.[30]

While Smooha considers Israel together with a number of other states to be an ethnic democracy, he nonetheless maintains that Israel is basically more democratic than ethnic in nature with the Palestinian Arab minority enjoying significant democratic rights on an individual and, to a smaller extent, on a collective basis as well. Thus, for him, "ethnic democracy is located somewhere in the democratic section of the democracy-non-democracy continuum" of state types.[31]

Shafir and Peled echo this description of the Israeli state as an ethnic democracy and provide a theoretical elaboration on the partial nature of Israeli democracy through their understanding of hierarchical and multiple citizenship.[32] They make a distinction between formal citizenship and full citizenship, whereby citizenship itself is understood not only as a measure of civic membership in a state, but also as a tool in its stratification. Within this approach, Israeli citizenship is said to consist of three separate components – liberal, republican and ethno-nationalist – each of which represents differential "modes of incorporation" for groups in society. The liberal element of Israeli citizenship accounts for the universal civic rights which are assured to every individual citizen of the state, regardless of ethnicity and in an unconditional manner. It is this form which is understood to be the most inclusive and democratic of all three citizenship types. The republican aspect of Israeli citizenship is identified on a collective basis as according special group rights exclusively to those who belong fully to the dominant community's particular conception of "the common good". This citizenship type is understood to be based on the "pioneering civic virtue" of Zionist ideology, particularly with regard to Israel's dominant male *Ashkenazi* community. Finally, the ethno-nationalist dimension of Israeli citizenship is recognised as giving preference and priority to citizens who are of Jewish descent. Palestinian Arab citizens are presented as enjoying the minimal form of Israeli citizenship – liberal citizenship – which

[30] Smooha (1997: 199-200)
[31] Smooha (1997: 199)
[32] Peled (1992); Peled & Shafir (1996: 396, 403); Shafir & Peled (1998: 412-417; 2002: 31).

provides individual Palestinians with full rights, but only so long as these rights do not conflict with the national priorities of the Jewish majority, in which case those rights are also restricted. As such, the Jewish majority is understood to enjoy full democratic rights, while the Palestinian Arab minority enjoy only partial democratic rights. Given their exclusion from the maximal republican and ethno-national categories of Israeli citizenship, Palestinian Arab citizens are identified as "third-class citizens" of the state.[33] Yet while Shafir & Peled believe the republican dimension of Israeli citizenship to have diminished in relevance in recent decades as a result of globalisation and the progressive "liberalisation" of society, the state is nonetheless understood to be committed to upholding the Jewish ethno-nationalist character of the state, and consequently of Israeli citizenship as well.

Although the partial or ethnic democracy approach recognises important structural limitations to Israeli democracy (and the ideological origins of these limitations) and makes important distinctions between the type and extent of rights available, this model also normalises the discriminatory and illiberal aspect of the Israeli state by focusing on certain democratic criteria, or features, rather than on the cumulative impact of the system as a whole. Ghanem, for instance, argues that a partially democratic state, as advanced by the ethnic democracy model is, rationally and philosophically speaking, not a democratic state at all. Although there is no such thing as a perfect democracy, to be considered democratic, in his analysis, would require a basic structural and normative commitment to the principle of universal equality as well as to the state's neutrality with regard to the ethnic affiliations of its citizens.

> As for the ethnic-democracy model, in my opinion an 'ethnic democracy' is not democratic at all, from a number of viewpoints. First, the term yoked two concepts that are logically, practically and historically contradictory as the basic foundation of deeply divided societies. Second, Israel does not preserve the fundamental principles of democracy, such as equality before the law and freedom for all citizens.[34]

Therefore, not only is the presence of democratic *features* an insufficient criterion for qualification as a democratic *state*, but the twin concepts of democracy, with its implied capacity for universal equality, and ethnicity, with its inherent collective bias, are fundamentally irreconcilable.[35] Instead, Ghanem suggests that Israel is better defined as an "ethnic state". While in an ethnic democracy the state is understood to be basically

[33] Shafir & Peled (2002: 73, 110)
[34] Ghanem (1998: 430-431)
[35] Ghanem, Rouhana & Yiftachel (1998: 254). See also Sa'di (2001).

democratic in nature, in an ethnic state, the reverse is true, with exclusive ethnic concerns overshadowing any formally democratic features of the state.

> It is much more appropriate to classify Israel as an ethnic state, such as Turkey, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Canada until thirty years ago, and even totalitarian states like Iraq and Iran. Of course, it differs from such intolerant ethnic states in that it does offer restricted rights to members of the minority group and integrates them to a limited degree in its politics, society, economy and media. Israel conducts sophisticated policies of exclusion allied with limited inclusion in all spheres of life. It permits its Arab Citizens to exercise basic rights, including the right to vote for and be elected to legislative bodies, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement and organisation. At the same time, however, it follows policies of domination and control that guarantee continued Jewish hegemony and Arab marginality in all fields.[36]

Rouhana is another proponent of the ethnic state model. As an ethnic state, Israel is, according to his analysis, based on "superstructural ethnic exclusivity" which precludes the possibility of full equality or full democracy.[37] While democratic elements do exist, an important distinction is made between "formal", or procedural, elements of democracy and "structural" democracy itself, which is based on essential recognition of the normative value and importance of the basic right to full equality by all citizens and groups in society. As such, the "essence" of democratic rule has not been sufficiently internalised by the Israeli state structure, thus rendering its designation as a democratic state illegitimate.[38] Furthermore, Rouhana identifies in the dissonance between ethnic priorities and democratic features a "self-serving national deception" which both legitimates discrimination and suspends objective internal inquiry, which if tackled would open up society to a fundamental ideological crisis.[39] This attitude is reflected in the conditional nature of Israeli public attitudes towards democratic principles:

> On the declarative level, Israelis accord democracy a high level of support. Once asked about particular democratic values such as minority rights and equality for non-Jewish citizens, that support breaks down.[40]

Interestingly, more establishment analyses of Israeli society accept this notion of the "conditional acceptance of democracy".[41] Horowitz & Lissak, for example, argue that "the ideological commitment to democracy has not always been unconditional among all political groups, and consensus has not always prevailed concerning the specific norms implied by the

[36] Ghanem (1998: 430)
[37] Rouhana (1997: 6)
[38] Rouhana & Ghanem (2007: 337)
[39] Rouhana (2006: 69-70)
[40] Rouhana (1997: 39)
[41] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 144)

broad concept of democracy," particularly when democratic norms are understood to challenge or contradict alternative ideological interests and commitments.[42] Thus, "Israeli democracy", as they recognise it, "has been anchored to a greater extent in arrangements of political convenience than in a fundamental commitment to the normative foundations of democracy".[43]

Adherents to the ethnic state model, both Ghanem and Rouhana have also supported definition of the State of Israel as an "ethnocracy" as advanced by Oren Yiftachel. While ethnic and ethnocratic states share a number of assumptions, ethnocratic theory has provided a broader theoretical understanding of the nature of the Israeli state and the resolution of the persistence of democratic features within it, which is particularly useful to this study.

Ethnocratic theory identifies the same basic dissonance between the core concepts of ethnicity and democracy and recognises the sociological tendency towards "conceptual stretching" and the "inflationary use" of the term democracy within the Israeli context.[44] An analysis of the term "democracy" itself underscores this contradiction. Correctly understood as a "community of equal citizens within a given territory" and as appealing to "inclusive association by origin", *demos* is considered fundamentally contradictory to the concept of *ethnos* which determines group membership according to "selective association by origin".[45]

This approach draws attention to one of the key concerns of ethnocratic theory, which is the importance of territory to analyses of democracy. A commonly-held requirement of statehood, as well as of democracy, is the existence of clearly demarcated and internationally recognised territorial state borders which, on the one hand, limit state sovereignty and jurisdiction to a particular territory and, on the other hand, determine the maximum boundaries of citizenship according to the extent of those borders. However, there exist deep disparities and incongruities between the territorial claims of the Jewish state, the State of Israel (*Medinat Israel)* and Greater Israel *(Eretz Israel).* While observers may assume that the State of Israel is limited to the area inside the Green Line, or the pre-1967 borders of the state which is commonly referred to as "Israel proper", growing Israeli military, political and settlement expansion within the occupied Palestinian territories, and the gradual integration and normalisation of these territories within the broader political consensus of the state,

[42] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 144)
[43] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 144)
[44] Yiftachel (2006: 84, 92). Karayanni (2006: 46, 48) also refers to the "elastic" nature of "Israel's proclaimed democratic norms".
[45] Ghanem, Rouhana & Yiftcahel (1998: 255, 264)

indicates the growing significance of the Greater Israel concept and the increasing erosion of the boundaries of "Israel proper". In one work, for example, Yiftachel describes "Israel proper" as an imaginary unit, and later as "a polity without borders".[46] As such, the inclusion of Israeli Jewish settler-citizens living outside "Israel proper," together with the fuzziness of the state's own understanding of the extent and limits of its own territorial borders, further weakens and undermines the concept of *demos* to the Israeli case.[47] As the Greek origins of the term "democracy" suggest, a civic understanding of rule, or government, by (all) the people for (all) the people is necessary, is clearly absent within the Israeli state, which is defined as a Jewish state for the Jewish people, wherever they may reside. By contrast, an "ethnocracy," which refers to rule, or government, by one ethnic group to the exclusion of others, is more appropriate.

> An ethnocracy is a non-democratic regime which attempts to extend or preserve disproportional ethnic control over a contested multi-ethnic territory. Ethnocracy develops chiefly when control over territory is challenged, and when a dominant group is powerful enough to determine unilaterally the nature of the state.[48]

Yiftachel provides a detailed description of the features which characterise an ethnocratic state:

> An ethnocratic regime is characterised by several key principles:
>
> a. Despite several democratic features, mainly ethnicity (and not territorial citizenship) determines the allocation of rights and privileges; a constant democratic-ethnocratic tension characterises politics.
>
> b. State borders and political boundaries are fuzzy: there is no identifiable *demos*, mainly due to the role of ethnic diasporas inside the polity and the inferior position of ethnic minorities.
>
> c. A dominant 'charter' ethnic group appropriates the state apparatus, determines most public policies, and segregates itself from other groups.
>
> d. Political, residential, and economic segregation and stratification occur on two main levels: ethno-nations and ethno-classes.
>
> e. The constitutive logic of ethno-national segregation is diffused, enhancing a process of political ethnicisation among sub-groups within each ethno-nation.
>
> f. Significant (though partial) civil and political rights are extended to members of the minority ethno-nation, distinguishing ethnocracies from *Herrenvolk* democracies or authoritarian regimes.
>
> Ethnocratic regimes are usually supported by a cultural and ideological apparatus which legitimises and reinforces the uneven reality. This is achieved by constructing a historical narrative which proclaims the dominant ethno-nation as the rightful owner of

[46] Yiftachel (1999b: 383, and 2006: 97)
[47] Yiftachel (1999b: 364, 377)
[48] Yiftachel (1999b: 367-368)

> the territory in question. Such a narrative degrades all other contenders as historically not entitled, or culturally unworthy, to control the land or achieve political equality.
>
> A further legitimising apparatus is the maintenance of *selective openness*. Internally, the introduction of democratic institutions is common, especially in settling societies, as it adds legitimacy to the entire settling project, to the leadership of the charter ethno-class, and to the incorporation of groups of later immigrants. But these democratic institutions commonly exclude indigenous or rival minorities. […] Externally, selective openness is established as a principle of foreign relations and membership in international organisations.[49]

Thus, while the Israeli state does possess partial democratic features, "most notably political competition, free media and significant civil rights", it is not, for Yiftachel, a democratic state.[50] Within the limited, selective, contingent, hierarchical and malleable nature of democratic features in Israel, Yiftachel suggests similarities between ethnocracy and "façade democracy".[51] A façade democracy is generally defined as any political system which appears to adhere to certain formal procedures associated with democratic standards, such as periodic elections or the rule of law, but which selectively distorts, exploits or ignores such procedures in order to preserve and strengthen the political hegemony of a particular, and usually authoritarian, ruling elite.[52] Normally used to describe the selective use of democratic standards in other Middle Eastern states, such as Algeria or the political oligarchy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan[53], a façade democracy is also one which uses the existence of open democratic features of the state both to promote a positive image of itself in the world and to legitimise the continuation of discrimination and inequality internally by appearing to offer avenues for political mobility, participation and change to its citizens while simultaneously reinforcing barriers to change.

Unlike Smooha's ethnic democracy model, an ethnocratic state is a fundamentally unstable political regime, bounded as it is between "opposite forces of expansionism and resistance [which are] in constant conflict".[54] However, this instability is not necessarily due to the definition of the state as a Jewish state. Other democratic states have enshrined a particular religious order (such as the Church of England in the UK), while simultaneously maintaining high levels of neutrality of the state and its legal code with regard to particular ethnic identities. It is the illiberal manner in which the legal and political codes, as well as

[49] Yiftachel (1999b: 367-368)
[50] Yiftachel & Ghanem (2004: 649)
[51] Yiftachel (2006: 3, 19)
[52] See Finer (1970: 57, 124) for a definition of a façade democracy.
[53] See, for example, Milton-Edwards (1993)
[54] Yiftachel (1999b: 368)

the territory of the state itself, have become "Judaised and de-Arabised" which renders it progressively more unstable, artificial and illegitimate.[55]

This study finds that ethnocratic theory best describes the nature of the Israeli state, and provides the most convincing account of the complex and uneven interaction between democratic and ethnic interests and priorities.

1.4 Minority Policy in an Ethnocratic State

The previous section has addressed the tension that exists between democratic and ethnic priorities and suggests that ethnocracy remains the best description of the nature of the Israeli state. That important democratic elements exist in Israel is undisputed by ethnocratic theory. However, given the more powerful structural commitment of the state to the maintenance of its Jewish character, the ability of such democratic elements to affect the necessary normative and structural changes in order for the state structure as a whole to be characterised as a democracy is limited and weak.

Bearing in mind the distinction between procedural and structural democracy, and the subordinate role of procedurally or formally democratic elements in non-democratic regimes, this section addresses the subject of how state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel can best be described. However, this immediately raises the difficult question as to how state policy itself can be defined. Policy is usually understood to refer to a deliberate plan of action which is designed with clear and rational outcomes in mind. However, policy can also have aims which are unstated as well as official, employ strategies which are indirect as well as direct, and bring about consequences which are both intended and unintended. This has posed a number of problems in defining a practical and accurate conceptual framework within which Israeli policy towards its Palestinian Arab minority can be analysed, leading some to avoid the subject altogether; others to describe it as consisting of a range of separate or multifaceted policy directions or approaches; and yet more to suggest a broader systemic approach to policy analysis.

[55] Yiftachel (1999b: 371)

Typical of early, pro-establishment analyses, for example, is the tendency to describe state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel as non-existent or undefined. Peretz, for example, argues that no defined or particular policy exists towards the Palestinian Arab minority. Instead, individual policy choices are understood to reflect the democratic character and universal principles of the state, while exceptions to this normatively defined democratic policy that are found to discriminate against the minority are presented as being the spontaneous, indirect and unfortunate consequences of the emergency situation and Israel's "security matrix". Such exceptions are identified as unavoidable shortcomings of an otherwise democratic and egalitarian policy rather than as a deliberately planned set of measures aimed against the minority. Peretz does, however, cite policy choices that have differentiated between sectors of the minority but attributes this to the fragmentary nature of the state's bureaucratic infrastructure and the internal machinations of various government departments that struggle for control within it.[56]

Schwarz reiterates the "dilemma" which is understood to exist between Israeli democratic principles and national security needs during the early decades of the state. However, policy is identified as "neither a defined goal nor a cynical scheme of neglect".[57] Instead, Schwarz argues that during the first ten years of the state no policy at all can be said to have existed towards the minority outside the universal application of certain progressive laws, such as female suffrage, compulsory education, and legal prohibitions concerning polygamy and underage marriage. However, while conceding some failures concerning the treatment of internal refugees and the lack of full equality experienced by the minority, military rule is nonetheless presented as "wrong, but justifiable".[58] In quoting what he presents as the *realpolitik* of Samuel Divon, the then Adviser to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, he agrees that the Arabs "must be persuaded, and coaxed, and even bullied – for their own obvious good".[59]

Writing a number of years later, Zarhi and Achiezra continue to identify policy as universal and progressive, believing that it is aimed at advancing the march of the minority towards the reputable goal of modernisation.[60] Stendel also lauds Israeli policy for what he observes as its concerted efforts to integrate the Palestinian Arab minority into Israeli society

[56] Peretz (1958: 95, 131, 135)
[57] Schwarz (1959: 65)
[58] Schwarz (1959: 78)
[59] Schwarz (1959: 142)
[60] Zarhi & Achiezra (1966)

and to reduce what is perceived to be the cultural gap between Jews and Arabs "without offending the national heritage and age-old traditions" of the minority.[61] Thus, the state is conceived of as both a facilitator and arbiter of progress and change. Equally relevant in this dynamic is the stress given to the state's role as protector and guarantor of cultural diversity in society.

Eisenstadt presents Israel as a benevolent welfare state which provides for all of its citizens, including its Palestinian Arab minority.[62] The exceptional thesis surrounding the security argument, however, continues to hold great sway in his analysis, and the legal exclusion of the bulk of the minority from military service is presented as an "institutional innovation" protecting the minority from the dilemma of their own conflicting loyalties and identity.[63] So, too, the creation of "the special advisory office for minorities" in the Prime Minister's Office is described as resulting from the state's sensitivity and concern for the feelings of the minority rather than as a result of any dark or ill-intentioned motives.[64] While Eisenstadt does not recognise any formal differential policy towards the minority, he does concede that particular benefits and favours (such as travel permits, job opportunities, licence grants and land leases) are bestowed upon particular, but unidentified, elements within the minority in return for their support, particularly come election time, of certain political parties and figures. This attitude points to the "equivocal" nature of official policy in his eyes.[65]

In yet another study, Landau, another pro-establishment academic, acknowledges the state's efforts to convert the Galilee into a Jewish region as a planned policy, thus indicating a shift away from the earlier tendency of viewing Israeli policy as being simply reflexive and spontaneous to one conceding that some deliberate, action-oriented and programmatic content is involved in the formulation of policy.[66] However, he maintains that the autonomy given to various religious minorities represents not only a central element of the state's formal policy towards its minority, but a symbol of its deep respect for their historical traditions and continuity in the region.[67]

At around the same time, a neo-Marxist critical perspective on Israeli state policy emerged, typified by Rosenfeld's analysis of the changing nature of the Arab village and

[61] Stendel (1968: 8)
[62] Eisenstadt (1967b: 394)
[63] Eisenstadt (1967b: 396)
[64] Eisenstadt (1967b: 399)
[65] Eisenstadt (1967b: 402, 405)
[66] Landau (1969: 6)
[67] Landau (1969: 7-10)

family structure, whereby government policy is described as deliberately maintaining and supporting the patriarchal leadership structure of the Arab village, and of manipulating factionalism between the various *hamules* so as to ensure the underdevelopment and dependence of the Arab village which thereby remains easy to contain, control and exploit for the state's own purposes.[68] In a later study, he also argues that the state deliberately sought to create distinctions and deepen divisions between Muslims, Christians and Druze.[69] This aim is understood to have become legally formalised through the provision of autonomous institutional structures under the pretext of pluralism and respect for diversity. However, the autonomy offered is identified as being restricted to a limited range of personal status matters, with no segment of the minority commanding either full or consequential autonomy over their community in any area that might overlap with state interest (particularly with regards to land, land planning, agriculture and economic investment). Furthermore, he charges that not only did the state pursue a policy of deliberate under-development and containment of the Palestinian Arab economy, it also pursued a policy of de-territorialising and de-classing the Arab minority; a policy that indiscriminately affected Arab life across all religious sectors in both village and city.

The 1970s also witnessed the emergence of a new generation of Israeli Palestinian academics who began to challenge typical understandings of the role of government policy. Zureik, for example, describes policy as a concerted effort by the state to pursue a project of social engineering and the re-socialisation of the Palestinian Arab minority.[70] He identifies the existence of a pluralistic, differential policy. However, this type of pluralism is understood as a deliberate strategy aimed at the "structural differentiation", or the institutional separation of the various minority communities from each other, under the guise of affirmative action, which, in turn, is understood to facilitate the subordination and continued underdevelopment of the minority in economic, cultural and political terms. In a later study, Zureik describes Israeli state policy as being rooted in discrimination, citing a range of laws which discriminate equally against all segments of the Palestinian Arab minority, regardless of their religious affiliation (including various Basic Laws and emergency regulations, and particularly the 1950 Absentees' Property Law, the 1950 Law of Return, the 1952 Israeli Nationality Law and the 1953 National Insurance Law).[71] Kanaana

[68] Rosenfeld (1968: 732)
[69] Rosenfeld (1978: 389, 391-2)
[70] Zureik (1974)
[71] Zureik (1976)

considers the decision made by the state to preserve the Ottoman *millet* system, which provides separate recognition and a degree of communal autonomy to each religious group, as being "easily adapted to standard colonial divide and rule procedure".[72] In addition to separate recognition and status, separate institutions and education systems are understood to be used in such a manner as to ghettoise the minority and disband political and cultural organisations that operate on a cross-sectional basis within the minority. Tawfiq Zayyad, a former long-serving and influential mayor of Nazareth, wrote an article entitled *The Fate of the Arabs in Israel*, in which he described the state as "adventeuristic, chauvinistic and expansionist", as its policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority as being one of "oppression and discrimination" which aimed at weakening "the ties of national identity".[73] As such, he considers the views expressed by former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, cited below, to be unsurprising:

> Our policy towards the Arabs is to keep them illiterate by preventing the Arab students from reaching the universities. If they were educated, it would be difficult to rule them. We should make them wood-cutters and water-carriers.[74]

Within this, the Israeli academic establishment is charged for what he views as their complicity with the political agenda of the government. One of the "absurd theories" which he claims the politically affiliated Israeli academic establishment have popularised is the concept of a separate non-Arab Druze identity, which received legal recognition by the state in 1956. He also makes reference to attempts from within official Israeli circles deliberately to "stir religious strife" within the Palestinian Arab minority by exploiting the unfolding civil war in neighbouring Lebanon.[75]

The vocal criticisms raised by both Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Israeli academics challenged the dominance and monopoly of the pro-establishment academic perspective. So too did the 1976 disclosure of an internal ministerial memorandum authored by Yisrael Koenig, a member of the ruling Alignment and the Northern District Commissioner for over 25 years.[76] In light of such criticisms of, and challenges to, traditional Israeli scholarship, a

[72] Kanaana (1975)
[73] Zayyad (1976: 101, 103)
[74] Zayyad (1976: 100)
[75] Zayyad (1976: 93, 102)
[76] See MERIP Reports (1976). The Koenig Report set out a bold strategy aimed at reducing the demographic presence and influence of Palestinian Arab citizens in the Galilee region through a range of political measures, including: undermining the political influence of the Arab Communist party (*Rakah*) by creating an alternative Labour affiliate party which could vie for Arab votes and be centrally controlled by Israeli authorities; finding a way to avoid the payment to Arab families of government subsidies for large families; discouraging Arab students from pursuing university education and encouraging them instead to acquire technical qualifications;

growth in the number of analyses providing a more nuanced, albeit compartmentalised, understanding of Israeli state policy can be observed. In discussing ethnic relations in Israel, for example, Peres argues that Israeli policy towards its Palestinian Arab minority can best be understood as a duality of intentional and unintentional policies that have led to state interference in the affairs of the minority as a whole.[77] He also suggests that the period from 1962 to 1967 introduced a new period of liberalisation in the position and policy of the Israeli authorities towards the Palestinian Arab minority in general terms.[78] Friendly identifies a similar compound policy approach by the state towards its minority, particularly with respect to the Druze.[79] While policy towards the "Oriental" Jewish minority is understood as being a combination of governmental neglect in key areas – which he refers to as "sins of omission" – together with undefined instances of "positive discrimination", policy towards the Druze is, by contrast, seen as being largely positivistic and affirmative. Any perceived limitation to this state aim "owes less to a determined or even subconscious discrimination or settled policy of keeping down a minority, than it does to the circumstance that the members of an essentially medieval culture have had much too little time in sharing a highly advanced Western environment to have achieved equivalent educational and professional status with the more sophisticated majority".[80] However, notwithstanding the responsibility that Friendly attributes to the minority for its own discrimination, he goes on to assert that:

> However fairly, decently and compassionately Israel may treat its minorities, however sincerely it subscribes to democratic principles, egalitarianism, justice and fair play, *political* discrimination is built into the system. A Druze, not to mention an Arab, must limit his ambitions. […] They must remain politically limited not merely because of their small numbers but because they are, *a priori*, not of the group which founded a nation on the basic premise that it was to be a Jewish state ruled by Jews.[81]

Despite growing awareness of the structural determinants of Israeli state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority, fragmented traditional discourses stressing the essentially democratic nature of state policy remained popular.[82] Nonetheless, the clear tensions between democratic and ethnic priorities, as manifested on the level of minority policy, raised the need to address or rationalise these tensions. One early Israeli academic response to these tensions was provided by Smooha who laid the basis for an integrated and

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and encouraging Arab students to study abroad while simultaneously making their re-entry into the state more difficult.

[77] Peres (1971: 1029)
[78] Peres (1971: 1030)
[79] Friendly (1972)
[80] Friendly (1972: 5, 10, 26)
[81] Friendly (1972: 26)
[82] See, for example, Stendel (1973), Ben-Dor (1979)

systemic approach to the analysis of state policy in Israel. In his 1978 study, *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict*, Smooha argued that while the Israeli authorities remain more liberal in their attitude towards the Palestinian Arab minority than the general Israeli Jewish public, they are nonetheless interested in engineering the "pacification" of the minority through a combination of carrot-and-stick initiatives, primarily involving the "carrot" of voluntary "compliance" based on recognition of the obvious benefits, incentives and rewards pertaining to them as citizens of the state, and the "stick" of their forced "economic dependence" on, and "political subordination" to, the Jewish majority. Together, these strategies are understood to minimise "the potential costs of the presence of an Arab minority to the core national goals of the Jewish character of the state, Israeli national security and democratic pluralism".[83] Critically, Smooha makes a radical departure from earlier and more traditional analyses by suggesting that Israel's policy towards its Palestinian Arab minority should, cumulatively speaking, be understood as "an effective machinoy of control-exclusion, dependence and subordination".[84]

In his 1989 study, *Arabs and Jews in Israel,* Smooha identifies the lack of a clearly defined state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. However, while arguing that the state is "basically" democratic, he does not observe this to be incidental proof of the dominant position of a universally-understood democratic policy in Israel. Instead, he sees the collection of "long-standing 'policies by default'" as testament to the unresolved tension that exists between the democratic and ethnic priorities of the state and the dichotomisation of Jewish attitudes between accommodation and rejection of the minority.[85] Moreover, his study highlights the limited nature of policy choices open to the state. Generally, the policy options which are generally available to states with regards to their minorities range between the two opposite extremes of assimilation and ethnic cleansing, with various other policy options, such as integration, binationalism and autonomy, intersecting this continuum.[86] Ethnic cleansing, involving such policies as "population transfer" and genocide, is considered, within Smooha's analysis, to be outside the permissible boundaries of Israeli state policy. The assimilation of the Palestinian Arab minority is equally not considered to be a viable policy option for the state "since the undesirability and improbability of cultural

[83] Smooha (1978: 45-46)
[84] Smooha (1978: 45)
[85] Smooha (1989: 22, 199-200)
[86] Smooha (1989: 107)

assimilation between Arabs and Jews are agreed upon".[87] Similarly, true binational, bicultural or bilingual arrangements are equally deemed to be impossible given the structural definition of the state as the Jewish state and the hegemonic status of the Jewish majority within it.[88] Even the full integration of the Palestinian Arab minority is not considered to be a realistic state policy for the same structural reasons and biases:

> Arab integration presents a dilemma for Jews and Arabs. For the Jews, to permit integration is to demonstrate goodwill. It is also a device calculated to coopt and contain the Arab minority. Yet it runs counter to Israel's Jewish-Zionist mission of preventing Jewish assimilation by positive and negative reinforcements. For the Arabs, integration is a forceful means to achieve equality of opportunities and resources, but also a threat to their separate existence and identity.[89]

Instead, integration, where is exists, is generally understood to imply the one-sided adaptation of interested individuals or segments within the minority, rather than any serious government-led initiative towards the minority as a whole.[90] Given the impossibility of assimilation and binational arrangements as well as the real limits of integration, policies promoting the autonomy of the Palestinian Arab minority are considered to be even more problematic.

> Israeli authorities have always considered Arab national autonomy a threat to Jewish domination and to the state's political stability and have adopted diverse countermeasures to avert it. These include depriving Arabs of control over their own institutions, preventing them from forming independent organisations, endeavouring to dismantle their majority status in certain regions, coopting their leaders, encouraging traditional internal divisions, and treating them as an ethnic rather than national group. These policies coupled with other restraints comprise the machinery of political control over the Arab minority.[91]

While none of these typical policy responses are considered to be realistic or viable policy options for the Israeli state, the dominant policy matrix within which the state is understood to operate is one that is based primarily on exclusion and control.[92] While acknowledging the centrality of control to Israeli state policy, and providing the basis for a systemic approach, Smooha nonetheless fails to provide a clear analytical framework through which the "control" of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel can be routinely addressed.

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[87] Smooha (1989: 45)
[88] Smooha (1989: 45-46)
[89] Smooha (1989: 94)
[90] See also: Ben-Dor (1979: 19, 203, 230, 241) who considers integration to relate to the unidirectional and "innovative" capacity of individuals to demonstrate "adaptive" or "integrative behaviour" "into" Israeli society. However, even here attention is drawn to the limits of integration as a result of the structural nature of the state.
[91] Smooha (1989: 98)
[92] Smooha (1989: 55)

The greatest single contribution to the development of a unified theory of control with respect to state-minority relations in Israel was made by political scientist Ian Lustick in his ground-breaking work, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority.* Lustick's analysis was concerned with the question of stability, and the regulation of ethnicity, in deeply divided societies. Writing in 1980, Lustick observed that, despite the existence of "an open and democratic society" in Israel, there remained wide gaps between Jews and Arabs. In particular, there had been no independent Arab political parties or significant Arab social, economic, cultural, or professional organisations during the first thirty years of Israeli statehood, which cast significant doubt over Israeli democratic claims.[93] Instead, Lustick identified the Zionist project of transforming Jewish society in Israel, based on "mass Jewish immigration or 'the ingathering of the exiles' (*kibbutz galuiot),* 'redemption of the land' through intensive Jewish agricultural settlement (*geulat haaretz),* the 'Judaisation of the Galilee' (*Yehud ha-Galil),* the consolidation of a Jewish proletariat (*avoda ivrit),* and so forth," as the fundamental cause of these gaps, which initiated the "regime's fundamental distrust of the Arab minority" and its designation of it as "the Arab problem"; military rule (until 1966); massive expropriation of Arab lands; economic and political discrimination; and the relative deprivation of the Palestinian Arab population in society.[94] As such, he was interested in exploring why obvious "Arab discontent" had not let to either an outbreak of ethnic conflict in society or the political mobilisation of the Palestinian Arab minority in order to improve or affect radical change to their status and why, instead, the minority demonstrated a high level of "political quiescence" and "seeming docility".[95] Following his investigation, he observed that the political quiescence and seeming docility of the Palestinian Arab minority was ultimately due "to the presence of a highly effective system of control which, since 1948, has operated over Israeli Arabs".[96]

Situating himself within international theories of structural pluralism, Lustick used "control" as "an analytical framework for explaining the anomaly of political stability in deeply divided societies.[97] Within the Israeli "system of control", "regime goals" together with certain "techniques of control" are attributed more importance than official Israeli policy itself as, "unlike apartheid, for example, the system of control over Arabs in Israel is not

[93] Lustick (1980: 4)
[94] Lustick (1980: 6-7, 66)
[95] Lustick (1980: 8, 15, 24)
[96] Lustick (1980: 25)
[97] Lustick (1980: 69)

explicitly recognised in the legal framework of the state".[98] Thus, a highly sophisticated and predominantly extra-legal system of control is understood to exist parallel, but not subordinate, to official proclamations, declarations, laws and policies of the state, and to consist of three main, but interlinking, components on three separate levels of analysis. The three separate components of Israel's system of control, which Lustick also refers to as the "functional requisites" of control[99], are: segmentation, dependence and cooptation.

> 'Segmentation' refers to the isolation of the Arab minority from the Jewish population and the Arab minority's internal fragmentation. 'Dependence' refers to the enforced reliance of Arabs on the Jewish majority for important economic and political resources. 'Cooptation' refers to the use of side payments to Arab elites or potential elites for purposes of surveillance and resource extraction.[100]

The three separate levels of analysis are: the structural, institutional and programmatic. The structural level relates to basic historical, cultural, religious, ecological and economic identities and circumstances, as well as various attitudes and stereotypes. The institutional level relates to three different categories of institutions: governmental institutions, such as government ministries and agencies, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and the Histadrut; Jewish national institutions, such as the Jewish Agency (JA), the Jewish National Fund (JNF) or the World Zionist Organisation (WZO); and Zionist political parties, primarily Labour and Likud. Finally, the programmatic level concerns various policies, political acts and decisions.[101]

One of the central elements of Israel's system of control is, according to Lustick, the state's tendency to capitalise on internal differences within the minority. While such differences are understood to be historically present, it is the particular manner in which the state is understood to have operationalised these differences in its effort to weaken the national unity and territorial integrity of the minority and strengthen its control which is relevant here.

> On the structural level of analysis, attention is focused on basic ecological, social structural, religious, cultural and historical circumstances, as well as on deep-seated attitudes which themselves constitute divisions within the Arab sector and between the Arab and Jewish sectors. These factors are significant for the way in which they have made the Arab population susceptible to effective control (1) by inhibiting the formation of political alliances within the Arab population or between Arabs and dissident Jewish

[98] Lustick (1980: 25, 52)
[99] Lustick (1980: 250)
[100] Lustick (1980: 77)
[101] Lustick (1980: 77)

> groups and (2) by providing the regime with an array of primordial identities and divisions which can be reinforced and exploited by appropriate 'segmentalist' policies.[102]

As a result, differences between patterns of Bedouin and non-Bedouin as well as between Arab urban-rural settlement patterns; different Arab regional distribution patterns in the Galilee, the Negev or the Triangle; religious differences between Muslims, Christians and Druze; internal political factionalism with tribal, or *hamule* politics, on the one hand, and modern urban-based party politics, on the other; socio-economic differences between different segments of the minority; as well as so-called "national" and allegedly ethnic-based differences between Arabs and Druze, all acquire new significance in the authorities' dealings with the minority.[103]

For Lustick, therefore, internal differences within the minority have become, in and of themselves, "meaningful political categories" in Israel.[104] Such differences are institutionalised and exploited in a number of different ways. In the first instance, the language and terminology used by the state to identify the minority, particularly with regard to the registration of nationality on Israeli identification cards, formalises differences between groups, while the recognition that is given to the religious communal structures of each group institutionalises them.[105] The role of the Israeli army, or Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), which is one of the major institutions of the state and a powerful tool of socialisation, and its differential approach to conscription within the minority, is singled out as a particular method through which such differences have also become institutionalised.[106] Also, the role of Zionist parties' "affiliated lists" in promoting sectarian and traditional elites is another such method of segmentation and cooptation.[107]

Seen cumulatively, Israel's "system of control" is according to Lustick based on "the network of mutually reinforcing relations which has emerged from these structural, institutional and programmatic patterns" and the "reciprocal interdependencies" which have been forged between them based on each separate level of analysis.[108] While Lustick's systemic approach highlights the complex, dialectical and evolving nature of these interweaving components and relations of control, and the capacity for the overall system of

[102] Lustick (1980: 82)
[103] Lustick (1980: 82-83)
[104] Lustick (1980: 133)
[105] Lustick (1980: 133)
[106] Lustick (1980: 92-94)
[107] Lustick (1980: 112-113, 136-137, 208-209)
[108] Lustick (1980: 77-78)

control to change and adapt itself over time as well as to provide unanticipated and undesired consequences for the state itself, his approach is weakened by the temporal limits of his research and how he anticipated various "challenges to the system" would be reconciled within it. Lustick's study, as with Smooha and Rosenfeld before him, was, to some extent, primarily focused on the period of military rule (1948-1966). With the end of military rule in 1966 and the relaxation of the bulk of emergency regulations which had hitherto contained and repressed the Palestinian Arab minority, a new period of self-confidence and awareness, together with renewed contact with Palestinians in the occupied territories, brought about a growth in Palestinian Arab national identity, which has been referred to as the "Palestinianiation" of the minority. This brought to an end the notion of a "quiescent" and "docile" Palestinian Arab minority.[109] Faced with growing challenges to its control system, Lustick forecast three different possible regime responses: "system adaptation, breakdown or transformation". Lustick considered these trends, together with the growth of internal Jewish voices of dissent and opposition, as indications of the weakening grip of Israel's system of control over the Palestinian Arab minority and of the concomitant strengthening of democratic forces within and upon the state.[110] In one study, he rather optimistically cited the 1984 elections, whereby Palestinian Arabs are understood to have new "political clout" in Israeli electoral politics, as indicative of this general trend away from a system of control towards "integration and effective binationalism".[111] Despite a certain retreat from his earlier understanding of the dialectical and dynamic nature of control in maintaining stability in deeply divided societies, and his inability to sufficiently recognise the structural potential for a sophistication of the system of control, rather than an abandonment of it, Lustick's approach remains fundamental to analyses of state-minority relations in ethnocratic regimes today.

Control theories, however, continued to develop in the decades subsequent to Lustick's study. The 1990s saw the emergence of political geography as a popular research discipline within which critical control theories were centralised. The first to address control within a territorial framework was sociologist Baruch Kimmerling. Like Lustick, Kimmerling identified the existence of an Israeli control system over the Palestinian Arab minority. However, his analysis differed from Lustick's in that territory is centralised as the main agency and mechanism of control. Within this, the porous boundaries of Jewish society

[109] Lustick (1980: 232-250)
[110] Lustick (1980: 252-265)
[111] Lustick (1989: 97-119)

and the Israeli territorial state are addressed. For Kimmerling, Israel's control system is "a territorial entity comprising several sub-collectivities, held together by purely military and police forces and their civil extensions (e.g. bureaucracies and settlers)" and based upon a combination of selective incorporation and exclusion of "controlled collectivities".[112] Within this territorially-defined Israeli control system, which includes the territory both of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, control is conceived not only as affecting Palestinian Arab citizens of the state but also those Palestinian Arabs who reside in the occupied Palestinian territories and are subject to military rule.

The first to address state territorial control of its Palestinian Arab minority in a focused and systemic manner was Oren Yiftachel, who documented an "elaborate system of Jewish territorial control" in Israel as arising from the general national and political salience of land and constituting a fundamental technique in the maintenance of asymmetrical power relations in society.[113] Jewish territorial control is understood to have been secured and maintained by the state through various "regulative" measures, such as: urban and regional planning; the categorisation of land types, permissible land uses as well as differential land ownership and accessibility rights; the zoning, and re-zoning, of urban and municipal boundaries; and the unequal distribution of state resources and budgets to Arab municipalities.

For Yiftachel, Israel's "system of control" is an integrated and inseparable element of Israeli ethnocracy. Put another way, ethnocracy is, fundamentally and in and of itself, a system of control. The previous section has already outlined the broad theoretical assumptions of ethnocratic rule. Following on from ethnocratic theory, this study suggests that treating particular policy choices as separate, or independent, from the structural priorities and nature of the state represents a false sociological dichotomy which serves only to confuse and restrict analyses of what is, essentially, the functional and instrumental nature of policy to serve the system which formulates it. Furthermore, delimiting certain components of control, whether it is Lustick's segmentation-dependence-cooptation model or even Yiftachel's primary focus on territorial control, to the exclusion or denial of other factors and techniques serves only to reify individual policy choices and areas which runs the risk of overlooking the fluid, dynamic, responsive and, at times, spontaneous nature of policy in fulfilling the changing demands of an ethnocratic regime. Instead, policy in an ethnocratic

[112] Kimmerling (1989: 266-267)
[113] Yiftachel (1992: 25 and 1999a: 293)

regime should be understood primarily as a functional or instrumental mechanism of the state which it serves, reflects but is, ultimately, subordinate to.

Despite the growing popularity of systemic control theories in analyses of state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, the notion of a spontaneous, circumstantial and largely positive, albeit poorly defined, minority policy has remained popular within pro-establishment discourses. One interesting example of the exceptional thesis surrounding minority policy in Israel is provided within Alisa Rubin Peled's study of state policy towards its Islamic institutions. While identifying a differential and differentiating state policy, Peled attributes this not to a deliberate or single-minded policy of control, but rather to the very fragmentary and confused nature of Israeli policy itself. At its source she identifies the competing agendas of various government ministries and personalities struggling for jurisdictional control over the minority.[114] Various ministries are identified in particular within this inter-ministerial battlefield. The first was the short-lived Ministry of Minority Affairs which was created in 1948 but lasted for only one year until it was replaced by the Office of the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs. To the Office of the Prime Minister were added the competing jurisdictional claims of several other ministries, particularly the Ministry for Religious Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Education. As a result of these bureaucratic and political inter-ministerial struggles, rather than any overriding ideological dissension over the importance of democratic or ethnic priorities, policy is understood as having "developed in fits and starts, mainly as temporary measures which eventually became permanent" and which "took shape through an informal system of checks and balances".[115]

Peled rejects the grand vision or meta-narrative approach of both system-supportive and critical control analyses. Instead, Israeli state policy is described as bipolar or even schizophrenic, swinging inconsistently back and forth between benevolence and rigidity, between good intentions and wilful manipulations, between humanitarian and security considerations. Trapped within this unresolved dynamic, minority policy is, as a result, understood to be naturally fraught with internal contradictions. On the one hand, Peled observes a genuine governmental tendency towards supporting a more positive approach to the minority, as typified by the extent of religious autonomy enjoyed by religious minorities in Israel. However, "an intrinsic link between Islam and Arab political nationalism, its

[114] Peled (2001a)
[115] Peled (2001a: 2)

greatest concern" is identified on the other hand, which severely limits and conditions that support.[116] In addition to bureaucratic struggles, the relevance of political personalities represents an important aspect of Peled's analysis. Her dichotomy between a benevolent and a security-oriented minority policy is demonstrated by her analysis of the personal and ideological disagreements between Bechor-Shalom Sheetrit and Yoshua Palmon, who both served as Advisors to the Prime Minister's Office on Arab Affairs during the early decades of the state. Within this "mosaic of motives and ministries", Sheetrit is presented as having basically "good intentions" towards the minority and as advocating a more liberal-minded view of them, while Palmon is presented as having a much more pragmatic, interventionist and Machiavellian approach to the minority based on security concerns. Thus, it is the personality of Palmon, rather than the state itself, that is singled out for having promoted a divide-and-rule approach to the minority. While the author considers Peled's avoidance of a systemic analysis a major weakness of her approach, her consideration of the complex interplay of personalities and ministries, and the competition and rivalry which existed, and continue to exist, between them, are no doubt vital aspects in the formulation and application of minority policy in Israel which should not be disregarded by this study either.

Despite its weaknesses, Peled's contribution can be incorporated within this study. In outlining a more fluid conceptual framework through which Israel's "system of control" can be analysed, this study also finds the contribution made by multicultural theorist Majid al-Haj particularly useful in this regard. But before an analysis of his particular contribution can be addressed, a brief commentary on multicultural theory is required. Multiculturalism is a sociological term which, like democracy, suffers from the paradox of being both ambiguous and over-used. Difference, diversity, pluralism and interculturalism have all too often been used interchangeably with multiculturalism, compounding the confusion between them even further. However, in general, three different forms of multiculturalism have been observed, which are: *descriptive, ideological* and *programmatic* multiculturalism.[117] Descriptive multiculturalism refers to the basic acknowledgement of the existence of diversity in society, but is devoid of any associated ideological content or normative judgement call on the value or order of such diversity in society. Ideological multiculturalism, by contrast, implies a particular and normatively positive position with regard to the value of diversity in society. It

[116] Peled (2001a: 3)

[117] Wieviorka (1998: 882-883) applies Inglis' three different registers of multiculturalism to his own study, which are: the "demographic and descriptive" register; the "ideology and norms" register, and "the programme and policy" register.

understands the expression of collective identity as a central component of individual human identity and as a basic human right. Not only does ideological multiculturalism advocate that states should recognise, promote and protect such diversity, it believes that groups themselves should be empowered with various autonomous powers by a decentralised state that arbitrates between different groups in an impartial manner. Finally, programmatic multiculturalism refers to the practical dimension of multiculturalism in practice, whereby it is expected that the normative assumptions of ideological multiculturalism become reflected in government policy and institutions.

Given the earlier analysis concerning the realistic and viable policy options open to the state with regard to its Palestinian Arab minority, it may appear strange to discuss multiculturalism within the Israeli context. While Israel may be considered to be a prime example of multiculturalism in the descriptive sense, this label breaks down immediately upon investigation of the ideological assumptions and priorities of multiculturalism which are deeply antagonistic to the central ethno-national priorities and structural demands of an ethnocratic state. However, the relevance of multicultural theory to the Israeli case surfaces with regard to the programmatic dimension of multiculturalism. The basis for this renewed association lies in recognition of the limits of multiculturalism in practice in any country in which it has been applied. This association is based, in particular, on the critical awareness of the structural and practical limitations of states, even those which are categorised as liberal democracies, to act as neutral arbiters of diversity in society and to be sufficiently "difference blind" as to fulfil multicultural requirements.[118] Given the socially and culturally-embedded nature of all states, and the intersection between national identity, whether civic or ethnically-defined, and the state, the degree to which states can, practically or ideologically speaking, be considered impartial is highly questionable.[119]

Despite this difficulty, several states have nonetheless adopted multicultural policies towards their minorities. However, given the ideological limits of states, the range and types of multicultural policies which have been applied by states – such as Canada, Australia, Sweden and the United States – are equally limited. Wieviorka conducted a comparative study of the type of multicultural rights which are in place in each of these four countries. Multicultural policy in Canada, for example, is described as one which is primarily concerned with the linguistic and educational rights of the two dominant groups in society. In dealing

[118] Joppke (2004)
[119] Eller (1997); Birnbaum (1996: 39-40); Joppke (2004: 240); Habermas (1995: 852).

with the claims of the sizable Francophone minority, and reconciling their claims against those of the Anglophone majority, Wieviorka suggests that multiculturalism has been employed "as a way of avoiding bipolarisation of Canada"; normalising the nationalist claims of both groups; pacifying a powerful minority and returning political order to society.[120] Critically, multiculturalism, within the Canadian context, excludes the cultural or linguistic claims of other, smaller minorities. In the case of Australia, multicultural policy is understood to be limited to immigrant groups, thereby excluding the indigenous aboriginal population from the potential benefits of multiculturalism. Moreover, its focus is economically-conceived as it attempts to redress economic disadvantages experienced by immigrant groups and to create national "economic cohesion" between them and the "established society". However, the ideological limits of multiculturalism are quite clearly outlined in the Australian context, given the accepted primacy of "the culture of the established society" on the public level.[121] While multicultural policy in Sweden is similarly conceived of in economic terms with a singular focus on immigrant groups,[122] multicultural policy in the United States is bound up with education on the one hand and "affirmative action" on the other.[123] With regard to "affirmative action", Wieviorka criticises this as being "not so much one of cultural recognition, but more one of action against social inequality based on, or reinforced by, racial discrimination". In other words, affirmative action is far removed from the basic multicultural tenet of cultural recognition; it is solely concerned with social equality, and can in fact play a role in reproducing and intensifying discrimination and inequality in society.

Wieviorka's comparative investigation highlights the *particular, limited, selective and functional* nature of multicultural policies in each country in which it has been applied. Given the absence of a total ideological commitment to the normative premises of multiculturalism, or rather the practical inability of states to fulfil these premises, the persistence of programmatic multiculturalism alongside other ideological norms and value-systems is clearly possible. Moreover, programmatic multiculturalism has been shown to possess a functional and instrumental dimension in the manner in which it is used to control, pacify and stabilise divisions in society.

[120] Wieviorka (1998: 884-885)
[121] Wieviorka (1998: 885)
[122] Wieviorka (1998: 885-886)
[123] Wieviorka (1998: 886- 889)

Majid Al-Haj has conducted a number of studies investigating multiculturalism in Israel with particular respect to minority education. Addressing the tension between the democratic and ethnic priorities of the state within the context of a deeply-divided society, he has documented the affects this has had on the formulation of a separate but unequal Arab educational policy and school curriculum. He finds that elements of multicultural education, stripped of its ideological multicultural content, have been unilaterally imposed upon the Palestinian Arab minority by the dominant group in society thereby increasing the dependency of the minority on the state, but also increasing the cultural gaps as well as the degree of alienation between groups in society.[124] As such, he argues that "the education system has been used by the Israeli establishment as a mechanism of control over the Arab population," with multicultural conceptions of difference cloaking the asymmetrical segregation of education in Israel.[125] As such, programmatic multiculturalism as it is applied to the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel is redefined by al-Haj as "ethnocratic multiculturalism".[126] This he elaborates as follows:

> Despite the veneer of deep cultural pluralism, no multicultural ideology has developed in Israel, whether at the level of Jewish-Arab relations or of inter-group relations within the Jewish sector of the population. The ethno-national structure of Israel has retarded the nourishing of an all-inclusive civil circle. Indeed ethnic stratification in Israel is evident in all spheres.[127]

This study does not suggest that instrumental or programmatic multiculturalism can, in isolation, explain all of the nuances of minority policy in an ethnocratic state such as Israel. However, what it does illustrate is the capacity for any given policy to be partially incorporated, instrumentally adapted and selectively used in order to reflect or serve particular state agendas. This selective incorporation may occur as an indirect consequence of the structural limits of the state. However, such selective incorporation may also be the result of calculated decisions to promote one policy under the guise of another more normatively positive and acceptable one. This latter capacity of "democratic" policies to become, themselves, co-opted within a broader "system of control" borrows somewhat from the literature on façade democracy. However, as the previous section on ethnocratic theory demonstrates, democratic features of the Israeli state are not limited to their function as a façade, or "cover", of non-democratic policies, and cannot solely be reduced to the level of

[124] Al Haj (2002: 182)
[125] Al Haj (2005: 52)
[126] Al Haj (2004: 681)
[127] Al Haj (2004: 684)

pretence. Instead, ethnocratic theory suggests that while the "marketing" potential of such features is not lost on ethnocratic regimes, a real tension between democratic and non-democratic ethnic forces exists. Ultimately, however, it is the non-democratic and ethnic forces which are understood to predominate in the formulation of policy in an ethnocratic regime.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents a general theoretical framework through which Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians can best be addressed in later chapters of this study. The first section describes the particular dilemmas facing Israeli society as a multi-ethnic, plural and deeply-divided society and discusses the political salience of its most important social cleavage, the Jewish-Arab national divide. This approach lays an important foundation through which the definition of the state as an ethnocratic regime can best be understood in the second section. On the one hand, Israel is a Jewish, Zionist and quasi-religious state which aspires to the status of a Jewish "nation-state" and which priorities the interests, priorities and identity of the dominant Jewish majority group within Israeli society as a whole. On the other hand, real democratic forces and features exist which provide important structural challenges to the exclusive ethnic characterisation of the state. However, given the stratified and hierarchical relationship between the democratic and ethnic character of the state, it is ultimately the Jewish ethnic component which retains a dominant and hegemonic status.

The third section of this chapter provides a theoretical framework through which minority policy in an ethnocratic state can best be understood. Identifying the discursive weakness of separate analyses of democratic and non-democratic policy approaches, this study argues that a systemic approach provides the best measure through which the cumulative impact of policy in an ethnocratic state can be addressed. Building on the contributions of Smooha and Lustick, this systemic approach centralises "control" as an integral component of this system. However, integrating the theoretical assumptions of ethnocratic theory with those of instrumental multiculturalism, this study also recognises the nuances of Israel's control system, in which real democratic features and apparently

democratic and even multicultural policies also have a formally significant role in the overall system of control. As such, this study proposes an adapted systemic control theory which is liberated from the strictures of particular control strategies or policy areas (such as Lustick's three components of control or Yiftachel's exclusive focus on land policy) and which provides space for the evolving, fluctuating, changeable and, at times, seemingly contradictory nature of state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel.

Chapter Two:

Profile of the Palestinian Christians in Israel

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to establish the particular attitudes of the Israeli state towards its Palestinian Christian population within the boundaries of an ethnocratic system of control. But who are the Palestinian Christians of Israel and what are their typical features? In order to address this question, this chapter is broken down into several sections profiling various aspects of the Palestinian Christians in Israel. Specifically, the topics under review are: their ethnicity, nationality, religion, population size, regional distribution, urban concentrations, vital statistics, economic indicators and political representation. The selection of each of these topics is motivated by two main interrelated factors. In the first instance, this approach adheres to typical profiling strategies encountered by the author with regard to analyses of this as well as other segments of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. Secondly, the information presented here provides a basic empirical outline of Palestinian Christians not only in isolation, but also relative to, and comparative with, the features and characteristics of other segments of the population, namely the Jewish, Muslim and Druze populations.

This profile has two important functions for this thesis. In the first instance, it provides the reader with an empirical basis through which a number of sociological assumptions which will be encountered in the next chapter can be cross-referenced and thereby either confirmed or dispelled. Secondly, it aims to provide an empirical basis through which broader national priorities and interests can be measured and examined. In sum, this chapter provides an empirical basis through which an initial location of Palestinian Christians within Israel's ethnocratic control system can be gauged.

2.2 Ethnicity

As the previous chapter has indicated, the Arab-Jewish ethno-national divide represents the single most dominant source of division in Israeli society. It is, therefore, important to address the issue of ethnicity with regard to the Palestinian Christian population as well. Palestinian Christians belong to the Arab ethnicity, but what does this label mean? Ethnicity remains a very loose and ambiguous concept but it is generally defined as representing the particular intersection of one or more of the following distinguishing group characteristics among people: a shared language, culture, geography, religious outlook, a common historical experience, or even an imputed genetic or biological connection.[1] With regard to Arab ethnicity, it is usually defined along particular linguistic and geographic lines.[2] However, given the subjective boundaries that separate real from presumed shared characteristics, ethnicity remains a very malleable concept that is strongly conditioned by human will as well as by other sensibilities surrounding the thorny subject of identity. The increasingly flippant usage of this inexact and seemingly scientific catch-all term disguises the political machinations and human prejudices which often accompany and influence it. It can even be charged with re-processing the now outdated, unscientific and sinister concept of "race" in softer and more acceptable tones. However, as ethnicity represents a key element in modern political and sociological discourses, it must be brought to account here as well.

