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“The Arab Demographic Time Bomb“

A Discourse Analysis on Israel's Fear of Losing its Identity as a Jewish
State

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of the Israeli discourse on the "danger" of a growing Arab minority within the population of Israel. With a share of more than twenty percent of Israel's population the Arab citizens of Israel constitute the state's largest minority. Since Israel is defined a 'Jewish State', this minority does not fall within the general understanding of Israeli national identity. Several Israeli politicians, including Prime Minister Netanyahu, view in Arab citizens as a danger and refer to these as a "demographic time bomb". Through the method of discourse analysis this research work analyzes statements on this particular perceived danger.

Theories of discourse and discourse analysis, as well as on nation and identity form the framework of this thesis. Furthermore, it examines the construction of a Israeli national identity. The construction of national identity is connected with the discursive construction of the Arab citizen's image. The central interest of the research is on this image produced in the discourse. Moreover, the social and institutional contexts of this discourse are highlighted, particularly in relation to the discourse on security.

The image of Arabs produced in the analyzed stream of discourse is very negatively connotated and represents the Arab citizens of Israel as an internal threat to the security and the Jewish identity of the state. They are perceived as strangers to the state and its national identity, more loyal to the Palestinians than to the state of Israel, and thus a threat.

The thesis comes to the conclusion that the actual fear is of a so-called "bi-national state". Elites eagerly try to avoid such a state, or moreover deny its existence in order to preserve hegemonial dominance.

Key words: Israel, national identity, Arab citizens of Israel, demography, demographic threat, demographic time bomb, security, discourse, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis.

Abstract (German)

Diese Diplomarbeit ist eine Analyse des israelischen Diskurses über die „Gefahr“ einer wachsenden arabischen Minderheit innerhalb der israelischen Bevölkerung. Mit einem Bevölkerungsanteil von mehr als zwanzig Prozent bilden die arabischen StaatsbürgerInnen Israels größte Minderheit. Da sich Israel aber als jüdischer Staat definiert, fällt diese Minderheit nicht in das allgemeine Verständnis einer israelischen Nation. Teile der israelischen Politik, unter anderem Premierminister Netanjahu, sehen in den arabischen StaatsbürgerInnen eine Gefahr und bezeichnen diese als „demografische Zeitbombe“. Mittels der Methode der Diskursanalyse werden in dieser Arbeit Aussagen über diese empfundene Gefahr analysiert.

Theorien zu Diskurs und Diskursanalyse, sowie Nation und Identität bilden das Grundgerüst dieser Arbeit. Des weiteren wird die Konstruktion der israelischen nationalen Identität beleuchtet. In Zusammenhang mit der Konstruktion von nationaler Identität steht die diskursive Konstruktion einer Sicht auf die arabischen StaatsbürgerInnen Israels. Das Zentrale Forschungsinteresse befasst sich mit damit, welches Bild von den arabischen StaatsbürgerInnen dieser Diskurs erzeugt. Über dies werden die sozialen und institutionellen Zusammenhänge dieses Diskurses hervorgehoben, insbesondere in Bezug auf den Sicherheitsdiskurs.

Das im analysierten Diskursstrang erzeugte Bild der AraberInnen ist äußerst negativ konnotiert und stellt die arabischen BürgerInnen Israels als interne Gefahr für die Sicherheit und die jüdische Identität des Staates dar. Darüber hinaus werden diese als dem israelischen Staat und der israelischen Nation fremd bezeichnet. Ihnen wird mehr Loyalität mit den PalästinenserInnen zugeschrieben, als dem Staat Israel gegenüber. Somit gelten sie als Gefahr. Fazit dieser Diplomarbeit ist, dass die eigentliche Angst in diesem Diskurs vor einem sogenannten „binationalen“ Staat besteht. Politische Eliten sind bestrebt, diesen zu vermeiden bzw. negieren die Existenz eines solchen, um die hegemoniale Vormachtstellung zu bewahren.

Schlagwörter: Israel, nationale Identität, arabische StaatsbürgerInnen Israels, Demographie, demographische Gefahr, demographische Zeitbombe, Sicherheit, Diskurs, Diskursanalyse, kritische Diskursanalyse.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

1.1 Epistemological Interest and Relevance

Israeli society has been a central part of my personal and scholar interest for years.¹ I have been concerned with Israeli identity and the ways it has been produced. In order to understand the social structure of Israeli society, it is crucial to take a look at the construction of identities. Being influenced by Benedict Anderson's theory of nations as imagined communities, I have put my focus of research on the discursive construction of national identity. My interest came to the identification of 'what is Israeliness?', 'what attributions are implied on Israeli?' and 'what defines Israeli identity?'. Engaging myself in the study of Israeli national identity, my attention has come to its frictions. When defining identity, a featured non-identity is defined at the same time, or in other words a distinction between 'what is Israeli?' and 'what is *not* Israeli?' is made. The category outside of the constructed national identity includes multiple parts of the country's inhabitants, while the most significant one is *Arab*. According to the self-definition of Israel as a 'Jewish and democratic state' the category 'Arab' does not fit into this concept. 'Arab' is not 'Jewish' and therefore a counterpart.

The discourse on national identity implies a discourse on its decline. Arab citizens compose a fifth of the state's population and form the largest non-Jewish minority. Ever since the very beginning of the Zionist movement the discourse on demography was central. The discourse has included ideas of 'demographic problems'. Besides the fear of high birthrates of the Haredim (Jewish ultra-orthodox), the main concern in the discourse on demography are Israel's Arab citizens. For many, the Arab minority poses a major challenge to Israel's Jewish identity, or moreover a danger to Israel's very existence. This thesis emphasizes on this particular stream of discourse.

To understand the emergence of the debate on a demographic threat I chose to carry out a discourse analysis. Discourse Analysis, and especially Critical Discourse Analysis, is a tool

¹ Besides the branch of International Development Studies, for years I have set my focus on studies of Antisemitism and Israeli politics and society.

for scrutinizing discursive practices. It examines the connection between language and power. It connects statements with social and institutional structure. It explores why statements repeatedly occur at a specific time and how they modify with changing structures.

The Israeli discourse on demography is very vivid and in the center of the country's public. At this point of time, as peace talks between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority are in progress, the discourse is receiving fresh wind. In the light of these negotiations demography issues are a key subject, probably now more than ever.

The aim of this thesis is not to give an overview on the broader discourse but to focus on one particular stream in this discourse. The stream examined is mainly right-wing and far-right-wing argumentation on the topic. I selectively pick what I consider right-wing statements on Israeli demography and analyze them. Despite some demographers cited, my analysis is not on the scholar discourse but on the political sphere. The resource for this is mainly the English edition of the Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz. The thesis highlights the herein cited politicians' emphasis on an Arab demographic threat and filters out the image of Israel's Arab citizens created in this stream of discourse.

1.2 Problem Formulation and Sub Questions

My focus in this discourse rests on the view on Arab citizens as an internal threat to security and the state's national identity. The main objective is to filter out the images produced.

The central question is:

“What images of the Arab citizens of Israel is created in this particular stream of the discourse on demography?”

To answer this question it is crucial to keep an eye on the construction of national identity and ask “How is Israel's national identity (discursively) constructed?” and “How is Israel's Arab population considered a danger to this identity?”. Approaching to these questions I analyze the discourse.

2.3 Structure

The major role in this thesis plays the analysis of the discourse. To understand the discourse it is necessary to take a look on theory and social and institutional structures.

The first two chapters are on theory and methodology. In chapter one I display *discourse theory*, mainly the approach of Michel Foucault, and *discourse analysis*. It is an overview on discursive practices and the aims of discourse analysis, as well as the related concepts of *power*, *dominance*, and *hegemony*. In this chapter I also introduce the sources I use for my analysis.

Chapter two is on theories of identity and nation. Here I refer to Anderson's theory of the nation as an '*imagined community*', as well as Stuart Hall's concepts of 'representation of the *other*' and David Campbell's concept of discourse on *national security*.

In Chapter four my focus is on Israeli national identity and the ways it has been (discursively) constructed. For a better understanding of the discourse on demography and national identity it is necessary to study *Zionism* and its construction of the '*Israeliness*'. As a key role in identity construction I emphasize on some central institutions of *nation-building*, like national *narratives*, national *symbols*, and national *language*. An inspiring work for this chapter and also parts of other chapter is Baruch Kimmerling's book "The Invention and Decline of Isrealiness".

Subsequently, the fifth chapter is on Israel's discourse on *security*, the main political *orientations* on security, and on Israel's *Arab citizens*.

In my sixth chapter I selectively collect statements on the 'Arab demographic threat'. I analyze the use of *language*, connect the discursive *practices* to the structural *context*, and extract the *images* of Arab citizens produced in this discursive stream.

At last, I close my work, summarize my research, point out my findings, interpret them, and draw conclusions.

CHAPTER II: Theory and Methodology

2.1 Discourse Theory

2.1.1 Foucault

Michel Foucault is known as the '*father*' of discourse theory. Often the term *discourse* is referred to a linguistic concept, in Foucault's case, however, it is given a much wider meaning. Discourse to him means a system of representation. "What interested him were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in the different historical periods."² Discourse produces knowledge through language and thus is a device of power. In Foucault's understanding nothing exists outside of discourse, that is to say nothing has a meaning outside of discourse. Solely the discourse of a certain subject gives meaning to it and only that way it can become knowledge. This idea plays a core part in the constructionist theory of meaning and representation.³

Foucault argued that discourses continuously change with the specific historical context, therefore, the conception of 'truth' is a different one in each period of time. Knowledge and discursive practices are always historically and culturally bound, and thus discourse is a permanently transforming matter. Important to Foucault were the radical breaks that separated periods of discursive structures.⁴

What counts is the continuous recurrence of statements. They cannot be regarded as single entities but are connected in a larger discourse:

A single text has minimal effects. Which are hardly noticeable and almost impossible to prove. In contrast, a discourse, with its recurring contents, symbols and strategies, leads to the emergence and solidification of 'knowledge' and therefore has sustained effects. What is important is not the single text, the single film, the single photograph and so on, but the constant repetition of statements.⁵

² Hall 2001a: 72

³ Hall 2001a: 72f

⁴ Hall 2001a: 74f

⁵ Jäger; Maier 2009: 38

Perpetual repetition enables discourse to empower itself and therefore exercise its power on the subject.

The most important sphere of Foucault's work for this discourse analysis is his focus on the relationship between knowledge and power,

and how power operated within what he called an institutional apparatus and its technologies (techniques). [...] Foucault did not believe that *any* form of thought could claim to have found an absolute 'truth' of this kind, outside the play of discourse. *All* political and social forms of thought, he believed, were inevitably caught up in the interplay of knowledge and power.⁶

In his concept knowledge has the potency to *make itself true*, i.e. *all* knowledge, operating in the sphere of reality, at one point becomes 'truth'. In this sense, constructed knowledge sustains a *regime of truth*. The belief in the absoluteness of this truth reproduces this and has eventually real effects on the subject. The belief that single parenting, for example, leads to crime, even though there is no confirmable proof, and hence society treats single parents accordingly, it will affect single parents and their children, and consequently create real effects, and, in this sense, become truth.⁷

According to Foucault, power is not a permanent structure and is not monopolized by any historical center. It is practiced by a complex network of social activity and interacts with all spheres of social life:

- in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law. What's more, power is not only negative, repressing what it seeks to control. It is also productive. It 'doesn't only weight on us as a force, that says no, but [...] it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be thought of as a productive network which runs through the whole social body' [...].⁸

In Foucauldian practice Jäger and Meyer distinguish between two discourse-connected kinds of power: *power of discourse* and *power over discourse*.

The first kind is the *power of discourse* to create and form a subject. Foucauldian discourse theory does not deny the existence of the subject, but in fact, analyzes its constitution in its historical and social context, i.e. takes a look at the discursive structure around the subject. Second, the *power over discourse* is the individuals' and groups' capability to influence dis-

⁶ Hall 2001a: 75f

⁷ Hall 2001a: 76

⁸ Hall 2001a: 77

course. It is important though to state that nobody has full control over any discourse and therefore the effects on a discourse cannot be fully intended. One is often not aware of the importance of their role – but, in the long term, powerful agents of discourse can accomplish notable changes.⁹

2.1.1 Language

Discourse Theory is centrally dealing with the question of the functions of language. Wetherell mentions an important *misconception* of language which discourse research seeks to dispute:

[L]anguage works rather like a picture [...]. It represents the world and people's thoughts and opinions. This representation can be faithful or, if people are malicious or lying, it can be unfaithful and misleading. Language's main function, however, is representational. [...] [T]he world, language and people are separate entities. Language in its picturing and representational modes mediates between the world and people. But language itself is removed from the world. It adds nothing but simply conveys from one person to another the nature of the world, people's impressions, their thoughts and opinions. Language in this sense is the neutral servant of the people.¹⁰

These assumptions suggest that language works as a transparent medium and reflects the real nature of the world. In discourse theory though, language actively builds the world instead of imaging it: "A central point discourse researchers make is that language is constructive. It is constitutive to social life. Discourse builds objects, worlds, minds and social relations. It doesn't just reflect them."¹¹

In discourse theory language is given meaning and purpose. It is the function of language that is being examined: "The meanings of words are derived not from fixed relationships between abstract things, but from the accumulated dynamic social use of particular forms of language in different contexts and for different and sometimes conflicting purposes."¹²

⁹ Jäger, Maier 2009: 39

¹⁰ Wetherell 2001: 15

¹¹ Wetherell 2001: 16

¹² Maybin 2001: 65

2.2 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis focuses on the frequent occurrence of statements in a discourse and the order in which the statements appear, its social and institutional ties, its power of creating reality, it asks why and how they appear at a certain time and how they change with their historical context.

Potter and Wetherell state three major components of discourse analysis: *function*, *construction* and *variation*. “[P]eople are using their language to construct versions of the social world. The principle of discourse analysis is that *function* involves *construction* of versions, and is demonstrated by language *variation*.”¹³ [emphasis added] Discourse analysis focuses on the constructive and functional nature of accounts. Discourse analysts suggest that:

1. language is used for a variety of functions and its use has a variety of consequences;
2. language is both constructed and constructive;
3. the same phenomenon can be described in a number of different ways;
4. there will, therefore, be considerable variation in account;
5. there is, as yet, no foolproof way to deal with this variation and to shift accounts which are ‘literal’ or ‘accurate’ from these which are rhetorical or merely misguided thereby escaping the problems variation raises for researchers with a ‘realistic’ model of language;
6. the constructive and flexible ways in which language is used should themselves become a central topic of study.¹⁴

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

The emphasis of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is on the (re-)production of power and social and political domination in spoken and written language. ‘Critical’, in this sense, refers to *Critical Theory* of the *Frankfurt School*, implemented by the works of notable theorists, such as Habermas, Horkheimer, Adorno and Benjamin. This approach demands a broader and multi-disciplinary view of sciences by including all the major social sciences, such as economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology and psychology. It

¹³ Potter; Wetherell 2001: 198

¹⁴ Potter; Wetherell 2001: 200f

seeks to display the interconnectedness of things, and thus also science itself. The research system, and CDA as a part of it, is dependent on social structures and therefore situated within the social hierarchy of power. Using self-reflection, critical analysis attempts to create a certain awareness of their own needs and interests in its agents and thus their own role in discourse.¹⁵

De Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl and Wodak define the aims of Critical Discourse Analysis as follows: “to unmask ideological permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language use.”¹⁶

Critical Discourse Analysis seeks to create awareness of the interconnectedness of the components in discourse. It reveals the hidden structures of language use and emphasizes on the role of power, dominance and hegemony.