While "Arab" is frequently equated with Islam – the religion of the vast majority of Arabs – it predates the rise of Islam and includes within its number historic Christian, Druze and Jewish communities. Today, there are almost one and a half million citizens of the State of Israel who are defined as Arabs. (This figure excludes the substantial number of Israeli Jews who are of Arab descent but who are, for political reasons, not referred to, or identified, as Arab.[3]) With regard to the Christian population of Israel, it is important to note that not all Christians in Israel are Arab. According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) almost 20 per cent of the total Christian population in Israel are not Arab.[4] These non-Arab Christians

[1] For more on problems with defining ethnicity, see: Horowitz (1985: 51-54); Rex (1986: 18-22); Esman & Rabinovich (1988: 3); Smith (1988: 21-41).
[2] Mansour (2004: 43-45)
[3] Instead, they are referred to as *Sephardim* or *Mizrahim*. See, for example, Shohat (1999).
[4] According to the Statistical Abstract of Israel (2009) No. 60, almost 30,000 of the 153,000 Christians living in Israel at the end of 2008 were not Arab.

are accounted for by small numbers of Armenians and Messianic Jews (also referred to as Hebrew Christians); however, the vast majority of non-Arab Christians living in Israel today are the result of large-scale immigration initiatives from the former USSR to Israel during the early 1990s. These immigrants applied for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return which gives individuals with Jewish ancestry (a Jewish mother or grandmother) the right to Israeli citizenship. While it is beyond the remit of this study to critique the Zionist concept of a single Jewish ethnicity or to elaborate on the work of those who see it as a social and political construct, it is relevant to note that it is quite possible within these parameters for an immigrant to be a practicing Christian and an ethnic Jew at the same time (despite the internal controversy that this seeming paradox has created inside Israel). It is, therefore, indicative that the CBS introduced a new "Arab Christian" category to its census material in 1995 with the aim of distinguishing Arab Christians from both non-Arab Christian and Jewish population groups.

2.3 Nationality

Like ethnicity, nationality is a particularly fluid and ambiguous concept which has deep political salience in Israeli society. Subscribers to the French school of nationalism – which also predominates in the US and several European countries – understand nationality as a form of open and voluntary civic citizenship that supersedes considerations of ethnic or religious affiliation. Followers of German romantic school of nationalism, by contrast, affix to their understanding of nationality qualifications based on perceived ethnic or even racial determinants.[5] As the previous chapter indicates, the concept of nationalism followed in Israel is based on the latter German romantic tradition which gives centrality to the notion of a single Jewish *Volk* or ethnic group in its understanding of the nation.

The Ministry of the Interior today recognises approximately 137 "nationalities" in Israel, though "Israeli" is not one of them.[6] Nationality remains an important differentiator of the Israeli population as manifested by the fact that until recent years a person's nationality was a mandatory requirement on Israeli birth certificates and national ID cards. Equally significant,

[5] For more on nationalism and its variants, see: Gellner (1983: particularly, pp. 1-5); Anderson (1991: 3-8); Hobsbawm (1990).
[6] Nathan (2005: 268).

given the ideological discourse of a single Jewish ethnicity, is that it is not possible to document the nationality of Israeli Jewish citizens as "Jewish". Instead the nationality of Israel's Jewish citizens is generally determined by the state according to their country of origin. Given the primacy of the concept of a single Jewish ethnicity in the Israeli nationalist discourse, it is therefore possible to deduce from this that not only is nationality not akin to the concept of citizenship in Israel, but that it is also differentiated from ethnicity, in the case of its Jewish citizens, by its very pluralism.

For the Palestinian Arab minority, however, "ethnicity" and "nationality" are not conceived of as plural concepts by the state, but rather as a single catch-all category. "Arab" is considered not only to be the single ethnic identifier of its minority but as a legitimate label designating the nationality of all of its Muslim and Christian Arab citizens, regardless of whether this label accurately reflects the national feelings of that minority or not. The Druze community represents an important exception to this. While the state recognises this community as a distinct nationality from Muslim and Christian "Arabs", they often (but inconsistently) refer to them as ethnically Arab, thus illustrating the politically laden and contradictory nature of this concept.

It is within this context that the state's identification of Israel's Palestinian Christian population as "Christian Arabs" must be understood as a central component of a wider political struggle over the national identity and national rights of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The insistence on the Jewish nature of the state, combined with the state's assertion of Arab nationality for its Palestinian Arab citizens and the absence of an inclusive Israeli civic nationality that could potentially provide an integrated civic identity for Israeli citizens as a whole has led the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel to reject the state's labelling system and to redefine their national identity in a manner which is more meaningful and legitimate for them. According to surveys conducted by Ghanem the preferred national self-identification of the minority is now Palestinian Arab,[7] a trend which is reflected in several important future vision documents published by Palestinian Israeli NGOs.[8]

[7] Ghanem (2002: 139)

[8] Notably: The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel (2006); The Haifa Declaration (2007); and The Democratic Constitution (2007).

2.4 Population Size

As with ethnicity and nationality, demography represents a highly sensitive and contentious issue in Israel. The maintenance of a Jewish majority in a Jewish state has been the stated priority and explicit raison d'être of the State of Israel since its establishment in 1948. The sense of demographic threat and encroachment associated with a large and expanding non-Jewish minority – as can be inferred from such phrases as the "numbers game" and the "battle of the cradles" – should not be minimised.

Israel has a total population of almost 7.4 million people, of whom only two-thirds are Jewish. Approximately 1.5 million, representing just over 20 per cent of all Israeli citizens, are Arab, while a further 4 per cent or so of the population is "not classified by religion".[9] In terms of the Palestinian Christian population, there were just over 123 thousand living in Israel at the end of 2008 representing 8.3 per cent of all Palestinian Arabs and 1.7 per cent of the total Israeli population as Table 1 below shows. However, as the CBS includes individuals living outside the boundaries of Israel proper, this information provided is not wholly reliable. For example, the CBS includes approximately 280,000 Arab permanent residents who are not Israeli citizens within its data sample (almost 23,000 of whom are from the occupied Golan Heights and over 250,000 from East Jerusalem). It also includes approximately half a million Jewish permanent residents from the occupied territories (including 290,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank alone). In terms of this study, it is important to note that the figures provided for the Palestinian Christian population in Israel include approximately 13,000 Palestinian Christian permanent residents from East Jerusalem. Therefore, the correct number of Palestinian Christian citizens currently living inside Israel proper is closer to 110 thousand.[10]

[9] According to the Explanatory Notes on Definitions and Sources provided by the CBS (2009) the category "not classified by religion" is composed of (1) family members of Jewish immigrants who are usually non-Arab Christians, (2) about 400 members of other faiths (Buddhists, Hindus and Samaritans) who until 1995 were included in figures for the Druze population and (3) approximately 2,500 Lebanese who entered Israel in 2000 with the flight of segments of the Southern Lebanese Army.

[10] This adjusted figure correlates with the findings of the independent survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel conducted by Sabeel (2006: 48).

Table 1: Population of Israel by Group and Religion (End of 2008)

	Total	Israeli Jews	Israeli Arabs	Israeli Arabs (Palestinian Arabs & Druze)		
				Christians	Muslims	Druze
CBS Population Figures						
Total Pop (in thousands)	7,374	5,569	1,488	123	1240	122
% of the total Pop	*100%*	*76%*	*20%*	*1.7%*	*17%*	*1.7%*
% of the Arab Pop	---	---	*100%*	*8.3%*	*83.4%*	*8.2%*

The information presented here is based on CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 (No. 60).

2.5 Internal Religious Divisions

As the previous chapter has highlighted, religion represents another defining aspect of individual and collective identity in Israel which, in turn, fuels the Arab-Jewish ethno-national divide. Followers of non-Jewish faiths such as Islam, Christianity or the Druze religion are negatively affected by their religious difference in a society that is defined along exclusive religious lines. This study is not concerned with the particular religious belief systems or practices of the various Christian denominations in Israel. However, an understanding of the basic structure and hierarchy of the various Christians sects in Israel is important as it informs the manner in which the state engages with Christians as a whole.

The Christian community in Israel demonstrates a high level of internal religious diversity with around twenty different Christian denominations active in the country today. However, only ten of these receive official recognition from the state.[11] These are: the Greek Orthodox, the Greek Catholic (Melkite), the Latin, the Armenian Orthodox, the Armenian Catholic, the Syrian Orthodox, the Syrian Catholic, the Chaldean Catholic, the Maronite and the Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal). Each of these churches receives a relatively high degree of religious autonomy from the state. For instance, the state grants each of these churches separate ecclesiastical court systems and religious institutions to administer both to the religious affairs of their community and to matters pertaining to "personal status". Personal status covers such areas as marriage and divorce, as well as the registration of births and deaths within the community.

[11] Online article published on the website of The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009).

Given the absence of secular or civic alternatives, the communal authority of these institutions is preserved and, in some cases, increased.

The majority of Palestinian Christians in Israel are Greek Catholic. Accounting for approximately 50 per cent of all the Palestinian Christians in Israel[12], they are also the most widely distributed of all the Christian denominations with their strongest concentrations found in the villages and towns of the Galilee region. The Greek Catholic (or Greek Melkite) Church is a "uniate" church, signifying its split from the Greek Orthodox Church and subsequent union with Rome in 1724. This church is also typified by the fact that its clergy are predominantly Arab and its laity completely Palestinian Arab. The current head of the Greek Catholic church in Israel is Bishop Elias Chacour who also happened to be the first Palestinian citizen of Israel to become head of this congregation. The Greek Catholic Archdiocese of the Galilee is based in Haifa.[13]

The Greek Orthodox community is the second largest Christian community in Israel representing 22 per cent of the total Palestinian Christian population. The vast majority of the Greek Orthodox in Israel is concentrated in the city of Nazareth, but they can also to be found dotted around a number of smaller villages in the north. Unlike the Greek Catholic church, the leadership of the Greek Orthodox in Israel is entirely Greek while the laity is predominantly Palestinian Arab. The head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Israel is Patriarch Theofilos III who was elected in November 2005, but only recognised by the State of Israel in December 2007. The Greek Orthodox Church in Israel is distinguished by its significant land assets being second only to the state in terms of its land holdings in Jerusalem. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate is based in Jerusalem.

Accounting for 18 per cent of the Palestinian Arab Christian community in Israel, Latins (or Roman Catholics) are the third largest Christian community in Israel and are mainly concentrated in larger urban localities such as Nazareth and Haifa, with a much smaller presence in other localities. While the ranks of the Latin leadership consist of a mixture of Arab and non-Arab clergy, the laity is primarily Palestinian Arab. Since June 2008, the head of the Latin Church in Israel is Patriarch Fuad Twal. The Latin Patriarchate is based in Jerusalem. The

[12] Information concerning the number of followers of each church can be found in the Sabeel Survey (2006).
[13] Information on the organisation and ethnic composition of the various church clergies is drawn from Tsimhoni (1993).

Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land falls under the umbrella of the Latin Church and is relevant to this study as it is a major land-owner and service provider, controlling many of the Christian-run schools and hospitals that serve the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The ranks of the Franciscan order in Israel are predominantly made up of non-Arabs. The head of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, the Custos, is in fact Italian.

The Maronite community, which makes up around 7 per cent of the Christian Arab population in Israel, is another uniate church that is concentrated in the northernmost part of the Galilee, primarily in villages close to the Lebanese border as well as a few other towns in the north. Haifa represents the single largest Maronite parish in Israel but smaller congregations are also present in Nazareth, Akka and Jaffa. The ranks of the Maronite leadership in Israel are made up almost entirely of Lebanese Arabs, while the laity consists of a combination of Lebanese and Palestinian Arabs. The head of the Maronite community in Israel is Lebanese Archbishop Paul Sayyah and his headquarters are in Haifa.

Finally, the Anglicans account for 3 per cent of the Palestinian Christian population and represent the largest of the Protestant sects in Israel. They are concentrated in urban localities such as Nazareth, Haifa, Ramla, Kfar Yasif, Shfar'amr and Reine. The leadership ranks of the Anglican Church in Israel are made up of a mixture of Arabs and British Anglo-Saxons, while the laity is predominantly Palestinian Arab. Although they represent a relatively new Christian sect in the Middle East, their membership originates from disaffected members of the indigenous Greek Orthodox community. The head of the Anglican community in Israel is Bishop Suheil Dawani and his seat is in Jerusalem.

2.6 Regional Distribution

Demography and land represent the two central national priorities of the Israeli ethnocratic regime. As such, an analysis of the regional distribution and concentration of Palestinian Christians vis-à-vis Israeli Jews and the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority is pivotal to this study.

Just under half of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel live in the administrative area of Israel known as the Northern District where they are also the demographic majority with Jews accounting for less than 45 per cent of the district's population. Not only is the Northern District the only district in Israel where Palestinian Arabs represent the overall demographic majority vis-à-vis the country's Jewish population, but it is also the only district where the highest concentrations of each separate Palestinian Arab sub-group can be found. While just under 40 per cent of all Israel's Muslims live in the Northern District, it is also home to the majority of Palestinian Christians and Druze (70 and 80 per cent of each respective community). Table 2 below indicates the differential regional distribution of Israel's main religious communities. Next to the Northern District, the second most important district for Palestinian Christian settlement is the Haifa District where a further 13 per cent live. The Palestinian Muslim population demonstrates a much more evenly distributed presence in Israel while the pattern of regional distribution of the Druze population shows a clustering in the Northern and Haifa districts.

Table 2: Population of Israel by District, Group and Religion (End of 2008)

District		Total	Israeli Jews	Israeli Arabs	Israeli Arabs (Palestinian Arabs & Druze)		
					Christians	Muslims	Druze
Northern District	Thousands	1,242	539	661	86	474	98
	%	*17*	*10*	*45*	*70*	*38*	*81*
(Jerusalem District)	Thousands	910	617	278	13	265	---
	%	*12*	*11*	*19*	*11*	*21*	---
Haifa District	Thousands	880	617	214	16	175	23
	%	*12*	*11*	*14*	*13*	*14*	*19*
Central District	Thousands	1,770	1,559	145	4	140	---
	%	*24*	*28*	*10*	*3*	*11*	---
Tel Aviv District	Thousands	1,227	1,147	18	4	14	---
	%	*17*	*21*	*1.2*	*3.1*	*1.2*	---
Southern District	Thousands	1,054	807	172	0.4	171	---
	%	*14*	*15*	*12*	*0.3*	*14*	---
(Judea & Samaria)	Thousands	290	284	---	---	---	---
	%	*4*	*5*	---	---	---	---

The data presented here is based on the CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 (No. 60).

The percentage figures provided above are calculated as percentages of each population group.

As the next chapter will show, much attention has traditionally been given in the literature to various assumed cultural, social and political by-products of geographic distribution patterns of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. The concentration of Palestinian Christians in Israeli urban centres is often singled out as a unique and differentiating characteristic of that community vis-à-vis the other Palestinian Arab communities in Israel. According to Table 3 below, 99 per cent of all Palestinian Christians living in Israel live in urban localities. While this figure is higher than the percentage of Israeli Jews listed as living in urban localities (91 per cent), so too are the percentages of Muslims and Druze living in urban localities significantly higher than that of Israeli Jews (93 and 98 per cent each respectively).

These surprisingly high figures result from the particular definitions used by the CBS, whereby an "urban" locality is any locality with a population in excess of 2 thousand people. However, if the figures for the two largest categories of urban localities in Israel with more than 100 thousand people are combined, it can be observed that 49 per cent of Jews fall into this category, compared with 23 per cent of Muslims and 25 per cent of Christians. This indicates a broader trend to settle in large cities by both Muslims and Christians, undermining the notion of unique Palestinian Christian urban patterns. Significantly, Israel's largest urban localities have no significant Druze population whatsoever. Equally revealing is that the bulk of Palestinian Christian population in Israel is concentrated in urban localities of less than 50,000 people, a trend which is also in line with the general distribution patterns of the Palestinian Arab minority. The relatively elevated presence of Palestinian Christians in urban localities of between 50 and 100 thousand inhabitants compared with the lower figure for Muslims in this category is entirely due to the unique significance of Nazareth. This city of over 65 thousand Palestinian Arabs – approximately one third of whom are Palestinian Christians – accounts for both the entirety of the Palestinian Christian population making up this segment and the majority of Palestinian Arabs in this category.

Table 3: Population of Israel by Type & Size of Locality (End of 2008)

		Total	Israeli Jews	Israeli Arabs	Israeli Arabs (Palestinian Arabs & Druze)		
					Christians	Muslims	Druze
All Localities	**Thousands**	**7,374**	**5,569**	**1,488**	**123**	**1,240**	**122**
Urban Localities	**Thousands**	**6,758**	**5,053**	**1,399**	**122**	**1,157**	**119**
	%	***92***	***91***	***94***	***99***	***93***	***98***
200,000+	Thousands	1,856	1,460	313	31	282	---
	%	*25*	*26*	*21*	*25*	*23*	---
100-199,999	Thousands	1,366	1,258	5	0.3	5	---
	%	*19*	*23*	*0.3*	*0.2*	*0.4*	---
50-99,999	Thousands	716	590	100	24	75	---
	%	*10*	*11*	*7*	*20*	*6*	---
20-49,999	Thousands	1,588	1,140	373	22	323	28
	%	*22*	*21*	*25*	*18*	*26*	*23*
10-19,999	Thousands	703	326	365	23	304	38
	%	*10*	*6*	*25*	*19*	*25*	*31*
2-9,999	Thousands	528	280	243	23	168	52
	%	*7*	*5*	*16*	*19*	*14*	*43*
Rural Localities	**Thousands**	**616**	**516**	**88**	**1**	**83**	**3**
	%	***8***	***9***	***6***	***0.8***	***7***	***3***

The information presented is based on the CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 (No. 60).
The percentage figures provided above are calculated as percentages of each population group.

Beyond the importance of regional distribution patterns and varying levels of urbanisation, the concentration of Palestinian Christians in individual urban localities is also relevant. By the end of 2008, there were approximately 1,180 localities in Israel.[14] Of the (recognised) localities, approximately 126 were listed as Arab localities (with the CBS defining an Arab locality as any locality possessing a majority of Palestinian Arab inhabitants). Of these, 91 were urban localities and the remaining 35 were rural. Table 4 below provides information on urban localities in Israel which have a significant number of Palestinian Christians and details their proportional presence relative to other segments of the population.

[14] This figure excludes the 79 "unrecognised" Arab villages in Israel, 27 of which are located in the north.

Table 4: Localities with Significant Palestinian Christian Populations (End of 2008)

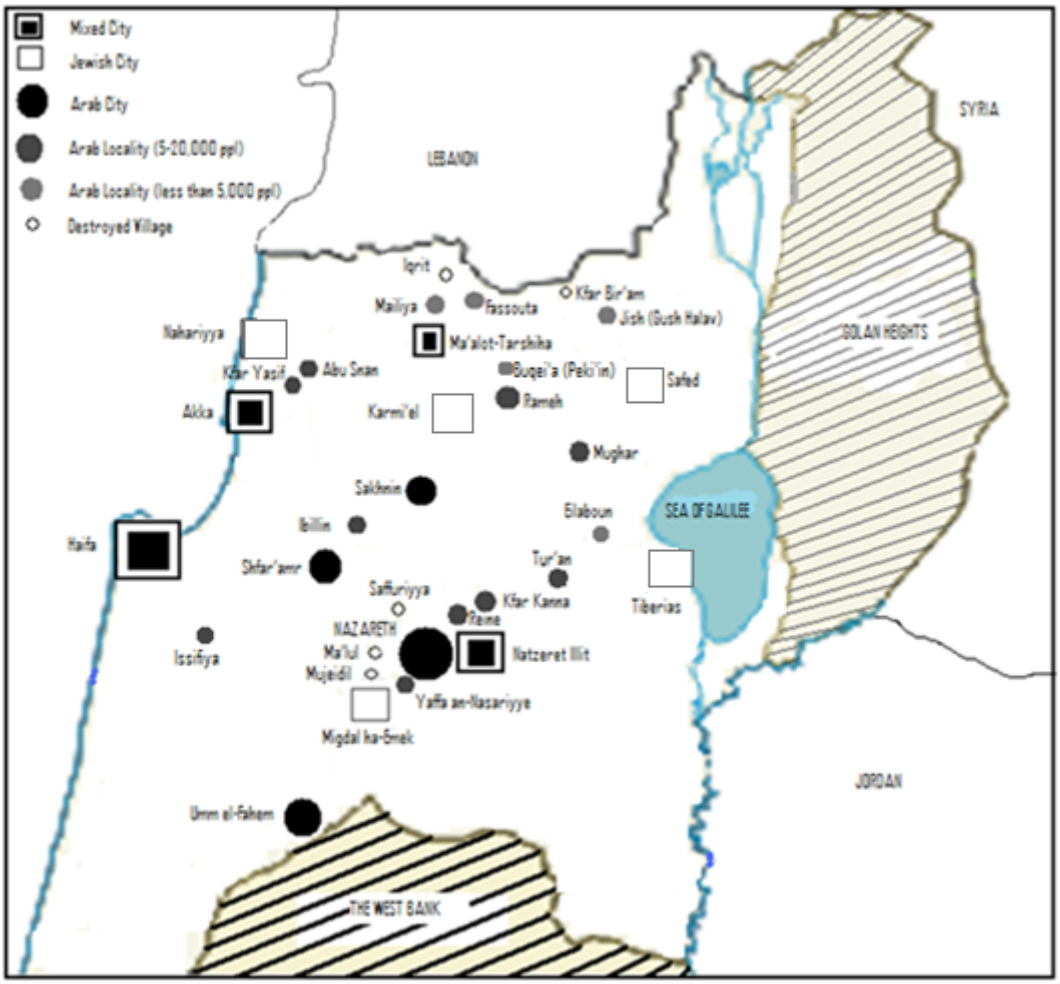
Locality	Total	Israeli Jews	Israeli Arabs	Israeli Arabs (Palestinians & Druze)		
				Christians	Muslims	Druze
Christian-only villages						
Fassouta	2,942	---	100%	100%	---	---
Mailiya	2,720	---	100%	100%	---	---
Mixed Arab localities with a Christian majority						
Kfar Yasif	8,700	---	100%	*55%*	*40%*	*5%*
Rameh	7,600	---	100%	*53%*	*17%*	*30%*
Eilaboun	4,676	---	100%	*70%*	*30%*	---
Jish (Gush Halav)	2,700	---	100%			---
Mixed Arab localities with a significant Christian minority						
Mughar	19,600	---	100%	*20%*	*20%*	*60%*
Kfar Kanna	18,900	---	100%	*16.5%*	*83.5%*	---
Yaffa an-Nasariyya	17,500	---	100%	*30%*	*70%*	---
Reine	17,000	---	100%	*20%*	*80%*	---
Abu Snan	12,000	---	100%	*19%*	*55%*	*26%*
Ibillin	11,400	---	100%	*49%*	*51%*	---
"Arab Cities" with a significant Christian population						
Nazareth	66,400	---	100%	*30%*	*70%*	---
Shfar'amr	34,900	---	100%	*28%*	*57%*	*15%*
Sakhnin	25,600	---	100%			---
"Mixed Cities" with a significant Christian population						
Maalot-Tarshiha	21,400	68%	22%			
Natzeret Illit	42,700	73%	14%			
Akka	46,300	66%	28%			
Ramle	65,500	73%	23%			
Lod	67,500	67%	24%			
Haifa	264,800	81%	10%	5.3%	4.7%	---
Tel Aviv-Yaffa	392,500	91%	4.4%	0.9%	3.5%	---

Total population figures for localities with more than 5,000 people are taken from the CBS Statistical Abstract (2009) No. 60 as are the Jewish percentage figures for each of the 7 mixed cities and the religious distribution of the Arab population of Haifa and Tel Aviv-Yaffa.

Total population figures for localities with less than 5,000 people as well as the Arab percentage figures for the 5 other mixed cities are taken from the 2008 Database on Local Arab Municipalities and Towns in Israel compiled by the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning (ACAP).

The symbol "---" means "no presence".

A religious breakdown of the Arab population of each locality is not provided by either the CBS or ACAP resulting in a number of gaps in the above table. Where possible, these gaps have been filled using a combination of academic and internet sources. Due to inability of the author to verify their accuracy, these figures are highlighted in italics.



Map showing the Distribution of
Palestinian Christians in Northern Israel by Major Localities

Table 4 is also useful in establishing patterns of communal coexistence within the Palestinian Arab minority. With regard to the Palestinian Christian population it is possible to observe, for example, that with the exception of the two Christian-only villages of Mailiya and Fassouta, the vast majority of the other localities which have significant numbers of Palestinian Christians also have sizable Muslim populations. Of these, Palestinian Christians form the majority community in only three, with Muslims representing the majority in most of the others. By contrast, Druze are present in only five of the 22 localities in Israel which have significant Palestinian Christian populations and are the majority in only two of these. Therefore, the figures would suggest that regional patterns of Palestinian Christians are more closely aligned with the Muslim segment of the minority than with that of the Druze.

2.7 Vital Statistics

A common theme in the coverage of Palestinian Christians in Israeli academic literature which will be encountered in the next chapter is the positive significance attributed to Palestinian Christians in terms of their differential age distribution, life expectancy, birth rates, fertility rates, mortality rates, marriage age rates etc. when compared with the rest of the Palestinian Arab minority. The notion that Palestinian Christians pose less of a demographic "threat" to the Israeli state as a result of these indicators is of central importance to this study and requires empirical validation here.

Table 5 below indicates that the Palestinian Christian population is a relatively old population group compared with the rest of the Palestinian Arab minority. Despite being two years younger than the average Jewish citizen, the average Palestinian Christian is 10 years older than the average Palestinian Muslim. The figures on gender distribution also indicate a slight difference between the ratio of men to women in the Palestinian Christian population when compared with those of the Muslim and Druze populations. Palestinian Christians demonstrate a relatively higher ratio of women to men relative to other minority groups (but in common with the overall Israeli Jewish gender distribution). This difference could be attributed to the relatively higher significance of emigration on the Palestinian Christian demographic compared with other groups. The CBS does not provide a breakdown of its figures by religious group for the average life expectancy of its citizens. However, it does state that the average life expectancy for a Palestinian Arab is a full four years less than that of Jewish citizens. The figures below also indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean age of marriage of the Palestinian Arab minority (1 to 2 years age difference does not represent a significant difference to this author). However, the figures do indicate significant differences in the general fertility rate of the various minority groups, with the Palestinian Muslim rate representing almost twice the figure of Palestinian Christians.

All in all, the figures confirm to some extent differences in the vital statistics of various segments of the Palestinian Arab minority. With regard to the average age and the gender distribution of the population, for example, Palestinian Christians appear to be closer to Israeli

Jews than to the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority. However, in the absence of a breakdown of statistics for life expectancy and mortality rate, a similar comparison cannot be made. With regard to the mean marrying age, there is a general uniformity across society at large, with no significant differences between groups. However, with regard to general fertility rates, the Palestinian Christians distinguish themselves from all other segments of the population with their exceedingly low rates.

Table 5: Vital Statistics (End of 2008)

		Total	Israeli Jews	Israeli Arabs	Israeli Arabs (Palestinian Arabs & Druze)		
					Christians	Muslims	Druze
Average Age		29	31	20	29	19	24
Between ages 1-19 (%)		37	33	50	35	52	43
Gender Distribution (%)	M	49.4	49.2	50.9	49.8	50.9	51.0
	F	50.6	50.8	49.1	50.2	49.1	49.0
Avg. Life Expectancy	M	79	79	75	No info	No info	No info
	F	83	83	79			
Mortality rate	M	5.6	6.4	3.2	No info	No info	No info
	F	5.6	6.5	2.5			
Mean Marrying Age	M	29	28	No info	29	27	27
	F	26	26		24	22	23
General Fertility Rate		89	84	No info	63	122	79
Average Household Size		3.3	3.1	4.9	No info	No info	No info

The data presented here has been collected from the CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 (No. 60).
Figures on Mortality Rate are calculated per 1,000 individuals.
The General Fertility Rate relates to live births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15-44.

2.8 Economic Indicators

According to the 2006-07 poverty index published by the National Insurance Institute (NII) almost a quarter (24.7 per cent) of Israel's total population live under the poverty line.[15] In 2006, the NII determined that the poverty line be set for those individuals who earn less than

[15] See: NII (2008).

23,124 Israeli shekels (less than £4,000 GBP according to 2008 foreign exchange rates) per year. The report also indicates that, in the same period, over a third of all Israeli children (or 35.9 per cent), numbering 805 thousand children in all, were living under the poverty line. However, there is a significant gap between the poverty rates experienced by Israel's Jewish and "non-Jewish" (or Palestinian Arab) families, and the alleviation of these poverty rates by state welfare contributions. While the poverty rate experienced by Jews in Israel before welfare payments is 28.7 per cent, welfare contributions reduced that figure by nearly half to 15.2 per cent. The poverty rate experienced by "non-Jewish" families, however, is reduced by only 6 per cent from 61.3 per cent to 54.8 per cent through welfare injections, thus indicating that over half the Palestinian Arab households, or over 149 thousand families, in Israel live under the poverty line, thus representing one of the largest "poverty pockets" in Israel. Significantly, the Northern District is, after Jerusalem, the poorest district in the country.

Neither the NII nor the CBS distinguishes its data on income or poverty according to religious groupings, so it is not possible to determine the Palestinian Christian poverty rate compared with other population groups. However, other sources of information do exist which may provide a good indication of the socio-economic status of Palestinian Christians in Israel. The Alternative Centre for Arab Planning (ACAP) compiles a database mapping a range of economic and demographic indicators particular to local Arab municipalities and towns in Israel which it releases to the public each year. It is interesting to note from the information provided in Table 6 below that the socio-economic levels of Arab localities with either a Palestinian Christian majority or a significant Palestinian Christian population (all of which are located in the Northern District) fall, on average, between the third and fourth lowest socio-economic levels in Israel. As the average socio-economic standing of all Arab localities in the Northern District is three, this indicates that the socio-economic reality of villages with Palestinian Christian populations is much the same as other villages and towns. Indeed, the Arab village of Kfar Kanna and the Arab city of Sakhnin, both of which have significant Palestinian Christian minorities, have the very poor socio-economic ranking of 2, thereby suffering conditions of extreme deprivation relative to the rest of the country. The exception to the generally poor socio-economic standing of Arab villages and towns with significant Palestinian Christian populations is the village of Mailiya in the north. This village, which has a socio-economic ranking of 6, is both the richest Palestinian Christian locality in Israel and the richest Arab

locality in the entire Northern District. Similarly, the Arab village of Jish, with its Palestinian Christian majority population, has a higher socio-economic standing than the Arab average for this region. However, Nazareth – the largest Arab city in Israel and the city with the largest Palestinian Christian minority – has a socio-economic ranking of only 4. Although this ranking places it one level above the regional average for Arab localities, it falls well below the national average for Jewish localities. Only one other Arab city, Tire, which is an entirely Muslim city located in Israel's Central District, has a similar ranking.

In terms of the average monthly salary of an individual living in any one of the Arab localities possessing either a Palestinian Christian majority or a significant Palestinian Christian minority, Table 6 indicates the relative deprivation and poverty of this community. The average monthly salary of individuals from a locality possessing either a majority or a significant minority of Palestinian Christians was only 4,154 shekels (or GBP £640). This figure is only around 240 shekels (GBP £37) higher than the average recorded annual salary of Arab localities in the Northern District.

According to the CBS, the unemployment rate experienced by Israel's Jewish population in 2007 was 6.8 per cent while the unemployment rate for the Palestinian Arab population was 10.9 cent. Although the CBS does not provide a further breakdown of this figure by religious group, the 2006 Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel indicates that the Palestinian Christian unemployment rate in Israel is 6.3 per cent, thus falling slightly below the Jewish national average.

Information on the various sectors of the economy in which the Palestinian Arab workforce are concentrated is also useful. The most significant areas of employment are: the construction sector, followed by education and, then, by the areas of wholesale and retail trade. This is compared with Jewish concentrations in manufacturing, business activities, education and wholesale and retail trading. The sectors which represent a relatively stronger representation of Palestinian Arabs than Jews are those of construction, agriculture, accommodation services and restaurants and education.

Table 6: Socio-Economic Ranking and Average Individual Salary by Locality (End of 2007)

	Total Pop	% Palestinian Christian	Socio-Economic Level	Average Monthly Salary (NIS)
Christian-only villages				
Fassouta	2,942	100%	4	4,356
Mailiya	2,720	100%	6	5,521
Mixed Arab villages with a Christian majority				
Kfar Yasif	8,491	57%	4	4,029
Rameh	7,591	51%	4	4,494
Eilaboun	4,676	70%	4	4,411
Jish (Gush Halav)	2,700	??	5	4,811
Mixed Arab towns with a significant Christian minority				
Mughar	19,305	20%	3	3,786
Kfar Kanna	18,460	16.5%	2	3,383
Yaffa an-Nasariyye	17,171	30%	3	3,944
Reine	16,686	19.3%	3	3,818
Abu Snan	11,746	18.9%	3	3,814
Ibillin	11,186	48.9%	3	4,008
Arab Cities with a significant Christian minority				
Nazareth	65,541	30%	4	4,133
Shfar'amr	34,123	27.5%	3	4,127
Sakhnin	25,055	??	2	3,668
"Mixed Cities" with a significant Christian minority				
Maalot-Tarshiha	21,235	9.9%	4	5,135
Natzeret Illit	43,082	6.7%	5	4,727
Akka	45,980	??	4	4,440
Ramle	64,900	4%	4	4,656
Lod	67,033	1.1%	4	5,019
Haifa	264,942	6%	7	7,007
Tel Aviv-Yaffa	378,902	1.4%	8	7,700

The data has been collected from the 2008 Database on Local Arab Municipalities and Towns in Israel compiled by the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning (ACAP).

The Socio-Economic Level of localities ranges between 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest possible level. The ranking system followed here was devised by the Israeli authorities.

NIS relates to the Israeli currency, the New Israeli Shekel.

Table 7: Employment by Sector (End of 2008)

	% of Employees	
	Jews	**Palestinian Arabs**
Services for households by domestic personnel	1.8	0.3
Community, social and personal services	5.0	3.2
Health, welfare and social work services	10.4	6.8
Education	**12.7**	**14.3**
Public Administration	5.2	2.5
Business Activities	**15.3**	6.4
Banking, insurance and finance	4.1	0.6
Transport, storage and communications	6.5	5.6
Accommodation services and restaurants	4.6	5.8
Wholesale and retail trade, and repairs	**13.3**	**16.8**
Construction (building and civil engineering projects)	3.5	**19.0**
Electricity and water supply	0.8	0.4
Manufacturing	**15.3**	**14.6**
Agriculture	1.5	3.3

The data presented here has been collected from the CBS Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009 (No. 60).
The four most important employment sectors for each population group are highlighted in bold.

Although it was not possible to isolate statistical information relating to the particular employment patterns of Palestinian Christians in Israel from the CBS data, the Sabeel survey does indicate that the majority of Christians in Israel (68.2 per cent) are employed in the service sector, i.e. banks, insurance companies, schools, tourism, hospitals etc, with the next most attractive areas being industry (11.2 per cent), commerce (10.5 per cent) and construction (9.5 per cent). The least relevant area of employment for Palestinian Christians is agriculture which accounts for only 0.6 per cent of all Palestinian Christians.

2.9 Political Representation

Different rates of minority activity and representation within Israeli national politics is often held up as an indicator of different orientations and outlooks within the minority itself. As such, a brief glance at the political representation of Palestinian Christians in Israeli politics is necessary here.

There are, in all, 120 Members of Knesset (MKs) who sit in the Israeli Knesset. As Table 8 below shows, thirteen of the 120 MKs elected to the Eighteenth Knesset are Palestinian Arabs. This figure represents 11 per cent of the total number of MKs in parliament which, on the basis of strict proportional representation, is approximately half their entitled share. Of the 13 current Palestinian Arab MKs, 8 are Muslim, 4 are Druze and only 1 is Christian, representing a share of 61, 31 and 8 per cent for Muslims, Druze and Christians respectively. If these figures are compared with the overall religious distribution of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel (whereby Muslims account for 83 per cent of the minority and Christians and Druze account separately for a further 8 per cent each) it can be observed that Muslims are considerably underrepresented in the Knesset while the Druze have almost four times their ordinary representation. Only the Christians with their single solitary MK are correctly represented should the rules of strict proportional representation be applied. The total number of Palestinian Christians who have ever served as MK since 1949 relative to the rest of the Palestinian Arab minority is illustrated in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Palestinian Arabs in the Knesset by Religious Affiliation, 1949-present

Knesset	Total MKs	Arab MKs	Palestinian Arab (Israeli Arab) MKs		
			Christian	Muslim	Druze
First Knesset (25 January, 1949)	**120**	3	2	1	0
Second Knesset (30 July, 1951)	**120**	8	4	2	2
Third Knesset (26 July, 1955)	**120**	9	4	3	2
Fourth Knesset (3 November, 1959)	**120**	9	4	4	1
Fifth Knesset (15 August, 1961)	**120**	8	4	3	1
Sixth Knesset (1 November, 1965)	**120**	7	3	3	1
Seventh Knesset (28 October, 1969)	**120**	7	3	3	1
Eight Knesset (31 December, 1973)	**120**	7	1	4	2
Ninth Knesset (17 May, 1977)	**120**	10	2	4	4
Tenth Knesset (30 June, 1981)	**120**	5	1	2	2
Eleventh Knesset (23 July, 1984)	**120**	7	1	3	3
Twelfth Knesset (1 November, 1988)	**120**	9	1	6	2
Thirteenth Knesset (23 June, 1992)	**120**	10	2	6	2
Fourteenth Knesset (29 May, 1996)	**120**	12	2	9	1
Fifteenth Knesset (17 May, 1999)	**120**	13	2	9	2
Sixteenth Knesset (28 January, 2003)	**120**	12	2	7	3
Seventeenth Knesset (28 March, 2006)	**120**	12	2	8	2
Eighteenth Knesset (10 February, 2009)	**120**	13	1	8	4

The information on Arab MKs presented here has been collected from the Israeli Knesset website.

Table 8 above illustrates that during the first two decades of the state, Palestinian Christians held a dominant share of the number of seats allocated to Palestinian Arabs in Israeli parliament. In the first Knesset, for example, 2 of the 3 Palestinian Arab MKs were Christian. This relatively inflated Christian presence is largely due to the important leadership role of a small number of Palestinian Christians in the non-sectarian Communist Party (formerly known as Maki, latterly as Hadash/DFPE). Of particular note is the role of Christian-born Tawfiq Toubi who, having served in every one of the first 12 Knessets until his retirement in 1990, is currently

the second longest serving parliamentarian in Israeli history. In all, 62 Palestinian Arabs have, from 1949 until today, held parliamentary positions in the Israeli Knesset. Of these, 14 are Christian, giving this community an overall average parliamentary representation of 23 per cent over the past sixty years. Despite this pronounced involvement, the number of parliamentary seats secured by Palestinian Christians began to significantly decrease as early as the 1970s in line with the gradual increase in the number of Muslims and Druze who became active in local and parliamentary politics. From that point on, their share has ranged between 1 and 2 seats in any single parliamentary sitting (reflecting approximately 8 - 16 per cent of the total Palestinian Arab representation).

In terms of political factions and party membership, the 13 Palestinian Arab MKs in the current Knesset are distributed across five different political parties, or factions, which are, by descending order of their parliamentary size: Kadima, Likud, Yisrael Beitenu, Hadash, Ra'am-Ta'al and Balad. Receiving the majority of the Arab vote in 2009, Ra-am-Ta'al took 4 seats; Hadash took 3 as did Balad; while one Palestinian Arab became an elected representative of each of the following three Jewish parties: Likud, Kadima and Yisrael Beitenu.

A number of clear religious patterns can be discerned. Firstly, each of the four Palestinian Arab MKs who ran with Ra'am-Ta'al is Muslim reflecting the predominantly Muslim character and appeal of this party. Similarly, all three of the Palestinian Arab MKs representing the Israeli right-wing parties of Likud, Kadima and Yisrael Beitenu, are Druze, indicating the close relationship between certain segments of the Druze leadership and the Israeli establishment. The remaining four Muslim MKs are evenly distributed across Hadash and Balad while the one remaining Druze MK is a member of Balad.

This analysis is confirmed by taking a glimpse at the historical patterns of political preferences demonstrated by Palestinian Arabs in the Knesset, as documented in Table 9 below. The only Palestinian Christian MK in today's (18^{th}) Knesset is affiliated with Hadash/DFPE. By analysing the political affiliation and party membership of Palestinian Christian MKs since the first Knesset, as documented in Table 10 below, it can be observed that Hadash (and its predecessors, Maki and Rakah) have been a consistent and dominant force in terms of Palestinian Christian representation in the Israeli Knesset. While Labour and other Jewish-establishment affiliated parties did for some time also attract a number of Palestinian Christians,

the parties which today account for Palestinian Christian presence in parliament, other than the dominant Hadash party, are Balad and, to some extent, Labour.

Table 9: Palestinian Arab MKs by Political Faction/List, 1949-present

Political Faction/List	Total	Christian	Muslim	Druze
Arab lists	15	3	9	3
Labour/Alignment	13	2	8	3
Mapam	5	2	2	1
Likud	3	---	---	3
Meretz	2	---	2	---
Kadima	1	---	---	1
Yisrael Beitenu	1	---	---	1
ICP/Maki/Rakah/Hadash/DFPE	12	5	5	2
Progressive List for Peace	1	---	1	---
Balad/National Democratic Assembly	6	1	4	1
United Arab List/Ra'am-Ta'al	10	---	10	---

The information presented above is drawn from the Knesset website.
Only major political factions and lists are shown. Certain MKs represented more than one list and are mentioned more than once in the statistics. For example, one Muslim MK, who served on several Arab lists, before joining Alignment and then the United Arab List, is mentioned three times. This is done in order to get a clear conceptual picture of the religious distribution of MKs according to their particular political preferences.

Table 10: Palestinian Christian MKs, 1949-present

	Name	Place of Birth	Knesset	Parliamentary Group / List
1.	Tawfiq Toubi	Haifa	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th	Maki/ Rakah/ Hadash
2.	Amin-Salim Jarjora	Nazareth	1st	Democratic List of Nazareth
3.	Rostam Bastuni	Haifa	2nd	Mapam
4.	Emile Habibi	Haifa	2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th	Maki/ Rakah
5.	Masaad Kassis	Maaliya	2nd, 3rd	Democratic List for Israeli Arabs
6.	Yusuf Hamis	Reine	3rd, 4th, 5th	Mapam
7.	Elias Nakhleh	Rameh	4th, 5th, 6th, 7th	Progress and Development, Participation and Development, Jewish-Arab Brotherhood, Participation and Brotherhood
8.	Hanna Mwais	Rameh	9th	Hadash
9.	Hanna Haddad	Jish (Gush Halav)	13th	Labour
10.	Saleh Salim	Ibillin	13th, 14th	Hadash
11.	Azmi Bishara	Nazareth	14th, 15th, 16th, 17th	Hadash-Balad, Balad
12.	Issam Makhoul	Haifa	15th, 16th	Hadash
13.	Nadia Hilou	Tel-Aviv/Jaffa	17th	Labour
14.	Hanna Sweid	Eilaboun	17th, 18th	Hadash

The information presented here is collected from the Israeli Knesset website.

The Democratic List of Nazareth was an Arab list affiliated with David Ben-Gurion's Mapai party. Bastuni became, in 1951, the first Arab MK to directly represent a Zionist party, rather than participating on one of its Arab-affiliated satellite lists. The Democratic List for Israeli Arabs was an Arab List affiliated with Mapai. Progress and Development (Kidma ve Pituah), Participation and Development, Jewish-Arab Brotherhood, Participation and Brotherhood were all Mapai-affiliated Arab lists. Elias Nakhleh founded Jewish-Arab Brotherhood after he left Progress and Development. This list did not survive beyond one term.

Beyond parliamentary politics, the role and participation of Palestinian Christians in central government is worth mentioning. Table 11 below documents every Palestinian Arab who has ever served in a central government position in Israel.

Table 11: Palestinian Arabs in Major Government Positions, 1949-present

	Name	Religion	Party/ Faction	Role	Government
1.	Abd El-Aziz El-Zoubi	Muslim	Alignment	Deputy Minister of Health	Gov. 15 (15/12/1969 – 10/03/1974)
2.	Jabr Moade	Druze	Alignment	Deputy Minister of Communications	Gov. 16 (10/03/1974 – 03/06/1974) & Gov. 17 (03/06/1974 – 24/03/1975)
				Deputy Minister of Agriculture	Gov. 17 (24/03/1975 – 20/06/1977)
3.	Walid Sadik	Muslim	Meretz	Deputy Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development	Gov. 26 (22/11/1995 – 18/06/1996)
4.	Nawaf Massalha	Muslim	Labour	Deputy Minister of Health	Gov. 26 (22/11/1995 – 18/06/1996)
			One Israel	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Gov. 28 (05/08/1999 – 07/03/2001)
5.	Saleh Tarif	Druze	Labour	Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs	Gov. 26 (27/11/1996 – 18/06/1996)
			One Israel	Minister Without Portfolio	Gov. 29 (07/03/2001 – 29/01/2002)
6.	Majalli Whbee	Druze	Likud	Deputy Minister in the PM's Office	Gov. 30 (30/03/2005 – 20/06/2005)
				Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Sport	Gov. 30 (20/06/2005 – 04/05/2006)
			Kadima	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Gov. 31 (29/10/2007 – 31/03/2009)
7.	Raleb Majadele	Muslim	Labour-Meimad	Minister Without Portfolio	Gov. 31 (2/01/2007 – 21/03/2007)
				Minister of Science, Culture & Sport	Gov. 31 (21/03/2007 – 31/03/2009)
8.	Ayoob Kara	Druze	Likud	Deputy Minister of the Development of the Negev and Galilee	Gov. 32 (01/04/2009 – present)

The information here was collected from the Israeli Knesset website.

As can be seen, no Palestinian Christian has ever been appointed to any central government position in the history of Israeli politics. Where appointments have been made, it is generally Muslim and Druze representatives affiliated with mainstream Jewish parties who have been chosen. Of the eight members of the Palestinian Arab minority who have been appointed to such positions four are Muslim and four are Druze. Generally, such appointments are restricted to the position of deputy minister and minister without portfolio which possess far less authority and ability to dictate policy matters than ministerial positions do. It is also noteworthy that with the exception of two individuals appointed during the 1970s, most of the appointments took place only from the 1990s onwards.

What is especially significant is the marked absence of Palestinian Christians in government positions. This fact is no doubt due to their higher concentration in non-

establishment Arab and Jewish-Arab parties, which have never been included within a single Israeli political coalition and, as a result, have been excluded from the distribution of political powers. However, other factors motivating this trend exist which will be encountered in the next chapter.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter documents the particular features and characteristics of the Palestinian Christian population of Israel. In so doing, it also provides important clues as to the possible location of Palestinian Christians within the Israeli ethnocratic regime. Ethnically Arab, Palestinian Christians are clearly on the "other" side of the Jewish-Arab division of society, which is confirmed by their national designation by the state as Arab rather than Palestinian. Countering this, however, it can be inferred from the data that Palestinian Christians do not, as a result of their religious difference from the predominantly Muslim-defined Palestinian Arab minority, represent a serious demographic threat to the state and its particular national priorities. This view is supported by their relatively benign vital statistics vis-à-vis the Muslims and their marginal economic tendencies with respect to the Jewish majority. However, their fairly wide geographic distribution in the predominantly Arab north, together with their concentration in a number of pivotal Arab localities, amplifies the political significance of this otherwise relatively inconsequential minority, which is confirmed by their relatively strong role in Israeli parliamentary activity.

While this profile provides an important empirical basis to this thesis and suggests the proximity (or distance) of Palestinian Christians from various national priorities of the state, it does not adequately address the more complicated nature of the relationship between the Israeli state and its Palestinian Christian population. Chapter Three addresses this issue in more detail.

Chapter Three:
Writing the Palestinian Christians in Israel

3.1 Introduction

Karl Mannheim's critical work on the sociology of knowledge greatly informs the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis.[1] By observing the relationship between society, ideology and power in the production of social values, truth systems and political orders, he outlined the potentially transformative effect of society on scholarship but, critically also, of scholarship on society.[2] Especially evident in situations of national conflict, his insights have deeply affected and transformed the nature of Israeli scholarship as well. A substantial number of Israeli sociologists have investigated the social and political contingency of research in Israel and have identified the existence of both a dominant or hegemonic pro-establishment academic discourse as well as of a competing critical academic tradition. While it is not within the remit of this study to elaborate on the particular research methodologies and framework decisions taken by Israeli researchers in their studies of the Palestinian Arab minority, a substantial body of work already exists which addresses this subject in a more systematic and focused manner than this study can accomplish.[3] Instead, this chapter provides a particular analysis of Israeli academic coverage of Palestinian Christians in Israel cognisant of the fact that such an endeavour may advance understandings not only of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians, but of the location of this community within a broader sociology of Israeli scholarship on the Palestinian Arab minority.

Rather than reiterating one or other of the competing ideological perspectives on Israeli society and state-minority relations, this chapter follows an integrated thematic approach which has the potential to shed new light on the particular relationship between the

[1] Mannheim (1936)
[2] This has been elaborated by Ritzer & Goodman (2003) who discuss the role of social research within the context of social continuity or change, and how this affects basic methodological and terminological choices made by researchers. Gouldner (1971) sees scholarship as possessing both repressive and liberative dimensions.
[3] The literature on this subject is substantial. Of particular note are: Haidar & Zureik (1987); Kimmerling (1992); Ram (1995); Lissak (1996); Ben-Yehuda (1997); Waxman (1997); Rosenhek (1998); Zureik (2003); Epstein (2004); Yair & Apeloig (2006); Kalekin-Fishman (2006).

Israeli state and its Palestinian Christian population. This decision was made for two main reasons. On the one hand, the views of so-called pro-establishment scholars are indispensable to this study's analysis of state attitudes. Given their national allegiances and political sympathies, these scholars are more likely to reflect the view of the prevailing political establishment (as their name would suggest) than their critical counterparts. On the other hand, this approach is supported by the recurrence of the themes selected here in both establishment and critical analyses suggesting that, notwithstanding different interpretations, a basic level of conformity concerning the basic issues affecting the state's approach to this community exists. Beyond theoretical boundaries of state-minority relations in Israel, which were outlined in Chapter One, the factors and characteristics of the Palestinian Christian community which have been identified from the literature as affecting, or influencing, state attitudes towards them are: their Arab ethnicity; their small size; their non-Muslim minority status; their 'westernised' outlook; their lack of a central communal leadership; their external links in the region; their international religious significance; their political behaviour; as well as a degree of Jewish religious antipathy. Although a certain degree of overlap between these themes is inevitable, each will be addressed separately for the sake of clarity. The empirical data outlined in Chapter Two underscores the practical relevance of these topics and can be used to test various sociological and ideological claims encountered.

3.2 A "Modern, Westernised and Secular" Community

The first commonly encountered feature of sociological analyses of Palestinian Christians in Israel is the frequent reference to their distinctive social and cultural attitudes and orientations relative to the rest of the minority. Described as being "modern", "westernised", "liberal", "progressive" and "secular", Palestinian Christians have been identified in several studies as being closer to, and more compatible with, mainstream Israeli Jewish society than the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority, whether Muslim or Druze, which is described as remaining, on the whole, more "backward", traditional, conservative and patriarchal in nature.[4]

This description of Palestinian Christians became popular in connection with the crude assumptions of the modernisation thesis. The modernisation thesis, which dominated

[4] Smooha (1978; 1989: 49, 89). Ashkenazi (1988: 10) refers to Palestinian Christians as "completely bourgeois".

the Israeli academic scene until the late 1960s and which continues to exert an important (but decreased) level of influence on Israeli scholarship today, is a discourse which centralises various cultural, social and psychological characteristics of the Palestinian Arab minority and presents them as instinctive and primordial group tendencies which are conceived of as measures of that group's ability (or inability) to adapt to and integrate within "modern" Israeli society.[5] Within this analysis, particular aspects of collective identity are singled out and connected to what are presented as being either positive or negative political and cultural attributes of the group in question. In particular, "modern" attitudes are equated with the presence of certain socio-economic features (such as high levels of education, professional qualification, personal wealth; urban residential patterns; a low fertility rate, low child mortality rates; smaller nuclear families; older marrying age; and increased contacts with Jews, etc.[6]). Situated within this logic of the anticipated social transformation of the Palestinian Arab minority, Palestinian Christians were frequently held up to be on the vanguard of this transformation.

However, despite the decline of the modernisation thesis, the notion that Palestinian Christians are more "modern" and, as a result, more akin to the values and culture of mainstream Israeli society remains popular. This is underscored by analyses which suggest that the alleged modernity of Palestinian Christians predates and, as such, is largely independent of the state's modernisation efforts with regards to the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority. Citing as evidence of this the central role of a "Western"-affiliated church school system, the Palestinian Christians are not only held up to be, by themselves, free-floating vectors of modernisation, but by virtue of their modern outlook, they are understood to preserve a degree of self-sufficiency and innovation which protects them from the worst excesses of the state's policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority.

Tsimhoni, for example, refers to the "Western open lifestyle" of Palestinian Christians, their more liberal dress code and their more frequent social contacts with Jews as being both a source of hope for future Jewish-Arab reconciliation and indicative of their higher tendency towards "integration" and "Israelisation".[7]

[5] Major proponents of the modernisation thesis include: Zarhi & Achiezra (1966) and Avineri (1972). For a critical perspective, see: Nakhleh (1977); Zureik (1977); Smooha (1978: 30-32, 120-122); Oppenheimer (1985: 261-262).
[6] See, for example, Landau (1969: 16, 206 and 1993: 18, 28-29); Rosenfeld (1968; 1978); Stendel (1973)
[7] Tsimhoni (2002: 132)

> Due to their Western and higher education than that of the Muslims, their prominence in the white-collar professions and their forming a largely urban middle class group, they have been amalgamated within Israeli society to a greater extent than the Muslims.[8]

This concept of Israelisation has been more generally used to describe the process of "internationalisation of Israeli identity in Arabs" whereby the social, cultural and political identity of Palestinian Arabs is understood to have undergone sufficient change so as to make it compatible with their new status both as a minority and as Israeli Arab citizens of the state. This one-sided process of social adjustment is said to result in increased levels of opportunity, personal contentment and acceptance for Palestinian Arabs as well as improved mutual understanding and coexistence between Jews and Arabs in society.[9]

Given the perceived proximity between Palestinian Christians and Israeli Jews in cultural and social terms, and the implied higher expectation of Palestinian Christian compatibility with Israeli Jewish society, it would be anticipated that this factor would diminish the necessity of control over this community and improve the relationship between them and the state. However, given the structural limits of integration within Israel, as described in Chapter One, this assumption is problematic. Critical anthropologist Amalia Sa'ar suggests instead a more complex and layered understanding of Palestinian Christian identity which challenges this assumption of Palestinian Christian difference and state preference. Sa'ar studied the identity of Palestinian Christians in the mixed city of Haifa and observed that while Palestinian Christians are "largely urban and better situated economically" their real identity is a shifting combination of seemingly contradictory tendencies towards Palestinian self-identification on a national level and Christian Arab self-identification on a social and cultural level which vary according to particular circumstances and needs and which, together, make up the complex arsenal of Palestinian Christian survival strategies in Israel. This latter tendency, which she describes as Christian ethnocentric behaviour, is "socially reproductive" in that "it complies with the state's policy toward the Palestinian minority" of "control, fragmentation and class discrimination".[10]

> By adopting a social-reproductive orientation – emphasising Christian cultural distinctiveness and drawing on the personal benefits that accompany political conformism – many Christians cultivate the hope (or the illusion) that they will be able to escape the class and civil subordination that they face as Palestinians in Israel. [11]

[8] Tsimhoni (2002: 149)
[9] Rouhana (1997: 116-120)
[10] Sa'ar (1998: 216)
[11] Sa'ar (1998: 216)

Notwithstanding this, Sa'ar argues that the parallel tendency of Palestinian Christians to emphasise their national identity above and beyond their religious identity represents the dominant tendency of the two. This national affiliation represents Palestinian Christians' "oppositional behaviour" to the state, thus pushing them further away from the Israeli Jewish social orbit. That such system-supportive and oppositional behaviour is understood by Sa'ar to co-exist even on the individual level of Palestinian Christian identity challenges the assumption that a "modern" outlook necessarily renders Palestinian Christians natural allies of the state and instead suggests a more complex relationship between the state and its Palestinian Christian citizens.

3.3 Ethnically Arab

Given the deeply divided nature of Israeli society along ethnic and national lines, and the particular political salience of the Jewish-Arab cleavage in society, Palestinian Christians are, as a result of their Arab ethnicity, inextricably associated with the wider "Arab problem" (or *ha-baaya ha-aravit*, as it is frequently referred to in Hebrew). In his seminal work on *Israeli Society*, Eisenstadt argued that "the parallel development of Zionist and Arab national movements" polarised the relations between Jewish and Arab communities, narrowing or limiting the state's options with regard to its minority which were, in turn, compounded by the "continuous state of hostility" between Israel and its Arab neighbours.[12] It is essentially the "ambivalence" of the Palestinian Arab minority to the state as a result of their "ties of kinship, ethnicity, or incipient nationalistic orientation" which is understood to have introduced limits to state-minority relations in Israel.[13] The Palestinian Christians are, within this analysis, not differentiated from this negative affiliation and associated ambivalence.

That the Arab identity of Palestinian Christians is an accepted and uncontested given, even in pro-establishment sociological accounts of the minority, is particularly noteworthy given the much greater efforts which some scholars have made in order to distinguish between "Arab" and "Druze" identities in society. While the "Arab" national affiliation of the Druze was re-categorised by the state into a distinct non-Arab Druze nationality in 1957, the "Arab" nationality of Palestinian Christians has never been challenged. This is confirmed

[12] Eisenstadt (1967b: 395)
[13] Eisenstadt (1967b: 396)

by the state's attitude towards military service by the Palestinian Arab minority. While the Druze are liable to perform compulsory military service, Palestinian Christians and Muslims are together exempted from compulsory military service on the basis of their ethno-national identity. This is not to suggest that the Druze are free from the restrictions of their Arab ethnicity when it comes to the national priorities of the state, but rather to highlight the broad level of consensus surrounding the Arab ethnicity of Palestinian Christians in Israel.

The impact of being Arab in Israel is also observed with regard to the state's land policy. The experience of Palestinian Christians under military rule clearly demonstrates the dominant role of ethnic affiliation in the determination of state policy towards them. While Eisenstadt defended the necessity of military rule within the context of security concerns arising from the concentration of Palestinian Arab citizens within sensitive border areas, it became evident that a "border area" was in fact any major area where Arabs were settled, regardless of their proximity to the territorial borders of the state.[14] As such, the entirety of the Galilee with its high concentration of Palestinian Christians came under strict military rule. In a study investigating the nature and practical administration of military rule on the Palestinian Arab population of Israel, Sabri Jiryis, a lawyer and Palestinian Christian from Israel, illustrates that within its tight territorial confinement of the Palestinian Arab minority, no exemption was made for Israel's Palestinian Christian population. The city of Nazareth, for example, which, at that time, was home to a Christian majority population, was designated a "closed area" and experienced a strict level of control, military curfews and police surveillance.[15]

However, military rule extended beyond the mere territorial containment of the Palestinian Arab minority. Jiryis observed three fundamental objectives of military rule: the expropriation of Arab land; the creation of Arab political dependence on the dominant Mapai Party; and the prevention of the development of an independent Arab party or national movement.[16] Each of these objectives equally affected the Palestinian Christians in Israel. With regard to the expropriation of land, Jiryis notes that the selective use and zoning of "closed areas" blocked Palestinian Arabs from entering their land for "security reasons" which were contrived to free up the land for Jewish settlement and development purposes.[17] Testifying to the shared experience of land expropriation, expulsion and destruction Jiryis

[14] Eisenstadt (1967b: 396)
[15] Jiryis (1969: 16, 20)
[16] Jiryis (1969: 44)
[17] Jiryis (1969: 44-45)

mentions the famous cases of two Palestinian Christian villages – Iqrit and Kfar Bir'am – which were destroyed by the state several years after the end of hostilities, in 1951 and 1953 respectively.[18] Iqrit and Bir'am were, however, not isolated cases. While Christian communities in cities such as Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa "were erased or reduced to ruins," their presence in the towns of Safad, Tiberias, Beisan and Beer Sheba was destroyed altogether.[19] Similarly, the village of Ain Karim (the home of John the Baptist) lost its Christian population while villages with significant Christian populations such as Al Bassa, al-Mansura, Birweh, Damoun, Suhmata, Mujeidil and Maa'lul were destroyed completely leaving several thousand Palestinian Christians homeless and displaced.[20] The Christian Maronite village of Eilaboun suffered a fate comparable to the now infamous Muslim village of Deir Yassin. Following military takeover in October 1948, twelve men from the village were shot by the IDF. The remainder of the population was forced to walk to Lebanon where they found temporary shelter in the Palestinian refugee camp south of Beirut called Ein al-Hilweh. The village itself was looted but not destroyed and, following international pressure, many of the village's refugees were subsequently allowed to return to their homes.[21]

These incidents highlight the common experience of Palestinian Christians during the *Nakba* and the subsequent period of military rule in Israel.[22] In fact, it can be argued that given the small size of the Palestinian Christian population, and the relatively small number of Christian-only villages in the territory that would become the State of Israel, Palestinian Christians have suffered disproportionately. Neither their small size nor their "modern" outlook tempered or moderated the state's wider expropriation policy. Considering "land expropriation [as] probably the most significant measure of deprivation" in society, Smooha

[18] Iqrit had a population of 500 mostly Greek Catholic Palestinians at the end of October 1948 when the IDF expelled its residents on so-called security grounds. After 2 years of internal displacement, the residents appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court to be allowed to return to their village. In July 1951 the court ruled in their favour. However, the military government refused to allow them to return and on Christmas Day 1951 the IDF destroyed the village. Soon after, the Jewish *kibbutz* of Yoqrat was established on Iqrit land. Kfar Bir'am, a village of 710 mostly Maronite Christians, which was also the only Maronite village in Israel, experienced a similar fate. Mansour (2004: 220, 236)

[19] In Haifa, for example, only 2 thousand of its original 26,570 Christians (in 1945) survived, while in Jaffa a population of approximately 15,000 Christians was reduced to less than a thousand. Only a handful of Christians remained of Acre's 2,330 Christians. Most notably, the 20,000 strong Christian community living in West Jerusalem was wiped out entirely with only a few hundred remaining on "as guards or maintenance workers" for church institutes. Mansour (2004: 219, 221-222)

[20] Mansour (2004: 219-220)

[21] Pappe (2006: 182-183); Morris (2004: 475, 479-480); Mansour (2004: 236-237)

[22] Estimates of the number of destroyed villages range from between 392 to 531. One source, which puts the figure at 425, states that 80 of these contained Palestinian Christian populations; and that of the 750-900,000 Palestinians who became refugees, 80,000 were Christians. Mansour (2004: 223-224)

argues that the government's policy of land expropriation affected every segment of the minority in Israel.

> It is estimated that Arabs lost 40% to 60% of their land between 1948 and 1967. According to our survey, 52% of all Arab families were affected by land expropriation. (...) Of those affected, two thirds report their loss as being heavy. Among the landowners, 38% of the Druzes, 64% of the Christians, 35% of Northern Bedouin, 81.5% of Negev Bedouin, and 70.5% of the non-Bedouin Moslems reportedly lost lands.[23]

Thus, Palestinian Christians suffered almost twice as much land losses than either of the Druze or northern Bedouin communities, and just under the level experienced by non-Bedouin Muslims. This similar experience of land loss was not restricted to the period of military hostilities but extended into the post-war years and the state's initiative to "Judaise the Galilee" (*Yehud ha-Galil*). This multi-faceted state policy aimed at creating Jewish territorial control over this predominantly Arab region as well as establishing Jewish demographic superiority within it through a system of land confiscations, Jewish settlement building and rezoning techniques. Falah has documented three separate stages in this "Judaisation" policy.

> In a *first stage* [from 1948 to 1974] the aim was to fill the "vacuum" left by the demolition of Palestinian villages during the 1948 war and its aftermath (notably in border areas), and to create a belt of Jewish settlements surrounding the remaining Palestinian villages and lands. The *second stage* [1974-1982] involved penetrating the "core" of greatest Palestinian population concentration through the implantation of new Jewish settlements, mainly small "lookout settlements" (*mitzpim*). This served to create further spatial fragmentation and discontinuity of Palestinian lands and villages. Since these efforts did not succeed in altering the relative demographic composition, it appears that a *third stage* was initiated after 1982 involving an attempt, on a micro-geographical level, to intervene in the economy and spatial expansion of individual Palestinian villages. Among other things, this involved introducing new jurisdictional boundaries to control and hem in the economic development of these villages while strengthening new Jewish economic foci so as to dominate the economic life in the region.[24]

Each of these three separate stages significantly affected each of the Palestinian Christian, Druze and Muslim communities. With regard to the first stage, for example, the "vacuum" left by the destruction of the Christian villages of Iqrit and Kfar Bir'am was filled by the construction of the Jewish settlements of Yoqrat and Baram. Nazareth – a city which not only housed a majority Christian population (until the late 1960s) but represented the centre of the Galilee – was also specifically targeted during this first stage by the construction of the Jewish "development town" of Natzeret Illit in 1957 (primarily for Jewish immigrants from

[23] Smooha (1989: 152)
[24] Falah (1991: 72)

the former Soviet Union) on lands which had been confiscated from Nazareth itself as well as from a number of other predominantly Christian neighbouring villages, such as Reine and Ein Mahil.[25] Designed to be a Jewish "buffer" town, the construction of Natzeret Illit aimed both to contain the physical expansion of the city and to curtail the political significance of Nazareth as Israel's unofficial "Arab capital". Another "development town", Maalot, was built in the same year on the edge of the predominantly Muslim-Christian village of Tarshiha.[26] The second stage of the government's "Judaisation" plan involved creating a "territorial belt" of Jewish settlements in the area, thereby shoring up their infrastructural strength and providing better security and prospects for further Jewish settlement.[27] While this stage provided for the economic control and the domination of the region's natural resources by and for its Jewish population, the third stage introduced a new era of direct intervention by the Jewish authorities in the affairs of Arab local authorities, particularly with regard to jurisdictional, development and zoning matters.[28] Using the banner of economic efficiency and municipal reform, a number of Arab municipalities were merged with each other thereby reducing the total number of local Arab municipalities in Israel.[29] The merger of a small number of Arab municipalities with larger neighbouring Jewish municipalities also took place which indirectly created Jewish political dominance over local Arab affairs in those areas. For example, Maalot-Tarshiha was the result of a merger between the Jewish municipality of Maalot and the Christian-majority municipality of Tarshiha. This policy significantly affected Palestinian Christian life in Israel as it reduced the number of localities in Israel possessing Palestinian Christian majorities thereby interrupting historic Palestinian Christian residence patterns in the region. Ultimately, it can be stated that, in these areas, the religious affiliation of the minority did not affect the ethnic determination of state policy.

Permanently trapped within competing national claims over the land, an intransigent Zionist discourse, and security concerns posed to the state by its Arab neighbours, the Palestinian Arab minority, including the Palestinian Christian segment of it, continues to be designated as a "security risk", as an "enemy-affiliated minority", as "the enemy within", as "potential fifth columnists", as a "Trojan horse" and even as a "second front" in Israel's wider struggle against both the Palestinians in the occupied territories and the Arab world,

[25] Falah (1992: 36)
[26] Tarshiha was bombed in 1948, killing 24 and burying a further 60 under rubble. Morris (2004: 473)
[27] Falah (1991: 76)
[28] Falah (1991: 79-81)
[29] Two more recent examples include the 2003 mergers of Baqa al-Gharbiyya and Jatt (forming Baqa-Jatt) and of Majdal Krum, Bana and Deir al-Assad (forming Shagor).

more generally.[30] Neither the different religious affiliation of Palestinian Christians nor their particular social outlook or orientations have protected them from the more general land policy of the state or resulted in a more lenient or preferential policy towards them. They are, in this respect, subject to the same measures of state control as the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority.

3.4 A Non-Muslim Minority

However, ethnicity alone does not explain the complex relationship of the state with its Palestinian Arab minority. With a following of just under one million citizens of the state, Islam is the religion of 15 per cent of the total Israeli population and of 82 per cent of the Palestinian Arab minority, making it the single largest non-Jewish religious minority in Israel. This relative demographic strength of Palestinian Muslims has major consequences for state-minority relations in Israel. Muslims represent a minority in Israel; yet, the impact of their wider regional majority status together with their external links and affiliations with the Muslim world has significantly affected Israeli assessments of their real and potential strength and power. To this is added the internal demographic threat of a fast multiplying Muslim population which challenges the stated national priority of maintaining a permanent Jewish majority in Israel. Therefore, local and regional Muslim demographic factors together represent important considerations in the state's negative assessment of its Muslim population and relatively better view of its Palestinian Christian population. This is compounded by the coincidence between Muslim distribution patterns and the state's land priorities.

> Constituting the vast majority of rural Arab settlements in Israel, the majority of conflicts with the Jews and the government have occurred with the Muslims, be it land confiscation, disputes over popular holy sites, or confrontations regarding tax raising.[31]

It can, therefore, be observed that certain Jewish national priorities, such as the maintenance of a Jewish majority and Jewish control over the land, have become defined in primarily religious and anti-Muslim terms. The impact of regional hostilities and the persistence of political deadlock between Israel and its Arab neighbours has swamped or at least clouded Israeli assessments of the capabilities of its own predominantly Muslim Palestinian Arab

[30] Schwarz (1959: 65); Smooha (1978: 47, 75, 83); Kaufman (1997: 3); Ghanem (2001: 166); Cook (2006: 31, 48) and Kanaaneh (2009: 2, 62).
[31] Tsimhoni (2002: 143)

minority.[32] If, according to Horowitz and Lissak, "the Muslim world sees Israel as an alien entity in the heart of a predominantly Moslem and Arab region" [33], then the religious and demographic significance of Israel's own Muslim population becomes accentuated and problematised to a degree which is well beyond the practical or political capacity of any other religious minority in Israel, whether Christian or Druze.

This close association between being Arab and Muslim in the Middle East has led to the two identities becoming fused in the minds of many. As a result, Arab nationalism and Islam are often seen as largely interchangeable expressions of the same monolithic identity, leaving very little conceptual space for reconciling Palestinian Christian political or national activity within it.[34] Furthermore, Muslims are described as showing a far greater inclination towards "radicalisation" and "extremism" than other religious groups as a result of their imputed theological heritage.[35] According to one analysis, the tendency of Palestinian Christians to follow secular and non-sectarian political options underscores the marginality of Palestinian Christians within the dominant religious-political framework of Arab-Islamic identity.[36]

One central determinant in the state's approach to its Palestinian Christian minority must, therefore, be its exceptional non-Muslim character. Religiously set apart from Palestinian Muslims, Palestinian Christians are "outnumbered" by Muslim Arabs and are, thereby, disconnected, to a significant degree, from the default conceptual framework of a demographically and territorially "threatening", "radical", "fundamentalist" and "violent" Muslim Arab Middle East.[37] Zureik considers one of the central features of Zionist thought to be the antagonistic and prejudicial view of Islam as a "militant, vengeful and conquering religion". Within this analysis, it is Islam itself and the resulting "Muslim mentality", not political circumstances, which are implied to be the root causes of the continued Arab hostility to the State of Israel.[38] However, this bias does not hold up to scrutiny.

> This one-sided explanation of Arab attitudes toward Israel, which is derived from an egocentric interpretation of Islam, and, as rightly pointed out by Said, has a pseudo-Gibbonian racist ring to it, fails to account for the well-known hostility displayed

[32] Karayanni (2006: 62)
[33] Horowitz & Lissak (1989: 10)
[34] Landau (1969: 11-12 and 1993: 36)
[35] Landau (1993: 37)
[36] Israeli (2002: 39)
[37] Israeli (2002: 65)
[38] Zureik (1979: 87); Avineri (1972: 5, 10)

throughout this century by Christian Arabs in Palestine toward Zionist colonisation of the area.[39]

The negative depiction of Muslims as tending more towards aggressive, intolerant, ignorant, intransigent, violent and, particularly, terrorist behaviour compares with the more benign stereotype of Palestinian Christians as choosing a more peaceful, moderate, accommodating and accepting path. To this is added the claim that Muslims are unfamiliar with, or unwilling to accept, due to various irrational, arrogant or bigoted reasons, their status as a minority in a non-Muslim society.[40] While these stereotypes fail to address the politically problematic behaviour of important numbers of Palestinian Christians, which will be detailed in a later section, the ideological and rhetorical power of these stereotypes to increase gaps and tensions within society is substantial. As a result, the depiction of Muslims in both Israeli and Palestinian Arab society as something of a school-ground bully is quite common. This is demonstrated with regard to analyses of village patterns of communal living amongst Arabs in Israel. In describing the regional distribution of the Druze in Israel, Landau, for example, described a history of "long, cruel persecution" of the Druze by Muslims as motivating their particular residential patterns.[41] In his study on the Druze in Israel, Ben-Dor also argued that, as a result of greater levels of Muslim intransigence and intolerance towards other groups in society, the Druze have historically preferred to live, where possible, with Christians with whom they reputedly have greater mutual understanding and respect.[42]

Accounting for their allegedly more pronounced feelings of hostility and resentment towards the state as a result of their historical memory of social and political dominance within the Middle East, the Muslim community in Israel is often described as an "ex-majority minority".[43] Palestinian Christians, by contrast, are portrayed as being familiar with their minority status and, as a result, more willing to adapt to and accept their new minority status in Israel. One proponent of this argument linking historical group memory as a minority with a concept of political maturity suggests that the Muslims, lacking experience of being

[39] Zureik (1979: 87)
[40] Landau (1993: 36)
[41] Landau (1969: 12)
[42] Ben-Dor (1979: 97-98, 106)
[43] Smooha (1978)

organised as a *millet*, have had a difficult transition to their new status as a minority in the Jewish state compared with other groups.[44]

More recently, this characterisation is demonstrated by the increasingly popular description of Palestinian Christians as a "minority within a minority", both as marginalised Arabs in the Jewish State and as a collections of threatened Christian communities in the Muslim Middle East.[45] One proponent of Palestinian Christians as a "minority within a minority", Tsimhoni situates her analysis within the context of increasing patterns of Christian emigration from the Middle East. She observes the "loss" of traditionally Christian-majority urban centres such as Nazareth and Shfar'amr and the "collapse of the inter-communal balance" in the face of a growing Muslim population and an increasingly dominant Islamic movement.[46] This characterisation is matched by her description of Palestinian Christians as the "weaker party" in an allegedly growing number of Muslim-Christian conflicts brought about by the transformation of Palestinian Arab society into an increasingly violent and intolerant "Muslim environment".

> The major cause for their growing sense of insecurity and dependence on the Arab Muslim environment has been the rise of the Islamic movement in Israel. The official declarations of the movement in Israel are cautiously phrased, speaking of the common fate with "our Christian brethren" as well as the need for cooperation with them in the common national struggle. However, no public discourse has taken place regarding the position of the Christians in the future Islamic state. But nobody is misled regarding the Christians' place in such a state bearing in mind the traditional *dhimmi* position of the Christians and Jews in Islam.
>
> Since the early 1990s, a growing number of verbal incitements against Christians and Jews have been heard in the mosque and printed in the newspapers of the Islamic movement. (...)
>
> The growing Islamic influence can be noticed in many Muslim neighbourhoods. The observance of the fast of Ramadan in public has become commonplace, more girls are clothed in Muslim dress, including head cover, even though this phenomenon is still less evident than in neighbouring Arab countries. Loudspeakers call for prayers and chapters of the Qur'an are broadcast for hours at a time, reminding the Christian neighbours that they live in a Muslim society. The general atmosphere in the Arab street denounces the Western open lifestyle as "Israelisation" (*Asralah*) and the maintaining of social contacts with Jews as "collaboration". And many of those to be blamed for these "faults" are Christians. Businessmen and professionals who cater for the Muslim majority need to adapt themselves to the general atmosphere lest they be boycotted economically and socially.[47]

[44] Stendel (1973)
[45] Landau (1993: 28); Tsimhoni (2002)
[46] Tsimhoni (2002: 124-125, 131)
[47] Tsimhoni (2002: 132)

The marginal status of Palestinian Christians within Palestinian Arab society is frequently understood to be caused by Muslim anti-Christian feeling, whether this is as a result of resentment or jealousy of the relative socio-economic advantage of Christians in society; religious antipathy or bigotry against Christianity; their association with the period of the Crusades or of European colonialism; or their more recent association with either Christian evangelicalism or US foreign policy in the region. Raphael Israeli has written extensively on "fundamentalist Islam" and Muslim-Christian relations in Israel. According to his analysis, Muslim attitudes towards Christians are heavily influenced by the latter's historical designation as a *dhimmi* people during the period of Muslim rule in the Middle East and their later status as a separate religious community, or *millet*, from Ottoman times, as well as their false association with the worst excesses of European intervention in the region.[48] However, he also observes that Christians are singled out by "Islamists" due to their more modern, secular, liberal and westernised attitudes which they allegedly share with the Jewish majority.

> The outcome flows evidently from these hallowed assumptions shared by Muslim fundamentalists: not only are Jews and Christians detested in their own right, but being the long arms of the West in the Islamic world, they are considered as its agents in its endeavour to undermine Islam, corrupt it from within, alienate its youth by their permissiveness and immoral conduct, and penetrate its educational systems in order to destroy them, etc.[49]

If this analysis of Palestinian Christians as a scared, threatened, insecure and vulnerable "minority within a minority" is correct, the degree of threat which Palestinian Christians could pose to the Jewish state, or which is associated with this community, should be minimal. This non-threatening nature of Palestinian Christians is underlined by their practical disconnection from the regional demographic majority (of Muslims) and the absence of any political or religious links with political Islam. Furthermore, given the common experience which is suggested to exist between Christians and Jews in the region, a more sympathetic, empathetic and supportive policy towards Palestinian Christians would be expected to follow. It should, therefore, be anticipated that this reported Jewish affinity and solidarity with the plight of Palestinian Christians, together with these other pragmatic demographic and territorial concerns, should minimise, or eliminate altogether, the necessity of control over this community.

[48] Israeli (2002: 6-7, 9, 10, 23)
[49] Israeli (2002: 67)

3.5 A Small, Insignificant Community

At just 1.7 per cent of the total Israeli population and 8.3 per cent of the Palestinian Arab minority, Palestinian Christians represent a very small segment of both societies. Their small size has had two major consequences for the formulation of state policy towards them. The first of these has already been encountered. Given their small size relative to both the Jewish majority and the predominantly Muslim Palestinian minority, Palestinian Christians do not constitute the same "lurking demographic threat" which is otherwise associated with the predominantly Muslim Palestinian Arab minority.[50] Nor are they sufficiently plentiful in the region to constitute a serious (independent) territorial threat. The non-threatening nature of Palestinian Christian demography is underlined by their unchallenging and inconsequential socio-economic characteristics. Their wide regional distribution together with their low fertility rates and high rates of emigration, remove the sense of threat which is otherwise associated with the Palestinian Arab minority.[51]

However, a second consequence of the small Palestinian Christian demographic is their negligible significance relative to the overall electoral weight of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israeli politics. The electoral significance of a minority, which together makes up approximately 20 per cent of the total population of the state, cannot be overstated. During the period of military rule, the politically disorganised and weakened Palestinian Arab minority was quickly identified as a valuable resource to the state in that it constituted an accessible "floating Arab vote" which could easily be harnessed to bolster the power and hegemonic status of the ruling Mapai party.[52] However, its primary function was one of control, particularly with regard to its use of affiliated Arab lists.

> The Zionist parties, and especially Mapai, unwilling to accept Arab members, encouraged leaders of clans, communities or religions to set up satellite lists that could attract Arab electoral support. This approach provided the Jewish parties with an instrument for controlling the Arabs and a means for mobilising their votes and support in Knesset.[53]

Another source clarifies the purpose of these lists even further:

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[50] Kanaaneh (2009: 2)
[51] See, for example, Stendel (1973); Friedlander & Golscheider (1974); Friedlander, Eisenbach & Goldscheider (1979)
[52] Kaufman (1997: 83, 113-114)
[53] Ghanem (2001: 41)

> Arab affiliated lists were one of the most efficient instruments of channelling Arab votes, in particular in the late 1960s. These affiliated lists were initiated and backed by Zionist parties, mainly the Labour Party, which was the principal force in the Israeli establishment until 1977. The object of these lists was not the political mobilisation of the Arab population but rather the "catching" of Arab votes through traditional means of persuasion. The structure of the Arab affiliated lists was tailored to fit the deep social territorialisation of the Arab population and the traditional character.[54]

Therefore, dependent Arab lists such as "Agriculture and Development", "Progress and Work" and "Cooperation and Brotherhood" which were created in the run-up to national elections were composed of various influential leaders within the traditional Arab elite who were willing and able to bring to the Israeli political table the voting power of their area, religious community or tribe in return for personal and family benefits and privileges. They demonstrated total subservience to the demands and ethnic priorities of the state, including, at one point, in 1961, voting in favour of a continuation of military rule.[55]

One vote-catching tactic concerned the selection of Arab candidates who would run on these lists. As the authorities were interested in co-opting those who could secure the widest revenue of votes possible, "men who have commanded large religious, sectional or kinship followings" were sought out.[56] While several Christian representatives were included on Arab lists – most notably Amin-Salim Jarjora, Masaad Kassis, Yusuf Hamis and Elias Nakhleh – the potential number of votes which these representatives could furnish paled in comparison with, for example, Muslim sectarian leaders.

However, Mapai was not the only Zionist Party interested in the "collecting" the Arab vote. The National Religious Party (NRP), which was founded in 1956 as a Mizrahi religious party and which dominated several key government ministries for many years, also sought out the Arab vote. Not only did it control the budgets for Arab municipalities and become closely involved in their internal affairs, it mobilised religious differences within the minority for its own sake, inspiring what Landau describes as their "horse-trading" electoral strategies within the Arab sector.[57]

Thus, the insecure atmosphere of military rule and the political cooptation of traditional Arab leaders by the authorities proved very effective in capturing the Arab vote. In the seven parliamentary elections which took place between 1949 and 1969, for example,

[54] Al Haj (1995: 142
[55] Ghanem (2001: 41-42)
[56] Lustick (1980: 208-209); al Haj (1995b: 143)
[57] Oppenheimer (1985: 276); Landau (1969: 143-144) and Ghanem (2001: 143-144)

Zionist parties and their affiliated Arab lists secured an overwhelming majority (80 per cent) of the Palestinian Arab vote, compared with an average electoral return of only 20 per cent for the only opposition party in Israel at that time, the Israeli Communist Party.[58] In 1951 alone, 84 per cent of all Arab voters voted for Zionist parties and their affiliated lists.[59] The majority of these (55 per cent) voted for Arab lists. Despite the fact that Zionist parties and their affiliated lists together continued to secure the majority of the Arab electorate's vote until 1984, the appeal of Arab lists had already begun to decline by the early 1970s as a result of the termination of military rule and the increasing politicisation of the Arab electorate.

Changes in the political arena also changed the role of the Arab vote. Previously, the purpose of Arab lists had been limited to the selective cooptation, containment and control of the Palestinian Arab minority in an uncontested, primarily one-party system of Jewish government. But with the territorial enlargement of the state following the 1967 war the state's focus expanded to include the Palestinians of the newly occupied territories thus reducing the centrality of Palestinian Arab citizens within the national security discourse of the state. Jewish and, in many cases, messianic religious politics also entered the fray with new vigour, deepening the significance of religious affiliation throughout society as a whole.[60] The victory of Likud in the 1977 elections introduced not only a new period of political competition, but a growing trend towards right-wing religious Jewish nationalism in Israeli politics. Owing its electoral success to the new national religious fervour which was gripping society; to the untapped electoral base of Jewish settlers in the occupied territories; and, internally, to the powerful protest vote of Israel's underprivileged *Mizrahi* population, Likud's electoral strategy towards the Palestinian Arab minority operationalised religious, residential and so-called ethnic differences within the minority in order to win the Arab vote and to secure its own political future.[61] By contrast, Labour's electoral strategy within the Arab sector focused on its apparently more "dovish" and inclusive nature – in other words, its greater willingness to engage in a meaningful peace process with the PLO and its promises for greater integration of Palestinian Arabs in society.[62] As a result, the role and function not only of the Arab vote but of internal differences within the Palestinian Arab minority, which had always played a factor in Israeli policy, became much more centralised from this period onwards. In several cases, they became decisive factors in determining the outcome of

[58] Ghanem (2001: 201)
[59] Smooha (1997: 215); Ghanem (2001: 201)
[60] See Rouhana (1997: 11-23, 106) for his discussion of the attenuation of religious identity in Israeli society.
[61] Herzog (1985: 163, 166)
[62] Rouhana (1997: 102)

elections, and with the emergence of direct and competitive electoral strategies which increasingly recognised the numerical significance of religious cleavages and differences in society, the Arab vote itself became politicised.

The Labour Party has traditionally been the most popular Zionist Party among the Arab electorate. When, in 1981, it cancelled its support for affiliated Arab lists and started running Arab candidates directly on its own list, Labour's popularity within the Arab sector jumped to 29 per cent from its 1977 electoral returns of 11 per cent.[63] The two Arab Labour candidates which were selected to represent Labour (then running as Alignment) in the 1981 elections were Hamad Khalaily from Sakhnin and Muhammad Wattad from Jatt. However, neither of these two candidates was Christian (one was Muslim and the other Druze). In fact, the first Christian to be elected to Knesset on behalf of the Labour Party was elected fourteen years later, in 1992, a full twenty years after Arabs were first allowed to join the Labour Party. The 1992 elections highlight the issue of reserved seats for Arab candidates on the electoral lists of Zionist parties as a strategic component of Israeli electoral *realpolitik*. Observing that "religious origin of candidates played a major role in the composition of most political parties", Al Haj notes the decision by the Labour Party to allocate its twentieth slot for a Muslim candidate (Nawwaf Mazalha); the thirtieth slot for a Druze (Saleh Tarif); and only a much lower and more marginal slot for the Christian candidate (Hanna Haddad).

> This decision has outraged Christian members of the Labour Party, since the Christian candidate was pushed into a marginal slot. Leaders of the Labour Party sought to prevent a crisis with the Christian community. Subsequently a Christian candidate was allotted to the forty-sixth place.[64]

Clearly, the Christian slot must have been moved up subsequent to this complaint as Labour only secured 44 seats in the 1992 parliamentary elections, and Haddad was allotted one of them. Only one other Palestinian Christian has ever been elected to represent the Labour Party in the Israeli Knesset – Nadia Hilou – who was elected 14 years later and served only one term.

The electoral strategies of other Zionist parties are also important, particularly given their growing popularity among the Arab electorate. The unusual appeal of the Arab vote to religious and right-wing Jewish parties continued after the end of military rule. Writing about the Druze community in Israel, Oppenheimer observes the role of these parties in

[63] Ghanem (2001: 201)
[64] Al Haj (1995b: 148)

politicising and manipulating the newly created Druze national identity for their own electoral purposes.[65] Druze representation on these parties' electoral lists is common. In elections to the 10th Knesset in 1981, for example, 22 per cent of the Arab electorate voted for "other Zionist parties" which included the NRP and Likud, resulting in the election of only one Arab candidate – a Druze, who ran on behalf of the Likud Party.[66] Moreover, in the five elections which took place between 1992 and 2006, non-Labour Zionist Parties attracted, on average, 21.3 per cent of the Arab vote, compared with 12.9 per cent electoral returns for the Labour Party itself. While no Arab has ever represented the NRP or Shas, a Druze was, for the first time, elected MK for the ultra-nationalist right-wing religious party of Avigdor Lieberman, Yisrael Beitenu, in the last, 18th Knesset (of 2009). Palestinian Christians, by contrast, have never been elected to the Israeli parliament for any Jewish religious or right-wing nationalist party. Therefore, it would appear that both the appeal and the electoral strategies of these parties is limited primarily to the Muslim and Druze communities.

As a result, it can be argued that the numbers game remains an important factor in the determination of Israel's electoral policy towards its Palestinian Arab minority. The political influence of traditional elites and sectarian leaders has declined as the power of practical numbers and demography has taken over. This is particularly so given the consistently high turnout rates of Arab voters in Israeli elections until recently.[67] In the fifteen parliamentary elections which have taken place between 1949 and 1999, for example, an average Arab turnout of 78 per cent was recorded.[68] Until the 2001 elections, Arab voter-turnout was usually as high as Jewish voter turnout, making the Arab vote not only important to the Labour Party in its attempt to unhinge the power of Likud, but "an attractive pool of voters for several parties including Likud and the Orthodox Party".[69] As such, the strategic importance of a numerically superior and "predominantly Muslim and conservative electorate", together with the sectarian electoral policies of Zionist parties, becomes emphasised, while the relative importance of demographically smaller segments of the minority diminishes accordingly.[70] The electoral insignificance of Palestinian Christians is understood, within this context, to be determined by "the changing attitudes of the governments, which seek out votes for their parties among the Muslim majority of the

[65] Oppenheimer (1985: 276)
[66] Ghanem (2001: 201)
[67] Rouhana (1997: 96). According to Ghanem & Mustafa (2007) Arab voter turnout plummeted following the events of October 2000.
[68] Ghanem (2001: 201)
[69] Peretz & Doron (1997: 98)
[70] Frisch (2001: 160)

Palestinian Arabs in Israel".[71] However, it is understood that the functionality of the Arab vote is limited to particular situations in which a tightly fought contest between Israeli Jewish political factions is anticipated and so long as Arab voter turn-outs remain high. Thereafter, or otherwise, it is disposable.

3.6 Political Behaviour & the Issue of Loyalty

Given their Arab ethnicity, the political behaviour of Palestinian Christians introduces potential roadblocks in the state's attitude towards them. The question of the loyalty and trustworthiness of the minority as a whole has dominated analyses of even this small, "westernised", non-Muslim, "minority within a minority". Notwithstanding their popular description as relatively moderate and "peace-loving" community[72], an alternative line of thinking emerged early on which cautioned that while this perceived politically moderate behaviour is desirable, it can only be understood as a forced consequence of their relatively isolated and vulnerable position as a small religious minority and that, ultimately, their allegiance to the state cannot be given too much trust or credence. Schwarz, for example, quotes Samuel Divon, former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Arab Affairs, as saying that only a few Palestinian Christians can be considered as belonging to the category of "Arabs who really accept us"[73], while Peres and Yuval-Davis argue that loyalty shown by any segment of the Arab minority in Israel to the state is a reserved type of loyalty based upon their pragmatic awareness of the new political realities which surround them[74]. The "real" attitude of the minority towards the state is, therefore, understood to be concealed by a "mask" of apparent political quiescence, pragmatism and indifference.[75]

Independent political activity within the Palestinian Arab minority has traditionally been viewed with a heavy dose of mistrust, understood as it to emanate from fundamentally "radical", "extremist" and "ideological" motivations. This is particularly true of the authorities' attitudes towards Palestinian Arab activity within the Israeli Communist Party (ICP), known by the Hebrew acronym *Maki* before it split in 1965 to form the first Arab-dominated party in Israeli politics, *Rakah*, which later merged with other left-wing parties in

[71] Tsimhoni (2002: 149)
[72] Peretz's (1958: 5, 45)
[73] Schwarz (1958: 140-141)
[74] Peres & Yuval-Davis (1969: 227-228)
[75] Peres & Yuval Davis (1969: 226, 231)

the 1970s to form *Hadash*, also known as the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE).[76]

Until the 1990s, the leadership structure of *Rakah* was dominated by secular Palestinian Christians (of predominantly Greek Orthodox background) from key urban centres such as Haifa and Nazareth.[77] Of the ten Palestinian Arabs who represented the leadership cadre of *Maki* between 1948 and 1959, nine were Christian.[78] Tawfiq Toubi, a Christian from Haifa, became the sole Palestinian Christian to represent *Maki* in the four seats which they took in Israel's First Knesset (1949-1951). In the Second Knesset (1951-1955), when the number of seats controlled by *Maki* increased to seven, Emile Habibi (also from Haifa) joined *Maki* as the second Palestinian Arab and Christian MK. Over the course of the next three Knessets (from 1955-1965) when *Maki* lost seats, dropping to just four seats during the Fourth Knesset (1959-1961), Toubi retained his seat, indicating his centrality to the party. Similarly, Israel's only Arabic daily newspaper, *al-Ittihad*, which is also the official organ of the Arab Communist Party in Israel, was founded in Haifa by three Palestinian Christians (Emile Habibi, Fu'ad Nassar and Emile Touma). It has suffered from periodic censorship and other government restrictions both during and after military rule.[79]

One common explanation for the relatively inflated presence of Palestinian Christians within the ICP/*Rakah* stems from the universal, inclusive, secular and nationalist ideology which it espouses and the notion that it represented the best "path to [their] inclusion in the national community".[80] Some Israeli Jewish analyses have criticised this heavy Christian involvement as a form of political pragmatism which is ultimately delusional and contrary to the "real" long-term interests of Christians in Israel and the Middle East.[81] However, what is not disputed is the prominent position of a significant segment of the Christian population in the development and leadership of what has been viewed, by the state, as the "threatening" or "radical" political activity of this party. As one analysis puts it:

> "[T]he fact that the Arab Christian elite was more intensely involved in political activity than the Muslims served to confirm the views of many sections of the Israeli establishment that they constituted a threat. The major role played by Christian Arabs in

[76] Kaufman (1997: 4, 24)
[77] Kaufman (1997: 25, 27, 48); Lustick (1980: 244)
[78] Kaufman (1997: 49)
[79] Kaufman (1997: 26); Ghanem (2001: 20, 66)
[80] Sa'ar (1998: 226)
[81] Tsimhoni (2002: 133)

> the development of the Communist movement in Israel and in Arab nationalist activity also influenced this official view."[82]

Although defined as a sectarian party from the point of view of the Israeli authorities (whereby sectarian, in this instance, came to be defined as both Arab and Christian), *Rakah*/DFPE was the first party to successfully mobilise the growing Arab protest vote in Israel on the basis of a universal, secular and non-traditional national platform. It promoted an integrated form of Arab identity stressing the common ethnicity and national destiny of all Palestinian Arabs in Israel; it demanded an end to military rule and called for equality and justice for Arab citizens in Israel; it opposed the government's land expropriation efforts and organised several conferences, strikes as well as public protests against them, most notably Land Day, 1976; it pushed for a just peace with the Palestinians and the recognition of Palestinians inside Israel as a national minority; it opposed military service for Arabs; and accused traditional Arab political leaders who served on Arab affiliated lists of treason.[83]

As such, *Rakah* came to both represent and spearhead the Arab cause in Israel, and while it remained marginal within Israeli national politics until the mid-1970s, it became a successful opposition party to the Israeli political establishment, leading to its designation by the authorities as a "militant", "radical" and "ideological" organisation.[84] Given its vocal political position, both *Rakah* and its predecessor *Maki* experienced persistent harassment by the authorities who were extremely hostile to it. For example, Ghanem reports that a number of Arab teachers and civil servants were dismissed from their jobs during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s for expressing sympathy with the ICP and that the authorities also encouraged Arabs to spy on neighbours who were known for their Communist sympathies or party affiliations. Lustick also reports the designation of *Rakah* by government officials as a serious source of threat to the state and as a "hostile element" which must be actively countered.[85]

This designation as a "hostile element" came primarily as a result of the incremental gains made by *Rakah* in successive Israeli national and municipal elections. In the five parliamentary elections before the *Rakah-Maki* split of 1965, for example, the ICP had managed to secure an average of only 17 per cent of the Arab vote. However, by the parliamentary elections of 1965, this figure had already increased to 23 per cent, continuing

[82] Bialer (2005: 127)
[83] Kaufman (1997: 60, 66-67); Ghanem (2001: 75-89)
[84] Smooha (1978: 224); Ghanem (2001: 32)
[85] Lustick (1980: 133, 243, 255, 332)

thereafter to grow until 1977 when *Rakah* reached its highest ever recorded electoral returns of 50 per cent of the Arab vote.[86] This impressive trend was mirrored in the local municipal elections when, in 1975, *Rakah*/DFPE succeeded for the first time in taking control of an Arab local council in Israel.[87] That this local council happened to be located in Nazareth – the largest Arab city in Israel and the city with the highest number of Palestinian Christians – underscored both Rakah's victory and its connection with Palestinian Christian political activity in Israel.

Rakah's electoral victory became symptomatic of a wider trend which was negatively perceived as the "radicalisation" and "Palestinianisation" of Arab society in Israel. It is no coincidence that this new sociological approach also emerged in the 1970s. Peres and Landau both applied the radicalisation thesis to their analyses of Palestinian Arab political behaviour, arguing that the minority's so-called radicalisation was the consequence, or flip-side, of their modernisation in Israeli society. Within this rationale, "modernisation" provided the minority with new educational benefits and social opportunities, but was unable to affect their deeper and more "radical" emotional attachments to Arab nationalism. The relationship between modernisation and nationalism, therefore, is understood to equip a hostile minority with the practical skills to manipulate and exploit the "loop holes" created by the liberalisation of Israeli policy following the termination of military rule in 1966.[88] And while Smooha countered the radicalisation perspective with his own "politicisation" thesis which saw the political mobilisation of the Palestinian Arab minority as a natural consequence of their increased opportunities, the changes within society, and the growing level of Palestinian Arab dissatisfaction with their discriminated status in society, the radicalisation thesis proved more influential in government circles.[89]

The contents of the leaked 1976 Koenig Report, for example, made several direct references to the threat posed by both *Rakah* and the Nazareth municipality. It warns of "the nationalist manifestations in the voting in the Nazareth municipal elections on 9 December 1975" and "the devious and unexpected call-up of the inhabitants of the inhabitants of Nazareth to help the municipality pay off pressing debts, which at that stage eased *Rakah*'s burden in running the town". These "pressing debts" were accrued as a result of budget cuts placed by the central authorities on the Nazareth municipality in an attempt to weaken its

[86] Ghanem (2001: 201)
[87] Rabinowitz (2001: 104)
[88] Peres & Yuval-Davis (1969); Peres (1971). Summarised by Smooha (1989: 3-9)
[89] Smooha (1989: 9-17, 169, 177)

ability to function effectively at this critical time. In addition to a system of "rewards and punishments," the Report also recommends providing an alternative political "valve for communities still sitting on the fence", whether through *Mapai*-affiliated lists or through the promotion of alternative political movements and parties among the minority in order to divide and weaken the strength of *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* and the role of Nazareth in promoting Arab nationalism.[90] In this regard, a significant proportion of its energies at this time were spent in promoting the fledgling Islamic movement, a policy which would later backfire upon the state. Otherwise, the report suggested "the coordination of a smear campaign against Rakah activists, and the harassment of 'all negative personalities at all levels and all institutions'".[91]

Rakah/DFPE does not represent the only oppositional political movement within which Palestinian Christians have played a central role. The rise to prominence of *Balad* – also known as the National Democratic Assembly (NDA) or *at-Tajamu'a* in Arabic – which was founded in 1996 by Nazareth-born Azmi Bishara further undermined the political hegemony of *Hadash*/DFPE and its unique representative function among Palestinian Arabs.[92] Unlike the Islamic movement, which offered a limited sectarian political path, *Balad* proposed a novel non-sectarian and ideological alternative to *Hadash*/DFPE.[93] In challenging the Jewish character of the state, it demanded that Israel become a fully democratic state by becoming "a state for all its citizens". It also led the drive for recognition of the collective rights of Palestinian Arabs as a "national minority".[94] Moreover, it exposed a number of weaknesses and shortcomings of the *Hadash*/DFPE platform. Seen as increasingly ineffective, rigid, traditionalist, old-fashioned and weak, *Hadash*/DFPE was criticised for not making enough of an effort to move with the times and to incorporate younger Palestinians, particularly Muslims, within its ranks.[95] It was also criticised for concentrating on its international character as a communist party and its regional role as Palestinian representative to the detriment of local Palestinian interests and needs.[96] Moreover it was criticised for its conformity to the political status quo (particularly the

[90] MERIP Reports, No. 51 (1976); Smooha (1982: 86); Emmett (1997: 547)
[91] Lustick (1980: 255-256)
[92] Kaufman (1997: 14)
[93] Peled (2001b: 384)
[94] Rekhess (2007: 12-14), Fraser & Shabat (2003: 16-36)
[95] Kaufman (1997: 48-50); Tsimhoni (2002: 134); Peled (2001b: 381)
[96] Kaufman (1997: 50), Rekhess (2007: 8-9)

Jewish character of the state) and its ambiguous position on the issue of the national identity and status of Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel as a national minority.[97]

The issue of loyalty, therefore, is a deeply important and central aspect of the Israeli establishment's analysis of the Palestinian Arab minority. In terms of their overall trustworthiness, the Palestinian Christians, while considered more trustworthy than Muslims, are not considered to fall into the same category of trust as the Druze who are still held up to be "model Arabs" in society.[98] Thus, "positive elements" within the minority are continually singled out from what were perceived to be "negative elements", with the distinction between both categories largely rooted in religious affiliation. Thus, the Druze are generally observed to be the most loyal segment of the minority, followed by the Christians, and then the Muslims who are relegated to the most potentially disloyal and distrusted position.[99] Perceptions of loyalty are not, however, differentiated according to religion alone, but sometimes also by religious sect, and even at times by cultural groupings within religions. Rosenfeld, for example, suggests that the ranking which best describes Israeli establishment perceptions of the minority is, by descending order of trustworthiness: the Druze, the Maronites, the Bedouins, the Greek Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, followed by the Muslims, who are relegated to the lowest rank. This suggests that although the Christians rank higher than the Muslims, perceptions of their political behaviour are divided and not uniform.[100]

3.7 Regional Links

The relevance of regional links in the determination of state policy has previously been encountered with regard to the state's determination of its Muslim population. As a religious minority in the region, Palestinian Christians do not suffer from this same negative association. This is mitigated by the common relevance of their Arab ethnicity which has contributed to their association with the wider "Arab problem" and "threat". However, religion and demography do not represent the only areas of interest to the state in its orientation towards Palestinian Christians. Regional links and contacts also represent an important factor to the state, albeit in a functional sense.

[97] Rekhess (2007: 8)
[98] Schwarz (1958: 148)
[99] Lustick (1992: 78)
[100] Rosenfeld (1978: 392)

While the Druze are – with the exception of the incorporated Druze population of the Golan Heights – cut off from their co-religionists in neighbouring Arab countries, Palestinian Christians continue to have important links with Christians not only in the West Bank and Jordan, but also in Lebanon and Syria.[101] Given their small numbers, these links do not constitute a grave threat to the state. What they can offer the state, however, is a unique point of leverage or manoeuvrability. Referring to their "consanguinity across the borders", Landau addresses historic patterns of Palestinian Christian migration and intermarriage, which was, in turn, compounded by the historic location of much of the northern Galilee within the territorial boundaries of Greater Syria.[102]

While each of the Christian denominations in Israel share communal links with neighbouring communities in Lebanon, the Maronite community demonstrates the greatest communal solidarity with their co-religionists abroad, notably in Lebanon. Contributing to this accentuated affiliation is the fact that the Maronite population of Israel is very small, amounting to less than 8 thousand individuals in all. Furthermore, their weak demographic presence is underscored by their isolated regional distribution along Israel's border with Lebanon. All of these factors have enhanced the strong religious-based transnational identity of Maronites in Israel. Beyond the particular identity of the Maronite community in Israel, Lebanon itself represents a particular emotional significance to Palestinian Christians in Israel. As the only country in the Middle East with a sizeable Christian minority, Christians in Lebanon benefit from a range of personal and political freedoms and powers unknown to any other Christian minority in the region. However, the diversity of Lebanon's social and religious landscape, together with its flawed confessional system of governance, has simultaneously proven to be a major source of political instability and violence both in the country and the region, providing political opportunities which have not passed its neighbour and political adversary by unnoticed.

Discussing government strategies to quash the increasing power of *Rakah* in the 1970s, particularly in the run-up to the 1975 municipal elections, Oppenheimer observes the ultimately unsuccessful attempts made by Israeli government and party officials to use the civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990) to stir up religious strife between Christians and Muslims in Israel.

[101] Ben-Dor (1979: 108)
[102] Landau (1969: 30)

> In this election, the non-sectarian alliance of the Communist Party (RAQAH) and members of the local professional intelligentsia was successful in a town with a mixed Christian and Muslim population. This happened in spite of attempts by Government representatives to exploit the tragic events in Lebanon in order to persuade the electorate that the real issue in Nazareth was the religious division, in the hope of thereby splitting support for the radical list and attracting votes for Labour-sponsored candidates.[103]

While the regional links of Palestinian Christians only represent a small factor in the determination of the state's attitude towards its Palestinian Christian population, they are nonetheless important as they demonstrate the subordinate and functional role of local Palestinian Christian needs to broader Israeli Jewish national priorities.

3.8 Absence of a Central Communal Leadership

That religious affiliation represents a central organising principle both of Arab communities within the Middle East and of the Jewish state is well known. That Israel also extends separate religious arrangements to its religious minorities which are legally recognised under the law is similarly well documented. Several studies have shown how such separate religious accommodations can be used as an instrument of control against the minority.[104] However, this section is specifically interested in observing how structural differences between religious communities have affected the state's attitudes towards and interactions with Palestinian Christians in Israel. The strengths and weaknesses of communal organisation in successfully navigating state-minority relations in an ethnocratic state are often overlooked or misrepresented. The presence or absence of internal fragmentation within each religious segment of the minority has important consequences not only for the organisational and leadership structure of each community – whether on a religious, social or political level – but it also determines to a significant extent the manner in which the state can engage with it. As a result, the degree to which internal homogeneity and a resulting single administrative or leadership structure provides a better or more effective mechanism to represent or defend communal interests compared with a heterogeneous community possessing several independent and separate administrative powers and structures must be dealt with. Specifically, is internal fragmentation necessarily a source of weakness and vulnerability for minority communities?

[103] Oppenheimer (1985: 265)
[104] See, for example, Karayanni (2006: 67) and Hajjar (1996 and 2000).

The Muslim population of Israel receives legal recognition from the state as a distinct religious community. However, as a result of the homogeneous nature of Islam in Israel – Israeli Muslims belong almost entirely to the Sunni branch of Islam – the communal organisation of Muslim affairs in Israel follows a highly centralised and singular pattern. As part of the system of religious accommodation in Israel, Muslim religious authorities possess one of the widest jurisdictional authorities of any minority religious group in Israel.[105] These authorities administer to the "personal status" of all Muslim citizens of the state, such as marriage and divorce, as well as the administration over all Muslim religious lands and endowments (known as *waqf*, plural *awqaf).* As part of the system of separate religious accommodation in Israel, Muslims possess separate communal structures and a judicial court system based on the *shari'a* and administered by a council of religious judges, known as *qadis.* While possessing the widest jurisdictional authority of any minority religious community in Israel, the Muslim authorities have, however, also suffered from the highest level of state interference in, and control over, their affairs which is in no small way connected to the high level of threat and suspicion that is associated with this community. Karayanni details Israeli state interference in Muslim religious affairs as follows:

> First of all, Muslim *qadis* to the *Shari'a* courts are appointed by a special statutory committee. Although the committee has representatives from the Moslem community, its agenda was controlled by the Minister of Religions, today the Minister of Justice. In addition, local *Imams* are appointed by the state and are in essence state officials. A substantial portion of Moslem religious endowments (*waqf),* regarded as absentee property, was transferred to the hands of the Israeli government.[106]

Therefore, the co-opted Muslim religious authorities are tightly controlled by the Israeli state authorities and their range of powers is tightly restricted and constrained. The Druze, are also homogeneous in their religious make-up and communal structure. Following their recognition by the state as a separate religious community in 1957, the Druze religious authorities were provided with their own separate and independent court system in 1962. However, unlike the Muslim community, the Druze are perceived as a non-threatening and, indeed, as the most favoured segment of the minority. As a result, their religious authorities and court system receives a far greater level of real autonomy with regard to the administration of their religious affairs, and with time, "the Druze religious courts became

[105] Karayanni (2006: 59)
[106] Karayanni (2006: 62)

important political institutions controlled entirely by the Druze community, including the process of selecting judges".[107]

However, despite their greater level of autonomy, the Druze communal structure is "weak" in terms of its ability to act independently of the state. Oppenheimer, for example, argues that it was the homogeneous nature of Druze identity and their singular communal organisation which made it particularly prone to Israeli state manipulation and interference. By offering the Druze leadership the novel opportunity of administering to the personal affairs of their own community, the state was able to institutionalise the exclusive authority of these notables; politicise the Druze and separate them from their Arab identity through the extension of a separate Druze nationality; and to extract a number of added benefits from them, such as compulsory military service of their young men.[108] However, the performance of military service was not a popular decision across all sections of the Druze community. As such, the co-opted Druze leadership were obliged to apply coercive measures against their own community in order to preserve the personal benefits which they had been awarded by the state.

> This practice became compulsory for Druze males in 1956. According to official claims this followed the request of the Druze themselves. It is clear, however, that the community has never been united on this question, and those who made the demand (if demand it was) were the same traditional leaders who had previously become clients of the Israeli administration and, in particular, of the then dominant Labour Party, MAPAI. A popular account of this development among Druze who oppose the officially recognised leadership suggests that traditional leaders were pressed into making the request in exchange for specific favours, and in particular, the granting of religious autonomy which was finalised the following year.[109]

Military service is not the only area which demonstrates the vulnerability of the centralised Druze communal leadership. Voting patterns and Druze electoral politics have also been traditionally dominated by the wishes and guidelines of their leadership. The creation of Druze-only affiliated lists during the period of Mapai dominance and military rules as well as the more recent success of Zionist parties in "catching" the Druze vote are, in no small way, connected to the influence of a central Druze communal leadership structure.