2.3.1 Power

Although practices of power and dominance are not merely a ‘top-down’ process imposed on others, broad discourses are mainly led and channeled by elites. Discursive practices can help to maintain unequal power relations “between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/ cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.”¹⁷ In this unequal distribution of power one group seeks to control the other: “Such control may pertain to *action* and *cognition*: that is, a powerful group may limit the freedom of action of others, but also influence their minds.”¹⁸ These forms of power are not necessarily to be seen on the surface, such as imposed physical violence, but rather structurally embedded: “Besides the elementary recourse to force to directly control action [...], 'modern' and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by

¹⁵ Meyer; Wodak 2009: 6f

¹⁶ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 8

¹⁷ Fairclough; Wodak 1997: 258

¹⁸ van Dijk 2001: 302

persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interest*.¹⁹

2.3.2 Dominance

CDA is particularly concerned with the *abuse* of power “in branches of laws, rules and principles of democracy, equality and justice by those who wield power.”²⁰ To distinguish this form of power from 'legitimate' and 'accurate' forms CDA calls it *dominance*. Dominance is rarely total, though in many cases it is challenged by *counter-power*. Prevalently, certain forms of dominance appear to be persistent and “natural until they begin to be challenged, as was/is the case for male dominance over women, white over black, rich over poor.”²¹

Dominance is a product of unequal power relations. Discourse is on the one hand a practice of dominance and on the other a reproduction of the same. Dominance in unequal social relations is a key issue in Critical Discourse analysis.

[D]ifferent discourses are seen as constructing social phenomena in different ways entailing different possibilities for social action. This epistemological move raises the issue of (unequal) power relations, and dominance, as a way of representing and constructing the ‘social’ (and the social actors) that may have an oppressive effect (within and) upon some groups in society. What one is studying in approaching issues that come under the umbrella term of ‘social inequality’ are discursive practices of various kinds and of various content, ways of talking that reproduce dominance and unequal relations of power. These can only exist in social interaction, as people are constructing and account for (equal/unequal) states of affairs.²²

Discourse does not only have the power to produce and reproduce dominance, it is also capable of legitimizing power relations. The broad acceptance of these power relations is called Hegemony.

¹⁹ van Dijk 2001: 302

²⁰ van Dijk 2001: 302

²¹ van Dijk 2001: 302

²² Tileaga 2006: 480

2.3.3 Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* is dominance by consensus, achieved through acceptance and the management of the mind. Hegemony emerges if the dominated are *manipulated* in such a way that they accept the dominance imposed on them and act according to serve the desires of the powerful, believing it is their free will to do so. Dominant discourse eagerly produces consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of power structures. Discourse is a tool of hegemonial power. It has the power to reproduce hegemony through this system of representation.²³ Hegemony is not steady or monopolized. It is constantly contested in a struggle for power. The question of hegemony plays a crucial role in Critical Discourse Analysis:

The political concept of 'hegemony' can be usefully used in analysing orders of discourse[...]. That is, a particular social structuring of semiotic difference may become hegemonic, become part of the legitimizing common sense which sustains relations of domination, but hegemony will always be contested to a greater or lesser extent, in hegemonic struggle. An order of discourse is not a closed or rigid system, but rather an open one, which can be put at risk by what happens in actual interactions.²⁴

The discourse on security for example does inhere the power to preserve the current rule of an elite, since that elite forms a protective shield against perceived dangers. The repetitive emphasis on dangers helps to legitimize their rule.

2.4 Choice of Primary and Secondary Sources

The discourse on Arabs and demography is practiced on many levels and by different political streams. I chose to analyze some extreme, or right-wing, views on the topic. I do not try to create an image of Israel as a very right-wing society, since there are many other political views existing in the state of Israel. To emphasize on the concept of Arab citizens

²³ Van Dijk 2001: 302; Mayer, Wodak 2009: 8

²⁴ Fairclough 2001: 29

as a demographic threat, however, I selectively picked some extreme statements that fuel the debate.

Introducing the discourse, I begin with Benjamin Schwarz's article "Will Israel live to 100?", published in "The Atlantic". This choice was made because the article has great popularity and is frequently referred to. The article is a graphic example for the fear of demographic shifts and a the pessimistic predictions for the future existence of the state.

The core of my analysis is formed by remarks on a demographic threat stated by politicians. My source for these statements is the Israeli daily Newspaper *Ha'aretz*. Despite of my knowledge of Hebrew, I chose to use the paper's English edition, since this thesis is written in English and my English is scholarly more profound than my Hebrew. The Newspaper, originally *Hadashod Ha'aretz*, Hebrew for *News of the Land (of Israel)*, being on rank three, does not have the greatest circulation among Israel's daily print media, but it is said to have great influence on public opinions. Its political position is liberal-democratic, opposing other mainstream media. Both Hebrew and English editions are also released online. This means the readership is extended, and moreover, the articles are available to an international readership.²⁵

The choice for the particular resources was made due to their exemplariness in this stream of discourse. The statements on Israeli demography are arranged by their sub-topics, that is, various fragments of the discourse. These Fragments are: statistics, population and land exchange, deprivation of citizenship and fertility. Another choice is a speech of Prime Minister Netanyahu at the Herzliyah Conference in 2005, referring to the Arab citizens of Israel as the *real* demographic threat. All these texts consist of big representational value for this particular stream of discourse.

Editors of *Ha'aretz* pick up the stream of discourse I am analyzing. They take part in an other stream of discourse on Israeli demography, opposing various statements and thus analyze them and exercise their own power through discursive practice.

I am aware that *Ha'aretz* filters its cited speeches of politicians and selectively picks extreme statements which are criticized by other political wings and the paper's editors themselves. Similarly I too pick statements that are significant for this discourse.

²⁵ Press Referenc n.d.: n. pag.

CHAPTER III: On Nation and Identity

3.1 Identity

The idea of identity is derived from the assumption of steady and unchanging sameness or equality between two or more related entities. This concept is being widely criticized, stating that there is no exact sameness in human beings and also no permanence of their conditions:

Individual people change constantly in the course of their lives, be it physically, psychologically or socially. Even an object changes constantly in its material constitution, as is revealed by a microscopic examination if not otherwise obvious. In this way, the concept of identity [...] never signifies anything static, unchanging, or substantial, but rather always an element situated in the flow of time, ever changing, something involved in a process.²⁶

Ricœur States three semantic components of identity:

Firstly, the *numerical* identity, which means that two occurrences of a particular thing resemble as ‘one’. “To this first component of the notion of identity corresponds the process of identification, understood in the sense of the reidentification of the same, which makes cognition recognition: the same thing twice, *n* times.”²⁷

Secondly, the *qualitative* identity or extreme resemblance: “[W]e say *c* and *y* are wearing the same suit – that is, clothes that are so similar that they are interchangeable with no noticeable difference. To this second component corresponds the operation of substitution without semantic loss, *salva veritate*.”²⁸

Ricœur’s third component of identity is *uninterrupted continuity*: “This criterion is predominant whenever growth and aging operate as factors of dissemblance and, by implication, of numerical diversity. [...] [T]he ordered series of small changes which, taken one by one,

²⁶ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 11

²⁷ Ricœur 1992: 116

²⁸ Ricœur 1992: 116

threaten resemblance without destroying it.”²⁹ The threat of identity by continuous change is though not present when “a principle of temporal constancy, which underlies both similarity and uninterrupted continuity of transformation, is assumed, for example, among others, of the permanence of genetic code of a biological individual and the example of the invariable structure of a tool. All of whose parts have gradually been replaced.”³⁰

It is here crucial to distinguish between *individual* and *collective* identity. The *individual* person is attributed social characteristics (such as age, sex, class, etc.) and “assigned role expectations and memberships from outside, which people then actually do take on in their images of themselves or which at least are seen by others to be their external attributes.”³¹ Here the person is the object of identification and the other people are the subject. The other analytical perspective is a system-related one, i.e. a whole social system is characterized. Here the object and subject are contrary to the previous. The objects of identification are social categories such as groups, organizations, classes and cultures. This includes members of these systems who define themselves as such, as well as those who see themselves outside casting definitions on (alleged) members of a particular system.³²

Linking these two systems of identification is the fact that both are defined from the outside. “[I]ndividual-related and system-related identities overlap a great deal in the identity of an individual. To a certain extent individuals bear the characteristics of one or more collective groups or systems to which they belong.”³³

The social construction of identity is a process constantly under development and a dynamic interplay between the inside and outside:

[T]he social processes implicated in identity formation are complex, recursive, reflexive, and constantly ‘under construction’. The appearance of stability in any given ‘identity’ is, at best, a transient accomplishment: discursive construction and re-construction emerge as a continuous process and stability appears to be either a momentary achievement or a resilient fiction. Thus, we suggest, ‘identity formation’ might be conceptualized as a complex, multifaceted process which produces a socially negotiated temporary outcome of the dynamic interplay between internal strivings and

²⁹ Ricœur 1992: 117

³⁰ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 12

³¹ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 16

³² de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 16

³³ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 16

external prescriptions, between self-presentation and labeling by others, between achievement and ascription and between regulation and resistance.³⁴

Identities can be also heterogeneous – in this case we speak of *multiple identities*. Members of any nation are enculturated multiple “heterogeneous and often conflicting regional, supraregional, cultural, linguistic ethnic, religious, sexual, political and otherwise defined ‘we’-identities.”³⁵ They ‘compose’ their identities (forced or voluntarily) through a selection from a wide spectrum of identifications.

3.2 Concepts of National Identity

The concept of *nation* is widely debated. Although there is no generally accepted definition of a nation, de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl and Wodak list two conceptions around which scholar discussions revolve: the *Willensnation* and the *Kulturnation*. The first one, the *Willensnation*, is a nation founded by the voluntarily by the free will of its members to form a political community. The Latter, the *Kulturnation*, is claimed to formed through the social unity of its members, while their common ground are cultural ties, such as language, tradition, culture and religion.³⁶

The notion of *nation* in our modern understanding, although it had its historical ancestors, arose in 17th and 18th century Europe. The age of enlightenment marked a tremendous break in the legitimacy of monarchic rule over its land and inhabitants. The power of the rulers could no longer be reasoned through the will of a deity, but had to give way to new conceptions in order to maintain control over people and territory: the *nation*. “It [the nation] is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. [...] The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state”³⁷ Another consider-

³⁴ Beverungen, Ellis, Keenoy, Oswick, Sabelis, Ybema 2009: 302

³⁵ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 16

³⁶ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 18

³⁷ Anderson 1991: 7

able circumstance Anderson stresses is the fall of Latin as the ‘sacred language’ and the opening to a previously privileged access to “truth”. Additionally he notes the connection between the industrial revolution and book printing, which increased the significance of local languages, gradually combined into a smaller number of written languages. “In this way new circles of readers were formed which could be mobilised for political and religious purposes [...] and later for political and national purposes”³⁸

In my work I refer to Benedict Anderson’s understanding of *nation* as an ‘*imagined community*’. Anderson understands *nation* as a fictive idea, impossible in reality of a social group. The nation is imagined “because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members meet them, or even hear of them; yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”³⁹

In Anderson's Understanding the nation is imagined in three ways: as *limited*, as *sovereign*, and as a *community*:

“The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind.[...]”⁴⁰ Second, it is imagined as *sovereign* because of its origin in the age of enlightenment and its replacement of the divinely-ordained order.⁴¹ And finally, it is imagined a *community* highly legitimized by a belief in equality, despite the inequalities and exploitation that occurs in each nation, though it is conceived as a ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’ based on the concept of fraternity. To Anderson all communities are imagined, perhaps even the smallest village in which people have face-to-face contact.⁴²

³⁸ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 22

³⁹ Anderson 1991: 6

⁴⁰ Anderson 1991: 7

⁴¹ Anderson 1991: 7

⁴² Anderson 1991: 7

3.3 Patriotism

National identity features the power to create a certain attachment to nation. The belief in their community often goes as far as the willingness to kill and also die in order to defend its existence. The love towards one's own community can however also occur alongside fear of and hatred for another. Nationalism includes sympathy and solidarity between the members of a community, while treating members of another group differently and seeing them as inferior. Notwithstanding internal conflicts and rivalries, in European colonies a 'solidarity among whites' prevailed. "This solidarity, in its curious trans-state character, reminds one instantly of the class solidarity of Europe's nineteenth-century aristocracies, mediated through each other's hunting-lodges, spas, and ballrooms; and of that brotherhood of 'officers and gentlemen,' which in the Geneva convention guaranteeing privileged treatment to captured enemy *officers*, as opposed to partisans or civilians, has an agreeably twentieth-century expression."⁴³

Patriotism in this understanding clearly distinguishes between the concepts of *us* and *them*. In sub-chapter 5.1 I take a closer look on the representation of the what I here called '*them*' by Stuart Hall's concept of the "Representation of the *Other*".

3.4 Discourse Theory on National Identity

If nation is an imagined community and at the same time a mental construct, an imaginary complex of ideas containing at least the defining elements of collective unity and equality, of boundaries and autonomy, then this image is real to the extent that one is convinced of it, believes in it and identifies with it emotionally. The question of how this imaginary community reaches the minds of those who are convinced of it is easy to answer: it is constructed and conveyed in discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture. National identity is thus the product of discourse.⁴⁴

⁴³ Anderson 1991: 153

⁴⁴ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 22

In the discursive approach identification is viewed as a continuous construction, a process always in progress, never completed.⁴⁵

Stuart Hall describes nation as a 'system of representation' which constructs itself through *narration*. Hall states the following central points of how the narrative of the national culture is told:

1. The *narrative of the nation* is presented in national narratives, literature, in the media and popular everyday culture. "These provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols, and rituals which stand for, or represent, the shared experiences, sorrows, and triumphs and disasters which give meaning to the nation."⁴⁶
2. There is an emphasis on *origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness*, stressing on the ancient emergence, unchanging in its destiny and of eternal continuity.
3. *Invented Traditions* put (often recent) rituals of symbolic nature in connection with an immemorial past and thus claim their cultural continuation.
4. The *foundational myth* or *myth of origin* invent partially glorious heroic stories from a misty past and move deep into the common consciousness.
5. And, lastly, the idea of a *pure, original people* or '*folk*'.⁴⁷

De Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl and Wodak see Hall's characteristics of narratively constructed national identity controversial: "These [difficulties] arise when one tries to separate the five points from each other with some degree of clarity in order to use them for the analysis of concrete data."⁴⁸

Summing up, the discursive construction of national identity rotates around the three temporal axes of the *past*, the *present* and the *future*. "Origin, continuity/tradition,

⁴⁵ Hall 1996: 612

⁴⁶ Hall 1996: 613

⁴⁷ Hall 1996: 614f; de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 24

⁴⁸ Hall 1996: 614f; de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 24

transformation, (essentialist) timelessness and anticipation are important ordering criteria. Spatial, territorial and local dimensions [...] are likewise significant [...].”⁴⁹

National identity is formed by social practices, such as discourse, shaping the perception of the imagined community:

The national identity of individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a national collectivity is manifested, *inter alia*, in their social practices, one of which is discursive practice. The respective national identity is shaped by state, political, institutional, media and everyday social practices, and the material and social conditions which emerge as their results, to which the individual is subjected. The discursive practice as a special form of social practice plays a central part both in the formation and in the expression of national identity.⁵⁰

Or, as Hall puts it, national identities are the product of discursive components, such as symbols one identifies with and national narratives one connects with as their personal past. Discourse gives meaning to these things and makes them collective properties:

National cultures are composed not only of cultural institutions, but of symbols and representations. A national culture is a *discourse* – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves [...]. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can *identify*; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it.⁵¹

The nation is constructed by the representation of its very own cultural peculiarities. The difference between nations, Hall says, are loomed in the different ways in which they are imagined, giving each nation a distinct identity, not being shared with other nations.⁵²

⁴⁹ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 26

⁵⁰ de Cillia, Liebhart, Reisigl, Wodak 2009: 29f

⁵¹ Hall 1996: 613

⁵² Hall 1996: 613

3.5 Representation of the 'Other'

As noted previously, discourse is a practice of power, the *power of representation*. Discourse is not only capable of constructing the '*self*' but also the '*other*'. Through representation a certain image of the '*other*' is created, identifying what is seen as the external reflects an identification of what is defined the self. Discourse in this sense produces distinct categories of identity. Representing the other means to exercise power and impose violence:

[P]ower in *representation*: power to mark, assign and classify; of *symbolic* power; of *ritualized* expulsion. Power, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain 'regime' of representation'. It includes the exercise of *symbolic* power through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise of symbolic violence ⁵³

A famous example of representation of the '*other*' is Edward Said's study of the European discursive construction of the *Orient*, through which in Said's understanding Europe was able to manage “– and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period’.”⁵⁴ *Orientalism*, as Hall notes, created a complex Orient “suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe [...]”.⁵⁵ Referring to the ideas of Foucault, Said underlines the relation between power and knowledge and the role it takes in the representation of the so-called *Orient*. A long tradition of romanticized images of the Middle East arouses the vision of the Orient as a negative reflection of the West.