The benefits of this "Druzification" process were limited. For example, the Druze remained excluded, together with the remainder of the Arab population, from joining the Labour Party until 1972. They have suffered similar losses of land as a result of the

[107] Karayanni (2006: 63)
[108] Oppenheimer (1985: 268-269)
[109] Oppenheimer (1985: 269)

government's expropriation efforts, particularly during its "Judaisation of the Galilee" initiatives.[110] Furthermore, despite their commitment to military service, the relative deprivation of Druze villages, together with their general marginalisation from the broader workplace, continues, contributing to growing level of frustration among all sectors of the community. Thus, while the power of the traditional Druze elite is slowly eroding, primarily as a result of the challenges posed to it by a new generation of more educated, secular and nationalist-inclined Druze who wish to reintegrate with the Palestinian Arab minority, the traditionally unified and hierarchical Druze leadership structure continues to be a significant source of weakness and vulnerability in this community's relations with the Israeli authorities.[111]

The communal organisation of Palestinian Christians is significantly different to that of either the Muslim or Druze communities. The Christians in Israel are a deeply heterogeneous community. They are internally fragmented along several different and quite separate religious denominational lines. The State of Israel officially recognises ten different Christian communities, the largest of which are: the Greek Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, the Latins (Roman Catholics), the Maronites and (since 1970) the Anglicans.[112] Each of these ten recognised Christian denominations possesses their own separate jurisdictional powers, religious courts and judges compared with the single jurisdictional power of each of the Muslim and Druze religious communities. They also experience a high level of autonomy over their affairs compared with, for instance, the Muslim religious authorities. The state, therefore, must engage separately with these ten different religious authorities. A single, blanket policy towards Christian religious authorities is, as a result, quite impossible.

This diversity is compounded by the fact that several of the Christian churches have extensive external links and are composed of a mixed ethnic clergy. This two-fold division of Christians in Israel between several different denominations and, within each church, between its clergy and laity has had major consequences for the nature of the engagement between church and state in Israel. As Dumper puts it:

> [T]hese churches often have different approaches to dealing with the Israeli government, partly owing to a situation in some of the churches wherein senior clergy are non-

[110] Oppenheimer (1985: 270)
[111] Firro (2001: 45-46)
[112] Karayanni (2006: 43)

> Palestinian or non-Arab, whereas the laity are either Palestinian Arab or identify politically and socially with Arab society.[113]

The absence of an indigenous Arab clergy which can not only communicate effectively with its flock but understand its local needs and priorities provides the state with a unique opportunity to affect decisions which serve its own interest. This is perhaps best demonstrated with regard to the Greek Orthodox Church. Controlled by a non-Arab and non-indigenous clergy who, in many cases, neither speak Arabic nor Hebrew, the former Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church became involved in a number of high-profile scandals involving the sale of communal properties (*waqf)* to Jewish settler groups. Showing a lack of concern over the sensitive issue of land in Israel, the Patriarch dissolved a number of communal church properties, primarily in Jerusalem's Old City, in order to pay off the church's mounting debts. In the face of his own congregation's outrage, however, his position became destabilised and ultimately untenable. A new Patriarch, Theofilos III, was elected in 2005. However, as Greek Orthodox Church tradition stipulates that all Patriarchs must receive the formal recognition of the state, the Israeli government was able to use this historical precedent as leverage against the patriarchate, withholding recognition for several years in the hope that their demands to restore these properties to the church would be surrendered or compromised.

Therefore, the particular structure and organisation of the Greek Orthodox Church has rendered it weaker and more vulnerable to Israeli state pressure than other churches which have been able to maintain a greater degree of organisational independence from it. However, structural factors surrounding the internal fragmentation of the Christian community do not represent the only explanation for the lack of a central Christian communal authority in Israel. Of much greater significance is the division between the churches and the general Palestinian Christian "street". The literature has already pointed to the relevance of the small size and secular predisposition of this community. Being on the whole a more secular community, Palestinian Christians have demonstrated a greater degree of independence from their religious authorities than is true of other segments of the minority, as can be observed from the reaction of the Christian community to the scandals within the Greek Orthodox Church.

[113] Dumper (2002: 52)

As a result, it can be stated that the power of the churches to command the will of Palestinian Christians in Israel is less strong than is perhaps true of either the Muslim or Druze religious authorities. However, while the literature contains several references to the generally uniform political outlook of Muslims and Druze in Israel, the orientations of Palestinian Christians are occasionally understood to be differentiated by denomination. Writing in the late 1970s, Rosenfeld described the Greek Orthodox as being the most "radical" of the Christian denominations, with the Greek Catholics and the Maronites deemed more "moderate" communities.[114] An elaboration of this denominational understanding of Palestinian Christian attitudes towards the state is provided by Landau.

> Of the two largest Christian denominations in Israel, the Greek Catholics and the Greek Orthodox, the latter are more extreme in their political attitudes. Many of the children of this community are educated in Protestant schools, which usually emphasise Arab tradition and nationalism more than do the Greek Catholic educational establishments. For generations, the Orthodox leaders were Greeks, while most members of the Church were local Arabs. In recent years, Arabs have succeeded in entering the top ranks, and their struggle for the Arabisation of their community is well integrated with the trends of Arab nationalism. Perhaps because the Greek Orthodox are the largest Christian group in the Middle East, yet do not enjoy the support of any great power, the Arabs among them feel that they have to demonstrate political extremism, in order to maintain relations with the Muslims, together with a struggle for Arabization (or even Palestinization) of their community. In contrast, the leadership of the Greek Catholics, made up entirely of Arabs, presents a more moderate national stand, characterised in the first twenty years of the State of Israel as ready to cooperate with the state authorities.[115]

Even here, Landau subsequently comments that the relatively moderate position of Greek Catholics in Israel became increasingly "radicalised" after 1967 and a change in church leadership. Therefore, not only is the Palestinian Christian community disunited according to their basic political outlooks, but their separate communal authorities are understood to have a significant impact on the political attitudes of each Christian community. This understanding of Greek Catholics as being a more politically moderate community in Israel is also found in Amalia Sa'ar's analysis of the role of church schools in Haifa in the creation of Christian ethnocentric and "socially reproductive" behaviour. While the Greek Orthodox high school is understood to adhere to an "explicitly secular orientation", the remainder of the Catholic-run schools are described as propagating an exclusively Christian atmosphere in their schools.[116] According to Sa'ar, the state allowed the predominantly Catholic church school system to have its monopoly over minority education not only because it relieved the

[114] Rosenfeld (1978: 392)
[115] Landau (1993: 31)
[116] Sa'ar (1998: 218)

state of its obligations to the minority with regards to their education, but because these schools possessed a "highly conservative and explicitly apolitical agenda" which not only did not challenge the state, but secured, or "reproduced" its power and control over the minority. However, the elite nature of these schools also had the reverse effect of inculcating feelings of political resistance among its students over time, primarily as a result of its ability to attract the broadest catchment of students from all religious and political backgrounds.

> The Christian educational institutions, then, bear the dual potential of political obedience and opposition to the state or, in other words, of social reproduction and resistance.[117]

As such, it would appear that the direction of influence between church and street in Israel may more accurately be described as being "bottom up" rather than "top down". This "politicisation" of the Christian churches in Israel has been connected with the growing "Arabisation" and "Palestinisation" of the various Christian clergies, which has both reduced the legitimacy of traditional clergy-laity distinctions and re-contextualised, to some extent, church-state relations within the wider "Arab problem". Even in the early years of the state, the political activity of Christian leaders aroused the suspicion and criticism of the Israeli authorities. This was similarly true of the "moderate" Greek Catholic Church than of other Christian denominations. The Capucci Affair of 1974, for example, was a famous case which illustrated the difficulties faced by the authorities in attracting or controlling Christian leaders in Israel.[118] By contrast, Egyptian-born George Hakim, who served as Greek Catholic Patriarch and Archbishop of the Galilee from 1967 until 2000, demonstrated an ability to extract the greatest advantage from the state's confessional policy while paying the minimum price in return.[119] As such, the former Director of the Department of Christian Affairs within the Ministry of Religions (now part of the Ministry of the Interior), could write:

> That the great majority of Christians in Israel are Arabs is bound to colour Christian affairs: in the nature of things, "political" problems of the Arab inhabitants, as such, can hardly fail to be linked at times with Church problems, if not deliberately confused with them.[120]

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[117] Sa'ar (1998: 218)

[118] Born in Aleppo, Syria, Hilarion Capucci was the Greek Catholic Archbishop of Caesarea when he was arrested by Israeli police in August 1974 for illegally smuggling large quantities of weapons and arms into Israel from Lebanon on behalf of the Palestinian Liberation Army. He had concealed the weapons and munitions in his car. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison, but served only 3 of these years.

[119] Bialer (2005: 141-142) notes that Hakim took advantage of the benefits provided to him by the state due to his status as a Christian leader. He describes him as a "shrewd businessman" profiting from the Christian tourism industry and accumulating substantial personal wealth. He was also involved in corruption and smuggling charges which the state overlooked in their failed attempt to foster greater allegiance from him.

[120] Colbi (1969: 127)

Other church leaders have demonstrated their political opposition to the state, using their religious platform to capture a wider audience on behalf of the Palestinian cause, such as Nazareth-born former Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, who served between 1987 and 2008 as the first Arab Patriarch of his church, and another Nazarene, Naim Ateek, from the Baptist church who has developed a Palestinian theology of liberation. These trends not only demonstrate the closing gaps between clergy and laity in Israel but also the chilly distance between some church leaders and the Israeli authorities.[121]

While the fragmentation and differentiation of Christian communal authorities has, in the case of the Greek Orthodox Church, been a source of weakness and vulnerability, it has, in the case of other churches, proven to be a source of strength. The absence of a unified Palestinian Christian community and leadership structure has rendered this community outside the reach of typical cooptation strategies. With regard to the political arena, this is best demonstrated by the failure of religious-sectarian politics within the Christian sector. An already small minority, their internal differentiation renders their electoral weight even more insignificant. No Christian party or affiliated list has ever run for election during the Mapai period of rule when such sectarian lists were otherwise popular within the minority. Similarly, despite a small number of later efforts to set up a Christian caucus within the dominant Zionist parties, these efforts have ultimately failed in their objective to attract Christian votes and have been abandoned.[122] The static nature of the Palestinian Christian community is compounded by the growing politicisation of the Christian churches and the increasing role of local Palestinian clergy in the decision-making process of their communities, which increases the negative association of these churches with the "Arab problem" and "radical" politics. While it is to be expected that control of the Christian religious communities remains a desired aim of the state in line with its broader confessional policy, this aim is obstructed and limited by the diffused and incongruous nature of the Palestinian Christian communities themselves.

[121] Dumper (2002: 55); Tsimhoni (2002: 143)

[122] An exception to this was the Christian list under the leadership of a retired police officer, Hanna Haddad, which ran for parliamentary elections in 1981. However, receiving only 8,300 votes in total it fell significantly below the electoral threshold required to secure representation in Knesset and disappeared. Landau (1993: 44)

3.9 International Religious Significance

One of the most commonly-cited factors affecting state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel is the international significance of Christianity. Given their spiritual connection to the Holy Land, Christians worldwide and their representatives are interested in the satisfactory maintenance of Christian Holy Places in Israel. Of the multiplicity of Christian denominations and churches, a smaller number of churches have taken direct responsibility for the administration and guardianship not only of the Holy Sites but of extensive properties and land-holdings in the state, making them a significant contender in local politics as well. Eager to pursue their churches' interests with the state, they have relatively more power to interfere with the authorities or the political processes of the state than other interest groups, and frequently do.

Several of these churches possess significant political weight both as independent religious organisations and as a result of their close connection with particularly powerful states, such as the Anglican Church in England and the Evangelical movement in the US. However, perhaps the most powerful of all is the Vatican. Based in Rome and constituting its own sovereign city-state, it represents, through the papacy, the spiritual and administrative leadership of Catholics (Roman Catholic as well as several other Catholic denominations which became united with Rome) worldwide. International Christian interest in Israel represents, as a result, a central element in Israel's foreign policy and diplomatic relations with countries which traditionally possess strong Christian religious and cultural traditions. Disagreements or conflicts with churches often have significant and deleterious effects both on Israel's foreign policy relations and its media image around the world. Therefore, the manner in which Israel deals with local Christian interests can significantly affect the nature of its engagement with the international community.

On the basis of their international connection with powerful 'western' churches, the Palestinian Christians are often presented as a strong community that has the influence and negotiating power to extract more from the state than other sections of the minority. According to this argument, Palestinian Christians are, relatively more protected and privileged in society. Tsimhoni, for instance, argues that Palestinian Christians have generally received preferential treatment from the Israeli authorities as a result of their proximity to Rome. This, she notes, was particularly evident during and subsequent to the

1948 war and the state's attitude to the return of Christian refugees and the restitution of confiscated Christian communal properties (*awqaf*).

> Hence, the Catholic Arab inhabitants of the Galilee village of Ilabun [Eilaboun] were expelled from their homes in 1948 by Israeli soldiers who suspected that they had cooperated with the Syrian invading forces. But they were allowed to return following Vatican intervention on their behalf. The Israeli authorities demonstrated a greater openness toward the return of Christian refugees and family unification shortly after the war than they did regarding Muslims.[123]

While a greater number of Palestinian Christian refugees were allowed to return to Israel as a result of intervention on their behalf by international Christian groups and lobbies than was the case for Palestinian Muslims, only 22 per cent of all Christians living in Palestine at that time went on to become citizens of Israel.[124] This relative "lenient" policy towards the repatriation of small numbers of Palestinian Christians and the restitution of church properties is generally acknowledged to have been due to the international factor.

> The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs was well aware of the possible pressures that might be put on the state by the Christian church headquarters, in particular the Vatican, in case of what might appear as harassment of the churches. The Israeli authorities abstained therefore from confiscating church properties, particularly if they were registered in the name of the church or a European clergyman.[125]

Nonetheless, Tsimhoni does make an important distinction between state policy towards the various churches and state policy towards individual Palestinian Christians themselves. This dual approach which echoes the church-laity division previously encountered absorbs an international-local dynamic with elements of an Arab-non Arab policy divide.

> Unlike the Christian churches, individual Christian Arabs have been treated by the Israeli authorities similarly to Muslim Arabs in matters such as confiscation of lands and the military administration.[126]

Writing about the deep impact of "the Christian world" in Israeli politics, however, Bialer paints quite a different picture of how the state authorities perceived, and reacted to, external Christian intervention. In particular, he describes the important political influence of the Vatican in discussions surrounding the recognition of the newly founded State of Israel and its acceptance into the international political community following its creation in 1948. Initially quite hostile to the idea of a Jewish state, both for theological, administrative and probably also anti-Semitic reasons as well, the Vatican vocally questioned the legitimacy of

[123] Tsimhoni (2002: 126)
[124] Mansour (2004: 219)
[125] Tsimhoni (2002: 126). See also: Karayanni (2006: 62).
[126] Tsimhoni (2002: 127)

the new state's territorial gains and backed a plan calling for the internationalisation of Jerusalem and the Holy Places. Illustrating the close connection between religion and politics, the Security Council is described as adopting tougher stances towards Israel during the 1948-49 war as a result of Vatican pressure. Conscious of negative international attention, Ben-Gurion himself is described as having personally issued orders expressly prohibiting the looting or defilement of Holy Places which had been occurring at that time, and as countermanding an IDF plan to expel the inhabitants of Nazareth, the majority of whom were at that time Christian.[127] Despite this, several instances of Jewish vandalism of Christian Holy Places and destruction of Palestinian Christian villages were observed by the international press, leading to a "wave of anti-Israel propaganda" around the world and calls to the UN to establish a commission of inquiry to examine the Israeli government's treatment of its Palestinian Christian minority.[128]

However, Bialer notes that the Vatican's priorities remained essentially focused on Jerusalem and the continuation of its traditional rights and privileges under the new Israeli administration. The Vatican's recommendation that Jerusalem be internationalised was ratified by the UN in December 1949 demonstrating the power of the Vatican in the UN.[129] However, the Israeli government, outraged both at the Vatican's power and opposition, retaliated by moving its capital to Jerusalem.[130] Responding to what it saw as a clear threat to both its existence and its political ambitions, Israel employed three main strategies, described by Bialer as political Machiavellianism, to undermine the position of the Vatican. First, it threatened that any continuation of what was perceived to be the Vatican's anti-Israeli policy would affect local Palestinian Christians and interests. This was mirrored by threats against local Catholic leaders that, if they did not disassociate themselves from the Vatican's position, it would be "liable to alter the government's intentions with regard to Christian refugees and its attitude toward internal developments in local Christian communities".[131] Second, it attempted to exploit the internal differences and discord between the various churches by promoting non-Catholic churches in Israel such as the Copts, Armenians and Greek Orthodox. Finally, it conducted a concerted propaganda (*hasbara*) campaign in the

[127] Bialer (2005: 7-9)
[128] Bialer (2005: 10)
[129] Bialer (2005: 14-23)
[130] Bialer (2005: 23)
[131] Bialer (2005: 48)

Christian world to nullify the internationalisation of Jerusalem as a non-feasible and impractical solution.[132]

Notwithstanding the subsequent Israeli success in removing the internationalisation plan from the discussion table, relations between the state and the Vatican remained frosty. However, due to the practical necessity of engaging with the new state and Israel's awareness of the political clout of the Vatican, quiet and indirect diplomacy between both parties became standardised. Additionally, the small Palestinian Christian community proved useful to Israel's foreign policy relations and international media campaigns. Bialer notes that by providing Christians with religious autonomy and freedom of worship, Israel satisfied the major demands of the international churches, including the Vatican.[133] This, in turn, helped the new state "look good". However, while Bialer notes that international church considerations deeply affected the state's relationship with its Palestinian Christian population, this relationship was, to a large extent, orchestrated for the benefit of external audiences. This situation couched a deeper ambivalence towards its Palestinian Christian citizens both as Arabs and, now, as an externally-backed community in the state. Commenting that "the prevailing attitude of the government towards Christian Arabs was not different from attitudes towards Muslim Arabs, especially in light of the general consensus which perceived every Israeli Arab as a potential enemy,"[134] the international significance of Christianity and the political power of the churches are understood to have increased the level of potential threat associated with this community above all others.

> Important elements of church activity in Israel, particularly among the Catholics, were perceived as a very real security threat by the authorities, which invested considerable efforts in countering them. (...)
>
> The fundamental political need to take the demands of the Church heads in Israel into account sharpened the perception of the Christians as an enemy, at least in the eyes of the highly influential security establishment.[135]

This view echoes the opinion expressed in the late 1960s by Landau:

> These contacts with their churches abroad strengthen the position of the leaders of the Christian communities in Israel; they serve them as an important source of political power, both within their own community and in their relations with the Israeli Government. Sometimes these contacts are used as a means of attack on the Israeli

[132] Bialer (2005: 33-34, 46-48)
[133] Bialer (2005: 121-122)
[134] Bialer (2005: 125)
[135] Bialer (2005: 126)

> Government, and, in consequence, this strengthens their own political or personal standing.[136]

This negative attitude of suspicion and resentment manifested itself in several ways. In the first instance, the Israeli military authorities and its "security establishment" were sorely opposed to the return of church properties which had been expropriated by the state in 1948.[137] However, the main area where the state's ambivalent attitudes towards the Christian churches can be found, concerns the religious *status quo* arrangements.[138] Bialer cites the former Advisor to PM (Ben-Gurion) on Arab Affairs, Yehoshua Palmon, as describing the *status quo* arrangements as: "their [the Christians'] way of waging a struggle to restore and increase their power and influence among members of the community and of their community among the Arab public".[139]

The reticence of the new state to recognise the communal authority of the Christian churches, and its increasing independence from international opinion and pressure, has become particularly apparent in the last two decades. Despite the extension of formal recognition and the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the State of Israel in 1993 – forty-five years after the establishment of the state – the terms laid out by the Fundamental Agreement (FA) which accompanied this recognition – which include the continuation of the religious *status quo* with regard to the Holy Places; the maintenance of the church school system; freedom of movement for clergy to administer to their religious functions; as well as of other fringe benefits and privileges traditionally enjoyed by the churches since Ottoman times – have not been met leading to a serious diplomatic impasse between both parties which shows no immediate sign of becoming resolved.[140]

The growing confidence of the Israeli authorities in its diplomatic relations with the churches, and its increasing independence from, if not indifference to, their stipulations and demands, suggests the dilution of the latter's negotiating power and influence on Israeli

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[136] Landau (1969: 17)
[137] Bialer (2005: 126)
[138] The "status quo" relates to a series of political arrangements with the Christian churches which date back to Ottoman times. They recognise the responsibilities of various churches over Christian holy places and set precedents in matters of ritual and access. Dumper (2002: 52)
[139] Bialer (2005: 126)
[140] The two main areas of dispute concern new visa restrictions faced by clergy, in particular Arab nuns and priests, as well as the issue of property tax. Traditionally exempted from it, the State has recently introduced the requirement that the churches pay property tax (*arnona)* which, considering their vast property holdings, would financially cripple the churches. The Vatican has refused to pay this tax arguing that it constitutes a violation not only of the *status quo* but of traditional Israeli policy.

policy. It would, therefore, follow that, in line with the decreasing political weight of the Vatican, the relevance of local Palestinian Christians to Israeli diplomatic strategies is also declining. This changing relationship has two main consequences for Palestinian Christians. To begin with, it can be expected that Palestinian Christians would become increasingly invisible and irrelevant to the state. As their functionality to the state, whether as a diplomatic or a media tool, declines, the need to maintain a special relationship with this community also declines. As a result, the main consequence of declining international church influence on the State of Israel is an increasingly uniform state policy towards local Palestinian Christians that is increasingly uniform with its wider "Arab" policy.

3.10 Jewish Religious Antipathy

However, changing attitudes towards the international significance of Christianity are underlined by the growth of Jewish religious antipathy and anti-Christian feeling within important segments of Israeli Jewish society and government. While difficult to gauge the prevalence of religious-based hostility in any society, analyses which have mentioned this factor with regard to Christianity have usually distinguished between historical and local contributing factors.

The historical dimension of modern Jewish anti-Christian feeling is understood, first and foremost, to be a reaction to the tragic plight of Jews in Europe. Identifying the roots of modern "anti-Semitism" to be not just in European racist and nationalist thought but in the theological core of Christianity itself, there has been a tendency to associate, or blame, the historically-disconnected local Palestinian Christians, who are themselves "Semites", of these European sins.[141] Tsimhoni, for example, describes this attitude as being rooted in the minority complex of Israel's Jewish majority.

> The Jewish experience of hundreds of years of persecution in Christian Europe still reflects on the Jewish attitude towards the Christians in Israel despite the very different historic role of the Christians in the Middle East. Modern anti-Semitism, partially rooted in the medieval Christian church attitudes towards the Jews, and the extensive missionary activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to convert them, just added to the feeling among Jews that the Christians will always try to eliminate them.[142]

[141] Mansour (2004: 217-218)
[142] Tsimhoni (2002: 142)

Within this historical perspective, the experience of Jews living in Christian Europe is compared with that in the Muslim Middle East, with the latter, quite reasonably, receiving better coverage.

> Jewish experience under Islam was much more favourable until the twentieth century. Despite the disabilities of their position as *Dhimmis*, they were allowed freedom of worship, vast measures of autonomy and security of life and worship. Hardly any pogroms or attempts to convert the Jews to Islam occurred.[143]

In a paradoxical shift from contemporary analyses of the two communities, Muslim treatment of Jews is, therefore, perceived in a far better light, while the historically-disconnected local Christians, who also suffered substantially from European Christian bigotry, become permanent reminders of this past. This irrational transference of European guilt to Palestinian Christians is frequently encountered within the literature. Moroccan-born historian Shlomo Ben-Ami, who was later appointed Minister of Internal Security for the Labour Party, revealed the full extent of this antipathy in an interview he conducted in the run-up to the 1999 national elections.

> No doubt, Christianity is the eternal enemy. With Islam it has been easier. It [Islam] did not emerge from us. Its relations with us have not been ideal or without hate. I do remember pogroms... on the other hand, Muslims and Jews visited together tombs of Jewish holy men.[144]

Within this context, instances of Christian political activity, whether by individual Palestinian Christians or by their churches, as well as public demonstrations or expressions of the Christian faith, are often viewed with an undertone of scepticism and hostility. However, historical grounds alone do not explain modern Jewish anti-Christian sentiment in Israel today. The rise of Jewish fundamentalism and the increasing role of Jewish religious parties in Israeli politics also represents an important contributing factor.

Dumper observes a significant deterioration in Jewish-Christian relations in Israel parallel with a general drift towards right-wing religious politics since 1977. He describes the appointment of "officials patently less concerned about maintaining good relations with the Christian communities" as "souring" relations not only between the state and the various churches, but also between the state and its Christian citizens as a whole.[145] To this he notes an increasing number of arson attacks and incidents of vandalism against church property

[143] Tsimhoni (2002: 142)
[144] Tsimhoni (2002: 142)
[145] Dumper (2002: 53)

conducted by "Israeli militants and Jewish fundamentalists"; as well as the open support provided by the government to Jewish settler groups, particularly in Jerusalem, which share a common desire to "Judaise" Christian sectors of the city as well.[146]

Even pro-establishment sources have acknowledged this growing Jewish religious antipathy towards Christians. Describing an emerging political consensus between Jewish and Islamic fundamentalist groups, Israeli observes how opposition to Christian interests has unified them even further. He mentions, in particular, their mutual distaste and rejection of the 2000 millennium celebrations in Israel as symbolic of Christian rather than of either Jewish or Muslim values.

> For the non-nationalistic ultra-Orthodox Jews of Israel, whose record of loathing the Christians and acting violently against their missionaries is long-standing, would conceivably feel as threatened by the millennium as the Islamists do. They can envision the physical turmoil, the spiritual torment and individual unrest that would grip Israel under the pressure of the millions of tourists and pilgrims who would be literally flooding the country. Everything would be Christian, about Christianity, of Christianity, by Christianity, and the entire land would appear to yield to this orchestrated invasion by foreigners whose omnipresence, backed by the omnipotence of their Christian countries, would dictate an alien pace of life and a strange sequence of events to this land. The ghetto-minded ultra-Orthodox, just like their Islamist allies, are not equipped to deal with this reality, they are afraid of it and would do everything in their power to stifle it, thwart it or make sure it never happens. Thus, Islamists and ultra-Orthodox Jews, who see eye-to-eye on so many social and state affairs, and share a suspicion and fear of Christianity, find themselves to be ideal partners in this joint endeavour, strange bed-fellows as they may be.[147]

Thus, anti-Christian religious feeling hovers over both Jewish society's and state's attitude towards, and relationship with, Palestinian Christians in Israel.

3.11 Conclusion

While the majority of sociological analyses of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel have either overlooked or only briefly attended to issues relating to Palestinian Christians, this chapter has sought to isolate various accounts and descriptions of them in order to address what factors, if any, are deemed significant or relevant by Israeli academic scholars with regard to this community. This approach was guided by contributions made by various sociologists regarding the critically important role of scholarship and its relationship with both prevailing and countervailing political forces. A thematic approach was applied as it

[146] Dumper (2002: 53, 64n4)
[147] Israeli (2002: 81-82)

united analyses from across the ideological divide and provided a broader perspective on the role and importance of each theme. What can each of these themes, therefore, say about state-minority relations with regards to Palestinian Christians in an ethnocratic Jewish state? To begin with, all accounts accept the problematic nature of Palestinian Christians' Arab ethnicity with regards to the Jewish nature of the state and their competing national priorities, as confirmed by their common experience of exemption from military service in the IDF and patterns of land expropriation. This negative association is compounded by the important role of Palestinian Christians in Palestinian opposition parties and nationalist movements. The Arab Communist Party emerged as the first internal political threat to the Jewish establishment. That this party was traditionally dominated by Palestinian Christians is, therefore, deeply significant and indicative of the state's general attitudes toward this community. More recently, Balad, which has also demonstrated pronounced involvement on the part of Palestinian Christian citizens of the state, continue to uphold the association of internal Palestinian politics with political "disloyalty" to the state.

By contrast, it has been shown that other factors, such as their small size, westernised outlook and their significance as a non-Muslim minority, have reduced the degree of "threat" associated with Palestinian Christians. This diminished sense of threat is primarily rooted in their small demographic weight relative to the rest of the Palestinian Arab minority, but is also based on their wider minority status in the region. It would be expected that these factors would diminish the distance between both groups and, thereby, also the necessity of state control over them. However, their small size has also increased their irrelevance to the political establishment, particularly during election campaigns when political courtship and allegiances with numerically stronger communities is sought, suggesting the hollow and functional nature of state attitudes towards the minority. Other factors have also complicated the state's practical ability to either effectively control this community or to administer a preferential policy successfully. On the one hand, the significance of the local churches, and their connection with powerful religious centres abroad, have increased the state's suspicions of the political capabilities and powers of its local Christian population. On the other hand, the absence of a single and centralised communal structure within the Christian community has seriously impeded the state's ability to successfully co-opt a representative and malleable Christian leadership. In addition, elements of anti-Christian antipathy from within both the Jewish majority and the political authorities have increased the level of stigma associated with this community.

The picture formed from the literature reviewed in this chapter paints a complicated and uneasy relationship between the Israeli state and its Palestinian Christian citizens. In some senses, this relationship is much the same as that experienced by the remainder of the Palestinian Arab minority. However, in other senses it is quite different. While some analyses question the applicability of systemic control theories to this community, it is surprising is that, beyond the level of rhetoric, there is little sociological evidence to support the existence of a preferential state attitude towards this community. On the contrary, the literature suggests that Palestinian Christians represent a unique dilemma to the state. The manner in which the state has responded to this dilemma will form the subject of the following chapters.

Chapter Four:
Fieldwork Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the methodological approach applied to the period of data collection which was undertaken by the author between 2006 and 2008. A qualitative approach was followed which was primarily based upon semi-structured interviews but also, to a lesser extent, upon archival work. An analysis of the two main field locations where the author was located during the period of her fieldwork – Nazareth and Jerusalem – is provided, together with a personal account of the importance of each of these locations to the research, as well as of their limitations. Also provided are descriptions of the author's archival work and issues encountered with regard to its applicability to this thesis. The remainder of this chapter describes the interview process itself, discussing important topics such as the decision-making process behind the selection of respondents; the representativeness of these respondents; issues of bias and transparency; the presentation of both the research and the researcher herself; the particular line of questioning and the use of strategic follow-up questions.

4.2 The Field: Nazareth

The fieldwork for this study was conducted over three separate periods between 2006 and 2008. The first stage, from September to November 2006, overlapped with the formal commencement of the PhD itself, during which time the author lived with, and to a large extent was informally adopted by, a local Palestinian Christian family in Nazareth. The city of Nazareth was chosen due to its significance as the largest Arab city in Israel and its consideration as the cultural capital and political centre of Palestinian

Arab life in Israel. It was also chosen due to its historic association with Christianity and its relatively high concentration of Palestinian Arab Christians. While no formal interviews were conducted during this preliminary research period, several individuals were informally consulted, including: a local freelance journalist, an official from the local municipality, an academic, as well as two representatives from local Palestinian Israeli NGOs.

The period spent in Nazareth was a pivotal experience which familiarised the author not only with aspects of local life in Nazareth but with a particularly sensitive conflict which had occurred there ten years previously and which forms the basis of Chapter Six of this thesis. Considering the close friendship which developed between the author and her host family during her stay in Nazareth, observations or personal testimonies made to her during this period will not be exposed to further analysis here. This experience introduced and exposed the author to a particular local and cultural narrative and facilitated a degree of ethnographic or participant observation which deepened the author's understanding of the "field" of study. While the author does not wish to adopt an ethnographic approach to this thesis, she is aware that this period may be interpreted by some as disposing the author towards a particular bias in favour of a certain local Palestinian Christian narrative. A counter claim of bias, however, could also be levelled at the author as a result of the year of graduate studies that she pursued at the Israeli university of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev from 2001 to 2002. However, it was the author's intention then, as it was in Nazareth later, to pursue an independent line of questioning, to accept the pitfalls and revelations of "bias" and to experience both sides of the political discourse in as much as is possible to an external observer, notwithstanding her own viewpoint which developed in conjunction with, but not solely reliant upon, these experiences.

While it is fair to say that the author's stay in Nazareth sensitised her towards a particular narrative, the author concludes that such a consequence should be recognised and embraced as benefitting, not disadvantaging, the subsequent research conducted. On the one hand, the author's first-hand experience of the local environment added to her later credibility when interviewing not only Palestinian Arab but also Israeli Jewish

respondents who were disposed to either suspecting or dismissing external investigation by foreign researchers as being either politically motivated or ignorant. When questions were raised during the later interview process by Jewish respondents as to the author's motivations in wishing to stay in Nazareth, it was generally found that their suspicions were eased to a significant, if not complete, extent when they learned of her year of study at Ben-Gurion University and her expressed desire to experience both sides of the narrative. Other Jewish respondents went so far as to praise the author's decision to live in Nazareth by suggesting that one of the main problems that Palestinian Christians encounter is their general neglect in academic enquiry. On the other hand, the author later found that her increasing command of Arabic, and particularly her growing use of the local Arab dialect which is unique to Nazareth and the Galilee was noticed and favourably remarked upon by a number of the Arab respondents, thus serving to develop a relationship of trust and to ease some of the natural suspicions that accompanied the sensitivity of the research.

4.3 The Field: Jerusalem

The second and third stages of fieldwork were conducted from the end of January to the end of April and from mid-June to the end of August 2008 respectively. During these periods, the author lived largely in East Jerusalem, but also for a number of weeks in Haifa and, again, in Nazareth. The author chose to use Jerusalem as her primary base in order to gain a measure of distance from the perspective which was garnered in Nazareth but also as a result of the significance of Jerusalem's location in political and religious terms. In terms of its religious significance, Jerusalem holds the headquarters of the majority of the Christian churches relevant to this study (the Greek Orthodox and Latin Patriarchates as well as the Anglican Bishopric), with the major exceptions of the Greek Catholic Archbishopric and the Maronite Bishopric which are both located in Haifa. In terms of Jerusalem's political significance as the declared indivisible capital of the Jewish state, the headquarters for all of the Israeli governmental and state institutions

(particularly the Knesset, the Ministries of the Interior and Foreign Affairs as well as the Prime Minister's Office) relevant to this study are also located there.

4.4 The Israeli State Archives

A period of one month, from February to March, was spent accessing the Israeli State Archives in West Jerusalem for correspondence and policy documents relating to Palestinian Christians in Israel. The Israeli State Archives are controlled by the Prime Minister's Office. Owing to the limits of legal disclosure of state records, the available archives generally did not extend beyond the late 1970s. The majority of listed files that were available for inspection did not extend beyond the late 1960s, with the exception of a small volume which covered random periods during the 1970s. While some form of temporal censorship is a common and legally normative practice in the maintenance of most countries' state archives, it was observed that, in addition to this unclear temporal cut-off period, the state continues to censor a significant proportion of its pre-1970 files relating to the Christian churches. It was found that the majority of the archives which remain off-limits from this period relate to the Greek Orthodox Church and related to correspondence over various land holdings in its possession. In itself, this factor illustrates the continuing political salience of, and sensitivity surrounding, the Palestinian Christian experience in Israel.

A number of documents were unearthed which both confirmed and challenged assumptions relating to the nature of the early relationship between church and state, and by consequence, the State of Israel and its Palestinian Christian population. For example, the presence of a significant volume of foreign press clippings in both English and French which detailed the treatment of Christian villages, properties and refugees during the first decade of the state, testified to the political salience surrounding the international significance of Christianity. By contrast, a large volume of correspondence from various church representatives with the relevant governmental authorities demonstrates the bureaucratic nightmare which these churches had to endure in order to secure the

provision of visas for their clergy, particularly their Arab clergy; the restitution and restoration of damaged church properties; the return of Christian refugees; as well as the provision of basic supplies needed to run their churches. The archives also confirmed both the strong political activity of the churches and their leaders. The Capucci Affair, for instance, which was mentioned in the previous chapter, is well documented in the state archives together with the governmental response to it. Similarly, the particular strategies of the Greek Catholic Archbishop, George Hakim, to secure the best advantage for both his church and for himself, are laid bare in the lengthy correspondence which exists between him and various ministerial representatives.

These documents provided the author with the unique opportunity to analyse the original content of a large volume and range of documentation and to make her own inferences from them rather than to rely solely on the conclusions of others. However, while findings from the Israeli archives proved fascinating – covering reports and newsletters; press clippings and press releases; policy documents; and private correspondence between church leaders and government officials – their applicability to this study was limited by the presence of several gaps within the files as well as the overall dated and one-sided nature of the recorded files (generally involving incoming correspondence from various church leaders and formal reports, with very little internal memos or outgoing correspondence available).

The author had wished to complete the picture sketched by the findings of the Israeli State Archives by bringing the available government and state documentation up-to-date by means of local church records. The expectation was that, in the case of written correspondence, both sides of the exchange would retain records of their communication with the other. However, it was not possible to accomplish this aim due to a number of factors. Firstly, of the five churches that the author approached, only the Latin (Roman Catholic) church maintains its own independent archives. When church representatives of the Melkite, Greek Orthodox, Maronite and Anglican churches were consulted about theirs, it was recounted that these churches were in such a state of disarray during the early years of the state due to the upheavals that they faced that the efficient bureaucracy that it would have taken in order to provide such an archive was neither feasible nor a

priority at that time. Secondly, the author encountered, despite the friendly and helpful demeanour of the Latin and Franciscan representatives, a certain reticence to open up their records to the public. Whether this was due to local political considerations or an internal *modus vivendi* of the Catholic Church can only be guessed at. In any case, it was not possible to pursue the matter further. However, given the limited representative nature of religious communal leadership over the affairs of Palestinian Christians in Israel, this obstacle was not necessarily a serious one, and ultimately challenged the author to find a more inclusive and representative framework through which to collect data.

4.5 The Interview Process

As a result, the author decided to base her fieldwork on interviews. From the end of February until the end of August 2008 just under 40 interviews were conducted. The Appendix at the end of this thesis provides information on each of the respondents who were interviewed. However, before the interview process began, a sample of four separate categories of respondents was decided upon. The sample selection was based on four different categories of leadership in Israel: the intellectual, the religious, the political and the civil. To correspond to these choices, the following sectors were focused on: Academics; Church Leaders or Representatives; Government and Political Figures; and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Representatives.

The author wished to interview academics based on the understanding that academia and politics are closely intertwined and connected, whether from a supportive or oppositional point of view. As a result, individuals from three different Israeli universities were met with: Haifa University, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv University. Due to the continued significance of communal and traditional social patterns as well as of religious identity in both Israeli and Arab societies, the author also deemed it relevant to interview a cross-section of Christian religious leaders from the five main Christian churches in Israel which are, by descending order of size: the Greek Catholic (or Melkite); the Greek Orthodox; the Roman Catholic (or Latin); the Maronite

and the Anglican. The influence of civil society in challenging and changing society then led the author to decide upon interviewing various representatives from Palestinian Israeli NGOs. Finally, within the context of policy formulation and implementation, it was deemed essential to interview a range of government figures, both at the local and national levels (mayors and ministers), as well as political representatives such as Members of Knesset (MKs).

In terms of the choice of individual interviewees, the author first contacted those individuals who were deemed to be the most centrally located or knowledgeable about Christian-related issues in Israel. If these were not available for interview, others were contacted in their place. In terms of the academics, the author chose those who had either written directly about some matter relating to the Palestinian Christians, or who were expert in matters relating to ethnic relations and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. In terms of the individual interviewees from the church sub-segment, the author interviewed, in as much as was possible, the heads of each of the five major churches in Israel. The author was also interested in finding out more about the realities of life in small Christian-only or mixed villages in the Galilee, and as such, two local parish priests there were contacted and interviewed. In terms of the government and political figures, the author interviewed two mayors, three Members of Knesset (MKs) belonging to three different political parties, one representative of the Ministry of Justice, one representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs (who was also an MK), one representative of the Ministry of Interior, and two representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister. In terms of the NGO sector, the author interviewed representatives from several key NGOs active in Israel within the Palestinian Arab and equality sectors.

The author encountered a number of limitations with the method of sampling used. In five cases, the interviewees' expertise crossed categories. For instance, retired academic Fuad Farah is also the Chairman of the Orthodox National Council in Israel; MK Hanna Sweid is also Director of the NGO, Arab Centre for Alternative Planning; Yaffa of Nazareth Mayor, Shawqi Khatib, was also Head of the National Committee for Arab Local Councils as well as Head of the Arab High Follow-Up Committee; Daniel Rossing, who is NGO Director of JCJCR was a former Director of the Department of

Christian Communities in the then Ministry of Religion; while Johnny Mansour, who is an NGO Director, is also Dean of Mar Elias Educational Institutions. This overlapping of expertise across the four different categories may be seen to limit the effectiveness of the sample categorisation for analysis purposes. However, for the purpose of this study, the author resolved this confusion by categorising each of these five respondents based on their most relevant expertise to the Palestinian Christian issue as expressed by them in their interviews.

The governmental/political category proved problematic as the view of local mayors and Members of Knesset, as elected public representatives, did not necessarily correlate with the views of government officials. The views expressed in the church sample, however, were generally found to be consistent with each other. This was also found to be the case within the NGO sector. Similar to the governmental/political category, the views expressed within the academic category followed an expected division between pro-establishment and critical approaches. This categorisation system proved, on the whole, to be useful in terms of illustrating general differences of outlook and priorities between the different academic, church and NGO sectors. As indicated, the least consistent category was found to be that of the government/political representatives. The author admits this to be the result of mistakenly combining national and local government figures, as well as national government and MK figures, together in the same category, but as the impact of the categorisation system is limited in function to the collection of data, it is not deemed have a significant or serious impact on the analysis of the findings produced by those interviews.

Thirty-six interviews, in all, were conducted during the course of the fieldwork and of these seven were not recorded. Two of the interviewees declined to provide their consent to be interviewed (both being currently engaged in governmental work), and the location of the five other interviews was deemed not to be conducive to recording (two took place in a café, while another two took place in the interviewees' homes where there were frequent interruptions by family members).

In each of the four categories, nine interviews were conducted. It was not an aim, but rather a coincidence, of the fieldwork undertaken that there happened to be exactly

nine interviews conducted in each category. The author had wished to interview a number of additional personalities but this was not possible either as consequence of inconvenient timing or as a result of being refused permission to interview. The one notable example of the latter case was when the author had gotten very close to securing an interview with Police Spokesperson, Micky Rosenfeld, who had also suggested bringing along with him a high-ranking Christian police officer to the interview. The author had reached the stage of confirming a date and time for the meeting when, catastrophically, possibly as a result of tiredness, the author slipped up and unintentionally referred to the "Christian Arabs", the term used within Israeli Jewish establishment circles, as "Palestinian Christians". The author was then treated to an indignant lecture by the Police Spokesperson who then hastily hung up saying that he would now need to receive permission from his superiors to proceed with the interview. Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, such permission was not granted. Despite the fact that had the author been able to secure this interview it would have proved a fascinating experience and source of information, the manner in which the telephone call fell apart was not without its own interest or significance. The sensitivity of language and political terminology, which the author was deeply conscious of and had up to then made a concerted effort to use in a manner appropriate to the interview and the interviewee, was revealed to the author in this case in a most direct manner.

The author had, in particular, sought to interview more representatives from the various governmental ministries and sub-departments. The government/political category proved to be the most difficult to access. In terms of the MKs, for instance, the vetting process by the MK's office of the author's credentials before the interview took place was generally a lengthy one, with the exception of MK Hanna Sweid who allowed the author to drop in to the office of the NGO of which he is the founder and Director in Eilaboun on the same day as initial telephone contact was made. In the case of MK Nadia Hilou, however, it took the author several months of email correspondence and telephone follow-ups to secure the interview which took place towards the end of the fieldwork. Finding an introduction into the various ministries was even more difficult. For example, had it not been for the efforts made by the Druze MK Majalli Whbee to find for her the direct telephone numbers for two individuals within the Prime Minister's

Office, then these interviews would not have taken place. It was the author's experience that without an internal contact, the public is reliant on what is a very inaccessible government web-site. In the case of the Christian Department, for instance, which is a unit within the Ministry of Interior, no trace of its existence as an office, its hierarchy or a description of its mandate, is to be found on the English website of that Ministry or any other government website. Having previously learned of the dissolution of the Ministry for Religions (which has since been resurrected, but as a Jewish-only Ministry of Religion) to which it belonged, the author might never had learned of its existence had it not been for the findings of the church interview segment. The author is left to puzzle why knowledge of the existence of this Department is not made more publicly available.

Of the thirty six interviewees, only five were female. Although this number appears to be low, the author believes that it is a fairly representative sample reflecting the lower level of female participation in the higher ranks of Israeli and Arab life. Of the nine academics, for example, only one was female (Dr. Amalia Sa'ar). The author had wished to interview a second female academic (Dr. Daphne Tsimhoni), who has written extensively on Palestinian Christian issues, but it did not prove possible to find a time which would have been convenient for her within the period of this study's fieldwork. Predictably, given the universally patriarchal structure of religious organisation, none of the nine church representatives were female. Of the government and political figures, two were female: one being a Christian Arab MK (Nadia Hilou) and the other being the Jewish Director of the Civil Service Commission (Henia Markovic). Of the NGO representatives that the author interviewed, two were female and both were Arab (Einas Odeh-Hajj and Suhad Bishara).

Although status and experience, and not ethnicity or religion, were the central determinants in the selection of interviewees, a note on the ethnic and religious affiliation of respondents within the sample will be made here. In terms of ethnicity, twenty-five of the thirty-six respondents were Arab; nine were Jewish and two were neither Arab nor Jewish. Five of the nine academics interviewed were Jewish, thus representing the majority of that segment. Predictably, none of the nine Christian Church representatives were Jewish; however two of them were not Arab either (the Greek Orthodox Patriarch

being Greek and the Franciscan Custos being Italian). Three of the nine political figures were Jewish, while only one of the nine NGO representatives was Jewish. In terms of religious affiliation (whether practicing or not), and reflecting the ethnic factor, nine of the thirty-six individuals interviewed were identified as Jewish. Of the remaining twenty-seven interviewees, the author was able to determine with certainty that twenty were Christian (or had no difficulty with being associated as such, regardless of whether they were practicing Christians or not), two were Muslim and one was Druze. While the religious affiliation of the four other interviewees was not shared or went undeclared, it can be determined with certainty that all four were Arabs. Given the political sensitivities surrounding religious identification in Israel, this final category of 'undeclared' is considered by the author to be a valid categorisation of self-identity and the interviewees were not specifically asked at any point in the interview process to state their religious identity or affiliation.

The format of a semi-structured interview was chosen as the best means of facilitating an open and fairly flexible framework conducive to two-way communication. The author did not believe that questionnaires or focus groups would be able to provide her with the same level of specific and personal feedback. During, or prior to, all of the interviews, the author was invariably asked to introduce herself and describe the subject, aims and function of her research as well as her own personal background. Given the sensitivity of the research, and the author's previous experience of this type of 'counter-interviewing' by people she had met during her stay in Nazareth, the author was prepared for such an eventuality.

During the fieldwork, the author encountered a generally very positive response to enquiries concerning her nationality (Irish) by both the Palestinian and Jewish respondents. Many Palestinian respondents remarked upon the shared historical experiences of, and solidarity between, the two peoples (Palestinians and Irish) who have suffered much at the hands of colonial powers. Some Jewish respondents, by contrast, suggested that there was much in common between the historical plight of the Irish and their struggle for self-determination and the Jewish struggle for nationhood, providing an interesting reverse logic. Although the author had encountered rumours that suggested

negative associations made by Israelis between Irish republicans and Palestinian nationalists, the author never experienced this during her fieldwork. As a result, the author found that it was generally to her advantage to mention that she was Irish in emails or telephone conversations where she was trying to arrange an interview.

Given that this research relates to Palestinian Christians, the author was frequently asked whether she herself was a Christian. This question initially proved to be a difficult and uncomfortable question for the author for a number of reasons. Coming from what may be described as a traditional Irish rural family, Catholic education and mores invariably colour the landscape of most children's upbringing. However, the author is hesitant to classify herself religiously and is reluctant to being classified by others in religious terms either, as she considers religious conviction to be a deeply personal matter. This discomfort is probably motivated in no small way by lessons learned from Irish historical experience which warn against such a line of questioning as it is deemed to have the negative potential of upsetting the social order and problematising relations in society. However, realising that religious faith remains a strong element of identity in the Middle East, and that defining oneself as "secular" introduces difficulties and misunderstandings, if not outright hostility, the author found that it was nearly impossible to escape being religiously classified by others as Christian. Furthermore, as the author was considered 'Christian by default' of her Irish national identity, she reconciled to identify herself, when asked, as having a 'Christian background'. In so doing, the author believes she has remained true to herself while at the same time being accessible to others. In any case, it is worthwhile to mention here that those interviewees that did ask for the author's religious identity did not appear to be unduly affected by this response. This shows that the information was important only in the manner in which it made the author easily categorisable and the interviewees more comfortable with the author.

Some interviewees expressed an interest in finding out more about the process of my fieldwork. A number of interviewees asked who was being interviewed, to which the author supplied basic sampling methods rather than individual names. Others were interested in where the author visited, and the reasons for those visits. Even when a small number of interviewees expressed reservation about the process, this did not seriously

impact the interview itself. Instead, suggestions were made, some of which were integrated by the author. For instance, Maronite Archbishop Paul Sayyah suggested that the particular experiences of Christian Arabs (he objected to referring to them as Palestinian Christians) in the urban centres of Nazareth and Haifa are not truly representative of all Christians in Israel. He strongly urged the author to visit the small rural Christian villages of the northern Galilee in order to discover what he viewed as a different reality which would in turn, he argued, reflect different responses to what he imagined the Nazareth and Haifa respondents were providing to the research questions. While the author did not necessarily accept the Archbishop's conclusions on what those responses would be, he did demonstrate the necessity of incorporating a wider geographic sample which the author endeavoured to do by visiting the Christian-only village of Mailiya and the mixed village of Rameh.

All of the interviews conducted for this study were conducted in English. While English is the mother tongue of the author, all of the interviewees proved proficient in their command of the English language. Had the interview process incorporated non-leadership levels, this may have proven problematic. In any case, the proficiency of the respondents with the English language eliminated the need for an interpreter and ensured a level of consistency throughout. The interviews lasted, on average, between thirty and forty minutes. No follow-up interviews were conducted.

As an introductory question, the interviewee was generally asked the following question: "How would you describe the situation and experience of [Palestinian Christians/Christian Arabs] in Israel?" This question was designed to be as broad as possible so as to allow the interviewee time to relax and position himself/herself with the subject matter in his/her own words before going into more specific questions later. If the interviewee had previously written about the Palestinian Christians in Israel and had already described his or her attitude to their situation and experience elsewhere, this question was not asked as it would have created a negative impression that the author had not done satisfactory background reading. In such cases, the author would allude to their experience or writing and instead ask the interviewee to explain how they came to be

involved in dealing with the Palestinian Christian issue, and in the case of academics, what attracted them to it as a subject of research.

As a follow-up question, the author asked: "Where, if anywhere, do you see their situation and experience as being different to that of the rest of the [Palestinian/Arab] minority?" These two questions combined were designed to identify, in general terms, the particular narrative and political outlook of the interviewee. One typical response focused on their particular attributes and particular experience, whether it was an experience of advantage, or suffering, relative to the rest of the minority. The other most typical response was that there was very little, if any, difference of situation or experience between Palestinian Christians and the rest of the minority. There were a small minority of responses to these questions which did not fit into either of these two general narratives and which took a more complicated view of the question, and while the expectation was confirmed that the majority of Jewish respondents would favour a differential description and the majority of Palestinian Arab respondents would favour a singular or united approach, there were some exceptions, notably within the church segment, some of whom tended to advocate a partially differential description.

The next general question asked was: "What are the issues or areas of most concern affecting the lives of Palestinian Christians in Israel today?" Responses varied, with the majority of responses suggesting one or a combination of the following: social and employment issues, the problem of emigration and the dwindling Christian presence in Israel, state policy and political Islam. Those who responded citing the state or state policy as a problem or as an area of concern were asked to elaborate on what aspects and areas of it were, in particular, problematic, while those who did not cite the state or state policy as a problematic factor were asked if they thought that the government should be doing anything about improving the other areas that they identified as problematic, and if they thought they should, what reasons they thought were holding the government back from doing so.

If the respondents had not independently raised the issue of the state or state policy in any of their previous responses, the author would then ask: "How would you define/describe state policy [or the attitudes of the state] towards Palestinian Christians in

Israel?" This pivotal question was left until the end so as not to crowd or guide the interviewee in his or her thought process. Throughout the interview process, connecting questions were asked that were relevant to that particular interview only in order to maintain a degree of fluidity or to re-direct the interviewee's attention in cases where he or she had become focused on a parallel or unrelated topic. There were also a number of filler comments made by the author to encourage further or more elaborate responses from the interviewee. In cases where the interviewee demonstrated new knowledge to the author, the author would ask additional questions requesting further clarification, rather than asking them a purely opinion-based question.

4.6 Conclusion

In sum, the method used to collect the data for this study, while suffering from a number of inevitable structural and temporal limitations, as well as from the imperfection of the author's own inexperience, offer a reliable system through which the findings which will be described in more detail in the following chapters could be collected and analysed. While the author has attempted to integrate as much as possible of the fascinating points and insights made by the various respondents during the interview process, much has had to be excluded from this study for the sake of conciseness. In particular, a wealth of personal impressions and anecdotes which were recounted to the author "off record" remain excluded from the findings here. The forthcoming chapters will, therefore, attempt to do justice to the opinions and comments made by the interviewees with respect to this study's particular research question.

Chapter Five:
Locating State Attitudes

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the diverse range of opinions expressed by the respondents interviewed for this study on the subject of Israeli state attitudes towards its Palestinian Christian population. Following the methodology outlined in the previous chapter, the findings demonstrate two main points of departure in the respondents' analyses which are reflected in this chapter's analysis. A number of the opinions expressed focus on what are perceived to be the prevalent attitudes of the state towards Palestinian Christians and the degree to which these attitudes are believed to converge or diverge with the state's broader views of the Palestinian Arab minority in general. While state attitudes are, in these analyses, often merged and indistinguishable from what are understood to be the typical attitudes of mainstream Israeli Jewish society towards Palestinian Christians, this is a welcome factor, particularly given this study's view on the contingency of state ideology, institutions and policy upon society itself, and the important potential of social norms to affect state attitudes. Furthermore, this approach provides an interesting test-case for the sociological themes laid out in Chapter Three, particularly in the manner in which some themes are highlighted and elaborated by respondents while others are downplayed or minimised.

While a number of respondents focus on state attitudes within a general social context, others have rooted their analyses within broader descriptions of the nature of the state and its particular set of national and ideological imperatives. Adherents of this approach generally positioned their analyses of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians within the broader theoretical parameters of the state and state policy, thus demonstrating the political saliency of the theoretical assumptions laid out in Chapter One.

Although it may have been expected that the findings would loosely reflect ethnic or political divisions in society, this was rarely the case. As a result, the presentation of findings along such lines is both deeply problematic and ineffective, resulting in the decision to present and review the findings according to respondent sample (academic, church, political, NGO). While this approach renders generalisations more difficult, it provides more space for

the particular and nuanced view of each respondent to be laid bare and analysed. This integrated approach is important given the overall function of this chapter to identify in a more precise manner the particular attitudes of the Israeli state towards Palestinian Christians as expressed. It is also a useful method through which the broader theoretical and sociological assumptions encountered in the previous chapters can be meaningfully compared and correlated. Finally, this chapter is critically important as it provides the motivation and support to investigate two particular issues which were highlighted by the respondents themselves as typifying current state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel and which will be addressed separately and in more detail in the next chapters.

5.2 The Academics

Within the academic segment, a number of different perspectives arise. The first is a non-control perspective of state policy which was expressed by two pro-establishment Israeli Jewish academics. However, in the absence of control, neither of these two respondents could easily identify an alternative policy towards Palestinian Christians. For one, Israeli state policy towards the Palestinian Christians is best understood as a "mixed bag" of different and, occasionally, conflicting policies reflecting the ambiguous nature of state attitudes towards this community.[1] On the one hand, the lack of any coherent state policy towards the Palestinian Christians is, in his analysis, the result of the misguided tendency of Palestinian Christians to willingly involve themselves in Palestinian nationalism as well as other "radical" or "extremist" oppositional politics which are understood to have both antagonised the state against them and contributed to their policy neglect. Even with the development of political Islam in the 1980s and the alleged decline of secular Palestinian politics in Israel since that time, which are both understood to have increased the vulnerability of this community, "the Israeli government made the mistake of not running to embrace them". Implicit in this argument is the "tit for tat" belief that the lack of a coherent policy towards Palestinian Christians is the result of the political choices made by this community.

However, the state is also understood to have extended some more generally positive measures towards the community which demonstrate the state's ultimate commitment to their

[1] Interview with Raphael Israeli, 06/07/2008.

welfare and solidarity with them. The role of the state as protector of Palestinian Christians (ironically, against the perceived onslaught of political Islam) is mentioned. By way of an example, he cites the appointment by the state of a bodyguard to protect the Mayor of Nazareth, Ramzi Jeraisi, during a particularly bad period of intra-communal tensions, which will be discussed in Chapter Six. However, even these protective measures are tempered by what he refers to as the state's preferred strategy of non-intervention motivated by their desire not "to rock the boat" in state-minority relations, which removes Palestinian Christians even further to the periphery of the state's priorities and concerns.

> [W]e know that the Christians are persecuted in the Holy Land and mistreated and what have you, but we don't want to rock the boat, because if we bring this whole thing into an open rift with the Muslims then the fate of the Christians would be even worse and therefore we mitigate the situation and make believe that everything is all right.

Thus, both the demographic size and political insignificance of Palestinian Christians as a non-Muslim minority represent major components in this respondent's understanding of state policy and attitudes. However, an additional factor which he believes has motivated the government's preferred policy of non-intervention into the affairs of the Palestinian Christians is what he perceives as being a general misunderstanding of the state's intentions and the lack of positive returns for their efforts as a result of widespread cynicism and distrust on the part of the minority as a whole. Once again he mentions the case of Nazareth, this time with respect to the role of the authorities and, especially, the Israeli police. Within this context, the international significance of Christianity can also be understood to have loaded the dice against local Palestinian Christians with whom the state is averse to engage on any terms lest it be misunderstood or manipulated by foreign media.

Another Israeli Jewish academic echoed this "hands off" analysis of state policy towards the Palestinian Christians.[2] He argued that while the state would like to take a more protective stance towards the Palestinian Christians, it is limited or obstructed by several factors. Firstly, the lack of political differentiation between Muslims and Christians negatively affects state attitudes towards them. It also both undermines and deters the state's ability to engage separately with them in practical terms. Secondly, the political and electoral strength of Muslims compared with the demographically small size of Palestinian Christians reduces the relevance of this small community to the state. Finally, state intervention, even

[2] Interview with Gabriel Ben-Dor, 07/04/2008.

when well-intentioned, is misunderstood and rejected by the minority themselves. The case of Nazareth is once again cited to demonstrate each of these points.

> There is no coherent policy that I can see... [T]he Israeli government is interested in working out some kind of relationship with the leadership of the Israeli Arabs who tend to be Muslim. And even the Christians among them, speak the language of Muslims. They don't identify as Christian… And there is the Druze question. I don't think there is any equivalent policy towards the Christians. When problems come up such as the great feud over the mosque in Nazareth, the government is ambivalent. On the one hand, they would like to appease Muslims. They don't want to fight Islam. On the other hand, they would like to protect the Christians who are the weaker party and the party in the right apparently in that particular case. And they just try to navigate through the crashing waves with no great degree of success.

Nonetheless, as before, the government is presented here as encouraging and promoting the integration of Palestinian Christians, despite the inherent limits of Palestinian Arab integration within Israeli Jewish society. Integration, according to this view, consists less of any particular or affirmative measures by the state than of not obstructing self-motivated efforts on the part of individual Palestinian Christians to integrate themselves within Israeli Jewish society. When asked whether he would go so far as to describe Israeli state policy towards Palestinian Christians as multicultural, he was more reticent. Suggesting that there is a "reluctant, grudging kind" of multiculturalism in Israel, he mentions a number of practical dimensions of multicultural policy such as "the independent cultural and educational institutions which cultivate a multiplicity of identities" and the status of Arabic as a second official language of the state. However, the extent of multiculturalism is clearly understood to be limited by the nature of the state and the absence of normative multicultural attitudes. On the one hand, "there is the ideology of the Jewish state. It's a national state of the Jewish people and everybody else is a minority. That's part of the game." On the other hand, the Palestinian Arab minority is also described as being uninterested in multicultural arrangements.

> The Palestinian Arabs in Israel basically object to the Jewish character of the state. They reject it. And the Israelis, the Jews, react accordingly, and see that minority as a hostile one which is to be controlled, to be dominated, kept in check so it doesn't become a very actively hostile group. That's not a good breathing ground for multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is one of two things. It's either the luxury of those who are well off, and are very tolerant and liberal, or else it's a mode of conflict resolution… And neither of these two prevails in Israel at this time.

While observing no evidence of a more affirmative and protective state policy towards Palestinian Christians, he believes that one should be introduced on the basis of the close cultural and social affinity that naturally exists between Christians and Jews in Israel.

Firstly, the Palestinian Christians represent, to his mind, a valuable resource to the Israeli state in that they "could be a very important cultural bridge between Palestinian nationalism and the West generally defined". In this regard they are also described as being very similar to Israeli Jews and "could be a very functional bridge in trying to reduce the gap" between Arabs and Jews as well. Secondly, "they are valuable from the point of view of skill and manpower. They are educated, they are skilled, they work hard, they work in the modern sectors of the economy. They are very useful citizens." And, finally, both Jews and Christians share similar experiences of fear and insecurity as minorities against a common enemy, "radical Islam". Interestingly, while this description reveals two factors which were encountered in the literature (that Palestinian Christians represent both a "western" and a non-Muslim community) as a positive resource and a potential asset to the state, neither of these attitudes are understood to affect the state's approach to them.

While these two accounts are largely consistent each other, the remainder of the academic respondents, while reiterating some of the same factors, have come to radically different conclusions on the overall nature of state attitudes and policy towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. One Israeli Jewish academic, for example, suggested that the state has never tried to assert a differential policy towards this particular community.

> Let's put it this way. Because the Christians… We have to bear in mind that the Christians were the leaders of Palestinian Arab nationalism. It would be hard to cut them off from the rest of the Arab community. (...) This was one factor. And I think the government, or the Jewish establishment, read the map rightly and correctly.[3]

The political behaviour of Palestinian Christians, therefore, represents a central determining factor in state attitudes towards them. However, in a radical departure from the previous analyses, this respondent suggests that Palestinian Christians have, in fact, suffered relatively more than other segments of the Palestinian minority in terms of their political and social discrimination by the state, and as a direct result of their greater proximity to, and contacts with, Jews in society.

> But, the Christians in Israel, paradoxically, are more discriminated against than Muslims as Arabs. Because they live more in mixed towns - we say mixed, but they are Jewish towns – than any other group. If they live in Jewish towns, it means that they also compete with Jews more than other Arabs. They also suffer more from discrimination. It's another reason for them to leave. This is why they are quite ambivalent… more ambivalent than other Arabs about Jews, because they have more contacts than other Arabs with Jews.

[3] Interview with Sammy Smooha, 13/04/2008.

It is, therefore, their greater experience of Jewish discriminatory attitudes as a result of their Arab ethnicity and geographical distribution which is understood to have increased the ambivalence of Palestinian Christians in society. This interpretation differs radically from typical accounts which see Christian nationalist tendencies as resulting solely from Christian compensatory or survivalist tactics. Similarly, their higher rates of emigration are, to a large extent, understood as a political statement of Christian protest against state attitudes.

Notwithstanding this experience of discrimination, this respondent does observe some clear cases of state differentiation of Palestinian Christians from the wider Palestinian Arab minority. Education represents one such area of differentiation, while the "real autonomy" received by Christian religious communities with respect to the administration of their communal affairs represents another. Such high levels of autonomy are considered to be above and beyond that which other religious groups receive from the state. However, these measures are not understood to be the result of more positive state attitudes towards this community. Instead, they are understood to be a consequence of Israel's foreign policy concerns and the international significance of Christianity. Rejecting any identification of Israel as a multicultural state "in the ideological sense", he nonetheless observes selective multicultural policies in practice, such as the symbolic status of Arabic as an official language and the apparent autonomy extended to religious minorities. This he refers to as "thin multiculturalism". Given the ethnic priorities of the state, he also suggests that the form of selective multiculturalism in place in Israel is more correctly defined as "multi-sub-culturalism" whereby the subordinate role of the Palestinian Arab minority and other non-Jewish groups is implied.

A number of respondents observed aspects of the divide-and-rule discourse in their analyses of the role of state attitudes and policy towards the Palestinian minority in general, and the Palestinian Christians in particular. For one critical Jewish academic, the state perspective "was and remains the divide and rule approach".[4] However, the state's divide-and-rule approach is understood to be less concerned with creating divisions between religious minorities than it is in distinguishing between radical and non-radical elements within the minority, whereby "radicalism is being anti-state" and anti-state attitudes are understood to be any claims or positions which oppose a Jewish definition of the state. As such, religious differences, while they may coincide with perceptions of radicalism and non-

[4] Interview with Amalia Sa'ar, 03/04/2008.

radicalism, do not necessarily represent the primary axis of differentiation of the minority by the state. Whatever lines of difference are used, divide-and-rule strategies are widely considered to directly target the cohesion and integrity of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel. According to one Palestinian Arab respondent, for example, state policy towards Palestinian Christians, as towards other segments of the Palestinian Arab minority, remains a matter of control.[5] This approach, which considers the Arab ethnicity of the minority to unify state policy towards all its segments, is based on his understanding of Israel as an ethnocratic state. The increasing academic tendency to relate to "Arabs" as just Muslims and Christians (but not Druze) represents one example of the state's desire to create divisions within the Palestinian Arab minority. With particular respect to Palestinian Christians, control measures are evidenced in such areas as the recent civic service initiative which is designed as an alternative to military service; the promotion of military service among Christians; and more liberal approaches by the state to Christian education, or the church school system in general.

Another Palestinian Arab academic who echoes the description of the Israeli state as an ethnocratic regime and who has written extensively on multiculturalism in such states, added that, as a "typical" Middle Eastern state, there is no real separation between religion and state in Israel, thus rendering the multicultural label void of any significant ideological value.[6] In addition, he observes that while the Israeli state is becoming more open to discussion about the external Israel-Palestinian conflict, it is simultaneously becoming more closed and intransigent about the nature of the state and internal dynamics within the state itself and between the state and its Palestinian minority. This is matched with a parallel growth of Jewish religious parties in Israeli politics, a trend which does not bode well for any non-Jewish religious communities. As a result, he argues that while it may appear that Christians have achieved a greater measure of autonomy than other groups within the minority, primarily through their separate church school system, this type of autonomy is fundamentally limited and more correctly understood as an example of "controlled multiculturalism". However, other strategies of division are also identified. He identifies a "silent process" of minority enlistment in the armed forces and the police, which Palestinian Christians are understood to be particularly susceptible to, as an example of the efficacy of

[5] Interview with As'ad Ghanem, 03/04/2008.
[6] Interview with Majid al-Hajj, 08/04/2008.

the state's divide-and-rule policy. As a result, he comments that the gap between Palestinian Christians and Muslims is, in fact, widening, not shrinking.

By contrast, one Palestinian Christian academic suggested that Israeli state policy towards Palestinian Christians differs in a negative way to state policy towards Muslims as a result of what he considers to be the growth in Jewish religious antipathy and hostile attitudes towards Christianity.[7] Discussing the lack of Israeli police intervention in a number of village conflicts in which Druze or Muslims had attacked Christians, it is this factor which he understands as having determined their "hands off" policy more than the politically cautious or reticent tactics that were encountered earlier. Moreover, he argues that "Christian ideology" also represents a particular political challenge to exclusive Jewish national and religious claims over the land. Christian claims to the Holy Places are understood, from a religious point of view, as being stronger than those of "Muslim ideology" and, therefore, to represent a greater threat to the exclusive religious authority of the Jewish state. He also suggests that many Israeli Jews continue to view Christians as "Crusaders", thus providing an historical dimension to their hostility.

For another Palestinian Christian academic, however, Israel's strategic interests and foreign policy commitments cannot be discounted in accounts of differential Israeli state policy. This strategically different application of state policy is understood to have been a continuous factor since the creation of the state.[8] The role of Israel-Vatican relations during the formative years of the state and, particularly, during Israel's diplomatic efforts to secure international recognition of its statehood by the United Nations, is understood to have had a significant influence on Israel's apparently more open policy towards Palestinian Christians and the churches. However, notwithstanding this international pressure on Israel to maintain a positive policy towards its local Christian policy, the persistence of identifying Palestinian Christians as part of the wider "Arab problem" is also clearly identified by him. Palestinian Christians are understood to have experienced similar discrimination and suffering to their Muslim neighbours during the traumatic early years of the state. The expulsion of Christians outside the boundaries of the state and the destruction of Christian villages are mentioned as examples of this same policy. Instances whereby Christians were allowed to return to their homes and villages are understood to have occurred solely as a result of international pressure and only on an individual and limited basis. Citing from his own family's personal history of

[7] Interview with Fuad Farah, 15/04/2008.
[8] Interview with Michael Karayanni, 11/08/2008.

expulsion to Lebanon, he could observe no such preferential treatment towards a general return of Palestinian Christians. His family's return to their home was organised clandestinely by themselves with some members of the family becoming naturalised citizens of the state only thirty years later.

Moreover, he observes a clear policy by the Israeli establishment to divide the Palestinian minority along religious lines. In discussing what he refers to as the convenient historical precedent of the Ottoman millet system and how it was instrumentally applied by the new Israeli state he observes the following:

> Historically, and that has been something that people wrote about, there was a kind of an establishment policy where if you fragment the Palestinian minority inside of Israel more, one factor being religion, the better able you are to control the community. So, in this sense, as I did write about also the historical millet system of the Ottomans that was in place here for so many years, it proved to be some kind of national treasure. I mean, it does work to fragment the community. And it has established this sense of being different and of being a separate nation and that did affect the reality of fragmentation and therefore the government was happy to find that reality in place because that way it could control better the Palestinian minority, and the idea of control was the dominant policy of the Israeli government since 1948 I would say until today, but it was very severe from 1948 until 1966 when the military government was in place.

Unlike other analyses, this view does not identify Israel's policy towards the Palestinian Christians as being one that is simply identifiable as divide-and-rule only. Israel's foreign policy interests and its need to secure international recognition and support are also identified as being "a very important ingredient in why Israel also applied this differentiating policy". Similarly, the role of internal politics within the Palestinian minority represents for him an additional element in the dynamic underlying Israeli state policy. Furthermore, the nature of the relationship between official Israeli state policy and Israeli Jewish public attitudes is highlighted as an important factor in determining unofficial state policy towards Palestinian Christians. While concrete evidence of differential policy is generally lacking beyond the restitution of church properties and the appointed jurisdiction of churches over the religious affairs and personal status issues of their communities, the media is accorded a central agency in the state's approach to Palestinian Christians in general.

> Well, the media has this stereotype. I've been asked a number of times, are you an Arab or a Christian, as if there's a difference. I could be both. The Israeli media and the general public [are] very undereducated on these issues of how the Arab community is conceived and what [are] the internal divisions and the character of that community. They perceive it through the prism of a threat, and the threat issue is something that determines how they would relate to the Christians as historically not being a threat. So they are categorised as a threat from the Muslims who are regarded as a threat not only

> inside of Israel but because of being part of the regional threat for Israel. That's the prism, it's a prism of fear, and how the Jewish community feels threatened determines how that community perceives others, and because the Christian community has not been a threat I would suspect that in the media they would be differentiated and they would hint that it's a success of some kind...

Therefore, fear is acknowledged as motivating, to some extent, differential state and public attitudes towards the Palestinian Arab minority. As such, the Palestinian Christians are not considered to represent the same level of security threat as Palestinian Muslims. However, opportunism is also understood to be an important factor, not only for the sake of international credibility and favourable public opinion but also for the sake of significant internal gains. While creating dissension within the minority aids and promotes state control over a feared minority, facilitating increased Christian autonomy similarly removes a number of clear financial burdens off the shoulders of the state. By facilitating increased autonomy on the part of a handful of comparatively rich churches, the responsibility of the state to distribute adequate resources to the minority as a whole is diluted under the pretext of respect.

> I suspect that it was like a mutual kind of interest. Because the Christian communities have their own resources, I mean, they were left with a lot of their properties, so they rent a lot of places that they sell here and there and they also get a lot of money sometimes from abroad. So, they are established, and they don't need the government money to handle their own affairs and that's also convenient for them, because not having the government regulating them does not make them have to submit to any kind of standards or supervision or file certain documents, the government would not know what's happening, so that's kind of convenient. And the government, for its own purposes, also found that convenient. It does not have to fund it, and it can say to the whole world, look how well we're treating these Christian communities, giving them absolute autonomy to handle their own internal affairs.

Therefore, a degree of complicity between the churches and the state is identified which facilitates the application of a differential state policy towards Palestinian Christians and which ultimately feeds a wider policy of control.

5.3 Church Leaders

Within the church leadership segment, attitudes concerning the nature of Israeli state attitudes and policies differ. One representative from the Anglican Church, for example, did not attribute a discriminatory aspect to state policy towards his church or its community. The

fact that Palestinians in Israel are citizens of the state in possession of Israeli passports confirms, to his mind, their equality in society.

> [T]hey live regularly... they're not being discriminated against because they are Druze, or Muslim or Christian. They are living as minorities, but they have their own representatives in the Knesset. There are a lot of things that are common with the Israelis, with the Jews.[9]

However, given that Israel, and the world in general, does not consider Palestinian Christians to be a "tentative bomb", from either a demographic or political perspective, as they do Muslims, has, in his analysis, significantly improved both their relations with the state and their situation in society at large.

From his perspective, the state's approach has, furthermore, been dictated and limited by the role of historical precedent as well as of various status quo agreements. At most, Israel is understood to have added to, or exacerbated, existing tensions and problems which predated the state's establishment. "Israel added to the problem, but it was not the cause of it or its initiator." In particular, the extension of official state recognition of the Anglican Church in 1970 was seen as a positive step towards mutual recognition and the practical administration of his church's affairs. With regard to the unresolved issues of church taxation (the *arnona* tax) he goes so far as to identify the state's attitudes towards the churches as being one of tolerance and respect. While this viewpoint makes reference to the international power of Christian churches, this respondent departs from all previous analyses by suggesting that the main factor shaping state policy towards the churches is the role of different personalities within the Israeli government rather than any particular malicious intention towards them.

> Maybe one minister will issue a statement blaming the church for what they are doing or one of the employees will, you know, take a stand against this church because they have done so and so. It's a rather personal rather than a general policy.

Similarly, in discussing the changeover of ministerial responsibility for the Department of Christian Affairs from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior, he identifies intra-governmental and intra-Jewish politics as determining a greater influence on policy than any consideration of the minority themselves. "It's a political issue, between rivals in the Israeli government itself rather than having something to do with anything else."

[9] Interview with Nabil Zumot, 12/03/2008.

However, other church representatives offered radically different views. The Rector of the Latin Seminary in Beit Jala, suggested two main factors which have influenced the state's attitudes towards Palestinian Christians, and negatively at that: their Arab ethnicity and their Christian religion.[10] However, both are moderated, in his view, by the continuing importance of Israel's foreign policy commitments and strategic relations.

> One view is they look at us as Arabs. It is true that they have an Israeli passport, but they still are Arabs. It means that they're different. So they want to make a Jewish state. The Arabs in a Jewish state seem to be foreigners. It is built on a Jewish state. This is one thing. Another thing is that they look at Christians in a different way also. Because Jews suffered from Christians during the ages, they consider that the persecution they endured after the death of Christ are motivated mainly by the fact that they are accused of killing Jesus. So, if they want to be very severe towards us they may consider us as traditional enemies. But now as they are supported by the USA, this feeling of… this anti-Christian feeling, doesn't appear clearly.

While the political bias against Palestinian Christians as Arabs remains clearly evident to him, the "hidden feelings" of anti-Christian bias are, on the whole, generally only experienced by church representatives and clergy. This bias is particularly evident for him in relation to the difficulty which Christian clergy have had in securing visas to come to Israel in order to administer to religious and personal affairs of their communities. This bias is understood as having become increasingly tangible in recent years. After the creation of the state, he recounts that it was relatively easy to acquire multiple-entry visas for Christian clergy in Israel. However, this situation has now changed with the cancelation of multiple-entry visas for all clergy except the very top leadership levels. In addition, an Arab bias has been introduced to the extension of visas. In the first instance, Arab clergy find it more difficult to acquire visas. Now they are granted only one-year visas, with the stipulation that if they should plan a trip outside of Israel within that year, their visa is cancelled and re-entry refused if they don't apply in advance for a separate re-entry visa before their departure. The application for a re-entry visa is a lengthy and delayed procedure meaning that trips abroad are difficult to organise. These extra restrictions have made life very difficult for Arab clergy and the administration of religious services to Christian communities which are spread across territorial boundaries.

In discussing the reasons behind the failure to implement the Fundamental Agreement between Israel and the Vatican, he mentions Israel's reluctance to continue giving the Christian churches privileges, particularly tax exemption on church land holdings which they

[10] Interview with William Shomali, 18/03/2008.

have traditionally enjoyed as part of the status quo arrangements. Once more, this change of attitude by the state towards the churches is observed as being a recent development originating in the last ten years. In explaining possible reasons for this change of policy towards the church, he provides a number of possible interpretations.

> Maybe this displays the hesitation inside Israel itself to give privileges... as Israelis are not all agreed together on this. This is one thing. Then, the change of Ministers… There [are] a lot of changes in the Director General of the representations to these negotiations. This is [another] reason. But it is not enough to justify all this slowness in giving a final decision. Maybe they don't want to give us these privileges. Or the slowness is a kind of pressure: we can continue this way for years, you will not have what you want, so you have to accept a compromise. Maybe it's their way to [push] for a compromise. Maybe… So in this way they say, ok, we don't remain in the status quo, in the privileges given to us by the Turks and the French and the British, and they accept a compromise. In this case they will win, and we will lose something but we will not lose everything. And this compromise maybe they are looking for it, both of them, now. They've understood that…

It would, therefore, appear that the international power of influence which Christian churches traditionally had over Israel, particularly during the early years of the state, has declined. The Israeli state is portrayed as being increasingly independent and indifferent to international and western Christian opinion. The balance of power in church-state relations is gradually shifting, and this confrontation with the most powerful church in Israel, the Latin Church, which has a leadership role among the rest of the churches in Israel, signifies both a test-case of those relations and a potential watershed for future relations depending on the outcome or compromise reached in these negotiations.

Although church-state relations in Israel are observed by this respondent to be deteriorating, not all aspects of Israeli state policy are considered negative. On the positive side, he mentions the economic support given by the government to Catholic schools in Israel. The state, he observes, picks up sixty-five per cent of the budget of these schools which represents an important contribution in his eyes. Furthermore, he praises the general freedom of religion which is enjoyed in Israel, and the steps which the state takes to allow full Christian worship whether it is in terms of holy days or religious processions.

While some respondents suggested that fear, opportunism or anti-Christian bias represent key factors motivating Israeli state policy towards Palestinian Christians, the Franciscan Custos, by contrast, suggests that ignorance, resulting from their demographically small size, is a more accurate description of both the state's and the general Israeli Jewish

public attitude towards Christians. "In Israel, first of all, most of Israelis don't see Christians and don't know anything about Christians."[11] He then adds:

> The attitude of the state, the first is ignorance. They don't care about Christians. We don't bring enough votes. But the church is important for foreign policy for if it speaks everyone listens… and generally speaking they don't like us so much. This is what I feel.

This suggests that both pragmatism and foreign policy considerations do influence state attitudes to some extent. However, ignorance remains the primary trait. This ignorance is influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, the changing demographics within Israeli society have resulted in fewer Jewish officials who are of European background who have direct experience, awareness of, or sensitivity to Christianity and Christian issues and are, thus, sufficiently informed or open-minded to engage with the churches. Secondly, there is a noticeable rise in the number of religious Jewish groups in government, who care little about promoting or even discussing Christian matters. Finally, their demographic small size, together with these other forces, have rendered Palestinian Christians an increasingly negligible community in political terms. "The state of Israel first of all does not think about the Christians, but when it thinks about the Christians, it thinks about the Christians mainly in Jerusalem." This last factor demonstrates the close intersection between international Christian interest and the Jerusalem question. The fixation of international Christian interest on Jerusalem has provided the authorities with more freedom and independence in the manner in which it engages with Christian communities living in other areas.

Like the Latin Rector, the Franciscan Custos also integrates into his analysis an understanding of the role of differentiated internal Israeli Jewish politics. Generally speaking, the churches and the Palestinian Christians rarely experience state policy directly. The point of contact which they have for important issues of visas, land issues et cetera is generally not at the ministerial level, but at the level of local authorities. In describing the attitude of local authorities towards the church, he suggests that "[t]hey don't understand the Christian significance of the Holy Places, for instance... I don't think this is cynicism. Simply they don't understand the significance." Elsewhere he commented that "I don't think it's a deliberate policy. Sometimes maybe so, but generally speaking it's ignorance".

The parish priest of the Christian village of Mailiya, by contrast, reflected on state policy towards his village and its parishioners and identified it in strongly negative terms.[12]

[11] Interview with Pierbattista Pizzaballa, 28/03/2008.

One particular aspect of discrimination he identified was with respect to land. He mentions how the government has designated significant tracts of village-owned land in Mailiya as "green" areas on which the villagers have no further rights to build, farm or develop their land. He also mentions the negative impact that the construction on their village land of the Jewish village, Hela, which was built only twenty years ago, has caused. His own family's personal history tells an additional story of suffering. Originally from the destroyed village of Kfar Bir'am, his family became internal refugees before eventually settling in Haifa. The memories of these experiences stay with him. Finally, he considers the state's policy towards further education as deliberately, albeit indirectly, discriminating against the Palestinian minority, including the Palestinian Christian segment of it. He argues that due to a minimum age restriction for enrolment in many university degree programmes – which is set at twenty-one years of age to coincide with the average age of Israelis who complete military service – a three-year vacuum for Israel's Christian and Muslim youth is created. Given this void, economic pressures oblige many Palestinian youths to enter the work-force immediately, a situation from which they have great difficulty extricating themselves three years later. They face various choices; they must either "put their lives on hold" until they are twenty-one, forego further education altogether, or continue their education abroad if they can afford it. If they choose the latter opportunity, the likelihood of returning to Israel diminishes starkly. Emigration continues to be a threat even to those who do receive further education in Israel as a result of the lack of suitable professional work opportunities for Palestinians inside Israel.

5.4 Government Officials & Politicians

In terms of the attitudes of the governmental and political segment of the respondents on the role and nature of state policy, it is not surprising to find a division of views on the subject. For example, Nadia Hilou, a Palestinian Christian and former MK for the Labour Party list, could not identify the existence of any attempt by the state to create divisions or problems among the minority.[13] This is compounded by the inability of any political Christian political party either to reflect the political will of the majority of the Palestinian

[12] Interview with Fr. Nadim Shakour, 19/08/08.
[13] Interview with Nadia Hilou, 20/07/08.

Christians or to pass the electoral threshold in Israel, rendering them, as a result, unattractive to the state as an independent pool of votes.

> Even if someone wanted to make a new party, a Christian party, I can't see that he will have a chance to do it because of the number of Christians on one side and because some of the Christians even don't want special parties and want to be part of the system, the Arab system, because they are not focusing on issues of the Christians but they are focusing on issues of the minority.

Hilou also raised the issue of reserved seats on Zionist parties as evidence of the politically weak position of Palestinian Christians in Israel. In the elections to the 17th Knesset, only one seat on the Labour Party list – seat number 19 – was reserved for an Arab candidate while approximately every fourth seat was reserved for a female candidate. As such, she deliberately chose not to run for the seat reserved for Arabs, but rather for one of the relatively more numerous seats reserved for female candidates. As a result, she won the 15th slot on the Labour Party list, out of a total of nineteen seats which the Labour Party won that year, which was coincidentally the fourth slot reserved for women. A Muslim won the 19th seat as the highest placed Arab candidate. Although she lost her parliamentary seat in 2009, primarily as a result of the underrepresentation of both Palestinian Arabs and women in the Labour Party, her views on the role of state attitudes and policy remain, at best, ambiguous. While failing to observe any clear state policy towards Palestinian Christians in Israel, and acknowledging that the state had still to address some important residual gaps in society, she focused her attention instead on what she referred to as the negative and contrary nature of Palestinian Arab opposition politics and the need for "a vision of coexistence and a vision of equality and a vision of peace".

> You know, I cannot say that the state has a special policy or a different policy towards Christians and Muslims. I can't say it. But, I want another policy of equality because I think that we haven't here a clear policy and a strategy of equality. (...) I think it's the same policy concerning the minorities in general. And I want, really, a very clear policy and strategy of closing the gaps that we can also measure. (...) Because if it's not, it's only words, it's only words and it's only giving promises and in general the Arab citizens are tired of these words and tired of all the government and all the promises that they have said they will make better and promote and we will, we will, but we want facts.

Notwithstanding her inability to observe particular state attitudes or policies towards the minority, she was comfortably able to reject the notion of Israel as a multicultural state. By contrast, Palestinian Christian MK for *Hadash*/DFPE, Hanna Sweid considers state policy in more definitive terms.[14] To begin with, the classification system used by the state in its

[14] Interview with Hanna Sweid, 15/04/2008.

presentation of official statistics is, for him, indicative of state attitudes towards the Palestinian Arab minority. This classification system is primarily based upon the distinction between Jews and "non-Jews".

> You know, the point here in Israel is that the government does not like to deal with so many minorities. They would like not to have so many minorities. So, if they put all of them in one basket, and that's what they do sometimes, they define all minorities in Israel as non-Jews. This is a huge basket in which you can put Arabs and Samaritans and Chechens, and then again you have the Christians and the Muslims and everybody. So, they're non-Jews and easily defined type of minorities. You scramble all of them in one category.

Therefore, the "non-Jewish" category of Israeli census material broadly indicates the common marginalisation of, and discrimination against, Christians with Muslims, Druze and other communities in Israel. Similarly, the reluctance of the state to use the internationally acceptable definition of the Palestinian minority as a national minority reveals the problematic nature of state attitudes towards the minority as a whole. The Palestinian Christians are, as a result, understood to be inextricably associated with the common political problematisation of the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. He cites his particular experience as a Palestinian Christian Member of Knesset to support this view. "I feel that I'm treated as an Arab, irrespective of my religion." He also does not observe any meaningful extension of religious freedom with regard to the state's, Knesset's and the Ministry of Education's general lack of observance of, or respect for, Christian holy days, particularly with regard to the scheduling of national school examinations or parliamentary voting dates. Ultimately, he does not identify any significant differences in Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians and the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole.

> The attitude of the state towards the Christians is almost exactly the same as the attitude towards the Muslim community. All are Arabs, all are Palestinians, all are suspected citizens of the state. And the state discrimination that is implemented against Muslims is the same as implemented against the Christian community.

As evidence of this, he cites the discrimination facing towns and municipalities that are predominantly Christian with regards to budget allocations that is comparable with that faced by predominantly Muslim or Druze municipalities. However, he does suggest that perhaps certain elements within the Israeli authorities and central government, such as the security branches, do observe or follow differential approaches in their evaluation of potential security threats.

> So, in general, the attitude is exactly the same. I think that maybe the security branches and institutions here in Israel and especially regarding the theories on terror might not suspect, from a security point of view, the Christian community exactly as they do the Muslim community because of the religious background. But this is almost unseen. This is between the lines that I can read that. But in the development policies, status, citizenship, I can see that the government and the establishment has the same attitude towards all.

Despite this, he observes that the differentiation of the minority by the state is less evident with regards to concrete policies than it is with regards to the more symbolic areas of language, media and political propaganda.

> Sometimes [the differentiation of the minority is done] only verbally. Just trying to revive, trying to give Christians the impression that they are preferred, that they do not belong to this Arab community. And in the definitions, Arab mainly means Muslims here. So sometimes they say Arab community, including Christians and Druzes. So, this is the wording used. 'Arabs including Christians and Druzes', and this is actually to give the impression that Christian and Druze communities are something else, not really Arab, and that is the reason why they should emphasise 'Arabs including', which means that if they accept the theory that Christians and Druze are Arabs but they emphasise that in order to give the impression that anyway there are some differences between the Muslim, Druze and Christian communities.

These selective terminologies are understood by Sweid to be used deliberately by the state in order to sow divisions or exacerbate tensions within the minority, but to have found resonance only within small sectors of the Palestinian Christian community, normally for opportunistic reasons.

One application of this language of difference concerns the area of electoral politics within the minority. Sweid mentions that the Labour Party floated the idea of a separate Christian political movement during the 1980s and employed its best efforts to generate feelings of Palestinian Christian difference during this period. Reference to one such attempt was encountered in Chapter Three, when the Labour Party supported a Christian list formed under the leadership of Hanna Haddad in 1981. However, this list failed to pass the electoral threshold at the time and was subsequently dissolved. Sweid suggested that the emergence of a separate Christian political movement in the 1980s was timed to coincide with the civil war in Lebanon and to exploit the deep religious tensions there in order to sow religious dissension between Muslims and Christians in Israel. However, these attempts are all understood to have failed due to the lack of receptivity from Palestinian Christians themselves and the inability of such a movement, even if it had secured a wider swathe of the Christian popular vote, to pass the minimum electoral threshold necessary for a political party in Israel to sit in the Knesset.

Similarly, Palestinian Christian mayor of Nazareth, Ramzi Jeraisi, considers that the manner in which the state uses language to identify and categorise the minority represents a solid indicator of its general political approach.[15] He points to the state preference to identify the minority as a series of "minorities" despite the fact that the practical implementation of state policy remains the same.

> We will not accept, not now and not in the future, the governmental attitude and the governmental policy of dealing with us as "minorities". (...) Of course we do not accept that, and actually I believe that the behaviour of the government towards all the Palestinian minority in Israel is almost the same.

He does, however, consider Israel's foreign policy, and the significance of Christianity within international diplomatic circles, particularly with respect to Europe, the Vatican, and the US, to have an important influence on the formulation of state policy towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. Notably, however, he considers the positive concessions which accompany it to be largely limited to the level of appearances. The reality is, for him, quite different. While it may appear that a different policy results from external interest in local Christian issues, Jeraisi observes a parallel, and more important, differentiation of Israeli state policy which focuses on, and sometimes caters to, Muslim interests. Ultimately, however, he observes Israeli state policy as being the same, single-minded, opportunistic and exploitative policy regardless of these occasional differences.

Internal political competition between Israeli Jewish political parties is also attributed an important role in his analysis, particularly with regard to the electoral strategies and political gamesmanship which took place between Likud and Kadima during various national election campaigns in the 1990s, and the impact that this had on communal relations within the minority. The role of anti-Christian attitudes within government circles and within Israeli Zionist ideology, or the deliberate disassociation by elements within the government from issues or events which have important Christian cultural or religious significance, is also mentioned as motivating the state's attitude and approach towards Palestinian Christians. To support this and his earlier views, he discussed at length the state's role and involvement in the Nazareth affair from 1997 until the turn of the millennium.

Regardless of their religious affiliation, intervention represents a core aspect of his understanding of Israeli state policy towards the Palestinian minority. However, the manner in which state intervention, or "interference" as he refers to it, occurs has changed according

[15] Interview with Ramzi Jeraisi, 17/04/2008

to shifting international opinion of Israel and Israel's increasing political awareness of how its policies may be received or interpreted internationally.

> Well, there is interference all the time. They will not stand looking from the side without trying to interfere, but I think that the regional and international atmosphere has changed and of course the political practices of the government have also changed… it's not the same. (...) Israel at the end [of the Nazareth affair] paid also a very high price because of its policy, internationally and locally also. That was a short-term policy. They did not think about the long-term. They thought only about the very short-term policy. It was a plastic policy.

The mayor of Yaffa an-Nasara, Shawqi Khatib, was more resolute and single-minded in his attitudes concerning state policy.[16]

> [F]rom my view, the policy of all the governments of Israel in taking decisions inside the Israeli institutions [is that] they have an agenda, or they deal with all the Palestinians like a problem. It doesn't matter to which religion they belong. They may use this division to serve their policy, not to serve any group of the Palestinians. The policy is one of dividing. They use it all of the time.

State policy is understood as being one that is primarily and consistently based on divide-and-rule strategies. As such, he categorically rejects that such a policy could benefit any segment of the Palestinian population. It is a policy which is implicitly structured against the interests of the minority as a whole and implicitly formatted to serve and promote the interests of the Israeli Jewish majority only. What unites all Palestinians in this policy is their common identification and treatment by the state as a problem. As such, there is only one real division within Israeli society, and that is the division between Israel's Jewish and Arab populations which has created two separate realities across all fields, whether it is according to employment, income, socio-economic, or development figures.

> They try to use it all of the time, in every field. It doesn't matter. They try to use it all of the time, in the media, in the terminology, [the] language they try to use. And they try all of the time.

The attitudes of the third and final MK to be interviewed for this study were markedly different. The former Deputy Foreign Minister, Majalli Whbee, a Druze candidate representing the Kadima party argued that the state takes positive and, indeed, affirmative steps towards all segments of the minority, including the Palestinian Christians, but that the impact of this approach is limited by the tendency of certain elements within it to identify themselves with negative Palestinian Arab elements. Unsurprisingly for a Druze candidate on a right-wing Jewish nationalist party, he considers Arab ethnicity not only to be a separate

[16] Interview with Shawqi Khatib, 17/04/2008.

nationality but one that is distinct from the constructed Druze ethnicity and nationality. Although he describes Palestinian Christians as failing to fulfil their duties as citizens, particularly the duty of military service, they are understood to receive not only all but more than their fair share of rights and benefits from the state. For example, he describes Palestinian Christians as being overrepresented in both government and civil service positions, even when compared with the Druze. He recommended that the figures provided by the Civil Service Commission's report be examined in order to confirm his statement. However, when the author conferred with the Director of the Civil Service Commission and checked the figures provided by their report, it was found that this claim was, in fact, misleading. The report in question states that of the total number of civil service positions in 2007, Arabs accounted for only 6.17 per cent of all these jobs in total. Therefore, to begin with, Palestinian Arabs are already seriously underrepresented according to their representative sample of the population (20 per cent). However, within the number of positions filled by Palestinian Arabs, patterns of both overrepresentation and underrepresentation can be found. Filling 60 per cent of all the Arab posts, Muslims are underrepresented, while both the Christians and Druze remain overrepresented at 21 per cent and 11 per cent respectively. Notwithstanding this, it remains true that the Palestinian Christians are the most overrepresented community in civil service positions. However, in later discussion with the Director of the Civil Service Commission, the real explanation for this inflated Christian representation became clear.[17] While the figures for civil service employees exclude the military, security and police branches – areas in which the Druze distinguish themselves numerically – as well as public school teachers and the recently privatised postal, transport and communication companies, it includes not only government and ministerial workers but the entire personnel of Israel's general health and hospital staff, including nurses, doctors, maintenance and cleaning staff who have been classified as Ministry of Health employees. In total, employees of the Ministry of Health account for half of the total number of people categorised as civil service employees. As medicine and health care are generally recognised to be common professions for Palestinian Christians, conclusions regarding the number of Palestinian Christians employed in the Israeli civil service can easily be skewed.

For this high-placed Druze MK and government official, Palestinian Christians receive a number of advantages as a result of both affirmative state policy and their own

[17] Interview with Henia Markovic, 18/08/2008.

opportunism. More generally, the state is portrayed as trying to cope the best it can within difficult political circumstances and sensitive communal dynamics. Israel is understood as maintaining the right of all communities to be separate, free and independent from each other. Furthermore, it is as a result of Israel's protective policies that Christians are understood to be able to practice their religion as openly and as freely as they do.

5.5 NGO Representatives

Attention will now be turned to the general findings drawn from the non-governmental segment of the interview sample. The attitude of the sole Israeli Jewish respondent in this segment, the Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations (JCJCR), will be addressed first.[18] While avoiding deep analysis of the role and nature of state policy towards Palestinian Christians, his perspective addressed the factors underlying what he perceived to be the currently poor state of Jewish-Christian relations in Israel. His research shows a particular concern with Israeli Jewish public opinion and negative attitudes towards Christianity and Christians in general. This is complemented by his previous governmental experience, working as the Director of the Department for Christian Affairs within the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the 1970s and 1980s which has informed his office's research aims. He observed that it was, in fact, his experience working in that Department which inspired in him the need to pursue non-governmental opportunities to focus on, and improve, Jewish-Christian understanding in Israel. His view is that the Jewish majority in Israel continues to harbour deeply antipathetic views of Christians. This antipathy and even antagonism is primarily rooted in feelings and experiences of historical persecution at the hands of Christians in Europe and their resulting deep sense of continued victimhood. The creation of the state of Israel and the reversal of the traditional Christian-Jewish majority-minority relationship to one of Jewish political power and dominance over a Christian minority did not result, however, in any significant change in Jewish attitudes. In fact, indigenous Christians in Israel are understood to suffer disproportionately more than other segments of the minority from the maintenance of old Jewish attitudes and stereotypes which portray Christians as being an historical source of threat and danger.

[18] Interview with Daniel Rossing, 17/03/2008.

> [W]e're working with a lot of Jewish baggage that comes from another place and another time, from the past centuries of persecution and so forth that obviously feeds in to relations here. If I say that the local Christians are a double-minority, I have reason to believe that many Jews view them as a double-majority: once as part of the vast Arab world, because they emphasise that they are Arabs, once as part of the vast Arab world with which we have a decades-old conflict here, more specifically with the Palestinian people, with whom the conflict is more severe, and once again as part of the vast and huge Christian world with which the Jewish people have certain problems. (...) What is clear is that the Arab Christian gets it twice. Whichever card he puts forward, the Arab or the Christian, it doesn't serve him well… in the eyes of the Jew.

This historical bias is understood to have an even more determining influence on Jewish-Christian relations and Jewish attitudes towards Christians than the wider Arab-Jewish political conflict. He argues that the majority of Israeli Jewish society is, in fact, difference-blind when it comes to attitudes towards the Palestinian minority. "I'm never very certain how much Israeli Jews understand that this is a Christian Arab and not just an Arab. I think there's a tendency to treat all Arabs as one." Moreover, Jewish religious antagonism to Christianity is understood to represent a growing factor in these relations.

The intersection between negative historical and religious attitudes is revealed in the results of a recent JCJCR survey into Jewish attitudes towards Christianity and Christians in Israel. Discussing the significance of this survey he focused on a number of findings in particular. The survey was conducted across a representative sample of the Jewish population broken down according to age, gender, level of education, country of origin and degree of religiosity (the options being secular, traditional or orthodox). According to the results of this survey, it was found that 52 per cent of the overall sample group did not have any Christian friends or acquaintances. Furthermore, only half of the sample believed that the city of Jerusalem is central to the Christian faith. Even more surprisingly, 24 per cent, or nearly a quarter, of the secular sample, compared with 42 per cent, or just under a half, of the total Jewish sample, believed that Christianity was an idolatrous religion. By contrast, only 71 per cent of the total sample believed that the State of Israel is obliged to guarantee freedom of religion and conscience for its Christian citizens, while only 37 per cent believe that the New Testament should be allowed to be taught in Israeli schools. Given the dialectical relationship between Israeli state policy and Israeli Jewish public opinion, these findings are enormously suggestive of the general attitudes towards Christians in Israel.

These negative attitudes are, therefore, explained as being the combined result of inherited stereotypes, religious antipathy, ignorance and fear. While ignorance and stereotypical attitudes are understood to be typical attitudes of majorities throughout the

world, the role of fear is described as being an important factor which is particularly unique to the Israeli Jewish experience. The creation of the State of Israel is understood to have been an attempt at the restitution of Jewish "normalcy" following the disastrous impact of the Holocaust on Jewish communal identity and confidence. However, a series of wars and the persistence of political deadlock with its Arab neighbours have kept the deep sense of fear and insecurity alive.

> And I think this is a nation that is so afraid. With all our power… When you become afraid, you close yourself off, you start becoming defensive. Everybody is the enemy. You start demonising everybody around you. Where is the next blow coming from? That may sound really strange for a country that has the kind of military power that we do, but you blow these things up… [F]or all our economic and military powers I don't think people in this country are confident – they're afraid. I think many Israeli Jews are much more afraid than the Palestinians are. Palestinians stopped being afraid. They don't have anything to lose. That's my experience... All these things operate, and that also creates a deterioration in relating to people. So, it's not just a matter of growing ignorance, it's growing fear. And of course the two are probably very interrelated.

Therefore, the JCJCR's efforts to run educational seminars and workshops in conjunction with various ministries, particularly the Ministry of Education (and their school networks) and the IDF (in particular during the five-day seminar on Jerusalem which the IDF provides to new recruits to familiarise them with religious and communal diversity in the city), as well as attempts to engineer religious dialogues and "cultural encounters" between Jews and Christians are understood to be necessary, but generally sufficient, measures to eradicate hostility and create a more harmonious relationship between Jews and Christians in society. These efforts are complemented, firstly, by his belief that the nature of the relationship between the state and one of its smallest minorities represents, essentially, a "good litmus test" in the determination of Israeli democracy. Secondly, Palestinian Christians share a history of minority suffering and persecution which could serve to integrate them further in the hearts and minds of Israel's Jewish population. And, finally, if Israeli Jews can learn to accept Palestinian Christians as non-threatening and integral to their society the path may potentially be cleared for a gradual reconciliation with Israel's Muslim community and a resolution to the wider Israeli-Arab conflict.

The only instance in which he directly referred to the state or state policy was with regard to the current administration of the Department of Christian Affairs. To his mind, this department is negatively affected by a lack of personnel who are familiar with and sensitive to Christian issues. During his time in office, he recounted that ministerial staff were predominantly first-generation Jewish immigrants from European or Arab countries,

possessing a much wider linguistic skill-set than is currently the case. By way of an example, he mentioned his role in the Capucci Affair of 1974 involving the case of arms-smuggling from Lebanon into Israel by the then Greek-Catholic Archbishop, Hilarion Capucci. The Advisor to the Minister of the Police was a Jewish man originally from Aleppo, Syria, who went to the same school as the Archbishop. This connection is understood to have facilitated a speedy resolution of the affair with minimal negative impact upon the situation of Palestinian Christians in Israel. Similarly, the then Minister of Religious Affairs, who was originally from Berlin, was described as being "a man of the world". However, with the passage of time, and the evaporation of first-generation immigrant expertise, a gaping hole in Jewish awareness of Christianity and Christian issues has emerged.

> They're gone! And our education system has done nothing to prepare their replacements. People don't know how to relate to anybody else. I know I'm very extreme in my words, but it's true. These people were what I call cultured, or cosmopolitan, whether they got it from Arab Muslim countries or Western Christian countries… Our Israelis growing up in this society don't know anybody but themselves! And therefore it's only a downhill thing, and it's there in our strategic plan. Many people feel there's a tremendous deterioration.

He also takes issue with the government's appointment of Cesare Marjieh, a Palestinian Christian, as the first non-Jewish Director of the Department for Christian Affairs within the Ministry of Interior. Considering the role of the job, the nature of the state and the amount of personal networking with other ministries and department that is required of it, he believes that the position should have been given to a Jew. As a Palestinian Arab Christian, his ability to influence a largely Jewish civil service is seen as being severely limited. As such, he sees this appointment as being "more of a token thing" which is ultimately a sign of the "downgrading of that office than [of] upgrading Caesar". To which he adds that: "[i]t might look on the surface like you're being multicultural by putting Arabs into seemingly significant posts but it might also be saying we don't really give a damn about that area".

As such, he does not subscribe to a description of Israel as a multicultural state. To his mind, multiculturalism is the careful orchestration of competing cultures and religions, not the dominance of any particular one over others. He uses the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem to represent a model of true multiculturalism. Despite the frequent fractious tensions between various competing sects within it, the division of space and time which it employs as part of the *status quo* arrangements is what multiculturalism is really about to his mind.

> [W]hen all is said and done they're all using the same building. They bump into one another. There are clashes... It's never always going to go totally smoothly, and in many cases it doesn't go smoothly at all... People don't love one another. People can exist together and separately in a good balance. The classroom for me is Jerusalem and the ultimate classroom for me the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In describing existing state policy, he has nothing to say other than that the state is "so obsessed with the security thing". In such an environment, true multiculturalism cannot exist as the "obsession with security is anti-multiculturalism".

However, other respondents from the NGO sector have provided a more specific and targeted analysis of the role and nature of Israeli state policy. For the Assistant Director of one Palestinian NGO, Mada al-Carmel, for example, there is no question that a differential state policy towards the Palestinian minority as a whole exists.[19] However, she categorically rejects the notion that the state pursues any affirmative policy towards particular communities within the minority. In describing that policy, she states: "It's the same. The same. There is no but. Absolutely the same." This same policy is one that is based on the state's desire to control the Palestinian minority.

> The most important thing is the control part. The best way to control the Palestinian minority, anything that would serve in favour of the control, the ruling of the Palestinian minority, how to stop their development, to block their development, how to control them, maybe even to stop them even from reproducing, to limit their numbers inside the state because you see the Israeli policy explicitly sees the Palestinian minority as a demographic threat, and they repetitively say that. And what they will be willing to put up with is a limited number of Palestinians inside Israel and with a certain kind of behaviour. A little bit of marginal freedom of speech within a very clearly defined frame. You do not go over that. And with explicit loyalty to the state of Israel as the Jewish state. Whatever falls in favour of this policy they will not hesitate to do.

From this perspective, she does not see any differences in the levels of funding or political representation accorded to Palestinian Christians over and above other segments of the minority. In support of this, she mentioned a law proposed a number of years ago in the Knesset by a former Palestinian Christian MK, Azmi Bishara, to accord proportional representation to Palestinians in governmental institutions. Although this law was passed, it has yet to be implemented, confirming in her mind the deeper structural discrimination that exists against Palestinians in Israel. "And this law is not yet implemented because nobody cares to enforce it."

[19] Interview with Einas Odeh-Hajj, 08/04/2008.

Another Palestinian respondent, this time a Christian, argued that Israel can, at best, be considered a "democracy of scale".[20] At the uppermost levels of this scale are Jewish Ashkenazi men who enjoy the full benefits and privileges of Israeli democracy. However, those at the lowest end of this scale, suffering the most from this incomplete form of democracy, are Muslim Arab women. Palestinian Christians are identified as lying somewhere closer to the bottom of this pyramid. This marginalisation is due to three main problems or obstacles. The first of these problems is the Arab ethnicity of Palestinian Christians, which places them within the same category of potential threat as all Arabs in Israel. The second problem concerns their Christian religion, particularly from the point of view of the increasingly powerful ultra-orthodox political elite in Israel. However, the third problem which pushes Palestinian Christians further down the order of importance in Israeli policy and governmental attitudes is the practical issue of their demographically small size. Considering that Palestinian Christians make up less than two per cent of the total Israeli population and could not, as such, cross the minimum electoral threshold necessary to be represented in parliament, the state has not seriously sought to encourage Palestinian Christian difference through the extension of any preferential policies. Although he does not observe any significant affirmative action to be in place towards any segment of the Palestinian minority, he suggests that if such a policy emerged it would first promote the Druze, because of their IDF service; second the Muslims, because of their numerical significance within the minority; and only lastly the Christians "who get the crumbs of what's left". However, in reality, he does not observe any "clear-cut policy" towards Palestinian Christians. They have suffered similar discrimination and violations of rights as Palestinian Muslims, to which he adds that the significance of the Vatican in considerations of state policy has diminished significantly in recent years. In sum, he identifies Israeli state policy towards Palestinian Christians as lying somewhere between stupidity and conspiracy, while never consistently being one or the other. However, despite the inconsistency he observes in Israeli state policy, the outcome is consistently the same, and that is the fundamental weakening of the minority as a whole, including the Christian component of it.

[20] Interview with Wadi Abu Nasser, 11/04/08.

Another Palestinian Christian respondent similarly observed the existence of a common state policy towards the minority as a whole which is essentially based on the segregation of Arabs from Jews.[21]

> They don't need us. They can live without us. But we, as a minority here, we need them. We need them. So, there is no difference between Muslim and Christian. It's the same. Maybe because the Christians are running schools or hospitals, they are well organised, more than the Muslims, there is the feeling that they have some autonomy. What you call cultural autonomy in some services. But these services are not the whole services that I need. I need the government. I need the state. But, the state doesn't need us and doesn't want us to continue here. They want more land, less Arabs.

Despite this, he observes that there is little direct or concrete evidence to support the claim that any particular policy, whether differential or discriminatory, exists towards the Palestinian minority in Israel. However, there remains a clear disjuncture between the declarative level of Israel policy, which is couched in the democratic language and legal provisions of the state, and the real or practical level of policy consequences. Furthermore, in terms of the apparent cultural autonomy given to the churches, he observes that such autonomy is, in fact, a convenient façade for the state in that it provides it with the opportunity to shirk its responsibility towards the minority in terms of a fair and equitable distribution of state services and resources.