The central role in Said's understanding of the representation of the '*other*' is played by power, domination and hegemony, producing and reproducing unequal relations:

⁵³ Hall 2001b: 338

⁵⁴ Hall 2001b: 338

⁵⁵ Hall 2001b: 338f

The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony[...]. The Orient was orientalised not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it *could be* – that is, submitted to being – *made* Oriental.⁵⁶

3.6 Discourse on Nation and Security

Nation is deeply connected to security. The state's major function is to exercise power and violence to ensure the citizens' security.

In a classical understanding the state is formed through the consensus of its member to reduce their own freedom for the purpose of security. The institution of a state is created in order to overcome the chaotic anarchy of the *state of nature*:

The state of nature is the reason for being of the state, it is the foundation of the modern Nation-State; the state is the lesser evil for which individuals sacrifice their freedoms in order to feel safe. The state is, then, this particular idea, this notion of a superior order which can provide security in the inside of its territory and protect it from the outside dangerous world.⁵⁷

National discourses on security do not just identify external threats and internal vulnerabilities, but furthermore they create identity categories: who is *Us* and who is *Them*? The list of factors that could harm the state can be endless, depending on the constitution of one's sensitivity. The power of discourse is though to incorporate certain dangers and leave others aside.

A graphic example for this is David Campbell's 'Writing Security' which illustrates the security discourse in the United States. Campbell understands the cold war as a 'struggle related to the production and reproduction of identity. "In the West, the cold war was an ensemble of practices in which an interpretation of danger crystallized around objectifications of communism and the Soviet Union"⁵⁸ The distinction between the West and communist states

⁵⁶ Said 2003: 5

⁵⁷ Echevarria Alvarez 2006: 66

⁵⁸ Campbell 2006: 169

served as a dichotomous classification such as 'civilized' and 'barbaric' or 'normal' and 'pathological'.

In a larger sense, given the global nature of the cold war, this means that the crisis of international politics is now very much a crisis of representation. The vast majority of contemporary states are multiplecephalous federations that exist as states only by virtue of their ability to constitute themselves as imagined communities. Central to the process of imagination has been the operation of dis-courses of danger which, by virtue of telling us what to fear, have been able to fix who 'we' are. The effective dis-courses of danger that have led to 'successful' instances of foreign policy are those that have been able to combine both extensive forms of power, so that the social identity of the community has been aligned with the political space of the state.⁵⁹

The crisis of representation is not exclusively occurring in the United States but is in fact a common condition to all states. A state is always an unstable ground on which identity is tried to be defended against danger: "[The] variety of state forms throughout modernity have always been a historically contingent panoply of practices that have served to constitute identity through the negation of difference and the temptation of otherness."⁶⁰

The operation of anticommunism has been a durable discourse of danger in the US, managing to convince a vast majority, structuring everyday practices, and linking internal with external threats. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union the dangers have not become less, though, and new threats have moved into discourse, such as "terrorism", giving a powerful example which has been circling the public eye more intensively than ever since the incidents on September 11, 2001 – even the name *9/11* itself, created by discourse, is loaded with such extensive danger and provokes fear by just hearing or reading it. Shehla Burney describes the issue as follows:

The selective replaying of 9/11 memories—the powerful and emotive images of fire fighters at the dismal remains of the World Trade Center, the sanctification of the space itself as Ground Zero, the ritualization of collective experience through the myriad stories of bravery, patriotism, camaraderie, and sacrifice, and the much professed love for New York [...] may indeed be appropriately newsworthy, timely, and important in the immediate aftermath of the horrendous tragedy. [...] [But] [t]he recalling, rebuilding, reimagining, and reinvoking of the horrendous events of September 11 on television and in the print media construct a compelling narrative of hegemonic, state-oriented, and self-centered nationalism that is designed to undercut discontent, deflate economic uncertainty, subvert critical thinking, and end moral dissent against war. Most importantly, the reigning nationalistic narrative serves to deflect attention elsewhere — to the trivial, to the *other*—and away from key issues.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Campbell 2006: 169f

⁶⁰ Campbell 2006: 170

⁶¹ Burney 2002: 2

This discourse rapidly lead to an identification and demonization of the *other* – the *enemy* – and terms like *terrorism*, *Islamism*, or *Taliban* were loaded with new emotions. Muslims and particularly Arabs were portrayed as a potential threat to the US and the 'West' and a wave of prejudice and discrimination followed. The nation had a new enemy menacing to endanger freedom and convinced of the importance of defeating this enemy. Members of the national community were willing to give up their privacy in favor of security and join the nation's endeavors of defending it against the '*Axis of Evil*' in the so-called '*War on Terrorism*'.

This way discourse on danger and security works as an agent to strengthen nationalism and the unity of a nation. A threat to the ideas of the nation makes the population stand together in order to defend itself against the aggressors and also fight them outside of the state's borders. It also serves to distract from internal issues, focusing the attention on internal and external threats and giving it major importance, subordinating all other issues to the handling of dangers.

CHAPTER IV: Discursive Construction of Israeli National Identity

4.1 Zionism

Whatever attributes different states in the world define themselves with, more than anything, Israel defines itself *Jewish*, a '*Jewish and Democratic State*'. Judaism, which originated in the Middle East, has been prevailing as one of the world's oldest presently practiced monotheistic religions, having spread over distant areas of the globe. Significant time marks of the Jewish diaspora were the destruction of the first temple in 586 BCE by the Neo-Babylonian Empire and more than half a century later the destruction of the second temple and parts of Jerusalem, following an uprising against the Roman occupation, which eventually lead to enslavement and the relegation of the Jews. However, after centuries of exile a movement for the resettlement of the *Holy Land* arose in Europe. But what were the reasons for this sudden Jewish nationalism?

Centuries of anti-Jewish resentments fueled particularly by the church, structural discrimination and cruel pogroms were a great challenge for the Jewish communities in Europe and Russia. Meanwhile, the modern era created a movement for nation states. The age of enlightenment bore a chance for equal rights and many Jews pinned their hopes on assimilation and emancipation. Nonetheless, Antisemitism didn't decrease, on the contrary. In the context of the formation of European nation states the Austria-Hungarian Journalist Theodor Herzl wrote "*Der Judenstaat*", a manifest for the creation of a Jewish national home. He believed in a Jewish nation and the necessity for a sovereign Jewish state, enabling its population to govern itself and to practice Jewish culture and religion freely without the repressions of Antisemitism. At first there was no consensus on where to create the Jewish state. Alongside Palestine other locations, like Argentina, Uganda, or the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in the Soviet Union were considered in the debate. Although Herzl was not religious, Palestine appeared the only accurate place to settle, since it was the *Holy Land* of Judaism and accommodated former Jewish states. Hence *Zionism* was born, albeit small in popularity at that time. Many Jews felt national sentiments for the states in which they were citizens, while others believed in the world revolution of socialism and communism which should

have resulted in a world of equality. However, the rise of the Nazis and the Holocaust made more and more Jews settle in Palestine (or the so-called *Yishuv*), whether being ideologically committed to Zionism or not.

In the meantime Israel had managed to build the institutional structures of a state. Subsequently, three years after WWII had ended the United Nations gave in to the demand for an independent state of Israel and a partition of Palestine, accompanied by the rejection by the surrounding Arab countries and a following military invasion, or the Israeli '*Milkhemet Ha'atzma'ut*' (War of Independence), or the Palestinian '*Al-Nakba*' (The Catastrophe).

Israel declared the '*Right of Return*' which granted every Jew in the world the right to become a citizen, following an increasing immigration (*Aliyah*) of Jews, as well as those from Arab countries where they experienced growing resentments and eviction. The Arabs who fled or had been expelled during the time of war, both internally displaced or refugees, remained in the neighboring Arab countries. They were denied their '*Right of Return*' and were not granted full legal status by their host countries. The war also resulted in a '*Jewish Nakba*' for many Jews living in Middle-Eastern communities, who were expelled by the Arab authorities and forced to leave their homes and partially move to Israel.

4.2 A Jewish State

Israel was declared a Jewish state, and, furthermore, a national home for *all* the Jews defined by halachic tradition, and later also those who are potentially affected by prosecution because of their partly Jewish roots. Although Zionism was mainly a secular movement, religion eventually started to play a central role in the construction of the nation. The existence of religious Zionism was important to legitimate the secular Zionist movement. For this reason, national religiosity was part of the secular nationalist hegemonic culture, despite its peripheral position in the state. In order to include the nation's religious elites into the collectivity, the establishment was ready to pay a high price. The rabbinical courts were given authority over personal status issues, such as marriage, divorce, and burial, and the halachic rules of Shabbat and Kashrut dominated large parts of the public sphere. In contrast to the

original secular spirit of early Zionists, religion became one of the central fragments of Israel's national collective identity:

Moreover, the very definition of the boundaries of Jewish nationality was altered to conform the halachic definitions. Curiously enough, despite the enormous effort invested in the creation of a new Israeli identity and nationalism, this identity was legally reduced to citizenship rather than nationality. Nationality officially remained registered (in ID cards, for example) in ethno-religious terms (e.g. Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Druse). This demonstrated that despite the secular inclinations and self-identity of the founding fathers, the collective identity was constructed of three intermingled components: secular nationalism, primordial ethnicity, and religion. These components complemented one another, but also perpetually conflicted.⁶²

Messianic redemption in traditional theology is believed to be achieved if all Jewish people become either fully observant or completely non-observant. If this occurs, the *Mashiach* will appear, the Jews will come back Zion, and, eventually, the Temple will be rebuilt. Rabbi Isaac Hacoen Kook, probably the most influential figure to religious Zionism, inverted this sequence of causality: the first stage is the Jewish people's return to Zion, making the secular Zionists God's secret messengers, unaware of their important role in the fulfillment of his sacred will. The redemption has therefore already begun by the reunion of the sacred trinity: the *land* of Israel, the *people* of Israel and the *torah* of Israel.⁶³

The inclusion of Bible instruction in the secular Hebrew school curriculum and the invention of a new type of knowledge, "Motherland studies" (*modelet*), combining biblical mythology, geography, archeology, topography, and hiking marked another level of *judaizing* Israeli society.⁶⁴ "Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion organized well-publicized Bible study classes in his home for officially invited intellectual and political celebrities, adding to his aura as a 'philosophical king'. Hundreds of imitative Bible seminars (*hugey Tanach*) were established countrywide."⁶⁵

In reality, Israeli society is a very heterogeneous one. A majority of about three fourths of Israel's citizens is Jewish. This majority however is by no means to be seen as homogeneous, consisting of disparities in origin and religious practices. According to Ceobanu and Sorek, almost half of the Jewish Israelis consider themselves secular and some even anti-religious,

⁶² Kimmerling 2001: 108

⁶³ Cohen-Almagor 1995: 465; Kimmerling 2001: 109

⁶⁴ Kimmerling 2001: 101

⁶⁵ Kimmerling 2001: 103

while ten to twelve per cent define themselves as religious and another 7.5 percent as orthodox (haredim).⁶⁶

These tensions and paradoxes are not unique to Zionism, but due to the overlap of ethnicity and religion in Judaism, as well as to the lack of an initial territorial base for the national project, they were especially pronounced in this case. Consequently, the contemporary public debate about the way national identity and religion should relate is much more clearly articulated and explicit in Israel than in most other countries. [...] [B]ecause of these tensions, the notions of 'religious' and 'secular' in Israel are not only epistemological categories but also significant socio-political identities. Religiosity is an important organizational principle of the Israeli political map and a major predictor of electoral voting.⁶⁷

Despite their different practices or non-practices of religion, what they all have in common is their Jewishness by halachic definition. A large number of immigrants over the twentieth century however are non-Jews, mainly of Russian origin. Alongside the Arab citizens of Israel they make up one fourth of Israel's population.

In order to remain a Jewish majority in a Jewish State, the governments have made great efforts to promote *aliyah* in different Jewish communities throughout the world. After a vast majority of the Middle-Eastern Jews migrated into Israel in the middle of the twentieth century, and several waves of Russians, particularly after the fall of the Soviet Union, had moved to Israel, a great campaign was launched to include another Jewish community: The Ethiopian Jews, known as the *Beta-Israel*. Having formerly been paid little attention, they became another group to move to the *holy land* and retain its Jewish majority. The discourse on the inclusion of the Beta-Israel yielded a great debate on whether they were really a 'lost tribe', and therefore Jewish. With the outbreak of Ethiopian civil wars in 1984 and 1985 the decision was made, eventually, to save the '*lost tribe of Israel*' and bring them *home* to Zion. 'Operation Moses' (1984), Operation Joshua' (1985) and Operation 'Solomon' (1991) flew tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews into Israel. In contrast to the 'heroic' narrative of the early Ashkenazic settlers, the Ethiopian story of migration was told with far less glory, but to an extent they still served to counter-balance the Arab population. Like other ethnic minorities (e.g. the Yemenite Jewish Migrants) Ethiopian arrivals were pushed to leave behind their cultural traditions and adopt the new Israeli culture and Hebraized names.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ceobanu, Sorek 2009: 481f

⁶⁷ Ceobanu, Sorek 2009: 480f

⁶⁸ Kimmerling 2001: 149ff

The two major cores of Israeli identity have been competing ever since the early beginnings of the Zionist movement(s) – the ongoing attempt to combine the two main principles, the particularistic (Jewish religious) and the universalistic (socialist, nationalist and liberal):

One of the salient features of political Zionism is that it purported to be not merely a 'nationalist' ideology, but strove to integrate two, in principle conflicting, value premises: the collective particularism of Jewish aspiration to an independent National state, and the universalism of modern Western civilization. [...] Both sets of premises [...] become fundamental components of the legitimation of the State of Israel. In political practice, however, they necessarily clashed⁶⁹

4.3 Israeliness

In the formation of the state of Israel Zionists had a very distinct idea of what the Israeli society should look like. In the process of nation-building a certain hegemony of *Israeliness* has been established through discursive construction by intellectual elites, such as “philosophers, writers, poets, artists, academics and 'spiritual leaders', whether secular or religious”⁷⁰ A certain glorious 'pioneering spirit' (*chaluziut*) arose to form the 'new Israeli', in whose construction the military played a key role:

Not only was the military assigned the tasks of waging war and protecting the 'national security', but also it was to be the major mechanism for creating the new Israeli man and woman, at least in the younger generations. Similar to the mythical saba (tzabar). Healthy, muscular, a warrior, industrious, hard-working, rational, modern, Western or 'Westernized', secular a vernacular, accentless Hebrew speaker, educated (but not intellectual), and obedient to authorities (that is, to state and its representatives).⁷¹

The idea of a new Israeli culture was created in order to mark the discontinuity of the life of the diaspora Jew and the rise of the *Sabra*, a strong and proud able to defend themselves:

Accordingly, Zionism was not content with returning the Jewish people to their biblical homeland; it also sought to be the midwife helping the Jewish people give birth to a new kind of person, the Sabra. As A. D. Gordon explained, the Zionist revolution is the revolution of the man in the Jew. The revolutionary term that was coined, Sabra, intended to capsule an image of a 'super Jew' who will also put an end to his/her parents' helplessness. He or she is the antithesis of the image of the old Jew who was torn by insecurities of the galut. In Israel, the Jews will become like the goyim (gentiles), a

⁶⁹ Cohen 1985: 322

⁷⁰ Kimmerling 2001: 100

⁷¹ Kimmerling 2001: 100

healthy nation. Healthy nations are not obsessed with survival, but rather concentrate their efforts toward progress.⁷²

This model was the image of the 'proto-type' of the early Ashkenazic settler, the so-called *pioneers* or *veterans*, while other immigrants and original inhabitants were marginalized by this hegemony and institutionally urged to assimilate accordingly, or in the case of the Arabs live in separate 'bubbled' societies. The '*New Hewbrews*' were Jewish, but only bearing Jewish culture, not religion; they lived a *Western* culture, not *Arab*. All Middle-Eastern attributes had to be left behind, since they were regarded as backward and did not serve the spirit new national identity. Israeli is equalized with Jewish. Since one can not be Jewish and Arab it is also not possible to be *Israeli and Arab* in this sense.⁷³