Similar to the previous analysis, the demographic insignificance of Palestinian Christians in Israel is considered to motivate the lack of any real differential policy towards that community. As such, they are not considered to have any significant "power of pressure". He recalled a meeting which he attended in the mid-1990s in which a former Greek Catholic Bishop (Maximos Salloum) and Israeli Prime Minister (Shimon Peres) were in attendance.

> He [Peres] said very well, and very clearly, that those people who are electing the Labour Party will take all the opportunities to be equal. He said that very well. So, I repeat that there is no policy. The whole policy is the same policy as it was forty, fifty or sixty years [ago] towards the Arabs – only to run their lives from day to day. There is no planning for the future for the Arabs. They are working, until now, in their way of colonial thinking, of how to separate the Arabs from the Jewish settlements, from the Jewish cities, or villages. So, you are there, and we are here.

As such, he believes that Muslims receive relatively more opportunities from the state than Christians do. By way of an example, he mentioned that until approximately twenty years ago, the majority of teachers in Arab schools were Christian, as were most of the Arab

[21] Interview with Johnny Mansour, 14/04/2008.

inspectors in the Ministry of Education. Nowadays, only two out of a total of forty-five Arab inspectors are Christian, despite the fact that there are 35 thousand school children attending church schools. This is indicative for him of the shift in the government's priorities and their attitudes towards the minority. Christians are, therefore, understood as being deliberately sidelined by the state in areas which have been traditionally dominated by, and provided for, by Christians. "Because the way of thinking in the Ministry of Education is to give the opportunities more to Muslims than to Christians."

Another Palestinian Christian respondent, by contrast, who also happened to be Co-Director for Policy in the Equality Department of Sikkuy: The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel, could not identify the existence of any particular state policy towards Palestinian Christians.[22]

> I think that the state of Israel nowadays doesn't have any special policies towards Christians. I mean policies are allocations. Policy is money. Where do you invest, where do you not. There are no special decisions for the government towards the Palestinian Christians. For example, they don't give them more allocations, they don't invest in their schools, they don't treat them in a special way. So, there is no special policy towards the Christians.

However, he also identified contradictions between the practical and the rhetorical levels of Israeli policy. The Palestinian Christians represent a useful symbol and rhetorical device for the state, whether through media channels or political statements, in its attempt to both promote itself as a democratic state and to suggest by comparison that Muslim disadvantage within society is self-engineered. The state is, therefore, understood as exploiting and capitalising from opportunities which Christians have, by and large, created for themselves.

> [T]he Christians are always a good excuse for the government to blame the Muslim Palestinians, because the most educated part of the whole Israeli population is the Christian women. The most educated. More than Jewish women. It's not because they are more clever, it's just that they continue more with education. There are many reasons for it, but that's a good excuse for the government to say that we're not discriminating against the Arabs because, look, here we have Christian women who are very well educated, and here you have Muslim women who are not. So, it's the Muslim mentality that is responsible for many of the gaps between Palestinian citizens of Israel and Jewish citizens of Israel. So, the Christians here are a good excuse for the government that they are doing ok, it's just the Muslim mentality that is not.

Accentuating differences within the minority is seen as occurring frequently particularly in situations of government neglect. "Everywhere that the government is not doing its job and there are huge gaps between Palestinians and Jews inside Israel, it's very

[22] Interview with Gubran Gubran, 16/04/2008.

convenient for the government to make differences." But, by and large, he observes that Israeli policy-makers are not particularly conscious or aware of Palestinian Christians when they develop or formulate their policies towards the minority. This is primarily due to the demographic insignificance of Palestinian Christians, and the identification of Palestinian Christians as Arabs by the state. However, given that Palestinian Christians are, by and large, mostly landless and urban-based, is understood to reduce their political significance and level of threat from the perspective of the state.

The state is observed to have attempted to create divisions between Palestinian Christians and Muslims in the past. The registration of a citizen's religious affiliation on national identification cards, which was a mandatory requirement until it was challenged by orthodox Jewish groups questioning the Jewish identity of immigrants from the former Soviet bloc countries, is provided as one such method. "The government tried to show that being Christian is not being Arab." He compared this venture with the state's successful attempt to separate the Druze from their Arab identity and heritage. "And Israel tried to do this thing with the Christians. They tried to divide the Arabs here among Christians and Muslims." Results are understood to have been mixed, based on the complicated and layered nature of Christian identity; the weak position of Christians in Israeli society; and the regional distribution of the various Christian communities. Some Palestinian Christians from the northern villages of Jish, Mailiya or Fassouta, for example, which are villages located close to the Lebanese border, are understood to be "trapped in a very problematic situation" between the demands of their Palestinian and Maronite identities. Similarly, the traumatic experiences of villagers originally from the destroyed village of Bir'am are understood to have placed different pressures on Palestinian Christian identity. He imagines that between a quarter and a third of all Palestinian Christians in Israel have chosen to emphasise their religious identity over and above their national identity, suggesting at least some measure of success for the state's divide-and-rule attempts. The lure of military and civil service is described as further emphasising these divisions. However, the lack of a central or a single hierarchical political leadership for Christians and the more individual nature of Palestinian Christian society, have limited the impact of any single trend. Ultimately, he sees no particular benefit to those Palestinian Christians who choose to emphasise their Christian over their Arab or national identity. In fact, he observes that doing so results in increased discrimination against them.

> By putting myself only as a Christian, I am losing a lot of my rights, because statistically I am in a better place than the average Arab in Israel. By that, I don't demand a lot more from the government. And this attitude is very convenient for the government: you're Christians, you're ok, so I don't have to give you anything. Look at the numbers, your situation is fine. I mean, the government doesn't give prizes if the Palestinian Christians are very well educated. No, it's not the way it is. The government says, oh, you Christians are ok, so you don't need anything from us, you're doing fine. And this is what the Christians don't exactly understand. They think, ok, we're happy about the compliments we get from the government, and that's it. This is not a smart thing to do. It's better not to get happy and say treat us as Arabs, as part of the whole Arab Palestinian community in Israel, and give us more allocations. Because the good place that the Christians are in in some of the villages is because of their own hard work, it's because they know that they have no other choice, and being a minority inside a minority inside a minority anywhere in the world demands for you to work harder and harder to achieve what's easier for the Jews.

The Palestinian Director of the Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) similarly identifies Palestinian Christians in Israel as suffering from the same discriminatory policies as the rest of the Palestinian minority.[23] However, contrary to the previous analysis, he does identify some small differences in government budgets allocated to Palestinian Christians, particularly in the area of education.

> In general, I would say that their status, their situation is very similar to other parts of the Palestinians in the sense that they are part of the Palestinian minority in Israel so they are treated in the same discrimination, or with the same policies that Muslim Palestinians are facing. With one major difference, in the sense that Israel is spending money, and policy and resources to try to develop a kind of separate culture, or separate identity for this minority so that it would be more close to the Jewish majority or the establishment of the state and to try to separate them from the other Palestinians in different ways, not just through trying to develop different or separate identity from the majority of the Palestinian people but also through investing in the education system in some of the schools, in some of the villages and even in some of the universities in trying to develop them.

Therefore, the issue of church education reappears as a divisive issue in the testimony of the various respondents who have discussed it. To some, the state neglects its financial responsibilities to church schools which provide an essential service to Palestinian Arab education. To others, such as this respondent, the partial subsidies which the state does extend to these schools represents a differential policy towards the Palestinian Christians, despite the fact that such subsidies do not significantly alter the status of Palestinian Christians in Israeli society. What unites this and the previous analyses is the importance given to practical and rhetorical differences in policy. This contradiction reveals the "hidden agenda" underlying state policy.

[23] Interview with Mohammed Zeidane, 16/04/2008.

> I think there is a hidden agenda in the sense that you will not see something written that speaks about the Palestinian Christians differently than Muslim Palestinians. In the written and public policy you see one policy, while in the practice and with the investment of the government you see that. Not investment in the positive sense, but in the investment of time and resources, you will see this.

This investment of time and resources is observed to be particularly true of the state's efforts to recruit Palestinian Christians into the army and civil service. This pursuit of differentiation of the minority is understood to be achieved primarily through the channels of the media and the education system.

> I think what they are trying to do is two things: one is in the public media, its attitude that if you are Christian, you are different, and the way that things are dealt with in the media. But more important, I think, is their investment in the education system. I think when you have church-based schools the state is interested more in all the issues of military service, like encouraging children to do national service as a replacement to military service, trying to focus on the religious identity of the group as separate to the national identity. But this is mainly through the education system.

Such differential media coverage of the Palestinian minority is understood as being rooted in rhetoric, slogans and insinuations which are rarely supported by empirical fact. He observes that such differential media coverage is particularly prominent in the run-up to various national and local elections, helping to fuel internal tensions within the minority to the anticipated advantage of Jewish national parties. Moreover, such an approach is understood to resonate with a growing "culture of racism" in Israeli society which is understood to be based on the rejection of all non-Jews, who are considered *goyim*, as foreigners in their own home. Ultimately, he comments that Israeli policy towards the Palestinian minority in Israel, being fuelled by an exclusivist understanding of nationalism, is based on "short-term strategies of apartheid" which have boomeranged on the state to the detriment of Israeli Jewish national interests.

> If you look at the policy of Israel towards the Palestinians inside Israel, I think that they are totally doing the opposite of their intention and interests. I mean, if their interest is that the Palestinians will stop becoming Palestinians and will become part of Israel and by this stopping any kind of demographic threat because they become an integral part of the region. But what they are doing on the ground is keeping this community outside any kind of consensus, which is the opposite [of their interest].

According to this perspective, the state's divide-and-rule attempts within the minority, whether among the Druze, Bedouin or Christians, are destined to fail in the long-term. He already finds evidence of this within the ranks of an increasingly oppositionist Druze youth.

The Palestinian Christian Coordinator of the Legal Department of Adalah: The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel saw absolutely no differences in Israeli policy towards the minority.[24] Specialising in land and planning issues, she could not identify any differences in the problems facing a Muslim village such as Wadi Ara and Christian villages such as Mailiya or Fassouta. She comments that while the government clearly wishes to create differences between the different segments of the minority, this aim has not ultimately been translated into different policies, particularly in the two key strategic areas of government policy relating to demographic and land issues.

The importance of these strategic concerns within Zionist ideology supersedes other state interests and ambitions in her analysis. This is demonstrated, in particular, by government plans to merge a number of local authorities, both Arab and Jewish, in order to reduce municipal expenses. There are a limited number of Arab villages in which there are a significant number of Palestinian Christians. These villages reflect historically unique patterns of Christian residence. However, this did not stop the government from proposing mergers between municipalities with a significant Christian population and other Muslim or Jewish villages. She recalls that in 2003, for example, the government proposed a merger between the municipality of Mailiya, one of only two Christian-only villages in Israel, and another non-Christian municipality. Despite the fact that the proposal was later dropped, the proposal itself suggests a disregard for the importance of Christian communal patterns of living. Similarly, she mentions an objection filed by Adalah in 2001 with the state on behalf of twenty-six local Arab authorities from the north of Israel. The objection related to a Northern District master plan which placed a number of serious restrictions on future Arab development. A number of the local authorities who signed this petition were Christian, confirming the similar discrimination which Christian and Muslim local municipalities face. Finally, she discussed the government proposed development scheme for border villages in the aftermath of the 2006 war in Lebanon. The scheme was designed to compensate villages and businesses damaged or otherwise negatively affected by the war. However, the initial plan excluded a number of Arab villages, including Mailiya, Fassouta and Jish. It was only after Adalah petitioned the Supreme Court on behalf of those villages that they were subsequently included in the plan.

[24] Interview with Suhad Bishara, 18/04/2008

The rhetorical dimension of Israeli policy towards the Palestinian Christians is also mentioned, particularly insofar as it brings important diplomatic rewards for Israel. "It's also in their interest to show the international community that the Christians are somehow protected... On the ground it's not like that but, internationally, I think it serves their interests." Similarly, the media is observed to play an important role in substantiating false claims of Palestinian Christian difference, "especially at times of crisis where [they] try to manipulate and censor what kind of information people will get". She describes the role of the Israeli media in advancing and supporting differences within the minority as a form of "marketing" as it ultimately pays dividends to the state, but only to the state. This is supported by her claim that, particularly during times of crisis, but also in the run-up to local and national elections, the Israeli media rallies around and becomes supportive of the government and its aims.

The final respondent from the NGO sector to be interviewed was the Palestinian Christian Director of Mossawa: The Advocacy Centre for Arab Citizens in Israel. Similar to the previous number of analyses, he identifies the existence of common discriminatory attitudes towards all segments of the Palestinian minority.[25] He believes that the confusion surrounding the question of whether or not there is a differential policy lies in understanding the difference between policy and the impacts of policy. Therefore, the "implications of discrimination" across the Palestinian minority are different, given the existence of a number of important pre-existing communal differences. However, even these communal differences have been influenced, to some degree, by the evolution of state policy, thus further complicating the matter. The 1948 Nakba, for instance, introduced seismic shifts in both the leadership structures and the demographic composition and distribution of the remaining Palestinian population. The implications of discrimination against the Palestinian Christians are, therefore, different than those experienced by Muslims and Druze, despite the fact that they originated in the same policy.

From this viewpoint, the experiences of Palestinian Christians in 1948 have continued to inform the nature of Israeli state policy towards them. The deportation of Palestinian Christians from the villages of Kfar Bir'am, Iqrit and Eilaboun, and the subsequent return of these villagers following international intervention is mentioned as an example of this. The state and, in particular, its security and intelligence services, are portrayed as "using and

[25] Interview with Jafar Farah, 21/04/2008

abusing" the experience of these Palestinian Christians, particularly Maronites, and their repeated demands to return to their villages in order to extract useful information and intelligence contacts from within the Maronite community in neighbouring Lebanon. He suggests that the return of the internally displaced hinged upon their cooperation with the Israeli security services, which used them to develop relations with the Kata'ib (Phalangists) in Lebanon. Throughout decades, hopes of return were kept alive by the state in order to motivate their continued cooperation. However, with the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 1999-2000, the need for this "political link" ended, "and this is why also the Israelis are not willing to talk about it [return to their villages] anymore and they stopped talking about it, because they don't need them anymore".

However, it was not only Christian villages that were targeted by this policy. The Muslim village of Kafr Kara in the Triangle is cited as having been similarly abused and exploited by the secret service in a similar manner. What united all of these individuals and groups, in his analysis, was the common sense of vulnerability resulting from the loss of their homes and villages, and their cooptation by the secret service into the system of control which ultimately deepened discrimination against them.

Other different "implications of discrimination" resulting from 1948 which he mentions include the preservation of Christian communal properties and institutions. Contrary to the Muslim experience, there was an explicit and deliberate policy not to confiscate properties or dissolve institutions belonging to the church. However this policy is understood to be an exception to the rule that also proves the rule. Foreign policy constraints together with explicit demands placed on the state of Israel by the international community in return for recognition of its nascent statehood are recognised as submerging an otherwise common policy based on the control of the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. However, the maintenance of Christian institutions has, in this analysis, contributed to widening gaps and tensions within the minority. This, in turn, strengthened the ability of the state to control it.

Particular discriminatory attitudes against Palestinian Christians are also encountered in his analysis. In order to counter the political leadership role of Arab nationalism and the Communist Party during the first number of decades of the state – movements which were synonymous with the Palestinian Christian intellectual elites – the government is understood to have nurtured a parallel political elite within the Muslim community, particularly during

the 1970s and 1980s. The emergence of the Islamic Movement in Israel is also identified as being initially nurtured and encouraged by the state in the hope that it would offset the political influence and popularity of unitary Arab movements. Similarly, the political leadership role of the Nazareth municipality, which is headed by a Christian mayor, is understood to have resulted in government efforts to promote the municipality of the next largest Arab city in Israel, Umm al Fahem, which its exclusively Muslim population. A policy of government intervention and interference, therefore, together with other forces of change, eventually resulted in diluting the political influence of Palestinian Christians in Israel, a situation which has, ironically, come to be decried by establishment circles as a loss today. Therefore, it is possible to observe from this analysis that the state's interest in Palestinian Christians is dependent upon, and subservient to, wider strategic interests and perceptions of minority threat that make no distinction according to considerations of religious differences.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter confirm the importance of each factor outlined in Chapter Three's sociological analysis of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. Several themes, in particular, were popular among the respondents. To begin with, the notion that their Arab ethnicity and oppositional political behaviour creates or increases the negative association of this community within the wider "Arab problem" remains common. Equally common is the argument that the numerical and electoral insignificance of Palestinian Christians in Israel increases the irrelevance and negligibility of this community to a political establishment that is consumed with more pressing concerns surrounding demographic and electoral priorities. At the very least, the findings show that their numerical insignificance has contributed to high levels of ignorance about Palestinian Christians in society, rendering both the Israeli authorities and the general public increasingly blind to them.

While their 'Western' attitudes and non-Muslim identity are frequently referred to as reducing the level of threat that is otherwise associated with the Palestinian Arab minority and as of having the potential to bridge the gaps between Jews and Arabs in general, the findings indicate that these two factors have not significantly affected or altered the concrete

application of policy, which suggests that these factors are not particularly relevant to Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians. Instead, state policy is portrayed as being largely consistent with that which is extended towards the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole and only different in such instances where foreign policy considerations relating to the international significance of Christianity have demanded an alternative or more concessionary approach. As such, it is generally understood that it is not affirmative or preferential state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians which generate differential policies where these are found to exist, but rather independent and external factors which have little to do with the daily lives of local Palestinian Christians. Even here, however, the diminishing power of the international community and, in particular, of the Christian churches to influence the Israeli authorities has been identified as resulting in a policy towards Palestinian Christians which is increasingly uniform and indistinguishable from state policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. This trend has been accelerated by growing Jewish religious antipathy towards Palestinian Christians and Christianity as a whole which ensures their isolation at the periphery of both society and state interests. The role of increasingly overt Jewish anti-Christian sentiments receives markedly more attention in this study's findings than it does in the literature, suggesting that this factor has potentially more influence on state attitudes than was hitherto anticipated or expected.

The findings also highlighted the relevance of two issues or topics in particular which received a strong emphasis from the respondents and which were used by them to demonstrate, or testify to, claims concerning the nature of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel. The first relates to a conflict which emerged in Nazareth and which dominated intra-communal relations there throughout much of the 1990s and the particular role of the state in that conflict. The second concerns growing Druze-Christian tensions in a number of Arab mixed villages in Israel and the response of the relevant Israeli authorities to these events. While each of these topics, together with the perspectives provided by the respondents, will be addressed separately in the next two chapters and provides a more in-depth and up-to-date account of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel, their selection is firmly anchored and motivated by the broader perspectives outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Six:
Conflict in Nazareth

6.1 Introduction

Variously described as the unofficial Arab capital and the centre for Arab economic and political life in Israel, the city of Nazareth is widely recognised to be an important political trendsetter for the entire Palestinian Arab population of Israel and is, as such, central to any investigation of state-minority relations in Israel.[1] Moreover, with a population of approximately 70 thousand people[2], Nazareth is not only the largest Arab city in Israel, but it is also home to one fifth (equalling 24 thousand people) of all Palestinian Christians in Israel underlining the particular significance of this city to Christian as well as Arab life in Israel.[3] With its strong concentration of Palestinian Christians, its Christian-led municipality, and its significance to international Christendom, Nazareth represents a unique and important opportunity to test different claims concerning the nature of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel.

It is within this context that this chapter seeks to explore the response of the Israeli government, its ministries and various political parties to a particular conflict which emerged in the city in the mid-1990s and which went on to dominate intra-communal relations within the city for several years thereafter. Referred to as either the Nazareth 2000 affair or the Shihab ad-Din conflict, the dispute arose between the city's Christian-led municipality and the local Islamic movement over the development of a small piece of land at the centre of the city. In order to understand how this conflict can inform this study's investigation of state

[1] See: Frisch (2001: 163); Landau (1969: 6, 206), Kaufman (1997: 99) and Israeli (2002: 38).
[2] Providing reliable population statistics for Nazareth is difficult. While the CBS estimates that Nazareth had a population of 65,500 at the end of 2007, Rabinowitz (2001: 100) suggests that the city had already reached 65,000 by 2001. By contrast, Usher (2000: 4) suggests that the city's population had reached 72,000 almost a decade ago, suggesting an even greater total population today.
[3] According to Rabinowitz (2001: 4); Forman (2006: 337) and Israeli (2008: 251), Palestinian Christians today represent a third of the city's total population. Despite being a Christian majority city for one century from the 19th century until the 1960s, Nazareth has remained a predominantly Muslim town and then city for most of its history. While the demographic decline of Christians in the city predates the creation of the State of Israel, both Rabinowitz (2001) and Emmett (1995: 40-45) have documented the transformative impact of the 1948 war and the influx of predominantly Muslim internal refugees upon the city's demographic balance.

attitudes towards Palestinian Christians, this chapter offers a brief introduction to the history and political role of the Nazareth municipality itself. This will be followed by a chronology of events surrounding the conflict and a description of the various players and factors involved in it. The final section will integrate this study's interview-based findings with the previous sections and analyse these together within the broader context provided by the literature and this study's theoretical assumptions.

6.2 The Nazareth Municipality

The first Israeli municipal elections to be held in Nazareth took place in 1954, six years after the creation of the State of Israel. This delay is particularly striking given that Nazareth has one of the oldest and longest functioning municipalities in Israel, dating back to the Ottoman reforms of 1877.[4] Explanations provided for this delay describe not only the prevailing "security" concerns surrounding military rule over the Palestinian Arab minority in general and the particular demographic threat posed by Nazareth as an Arab city in the midst of a predominantly Arab Galilee, but also the state's practical fears of the anti-Zionist Communist party (*Maki*) which had by then established a strong base of support in the city and which was emerging as the main source of opposition to the hegemonic status of David Ben-Gurion's *Mapai* party.

These fears were confirmed by the 1954 victory of *Maki* in Nazareth. However, despite winning the majority of seats in these local elections, *Maki* representatives were pushed out of the leadership level of the municipality by a government-backed sectarian coalition which was more accepting of, and submissive to, government demands.[5] Until the mid-1970s the city was led by a series of *Mapai*-aligned mayors, who were considered to be deeply unrepresentative, inefficient and corrupt in their administration of the municipality.[6] The predominance of *Mapai*-affiliated lists within the Palestinian Arab sector is documented in the literature as a typical feature of the period of military rule and the neo-patrimonial politics of the early state. The first mayor of Nazareth, for example, a Greek Orthodox

[4] Forman (2006: 337)
[5] The sectarian list consisted of 9 representatives made up of: 3 Muslims, 2 Greek Orthodox, 1 Roman Catholic, 1 Greek Catholic and 1 Maronite. Forman (2006: 342-347)
[6] Smooha (1989: 113); Dumper (2006: 274).

Christian by the name of Amin-Salim Jarjara, ran on the *Mapai*-affiliated list known as The Democratic List of Nazareth. He served as mayor of Nazareth from 1954-1959 until he was replaced by Seif id-Din el-Zu'bi, a Muslim who ran on the same list until 1974.[7]

As a result of growing levels of local dissatisfaction with the municipality as well as with government policy in general, a number of May Day protests, spearheaded by the Communist Party were initiated in Nazareth in May 1958, later spreading to other villages in the area.[8] Although these protests were quickly squashed by the authorities, they provided an important indication of the growing confidence of the Arab Communist Party.[9] Ending the dominance of Labour-affiliated "satellite" lists in Nazareth forever, the Democratic Front (later DFPE/*Rakah*) took control of the Nazareth municipality in December 1975 in a landslide victory.[10] Tawfiq Zayyad, a Palestinian Muslim who was well-known for his "poetry of protest against Israeli treatment of the Arab minority in Israel," and a senior member of the Israeli Communist Party, became mayor of Nazareth and remained in that post until his sudden death in 1994.[11] The 1975 municipal elections in Israel represented an important watershed for the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole as this was the first time in which "an Arab candidate, affiliated with a nationalist-oriented party such as *Rakah*, [had] been successful in winning the mayoralty of any major Arab town such as Nazareth".[12]

The important leadership role of Palestinian Christians in *Rakah*/DFPE has been described in Chapter Three. This is consolidated by the leadership role of the Nazareth municipality itself. Not only did Nazareth become the first Arab locality to be led by an Arab Communist-led political coalition, but *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* itself remains the only local party to have participated and won seats in all twelve Israeli municipal elections between 1954 and 2008.[13] When Zayyad was re-elected mayor in 1979, Christian-born Ramiz Jeraisy, who was then only 27, became his deputy-mayor until he himself became mayor of Nazareth following Zayyad's death in 1994.[14] Since then, Jeraisy has been continuously re-elected as the city's mayor.

[7] According to the Knesset website, Seif ed-Din al-Zu'abi was active in the pre-state Haganah.
[8] Emmett (1997: 538)
[9] 17 were wounded and 350 others were arrested during these May Day protests. Hadawi (1959: 37-38)
[10] Rabinowitz (2001: 104)
[11] Instiute of Palestine Studies (1976: 178); Rekhess (2002: 10).
[12] Rekhess (2007: 10)
[13] Emmett (1997: 540)
[14] Israeli (2008: 252-254)

As "the only non-Zionist Israeli party officially permitted to function in Israel since its establishment", the survival of *Rakah*/DFPE depended in no small way upon its formal character as a Jewish-Arab party.[15] Notwithstanding this, the results of the election were not received well by the authorities who saw it as indicative of an emerging threat "from within". In fact, *Rakah*'s platform came to symbolise the first real and serious case of "radical" and "extremist" politics within the Palestinian Arab minority from the perspective of the Israeli state authorities. That this "threat" was centred on Nazareth should not be minimised. According to one report, "the Israeli press was unanimous in describing the [1975] election returns as an expression of anti-Zionist sentiment among the Arab citizens of Israel".[16] The same report quotes comments made at that time by Moshe Dayan to Haaretz suggesting that the results should be no surprise to those who understood the "true aspirations" of the people of Nazareth.

> We must remember something that is absolutely fundamental. The Arabs of Nazareth did not become Israelis of their own free will. (...) We forced Israeli [citizenship] on them. The only other option open to them was to leave the country. They neither sought nor asked for the State of Israel to be established. (...) For some years, at least, some of them have voted and acted not in accordance with their true aspirations, but rather in accordance with their daily needs. They were afraid of an angry reaction of some kind if they expressed views against the government of Israel and therefore acted through the framework of established parties, party agents or other interests. None of these things can be relied on, and I am not sorry they have vanished or will soon vanish completely. I have never thought that relations could be established with the Arabs of Israel, or even with the Arabs of the occupied territories, through a party agent – whoever he may be – who tells them how to vote.[17]

From the point of view of the authorities, therefore, *Rakah*, and by consequence Nazareth for the platform it offered it, represented the main, and most serious, source of internal political threat to the Israeli political establishment and to the state's national priorities. One account of the run-up to the municipal elections of 1975, in fact, claims that "the Israeli government felt so threatened by the prospect of this "radical" [Tawfiq Zayyad] becoming Mayor that it had warned the residents of Nazareth that, should they elect Zayyad, they would lose all government assistance to their community".[18] Notwithstanding these threats, Zayyad was elected. However, the government lived up to its promise and showed its

[15] Jiryis (1979: 35)
[16] Institute of Palestine Studies (1976: 178)
[17] Institute of Palestine Studies (1976: 178)
[18] James Zogby, 11/07/1994, "The Unforgettable Tawfiq Zayyad", The Arab American Institute.

displeasure with Nazareth by drastically cutting the already meagre municipal and development budgets which the city had hitherto received.[19]

This is also evidenced by the contents of the Koenig Report which were leaked to the public in 1976 and which contained several references to the so-called threat posed by *Rakah* and the Nazareth municipality. In particular, it warns of "the nationalist manifestations in the voting in the Nazareth municipal elections on 9 December 1975" and "the devious and unexpected call-up of the inhabitants of Nazareth to help the municipality pay off pressing debts" accumulated as a result of the government's discriminatory and retaliatory budget cuts. In addition to a system of "rewards and punishments," the Report also recommends providing an alternative political "valve for communities still sitting on the fence," whether through *Mapai*-affiliated parties or through the promotion of alternative political movements and parties among the minority.[20] In was within this context of "radical" Arab communist activity that a significant proportion of the government's energies were invested in promoting the fledgling Islamic movement.

Despite this, the 1975 local elections mark the beginning of a new period of Palestinian Arab minority politics characterised by the hegemonic role of *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* which was centred on Nazareth and, particularly, on its local municipality. In effect, these elections transformed Nazareth into the "de facto capital of Israel's one million Palestinian citizens" and the place from which "the basic political consensus of this community" would henceforth be forged.[21] As the driving force behind the first "Land Day" (*Yaum al-Ard)* on March the 30th of the following year (1976), an event which is considered to be "a watershed in the relations between Jews and Arabs" in Israel, the Nazareth municipality organised a general protest and a series of strikes across a number of villages in the Galilee against government plans to expropriate more Arab lands in the Galilee for Jewish development and settlement purposes.[22]

As a result, the Nazareth-based *Rakah* party represented a real threat to the Israeli establishment not only because of its novelty in offering "state-wide national leadership" on a universal and non-sectarian platform to the disenfranchised Palestinian Arab citizens of

[19] According to the Institute of Palestine Studies (1978: 134-135), "representatives of the Interior Ministry had slashed the municipality's budget by 40 million Israeli pounds as a result of the elections".
[20] MERIP Reports, No. 51 (1976); Smooha (1982: 86); Emmett (1997: 547)
[21] Usher (2000: 2-3)
[22] By defying a state-imposed curfew on certain villages, 6 Palestinian Arab citizens were killed by the Israeli military and police during the 1976 non-violent rally. Landau (1993: 21)

Israel, but because of its active opposition to government policy within the minority sector.[23] One report suggests that, in 1981, the then Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, who was also the Minister of Defence, barred a conference of Arab representatives scheduled to take place in Nazareth, confirming the negative role of the city to the authorities.[24]

With the emergence of the Islamic movement in Israel, however, it became clear that a substantive thematic shift had occurred not only in local minority politics, but on the national level of politics as well. A number of national, regional and international developments contributed to the loss of *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash*'s political monopoly and the growth of political Islam. In the first instance, mainstream Israeli Jewish politics witnessed a sharp swing to the right with the Likud victory of 1977, which, when coupled with the increasingly powerful role of ultra-orthodox Jewish religious movements in government, resulted in an accentuation of the significance of religious identity of Israeli society as a whole. Secondly, the recognition by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) of Israel in 1988 (and Israel's reciprocal recognition of it in 1993), and its acceptance of the 1947 UN Partition Plan, led to the marginalisation of the wider political leadership role of *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash*, and an increase in feelings of disillusionment, isolation and abandonment by the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel who felt cut adrift and forgotten by the PLO and the peace process. This dilemma led to a crisis in the political identity of the minority which, in the short term, bolstered the status of religious frameworks of identity in society. Thirdly, the decline and ultimate break-up of the Soviet Union itself seriously undermined the credibility of communist-affiliated political platforms and their ability to provide effective leadership. And, finally, the 1980s witnessed widening socio-economic gaps between Jews and Arabs in society, resulting in increasing competition and tension between both sides, and within Palestinian Arab society itself. The combination of all of these factors contributed to the emergence of the Islamic movement not only as an attractive alternative to *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash*, but as its primary opposition.[25]

The Islamic Movement, which was established in Israel in the late 1970s by Abdullah Nimr Darwish of Kfar Qassem, emerged primarily as a grassroots organisation providing social welfare support for Muslims in the area known as the Triangle in Israel.[26] However, its roots date back to 1967 with the regional growth of Islamic movements on the one hand,

[23] Smooha (1982: 77-78)
[24] Ghanem (1998: 437)
[25] Kaufman (1997: 40-41); Tsimhoni (2002: 131-134)
[26] Emmett (1997: 546); Kaufman (1997: 117)

and the relaxation of military rule upon Israel's Palestinian citizens on the other.[27] Its popularity continued to grow into the 1980s, particularly as a result of the support it received from the Israeli government itself, which sought to undermine the power of *Rakah* by promoting alternative political movements to it.[28] When the Islamic movement campaigned for the first time in municipal elections in 1984 it won seats on several local councils, and by 1989 had secured mayoral positions in five Arab municipalities which were previously held by *Rakah*. This it achieved under the campaign slogan "Islam is the answer".[29] Therefore, *Hadash*/DFPE suffered not only "the defection of part of its Muslim supporters" in 1989 but also experienced the beginning of a more general decline in their electoral significance in local politics.[30]

This trend was also apparent even in the *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* stronghold of Nazareth. While securing the majority of the vote (50.8 per cent) in 1989, *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* suffered a significant decline on its 1983 electoral returns when it secured 65.1 per cent of the local vote.[31] And while the Islamic List did not win control over the municipality in Nazareth, it nonetheless secured an impressive 30 per cent of the vote (and 6 out of the 19 available seats in the municipality). While failing to secure the mayoralty itself, the new Islamic List did go on to win control of six other local municipalities in 1993, testifying to the wide distribution of its political influence in Israel.[32] Of these, the most significant were Taybeh and Umm el-Fahim, the latter of which would, in certain respects, come to replace Nazareth as a centre of gravity for significant sections of Palestinian Arab (Muslim) minority.

The 1989 elections were, therefore, pivotal for two main reasons. Firstly, they resulted in the loss of the hegemonic power of the Communist party and the consensual nature of the political platform which it advocated. Secondly, it also introduced a more pronounced sectarian character to minority politics, with the Islamic movement commandeering large swathes of the Muslim vote and the Communist party becoming increasingly associated with its Christian electorate (even though it was not, in and of itself, a sectarian party). As one observer put it, "[re]ligion re-entered the political arena of Nazareth in full force in the 1989 elections" and, by the year 2000, Muslim parties came to command

[27] Peled (2001a: 122); Peled (2001b: 379)
[28] Peled (2001a: 132, 133)
[29] Peled (2001a: 132); Peled (2001b: 383)
[30] Emmett (1997: 541)
[31] Emmett (1997: 551-552); Israeli (2008: 255).
[32] Peled (2001b: 384); Israeli (2008: 255).

approximately 25 per cent of the total Arab vote in Israel, making them an important political force to be reckoned with.[33]

The growth of political Islam in Nazareth is also rooted in the particular situation of the city's internal refugees. When, after 1948, large numbers of predominantly Muslim internally displaced refugees came to settle in the city, they established separate quarters on the periphery of the old city.[34] The spatial segregation of these communities from the "core" areas of old Nazareth introduced socio-economic and infrastructural disparities and imbalances between old and new residents. With the passage of time and the persistence of these gaps, the Communist-led municipality of Nazareth came to be targeted by accusations of neglect and, given the religious affiliation of the mayor, of religious bias and favouritism. That traditional, or pre-1948, Muslim neighbourhoods of Nazareth remained on the same level of development or underdevelopment as Christian ones, in line with wider trends of budgetary discrimination faced by Arab municipalities, did little to mitigate this potentially incendiary accusation.[35] Instead, the strong Christian atmosphere of the city with its dominating Basilica and plethora of churches and shrines, together with the prevalence of European-administered church schools and institutions, served to reinforce the notion of Christian advantage, chauvinism and exclusivity.[36]

With the split of the Islamic Movement in 1996, the power of this party to effectively challenge *Hadash*/DFPE was challenged for the first time.[37] Issuing from this split, however, the more politically moderate southern branch, based around the figure of Abdallah Nimr Darwish, came to provide important ideological support to the newly formed United Arab List (UAL) which would soon overtake *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* as the single largest Arab party in Israel.[38] Although it does not campaign on an explicitly religious or sectarian political platform, all of the MKs who have represented the UAL since 1996, or *Ra'am-Ta'al* (when UAL merged with the Arab Movement for Renewal) since 2006, have been Muslim which has important consequences for voting patterns in subsequent Israeli national and municipal elections.

[33] Emmett (1997: 546); Usher (2000: 3)
[34] Emmett (1995: 153-160, 176-197). A few hundred Palestinian Christian refugees from the destroyed villages of Beisan, Tiberias, Mujeidil and Maa'lul also settled in Nazareth. Mansour (2004: 219)
[35] Emmett (1997: 546); Tsimhoni (2002:140).
[36] Emmett (1997: 547)
[37] Emmett (1997: 548-549); Kaufman (1997: 119) describes the reason for the split as resulting from disagreements over whether the movement should take part in the 1996 national elections.
[38] Usher (2000: 4)

In the Nazareth municipal elections of 1993, only 23 per cent of Nazarenes voted for any of the three Muslim parties, with a parallel upward shift in electoral returns for *Hadash*/DFPE to 56 per cent of the overall vote.[39] By the time of the 1996 municipal elections, *Hadash*/DPFE won back even more electoral support. However, this figure fell to 44 per cent by the time of the 1999 municipal elections, demonstrating that Muslim parties had come to represent "CPI-Front's most formidable rival in the 1990s" even in Nazareth.[40] Having said this, the electoral returns for DFPE/*Hadash* in Nazareth were more than twice the national average for that party in 1999 suggesting that while its regional popularity was waning, Nazareth continued to be "a traditional DFPE stronghold".[41]

Despite the erosion of the singular significance and centrality of Nazareth and the increased distribution of Palestinian Arab political weight across other Arab urban centres in Israel, political competition for control over its municipality demonstrates the continued importance of this city to the aspirations of various political parties and movements within the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel.[42]

6.3 The Nazareth 2000 Affair

In the mid-1990s tensions developed in Nazareth between members of the Islamic movement and the Communist-led municipality over the fate of a six thousand square foot plot of land in the city centre adjacent to Basilica of the Annunciation and surrounding the tomb of Shihab ad-Din, nephew of the legendary Salah ad-Din.[43] The plot of land, which had previously been the site of a state primary school, had been levelled in 1996 by the municipality in order to create space for a plaza in front of the Basilica in time for the city's 2000 millennium celebrations.[44] The initiative, referred to as the "Nazareth 2000" project, was originally launched by the municipality in 1991 under the leadership of its former Mayor, Tawfiq Zayyad, to coincide with the millennium, the March 2000 visit of Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land, and the anticipated mass influx of tourists who were expected to

[39] Emmett (1997: 552)
[40] Kaufman (1997: 4, 117)
[41] Frisch (2001: 163)
[42] Jamal (2006: 12)
[43] Shihab ad-Din died in Nazareth from injuries received at the famous battle of Hittin (1187) against the Crusaders. Rabinowitz (2001a: 96)
[44] Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 706).

come to celebrate 2000 years of Christianity in Nazareth.[45] It "aimed to use the millennium as a springboard for urban renewal in Nazareth" and, as such, was specifically designed to promote the largely tourist-based economy of the city, develop infrastructure, renovate the old *suq* (market), build museums and other public buildings, as well as to remodel the heavily congested city centre.[46] Despite efforts made by the municipality to capitalise on the singular opportunity afforded by the millennium to develop the city for all its inhabitants within the confines of Nazareth's only niche market (and dependent economy) – tourism – the initiative was vigorously opposed by members of the Islamic movement who protested that it marginalised the city's majority Muslim population and heritage in what was, to their eyes, an exclusivist Christian project. This antagonism was not helped by the insensitive relegation of the Shihab ad-Din shrine to a small, closed-off area behind utility buildings in the architect's original master plan for the area.[47] Instead of the proposed open plaza, Muslim protestors demanded that a new mosque be built on the site, the dimensions of which would have overshadowed the Basilica as the dominant landmark of the city.[48] Fearing the rapid progress taking place at the site and the potential damage to the delicate dome of the shrine, Muslim protestors led by Salman Abu Ahmad, a local council member who represented the newly-formed Muslim Action Committee (incorporating the local Islamic Movement and the *Waqf* Committee of Nazareth), declared the contested area to be Muslim *waqf*.[49] He and his followers moved in and took over the site on the 21st of December 1997, setting up prayer tents and erecting a ten-metre fence south of the shrine, thus stopping any further construction on the site.[50]

In the meantime, the municipal elections of November 1998 took place in which the DFPE, led by the incumbent mayor, Ramzi Jeraisi, won only nine out of the total 19 seats available. With only 135 votes separating them, the United Nazareth List, a Muslim list headed by the UAL, won the remaining ten seats thus becoming the majority coalition power in the municipality.[51] Notwithstanding this, Jeraisi himself was successfully re-elected as mayor after winning 52 per cent of the popular vote in the direct elections which were held

[45] The Nazareth 2000 Master Plan was designed by the Nazareth municipality in conjunction with a Jerusalem-based company of Jewish architects by the name of Rahamimov. Jabareen (2006: 16-17); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 706).
[46] Rabinowitz (2001a: 96); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 705)
[47] Rabinowitz (2001a: 97)
[48] Tsimhoni (2002: 135); Israeli (2008: 260)
[49] Jabareen (2006: 17)
[50] Rabinowitz (2001a: 97-100); Jabareen (2006: 17); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 707-708)
[51] Israeli (2002: 158)

separately for the mayoralty.[52] As runner-up in the direct elections for the office of the mayor, however, Salman Abu-Ahmed, leader of the United Nazareth List and the majority coalition power after the elections, became deputy mayor.[53] It quickly became evident that the mayor and his municipality were pitted against each other in their respective struggles for control over the municipality which resulted in a complete political and administrative deadlock of the city. Demonstrating the high level of tensions between both sides, the first council meeting following the elections descended into a fist-fight.[54] Jeraisi himself hired a number of bodyguards suggesting that he himself felt a direct level of personal threat against him.[55]

This political conflict between the mayor's office and the Islamic List did not remain within the confines of the municipality for long. It spread to the street, when on the 3rd of April, 1999, one day before Easter, violence broke out.[56] One source suggests that a group of young Christians passing the compound of the shrine initiated the trouble by making insulting remarks about the Prophet Muhammad. During the night, angry Muslim rioters set fire to a number of cars on the main street and broke several shop windows.[57] Another account, citing local media sources, claims that following a fight between drunken Christian youths and Muslim protestors, the violence became targeted against innocent Christian passers-by.

> Christian women driving their cars were dragged off and badly beaten; Muslims who were considered to be collaborating with the Christians were attacked and their property vandalised.[58]

What is certain was the fear that this violent outburst would escalate into "large-scale bloody clashes" between Muslims and Christians in the city.[59] As a result, Mohammed Zeidane, who was then head of the Committee of Arab Heads of Local Councils in Israel, called an emergency meeting between local leaders to take place the following day in order to resolve

[52] Frisch (2001: 157); Rabinowitz (2001a: 103); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 708); Israeli (2002: 158).
[53] Initially, however, Jeraisi withheld the appointment of Abu Ahmad as deputy mayor fearing that this would undermine and counteract his ability to lead the municipality. Israeli (2001: 69, 104-105)
[54] Rabinowitz (2001a: 105)
[55] Israeli (2002: 109)
[56] Rabinowitz (2001a: 105); Tsimhoni (2002: 136). By contrast, Jabareen (2006: 14) states that the clashes erupted on the 16th of April 1999.
[57] Rabinowitz (2001a: 105)
[58] Tsimhoni (2002: 136-137)
[59] Rabinowitz (2001a: 105)

this "ticking time bomb" and succeeded in averting a general strike organised by the Muslim *Waqf* Committee.[60]

Within the context of these developing tensions the role of the state became the focus of much attention. However, descriptions of the nature of that role have not always been consistent or uniform. Some have argued that the Israeli central government "sided with the municipality". However, even here, these accounts describe the state's actions as highly inconsistent reflecting the changing priorities of different governments and political parties.[61] To begin with, the municipality's Nazareth 2000 Master Plan, which was first drafted in 1993, was originally coordinated alongside the Labour government of Yitzhak Rabin.[62] In this, Rabin is accorded a positive and affirmative role in his apparent desire to narrow the developmental and economic gaps between Arab and Jewish cities in Israel.[63] However, in 1996, a new government, headed by Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu, took over which openly endorsed and supported the Muslim protestors' demand to build a mosque, thus undermining Rabin's earlier position. In particular, the occupation of the construction site by Muslim protestors in late 1997 involved the office of the Prime Minister himself through his personal envoy, Danny Greenberg.[64] Greenberg, who had been presented in the media as "the Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs" was, in fact, the Likud Party's independent consultant on Arab Affairs. He was seen in the city as early as December 1997 (before the riots began) and met frequently with the various heads of the Islamic movement as well as with their lawyer, Dan Shafir, coordinating meetings between them and various governmental representatives. Mayor of Nazareth, Jeraisi, wrote directly to Netanyahu to complain of "Greenberg's suspicious activities" and his "meddling" in the issue to little avail.[65] The Likud policy contradicted that of the Israel Lands Authority (ILA) which had jurisdictional authority over the plot of land and, in early 1998, appealed to the court to have the protestors removed. However, despite the relative power of the ILA, even their appeals were deliberately delayed and neglected.[66] Instead of action, the first inter-ministerial commission of inquiry was appointed in April 1999 which was headed by the then Minister of Tourism, Moshe Katsav and the Minister of Tourism, Eli Suissa, but which was assembled largely as a result of vocal protests emanating from the Vatican. However, testifying to a broader policy

[60] Rabinowitz (2001a: 105-106)
[61] Rabinowitz (2001a: 103)
[62] Tsimhoni (2002: 135)
[63] Jabareen (2006: 16); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 702, 705)
[64] Tsimhoni (2002: 136)
[65] Israeli (2002: 89-90)
[66] Rabinowitz (2001a: 103); Tsimhoni (2002: 135).

of neglect, they failed to present any immediate formal recommendations, extending the conflict further.[67]

In terms of the government's role during the violent outburst of April 1999, a deliberate "hands-off" policy by the police has been observed:

> A large police force was mobilised, but abstained for hours from stopping the attacks... due to received orders [by Northern District police commander, Alik Ron] from "higher levels" not to interfere.[68]

Similarly, a blank cheque policy with regard to the arrest and prosecution of known perpetrators of the violence was noted.

> Rather than punishing the rioters, representatives of the Likud and several religious parties that were members of the government coalition visited the Islamic movement protest tent and publicly expressed their support for the building of the mosque in front of the basilica.[69]

On the 9th of April, 1999, the then Minister of Tourism, Moshe Katsav, publicly endorsed the protestors, announcing his "personal support" for the construction of the mosque on Israeli television.[70] Nine days after this broadcast the government announced the allocation of 504 square metres of the disputed square for construction of a mosque, with the remaining area to be developed in line with the original master plans.[71] This offer, however, was rejected by local Islamic leaders who hoped for even greater concessions by the government. In addition to his open support of the Muslim protestors' cause and their demand to build a mosque on the site, Netanyahu "caused the freezing of nearly all government projects and finance connected with the Nazareth 2000 project".[72] Notwithstanding the apparently overt commitment of Netanyahu's government to the cause of the Muslim protestors, other developments such as the pledge made by former Foreign Minister, Ariel Sharon, to the Pope on his visit to the Vatican on the 26th of April, 1999 that the Israeli government would not allow the construction of a mosque in front of the Basilica, cast a reasonable measure of doubt over the real intentions of the government and suspicion over their tactics.[73]

[67] Rabinowitz (2001a: 103); Tsimhoni (2002: 138); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007:??)
[68] Tsimhoni (2002: 137)
[69] Tsimhoni (2002: 137)
[70] Tsimhoni (2002: 137)
[71] Tsimhoni (2002: 137-138)
[72] Tsimhoni (2002: 135)
[73] Tsimhoni (2002: 140)

As such, it is widely acknowledged that Netanyahu's position was heavily motivated by pragmatic electoral politics in the run-up to the parliamentary and direct prime ministerial elections of 1999 in which the "Arab vote" which was essentially a Muslim vote was prioritised and aggressively courted. For instance, Greenberg, who worked personally for Netanyahu's re-election as his special envoy "was appointed by the Prime Minister to meddle in the Nazareth controversy informally, as a contractor of votes in the Arab sector".[74] However, these attempts to win the popularity of marginal Islamic elements within the Muslim minority alienated the more moderate majority of the Muslim electorate, demonstrating that their policy not only miscalculated the response of Palestinian Muslims but underestimated the strength of their Palestinian Arab identity. These factors ultimately contributed to the collapse of the Arab support for Netanyahu and his fall from power following the May 1999 general elections.[75]

Demonstrating their dissatisfaction with Netanyahu, the vast majority of the Arab electorate supported Labour candidate Ehud Barak as a vote for change in the direct prime ministerial contest of the 17th of May, 1999.[76] One analysis describes the factors which brought Barak to power as follows:

> The mood among the people in Nazareth was that if the right-wing Likud won the Islamic movement would get the upper hand, and if the Labor bloc won the Christians and the moderate Muslims in Nazareth would strengthen their position.[77]

Others, however, acknowledge the equally important role of Israeli electoral politics upon the Labour Party campaign, suggesting that Barak's victory was, in no small part, due to promises he made to the Islamists regarding the construction of a mosque and the promotion of "Arab-Muslim" enclaves in Israel.[78] This view is supported by the fact that when Barak took over the reins of power in 1999 no noticeable change in either his wider policy towards the Palestinian Arab minority or in his local policy on the Nazareth issue itself occurred. In fact, the former government's position on the Nazareth issue became, to a large extent, solidified under Barak's term in office. A second ministerial commission of inquiry, this time under the authority of Shlomo Ben-Ami, who served as Minister of Internal Security and was also responsible for the Israeli Police, was set up on the 14th of April to deal with "this sensitive issue". However, this committee "was mainly concerned with the possible reactions

[74] Israeli (2002: 89, 93)
[75] Tsimhoni (2002: 130, 138, 143)
[76] 94 per cent of the Arab electorate voted for Barak in the 1999 direct elections. Frisch (2001: 153).
[77] Tsimhoni (2002: 138)
[78] Israeli (2002: 98-99) and Israeli (2008: 262-263)

of the Islamic movement to their decisions" rather than issues of legality or local Arab consensus.[79] In fact, Barak's government decided to allocate an even greater proportion of the site (700 square metres) towards construction of a new mosque. This decision, which was taken on the 5th of October, 1999, came just one day before the Nazareth District Court released a report refuting the protestors' claim that the entirety of the site represented Muslim *waqf*. Tracing historical land deeds and ownership documents for the site, they found that only 135 square metres of land surrounding the shrine itself was Muslim *waqf*. The remaining area was traditionally, since the time of the Ottoman period, state-land.[80]

Barak introduced one important condition to his offer to the Islamic Movement which was that "in return for a governmental guarantee that a mosque would be built, the Muslim activists were to evacuate the area no later than 8 November".[81] On the 2nd of November, 1999, the government-appointed office of the architect responsible for the construction of the mosque issued its proposed blue-prints for the mosque. This was immediately followed by wide-scale protests and strikes by the churches as well as condemnation by the Vatican and several Arab leaders both of the Israeli state and of the Muslim protestors themselves. Notwithstanding these protests, government representatives officiated at the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the new mosque on the 23rd of November 1999.[82] Losing patience with the slow progress of building, the Islamic movement reneged on its deal with the government and, defying regional and international protests, paved large sections of the disputed area, installing a loud-speaker system for prayers.[83] It became increasingly apparent that the Islamic movement was thereby aiming to create a *fait accompli* or irreversible "fact on the ground".[84]

The millennium came and went in Nazareth without the anticipated hype or celebration which had been planned seven years earlier. On the 25th of March, 2000, the Catholic holy day commemorating the annunciation of the Virgin Mary in Nazareth, Pope John Paul II arrived in Natzeret Illit by Israeli Air Force helicopter from Jerusalem. He was escorted down into the old city in order to preside over a short mass for the occasion.[85] Notwithstanding the anticlimax of the millennial celebrations in Nazareth, international

[79] Tsimhoni (2002: 138); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 710)
[80] Tsimhoni (2002: 139); Peled (2001: 395).
[81] Rabinowitz (2001a: 106)
[82] Tsimhoni (2002: 139); Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 708); Rabinowitz (2001a: 106-107).
[83] Peled (2001: 395)
[84] Israeli (2002: 111)
[85] Rabinowitz (2001a: 94-96)

pressure against the construction of the mosque was growing ever stronger and more impatient. Ariel Sharon of the Likud party took office becoming not only the eleventh Prime Minister of Israel but the third Israeli Prime Minister to officiate over the protracted conflict in Nazareth. The Vatican was growing ever more restless (it had, in fact, threatened to cancel the Pope's visit), while Arab leaders became ever more vocal and critical. Even international leaders such as George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin made direct intercessions with Israel on behalf of the municipality.[86] Like each of his predecessors, Sharon appointed his own ministerial commission of inquiry to investigate the matter anew, this time led by his Minister of Construction and Housing, Natan Sharansky. This inquiry which was appointed in 2001 reached the conclusion one year later that the construction of a mosque on that spot would be deleterious both to intra-communal relations in the city and to the state's diplomatic relations abroad. On the 1st of July, 2003, the foundations of the new mosque were destroyed and the tents removed with little to no resistance from the local community.[87] Four months later, in November 2003, when the next municipal elections came around, Jeraisi won an outright majority of the popular vote and his party was similarly successful in winning the necessary majority to lead the municipality. Only in 2004, eight years after the demolition of the school, did construction of the new city square begin. However, given the long delays and the protracted nature of the conflict, hopes of securing the development of the city on the basis of the unique, one-off funding package earmarked for the millennium, were permanently dashed. Moreover, the city's tourist trade, which had virtually come to a halt during the eight years of conflict, political deadlock and governmental procrastination, has still not recovered from the major economic setback it experienced during this period and, arguably, is worse-off in economic terms today than it was before the initiative was first launched.[88]

Media coverage of the Nazareth 2000 crisis has also played a pivotal part in the conflict, stressing different areas of responsibility. Mainstream media generally provided a "Huntingtonian" analysis of events centring on a presumed clash of civilisations between Christians and Muslims. However, attention was also brought to bear on state policy itself as well as on internal electoral competition and rivalry between the DFPE-dominated

[86] Peled (2001: 395); Tsimhoni (2002: 140-141)
[87] Cohen-Hattab & Shoval (2007: 710); Jabareen (2006: 16, 18) puts the date at the 4th of July 2003.
[88] Of the financial package earmarked for the Nazareth 2000 project by the government, money was rerouted to support Jewish contractors and projects instead, such as 500 million NIS which went towards the construction of highways in the Jewish towns of Afula and Tiberias. See: Arab HRA (2000).

municipality and the aspiring Islamic movement.[89] However, in a 2004 survey conducted by Jabareen among a sample of 250 local residents of Nazareth, the public perception and assessment of blame follows a more distinctive pattern. The respondents were asked to grade five different "players" in the crisis according to their perceived role (whether it was "strong," "moderate" or non-existent) in contributing to, or aggravating, the crisis. The five different players in the conflict were listed as follows: the municipality, the Islamic movement, the Israeli government, the Islamic *Waqf* Committee and the planners. According to the survey's findings, the vast majority of the respondents (88%) considered the Israeli government to have played the strongest role in bringing about, or contributing to, the crisis. The Islamic Movement was apportioned the next highest level of blame (66%), followed by the Islamic *Waqf* Committee (50%), the Planners (48%) and, only then, the Municipality of Nazareth itself (37%).[90]

6.4 Analysing State Attitudes

In this section, the particular views of the respondents interviewed for this study will be incorporated with the available evidence from the literature. Three individuals directly involved in the crisis were interviewed by this author. The first was Ramiz Jeraisi, a Palestinian Christian by birth and active member of *Rakah*/DFPE/*Hadash* who has accumulated over three decades of experience within Nazareth municipality since his initial election to the City Council in 1978. Serving as Deputy-Mayor of Nazareth until the sudden death of Tawfiq Zayyad in 1994, Jeraisi has since held the position of Mayor of Nazareth for 15 years through three successive elections (in 1998, 2003, 2008) and will continue to hold this position for another three years until the next Israeli municipal elections take place in 2013. The second individual who was directly connected with the Nazareth conflict and who was interviewed for this study was Raphael Israeli, an Israeli Jewish academic from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who specialises on topics relating to Islamic fundamentalism. Called as an expert witness to the 1999 government-appointed inter-ministerial Committee of Inquiry on Nazareth, Israeli was not only responsible for writing

[89] Usher (2000: 2)
[90] Jabareen (2006: 18). 53 per cent of the respondents surveyed were women. In terms of religious affiliation, 37 per cent designated themselves as Christian Arabs and 38 per cent as Muslim Arabs. The remaining 25 per cent simply described themselves as Arabs.

that Committee's report, but he later developed his findings into a book dedicated to the subject, *Green Crescent over Nazareth*. The third respondent who was directly involved in the conflict was Mohammed Zeidane, a Palestinian Muslim by birth who is currently Director of the Arab Association for Human Rights. During the 1990s, he served as Head of the Committee of Arab Mayors and the National Follow-Up Committee for the Heads of Arab Local Authorities in Israel, and played a key part during the conflict which unravelled in the city. In particular, he called for and chaired the emergency meeting of local Arab leaders which took place following the outbreak of violence in 1999. In addition to these three figures, the views of other respondents who were not directly involved in the events but were, nonetheless, contemporary witnesses to them are also addressed here.