The hegemonial Western-secular rule was soon to be contested by a large part of Israeli society unsatisfied with the neglecting of their own cultural and religious traditions: "By the early 1970s, the majority of the Jewish population in Israel were immigrants from Islamic countries or their descendants, and they had not completely assimilated, as the Zionist establishment had hoped. Their estrangement from socialist values, which contradicted their more traditional ones, kept growing, as did their dissatisfaction with its institutions."⁷⁴

The attempts to homogenize the society soon provoked resistance by the marginalized parts of society, like the religious Mizrachim, who challenged the secular socialist political hegemony, disillusioned by the promises of both Likud and Labor. The gain of political power of marginalized groups marks the '*decline*' of Israeliness, as Kimmerling calls it. They organized politically and created a strong civil society, contesting the cultural hegemony. With the recently deceased Mizrachi Rabbi *Ovadiah Yossef* the movement has been united under a charismatic leader and given an identification. Yossef founded the ultra-orthodox *Shas* party and played powerful role in Israeli politics.⁷⁵

A proof for the power of this new political electorate is can be seen in the elections:

⁷² Cohen-Almagor 1995: 466

⁷³ Cohen-Almagor 1995: 465; Kimmerling 2001: 130f

⁷⁴ Kimmerling, Moore 1997: 30

⁷⁵ Kop 2003: 24

In the late 1970s, the majority of the Asian-African Jewish voters rejected the socialist Labour Party, in favour of right-wing and/or religious parties so that in the 1977 elections the ideological-political situation changed drastically and the reign was transferred to the basically populist capitalism of the Likud Party and its coalition of right-wing and religious parties”⁷⁶

Challenging the 'monopoly' on power, the revolutionary movement opened the gates for various minorities to social and political emancipation: “By moving to the center of the social arena, national religious Judaism succeeded in breaking the secular socialist nationalist hegemony and also unintentionally paved the way for the establishment of other autonomous cultures [...] within the Israeli state”⁷⁷

The political break up also made it possible for Arab citizens to increase their autonomy and participation, which also marked a major break in the constitution of the Israeli society.⁷⁸

4.4 Narratives of National Identity

Being a state built upon a religious base, Israel has been 'judaized' in order to create an Israeli identity. An important part of creating a national identity was played by national narratives, which produce a mystified and glorified collective memory and history. Seeing themselves as the descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the prophet Moses, the land was promised to them since time immemorial and it is the only thinkable destiny to live on this particular holy ground.⁷⁹ The Yishuv community constructed itself as a direct continuation of ancient biblical Jewish society. Zionism consciously used traditional Jewish religious motifs and symbols to promote the immigration of Jews and to legitimize the settlement internally and externally, based on the Bible and more recent literature, such as the Book of the Maccabees.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Kimmerling 1997: 30

⁷⁷ Kimmerling 2001: 233

⁷⁸ Ghanem 2001: 22f

⁷⁹ Alongside the Jewish claim of an ancient national home, suggesting that the Palestinians are at best newcomers, exists a Palestinian 'time immemorial', “alluding to their Canaanite roots, preceding the Jewish tribes who conquered the land according to the bible description.” (Kimmerling 2001: 16)

The Bible serves as both religious holy script and national history, in which God plays the role of the most active 'hero'. Ancient mythological events have been glorified as collective national history, such as the besiege of Masada in 73 A.D. which is said to have lasted four to eight months and resulted in a mass suicide in order to avoid enslavement by the Romans. In the Zionist sense, however, this story was reconstructed as a story of Jewish heroism, a fight for freedom and self-sacrifice for the nation.⁸¹ But not only ancient Jewish narratives, also recent history of the pre-state years and the numerous wars since the declaration of the state are being mystified and coated in glory: the heroic fighters of the Ha'ganah, the astounding victory over the Arab alliance in the war of 1948, or the story of the amputee hero Yosef Trumpeldor, who lost his life in 1920 defending the settlement of Tel Hai against an Arab attack. Today Trumpeldor is celebrated an ideal soldier and "immortalized in history books, songs, stories, and a monument that has become an annual pilgrimage site for youth on the anniversary of his death."⁸²

Ever since early Zionism multiple opposed narratives arose among different societies: the 'West', Israel, Arab states and the Palestinians. They each created their own narrations of history:

The 1920-1921 riots or events" (in the Jewish narrative) vs. "the national uprising of 1920" (in the Palestinian narrative); "the 1929 pogroms" (Jewish) vs. "1929 revolt" (Palestinian); "the Great Arab Rebellion" (Palestinian) vs. "the 1936-1939 riots or events" (Jewish); "the War of Independence" (Jewish) vs. "the *Nakba* of 1948" (Palestinian), and likewise for the wars of 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982, the first *Intifada* in 1987, the Oslo Accords, and up to the start of the second *Intifada*.⁸³

Breaking the traditional ways of narration and contesting these 'traditional' discourses of history, the so-called '*New Historians*' have yielded a reflected perspective on the history of the state and pre-state. They cut out the glory and mystery and shaped the events in a more critical and reflected way, deconstructing the discursive narratives. In a *post-Zionist* manner his-

⁸⁰ In Benedict Anderson's concept of nationalism nation replaces the religious legitimacy of a community. In Israel's case nation and religion are *one*.

⁸¹ Kimmerling 2001: 18f

⁸² Auerbach 2001: 102

⁸³ Auerbach 2001: 122

torians and other social scientists like Benny Morris, Baruch Kimmerling, Tom Segev or Avi Shlaim paved the way for a new kind view on history, state and society.⁸⁴

4.5 Symbols of National Identity

A core task of nation-building is to create national symbols the nation's members relate to. These symbols underline the people's unity and connect the nations people to the national territory. In Israel's case these are religious symbols. The following are a few examples of representational symbols connecting national and religious identity.

4.5.1 Flag and Emblem

In order to emphasize the Jewish character of the state, religious symbols were institutionalized into the representation of the state. The *Magen David* (the star of David) became the national symbol of the state of Israel, forming the very center of the national flag and the *menorah* (the seven armed lamp stand) became the emblem of the state.

4.5.2 National Anthem

Israel's national anthem consists of the words of the poet and early Zionist Naphtali Herz Imber. *Ha'tikvah* (the hope) is about the calamity of the Jewish exile and the strong and persistent desire to return to the Holy Land. It is a very important symbolic component of Israel national identity and a good example to demonstrate some early Zionist rhetoric. These are the first two of nine stanzas and the first refrain (only these lines of the originally nine stanzas and refrains are official parts of the Israeli anthem):

⁸⁴ Silberstein 2002: n. pag.

כָּל עוֹד בְּלִבְּךָ פְּנִימָה
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדִי הוֹמָה
וּלְפָאֲתֵי מִזְרַח קָדִימָה
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה

עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תְּקוּוֹתֵנוּ
הַתְּקוּוֹה בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים
לִהְיוֹת עִם חֶפְשִׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

As long as in the heart, within,
A Jewish soul still yearns,
And onward, towards the ends of the east,
An eye still gazes toward Zion;

Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free people in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

4.5.3 Calendar and National Holidays

As part of a secularization of religious symbols a hybrid Jewish calendar was established, including Jewish holidays “such as Passover (reinterpreted as 'Liberation Day'), Succoth (the celebration, harvest, and nature), Tu B'Shevat (the Zionist Arbor Day), Purim as a popular carnival day (especially in Tel Aviv) [and] Lag B'Omer (a celebration of the revolt led by Bar Kochba against the Romans)”⁸⁵. Making the Shabbat the official resting day and Jewish celebration days public holidays marked a big contribution to the state's Jewish identity.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Kimmerling 2001: 93

⁸⁶ Cohen-Almagor 1995: 649

4.5.4 Names

In pre-state Israel the so-called pioneers called themselves rather Hebrews than Jews, especially during the 1930s and early 1940s. This identification worked as another way of detachment from their diaspora past and the continuation of the Jewish people of Eretz Israel. Also the names of the new Hebrews had to be adapted to this new identity:

The practice was encouraged after Ben-Gurion became the prime minister. Ben-Gurion (formerly Gryn) used his authority and influence to effect a massive conversion of names in the political and military establishment. He believed that this symbolic step of acquiring a Hebrew name constituted an explicit declaration of disassociation with the humiliating past. By converting one's name one attaches oneself to the land of the Bible that now renews its days; one acquires new identity and symbolically announces one's association with the Hebrew-Israeli collective. The new Hebrew name signified an act of rebirth.⁸⁷

4.5.5 Hebrew

As one of the major revolutionary steps towards the creation of a national identity, Hebrew, opposing Yiddish as a secularized cultural displacement, was promoted as the national language in order to symbolize discontinuity from the exile culture and the reconstruction of the biblical Israel. Having been a language hardly spoken in daily life and almost exclusively used for religious purposes of the Jewish diaspora for centuries, Hebrew was renewed for the modern use and became the official language of Israel.⁸⁸ Alongside Hebrew, Arabic is the second official language. Yet Arabic faces some institutional restrictions: "The Arabic language, whose status is officially on a par with that of Hebrew, in practice does not receive equal treatment and its official status is not respected."⁸⁹

The slogan that spoke of a common heritage, of creating "one people and one language" meant that the Middle Eastern immigrants had to change their entire thinking in accordance with European standards. The effort was to absorb the immigrants through modernization.

⁸⁷ Cohen-Almagor 1995: 670

⁸⁸ Ceobanu, Sorek 2009: 480; Kimmerling 2001: 93, 125

⁸⁹ Ghanem 2001: 25

By definition, this effort was anything but neutral or impartial in its attitude toward cultural pluralism.⁹⁰

The national symbols, narratives and language all underline the Jewish character of the state and its national identity. The other 25 percent of society are excluded from these institutions. Arab citizens, however, are not represented in this construct of the nation's identity:

Whereas the Jews relate to the symbols, values, and institutions of the state as their own, identify with them, and derive them all from their own heritage, the Arabs are estranged from them, do not identify with them, and are painfully aware that they are drawn exclusively from the heritage of the majority.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Cohen-Almagor 1995: 464

⁹¹ Ghanem 2001: 25

CHAPTER V: The Israeli Discourse on Security

5.1 The Three Main Socio-Political Orientations Toward Security

Kimmerling has defined three major sociopolitical orientations in Israeli society: the *Securitist*-, the *Conflict*-, and the *Compromise Orientation*. They contain different perceptions of Judaism, Israeli society, and of course the nature of the Jewish-Arab conflict.⁹²

The *first* one is focused on the future existence of the state of Israel by means of surviving international conflicts. Kimmerling calls this particular stance on security the “*Securitist Orientation*”. “The primary means to prevent this destruction [of Israel] is maintenance of absolute and permanent Israeli military superiority in the region, and the supreme duty of every member of society is to give his or her utmost in military service.”⁹³ The military has moved to the center of Israeli society, being a big player in the employment market and important to civil, and especially political careers. The state is obliged not to abuse the military readiness and self-sacrifice of its members, using its power only for means of survival. The compliance of this 'social contract' has been broadly questioned for the first time in the war in Lebanon 1982-85, and a debate broke out on whether the state has violated its concept of *security*. Anyhow, the first priority in this concept is security, no matter what and who's freedoms are limited in order to ensure this security:

As long as the collectivity's existence is threatened in any way, all other social and private goals are subordinated, although not completely disregarded, to the maintenance of security. In principle, the achievement of peace and legitimacy in the region is desirable and attainable in the distant future, if and when 'the Arabs' understand that the Jewish state is indestructible. When that happens, there will be peace, and another Zionist goal, the complete 'normalization' of Israeli society will be attained. Concomitantly, the Palestinian problem will be solved without endangering Israel's security.⁹⁴

⁹² It is here crucial to state that several marginal groups do not relate to any of these orientations. These are mainly Arab citizens, ultra-Orthodox Israelis or new Russian immigrants, developing their own “bubbled” culture.

⁹³ Kimmerling 2001: 217

⁹⁴ Kimmerling 2001: 218

A, to a certain extent, more extreme approach is what Kimmerling calls the “*Conflict Orientation*”. This stream sees the Arab-Jewish conflict as just another manifestation of traditional Antisemitism. The Jewish state, surrounded by Arabs, is in permanent danger, frequent wars with them are inevitable, and a peaceful settlement of the conflict cannot be attained in the near future:

The most important goal of the collectivity is to win any war. All other collective or private goals are subordinate to this, and pursuit of them detracts from it. Power and military strength are the only consideration in relations between different national, ethnic, or religious groups. The only difference in relations between Jews and non-Jews in the present Israeli and Zionist context, in comparison to other historical periods, is that now Jews have some advantage in the regional power game; the foremost priority is to preserve this superiority. [...] Holding on to as much as possible of Eretz Israel [...] is seen not only as a strategic necessity [...] but mainly as a moral, sacred, and religious-nationalistic imperative.⁹⁵

The collectivity of Israel is formed by ethno-religious ties. These are the only relevant criterion for the membership in the country's community. The collectivity is exclusively Jewish, and thus, Non-Jewish residents are not to be granted its advantages: “Equality, justice, welfare, and mutual aid are meaningless beyond the boundaries of the Jewish primordial collectivity. Opponents are found not only outside the boundaries of the Jewish collectivity but also inside it.”⁹⁶

The “*Compromise Orientation*”, on the other hand, is more of a deconstructivist view on the state and security, often referred to as leftist. The central objective of this socio-political orientation is the peaceful settlement of the Jewish-Arab and especially Palestinian conflict. The particular dispute is seen as no less negotiable than any other conflict. In a great contrast to the 'conflict orientation' this orientation sees this Jewish-Arab relation unconnected to anti-Semitic persecution of the past. The actual reasons for the conflict are found in:

material interests, such as territorial resources, markets, boundaries, and water. Peace, democracy and 'normalcy' [...] are perceived as linked to compromise, and the achievement of peace as a necessary condition for the attainment of all other aims, such as a more egalitarian society, economic growth, welfare, technological, scientific, cultural, and artistic progress [...].⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Kimmerling 2001: 221

⁹⁶ Kimmerling 2001: 222

⁹⁷ Kimmerling 2001: 223

Above all, the central thought of this orientation is that peace (with the acceptance of Israel as a legitimate state) is the only way to reach security. The membership to the society is here connected to citizenship, regardless of religious or ethnic categories. An utmost demand is a “state for its citizens”, while citizens are though obliged to fulfill their duties, which means besides obeying the laws and paying reasonable taxes, performing military service.⁹⁸

As mentioned, some parts of society are not represented in these orientation. Arab citizens of Israel are excluded even from the compromise orientation. Peace and war are both considered exclusively a Jewish matter. Even some of the largest peace movements, like “Peace Now” choose to leave the Arabs out of the debate, partly not to be suspected of supporting the so-called “*Arab cause*”.⁹⁹

5.2 Security and Israeli National Identity

5.2.1 Violence

Jewish history is characterized by violence and discrimination against Jewish communities, reaching back to the antiquity. European (christian) medieval *anti-Judaism* 'wiped out' entire Jewish communities from several countries, like in the Reconquista on the Iberian peninsula. The peak of the violence against Jews is posed by modern *Antisemitism*, which has found its most inhuman outburst in the *Shoah*. One undeniable goal of Zionism was in fact to bring the 'Jewish People' to a safe haven and thus ensure its future existence. This still is a major legitimacy for the cause of the state of Israel, its '*raison d'être*', and plays a central role in the discourse of the right of existence of Israel. The objective is to ensure the continuity of the Jewish state in order to guarantee the future existence of Jewish life. Even though not being the home to all world Jewry, Israel is seen by many as an emergency shel-

⁹⁸ Kimmerling 2001: 223

⁹⁹ Kimmerling 2001: 224

ter, in case of new outbreaks of violent Antisemitism. Therefore, security remains a major objective of Israeli politics.

But Zionism did not mark an end of the violence, to the contrary. From the first Zionist settlements on a conflicts arose. Attacks and counter-attacks between Jews and Arabs shaped the life in the *Yishuv*. Another opponent were the British authorities, who were fought in order to protect clandestine migration from European countries during and after World War II, and fight for the case of independence. In 1948 the 'enemy' consisted no more solely of small unorganized groups of Arabs, occasionally committing assaults, or a colonial power which sought to prevent illegal immigration, but a much more visible enemy: the Arab neighbor states, united to fight against the resolution of the United Nations intending to create an alien state in midst of the Middle-East; and the Palestinians themselves, hoping for the inclusion into a desired pan-Arabian 'empire', which was to be established after the end of Colonial rule. From 1948 on, the state of Israel saw itself surrounded by 'enemies' in a war between two systems, claiming the end of the state, and whose major victory would mean its annihilation.

5.2.2 The Regime of Security

As early as the very first Zionist settlements in the late 19th century, defense organizations (such as Ha'ganah, Irgun or Lehi) and weapons were organized for defensive and offensive purposes. Since security has been an important matter, the society got 'militarized', so that every (Jewish) citizen was able to defend their country against external and internal aggressors. Joining the army is not merely an obligation by law, but a duty most Israelis willingly attend for.¹⁰⁰ Not is the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) only an instrument for national *security*, but also for national *identity*, playing a core role in nation-building, imposed on young Jewish men for three, and women for two years.¹⁰¹

The “security regime” has become a very powerful part in Israeli politics. It is omnipresent in the news, as external and internal dangers are pointed out permanently. The grown popu-

¹⁰⁰ Kimmerling 2001: 213

¹⁰¹ Armees service is not compulsory for ultra-orthodox Jews. The question whether the Haredim should serve the same national duties as other Jewish citizens has been in debate recently.

larity of the security discourse can be evidenced e.g. in the elections of 1996, when Benjamin Netanyahu's security campaign outshone Shimon Peres' peace emphasis. "The suicide bombings have played into his hands in this respect, while the constant emphasis on security, rather than peace, has proved a useful means by which to cover up his government's failures, be it the Bar-On affair or, most recently, the ill-considered Mossad operation inside Jordan."¹⁰²

The region of the Middle East has been politically very unstable through the recent decades. After signing peace treaties with Egypt and the withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula, the relation with Israel's neighbors still remained critical. Especially Iran as an enemy country represents a powerful "enemy" to the Israeli nation, causing a major discourse, primarily fueled by its nuclear program and the danger of a nuclear strike on Israel. In the legislative elections of 2013 the Iranian security discourse played a fundamental role which helped Netanyahu's Likud to stay in power, despite the broad disaffection previously expressed in the social protests and linked occupation of the Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv.

With the beginning of the "Arab Spring" in 2010 the Israeli security discourse has received a new drive. Even though the relations with the former regimes of Mubarak and Al-Assad have not been flawless, it created a certain stability for decades. The current political conflicts in the Middle East produce an unpredictable future in the inter-state relations. The Israeli media keeps a close watch on the current events in the neighboring counties and the national defense system is constantly kept alerted.

¹⁰² Newman 1997: n. pag.

5.2.4 'Terrorism'

Not only foreign governments represent potential dangers – non-governmental organizations play a major role in the security discourse. Militias such as the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah, and especially the Palestinian Hamas and the Islamic Jihad Movement, mainly acting in the Gaza Strip, represent a constant threat on the daily basis for many Israeli civilians. With the high frequency of Palestinian terrorist attacks the Israeli government legitimized the construction of the West Bank barrier, cutting along and, in many cases, across the *green line* of 1949, or the *pre-67* border. The Government calls it the *security fence* or the *anti-terrorist fence*, while others refer to the barrier as *separation wall*, *racial segregation wall*, or even *apartheid wall*. Even though the wall interferes with the everyday lives of Palestinians in many ways, it is celebrated as a great achievement in security by the Israeli government, referring to the decreased number of terrorist attacks. This forms a prime example of Israeli security discourse: The disadvantages the wall imposes on the Palestinians of the West Bank are widely noticed and there is a certain compassion with the Palestinian farmers being cut off their farmland, but the fact of a successful reduction of terrorist attacks and the therefore increased sense of security predominates and legitimizes the (involuntary) sacrifice of freedom. Security forms a significant objective, all other matters are subordinated, such as freedom, even if it is someone else's freedom.¹⁰³

Another example is the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 which is often seen as a big strategical mistake causing a decline in civil security. Since Israel's disengagement from Gaza missile attacks on Israeli territory have been frequent accompanied by counter strikes and two major ground offensives in 2008/-09 and 2012. This is often used as an argument for the distrust in the Palestinian Arabs, claiming that every step towards Palestinian sovereignty is immediately abused to harm Israel.

¹⁰³ Security is though obviously not the only effect and perhaps intention of the construction of the West Bank barrier, but I'm focusing here on the discourse of security.

5.2.5 Perceived Threats

The Israeli Sociologist Sammy Smooha distinguishes three perceived threats in the Israeli security discourse:

The *first* threat is to Israel's physical and political survival in the Middle East. Although peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt have stabilized the situation a little towards two borders, the whole region remains hostile.

Regional animosity is expected to continue because Israel prefers economic, political and cultural integration into the West rather than into the Middle East. Maintenance of Israel as a Jewish state stirs rejection in the Arab region on the one hand and serves as a vehicle for mobilisation of Israeli Jews on the other.¹⁰⁴

The *second* perceived threat are the Arab citizens of Israel, as they constitute a hazard in both Israeli security and demography:

[T]he Arabs are an enemy-affiliated minority and an integral part of the Palestinian people and the multistate Arab nation that are not amicable to Israel. They are also concentrated in border and confrontation areas susceptible to a high external pressure to collaborate with the 'enemy'. [...] Their numerous past and present deprivations cast further doubt on their loyalty to the state.¹⁰⁵

The Arabs of Israel are feared to affiliate to the Palestinian people and a future Palestinian state. Peace with the Palestinians will not be accompanied by forgiveness and the confession of one's own mistakes, but will still contain unsettled issues potential to arouse traditional conflicts. Moreover, "a future Palestinian state would serve as an external homeland and patron for Israeli Arabs and would enlist their support in order to destabilise the Jewish state."¹⁰⁶ Besides the image of Arabs as alien to the Jewish national identity, the long standing discourse of security and has created an image of "The Arab" as dangerous and therefore a threat to the State of Israel. This discourse does not only impose a certain image of volatility on the neighboring Arab countries or the Palestinians, but as well on the Arab citizens of *Israel*. The Arabs are perceived as non-loyal to the state and its values, suspected of sharing more sympathy with the Palestinians and Arab neighbors than with their Jewish

¹⁰⁴ Smooha 2002: 486

¹⁰⁵ Smooha 2002: 486

¹⁰⁶ Smooha 2002: 487

co-citizens.¹⁰⁷ Another part of this concept of national threat is the Arab demography, with which I will deal in the following chapter.

A *third* one is the fear of a discontinuity in the survival of the Jewish people. This danger is found in the continuous Antisemitism, “dilution of Jewish identity and culture and mixed marriages”¹⁰⁸. Having achieved to build a Jewish state, Israel assumes the responsibility to ensure the future existence of the Jews and Jewishness. The state therefore has to fulfill preserving tasks, like fostering ties with the diaspora and supporting Jewish immigration:

A Jewish state is regarded as a necessary condition for the Jewish national survival. It provides a safe shelter tor persecuted Jews and a haven to any Jew seeking full and sovereign Jewish life. The Jewish diaspora is vital for Israel as a source of immigration, political support, economy assistance and moral solidarity.¹⁰⁹

5.3 The Arab Citizens of Israel

With a share of more than 20 percent, Arabs¹¹⁰ form the largest non-Jewish group in the state of Israel.¹¹¹ They are a minority in a state defined by ethno-religious classification. They consist of a Muslim majority, other religious groups such as Christians (including different confessions) and Druze, while another minority amongst them are Bedouins. Being Israeli citizens, they formally enjoy the same rights and duties as their Jewish associates, except for the military, in which only Druze are allowed to serve. In reality Arab citizens face a different treatment. There are distinct inequalities between Arab and Jewish Israelis, apparently, especially when it comes to income and higher education, or acquisition of land. Israel is defined a Jewish state, therefore non-Jews don't fit into this self-definition of the nation's identity. Arabs in Israel have a distinct history and identity, different to the

¹⁰⁷ Smooha 2002: 487

¹⁰⁸ Smooha 2002: 487

¹⁰⁹ Smooha 2002: 487

¹¹⁰ Not all groups included into the term necessarily fall under the classification of Arab. In the discourse examined in this thesis they are all subsumed into this category.

¹¹¹ There are different terms to identify this group: Arab Israelis, Israeli Arabs, Palestinian Israelis, Israeli Palestinians, the Palestinians of 1948, etc. I decided to use “Arab citizens of Israel” as a more neutral name, since the self- and extraneous identifications vary.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, living under different conditions and in a different system.¹¹²

[A] state-controlled elementary and high-school system was added. Israel's school curriculum for its Arab citizens was designed to create a new ethnic identity, that of the 'de-Palestinized' Israeli Arab. The history was presented as consonant with the history of the state of Israel. They were taught the Koran (and the New Testament for Christian Arabs) as well as the Hebrew Bible literature. Israeli Arabs became a bilingual and bicultural people, educated to obey 'Israeli democracy'.¹¹³

Making up more than 20 per cent of Israel's population today, the Arabs citizens have grown not only in number but also cultural, social and considerable material wealth. Despite their unerprivileged social position, many Arabs have managed to get higher education and economic success. They started to organize politically and become an important player in Israeli politics:

[T]he Israeli Arabs, who since 1967 have come to feel part of the Palestinian people, but at the same time are active participants in the Israeli state, involvement in Israeli politics, society, and culture on the basis of equal citizenship rights now seems desirable. From the Jewish side, participation of Arabs as active actors in Israeli politics has interested many segments of the secular, and especially left and libertarian, wings of Jewish society. The social construction as a Trojan horse and self-evident 'enemy' is now being strongly challenged.¹¹⁴

For decades the communist party served as a major agent to channel Israeli Arab protest, while the state made big efforts in choking off any national or ethnically based Arab political organizations and protest movements. For decades Communist party was regarded as an Arab national party by both Jews and Arabs.¹¹⁵ “The Communist party also served as an intellectual hothouse for a new Arab cultural elite, who created an original local counterculture, almost completely isolated from cultural developments in other Arab countries.”¹¹⁶

With the political mobilization of other ethnic groups like the Mizrachim, their participation in Israeli politics, and the formation of political parties like the *Shas* party, Arab parties, such as *Balad* were being founded and voted into the Knesset. The importance of the Arab

¹¹² Ghanem 2001: 50ff; Kimmerling 2001: 133f; Kop 2003: 22f

¹¹³ Kimmerling 2001: 134

¹¹⁴ Kimmerling 2001: 136

¹¹⁵ Ghanem 2001: 5; Koren 2003: 216f;

¹¹⁶ Kimmerling 2001: 135

electorate has grown over the years and the large party blocs have realized the potential of these voters, trying to win them for their cause: “In this sense, the Arab population is no longer a marginal and irrelevant player in decision-making processes. Instead, it has become a meaningful factor in the political mobilizations of the two large party blocs, Likud and Labor.”¹¹⁷

The regain of the *Labor* party's power in the 1999 Knesset elections can be traced to the massive support of the Arab voters. Despite of the support of the Arab electorate, the new elected prime minister Ehud Barak refrained from putting Arab members into high positions in the government and there fore excluded them from the foci of power.¹¹⁸ After the outbreak of the *al-Aqsa intifada* in 2001 Arab citizens demonstrated their solidarity with the Palestinian struggle. The violent response of the Israeli government was considered overreacted and lead to a great disaffection and frustration among Arab citizens. The vast disappointed in the new government lead Arabs, who previously supported Labor in the elections of 1999, to boycott the elections in early 2001, as many did before in 1996. Most Arab citizens boycotted the elections and the absence of the traditional support of the Arab community for Ehud Barak lead to the political victory of Ariel Sharon's Likud.¹¹⁹ The intentions of the Arab community's boycott may have been to protest against their exclusion and demonstrating their political importance, the results were however to their disadvantage – the rise of the center-right wing:

Some analysts have interpreted the boycott as the withdrawal of the Israeli Arabs from the state, from their Israeliness, and from the political arena. However, the meaning of this collective act was quite the opposite. The aim of the boycott was to indicate to the Israeli state, especially the political left (namely, the Labor and Meretz parties) that the support of Arab voters can no longer be considered self-evident, and that they demand an equal voice in the Israeli polity's critical decision-making.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Kop 2003: 23

¹¹⁸ Ghanem 2001: 168

¹¹⁹ Kimmerling 2001: 171 f; Kop 2003: 23

¹²⁰ Kimmerling 2001: 172

CHAPTER VI: The Discourse on Demography

In 2005 Benjamin Schwarz published a comment in *The Atlantic* entitled “Will Israel Live to 100?”. His article received great popularity and has ever since been debated and cited numerous. Schwarz states a very pessimistic view on the future of the Jewish state. The tendencies in the region, he argues, do not point at an ever possible peaceful settlement of the conflict. Schwarz warns of a rapid demographic growth of Palestinians and Arab citizens of Israel. 'The womb', as Yasser Arafat once said, 'is the Palestinian's best weapon' – Schwarz sees this statement reflected in the current development of Arab demography. Opposing Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, he sees a great danger in sympathizing with the Palestinian's history, as he accuses both of doing so. Until the year 2020, he believes, the Jewish population between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea will likely have shrunk to as little as 42 per cent.¹²¹

[A] future Palestinian state hemmed in between the Green Line and the Jordan and in the Gaza Strip will face astronomical population growth (the population in Gaza now doubles every generation, and an enormous influx of former refugees now living throughout the Arab world [...] is almost certain), scarce water, and dire economic conditions. (The obvious outlet for Palestinian labor—Israel—will perforce be tightly closed; otherwise the sort of creeping immigration the United States has experienced from Mexico would swamp Israel[...]).¹²²

The narrow land, crowded with two peoples, will not contain enough sources to sustain two sovereign states. The Palestinians are tempted by a one state solution, taking over the whole land piece by piece, he claims. Just like David Ben-Gurion said, he'd accept even the smallest state, using it as a springboard for future expansion, the Palestinians follow the same strategy, according to Schwarz.¹²³

Israel must take actions to retain its Jewish national identity, even by the high cost of giving up the occupied territories. The barrier, he agrees with Arnon Soffer, is a desperate attempt

¹²¹ Schwarz 2005: n. pag.

¹²² Schwarz 2005: n. pag.

¹²³ Schwarz 2005: n. pag.

to save the state of Israel, “detaching Israel politically and economically from the growing and impoverished Palestinian population”.¹²⁴

However, the discourse Schwarz is taking part in is about the fear of a greater state shared between Arabs and Jews alike. The fear is expressed in the loss of a national identity and the end of the state of Israel the way it presently is in the status quo. Trying to avoid a bi-national state, some radical opinions view the Arab citizens of Israel as an internal threat, and even suggest policies to make them leave the state, in order to keep Israel *more or less exclusively* Jewish.

The ratio of population balance to ensure a Jewish demographic majority is usually cited to be 80 per cent Jews and 20 per cent Arab. Since 1948 Israel has managed to keep this ratio.¹²⁵ Israeli policy makers are eager to keep this Jewish majority in the Jewish state, e.g. by promoting the immigration of Jews all over the world, and even – by halachic definition – non-Jews, as in the case of immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s.

6.1 Demographic Statistics as a political tool

Over the years numerous statistics on Israeli and Palestinian demography have been released, pointing out demographic forecasts about the future 'ethno-religious' share in the Middle East. The statistical data varies dramatically, comparing their quantitative outcome. Depending on the political intentions behind the statistics, they use different ways of counting, increasing or decreasing the Arab and Jewish population. “Population statistics and birth rates play such an important role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—from the way that foreign aid is allocated to Israel's decision to hold or relinquish territory—that those attempting to manipulate the perceptions of both the public and policymakers are irresistibly drawn to the field.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Schwarz 2005: n. pag.

¹²⁵ Zureik 2003: 620

¹²⁶ Faitelson 2009: n. pag.