In line with the findings produced by Jabareen's survey of public opinion in Nazareth on the sources and origins of the conflict, the Mayor of Nazareth also found the Israeli political establishment to be the main party responsible for the events which unfolded in the city. Not only did he believe that the authorities developed the dispute, but that they were also instrumental in raising it in the first place. In particular, he identifies the role of "common goals" between certain local interest groups (namely, the Islamic movement) and the national interests of the state. Nonetheless, he rejects the notion that the conflict can be characterised as an essentially religious clash between Muslims and Christians in Nazareth. For him, the goals of, and decisions made by, the Islamic movement in Nazareth were purely political, as they were for the state itself. The Islamic movement is understood not just as a religious movement but as an aspiring political party which seeks to capitalise on Muslim demographic strength in its competition with the DFPE/*Hadash* for control over the municipality.

Citing the destructive role of Netanyahu's envoy Danny Greenberg, the significance of the state's support to the Islamic movement is also understood by Jeraisi to have been motivated as much by pragmatic electoral concerns as it was by strategic national interests in the run-up to the hotly-contested prime-ministerial elections of 1999 in which the Arab vote played a determining role. This factor underlines the view encountered in previous chapters that the numeric weakness and electoral insignificance of Palestinian Christians represents a central determinant of state attitudes towards them. It also suggests that the religious difference of Palestinian Christians is submerged or overruled by the more crucial factor of political activity and orientation in the formulation of state attitudes towards them.

For Jeraisi, the fundamental reason why this dispute, which could otherwise have been so easily contained and overcome had the state been so inclined, became so protracted and long-winded was the cynical attitude of the state itself towards Palestinian Arab intra-communal relations. The constant intervention and meddling of various political envoys such as Greenberg and the three highly ineffective ministerial committees which were set up to deal with the issue by successive Israeli governments, but which ultimately prolonged and worsened the conflict, testifies to the disposability and inconsequentiality of Palestinian Christian needs and interests to the state. Ultimately, Nazareth as a whole is understood to have fallen victim to cynical Israeli political gamesmanship. Neither side in the conflict (whether the DFPE-led municipality with its Christian mayor or the local Islamists) benefited. No mosque was ever built and the Nazareth 2000 initiative was, for all intents and purposes, shelved. Instead the political integrity and unity of Nazareth was called into question and seriously undermined by the dispute, with the only possible benefactor being the state.

In fact, Jeraisi argued that the government never really had any intention of proceeding with either the mosque or the Nazareth 2000 project in the first place. In terms of the mosque initiative, for instance, he mentioned that the government had solicited three architectural companies from around the world to propose different designs for a new mosque on the contested site. This selection process alone cost the government 3 million shekels, which would suggest a real commitment by the state to this project. However, once the plans were ready and about to be put into effect on the ground, the Islamic movement suddenly and illogically lost patience, choosing to proceed with construction themselves. For Jeraisi, this was no coincidence, but rather the result of a careful governmental orchestration. As such, the government is understood to have quietly encouraged the protestors to take over the site, "to turn the situation to violence", and to dig a make-shift foundation for a new mosque, so that, as a result of their legal violations, construction of the mosque, "which was at a very advanced stage of planning" could be stopped. This highly irrational move by the Islamic movement is understood to have been motivated by the state's desire to outwardly appear as a defender of Muslim rights while, covertly, making every effort to undermine and limit any real advancement of Muslim interests in the city.

This discomfort with Muslim communal gains, however, also extended to the Palestinian Christians. For Jeraisi, the state, particularly under the government of Netanyahu, was deeply uncomfortable with the Nazareth 2000 project on several different grounds. In

the first instance, this discomfort was primarily due to the central status of the Christian-associated and DFPE-led Nazareth municipality within Palestinian Arab society and Palestinian oppositional political activity. As such, the state is understood to have feared the increased potential that the Nazareth 2000 project would have given to the already problematic political leadership of the municipality. Jeraisi summarises the significance of the Nazareth municipality as follows:

> The municipality of Nazareth created a new model for the Arab local authorities. On one side, holding the basic and principal positions concerning the struggle against the policy of the government based on discrimination, for equal rights, national rights and civilian rights, for the rights of the local authorities, the issues of confiscation, of lands, Nazareth was in the front of that struggle inside the Committee for Arab Local Authorities and the Follow-Up Committee. The role of Nazareth and the Nazareth municipality [had] a very important role... We were in the front as a leader. So, creating that model from one side, the city was developing deeply and [proposing] very important positive changes everywhere in the city, infrastructure projects, buildings, preparing the old part of the city, a lot of investment internationally, nationally, all that, and at the same time with the positions of defending rights.

Accordingly, Netanyahu's government is described as having "wanted to break this model" and, in order to achieve this, they sought "to use this dispute and to create this problem and to develop it" in the hope that the power of the Nazareth municipality to lead the city, let alone the wider national minority, would be effectively "neutralised".

However, the desire to undermine Nazareth as the centre of political gravity for Palestinian Arabs in Israel was not the only factor to have affected state attitudes towards the dispute. Jeraisi considers Jewish religious antipathy towards Christianity to be an important additional factor affecting both the state's decision-making process and its strategies of intervention.

> I think that when the Likud Party came to power, I'm sure of it, they decided that the state of Israel should not be part of these preparations for celebrations towards 2000 because of ideology, because these celebrations don't have any roots in Jewish history in the area, but Christian history in the area.

In particular, Jeraisi points to the decision made by Benyamin Netanyahu together with his new Deputy Prime Minister, Moshe Katsav (who was then also Minister for Tourism and his Advisor on Arab Affairs, and who would become President of Israel in 2000) to change the name of the "Nazareth 2000" project to "Nazareth in 2000". While this may appear to an outside observer to be only a minor change in the project's marketing slogan, this change of name provides Jeraisi with ample evidence of the anti-Christian religious bias of the state.

Fearful that “Nazareth 2000” reinforces not only the association of an Israeli city with Christianity but implicitly recognises the historically continuous presence of local Christians in Israel, thereby challenging the exclusive nature of Jewish claims to the land, the more sanitised and historically disconnected “Nazareth in 2000” label was adopted.

Given the distancing tactics of the Likud government to the millennium project, the Nazareth municipality decided to proceed with their preparations alone. The municipality advertised internationally for proposals to organise the millennial celebrations in Nazareth and received three bids. They chose the proposal made by the London-based Clinton group who were prepared to pay the municipality 3 million dollars in advance of the celebrations to fund the necessary infrastructural improvements to the city, including the construction of an amphitheatre. However, just as they were about to sign the contract, the Easter riots of 1999 broke out. As the new year celebrations were due to be broadcast all around the world in just 8 months time, including guest appearances by a number of high-profile stars (including U2), the Clinton group decided that, despite having already invested 100 thousand dollars of their own money in the project, the risk to any further investment by potential intra-communal conflict in the city was too great and they pulled out. Given the ambivalence and antagonism of the Netanyahu government to a project which would underscore the Christian atmosphere of the city, the authorities are said to have been secretly very pleased.

However, a third factor which influenced the state’s attitudes towards the Nazareth dispute is mentioned by Jeraisi. Towards the late 1990s, momentum was building in political talks between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat as part of the Oslo peace process. In particular, international attention was focused on final status arrangements with regard to Jerusalem. As the European governments were generally supportive of the Palestinian demand to have East Jerusalem as their capital and for the PA to have control over the Holy Sites within the Old City, the emerging intra-communal conflict in Nazareth became a useful political playing card for Israel. According to Jeraisi, Israeli representatives approached EU and Vatican officials arguing that if the PA had control over Jerusalem and its Holy Sites the same level of instability and intra-communal hostility as was apparently happening in Nazareth would plague Jerusalem as well. As a result, stoking up the conflict in Nazareth and portraying the conflict in exaggerated terms signifying a clash of civilisations between radical Muslims and a united Christian-Jewish “West” paid important political dividends to the state.

However, despite gloomy prognostications made in the media concerning the future of intra-communal relations in Nazareth, Jeraisi remains upbeat. Stating that relations in the city have returned to normal, he argues that the conflict represented nothing more than an artificially-inflated "blip" on an otherwise calm horizon. Testifying to what he understands to be the true nature of Muslim-Christian relations in Nazareth he argues that, in a city which is 70 per cent Muslim, he, as a Christian-born candidate has been re-elected twice since the dispute occurred. As such, the vast majority of the people of Nazareth remain united in their support of a DFPE-led municipality with a Christian at its head, and are not as influenced by ideological rhetoric as some analyses might suggest. He also suggests that it is very unlikely that the state would ever again take such a direct interventionist role in intra-communal relations within the Palestinian Arab minority. While interference is to be expected ("Well, there is interference all the time. They will not stand looking from the side without trying to interfere..."), the significant and costly internal and international backlash which it received for its role in Nazareth has had a deep impact both on its diplomatic relations and on how the state moves forward with respect to its Palestinian Arab minority.

For Muslim NGO Director, Mohammad Zeidane, the Israeli government also receives the greatest measure of blame for the Nazareth affair. For him, it was "the manipulation of small things in the election campaign" of the main Zionist parties that is understood to have influenced the state's particular line of intervention. Such government intervention is identified by him as occurring on several different levels. In the first instance, media coverage by both the Israeli and international press is understood to have manipulated the conflict and to have distorted the real significance of the affair.

> I mean Israel can demolish a whole village in the Negev and nobody will hear about it. It won't even be mentioned in the Israeli media let alone the international media. I mean, twenty-five houses were demolished in the Negev and nobody mentioned it even the Israeli media, while a small event around a religious thing in Nazareth suddenly becomes a New York Times and BBC item.

However, even with international press coverage, the state is considered to have played an important part in directing and even encouraging these newsfeeds. Given the timing of these press releases which he observes to have generally coincided with electoral campaigns, he suggests that not only particular political parties but the state itself exploited the fall-out of this sensationalist and Huntingtonian coverage of the conflict upon Muslim-Christian intra-communal relations in Israel to its own advantage.

Zeidane also stressed the poor socio-economic situation of certain neighbourhoods in Nazareth which exacerbated tensions between communities in Nazareth and provided the state with another angle of opportunity. The disenfranchised neighbourhoods in question are those which emerged from the settlement of predominantly Muslim internal refugees in the periphery of the old city and which he likens to modern-day refugee camps. The emerging gaps between these neighbourhoods and the more traditional Muslim and Christian core areas of the city are not, however, attributed to discrimination by the municipality but to the natural development of the area in line with continued budgetary discrimination from the central government. Ironically, it was these socio-economic gaps which contributed to the growing popularity and strength of the Islamic movement in Nazareth which, in turn, fed off and exploited the clear social and economic gaps for its own quasi-religious political purposes. Similarly, he accuses the state for manipulating the conflict by persistently portraying it as an essentially religious one, overlooking its deeper political and socio-economic dimensions for which it alone was ultimately responsible.

Unlike analyses which portray the conflict in Nazareth as a "watershed" which marking the deterioration of Christian-Muslim relations in Israel, Zeidane believes the opposite to be true. A growing public awareness of the real root causes of the conflict has, to his mind, led to a growing internal criticism of the intentions of both the state and the Islamic movement among the majority of the Muslim population in Nazareth. It did not usher in a collapse of the "communal balance" in Nazareth, as some had prophesied, but rather it represented an isolated and unfortunate incident which – notwithstanding sensationalist media coverage and opportunistic state policy – has been overcome. Testifying to this and the importance of other underlying factors obfuscated by the media, he discusses the response of local Nazarenes to a Jewish terrorist attack at the Basilica of the Annunciation which took place in 2006.[91] On Friday the 3rd of March, 2006, a special Lenten mass was being held in the upper floor of the Basilica at which several hundred local Christian together with a handful of foreign pilgrims were present. A Jewish man from Jerusalem together with his Christian wife and 20 year-old daughter entered the church posing as tourists. Pushing a baby stroller filled with firecrackers, kerosene, gas canisters, inflammable material, as well as metal shards and marbles, the home-made bomb which they carried failed to detonate properly and, as a result, no one was killed or seriously injured.

[91] See: Arab HRA (2006) "Attack on the Basilica of the Annunciation."

Panic quickly spilled over from the smoke-filled church onto the streets and soon large crowds of locals, shocked by this brazen attack on such a venerated holy site and a central landmark of the city, gathered around the front gates of the church in a gesture of solidarity and protection. This response was no doubt spurred on by memories of an earlier Jewish terrorist attack which had occurred six months previously on a bus in Shfar'amr when an Israeli soldier indiscriminately opened fire on the Palestinian passengers killing four (2 Muslims and 2 Christians).[92] The reluctance of the authorities to apply criminal procedure against the man responsible in that incident led many in Nazareth to fear that those responsible in Nazareth would also escape justice. Demonstrating the biased nature of the state's security concerns, riot police were dispatched in large numbers to contain the demonstration and to protect the attackers from what was described in the Israeli media as the "Arab mob". The police then entered the church where the attackers were being held and, disguising them in police uniforms, escorted them to a local hospital whereupon they were released from police custody. The police then used teargas and stun grenades to disperse the unarmed crowd.

The following day hundreds of locals marched through Nazareth protesting the police response and the inability or unwillingness of the authorities to prosecute the law in an impartial manner. At the front of this march were communal and political leaders from across the religious spectrum, underscoring the new sense of solidarity between Christians and Muslims. Ironically, it was the Basilica of the Annunciation which only a decade earlier proved to be so divisive which now inspired renewed intra-communal solidarity. Over the course of the following days, the police began to arrest individuals who they claimed were responsible for brutality against the police. By contrast, no criminal procedure against the attackers was observed. In fact, the local Hebrew press downplayed the attack altogether, dismissing those responsible for it as being mentally unstable and crazy. Simultaneously, then President, Moshe Katsav, accused local Muslims who made up the majority of protestors of interfering in affairs which had nothing to do with them, while acting PM, Ehud Olmert, tried to diffuse the sense of renewed intra-communal solidarity with claims of persistent Muslim intolerance towards Christians.[93]

[92] See: Arab HRA (2005b) "One Gunman, Many to Blame."
[93] Examples of media coverage include:
Roffe-Ofir, S. 03/04/2006. YNet. "Nazareth mayhem dies down".
Cook, J. 9-15 March, 2006. Al-Ahram. Issue No. 785. "Basilica Burning".

Zeidane was present in the crowd following the attack on the Basilica. He recalls that 95 per cent of the crowd who gathered outside the church gates were Muslim, confirming his view that there is a unity of feeling amongst the people of Nazareth that supersedes sectarian differences. In fact, the Basilica of Annunciation came to represent an important symbol of Palestinian Arab unity against what was perceived to be a Jewish racist attack and an indifferent government. And while religious differences will continue to provide new and easy opportunities to create problems amongst the minority or to promote particular local political agendas, particularly around election time, he believes that the Shihab ad-Din issue is now very much a thing of the past.

The third central figure in the Nazareth 2000 affair who was interviewed for this study was Raphael Israeli. A Professor of Islamic, Middle Eastern and Chinese History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israeli was born in Morocco and emigrated to Israel when he was just 14 years of age. He has written several books on "radical Islam" and the so-called threats posed by the "Islamisation" of the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel as well as the manifold dangers surrounding the presence of Muslim minorities throughout Europe and the US. He was also called as an expert witness by the state on three separate, and highly publicised, trials and commissions of inquiry in Israel: the first inter-ministerial commission of inquiry into the Nazareth dispute in 1999; the Or Commission of Inquiry in 2000; and the trial of Sheikh Raed Salah, mayor of Umm el-Fahem and spiritual leader of the northern wing of the Islamist movement in Israel. It was his role in the inter-ministerial commission of inquiry into the Nazareth dispute of 1999 which is of interest here.

The Commission of Inquiry which Israeli gave evidence to was appointed on the 14th of April, 1999 by the former Minister of the Interior, Eli Suisa, who was a member of the ultra-orthodox Mizrahi Shas Party. The Committee itself was quite small and was composed of four core members: a Bedouin (Amram Kalaji) who was a former Director General of the Ministry of the Interior and had risen through the ranks to become Commissioner for the Northern District; a former intelligence officer in the IDF who was also a former Director General of the Ministry of Police (Gad Aviner); a former General and IDF spokesman (Ephraim Lapid); and Israeli himself who was appointed to this panel made up primarily of

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Bannoura, S. 28/05/2008 "Arab Resident of Nazareth to be imprisoned for defending the Basilica of Annunciation Church." The International Middle East Media Corner.

defence and security officials "in order to lend to it an aura of objectivity, respectability and thorough research which would be free from biases and political scheming".[94]

The Committee was charged with three tasks: to examine the tensions between the different groups in the city; to find a resolution to the conflict without having to resort to governmental measures; and to investigate how the normal functioning of the city council could be restored to order.[95] However, the conclusions reached by the Committee, which were submitted as a report three months later and which basically endorsed governmental support and further concessions to the Islamic movement, contradicted the views of Israeli himself. As the only academic on a committee consisting primarily of politicians and officials, he claims to have been given the task of researching the historical context of the conflict, particularly with regard to the claim that the disputed plot of land was Muslim *waqf*. However, when he submitted this report together with his conclusions, the committee chose to replace his final recommendations with their own while keeping the main body of the report intact. He was most indignant and refused to sign the new report which became known as the Majority Report. In his own conclusions, which he submitted as the committee's Minority Report, he recommended against the construction of a mosque which would only "yield" to the demands of a radical Islamic movement and which would, in turn, be understood as a provocation by the local Christian population.

He subsequently converted this Minority Report into his book, *Green Crescent Over Nazareth: The Displacement of Christians by Muslims,* in which he details in greater length his dissatisfaction with the Committee's conclusions.

> Taking into account the political machinations behind the scenes, (...), the slow pace in the proceedings of the Commission, and the parallel measures and decisions that were adopted by the Government as the Commission was being set up, it is now evident that the latter was no more than a fig leaf to cover the already adopted resolution to give in to the Islamists with a facade of respectability, proper government and good manners. At no time, indeed, did the Minister who appointed the Commission think about dissolving the city council, or denying the Islamists their actual illegal possession of the plaza, or move to ensure that the plaza would be ready at the deadline for the 2000 celebrations. His alliance with the Islamists described above in fact may have dictated his negative approach to the whole idea of the millennium, and he did not seem to be in any rush to advance that cause. The fact that the Commission was not pressed at any time, neither before the national elections of 1999 nor subsequent to them, to expedite the report of its findings, also tends to corroborate this view. Moreover, the repeated individual attempts made by various members of the Commission, apparently under its Chairman's prodding or assent, but never reported beforehand at the Commission's meetings and only

[94] Israeli (2002: 115-116)
[95] Israeli (2002: 116)

> reluctantly confirmed after the fact, is evidence enough that what was happening behind the scenes was more important than outward appearances. The assumption must have been that any attempt at mediation behind the scenes, which pleased the Chairman who acted on orders from his Minister, would be at any rate rubber stamped by the Commission.[96]

Notwithstanding the alliance between the government and the Islamic movement, which he disapproved of in the strongest terms possible, he was no fan of the local municipality either and of the "radicalising" nationalist position he considered it to espouse. Given the paralysis of the municipality, the state would have, to his mind, been entirely within its rights to have dissolved it, appointing central control over it instead. Unlike Jeraisi, who identifies a measure of Jewish anti-Christian religious feeling in determining state policy, Israeli blames the state's proximity to the Islamic movement, arising from electoral opportunism, as well as the (misguided) political choices made by Christians themselves, as indirectly sidelining local Christians and their particular issues within the priorities of the state. In all, he identifies state policy as a "mixed bag". He was adamant that the state was concerned with providing a peaceful resolution to the conflict, which he sees as an essentially religious conflict between Muslims and Christians but that, due to electoral politics on the one hand and the hostile attitude of the minority towards it on the other, the state is caught in a "no-win" situation resulting in their ultimate "hands-off" approach to the conflict.

> Because whenever, like in Nazareth, when Israel interferes or tries to establish some order between the two camps, because they were attacking each other and so on, and the Israeli Home Office needs the municipality to function, they need to bring services to 60,000 people and so on. So, both Christians and Muslims accused Israel. It's Israel that's causing the rift, causing the rift between the two, and so on, and therefore the Israeli police say whatever we do will be damned and, therefore, let them settle their problems, unless it gets into open conflict or criminal acts and so on and the authorities have no choice but to intervene. But usually they prefer not to intervene as far as possible.[97]

This view of stand-off government policy is confirmed by other respondents. Professor Gabriel Ben-Dor of Haifa University, for example, describes it as follows:

> When problems come up such as the great feud over the mosque in Nazareth, the government is ambivalent. On the one hand, they would like to appease Muslims. They don't want to fight Islam. On the other hand, they would like to protect the Christians who are the weaker party and the party in the right apparently in that particular case. And they just try to navigate through the crashing waves with no great degree of success.[98]

[96] Israeli (2002: 116-117)
[97] Interview with Raphael Israel, 06/07/2008.
[98] Interview with Gabriel Ben-Dor, 07/04/2008.

According to this view, no particular or affirmative state policy towards Palestinian Christians is identified and while the government is described as wanting to protect this community it is understood to be preoccupied with the more numerous Muslim segment of the Palestinian Arab minority primarily for electoral purposes. Notwithstanding this, he believes that Palestinian Christians are already well equipped, in socio-economic terms, to withstand government discrimination towards the Palestinian Arab minority but this factor, ironically, serves only to compound, not reduce, the indifferent attitude of the state.

By contrast, the Greek Catholic Archbishop of the Galilee, Elias Chacour, considered state attitudes towards the conflict in Nazareth to have been essentially an extension of its more traditional divide and rule policy. Archbishop Chacour, who expressed no objection to the construction of mosques anywhere else in Nazareth, considered the decision to build a mosque directly adjacent to the Basilica as a deliberately provocative gesture which would never have gotten off the ground, particularly given the widespread condemnation of it by important Arab and Muslim leaders, were it not for the intercession and support provided to the Islamic movement by the Israeli authorities.

> The only one who wanted the mosque, apparently, was a Jewish minister with the Jewish authorities with a few Muslims. And the aim was not the mosque. Israel is not missionarising for Mohammed. The aim was to divide the Christians from Muslims in Nazareth. And they succeeded greatly in doing that. (...) But it left a trauma, a wound in the heart of both the Muslims and the Christians.

Similarly to the views expressed by Zeidane, the attitude of the authorities to the Jewish terrorist attack of March 2006 is singled out for his criticism.

> And God arranged that some weeks later that famous Jewish family brought these fireworks and exploded them in the church and everybody thought the church would be destroyed, [which] brought thousands and thousands of Muslims with their top leaders to join into the church, more than the Christians did. Why? Because they wanted to protect the church of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, *Maryam, bint 'Aman*. We found ourselves there hugging each other and forgetting all the misunderstanding. That evening, Mr. Olmert called me on the telephone. I was just two weeks Bishop. He said, Bishop Chacour, we are sorry that what happened in Nazareth happened. You know that it does not represent the Jews. It must he handicapped persons, surely, and we are not with them. We reject all that. But also we want to encourage you to see clearly, these Muslims who came and gathered around the Church, they don't like you. They come flattering you to win your votes for the election. Please, don't fall in the trap. I said, Mr. Olmert, we have been dreaming to see the Muslims come with us in the church, around the church, to show solidarity. Not to show flattery, but solidarity. And I want you to be sure that your place

> as Jew is very well respected. If you come, instead of me hugging you, we would be hugging you, me and the Muslim sheikh.[99]

Palestinian Christian Professor of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Michael Karayanni, considered that the state is interested, for its own purposes, in creating or promoting divisions between different segments of the Palestinian minority. However, in his analysis of the factors which can be said to determine the state's response to intra-communal conflict in Nazareth as well as in other localities, the role of internal electoral politics and Israeli foreign policy considerations are also attributed equal weight to Israeli state attitudes and interests.[100] Ultimately, the final resolution to the Nazareth 2000 dispute was one which reflected the wishes of the international community, not necessarily the wishes of the Israeli establishment. However, in this, the preferences of local Christians as well as of the majority of Muslims in Nazareth are considered to be quite irrelevant to the overall decision-making process of the government.

This is reiterated to some extent by Palestinian Christian Jafar Farah, Director of the Palestinian Israeli NGO, Mossawa. While recognising the conflict in Nazareth to be one between three main players – the Israeli government, the Nazareth municipality and the Islamic movement – Farah stressed the hierarchical relationship between each of these three different and unequal parties to the conflict reflecting the broader picture of socioeconomic inequality and discrimination in Israel.

> You know, in Nazareth the fight was not over the Shihab ad-Din. It was over the institutions: schools, local councils, etc. Shihab ad-Din, this half *dunam*, was abused because Upper Nazareth was taking everything around them, so suddenly what do you have? You have a stupid fight over the margin. The struggle on the margin is very tough, and the elites, the leadership of any community have to be aware of the fact that marginalised communities can be very tough in fighting over the margin instead of fighting and getting people to fight over the centre. Instead of fighting for our rights from the government and to distribute the resources of the state in a fair way, we have elites in our community that are concentrated in fighting each other on the margin of the margin. So, you find it in every Arab village and city… Suddenly you have Christians against Muslims, [saying] that we want a Christian mayor. Why is a Christian mayor better than a Muslim mayor? I don't know. I'm not sure that a Christian mayor is better. (...) So the fact that he's a Christian mayor and he is educated didn't help Nazareth. It didn't help Nazareth to improve the situation of the city, because the Arab community took the decision that they want to develop Nazareth, so the state doesn't want to develop Nazareth. So they encourage and develop and feed Umm al-Fahim, and you have

[99] Interview with Elias Chacour, 21/04/2008.
[100] Interview with Michael Karayanni, 11/08/2008.

> parallel local forces in Umm al-Fahim, Islamic movement, that want to develop Umm al-Fahim.[101]

For Farah, therefore, the mosque dispute is symptomatic of the widespread underdevelopment and marginalisation both of Nazareth and the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. Within this, the Islamic movement as well as elitist elements within the Christian community, which both sought to capitalise from the divisive framework of government-promoted sectarian identities, are both guilty of losing sight of the bigger problem of state discrimination. In fact, Farah argues that, on a purely pragmatic level, a Christian-led municipality may have, given the nature of the state and the religious appeal of the Nazareth 2000 initiative, worked more to the socio-economic disadvantage of Nazareth as a whole than a Muslim-led municipality.

6.5 Conclusion

The Nazareth 2000 affair, and the role of four subsequent governments (under Rabin, Netanyahu, Barak and Sharon) in responding to it, allows a number of observations on the nature of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel to be made. While external foreign policy considerations may have moderated, or even determined, the final outcome of the conflict, it can nevertheless be concluded that, internally at least, the state did not pursue any particular, affirmative or multicultural policy towards local Palestinian Christians in Israel. This assessment is due to the significance of several other factors in the determination of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians.

The electoral significance of the demographically stronger Muslim population and the desire of successive Israeli governments to appeal to or, at the very least, not to alienate that electoral base, resulted in a higher level of political indifference shown by the state towards Palestinian Christians and their local interests than that shown towards Palestinian Muslims. However, it must be observed that the conflict in Nazareth, and particularly the role of Israeli electoral politics in contributing to and developing that conflict, coincided with the short-lived period of separate direct elections for the position of Prime Minister which was

[101] Interview with Jafar Farah, 21/04/08.

abandoned after 2001, thus diminishing the relevance of the Arab vote to mainstream Israeli Jewish parties.

Another factor which motivated state attitudes towards the conflict in Nazareth was Jewish religious antipathy towards Christianity as manifested in opposition to the symbolic nature of the Nazareth 2000 celebrations. While this factor has been observed by the respondents to have grown in line with the increase in the number of ultra-orthodox and other Jewish religious parties in Israel, its role during the conflict in Nazareth was particularly strong during the government of Netanyahu. This factor, when combined with Israeli electoral politics, indicates a particular form of discrimination against Palestinian Christians in Israel which, in turn, increases the level of isolation and neglect experienced by them.

Finally, the historically active role of Christians in Palestinian Arab national politics both in Nazareth and on the broader national level also contributed to the marginalisation of this community from the central priorities of the state during this conflict. The important political leadership role of the DFPE-led Nazareth municipality has been a continuous source of annoyance and even of threat to the Israeli authorities. That this municipality is led by a Christian-born mayor did nothing to dispel this negative association or to moderate the government's support of and alliance with the local Islamic movement. In fact, it can be convincingly argued that the opposite is true, particularly given the political salience of electoral politics and of anti-Christian religious antipathy.

To conclude, Israeli state attitudes towards the dispute in Nazareth and, by extension, towards both the Palestinian Arab minority as a whole and Palestinian Christians in particular, can be described as being highly opportunistic and indifferent. It consisted of different approaches which were, in turn, highly interventionist (on behalf of the local Islamic movement) and "hands off" (with regards to local Palestinian Christians). At no point were the aims and wishes of local Palestinian Christians, or even the majority of Palestinian Muslims, taken into account by the state, and while the Islamic movement was initially singled out for support by the government, this support was ultimately a poisoned chalice.

Chapter Seven:

Military Service and Village Conflict

7.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates another dimension of intra-communal conflict involving Palestinian Christians in Israel which was frequently identified by the respondents as typifying or demonstrating current state attitudes towards them. Unlike the conflict in Nazareth between the local municipality and the Islamic movement, the conflicts under discussion here occurred in various villages between Druze and Christians. As such, this chapter has the added potential of broadening an analysis of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians from one that is fixed upon Muslim-Christian relations to one that integrates other segments of the minority as well as other factors connected with the state itself. In line with respondent feedback, this chapter also integrates a particular focus on the role of national military service both as a cause of, and response to, Druze-Christian conflicts in Israel. As such, this chapter provides a brief introduction to the goals and ethos of the IDF together with a discussion of the consequences of the legal exemption of Muslims and Christians (but not Druze) from compulsory military service. This approach, which outlines a number of important structural limitations to state attitudes towards the Palestinian Arab minority, is followed by an overview of Palestinian Arab voluntary service in the IDF both in terms of numbers and factors which can be said to influence or encourage their enlistment. On this basis, this chapter will then proceed to address four Druze-Christian conflicts – the majority of which have occurred over the past decade – and address the significance of military service for intra-communal relations between Druze and Christians in Israel. In particular, differential state attitudes towards its Druze and Palestinian Christian populations as symbolised by each community's respective inclusion and exclusion within the framework of compulsory military service is discussed. Also discussed is the state's observed differential response to the conflicts and the significance of this response to this study's analysis of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in general.

7.2 Palestinian Soldiers in the IDF

More than any other institution in Israel, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF, or *Tzahal* as it is known for short in Hebrew) plays a central role both in Israeli state and nation-building efforts. It remains the main symbol of national unity as well as a badge of honour, identity and belonging for the vast majority of those who serve in it. Described as Israel's melting-pot, the army has critically functioned as an important and indispensible socialisation device, particularly with regard to the integration and assimilation of Jewish immigrants (*olim*) into society. In addition to its nation-building role, military service is also known as "the great equaliser" of Israeli society, representing an egalitarian platform through which social differences and cleavages may be overcome through the performance of military service alone.[1]

The centrality and dominance of all "things military" in Israeli society is, therefore, a widely acknowledged fact.[2] However, the problematic perception of Arabs in Israel has been compounded rather than alleviated by the ethnic and political salience of military service. In as much as the Israeli army is a central location in the social construction of Jewish national identity, it is also directly involved in the social construction of the Arab as its permanent "other".[3] In other words, the "othering" of Palestinian Arabs is not only to be found within Zionist discourse, but it is also a central and persistent feature of Israeli military discourse. Therefore, in creating new avenues of social mobility and integration for its Jewish majority population, military service has simultaneously become the "great divider" of Israeli society along national lines. The inclusive framework of military service which was established not only for the protection and the security of the state, but also for the production of a new, homogenised Jewish nation-state, has become an exclusive and differentiating framework underlining the non-compatibility of Palestinian Arabs within it. In discussing Ben-Gurion's "nation-building vision of the new military", Peled identifies Palestinian Arab citizens of the new Jewish state as remaining "outside the boundaries of this military melting pot".[4] The

[1] For more on the social ethos and ideology of the Israeli military see: Gal (1986), Cohen (1995), Peled, A. (1998), Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari (1999) and Weitz (2006).
[2] Ben-Ari & Lomsky-Feder (1999: 1-34)
[3] Ben-Ari & Lomsky-Feder (1999: 1)
[4] Peled, A. (1998: 130)

prestige and esteem associated with military service for Israel's Jewish population have become, in turn, badges of suspicion and rejection for Israel's Palestinian Arab minority.[5]

This point is developed by Kanaaneh who has recently investigated the role and motivations of Palestinian Arabs who serve in the IDF. Like her predecessors, Kanaaneh ascribes the military with twin melting pot and nation-building roles.[6] However, in her analysis, which identifies Israel as "a military democracy at best", these functions and roles are viewed as being exclusively in the service of the Jewish community and to the detriment of the Palestinian Arab minority which retains "the embodiment of Arabs as a source of insecurity".[7] It is within this context that Palestinian Arabs have, with the exception of the Druze, been legally exempted from military service since 1954. This decision was taken by the Ministry of Defence, which was then under the sole jurisdiction of one of Israel's founding fathers and former Prime Ministers, David Ben-Gurion.[8] While some suggest that this exemption was requested by the local Palestinian Arab leadership as a temporary measure "until the problem of Arab refugees was settled", all accept that the state's decision was based, at the very least, upon the mutual suspicion of the authorities, on the one hand, who saw in Arab military service "the Trojan horse dilemma", and of the local Arab leadership, on the other hand, whose "overwhelming suspicion and distrust of the state's real intentions" undermined any initiatives to recruit Palestinian Arab citizens into military service.[9] One account which has explained the exemption of Palestinian Arab Muslims and Christians from mandatory conscription as an unfortunate but necessary requirement brought about by the so-called "security risk" posed by Palestinian Arab citizens, on the one hand, and by the state's desire to "spare" Palestinian citizens the difficult dilemma of being forced to choose between their Palestinian and Israeli identities is that of Reuven Gal, former chief psychologist of the IDF and later Director of the Authority for National Civic Service in Israel.[10] To this, sociologist S.N. Eisenstadt, who typifies the pro-establishment discourse in Israeli academia, added the view that the military exemption of Palestinian Muslims and Christians constituted an "institutional innovation" by the state which sought "to avoid a

[5] Several critical studies challenge the description of the IDF as an "integrative enclave" even for Israeli Jewish society. Ben-Ari & Lomsky-Feder (1999: 6-7), for example, identify links between military service and patterns of gender inequality while Shafir & Peled (1998: 415) similarly observe sexist and patriarchal attitudes towards women in the military.
[6] Kanaaneh (2009: 7)
[7] Kanaaneh (2009: 7)
[8] Ghanem (1998: 433); Peled (1998: 137)
[9] Peled, A. (1998: 131-136)
[10] Gal (1986: 32)

situation of conflicting loyalties, as well as not to endanger the security of the Israeli Army".[11]

However, not all pro-establishment accounts are consistent with each other. Peled, for example, suggests that the state was not solely interested in encouraging the compulsory conscription of the Druze community. Mentioning the ultimately futile attempts of various government officials to "test the waters" with local church leaders in the mid-1950s, he recognises a broader attempt by the authorities to encourage the leaders of smaller communities within the Palestinian Arab minority (but never those of the larger Muslim community) to consider the possibility of mandatory conscription for Palestinian Christians in Israel.

> There were also rumours that in 1955 Israel approached [the Greek Catholic] Archbishop Hakim in Beirut, requesting his support for the conscription of young Christian Arabs, and that Archbishop Hakim consulted the pope and declined the offer.[12]

These attempts to foster the communal conscription of Palestinian Christians in Israel were short-lived and ultimately abandoned not only because of the lack of receptivity to the idea from within the Christian community but, more importantly, because of the state's inability to control or overcome the complicated and fragmented nature of Palestinian Christian religious communal leadership in Israel.

The inability of the state to co-opt Christian communal leadership has resulted in the tendency of pro-establishment analyses to explain the exemption of Palestinian Muslims and Christians from military service on the same basis of a potential security threat. This negative bias, however, does not explain the phenomenon of Palestinian voluntary conscription into the IDF and the reaction of the authorities to those Muslims and Christians who have sought to be included within it. This phenomenon is particularly remarkable given that, until the late 1980s at least, the voluntary enlistment of Palestinian Muslims and Christians was severely restricted by the state due to its persistent distrust of the Palestinian Arab minority and its desire to maintain the Jewish national character of military service. A number of obstacles were placed in the path of any aspiring Arab recruit. One account describes it as follows:

> Formally, Muslim and Christian Arab citizens had the option of volunteering for military service. But the conditions for the acceptance of such volunteers were difficult to satisfy.

[11] Eisenstadt (1967b: 395-396)
[12] Peled, A. (1998: 137)

> To gain approval, Arab volunteers had to command the Hebrew language, complete at least ten years of schooling, have paternal approval, and be twenty-two years of age or less. They were also required to serve in field units because the IDF had enough conscripts and regulars staffing its headquarters. (...) Finally, Arab volunteers needed strong Jewish recommendations to support their applications. Needless to say, none of these requirements were ever applied to Jewish conscripts.[13]

A number of these restrictions still apply. For example, it is still a requirement that new Palestinian Arab volunteers must provide two formal recommendations in order to serve in the IDF. These recommendations, however, must come either from individuals already connected with the military establishment or from communal leaders with whom the authorities have close relations. This illustrates the continued importance of state control and patronage and the impact that this policy has on creating or re-creating patrimonial relations within Palestinian Arab society.[14] Furthermore, all potential Palestinian volunteers are subjected to rigorous security checks and careful screening, on which basis some are rejected. Kanaaneh describes the experience of one Palestinian Christian volunteer in this regard.

> One Christian man I interviewed was asked to identify himself and his family members in photographs of legal and peaceful political demonstrations before being turned down by the military as "incompatible". The very definition of compatibility with the military carries ethnic significance.[15]

As a result, the number of Muslim or Christian recruits during the first forty years of the state "was close to nil" with estimates suggesting that as little as only four or five Muslims and Christians were successfully registered for service each year between 1978 and 1983.[16] Ascertaining the number of Palestinian Arabs currently serving in the IDF today is more difficult. While the Israeli military authorities do not disclose the exact number or religious breakdown of Palestinian Arab volunteers (whether Muslim or Christian), partial figures do exist. Illustrating the close relationship between print media and the political establishment in Israel, selective figures concerning minority presence in the army have been sporadically leaked to the Israeli press over the years shedding some light on the matter. One article published by Haaretz in 2004, for example, states that the combined number of Muslim and Christian recruits to the IDF does not exceed, on average, 150 individuals per year.[17] This figure represents a statistically negligible proportion (less than 0.2 per cent) of

[13] Peled (1998: 138)
[14] Kanaaneh (2009: 45-46, 63)
[15] Kanaaneh (2009: 64)
[16] Peled (1998: 139)
[17] Amos Harel, 30/12/2004, Haaretz, "Number of Muslim, Christian Arab volunteers in IDF growing."

the total number of Israeli conscripts to the army in any given year.[18] Another Haaretz article from 2005 suggests that "[i]n 2002 and 2003, the Christians were 0.1 percent of all the conscripts" suggesting that approximately half of all Muslim and Christian recruits, amounting to no more than 85 individuals, were Palestinian Christian.[19] In terms of the number of Muslims and Christians within the Palestinian Arab minority (which, if we exclude the Druze population, follows a ratio of approximately 9:1 Muslims to Christians), it is therefore possible to argue that Palestinian Christians are, in fact, statistically overrepresented in the IDF, a fact which the Israeli media tends to emphasise despite the fact that generalisations based on such small numbers are highly problematic and weak.

The improbable and contradictory phenomenon of Palestinian Arab voluntary military service in the IDF is usually explained with reference to structural considerations of the nature of the state and the negative impact of their formal exclusion from mandatory military service on their general status and opportunities in society. In identifying the necessity of their exemption from within a national-security perspective, for example, Eisenstadt identifies the obvious practical drawbacks of this policy upon the Palestinian Arab minority.

> While this might have been seen as a release from an onerous duty, it was also an exclusion from a sphere which epitomised the essence of Israeli citizenship and identity and it therefore emphasised the ambivalent relations between the Arabs and the state. Wider repercussions of this involved the availability of occupational opportunities, as suspicion and a reluctance to employ Arab labour developed in legitimate security areas as well as those not directly affected. As this widespread attitude was not fully articulated, it was also not easy to overcome.[20]

In another study investigating the role of the Druze in the Israeli military, Frisch observes this same connection between military service and the extension of the full rights and benefits of citizenship which he argues has been clearly understood and accepted not only by the state but by the majority of the Israeli (Jewish) public as well.

> Paradoxically, the Jewish Israeli majority accept to a far greater extent the exemption of Muslim and Christian Arabs from the army [than ultra-orthodox Jews]. First, security considerations justify it. Second, the Arab sector receives small per capita allocations from the public purse. The bulk of Israeli society justifies this biased allocation by the fact that the Arabs do not bear the military burden. Arabs feel that burden is not theirs to begin with and demand allocations on an equal basis due to common citizenship.[21]

[18] According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (2009: 249-251), Israel had a total military manpower of 741,500 people in 2009, consisting of 109,500 conscripts and 565,000 reservists.
[19] Yoav Stern, 23/03/2005, Haaretz, "Israel's Christian Arabs don't want to fight to fit in."
[20] Eisenstadt (1967b: 395-396)
[21] Frisch (1993; 59-60)

While both of these analyses acknowledge the clear correlation between state discrimination against Palestinian Arabs and the non-performance of military service, a more detailed elaboration of the practical implications of this attitude is missing. Lustick overcomes this in his analysis of the structural impact of Israel's military-defined "social-evaluative system" which equates both social worth and equal rights with military service.

> The fact that the army is not an integrated Jewish-Arab institution is of enormous significance for Arab citizens. The position of veteran status is a prerequisite to a wide variety of jobs and public assistance programs. The personal associations, as well as the rank and service records, a soldier establishes in the course of regular service and reserve duty are among the most important elements in the determination of a future career in Israeli society – the officer corps being, perhaps, the primary conduit for administrative and managerial personnel in all branches of Israeli industry, commerce and government.[22]

On an individual level, military service can affect not only a person's ability to advance in society but their basic employability in a range of sectors. Careers which are understood to relate in any way to Israel's defence, national priorities or security industries such as engineering and even computer science are subject to the same military preconditions.[23] The decision to dismiss 150 Palestinian Arab employees of the Israeli state-owned railway company (Israeli Railways) on the grounds that they did not perform military service and could, therefore, not be trusted with the "security"-related duties of their jobs, represents a more recent case of this form of discrimination.[24]

On a collective level, military service has also been used by the state to determine the distribution of various subsidies and welfare allocations. One area in particular in which the criterion of military service has been used to discriminate against Palestinian Arabs is education. In 1987, for example, the government attempted to condition the award of tuition subsidies towards university students upon the performance of military service, directly targeting the educational aims of Palestinian Arab youth. However, following public outcry from both Palestinian Arabs and their Jewish supporters, this initiative was soon thereafter dropped.[25] Similarly, the Ministry of Education has set the minimum enrolment age for many university degree programmes at 20 or 21 on the grounds that this is the age when conscripts typically finish their military service.[26] However, given that this policy has not

[22] Lustick (1980: 94)
[23] Kanaaneh (2009: 40, 43)
[24] Article by Jonathan Cook, 06/04/2009, in *The National*, "Arabs Left on the Wrong Side of the Tracks in Israel."
[25] Rouhana (1997: 263, no.16)
[26] Kanaaneh (2009: 41)

been applied universally to all university subjects, but to those which are the most competitively sought after, such as medicine, pharmacy, social work, physiotherapy and speech therapy, many young Palestinians are either obliged to sacrifice further education or, if they can, pursue their studies abroad.[27] Palestinian Israeli NGO Adalah has also filed several complaints against Haifa University both for making enrolment into certain courses contingent upon military service and for using this same criterion to discriminate against Arab students in the allocation of student dorms.[28]

Military service has also been used as a precondition for the award of numerous social welfare and other material benefits. In order to avail of these benefits, applicants are expected to produce certificates of release from the Israeli army.

> The status of "released" qualifies the individual and his family for a wide range of financial assistance in the areas of education, professional training, housing, and starting a business, as well as exemption from or reduction in municipal property taxes, credit points on income tax calculations, free driving courses and so on.[29]

Critically, "released" soldiers are given the unique opportunity to lease land from the state at preferential rates, representing an obvious incentive to land-deprived Palestinian Arabs with no other way of securing a plot upon which to build a home for themselves and their families.[30] The contingency of this and other subsidies upon the performance of military service reflects not only the suspicious and rejectionist mentality of the state but their fear of the so-called "demographic threat" posed by Palestinian Arabs to the future Jewish majority status of the state.

> According to regulations that don't explicitly use the term Jewish or Arab, Jewish families with children were awarded larger financial allowances per child than Arab families. Formulating an explicit policy of supporting a higher Jewish birth rate would have contradicted values of equality inherent in the state's second guidelines of democracy; however, the tension between these two principles came to be obscured (though not resolved) by using military service as the qualifying factor for receiving the higher subsidy. Since few Arabs serve in the army, this criterion functionally channelled the larger funds to Jews without explicitly stating so. But with increased awareness that the criterion was manipulated to include as many Jews as possible regardless of their actual military service – yeshiva students, for example – and as few Arabs as possible, and with the increasing pressure from the Arab community and their Jewish supporters on this issue, the Knesset revoked differential subsidies as of 1997.[31]

[27] Article by Jonathan Cook, 10/06/2009, in *The National*, "Israel's Arab Students are Crossing into Jordan"
[28] Adalah (2008 and 2006)
[29] Kanaaneh (2009: 39)
[30] Kanaaneh (2009: 36, 41-42)
[31] Rouhana (1997: 83)

Despite the formal revocation of differential subsidies based on military service, the Knesset passed new legislation in 2002 legally condoning reductions in economic subsidies payable to families not covered by the criterion of "entitling service" which refers to financial entitlements based on the performance of military service by a family member. As such, "the law is a thinly disguised means to deny Arab families the benefits available to virtually all Jewish families".[32]

It is within this context that the obvious economic incentives of military service to individual members of the Palestinian Arab minority become apparent. Volunteering is rarely understood to be motivated by ideological commitments. Instead, the phenomenon is generally understood to reflect a pragmatic strategy of self-advancement by a small number of deprived individuals who have recognised the structural limitations imposed upon them by the state and who seek to bypass the worst aspects of state discrimination through the performance of military service. In response to growing criticism of the discrimination faced by Palestinian Arabs in this regard, the state has launched a national civic service initiative whereby a non-military alternative to national service has been provided. However, this scheme has been identified by a number of quarters within the Palestinian minority as the government's cynical attempt to neutralise the legitimate and democratic demand that Israel relinquish its discriminatory policies towards the Palestinian Arab minority. In the Committee set up by the Minister of Defence in 2004 the government's intentions with the national service scheme were outlined.

> The committee argued that Arab citizens would thereby gain similar benefits to those received by individuals who serve in the military. Thus, the committee explicitly linked Arab citizens' entitlement to equal rights with an obligation to perform national service. The committee also made a connection between national and military service.[33]

This deliberate coupling of military service with civic service is indicative of the continued conditionality of Arab equality in Israel upon the prerequisite that Palestinian Arab citizens perform some form of national service.[34] By providing an alternative avenue for military service, civic service reduces the financial pressure on Palestinian Arabs to perform military service. Similarly, it may be observed that, given the relative socio-economic advantage of Palestinian Christians and their higher concentration in the areas of education and professional careers, the traditional argument that Palestinian Christians would volunteer for

[32] Rouhana & Sultany (2003: 12)
[33] Adalah (2007b)
[34] See also: Baladna (2008)

military service as a means of financial self-advancement is not very convincing. As such, other factors motivating their enlistment must be considered.

One factor which explains Palestinian Christian voluntary conscription is connected to the historical experience of the Druze in the IDF. All Palestinian Arab recruits to the Israeli army were originally concentrated by the state within the military's "Minorities Unit" which was first created during the Israeli War of Independence. Receiving official status as a regular military unit only in 1954, the history of the Minorities Unit has been dominated by the Druze and is, in fact, closely connected with the evolution of Druze political identity in Israel.[35] The concentration of Druze soldiers within the Minorities Unit predates the 1956 decision to make military service for Druze compulsory in Israel, but, given the much smaller number of other Arab recruits over time, this legal provision maintained the Druze character not only of this unit but of Arab military service in general.[36] The Minorities Unit remained an essentially segregated battalion within the IDF until 1972 when minority volunteers were first given the opportunity of serving in other mainstream military units, but on a limited basis only.[37] Even today, with the disappearance of the Minorities Unit, the majority of Arab soldiers still serve in separate units associated with different segments of the minority, such as: the Druze unit known as the Sword Battalion; the Bedouin Desert Reconnaissance Battalion and the Bedouin Trackers Unit.[38]

The traditional internal separation of Arab recruits within the IDF not only marginalised the role of Arab recruits but of the units in which they served. Although allowed to participate in its War of Independence, the Minorities Unit was "denied participation in the battles of the 1956 and 1967 wars" due to the persistence of security fears and suspicions of disloyalty by the establishment.[39] This suggests that despite the performance of military service and the fulfilment of this ultimate "test of loyalty", minority recruits remain marginalised and suspected by the state. Despite growing incorporation of the Minorities Unit within mainstream military operations, the military duties of Palestinian

[35] Kanaaneh (2009: 11) suggests that it is no coincidence that the Unit received formal recognition just two years before the Druze themselves became liable for mandatory military conscription in 1956. In fact, she suggests that their formal conscription not only predated but was contingent upon their subsequent recognition as a separate religious minority in 1957.
[36] It is estimated that 850 of the approximately 1,000 Arab recruits to the IDF in 2008 (both compulsory and voluntary recruits) were Druze, suggesting that they make up around 85 per cent of all Arabs in the Israeli army. Gil Ronen, 04/04/2009, Arutz Sheva, "Druze beat out Jews in Recruitment to IDF."
[37] Peled, A. (1998: 161)
[38] Kanaaneh (2009: 52)
[39] Peled, A. (1998: 158-159)

Arab recruits remain largely confined to more perilous and unpopular border-guard and patrol duties, as typified by the Druze Reconnaissance Unit and the Bedouin Trackers' Unit.

This marginalisation of minority recruits, and the inability of their military service to create the anticipated improvement of their socio-economic status in society, has contributed to growing feelings of frustration and resentment within certain segments of the minority. Criticising the empty rhetoric of the state which conditions equal rights upon military service, one report discusses the continued deprivation of Druze and Bedouin communities in Israel.

> Under Israeli law, the whole population must complete military service. The Minister of Defence does have limited power to excuse certain members of society from serving – namely Orthodox Jews and the majority of the Palestinian community. However, in the case of the Palestinians, this is used to justify their unequal status in society. In truth, there are now more and more Jewish Israelis who are dodging enlistment, and yet, like the Orthodox Jews, they still receive all of their rights. The Israeli Defence Forces' statistics of 2007 show that 25% of draft-age men obligated to complete military service do not enlist (Haaretz), and the number of women thought to be eluding service is thought to be even higher. On the contrary, many Druze Israelis have the same military obligations as secular Jews, and there is a long-standing policy of persuading those from impoverished Bedouin communities to enrol for military service. Despite serving in the IDF as they are supposed to, it is widely accepted that both of these groups remain two of the poorest and most neglected areas of Israeli society, and live without their individual and collective rights. The dire conditions within the 37 unrecognised Bedouin villages warrant special emphasis, as despite paying taxes to the government and completing military service, 80,000 people in these Bedouin communities are without running water and electricity.[40]

This lack of positive returns is particularly evident for the Druze community not only because of their exemplary military service record but also with respect to the "ethnicisation" not only of their identity but of their military duty by the state.[41] Over 40 per cent of the total Druze male labour force is today dependent upon the army for jobs.[42] That the military has become a "niche" market for Druze is a consequence of both their mandatory conscription and the parallel destruction of the Druze agricultural economy by the state.[43] By 1962, the Druze had already lost more than two-thirds of their lands, and by the late 1990s, less than 1 per cent of this traditionally rural community was able to support itself through agriculture.[44] Poverty, the lack of further education and the hierarchical nature of the Druze communal leadership structure further restricted the occupational avenues open to the Druze and

[40] Baladna (2008: 8)
[41] Particularly the creation of a new non-Arab Druze nationality and the association between their new politicised identity and their compulsory military service. Hajjar (2000: 304)
[42] Firro (2001: 42)
[43] Hajjar (2000: 304)
[44] Firro (2001: 48)

increased their dependency upon the military. The official rhetoric of state favouritism made little material difference to the Druze. The influence that it did have, however, was that it increased both the sense of Druze entitlement based on their military service and their resentment of other segments of the minority which were exempt from military service.