The presented data has always had an enormous impact on various discourses in Israel, and often created 'panic' among the Jewish-Israeli society. The power of statistic data is not to be underestimated since it has great influence on the discourse, and thus on policies. According to Faitelson and Gottheil manipulation of data has always been a part of Israeli and Palestinian demographic consensus and works as a powerful political 'weapon' to convince the society and policy makers of the importance of one or another political action, or as Gottheil puts it:

Palestinian demography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has never been just a matter of numbers. It has always been—and consciously so—a front-line weapon used in a life-and-death struggle for nationhood among two peoples[...]. The problem with staking so much on so narrow a focus as past demography is that the data generated by demographers and others since the early nineteenth century are so lacking in precision that, in some matters of dispute concerning demography, 'anyone's guess,' as the saying goes, 'is as good as any other.' Or almost so.¹²⁷

Arnon Soffer, a geographer at the Haifa University, predicts an alarming future concerning Israel's Jewish population. By the year 2020, Soffer estimates, the west of the Jordan river will accommodate a total population of 15.1 million people, while the Jewish population will be a minority of only 6.5 million. He argues further, even within the borders of 1967, the Jewish population will be reduced to 65 per cent.¹²⁸

Also the Italian born Israeli demographer Sergio DellaPergola, who plays an important role in Israel's national demographic research, predicts a similar future, suggesting the Jewish population is in threat of an Arab demographic domination.¹²⁹

However, Soffer's statistical outcome is inaccurate, as Faitelson puts it, because of double counting:

Sofer [sic] actually miscalculated the Arab population twice: First, by using the 1986 Central Bureau of Statistics forecast made for 2002 for all Arabs—defined officially as citizens and permanent residents of the State of Israel, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights—as the Arab population of Israel only 'within the Green Line,' i.e., exclusive of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights; and, second, by folding the Arab population of East Jerusalem into the forecast of the Arab population in the Palestinian territories. Then, he presented the forecast for the West Bank and Gaza Strip including East Jerusalem, as it was usually done by the U.N., CIA, and Palestinian sources. In effect, this results in double counting the East Jerusalem population, first as permanent residents of the State of Israel and then as the residents of Palestinian territory.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Gottheil 2003: n. pag.

¹²⁸ Zureik 2003: 622

¹²⁹ DellaPergola 2003: 3ff

¹³⁰ Faitelson 2009: n. pag.

But not only Israeli demographers are suspected of counting parts of the populations double. Also the Palestinian Authority is said to use this tool to emphasize on an increased demographic size of Palestinians:

On February 9, 2008, Luay Shabaneh, the new president of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), published the results of a December 2007 Palestinian Authority population census. According to the new data, since 1997, the Arab population has increased to 1,460,000 in the Gaza Strip and 2,300,000 in the West Bank (including 208,000 in East Jerusalem) to a total of 3,760,000 people—an increase of 30 percent in one decade. East Jerusalem is under Israel's administration, but the Palestinian Authority nevertheless counts its Arab population as part of the territory it administers. Thus, the East Jerusalem Arabs are double-counted: once as part of the Arab population of Israel, and again as a part of the population of the Palestinian Authority.¹³¹

Besides the double counting, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics also enlisted more than 300.000 Palestinians emigrants as permanent residents, distorting the numbers. The outcome of the 2007 Palestinian Authority consensus almost matched the PA's estimates at the end of 2005. Faitelson finds two reasons for the PA's intentional boost of numbers: *first*, the *positive* effect on the Palestinian morale and the *negative* on the Israelis' morale, pushing the fear of a “demographic time bomb”. And *second*, he argues, the numbers promote *financial incentives* the Palestinian Authority receives from the international community, accordingly to its population size.¹³²

Despite the presented numbers of many statistics commissioned by Israeli governments and the Palestinian Authority, researches independent from each political authorities suggest a different picture, pointing out a rise in Jewish birth rates accompanied by a decline in Arab birth rates. According to their estimation, the land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean Sea will also inherit a Jewish majority in the future decades.¹³³

US-American political scientist Ian Lustick, on the other hand, accuses some Israeli national demographers even of showing a smaller number of population in the West Bank. According

¹³¹ Faitelson 2009: n. pag.

¹³² Faitelson 2009: n. pag.

¹³³ Faitelson 2013: 17; Morland 2009: n. pag.; Carmeli 2012: n. pag.

to Lustick, Israeli government associated demographers intentionally manipulate demographic data and portray an image of a far smaller Arab population, in order to promote the proceeded settlement in the West Bank:

Their efforts have convinced most of the settler and right-wing blocs in Israel, and many among its supporters abroad, that there are at least a million fewer Palestinians in the West Bank than is widely believed, and that insistent reports to the contrary are politically motivated falsifications produced by media, statisticians, and politicians opposed to Israeli rule of the West Bank.¹³⁴

The variety of statistic data on demography does not necessarily indicate intentional manipulation, and it is not my ambition to accuse any of the here listed researchers and institutions of doing so. But the varying results of the demographic inquiries indicate ideological interests and the purpose of backing policies.

Whatever the intentions may be, many popular statistics indeed produce an image of a rapidly growing Arab population, inside Israel and in the occupied territories. The predicted destiny of an Arab majority and Jewish minority is a powerful agent in the discourse on an “Arab demographic time bomb”, producing the “danger” to the future existence of the State of Israel, its *raison d'être*, or at least, to the Jewish national identity of the state of Israel. A major function of these statistics is their interpretations, predicting a future share of population. They provide a tool for politicians, center-right wing and far right-wing, who use these to emphasize on the decline of Israel's Jewish population and thus strive to create awareness for an identity they seek to preserve.

¹³⁴ Lustick 2013: 185 ff.

6.2 Population and Land Exchange

In 2001 Itzak Ravid, back then director of Operations Research in the Israeli Air Force and head of the National Security Team in the prime minister's office, initiated a study on Arab-Jewish demography. The study's main concern was to suggest ways to maintain a Jewish majority in Israel, facing a low birth rate of Jews, declining Jewish immigration and a high birth rate of Arabs, in both the occupied territories and Israel itself. Among his suggestions were policies to “encourage a decline in the birth rate among the Arabs in Israel, prevent the refugees from returning to their homes and increase Jewish immigration.”¹³⁵ Another proposal endorsed by transportation minister Ephraim Sneh, and adopted by the Herzliya conference, was the so-called 'population and land exchange'. Sneh suggested that Arab towns and villages along the Green Line of 1967 should be included into a future state of Palestine. In return, Israel would incorporate Jewish settlements close to the border. Arab citizens, especially those who were inhabitants of the proposed regions for exchange, were not consulted in the demographic debate. Despite of their Israeli citizenship, they and their homes are supposed to be expelled and included into another state, regardless of their consent. Responding to the criticism that such a practice of land and population transfer would be undemocratic on many levels, Shlomo Gazis, a former IDF general and participant of the Herzliya conference argued that “these are times in which 'democracy has to be subordinated to demography’”¹³⁶

Rehavam Ze'evi, former IDF general, government special adviser on terrorism, and founder of the far-right Moledet party, is known as the 'father of transfer'. In 1987 Ze'evi proposed the “transfer” of Palestinians and Arab citizens of Israel to neighboring countries. In his opinion this is the only viable solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He held on to this radical views until the very day of his death in 2001 when he was assassinated by four Palestinian gunmen who were members of the 'Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine'.

¹³⁵ Zureik 2003: 621

¹³⁶ Zureik 2003: 622

Population 'transfer', he argued, had previously been a legitimate solution to other ethnic conflicts, such as in the cases of India and Pakistan or Turkey and Greece.¹³⁷

Zionism is in essence the Zionism of transfer. The transfer of the Jewish nation from the diaspora to Zion and the transfer of the Arabs from lands neighboring Palestine, who came here to enjoy the fruits of the prosperity that the Jews brought to this land. And now the time has come for the third transfer, the separation of peoples, so that they will stop murdering each other.¹³⁸

In Ze'evi's understanding, socialist Zionists and the Labor party have been the *real* 'fathers of transfer,' because the very early settlement on Palestine had been accompanied by the displacement of its local Arab population.¹³⁹

In November 2001, Michael Kleiner, member of the right-wing Herut party, suggested a bill which received zinging response by other members of the parliament. The Knesset's legal adviser declared the bill racist. Kleiner proposed an "emigration package" for every Arab who is willing to leave to an Arab country, precisely: The Israeli government should encourage (its own) Arab citizens with financial incentives to refrain from their Israeli citizenship and adopt the citizenship of an Arab country, whereas foreign Jews are encouraged to immigrate and settle.¹⁴⁰

All these statements on population and land exchange or transfer include a certain view on the Israeli national identity and the identity of Israel's Arabs: Jews possess Israeli identity and Arabs the identity of another nation outside the land of Israel. The Arabs of Israel are seen as apart from society, not belonging to the country anyway. Kleiner's idea of "emigration packages" suggests that the Arabs are anyhow not satisfied living in Israel as part of its society, but desire to live among their fellow Arabs. According to this, the suggested incen-

¹³⁷ Shragai 2001: n. pag.

¹³⁸ Ze'evi cited by Shragai 2001: n. pag.

¹³⁹ Shragai 2001: n. pag.

¹⁴⁰ Alon 2001: n. pag.

tives mean only to stimulate the final decision to leave and give a little seed capital for a new beginning in Arab country. The use the expression '*emigration packages*' trivializes the transfer policy. It makes the transfer sound like a 'lunch box' and a little 'pocket money' for a school trip. The solution is presented as 'killing two birds with one stone': *Firstly*, it helps Israel's Arabs to fulfill their dream of a live among their own 'kind' and under Arab rule, and *secondly*, it helps Israel consolidate its Jewish character through boosting demographic majority by reducing the Arab minority.

The proposed land exchange in this discourse is portrayed as a '*win-win situation*' for both Israel and a possible future Palestinian state. A large share of Israel's Arab population lives in the areas bordering the green line of 1967. By excluding this land and the people living on it Israel would 'get rid' of a great part of its Arabs. Therefore Israel would solve its 'demographic problem' and dismantle the fear of becoming a future Jewish minority. It suggests that the Arabs would benefit insofar that they are reunited with their compatriots and abstracted from Israeli rule. The problem then is no more Israel's concern, but the Arabs would rule themselves.

What Ze'evi calls "transfer", however, is in fact *deportation*. He calls for a forceful removal of what today makes up one fifth of the country's inhabitants. To Ze'evi the Arabs are 'invaders' who had come to 'enjoy the fruits of the prosperity that the Jews brought to this land'. In his view it is time to undo their infiltration and initiate their transfer. Peace, he claims, is only possible by separating Arabs from Jews.

The Arabs affected by the suggested policies are never conducted. Except for the "emigration package" model, these 'transfers' are by direct force. Despite of Israel's definition as a "Jewish and democratic State", in this stream the "*Jewish*" appears to be more important than the "*democratic*" character, like Gazis says, democracy has to be subordinated to demography.

The idea of a demographic exchange has found notable response in Israeli society. A research published by the 'Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies' annual national security public opinion poll' claims that a noteworthy percentage of Jewish Israelis favor such policies:

Some 46 percent of Israel's Jewish citizens favor transferring Palestinians out of the territories, while 31 percent favor transferring Israeli Arabs out of the country [...]. When the question of transfer was posed in a more roundabout way, 60 percent of respondents said that they were in favor of encouraging Israeli Arabs to leave the country.¹⁴¹

The survey provides a little insight on how the public's political opinion changed within a short period of time. The sympathy for their Arab fellow citizens has anyhow declined compared to earlier polls:

The results of the survey also reveal that 24 percent of Israel's Jewish citizens believe that Israeli Arabs are not loyal to the state, compared to 38 percent who think the Arabs were loyal to the state at the beginning of the intifada. [...] Israeli-Arabs pose a threat to Israel's security, according to 61 percent of the Jewish population, while around 80 percent are opposed to Israeli-Arabs being involved in important decisions, such as delineating the country's borders, up from 75 percent last year [2001] and 67 percent in 2000. Some 72 percent of Jewish Israelis are opposed to Arab parties being part of a coalition government, compared to 67 percent last year [2001] and 50 percent in 1999.¹⁴²

Also the belief in a peaceful settlement of the conflict has shrunk, according to the survey, leading to a reduced willingness for granting Palestinians sovereign self-rule. The failed Oslo peace process and the following second intifada had both frustrated the faith in peaceful coexistence, leading a shift to the political right. Barzilai notes:

This overall shift to the right has been coupled by a significant fall in support for the Oslo process; down from 58 percent last year, to 35 percent this year. Support for the establishment of a Palestinian state has also dropped from 57 percent last year to 49 percent this year. Only 40 percent of Jewish Israelis support transferring [sic] control of Arab areas of East Jerusalem to the Palestinians as part of a peace agreement, compared with 51 percent last year. There has also been a fall in the number of people willing to leave the settlements as part of an agreement with the Palestinians: 49 percent are in favor of Israel leaving the settlements, apart from large blocs, under a permanent status agreement, compared to 55 percent last year.¹⁴³

Taking this survey seriously, one could come to the conclusion that the discourse on Arabs, demography, and security had strengthened its influence on the Jewish population's political views.

¹⁴¹ Barzilai 2002: n. pag.

¹⁴² Barzilai 2002: n. pag.

¹⁴³ Barzilai 2002: n. pag.

6.3 Deprivation of Citizenship

At that time interior minister Eli Yishai demanded to revoke the Israeli citizenship and permanent residency rights from Arab citizens if they have ties to terrorist organizations and activity. The prime minister at that time, Ariel Sharon, expressed his support for his minister's plan: Sharon said the interior minister's decision was "wise, judicious and balanced, and in accordance with his legal authority. Of course all the necessary legal steps must be taken."¹⁴⁴ Previously other steps have been taken to deprive Arabs from their citizenship. One was to revoke citizenship from Arab women who marry Palestinians from the occupied territories or move to those:

In 1999 the Israeli Supreme Court President Aharon Barak reprimanded the interior minister at the time for revoking the citizenship of Israeli Arab women who marry Palestinians from the territories. He called the practice 'scandalous'. By 1999, 1000 Arab women from Israel had lost their citizenship when they moved to the territories. The Justice asked rhetorically, 'would anyone ask an Israeli Jew to give up his citizenship if he moved to the territories?'¹⁴⁵

There are cases in other countries of the world where people lose citizenship, but usually in the case of citizens of two countries. Revoking Israeli citizenship from Arabs is an undemocratic policy, critics say. Even though the same rules should be applied to every citizen of a democratic state, these seem to be made to exclude Arab citizens from the country. The Supreme Court President's question criticizes this policies, referring to unequal treatment of the state's citizens: The state would not withdraw a Jewish Israeli's citizenship for settling in the territories. So why depriving it from an Arab woman?

The same question could be asked in the case of citizens with 'ties to terrorist organizations and activity'. There have been many incidents of Jewish terrorist action threatening democracy, like the assassination of Rabin, but revoking their citizenship would sound absurd.

So what is the difference and why do these politicians state these claims with such levity? Because Arab citizens are viewed as foreign to the state, at best newcomers to the land, not belonging there. This discursive practice creates an image of the Arabs as non-Israelis. They are residing in Israel, but they are not Israelis. Israelis are Jewish, they are democratic and

¹⁴⁴ Sharon cited by Ha'aretz Staff 2002: n. pag.

¹⁴⁵ Zureik 2003: 626

secular, as defined in the Israeliness, so Arabs can not be Israelis. Therefore these policy makers suggest that it is the best for both them and the state to move them out of the country, in which they do not wish to live and integrate.

Former Knesset member Bishara (later excluded after being accused of spying for the enemy) sees the policy as a forerunner for the transfer of Arabs: "What Yishai wants to do is a conspiratorial step in the direction of transfer. Citizenship cannot be a weapon in the hands of one person against the another."¹⁴⁶ Bishara saw here first attempts of making Ze'evi's idea of transfer come true. It is a way of solving a problem by simply removing it, or moving it out of sight.

6.4 Fertility

As early as the very beginning of the Zionist movement fertility has been seen as a major factor for the establishment and maintenance of a Jewish state. In the spirit of the biblical commandment "be fruitful and multiply" the discourse concentrates on the promotion of child birth to preserve a Jewish majority in Israel. Facing the fear of a high Arab birthrate, Israeli policy makers have made efforts to create an environment friendly for Jewish fertility. The image of Arab women as 'birth machines', supported by Arafat's statement about the womb as the Palestinians' most powerful weapon, has created a great fear for Israel's society losing the demographic 'battle'. In response to a high Arab birth rate, Jewish fertility had to be increased through intervention by the state. Politicians have pushed the urge of a fast growing Jewish population to fight back their Arab counterpart. With the intention of planning demographic interventions the state installed agencies concerned with the promotion of a large family and institutional arrangements for child birth. Promotion campaigns were launched, the legal framework was shaped accordingly, family incentives were established and the public health system was adjusted. The policy was though not directed at Israel's citizens per se, but provided for Jewish Israelis, not the Arab citizens, since their birth rate was perceived the nation's problem intrinsically.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ Bishara cited by Ha'aretz Staff 2002: n.pag.

¹⁴⁷ Sperling 2010: 363f

By and by, the proceeding discourse has created a “strong cultural perception of raising a family as a patriotic endeavor”¹⁴⁸, making reproduction a national duty, crucial for the security and the future existence of the State of Israel, and more, its national identity as a Jewish State.

In 1949, one year after the establishment of the state, Israel's first prime minister David Ben Gurion stated he would give a symbolic award for Jewish 'heroine' mothers who deliver their tenth child. Such an extraordinary national heroine was Amalia Ben Haroush, who gave birth to her 20th child in 1967.¹⁴⁹

In 1967, in a time of economic recession, causing fewer Jews to immigrate and more to leave Israel, the government was alarmed, fearing a demographic 'disaster'. As an action against the impending decrease of Israel's Jewish population the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare established the Center for Demography and the Public Council for Demography. Both institutions are concerned with demographic research and ways to increase the country's Jewish population.¹⁵⁰ Prime minister Levi Eshkol explained the creation of these two institutions as follows:

We have to work systematically to realize demographic policy, which is intended to create an atmosphere that will encourage childbearing, in light of the fact that it is crucial for the future of the Jewish people, [...] [and] to reduce 'artificial' abortions, whose large number constitutes a worrisome phenomenon in terms of both national demography and women's health.¹⁵¹

As an intervention in the country's birth rate, the government decided to give incentives to large Jewish families, such as in education, housing and insurance, to encourage Jewish parents to have more children. The government institutions' efforts of encouraging Jewish family growth have been criticized much, calling it a racist and sexist policy, especially because these benefits are provided exclusively to *Jewish* mothers and families.¹⁵² Defending the

¹⁴⁸ Sperling 2010: 364

¹⁴⁹ Sarig 2002: n. pag.; Sperling 2010: 365

¹⁵⁰ Sperling 2010: 365

¹⁵¹ Eshkol cited by Sarig 2002: n.pag.

¹⁵² Sarig 2002: n. pag.

government's demographic policy, Baruch Levy, chairman of the Council for Demography argues, that the institution's efforts are only to counterbalance Arab birthrates:

The question that will have to be examined [...] is whether there is a way to get such families to bring another child into the world, and what that way might be. As for the ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations, the natural birthrates are already high, so there is no need to encourage them to have more children. [...] The Council for Democracy does not have the goal of fighting Arab childbearing, but neither does it have the intention of encouraging Arab childbearing, just as it does not have the intention of encouraging childbearing in the ultra-Orthodox population.¹⁵³

In defense of the council's objectives, Shlomo Benizri, member of the Shas party and minister of labor and social affairs under the Sharon government, stated that the council only reflects the Israeli citizens' strong desire to have more children:

A study conducted three years ago found that the majority of women in the country want to have a larger family if the state is willing to help out in a variety of areas, such as housing, day-care centers and so forth. It follows that not only is there no contradiction between the personal desire of the women in the country and the national interest in increasing the birthrate, but that the personal interest of the majority of the women in the country (and of the men) is completely consistent with the national interest of consolidating the Jewish majority.¹⁵⁴

In 1986 the Peres government, worried about the demographic trends among the 'Jewish people', stated that it “will strive to ensure an appropriate level of growth of the Jewish population”¹⁵⁵

However, 11 years later in 1997 Eli Yishai of the Shas party, then minister of labor and social affairs, viewed the Council for Demography's goals as failed and initiated its re-establishment. The council proceeded to give direct recommendations to the Netanyahu government, including the “preparation of a kit to be used by every woman who became pregnant, containing advice and publicity information to convince her not to have an abortion”¹⁵⁶.

The pro-natalist approach has been fruitful anyhow, showing a highly increased Jewish birth rate today.¹⁵⁷ The governmental institutions have created an environment inviting for Jewish

¹⁵³ Levy cited by Sarig 2002: n.pag.

¹⁵⁴ Benizri cited by Sarig 2002: n.pag.

¹⁵⁵ Sarig 2002: n. pag.

¹⁵⁶ Sarig 2002: n. pag.

¹⁵⁷ Sperling 363f

women and families to bear children. The state provides technology, institutions, financial support and the legal ground for a high birthrate. In vitro fertilization has been on the rise, making Israel the country with the world's most fertility clinics per capita. Single women, including homosexuals, are fully eligible to access in vitro fertilization services, all funded by the state of Israel.¹⁵⁸

Childbirth in these examples is portrayed as a weapon in the demographic battle for dominance. The childbearing women are the war heroines in this game, like when Ben Gurion said he would honor every “heroine” who gave birth to her tenth child. It is every woman's duty to serve her nation by reproduction. This makes them warriors, equally to taking part in the army's combat units. This way, reproduction is incorporated into the military society, giving birth a central part in national defense. The discursive practices on demography and child birth have created an own social moral in which reproduction is a duty to Israel's society. Bearing children is another form of serving the country, equally to serving in the army:

Through childbirth women become true members of the collective or the nation, thereby deserving respect and social recognition. Such a perception is also reflected in the usage of military terms to express maternity issues, like the word “*shmirah*,” which is used both to mean the duty of guarding and bed rest prescribed to avert miscarriage. [...] [C]hildless women (and men) in Israel suffer enduring stigma that can only be 'repaired' through the use of assisted reproductive technologies.¹⁵⁹

Women are given the social responsibility of preserving the nation against Arab women, who are at the same time their counterpart. The pictured battle is fought between the Jewish and Arab woman, using their wombs as weapons to defeat each other.

The Jewish woman has to be supported as much as possible, to make her aware of her duty and help her execute it. The idea is to create the awareness that every member of (the Jew-

¹⁵⁸ Sperling 2010: 363

¹⁵⁹ Sperling 2010: 364

ish) society has the obligation to serve their country in any ways possible. 'Reproduction is the women's way of supporting their country', politicians like Yishai seek to convince society. Abortion is therefore a betrayal, deserting their own nation in its war for identity. Every pregnant woman should thus be convinced of the importance of giving birth to a member of the Jewish state. This reduces the role of women, Arab and Jewish alike, to the task of being mothers and raising children for the future existence of their community.

If not able to fulfill their duty the state supports Jewish Israelis, if necessary by artificial fertilization. The fact that Israel has the most clinics for in vitro fertilization per capita worldwide reflects the significant weight of birth in the Israeli society.

However, the state's support for families is directed at *Jewish* parents, being the ones responsible for the continuance of the state's Jewish identity. The law officially does not distinguish between their citizens, it is though made clear that Arab families are not to be encouraged of extending their families. In one case the labor court denied fertility treatment for a Palestinian woman, even though her infertile husband was an Israel citizen, the decision was reversed later.¹⁶⁰

Like Levy says, the policies do not have the goal of *fighting* Arab birthrates, this would not be possible in any thinkable legal way, but it is also *not encouraging* the Arabs of having more children. In this rhetoric, support for Arab fertility would mean a direct support of the enemy providing them with weapons, which eventually would be used against Israel. It would therefore be fatal, in this sense, to assist Arab citizens' fertility because this is exactly the problem attempted to be solved.

When Benizri defends Israel's demographic policies and points at a survey that says that the women's and state's desires are equivalent, he means that the wish of growing the Jewish majority is fixed in both the state and the people. Whatever validity of such a survey, the

¹⁶⁰ Sperling 2010: 366

question is more how much the ongoing discourse on a demographic threat has stimulated the desire for growing a large family in order to save the nation's Jewish identity.

6.5 Netanyahu: "Israel's Arabs are the *real* demographic threat"

At the Herzliya Conference on security in 2005, Benjamin Netanyahu, at that time minister of finance and currently prime minister, held a speech on Israeli demography and security.

Netanyahu explained the risks of an internal threat, the Arab citizens of Israel. He pushed forward the urge for a two-state solution, in order to keep Israel safe. "Israel had already freed itself from control of almost all Palestinian Arabs. [...] The Palestinians would under all circumstances rule themselves and administer their own affairs[...]."¹⁶¹ But Israel's detachment from the Palestinians, the West Bank, and Gaza does not yet neutralize the 'demographic threat'. The *real* demographic threat to the Jewish state, Netanyahu says, are Israel's Arab citizens:

'If there is a demographic problem, and there is, it is with the Israeli Arabs who will remain Israeli citizens,' he said. The Declaration of Independence said Israel should be a Jewish and democratic state, but to ensure the Jewish character was not engulfed by demography, it was necessary to ensure a Jewish majority, he said. If Israel's Arabs become well integrated and reach 35-40 percent of the population, there will no longer be a Jewish state but a bi-national one, he said. If Arabs remain at 20 percent but relations are tense and violent, this will also harm the state's democratic fabric. 'Therefore a policy is needed that will balance the two.'¹⁶²

To ensure a the Jewish character of the State, Israel must promote immigration, according to Netanyahu. The economy, Netanyahu says, is the main factor for attracting Jews to Israel. "If we want Jews to come here, we need a flourishing and dynamic economy."¹⁶³

Calling 20 percent of Israel's citizens a "threat" to the state caused a lot of criticism on part of Likud's political opponents. Issam Makhoul of the Hadash party (a Jewish Arab socialist party), and at that time member of the Knesset, called Netanyahu's political views racist.

¹⁶¹ Netanyahu cited by Alon, Benn 2003: n.pag.

¹⁶² Alon, Benn 2003: n. pag.

¹⁶³ Netanyahu cited by Alon, Benn 2003: n.pag

Makhoul said that racism is the real threat to a democratic state: “A leader who considers 20 percent of the population of Israel to be a demographic threat and treats them as an existential problem, is himself a racist threat to democracy, sanity, and the rule of law - and he should be disposed of immediately for the good of both peoples.”¹⁶⁴

Other Arab members reacted similarly to Netanyahu's statements. Azmi Bishara, of Balad (National Democratic Alliance) responded: “Describing the original residents of this land as a demographic problem would be considered racism in any normal, or even abnormal, country.”¹⁶⁵

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel sent a letter of complaint about Netanyahu's remarks, stating: “Comments like these fan the flames of hatred, racism and discrimination that are the daily reality of Israeli Arab citizens and undermine the basic trust that underpins a democratic society,”¹⁶⁶

Netanyahu, minister of finance at the time of his speech and presently prime minister of Israel, in his distinct rhetoric, presents a large part of the Israeli population as a 'threat' to society. He calls 20 percent of the Israelis a national menace, not only in means of security, but also to Israel's national identity. In fear of a growth of the Arab population, Netanyahu calls for policies to create 'ethnic balance'. To him, the problem of demography is not expressed in the general growth of population, causing scarcities, like other fears of population growth predict, since on part of the solution is to include more people. The demographic problem is stated as a minority increasing in number and power, endangering the power of the majority, or in other words, Israel becoming a bi-national state. Netanyahu calls for a “flourishing and dynamic” economy to stimulate Jewish immigration. Immigration should be pitched to foreign Jews by creating and presenting financial advantages of a future life in Israel. His solution to the 'problem' is thus not necessarily to dissolve the tension between the country's citizens, but to integrate more of one group, in order to maintain its majority.

The discursive practice of Netanyahu, as a member of the country's political elite, tries to drive a wedge between parts of society, distinguishing them as two separate entities, and even worse, claiming that one group is endangering the very existence of the other. Arabs

¹⁶⁴ Makhoul cited by Alon, Benn 2003: n.pag.

¹⁶⁵ Bishara cited by Alon, Benn 2003: n.pag.

¹⁶⁶ Association for Civil Rights in Israel cited by The Assioted Press, Benn 2003: n.pag.

are portrayed as a potential danger, in the neighboring Arab countries, in the Palestinian territories, and in the state of Israel itself, constituting a threat to everything Israel stands for. They are not a part of Israeli society, but live their own alien 'bubble', not identifying with the identity of the state, without connection to the national symbols, and, what makes them the least Israeli, non-Jewish.

By emphasizing on Israel's Arab citizens as the “*real*” problem, Netanyahu points out a gradual withdrawal from Palestinian affairs. With the separation barrier, Israel is sealed off from most Arabs in the region and a possible future Palestinian state. Thus, he says, one demographic threat is almost solved, but what remains are the Arabs inside the Jewish state, who now pose the *real* danger.

6.6 Language and Power

In this stream of discourse demographic tendencies, real or perceived, are portrayed as a problem, or moreover, a danger to Israel's national identity. The situation of a rapidly growing Arab population and a slower growing or even shrinking Jewish population is expressed in different levels of urgency, varying in the language used. Some call it a “demographic problem” (*ha-ba'aya ha-demografit*), while others refer to “demographic threat” (*ha-sakanah ha-demografit*). More radical terms are “demographic time bomb” (*petzatzat ha-zman ha-demografit*) or “demographic ticking bomb” (*petzatzat ha-taktak ha-demografit*).

While the term *problem* reflects that there are some issues concerning the population in the region, calling the Arabs or Israel's Arab citizens a problem makes a big difference. It is identifying a problem and the Arabs as its cause, or, furthermore, the problem itself.

Threat, on the other hand, is a much more powerful term. The ongoing discourse of security has had strong influence on the constitution of Israeli society. The lack of security has been

an essential reason for the Zionist movement. The substantial threats of Antisemitism have been dangers and pushed the desire for the establishment of a Jewish state. The Jewish state was to ensure free practice of Jewish religion and culture, unaffected by the threats of Antisemitism. The numerous military conflicts with Arab countries have produced a regime of security over the years, giving major importance to security for every sphere of social life.

The repeated reference to “treat”, however, can distract from internal problems, such as economic disparities, welfare, and other internal political issues, making security the highest objective and subordinates all other policies. It can be used as a tool of the elites seeking to maintain hegemony. The discourse of threat is also capable of shaping national identity, unifying Israel's Jewish citizens, divided by origin, religious practice and political views.

The term 'threat', imposed on the Palestinians or the Arab citizens of Israel, indicates another use or abuse of language. It reflects the concept of Arabs per se as dangerous people, dangerous to Jews and the Jewish state alike, identifying them as *the enemy*. This discursive practice demonizes a considerable share of Israeli citizens, driving a wedge between the Jewish and Arab population. It strives to consolidate identities through demarcating the Jewish from the Arab identity.

The terms *time bomb* and *ticking bomb* are even more powerful than *threat*. The word *bomb* (*petzatzat*) is canny deployed in this discursive practice, using a kind of language which is strongly accompanied by emotions emerging from a collective memory.

Terrorist attacks like suicide bombings have been on the public eye in Israeli daily life. Frequent incidents of Palestinian men, women and minors entering buses, wearing explosive belts on their bodies and blowing themselves and a number of civilians to kingdom come, are deeply burnt-in pictures. The term 'bomb' evokes these emotional pictures, reminding Jewish Israelis of the everyday threats they, their families, and their social environment are exposed to. Calling the Arabs a demographic bomb connects these images with a whole part of the population. It turns Arab citizens into 'bombs', seeking to-, and capable of- blowing up the state.

The term “time” in *time bomb* refers to the urgency for actions against the demographic threat. It reflects the perception that it is just “a matter of time” that the Jewish population

will become a minority. The Arabs would grow in number and power, calling for the right of return for the refugees exiled in 1948 and grown to millions over the decades, and eventually dissolve Israel, if not “pushing the Jews into the sea”. ‘*Time*’ serves to remind of the acuteness of this whole danger, pushing to take actions before it is too late, if it is not already. The discursive practice calls for an immediate response to the threat. It emphasizes on the urgency to develop and advance demographic policies to prevent such a future, or in the rhetoric of this discourse, *defuse the ticking time bomb* before it explodes and blows up the nation.