> These policies of separating and distinguishing Druze from other Arabs have been resoundingly effective overall. Although Druze and Arabs are discriminated against in comparable ways as non-Jews in a Jewish state, because the state *rhetorically* favours the Druze, they have been presented with a strategic incentive to maintain and even to use the sectarian divisions by lobbying for equality with Jews. This is the ideal they have been led to believe that they deserve because of their service to the state, rather than aligning themselves with Arabs to work for universal equality for all citizens. The importance of military service to reinforcing the separation cannot be overstated: Druze are 'different' from Arabs (more 'Israeli') because they serve; discriminatory policies like land confiscation and insufficient investment in Druze villages are unjust because they serve, and so on.[45]

These feelings of frustration, however, are not of recent origin. One study suggests that despite being "natural allies" of the Jewish state and having an impeccable service record within the IDF, Druze units have not received "the same level of professional military support" from their higher command that other Jewish units have, often suffering far higher casualty rates and injuries as a result. Similarly, military service did not protect them from the government programmes of land seizures and expropriations. Referring to "greedy state institutions interested in confiscating the assets of their communities" in the 1950s, Peled refers to attempts made by individual Jewish officers at the time to compensate affected Druze soldiers by providing their villages with "food supplies, weapons licenses, and travel passes".[46] This form of assistance, particularly with regard to the provision of additional weapons' licenses to the villages of serving Druze soldiers during the 1950s, is also mentioned by Kanaaneh. However, for her, this was not a compensatory gesture but rather a deliberate scheme by the government to provide incentives to Druze to support the idea of mandatory military service which was at the time being actively pursued by the authorities.[47] As it is illogical that the state would provide weapons' licences to the Druze in order to help them defend themselves against government expropriations of their land, the question arises why weapons' licences represented such an attractive incentive to the Druze.

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[45] Hajjar (2000: 307)
[46] Peled, A. (1998: 146)
[47] Kanaaneh (2009: 11, 137 n.11) also refers to the provision of weapons' licences to Druze villages as early as the 1950s as a deliberate incentive offered by the state to break down Druze opposition to mandatory conscription.

Kanaaneh believes that the explanation resides in the tradition of military authorities to interfere with and stoke tensions between different segments of the Palestinian Arab minority, both inside the military and in society as a whole. In particular, she observes the segregation of Arab recruits along communal lines and the different military functions given to separate communities – particularly the segregation of Druze and Bedouin recruits in separate border patrol and tracking duties – as part of the state's wider divide-and-rule policy.[48] The manipulation of intra-communal tensions by the military establishment is, however, not restricted to the separate designation of military duties alone. Kanaaneh also observes the state's deliberate attempts to exploit communal divisions within the minority as a whole for the sake of military recruitment purposes. One area of concern which she mentions is the manipulation of inter-clan rivalries by the IDF. However, a more explosive area is their manipulation and exploitations of sectarian differences and religious tensions, within which "conflicts between Christians and Muslims are used as opportunities to recruit Christians into the military".[49] This point she elaborates further as follows:

> Beyond the ethnic labelling of units, recruitment centres, and benefits, authorities take advantage of disputes in Arab communities at a more ad-hoc level, encouraging parties to the conflict to enlist in the military in order to gain access to weapons and state protection. After the Shihab ad-Din conflict in Nazareth between Muslims and Christians, especially the violence that erupted in 1999, many Christians were encouraged to enlist with the argument that the state is the only entity able to protect them from their Muslim neighbours.[50]

While avoiding discussion of the role of Druze-Christian tensions on recruitment drives, it can be understood from the situation in Nazareth that intra-communal conflict is not only of interest to the political establishment in terms of the electoral significance the Arab vote, but is also of interest to the military establishment in terms of its wider recruitment potential. One central theme of the state's recruitment drives within the minority is, according to Kanaaneh, their exploitation of the conservative and patriarchal nature of Palestinian Arab identity, particularly with regard to concepts of family honour and masculinity. As "Palestinian masculinity centres on the ability to provide for and protect home and family", this strategy of equating military service both with concepts of masculinity is understood to have found resonance with segments of disenfranchised male youth.[51] It is also understood

[48] Kanaaneh (2009: 52-54)
[49] Kanaaneh (2009: 14)
[50] Kanaaneh (2009: 57-58)
[51] Kanaaneh (2009: 80)

to have affected the manner in which the state "markets" military service within the Palestinian Arab sector, particularly in its use of local Arab officers to entice new recruits.

> Palestinian soldiers are accused of "seducing" other young men into soldiering, under direction from Israeli authorities, by showing them their guns. Soldiers are supposedly instructed to intervene in local conflicts – family feuds, wage disputes, and religious tensions – by suggesting to young men involved in the conflicts that getting a gun (by joining the military) will resolve such problems with ease.[52]

As such, gaining access to a gun is, in many instances, a pivotal factor motivating Palestinian Arabs to volunteer for military service. While the lure of having a gun may, as Kanaaneh suggests, be linked with either a skewed sense of male pride or the need to overcome feelings of social disenfranchisement and emasculation, it may also be motivated by real feelings of personal or communal insecurity and vulnerability and the individual's desire to defend and protect his family, property or community in instances of intra-communal conflict. As Kanaaneh puts it:

> When one party to a conflict has soldiers among its members and thus access to weapons, this puts pressure on the opposing party to have members volunteer for the military so that it too can acquire guns.[53]

While the role of intra-communal conflict on voluntary conscription is often overlooked, it represents a critical dimension of this study's analysis of what motivates Palestinian Christians to volunteer for military service.

[52] Kanaaneh (2009: 81)
[53] Kanaaneh (2009: 58)

7.3 Four Village Conflicts

This chapter looks at four Druze-Christian conflicts which have taken place in mixed Arab villages in Israel which have either a Palestinian Christian majority (Kfar Yasif and Rameh) or a significant Palestinian Christian minority (Mughar and Abu Snan). Significantly, these four mixed Arab localities represent the only villages and towns in Israel where significant numbers of Palestinian Christians live together with Druze. Equally significant is that all of the conflicts under discussion have taken place in relatively recent times. With the exception of the first conflict which took place in 1981, all have taken place between in a short two-year period between 2003 and 2005, suggesting a real contemporary relevance to theese conflicts.

On the 11th of April, 1981, Kfar Yasif witnessed the first major conflict between Druze and Christians in Israel.[54] Kfar Yasif is a mixed Arab village close to the city of Akko with a population of 8,700 people. Of these, the majority (55 per cent) are Christian, but it also contains a large Muslim minority (40 per cent) and a smaller Druze community (5 per cent). On the 11th of April, a football match was taking place in the village between the local team and that of the smaller nearby Druze village of Julis. Given that this was an important soccer match, the local team managers requested a police force to be present as a precautionary measure.[55] As predicted, fights broke out during the match between supporters of both sides. However, in the chaos a young man from Julis was stabbed.[56] Reconciliation talks were scheduled between leaders from both communities, but following the unwillingness of the local council to release the name of the man suspected of the stabbing, a large crowd of several hundred armed men from Julis descended on Kfar Yasif. Fearing that a failed reconciliation would lead to even more violence, the reconciliation committee together with the head of Kfar Yasif local council contacted the regional Israeli police headquarters requesting immediate back-up. Their request was refused.[57] In the events that followed, which Masour describes as a "pogrom", the police played a central role.

> Two days later [after the stabbing], as a group of Arab leaders were negotiating a traditional peace agreement (*sulha*), a large police force was deployed in the field separating the two villages – Julis and Kafr Yaseef. Suddenly a crowd of heavily armed

[54] Shihade (2005: 32)
[55] Shihade (2005: 33)
[56] He later died in hospital. Mansour (2004: 274). By contrast, Shihade (2005: 33) argues that two individuals, one from Julis and another from Kfar Yasif were injured at the football stadium and both later died in hospital.
[57] Shihade (2005: 34)

> Druze from Julis arrived seeking revenge against the Christian village. A police force of 60 armed officers did virtually nothing to prevent the ensuing pogrom. Houses, cars, stores and workshops were torched. Three people were shot dead, others were injured. Only one police officer behaved with honour for he blocked the entrance to the high school and told the mob's ringleaders they would enter the school over his dead body.
>
> This slowed the massacre, but the other officers refused to act claiming they had insufficient arms to do anything and were waiting for reinforcements – which did not show up for two long hours of terror and looting. I interviewed General Hayem Avinoa'am, the north district police commander a few days later, who assured me the police knew the perpetrators and they would be brought to justice. Some 20 years have passed, yet not one of those criminals who acted in front of 60 armed police witnesses have been convicted in court.[58]

It is clear from this account that the vast majority of the Israeli police officers present shared responsibility for an attack which lasted only two hours and which, altogether, killed three people, destroyed 85 homes, 17 stores, 31 cars and damaged the local church.[59] An important number of off-duty Druze military personnel also took part.

> A number of the attackers were wearing either Israeli army or border police uniforms. Arms and equipment (such as vehicles, automatic machine guns, and bombs) from the Israeli military and different security unity were used in the attack. This added to the fear of the people in Kfar Yassif who realised that the state seemed to be behind this serious attack.[60]

Others who did not take a direct part in the attack assisted the Druze attackers by blocking the entrances of both villages to outsiders while at the same time keeping the road linking Julis with Kfar Yasif open.[61] Describing the role of the police, one respondent who witnessed the attack states:

> I was a witness to that. From that neighbouring Druze village of Julis a lot of people came in destroying houses and homes and eventually killing a guy who was also my friend, and I could see the police just standing and doing nothing.[62]

However, in discussing the role of the authorities, he distinguishes between that of the Druze-dominated police and the Jewish authorities.

> I don't know, but it's not that they [the authorities] don't want to intervene in order to let all of this damage happen, like they like seeing the damage. It's not that. Maybe they didn't want to intervene because they don't want to take sides in this dispute. It's like a kind of a hands-off kind of a policy more than, ok, let's let them burn and kill each other, we're happy with it. That's not what I think is at issue. What is more at issue [is] that such a conflict is not perceived as a national threat in the establishment's mind. It's not

[58] Mansour (2004: 274-275)
[59] Shihade (2005: 34)
[60] Shihade (2005: 34)
[61] Shihade (2005: 34-35)
[62] Interview with Michael Karayanni, 11/08/2008.

> like a guerrilla from Hezbollah coming from Lebanon and doing something in some northern village where you would find the whole Israeli army mobilised in one hour. When these conflicts happen, they are not perceived as a national threat or as something that threatens something, so the establishment does not really know how to handle it.[63]

While the state is not blamed for the outbreak of violence, its indifference towards the plight of Palestinian Christians and the impact of this conflict upon intra-communal relations is understood to have indirectly offered a green light to the attackers. To worsen the situation, the state showed no inclination of either pursuing criminal prosecutions against those responsible or of providing financial support to repair damages done to the village. While an international church organisation paid for some of the damages, it was the uninvolved Muslim *waqf* which was made to pick up the bill for the majority of the damages.

> The World Council of Churches partly compensated the damage in Kafr Yaseef, but the cost of the rituals for the traditional "peace" was paid from the Muslims' Waqf revenue – collected to help needy Muslims, repair Muslim mosques, subsidise the maintenance of Muslim cemeteries or met similar community needs. In Israel these funds are run by Jewish officials, so the ministry of religious affairs and the prime minister's advisor on Arab affairs decided to finance peace celebration between Druze and Christian from these Muslim funds – a typical demonstration of how the Israeli "civil servants" treat the minorities.[64]

For one respondent who was interviewed for this study, the attack in Kfar Yasif was a clear case of anti-Christian violence which was condoned by the state. The attackers, after all, used Israeli army weapons in their attack against the Christian villagers.[65] Citing several reasons why the Christian villagers of Kfar Yasif did not seek revenge for these violent attacks on them, Shihade mentions their pragmatic awareness of the military strength of the Druze.

> The village of Kafr Yassif did not seek revenge for the damage and fatalities caused by the assailants from Julis, but sought a truce with the attacking village. People I interviewed from Kafr Yassif viewed the event as a plan by the Israeli government to stir up communal fighting and divide the Palestinian Arab community along religious lines. In addition to this political analysis for not resorting to revenge, the local Palestinian Arabs understood that Arab tradition was opposed to violence because it upsets the normal, peaceful, daily life of the community. They realised that revenge leads to a cycle of violence. People from Kafr Yassif that I interviewed also said that the residents of their village did not respond in a like manner because they were afraid to do so, knowing that Julis was an armed village and the government seemed to be backing them.[66]

[63] Interview with Michael Karayanni, 11/08/2008.
[64] Mansour (2004: 275)
[65] Interview with Fuad Farah, 15/04/2008.
[66] Shihade (2005: 35)

The next instance of Druze-Christian confrontation occurred in Rameh, a mixed Arab village of just under 8 thousand people the majority of whom are Christian (53 per cent) but which also has smaller Druze and Muslim communities (30 and 17 per cent respectively). Against the backdrop of government plans to merge the Christian-majority municipality of Rameh with two neighbouring Druze villages (Sajur and Ein al-Assad), tensions between Christian and Druze youths in the village spilled over on the 22nd of February, 2003 when an anti-tank missile was fired through the wall of the local Greek Catholic church. While several nuns were inside the church when the missile hit, no one was seriously injured.[67] Although the identity of the perpetrators was never uncovered, it is widely accepted that, given the sophistication of the weaponry used in the attack and the inability of other segments of the minority to gain access to such weapons, individuals from the Druze community were responsible.

A similar attack against Christians involving a bomb took place two years later in Abu Snan on the 18th of February 2005. Abu Snan is a mixed village close to Akko where at 19 per cent of the population Christians represent the smallest of the three communities there, while Muslims and Druze account for 55 and 22 per cent of the village population respectively. While the roots of Druze-Christian tensions in the village are understood to be connected with electoral competition over the municipality, it is the military superiority of the Druze which allowed these tensions to spill over into open conflict.

> Similarly, in the longstanding and violent electoral conflict in Abu Snan, where military weaponry has been used, the police have been at best ineffectual. Local policemen are both party to the conflict and involved in the investigations – the authorities have not removed them from investigating the case although they are accused of some of the crimes. This impunity and that of soldiers and policemen in other incidents give Palestinians the sense that the state wants Arabs – soldiers included – to fight with each other.[68]

Despite the seriousness of the attack, next to no media coverage within the Israeli English-language broadsheets of the attack in Abu Snan exists.[69] This suggests a broader level of indifference to the plight of Israel's Palestinian Christian population. It is also astounding

[67] The Christian community of Rameh, the Druze populations of Sajur and Ein al-Assad, as well as various Arab representatives, opposed the proposed merger on the basis that it would destroy the religious balance of the town, upset traditional patterns of Arab communal living, undermine Christian presence in Israel and weaken Arab local government in general. Yair Ettinger, 13/05/2003, Haaretz "Urban plan seen as racist move in Arab sector." Published in the Associated Christian Press, Bulletin

[68] Kanaaneh (2009: 59)

[69] The author was informed of the incident in an interview with Fuad Farah on 15/05/2008 who has kept extensive local (Arab) newspaper records of this and other attacks.

that in other instances where Druze assailants have used military weapons against civilians, the media establishment does not pick up on the responsibility of the Israeli authorities to ensure that military weapons are not abused or exploited in this way. Testifying both to the nature of media coverage and common occurrence of attacks involving military weapons by Druze, the Jerusalem Post reported two incidents which occurred on the same day on the 6th of February 1995. In one case, an IDF fragmentation grenade was thrown at a house in Rameh while the owner and his family were asleep inside. The house was badly damaged but nobody was hurt. In another incident that day, it was reported that a bomb exploded under a car parked outside a house in Abu Snan. Once again, nobody was hurt, but the car and surrounding houses were damaged. In both cases, the report downplayed the attacks, stressing that they were "criminally motivated" incidents and nothing more. In neither case did the report mention the religious identity of the victims, nor did it find anything noteworthy in the fact that IDF weapons had been used to attack innocent civilians in their homes.[70]

The casual nature and common recurrence of such Druze attacks was personally evidenced by the author on a visit to the mixed Arab town of Rameh in a meeting with the local Greek Orthodox priest who had spent most of his life as a teacher in the local state school. When asked how relations between the different communities have been in the village since the bomb attack (which occurred in 2003), he paused in confusion before answering "which one?" as apparently just one week prior to my arrival (in August 2008) a grenade had been thrown at a Christian house in the village.[71] This response alone clearly demonstrates the mundane and ordinary nature of such attacks. A similar pattern of non-intervention by the police, non-identification of the attacker and non-prosecution through the courts was observed, all of which increases the sense of vulnerability experienced by Christians and add to the impunity and disregard of the attackers who both consider themselves to be and are treated as though they are above the law.

Of all the violent attacks perpetrated by Druze against Christians, the incident which took place in Mughar between the 10th and 12th of February 2005, has become the most well-known with the then Minister for Internal Security, Gideon Ezra, going so far as to describe them as "the worst sectarian riots I have ever seen in the Israeli Arab community".[72] Mughar

[70] David Rudge, 07/02/1995, Jerusalem Post, "Probe of Bombing Incidents in two Galilee Arab villages."
[71] Interview with Fr. George Hanna, 20/08/2008.
[72] Conal Urquhart, 14/04/2005, The Guardian, "Christians flee homes after Druze youths riot."

is a small mixed Arab village with a population of just under 20 thousand people. Representing 20 percent of the village, Christians are, together with the Muslims who represent the same proportion of the population, a minority in the village. By contrast, the Druze constitute the overwhelming majority of the village. As such, Mughar is also the only locality in Israel with a significant Christian population to have a Druze majority.

Following rumours that Christian youths in the village had digitally manipulated and uploaded pornographic pictures of local Druze girls onto the internet, a group of around several hundred Druze men descended upon the Christian quarter of the village on Thursday night of February the 10th and went on what was described in several newspapers as a "rampage" and a "pogrom".[73] Twelve people were injured, two by bullets; the local Greek Catholic church was damaged and dozens of Christian-owned businesses, homes and cars were broken into, vandalised or set alight; and over two thousand Christian villagers fled the village in fright.[74]

Despite the fact that the rumour which sparked the riots turned out to be a hoax spread by a local Druze boy, analyses of the attack suggest that the incident in Mughar represented "nothing new" in Druze-Christian relations which have come to be dominated by Druze jealousy and resentment at the allegedly more privileged socio-economic position of Palestinian Christians in Israel. The non-performance of military service by the more educated and economically secure Palestinian Christian population compared with the lack of opportunities and the economic instability facing returning Druze soldiers who have forgone further education in order to serve the state which has nonetheless chosen to neglect them represents an essential aspect of these recurring conflicts. For one Druze respondent, the conflict in Mughar is first and foremost understood within the particular context of the disparate contributions made, and benefits received, by each community.

> They [the Druze] asked to be under all of the duties that Israel asks from its citizens. They serve in the compulsory service in the army and they are part of the Israeli community. Even though they have made all of their duties, they did not get all of their

[73] Gil Sedan, 24/02/2005, The Jewish Journal, "Druse riot against Christian neighbours." Zenit: The World Seen from Rome, 26/05/2005, "Christians in the Holy Land in Crisis, Says Report." Amram Mitzna, 16/02/2005, Haaretz, "There was a pogrom in Maghar."

[74] Conal Urquhart, 14/04/2005. David Rudge, 14/02/2005, Jerusalem Post, "Mughar leaders struggle to reach 'sulha' after riots." Kanaaneh (2009: 58) states that 152 cars and 122 buildings belonging to Christian residents were set alight by Druze rioters.

> rights. The Christians, they don't join the duties of the Israeli population but they got a lot of their rights.[75]

According to this perspective, the Druze community are not oblivious to what he describes as the opportunistic behaviour of Palestinian Christians who play both sides of the political field (the Palestinians and the Israelis) in order to secure for themselves the best position possible in society.

Given this explanation, however, it would be anticipated that Druze jealousy would also extend to Muslims who are similarly exempt from military service. While this sentiment may very well exist, it is unlikely to be acted upon. As another respondent explains, the Palestinian Christians are an easy target for the Druze precisely because they are the smallest and most politically weak community within the Palestinian Arab minority. "You see, they can't attack the Muslims. They know they can't do it. They are too strong for them."[76] But according to the previous Druze respondent, this factor alone does not explain Druze attitudes towards Palestinian Christians which, he argues, are also partially rooted in local politics and Christian electoral strategies.

> We know the background of the elections for the local council. The Christians supported the chair [mayor] of the municipality. Because of the support of the Christians they won the head of the municipality. And when [the Druze] saw that Christians do not serve in the army, they finish high-school, go to university, return back with all... the professional jobs – doctors, advocates, teachers – the [Druze] said, listen, we are going to the army, we are going to serve three years for nothing, only to be part of this country. The Christians within these three years will finish university, come and take the good jobs, have all the places of trade because they have the time and ability to be more educated... And [because] they are the minority, and the [Druze] majority feel that... they are not the same as us, they didn't serve in the army, they didn't pay nothing for the Israeli community, and they got all of their rights... This situation makes those that are less educated to be jealous of them. And when you see that he has the good life, he has a car, he has a house, he is educated, he is beautiful. That means, I work very hard, I finish the army, the trade is not in my hands in my village, and I am jealous of him. Those who are more or less educated, people come and ask them, look what's going on there, and this brings the people to be very tough in their thoughts.[77]

One Palestinian Christian respondent also ascribes a measure of responsibility to Christians themselves for their role in adding to Druze-Christian tensions in Mughar.[78] For instance, the exclusive and aloof attitudes of the church, which owns the local school and which insists upon maintaining sole jurisdictional power over all administrative decisions relating to

[75] Interview with Majalli Whbee, 06/08/2008
[76] Interview with Fuad Farah, 15/04/2008.
[77] Interview with Majalli Whbee, 06/08/2008.
[78] Interview with Jafar Farah, 21/04/2008.

education, teaching and employment within the school, disregards the demographic reality of the village and the rights of other communities to have an equal stake in the running of the school. Furthermore, it was the inability of certain segments of the Christian community to reconcile themselves to their minority status within the village and to accept the natural rights of the Druze majority to have more of an input into their own education, that motivated many Christian families to leave the village and educate their children in neighbouring villages subsequent to the riots primarily.

While this account may seem a little harsh, it does, at least, provide a broader contextual understanding of Druze-Christian tensions in Israel. Notwithstanding this, most accounts accept that it is military service itself which has had the greatest influence on the nature of Druze-Christian relations in Israel today.

> But, they do have this problem, this mental problem. They want to prove to the Israelis that they are good citizens, that they are very faithful to the army, to Israel, more than the Jews themselves even. For example, in the uprising in the First Intifada from 1987-91, it was the Druze soldiers who committed the most awful crimes against Palestinians. Jews as well, but a lot of them were by Druze. Because they are a very, very conservative community that is not educated, but they have the power and for the first time they are discriminated against. They have weapons, and they all work in the Border Police, and they are the first line against the Palestinians, and this is where all their shortcomings come to the surface. They have someone they can abuse as they have been abused. It's a very understandable thing in psychology. The victim can be the most horrible victimiser sometimes. They have weapons…[79]

The issue, therefore, returns to one of weapons. Beyond the issue of Druze resentment and jealousy, the riots in Mughar were exceptional not solely for the role played by Druze officers and the use of military weapons – which are evident in several other Druze-Christian conflicts in Israel – but because of their organised and premeditated nature.

> One witness said: "The attacks on cars and people are nothing new. But this time they were very well organised. They had petrol and tubes to pour it through doors and they had tools to break into the houses. The Druze have no fear. They are in the police and army."[80]

However, what stands out in accounts of the riots in Mughar is the fact they went unchecked by the authorities for so long. The violence commenced on Thursday night but it was only on Saturday afternoon that the Israeli police finally responded, sending in 350 officers and using

[79] Interview with Gubran Gubran, 16/04/2008.
[80] Conal Urquhart, 14/04/2005.

tear-gas to disperse the crowd which had by then reached 1,500 people.[81] For failing to intervene earlier and for allowing the Druze mob to go about their business in destroying Christian properties, the Israeli police have been singled out for particular criticism.

> Although Christians are angry at their treatment at the hands of the Druze, most of their anger is reserved for the Israeli police, who they say could have halted the violence. Witnesses said they saw police in cars watch as the mob stoned and burned buildings.[82]

For one respondent, the behaviour of the police in Mughar was indicative of deeper attitudes of state indifference and religious antipathy against Christians.

> They [the police] stood back all the time in Mughar. For three days they were battling in the city. And they put [the police] there, and they didn't move, they didn't say a word, they didn't try to prevent. And there are rumours – they're not rumours, they're facts – that some of the police, who were Druze, took part in what happened. OK, what happened, happened. What about… I don't know, I could show you pictures. How many houses were burned? How many shops were looted? I mean, why doesn't somebody go and investigate and order some arrests? Nothing! In Kfar Yasif they attacked the village, they burned 68 houses, many cars… and the police didn't interfere at all. They stayed out. They prevented people from coming in and trying to help... [I]n Rameh, they fired a rocket on a school. It's going on all the time. I mean, they start something and the police are happy about it, let's say...[83]

This is confirmed by another account which suggests that the attitude of Israeli police was not one based on political apathy alone.

> [O]ff-duty Druze policemen, along with soldiers and ex-soldiers, were suspected of participating but were not punished. The Druze police on duty were reportedly 'apathetic' during the worst peaks of the violence, which they watched but failed to stop. They reportedly ignored residents' pleas for help, and instead stood around 'watching and eating baklava'. Yet in the end there was no official sanction for their behaviour.[84]

While the inability of the Israeli police to deal swiftly and fairly in ending the conflict increases the sense of vulnerability experienced by Palestinian Christian citizens of Israel, it was the indifference of the political establishment to pursue justice on their behalf which has compounded it. Despite claims by the authorities to the contrary, their inability or disinclination to follow standard criminal procedure against the culprits has undermined their status as protector in the eyes of many Christians.

> The local police commissioner, Dan Ronen, told the Knesset committee on interior affairs that it was not the job of the police to become involved in inter-communal violence. "Police have no say in the matter. Don't expect the police to solve all

[81] David Rudge, 13/02/2005, Jerusalem Post, "Galilee Druse, Christians brawl over 'naked web photos' rumor."
[82] Conal Urquhart, 14/04/2005.
[83] Interview with Fuad Farah, 15/04/2008.
[84] Kanaaneh (2009: 58)

> communal internal conflicts. This is the responsibility of the heads of the community," he said.[85]

Despite the rather direct way with which the northern Police Commissioner expressed himself, the lack of police intervention in Druze-Christian conflicts has nonetheless been interpreted differently by others. For some, the police response follows a more general "hands off" policy of the state in dealing with sensitive intra-communal issues within the Palestinian Arab minority. Given that the state is generally suspected and mistrusted by the minority, non-intervention is presented as being the most preferable and least exacerbating position that it can take.

> So, both accused Israel [of interfering]. It's Israel that's causing the rift, causing the rift between the two, and so on, and therefore the Israeli police say whatever we do will be damned and therefore let them settle their problems, unless it gets into open conflict or criminal acts and so on and the authorities have no choice but to intervene. But usually they prefer not to intervene as far as possible.[86]

Clearly, however, "open conflict" and "criminal acts" in Mughar did not speed up the police response. Another respondent suggests that the lack of police intervention in Druze-Christian conflict is not necessarily motivated by ideological concerns only. For him, a downturn in the police's financial resources and manpower limits their ability to act swiftly and efficiently in instances of intra-communal conflict. In addition, he believes that regional police forces lack the necessary authority from above to deal with these cases. To support this, he recalled one occasion where he had been advised by a Jewish policeman that the central government was reticent to get involved in unnecessary high-profile cases due to the high volume of political corruption charges it was facing and its desire to avoid becoming embroiled in any situation which would invite further bad publicity.[87]

Regardless of what factors underpin this policy of non-intervention by the police in intra-communal conflict, their non-intervention is universally acknowledged. What is less acknowledged is the impact of this policy on the local Palestinian Christian population. Their confidence in the ability or desire of the authorities to protect them when required was crushed. Equally caustic was the rejection by the authorities of numerous calls to open a formal public inquiry to investigate the conflict in Mughar. More damning still was the decision taken several months later by the government to close criminal cases against four

[85] Conal Urquhart, 14/04/2005.
[86] Interview with Raphael Israeli, 06/07/2008.
[87] Interview with Fr. George Hanna, 20/08/2008.

Druze police officers who were identified as taking part in the attacks.[88] To which is added the lengthy struggle the local Christian community subsequently had with the authorities in their attempt to secure financial compensation for damages done to their properties and livelihoods. Given the extensive damages done to property in Mughar, it was estimated that the cost for repairs would require tens of millions of shekels. A Haifa-based Jewish law firm represented over 100 individual Christian claimants from the village seeking financial restitution from the government. Initially, the government refused to accept that it was in any way obligated to cover these costs. However, their legal representation argued the opposite.

> These people were abandoned to their fate. If the police, who were aware of the tensions in the village, had acted immediately and taken the appropriate measures, the violence would have been prevented. (...) The state failed to protect them and, as such, has to take responsibility.[89]

Eventually, the government agreed to pay out NIS 15 million to compensate for damages and to allow reconstruction of the village to begin.[90] However, local press coverage of the events in Mughar suggests not only that the final compensation package awarded by the government was cut to between 9 and 10 million NIS (approximately USD 2 million), but that the pay-out was delayed for several months, causing even further economic suffering to the already frozen local economy of the village.[91]

All of these factors explain why military service has become an attractive option for certain quarters within the Palestinian Christian population. Military service provides weapons which in turn equips families with the means through which to defend themselves in instances of intra-communal conflict. Strikingly, the military authorities have shown that they are well aware of this. As one respondent noted, the authorities send military representatives, both Arab and Jewish, to visit village schools in these small mixed villages in order to advertise and market military service among the local youth. An important part of their recruitment strategy is the way in which they play off and accentuate the patriarchal nature of Palestinian Christian identity.

> And also they play on macho stuff, like, if you go to the army you're a man because you have a gun. In some villages, the motive is also because of tensions. For example, in one of the villages a part are Druze, and most of them go to the army so they have guns

[88] 07/10/2005, The Jewish Daily Forward, "Arabs Protest as Probe of Deaths is Dropped."
[89] David Rudge, 25/02/2005, Jerusalem Post, "Government pressed to compensate Christian families in Mughar."
[90] Interview with Majalli Whbee, 06/08/2008.
[91] See: The US Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report 2006 for Israel and the Occupied Territories, the Report on Human Rights Practices for 2005 Israel.

> in their houses. Sometimes there are fights, so the Druze have guns and you don't ask questions. So they come and tell you to go to the army and you'll have a gun and you'll be more of a man. They play on different levels. It's not only sectarian thing. It's also about macho stuff.[92]

Other respondents have pointed to the tendency of Palestinian Christians to volunteer for military service based on feelings of threat and vulnerability and an awareness that they must look to themselves, and not the state, for protection.

> We want to go and serve in the military and basically in the police only to take a weapon to feel safe. This is the only answer of why Christians in these specific areas they are ready to go and serve in the army or the police or the civil service.[93]

This factor is understood to influence the manner in which military service is "pitched" or marketed to Palestinian Christians by recruiters. Moreover, for this respondent, the practical or economic incentives of military service which are typically cited as motivating Palestinian Arab recruitment are considered to have less impact, or influence, on the decision-making process of Palestinian Christian who are deemed relatively more economically advantaged and secure than their Muslim and Druze neighbours. This desire to simply have a weapon for the purposes of self-defence is widely understood to be a dominant factor motivating Palestinian Christians to volunteer for military service.

> Among the villages themselves. And it happened in the past, it's happening now, it happened before, especially in the '80s. Druze and Bedouins who go to the army have their weapons, and in every communal village, family struggle, they use these weapons against Christians when the struggle is with the Christians. So, the Christians in the '80s found themselves without any protection at all. Many of them, a big number, from the villages in the north, go to the army just to get a weapon. So, it's not connected to their political point of view. They just want to go to have a weapon and keep it in case. It especially happens in Mughar, in Kfur Yasif, in Abu Snan, in the villages where around you, you have Druze villages.[94]

Another respondent suggested that the two main areas through which the government fulfils its policy of encouraging Palestinian Christians to volunteer to national service are the media and the education system.

> I think what they are trying to do is two things: one is in the public media, its attitude that if you are Christian, you are different, and the way that things are dealt with in the media. But more importantly I think is their investment in the education system. I think when you have church-based schools, the state is interested more in all the issues of military service, like encouraging children to do national service as a replacement to

[92] Interview with Nadim Nashef, 02/04/2008.
[93] Interview with Johnny Mansour, 14/04/2008.
[94] Interview with Gubran Gubran, 16/04/2008.

> military service, trying to focus on the religious identity of the group as separate to the national identity. But this is mainly through the education system. (...)
>
> And [in the schools] you will see more programmes concerning identity, more programmes, more lectures putting the children in direct contact with political propaganda basically which is making them closer to the state, in the sense that you are Christians and not Muslims... Through funding, through lectures, through visits, through tours, like taking children to meet with Jewish children, like coexistence programmes, taking children on Independence Day to meet with army people, bringing army and military people to lecture about the army to the schools. It's the same programme, more or less, that was used against the Druze. (...)
>
> And also the way it's presented in the media. You'll see from time to time in the media, like in the Arab media, somebody writes about the fact that you have more and more Christians participating in the police service, or in the armed service. And sometimes it's not factual, just propaganda to send a message also to the Muslim community that the Christians are integrating. Like to try to separate the two communities from each other.[95]

This tendency of military recruiters to target mixed villages, particularly for Christian volunteers, is confirmed by the literature.[96] Despite that their recruitment is motivated by existential concerns brought about, in no small way, by the indifference and neglect of the Israeli authorities, Christian recruits are welcomed by the military authorities who use them as a political symbol of the possibility for Arab integration into Israeli society; the more amenable nature of Palestinian Christians and the fragmented nature of Palestinian Arab identity.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter investigates four instances of intra-communal violence in Israel involving Palestinian Christians and Druze and finds that the mandatory conscription of Druze in the IDF has not only accentuated Druze-Christian tensions, but directly enabled violent confrontations between both groups. This it has done in two main ways. On the one hand, military service equips the Druze with military arms which are unavailable to other segments of the non-serving minority, thus determining that Druze-Christian conflicts remain largely one-sided and asymmetrical in nature. On the other hand, the concentration of Druze in the police and military forces has compromised the ability of these important state institutions to intervene in a fair and timely manner, thus prolonging the duration of attacks and maximising the amount of damage inflicted on Christian lives and properties.

[95] Interview with Mohammad Zeidane, 16/04/2008.
[96] Peled (1998: 166)

What can this say about the nature of Israeli state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel? Given the reluctance of the authorities to ensure that weapons provided by them which are designed to protect and defend the state and its citizens from external threats are not abused and exploited by certain Druze wishing to act out their frustrations or act upon their petty grievances against Christians; given their track-record of protecting those Druze individuals and officers involved in violent attacks against Christians from standard criminal procedure or even reprimand; given their rejection of various calls for inquiries into the substandard role of the police in these conflicts; and given their reticence to provide adequate or timely financial compensation to those Christian individuals and families whose properties and livelihoods have been destroyed by individuals using military weapons, it seems plausible to argue that, by providing the Druze with a blank cheque to behave as they wish, the state is guilty of, at best, neglecting and, at worst, targeting, the interests and needs of Palestinian Christians in Israel. In this, the state's indifference is facilitated by the indifference of international players whose attention is focused almost exclusively on the key religious and geo-political cities of Nazareth and Jerusalem. Strategically speaking, the state is also blind to small Christian communities which, compared to the Druze, make no significant contribution to the national priorities of the state and, compared to the Muslims, pose little threat to the state's national security.

These instances of intra-communal violence demonstrate not only an important level of state indifference to Palestinian Christians in Israel but the growing sense of vulnerability and existential threat experienced by Palestinian Christians. It is, ironically, the failure of the state to provide Palestinian Christians with adequate protection as equal citizens under the law which has contributed, in part, voluntary Palestinian Christian conscription within the army. While other factors and motivations also exist, the necessity of acquiring a gun for the purposes of self-defence remains one of the most important explanations behind the conscription of Palestinian Christian villagers to the IDF. Nonetheless, the relatively small number of conscripts each year suggests that this phenomenon, while it exists, is not representative of the Palestinian Christian community as a whole. However, given the temporal significance of Druze attacks on Christians, with the majority occurring within the last decade, it should be anticipated that, if these attacks continue unabated, the number of Palestinian Christian voluntary conscripts to the army will increase.

7.5 Postscript: The Case of Shfar'amr

Another incident of Druze-Christian conflict occurred in Shfar'amr after the fieldwork for this study was conducted. It is mentioned here as it represents an interesting counterpoint to the themes and patterns observed in the case of the four village conflicts. While previous incidents of Druze-Christian conflict have all occurred in villages, this is the first Druze-Christian conflict to have occurred in a city. With almost 35 thousand people, Shfar'amr is the only Arab city in Israel in which a significant Palestinian Christian population (28 per cent) live alongside Druze (15 per cent). As one of only a handful of Arab cities in Israel, the city represents both a demographic and political cause for concern for the authorities, as was demonstrated in 2005 when a Jewish settler wearing an IDF uniform climbed aboard a bus travelling from Haifa to Shfar'amr and opened fire on its Arab passengers with an M-16 rifle, killing 4 (2 Muslims and 2 Christians) and injuring 10 others. When individuals at the scene attacked and killed the terrorist, the Israeli media turned the attack on its head describing it as a "lynching" by an Arab "mob". The authorities also turned their back on their own policy of overlooking the deaths of Palestinian terrorists by Jewish "mobs" and aggressively pursued several local Palestinians from Shfar'amr through the courts for attempted murder.[97]

Five years later, on Sunday, the 6th of June 2009, the state finally indicted 12 Palestinians from Shfar'amr on charges of attempted murder and aggravated assault against an Israeli police officer. In response, the city declared its intention to hold a one-day general strike to protest the state's "double standards" on Tuesday the 9th of June.[98] It is within the context of this united political front that, quite out of the blue, violence broke out between Druze and Christians exactly one week later on Tuesday the 16th of June, 2009. The violence was triggered by rumours that a digitally manipulated video clip showing the image of deceased Druze spiritual leader, Amin Tarif, alongside a pig had been uploaded to YouTube.[99] Unlike a similar case in Mughar, this rumour turned out to be true.[100] The identity of the individual or individuals who uploaded it, however, is not known. Houses and shops, mainly in the Christian part of town, were damaged or torched. Representing another departure from previous conflicts, police, Border Police and anti-riot squads were quickly

[97] Dan Izenberg, 07/06/2009, The Jerusalem Post, "12 charged in Shfaram shooter lynching."
[98] Jack Khoury, 08/06/2009, Haaretz, "Shfaram calls strike after 12 charged with lynching Jewish terrorist."
[99] Aniya Raved, 17/06/2009, YNet, "Clashes break out in Shfaram between Christians, Druze."
[100] Joseph Nasr, 18/06/09, Reuters, "Video clip raises Christian-Druze tension in Israel."

deployed and did not demonstrate any bias in favour of the Druze.[101] Roadblocks were established, but in their attempt to disperse the crowds, the police themselves came under attack from rocks thrown by both Druze and Christians. Live ammunition was also used against the police.[102] The issue of where these weapons could have originated from was dealt with in local press in the same evasive manner as before.

> "It's clear they have many guns, but we don't know from where. Some could be legally owned. Last night, they were turned against us," Galilee Spokesman Eran Shaked told *The Jerusalem Post* on Wednesday.[103]

However, for others, the whole incident was suspect. The fact that this conflict had emerged as the city was experiencing an unprecedented level of political unity was too much of a coincidence for one local Druze Hadash member, who described his disbelief to a Haaretz reporters as follows:

> "Some hooligans on both sides caused this whole commotion. I'm convinced that people from outside caused the conflagration in town. Only last week the people here were united in their response to the [state's] decision to indict 12 townspeople for being involved in killing the terrorist Natan Zada," he said.[104]

As a result, the extent to which the Druze-Christian riots which recently took place in Shfar'amr were a continuation of, or a break with, previous village conflicts is unclear. While certain factors, such as the one-sided use of military weapons, echoes previous incidents, others are inconsistent with them, such as the quick and even-handed response of the police which did not take the side of the Druze rioters in this case. While this may be indicative of changing attitudes to intra-communal conflict in Israel, it is more likely that, compared with the small and politically irrelevant villages, the political significance of Shfar'amr as an Arab city dictated a firm and swift response. While there are questions as to whether governmental quarters were somehow involved in uploading the video-clip which triggered the violence which set Druze against Christian once again, it is unlikely that they will ever be answered. Only future cases of Druze-Christians conflict in Israel, if they are found to persist, will provide the answers.

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[101] Jack Khoury, 18/06/2009, Haaretz, "Israeli Arab town erupts in Christian-Druze riots."
[102] Yaakov Lappin, 17/06/2009, Jerusalem Post, "Police put Shfaram under lockdown after rioters open fire on officers."
[103] Yaakov Lappin, 17/06/2009
[104] Jack Khoury, 18/06/2009

Conclusion

This thesis has examined state attitudes towards the Palestinian Christian population in Israel and finds that indifference and neglect represent the best description not only of those attitudes but of the particular policy approach of the state towards this segment of the Palestinian Arab minority. The role of electoral politics as well as of the police and even the security forces in responding to and dealing with several instances of intra-communal conflict involving Palestinian Christians in Israel have been analysed in order to uncover the contemporary nature of those attitudes. The findings presented in this thesis suggest that state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel are better characterised by indifference and neglect than by any other single factor. The sympathies and allegiances of the authorities during the conflict in Nazareth, for example, consistently overlooked and disregarded the local Palestinian Christian population. While this study does not, in any way, suggest that the authorities' support of local Islamist demands was indicative of an ideological or political rapprochement between the state and its Muslim population it does clearly highlight the political irrelevance and negligibility of the small, electorally weak Palestinian Christian population. Intra-communal conflicts in a number of mixed Arab villages, by contrast, introduce a further dimension of state indifference that owes its basis to the non-performance of military service by Palestinian Christians. Hailed as the ultimate test of Arab loyalty in Israeli society, the non-performance of military service by the vast majority of Palestinian Christians in Israel has left this community not only outside the normative consensus upon which Israeli society is based, but open to attack from their serving Druze neighbours who resent their relatively better socio-economic standing and wish to vent their anger and frustration at their continued discrimination upon what is, essentially, an easy target. Isolated and ignored by legal due process, the vulnerability of these Palestinian Christian communities has increased on a par with the confidence and bravado of Druze attacks, contributing to the paradoxical phenomenon of Palestinian Christian voluntary conscription in the Israeli military. The lure and necessity of acquiring a gun not only provides an explanation for the relative growth of Palestinian Christian recruits, but unequivocally demonstrates the deeper significance of state indifference to the material and existential dilemmas of Palestinian Christians in Israel.

This thesis has important implications for our understanding both of the nature of the state and of state-minority relations in Israel. On the one hand, it provides strong evidence dispelling the notion of preferential state attitudes or policies towards Palestinian Christians and confirming the location of Palestinian Christians within Israel's system of control of its Palestinian Arab minority as a whole. However, this thesis also suggests that while Palestinian Christians are submerged within the state's pervasive system of control, they are by themselves not the primary object of it. This is because the prism through which the Palestinian Arab minority continues to be viewed by the state in Israel is not merely one that centralises the notion of a demographic and territorial "Arab problem" that incorporates Muslim, Christian and Druze communities on an equal basis, but one that specifically associates the greatest level of threat to Jewish national interests and priorities with the majority of that minority, which happens to be Muslim. As such, Israel's system of control of its Palestinian Arab minority is primarily directed towards the control of its Muslim population. This, however, has not led to a more affirmative or preferential treatment of its Palestinian Christian population. The opposite, in fact, is true. While their demographic and territorial weakness have minimised the potential threat associated with this community, their problematic role within Palestinian national politics has soured the state's attitudes towards them. This is compounded by other factors, such as the state's inability to co-opt the fragmented communal leadership of the various Christian communities and its reticence to antagonise international opinion in the traditional power centres of the Christian "West" against them. While both of these factors act as important centrifugal forces upon state policy, an important bi-product of the relatively greater sense of security experienced by local Palestinian Christians as a result of their international links and differentiated communal structure has been a relatively higher level of official aloofness if not outright resentment at the relative autonomy of Palestinian Christians vis-à-vis other segments of the minority. This negative association is, no doubt, complicated by Jewish memories of suffering and persecution at the hands of European Christians. However, the parallel growth of anti-Christian religious sentiment which has accompanied the rise to power of Jewish religious and ultra-orthodox parties in Israel has also exacerbated these negative associations and attitudes.

Although this thesis subscribes and adheres to a general theoretical framework of control with regard to the wider context of minority policy within an ethnocratic state, this thesis' findings challenge a number of the traditional assumptions concerning theories of

systemic control. State attitudes of indifference and neglect are not easily reconciled within a traditional theoretical framework of control which is generally formulated on the basis of active, conscientious and direct strategies of control and intervention. While the various intra-communal conflicts analysed in this study demonstrate the continued salience and relevance of one of Lustick's "techniques of control" – namely, the segmentation of the Palestinian Arab minority based on, in this case, the isolation and fragmentation of various religiously-defined segments of the minority from each other – the application of the two other main strategies of state control which were outlined by Lustick – co-optation and dependence – is more problematic with regard to contemporary analyses of the state's relationship with its Palestinian Christian population. The internal differentiation of the Palestinian Christian communal structure, together with the continued relevance of external links, have both reduced the practical abilities of the state to co-opt and control Palestinian Christians in Israel, and while it can be argued that the significance of national service for vulnerable and isolated Christian communities has increased the overall dependence of Palestinian Christians upon the state, the statistical insignificance of the overall number of Palestinian Arab recruits, whether Muslim or Christian, further undermines the notion of Christian dependency upon the state.

This thesis has, therefore, uncovered two main areas of weakness of traditional theories of control which must be addressed and challenged. The first concerns an overly restrictive and narrow understanding of both the forms and mechanisms of control in an ethnocracy as outlined above. Methods of control which are passive as well as active, indirect as well as direct, conscious as well as unconscious, non-interventionist as well as interventionist, all require further and more balanced examination and analysis. As this study's findings on state attitudes of indifference and neglect towards Palestinian Christians in Israel show, it is essential that our assumptions concerning the nature and mechanisms of control in an ethnocratic state be constantly re-addressed if our analyses are to stay abreast of parallel paradigmatic shifts within the areas of Israeli national ideology, consensus and, by extension also, policy. Given the systemic and fluid nature of control, it is vital that control theories demonstrate a similar degree of flexibility. Similarly, this argument hints at a further weakness of traditional control theories, which is an over-reliance on the concept of control itself. Is control always the only option open to ethnocratic states in their dealings with minorities? Given Yiftachel's description of an ethnocracy as an essentially non-democratic state, the range of possible policy options, as listed by Smooha, need to be periodically re-

considered and re-evaluated with regard to the Israeli case as well. In fact, an investigation of the different possible forms of control open to an ethnocratic state in its dealings with its minority is as important today as the question of whether control need always be the primary objective or intention of state policy in the first place. Given the once marginal but now increasingly popular rhetoric of "transfer" and "population exchange" of Palestinian Arabs from Israel to the occupied territories of the West Bank, the assumption that control remains the only policy framework open to the Israeli state in its dealings with its Palestinian Arab citizens is no longer entirely credible or convincing. While control theorists have made some of the most valuable contributions to our understanding of the nature of the state, state-minority relations and the state's minority policy, it is increasingly in danger of becoming stuck within its own terminological trappings. Given the continued salience and legitimacy of the definition of the state as a Jewish ethnocracy, it would perhaps be more useful and liberating to refer to the state's minority policy not within the exclusive boundaries of control but simply as "ethnocratic policy" which incorporates the pervasive system of control but also provides room for other parallel policy developments which may evolve within Israel over time.

Although this was not this thesis' stated aim, this study's assessment of the impact of state indifference towards Palestinian Christians in Israel has the potential not only to significantly advance the theoretical literature on control itself but, more importantly, to challenge conceptions of state-minority relations in Israel in general. As a result, this thesis has opened up several new areas of future research. This thesis has focused on two main sources of intra-communal conflict in Israel involving Palestinian Christians which the author feels best demonstrates current state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel: electoral politics and national service. The decision to focus on these areas was motivated by two main considerations. Firstly, they were two of the most commonly cited areas of concern which were highlighted by the respondents themselves and which suggest an important contemporary relevance which should not be overlooked. Secondly, these areas offered the opportunity to observe state attitudes towards local Palestinian Christians in areas which are removed, to a large extent, from the typical priorities of the churches and international opinion, thus facilitating fresh insights into what the unaffected nature of state attitudes towards local Palestinian Christians could be. The findings of this thesis, however, suggest that the decision to distinguish between what are essentially secular and religious areas may not have been entirely necessary. The continued political deadlock between the Vatican and

the State of Israel with regards to the implementation of the Fundamental Agreement of 1993 suggests not only a degradation of the political power of this important Christian institution but an increasingly independent and confident state which is less and less concerned with international opinion. What can the impact of this changing relationship be said to have on local Palestinian Christians who have traditionally been described as benefitting from the protection of such external powers? Could indifference also come to represent the state's attitudes towards the once politically powerful Christian churches? As such, future research could be directed towards an investigation of Israel-Vatican relations which may shed important new light from an additional angle on what the nature of Israeli state attitudes towards its local Palestinian Christian population can be. For similar reasons, the findings of this thesis could be strengthened by a parallel investigation of state attitudes towards the Christian church school system in Israel. Given the political salience of education in Israel, the central role of relatively autonomous Christian religious institutions in providing Palestinian Arab youth with a competitive and alternative education to that which is provided by state-run public schools would have been an interesting avenue of research which could have either challenged or supported this thesis' assumption that indifference and neglect constitute the primary state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel.

The findings of this thesis also suggest that a more in-depth analysis of current electoral politics would have potentially rewarding consequences for any investigation of state-minority relations in Israel. With the abandonment of the policy of separate direct elections for the position of Prime Minister in 2001, the question of how relevant the "Arab vote" and, particularly, the numerically superior Muslim contingent of it, is in Israel today has important consequences not only for the manner in which the state and mainstream Jewish parties engage with the Palestinian Arab minority but for the relative electoral power or strength of the various religious segments of that minority. Similarly, future research would be rewarded by a more in-depth empirical analysis of regional voting patterns within the Palestinian Arab minority and, particularly, within areas and localities which have significant Palestinian Christian populations, the findings of which have the potential to either support or contradict assumptions regarding the political outlook and orientations of Palestinian Christians in Israel.

In sum, this thesis' examination of state attitudes towards Palestinian Christians in Israel not only provides a basis upon which the complicated relationship between the state and its Palestinian Christian population can be understood, but provides a novel approach

through which broader assumptions concerning the nature of the state, state-minority relations and state policy as a whole can be tested and analysed. Typically described in exceptional terms as a modern, progressive and secular segment of the Palestinian Arab minority that is closer to mainstream Jewish society, an analysis of state-minority relations in Israel using Palestinian Christians as a test-case remains an excellent litmus test of those claims and a useful sign-posting system for the future.

Appendix: List of Interviews

	Name	Date	Position
Academics			
1.	Dr. Amalia Sa'ar	03-04-08	Lecturer in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Haifa University
2.	Dr. As'ad Ghanem	03-04-08	Lecturer in the School of Political Sciences, Haifa University
3.	Dr. Dan Rabinowitz	06-04-08	Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Tel-Aviv University
4.	Prof. Gabriel Ben-Dor	07-04-08	Head of the School of Political Sciences, Haifa University
5.	Prof. Majid al-Hajj	08-04-08	Vice President, Dean of Research and Director for the Centre for Multiculturalism & Educational Research, Haifa University
6.	Prof. Sammy Smooha	13-04-08	Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Haifa University
7.	Fuad Farah	15-04-08	Retired Academic & Chairman of the Greek Orthodox National Council in Israel
8.	Prof. Raphael Israeli	06-07-08	Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern & Chinese History, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
9.	Prof. Michael Karayanni	11-08-08	Lecturer in the Faculty of Law & Director of the Sacher Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Church Representatives			
10.	Nabil Zumot	12-03-08	Anglican Ecclesiastical Court Registrar of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East
11.	William Shomali	18-03-08	Rector of the Latin Seminary of Beit Jala & former Procurator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem
12.	Joseph Saghbini	19-03-08	Greek Catholic Patriarchal Vicar of Jerusalem
13.	Theofilos III	28-03-08	Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and the Galilee, Israel
14.	Pierbattista Pizzaballa	28-03-08	Franciscan Custos of the Holy Land
15.	Paul Sayyah	09-04-08	Maronite Archbishop of Haifa and the Holy Land
16.	Elias Chacour	21-04-08	Greek Catholic Archbishop of the Galilee
17.	Fr. Nadim Shakour	19-08-08	Greek Catholic Parish Priest of Mailiya
18.	Fr. George Hanna	20-08-08	Greek Orthodox Parish Priest of Rameh
Government & Political Figures			
19.	Cesar Marjieh	19-03-08	Director of the Department of Christian Affairs, Ministry of the Interior
20.	Hanna Sweid	15-04-08	MK in the 17th and 18th Knessets for DFPE/*Hadash* & Director of the Arab Centre for Alternative Planning (ACAP), Eilaboun

21.	Shawqi Khatib	17-04-08	Former Mayor of Yaffa an-Nasariyya & Head of the National Committee for Arab Local Councils & Arab High Follow-UP Committee
22.	Ramiz Jeraisi	17-04-08	Mayor of Nazareth & Member of DFPE/*Hadash*
23.	Nadia Hilou	20-07-08	MK in the 17th Knesset for the Labour Party
24.	Yossi Hershler	24-07-08	Legal Consultant to the Non-Jewish Committee in the Holy Land, within the Ministry of the Interior
25.	Majalli Whbee	06-08-08	MK in the 16th, 17th and 18th Knessets for the Kadima Party & Former Deputy Minister in the PM's Office (16th Knesset); in the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (16th Knesset) and in the Foreign Ministry (17th Knesset)
26.	Henia Markovic	18-08-08	Senior Director of the Civil Service Commission in the PM's Office
27.	Dr. Reuven Gal	18-08-08	Head of the Authority for National Civic Service in the PM's Office
NGO Representatives			
28.	Daniel Rossing	17-03-08	Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations & Former Director of the Department for Christian Affairs (then within the Ministry of Religions)
29.	Nadim Nashef	02-04-08	Director of Baladna: The Association for Arab Youth, Haifa
30.	Einas Odeh-Hajj	08-04-08	Assistant Director of Mada al-Carmel: The Arab Centre for Applied Social Research, Haifa
31.	Wadi Abu-Nasser	11-04-08	Director of the International Centre for Consultations
32.	Johnny Mansour	14-04-08	Director of the Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies & Dean of the Mar Elias Educational Institutions
33.	Gubran Gubran	16-04-08	Co-Director for Policy, in the Equality Department of Sikkuy: The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, Haifa
34.	Mohammed Zeidane	16-04-08	Director of HRA: The Arab Association for Human Rights, Nazareth
35.	Suhad Bishara	18-04-08	Advocate in Adalah: The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Shfar'amr (now in Haifa)
36.	Jafar Farah	21-04-08	Director of Mossawa: The Advocacy Centre for Arab Citizens of Israel, Haifa

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