The word *Arab* itself is given a distinct connotation in this discursive practice. ‘Arab’ is equalized with very negative terms like ‘problem’, ‘danger’, ‘threat’. Often the word ‘Arab’ is followed by these expressions or mentioned in the same breath. They are portrayed as harmful to the ‘*actual*’ Israelis, and, as Ze’evi said, came to the state to enjoy the fruits grown by the Zionists. They are thus a vermin, not only benefiting from the society, but at the same time destroying it.

‘Arab’ is used to describe the *other*, the non-Jewish, the non-Israeli. Arabs are perceived as not part of the Israeli nation, but belonging to the Arab nation, that is whether an Arab country or a future Palestine, into which the discourse includes them. The Arab citizens of Israel are represented as loyal to their ‘fellow’-Palestinians, not identifying with the state and at the same time not identified as legitimate members of it.

The Arab *woman* is represented as a major security risk with the potential of giving birth to Arab children, causing a growth of the Arab population and endangering the Jewish majority. The discourse puts her into the role of a *weapon* in favor of the demographic counterpart, fighting Jewish dominance in the region. It is the Jewish woman’s obligation to use her own womb to fight ‘fire with fire’.

6.7 Power, Dominance, and Hegemony

The discourse on the 'demographic time bomb' permanently links demography with security. The threat to national security is in fact the fear of a transition of power. With an Arab population growing not only in number, but also in social and political influence, the above mentioned Israeli policy makers predict the end of Israel's Jewish identity, if no profound actions are taken. Every necessary step has to be taken into consideration in order to maintain the current distribution of power.

The discourse has changed with the six-day-war in 1967, resulting in Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Within a short period of time Israel's borders were redrawn to a much larger extent, including millions of Arabs into the state's control. The demographic balance in Israel suddenly shifted, causing an outcry for the maintenance of the state's Jewish identity. While some parts of society promoted extensive policies, others demanded the withdrawal from the territories. Facing high Arab birthrates inside pre-67 Israel, they saw the internal demographic challenge already big enough, not wishing to extend the population 'dangers' to a larger scale:

[The occupation] launched a new national debate on the demographic future of Israel. Former foreign minister Abba Eban was among several Israeli political elites who became alarmed at the demographic implications of annexing the newly acquired territories. Eban ultimately embraced the creation of an independent Palestinian state for this reason.¹⁶⁷

This view has grown in popularity among Israeli politicians on both left and right orientations, stressing the necessity of the establishment of a Palestinian state and separate the Jewish state from the Arab 'threat'. Demographic security, in this sense, can only be achieved through division. But still, Israel contains more than 20 percent Arab citizens. The discursive practices made these 20 percent of the country's citizens an internal threat, identifying them as a demographic problem.

¹⁶⁷ Duffy Toft 2013: 34

Discourse implies constructive power and is capable of constructing identities. It produces and reproduces power relations and thus consolidates hegemonic structures. Power reproduces power and produces 'knowledge'.

The discursive construction of an Israeli identity was accompanied by, or even incorporated, a discursive construction of its Arabs. By producing an Idea of what is *Israeli*, it produced the Idea of what is *not* Israeli. Despite being citizens of the state, Arabs cannot be Israelis, according to the definition developed, and therefore they become '*others*'.

The discursive practices in this particular stream of discourse do have the power to create and sustain hegemony. The '*knowledge*', in Foucault's sense, of *the* Arabs being a threat to *the* Israelis has the *power* to keep the regime of security alive. The state is seen as in permanent danger of aggression by others, and ideologically, the destruction of its Jewish identity. The power of the discourse is to reach consensus on the importance of security and therefore legitimize the security regime and its policies. It helps elites to sustain their political dominance by emphasizing on the constant threats to the voters' very existence. Security as a central part of the political program has helped Likud, for example, remain in power in the previous elections.

The discursive representation of the Arabs as a demographic threat to the nation's identity reproduces social power relations. The social position of most Arab citizens is separate from most Jewish citizens. Arabs are a marginalized part of the society. A great inequality in many spheres distinguishes many Arabs from the dominant culture. The discursive practice is to a certain extent capable of maintaining these relations of power and frustrates social, economic, and political mobility. Social structures are reproduced through this practice, keeping the social hierarchy.

Israeli politicians, mainly right wing but also left, repeatedly emphasize on demographic trends and forecast related problems to the state. Referring to statistics on population, right-wing politicians point out a demographic threat and propose policies to redeem the population shift.

Their apocalyptic predictions are in contrast with other political orientations, which show a different demographic reality, and, moreover, relativize their prospects. The claim for a bi-

national state, or a 'state for its citizens', often stated by left-wing politicians and left-leaning media, is posed as a part of the perceived danger. Pointing out an end of the state's Jewish character, politicians accuse their counterparts of sympathizing with the enemy. A bi-national state has to be prevented by any possible means in order to sustain dominance.

6.8 Contesting the 'Demographic Threat': Ha'aretz

A very contrary stream of discourse on Arab demography is growing in attention. This is the discourse on a the *bi-national state* and the claim for *equal rights* for all its citizens. In Chapter five I referred to this particular stream as one of the main political orientations of security. Baruch Kimmerling calls this the 'Compromise Orientation'. This stream of discourse includes a much different view on Arab citizens. In this representation Arabs are not reduced to the matter of security. The radical elements of some Palestinian organizations are noticed and their existence is recognized as a security threat, but reduced to a small minority of Arabs. This orientation locates the actual problem in the state's refusal to support Arab integration. The *real* threat here is not demography but the concept of a demographic threat itself which is viewed as a threat to *democracy*.¹⁶⁸ One pool for this discourse is formed by Ha'aretz. Many editors of the newspaper challenge the state's politics towards the Arab minority:

The degree of integration of Israel's Arab minority into the fabric of Israeli society bears directly on the question of how large a minority population can live at peace in the State of Israel. A minority that is alienated from the state and hostile to it represents a problem. A minority that is well integrated and feels at home can be an asset. Despite the opposition of radical elements like the Islamic Movement, in recent years there are visible signs of a gradual process of integration of many of Arab citizens into Israeli society. It is spontaneous, receiving very little help from the government. Much greater progress could be achieved if the government were to adopt it as a high priority goal. In time it may well turn out that the demographic issue is not all it is cracked up to be.¹⁶⁹

Editors of Ha'aretz accuse religious and right-wing politicians of using the concept of demographic threat to distract from the country's '*real*' problems. Instead of policies which

¹⁶⁸ Shohat 2004: n. pag.

¹⁶⁹ Arens 2013: n. pag.

distinguish in terms of ethno-religious categories they demand the same rights for all citizens of Israel, Jewish or non-Jewish:

A democratic state cannot exist if paranoid fears about the demographic threat lurk perpetually around the corner, and are fanned now and then by demagogic politicians. Demographic fears lead to racist policies. [...] Every Israeli citizen, Jew and non-Jew, should be allowed to marry whomever he or she pleases. [...] Politicians in Israel have regularly appealed to presumed demographic threats to distract citizens' attention away from their real sorrows. It's easy to tell the unemployed that foreign workers have snared their jobs. It's easy to tell terror-scarred citizens that Israeli Arabs who marry Palestinians are a threat. Religious parties join in this scaremongering chorus, and preach about the dangers of mixed marriages. The political right has a distinctive knack for harping shamelessly about the problem with Arabs. Right-wingers don't care about the identities of immigrants to Israel, as long as the newcomers contribute to the war against Arabs.¹⁷⁰

This stream of the discourse can be seen as a counter-stream to the stream of discourse discussed in this thesis. It is at the same time analyzing the discursive practices. The editors of Ha'aretz form another elite contesting the political elite in power. They are part of an opposing civil society. This stream performs its own power on the discourse, attempting to break up hegemonic structures.

¹⁷⁰ Shohat 2004: n. pag.

CHAPTER VII: Conclusions

The construction of national identity is a mechanism that is always in progress and never finished. Discourse continues this construction as a system of representation, it produces and reproduces Identities. Discourse is also a system of power relations and has the ability of reproducing these relations. It is capable of producing and consolidating hegemony. Discourse is though not led by just one center of power, but a battlefield of various agents challenging each other.

However, this thesis focuses on one particular stream of repeated discursive practices. The political stream I emphasized on in my analysis does not necessarily represent the mainstream view in society, nor does it represent an overall view of the political blocs I refer to. It is a collection of some very extreme statements on Israeli demography. These statements may not be the most respected in the broad discourse, but they are controversial. They are debated in public and therefore have the power to fuel the discourse. The fact that newspapers like Ha'aretz are picking up and discussing them is an evidence for their powerful influence on the discourse and their public cognition.

The discourse on Israel's demography is a discourse on identity. The state's national identity has been constructed as a 'Jewish and Democratic State'. Multiple components define the state's identity as *Jewish*. Narratives of a common Jewish history bind the Jewish *people* to the *land*, connecting nation to national territory. The state's national anthem itself is actually such a narrative. Symbolism plays a key role in the construction of national identity, like in the cases of the national flag and emblem.

However, all these symbols emphasize on the state's Jewish identity. The discourse does not include minorities into the nations character, but whether denies their existence or identifies them as, in Hall's way, '*others*'. It is distinct definition of categories, distinguishing the '*we*' from the '*them*', and, moreover, in the discourse on Arabs, the '*them*' from the '*we*'. It is a categorization of two imagined communities: *Israeli* and *not-Israeli*, or *Jewish* and *not-Jewish*. Emphasizing on this distinction, this practice drives the social wedge deeper into the population. It divides society through the concept of nationality.

Nationality, in this understanding, is not conterminous to *citizenship*. It is an 'ethno-religious' classification. Three fourths of the citizens fall into the national category, while the other quarter is represented as members of external nationalities. Despite their citizenship and formal equal rights, they are not considered Israelis by national definition.

The Arab citizens, however, are included into a discourse of security. As a major objective in Israeli politics, security takes a central role in society. A so-called 'security regime' has taken over many spheres of life. Security has many meanings in this context. The central meaning of security in this particular context is the *danger* to the state's very existence and its national identity. These discursive practices put Israel's Arabs into the middle of this danger, making them agents of this destruction. The picture is, however, not just Arabs being a threat to society per se, but also a danger in terms of demographic growth. Statistics are presented, suggesting a high birth rate of Palestinians and Arab citizens. These statistical numbers differ in each survey. Depending on the institution the Arab population in Israel and the Palestinian territories is either sinking or rising. The discourse stream pointing out a demographic threat, however, claims a growing Arab population. Interpretations of these numbers predict an 'apocalyptic' scenario of the end of Jewish majority. The great power of these statistics is used to emphasize on the dangers and the urgency for intervention.

Seeing the state's Jewish identity at risk, steps are taken into consideration to prevent such a future. This is whether to increase the Jewish or decrease the Arab population. To ensure the continuity of the majority, Jewish immigration is promoted. The desired immigrants are foreigners, but since they are Jewish they are considered members of the nation, in contrast to the Arab citizens. While the state should support foreign Jews in their relocation to the 'Holy Land', the Arabs are supposed to leave. On the one hand, immigration of foreign Jews is promoted, and on the other, politics ought to foster Arab emigration. The Arabs should be excluded from Israel and included to either neighboring Arab states or a future Palestinian state. This representation of Arab citizens implies that the state of Israel is an 'unnatural habitat' to them. Since they are not part of the country's national identity and do not identify with the state's values, the desire of living somewhere else is pinned on them. Their emigration is portrayed as best for themselves and the Jewish state. The suggested ways to enforce such a relocation reach from financial incentives to expatriation and the transfer of land and population.

The suggested birth and fertility policies serve as methods to counterbalance the Arab birthrates. Giving birth is depicted as a civic duty every member has to fulfill. The womb is stated as the most powerful weapon of the Arabs. If no further actions are taken their children will soon outnumber the Jews. The state therefore eagerly seeks to create an environment perfect for Jewish families to grow in size. The laws on in vitro fertilization have been adjusted accordingly. Raising children as a Jewish patriotic endeavor is equalized to military service. Both are ways to serve the country in order to defend it. In the case of Jewish mothers this is defense against Arab mothers, their counterpart in the battle for demographic dominance. The '*time bomb*' Arabs are presented as is perceived to explode sooner or later if it does not get defused. These predictions suggest that it is just a matter of *time* that the Arabs will eventually become a majority between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean sea.

Discourse Analysis, and especially Critical Discourse Analysis, is a tool for scrutinizing discursive practices. It examines the connection between language and power. It connects statements with social and institutional structure. It explores why statements repeatedly occur at a specific time and how they modify with changing structures.

The image of the country's Arab citizens produced in this stream of discourse is very clear. The used language is playing with the sense of security. The terms provoke fear. The 'Arab' is a danger to the Jew. As long as they reside in the state's territory they perform a threat to security and Israel's Jewish character.

The discourse has taken on greater significance since the borders were redrawn after the war of '67. While some voices call for the de-facto annexation of the territories, which means to control more of biblical Judea and Samaria, others fear the ultimate demise of the Jewish majority through this very expansion. The call for the withdrawal from the territories has become louder over the decades and finds popularity on the left as well as on right wings of Israel's political parties. The demand for a Palestinian state forms a part of the desired solution to the demographic 'problem'. According to this idea the two communities can at best exist next to each other, but not mixed. The state defuses its demographic time bomb by cutting itself off from the Arabs. The construction of the barrier is a distinctive example:

While the Israeli discourses on a 'transfer' of the Palestinian Arab population, on separation, and on demographic concerns more generally are not new phenomena, they have recently taken on a more central role in Israeli policy making on national security. This new-found concern for demography as a security issue is evidenced largely by the construction of the West Bank 'security barrier,' which

shows clear signs of taking shape in response to perceived demographic threats against the Jewish majority. This menace finds strong support in Power Transition Theory, which holds that demographic transitions, while rare, are particularly worrisome in cases such as Israel's, in which a declining majority is coupled with a growing minority.¹⁷¹

The fear is not only of a transition of a demographic balance, but more of a transition of power. Arabs have not only grown in number but also in power over the last decades. Their political influence is not to be underestimated today. Arab voters as well as Arab parties and politicians take a growing role in the process of decision making. As seen in previous elections, not only the Arab parties but also the mainstream parties are dependent on the Arab community's support. Since Israel is a democracy, the Arabs' increased share of Israel's population would mean a much bigger influence on the country's decision making and Arabs could extend their political power to central questions of the state's politics.

A bi-national state is feared, for a bi-national state cannot be a Jewish state, or at least not *purely* Jewish by definition. While it is still regarded a Jewish and democratic State, many claim that Israel already *is* a bi-national state:

Fear of the emergence of a bi-national state in the Land of Israel seems to be the driving force, on the right and on the left of the political spectrum, behind the many proposals for abandoning the hills of Samaria and Judea, the biblical Land of Israel, to powers as yet unknown and unpredictable. But the fact of the matter is that the State of Israel is already a bi-national state – a state in which two nationalities reside, Jews and Arabs. The advocates of the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria simply oppose the addition of any more Arabs to the existing Arab population of the State of Israel. Lurking behind their pious slogan 'two states for two peoples' is their real, politically incorrect slogan: 'Not one more Arab!'¹⁷²

The question is how big a majority has to be to define a state's national identity. Is Israel a Jewish state when 'only' about 75 percent of its population is defined Jewish? And why is it necessary to define a national identity? Is it a matter of physical security or is it a question of power and dominance? What are the dangers of a bi-national state or a 'state for its citizens'? And regardless of a two state- or a one state solution, how much longer can Israel keep up its definition of a Jewish and democratic state? How many Jews will be willing to make aliyah in the future decades?

¹⁷¹ Duffy Toft 2012: 37

¹⁷² Arens 2013: n. pag.

And moreover, how can the idea of “two states for two peoples” be realized when in fact a large number of what is considered the 'Arab people' lives on the national territory of the Jewish State and hundreds of thousand members of the 'Jewish people' have settled across the Green Line, on land supposed to be part of a future state of Palestine?

The question should not be *if* and *how much* the Arab minority is growing in number and what actions should be taken to counter-balance a growing Arab population. Considerations should be taken on how to integrate Israel's minorities as equal citizens. It is not a demographic, but a democratic threat, like Shohat says. The real danger is the isolation of Israel's minorities.

The future developments depend very much on how this discourse will go on, what shapes it will take, and what streams of the discourse will assert, or what new streams will occur.

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Appendix

Lebenslauf

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