

The Sociolinguistic Status of Arabic in Israel: A Contextual Examination

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Abstract

Since the late 1980s, both the ruling Zionist right wing and Palestinian-Israeli civil society have challenged the sociolinguistic status quo in Israel where both Hebrew and Arabic serve as the two main languages of communication. The former has been fervent in its attempts to destabilize the status quo and designate Hebrew as the sole official language, while the latter is eager to bridge the gap between the *de facto* and *de jure* status of Arabic in Israel. This study aims to show that the Palestinian-Israelis' struggle for language rights is based on their belief that language is critical in accessing civil and political collective rights. Moreover, it reflects the desire of the Palestinian-Israelis to participate as equals in Israeli civil life. It is also argued that progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has accelerated the struggle for language rights, because Hebrew has transmuted to become the core of neo-Zionism politics, the national religious politics.

Language Policy: A Contextual Approach

Language plays a crucial role in the establishment of national identity. It is one of the fundamental characteristics of the national ideology and serves as a means of categorizing the state's residents into groups of who is "in" and who is "out," a process that gives legitimacy and prestige to certain languages and their speakers, whereas other languages are undermined, stigmatized or even banned (Shohamy 22-23).

Rumsey defines language ideology as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (346), whereas other scholars have defined it with emphasis on the social and collective facet as "self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of the group" (Heath 53) and as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 255).

There appears to be an ideological set of beliefs behind the implementation of any language policy. For example, a group that believes in the hierarchical and unequal distribution of power based on language could be said to hold an ideology of linguisticism (Skutnabb-Kangas 362-3), whereas a group that believes in promoting minority language rights usually holds a multilingual ideology.

Today, the monolithic, unified and homogeneous ideological foundation typical of the nation-state is being transformed through diversification and the process of globalization. States are being forced to adopt controlled multilingual language policies because of globalization itself and the fluidity of immigration (Spolsky 175-6). Ethnic minorities have become more conscious of their language rights, which are rarely articulated independently, but rather come with a slew of other demands, such as recognition in political and academic spheres, and the right to self-expression (Shohamy 23). Consequently, some modern nation-states have adjusted their language ideologies and policies in the direction of more diversity while others have employed new political strategies to surmount these challenges. In all, language still maintains a symbolic status as an indicator of inclusion/exclusion, so much so that when one does not speak the "standard language," "national language," or "majority language" of the nation one is excluded. Thus, while the nation has become more cosmopolitan and *de jure* accepting of other languages, the language policy has become more implicit and vague.

Shohamy argues that there is a need to expand the view on language policy and focus on both overt and covert practices (xv). Overt practices

include official written documents such as a clause in a constitution, language regulations, court decisions, curricula, and textbooks. Covert practices are those that may not be stated overtly but convey covert and hidden policies that make it more difficult to detect the actual direction of the language policy. Shifting the examination to more covert practices reveals the *passive* policies of those regimes that practice cultural neutrality or offer only nominal or partial support for specific language functions, even while, on paper, granting minority languages official status.

This study adopts a broader definition of language policy offered by Spolsky in which he defines it as a body that consists of three components: (A) Language practices, referring to the speakers' linguistic choices and practices among the varieties that make up their linguistic repertoire; (B) Language beliefs or ideology, referring to the beliefs, values and statuses that are assigned to linguistic varieties and features; and (C) Language management, referring to the observable efforts made by an individual or group to modify or influence the practices or beliefs of a group of speakers (6-7).

The significance of Spolsky's theoretical framework is that language policy can only be fully understood in its relation to its different social, sociolinguistic and political contexts. This idea is supported by the fact that language management is not a distorted process or limited only to the external forces of governmental managers' and official delegates' policy actions and efforts, it can also originate in the community itself, through such internal forces as religious authorities, the school system, activist groups, family, and individual speakers.

Looking at the status of Arabic in Israel through the lens of Spolsky's theoretical framework, gives us an opportunity to look at the wider picture of the sociolinguistic ecology surrounding the language situation in Israel. This situation is marked by the conflict between the formal language procedures established by the national government, and the efforts of voluntarily organizations that represent minority language rights and seek to influence the official national language policy in Israel.

The Sociopolitical Context of the Study

The waves of Jewish immigrants into Palestine began in the late 1880s. Because these immigrants have gathered from all over the world, Israel is by definition a multicultural and multilingual society.

The largest non-Jewish minority in Israel that has not been culturally assimilated into Jewish-Israeli society is the Palestinians, who make up about 20.7% of Israel's population. Most of them remained in Israel after much of their community was either expelled or fled after the war of 1948. The majority

resides in segregated Arab towns, but some live among Jews in mixed cities. Palestinian citizens of Israel are native speakers of Arabic, but they are also fluent in Modern Hebrew.

Due to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the undetermined territorial spaces and borders of the Israeli state, the numerical dominance of ethnic Jews, and the absence of constitutional regulations for the collective rights for ethnic and national minorities in Israel, the status of Palestinians and their relationship with the state of Israel are contentious issues. Palestinians in Israel are considered a security risk (Amara 53; Amara and Mar'i 17; Smootha, "The Viability of Ethnic" 276) because of indigenous Palestinians' resistance to Zionism's colonial project, and their identification with the national ambitions of Palestinians outside of Israel. This security argument was used to impose military rule over Palestinian towns within Israel from 1948 until 1969. Because of the deep conflict that stemmed from their indigenous political identity, as well as having been designated a security risk, Palestinians were relieved of the obligation to serve in the Israeli army.¹ However, not taking part in military service has been used by the Israeli authorities to justify de facto discrimination against Palestinian citizens, since many benefits are designed only for those who serve in the army (Amara 55; Amara and Mar'i 18; Smootha, "Ethnic Democracy" 216-17).

The questions of citizenship and of the civil rights and duties of Palestinian-Israelis have recently become dominant topics in official and legislative discourse. Among these topics are the enactment of the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, a temporary law that forbids Palestinian spouses from the West Bank and Gaza from obtaining permanent residency permits by marrying Israeli citizens. Although the order is temporary, it has been renewed annually since it was initially passed in 2003. Amendments were made in 2005 and 2007 to include changes in the age criterion of the Palestinian spouses and extending its application to citizens of Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. It is noteworthy to point out that several petitions have been submitted by civil rights entities to the Supreme Court to repeal or change the law; the last attempt was made in 2012, but all of these petitions were rejected.

Another arguable law is the Nakba² Law, passed by the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in March 2011. This law prevents any public organizations or institutions that recognize the Nakba from receiving any governmental funding or support.

The most current major debatable issue is that involving the enactment of a law of national service that applies to those who do not serve in the army such as the Palestinian-Israelis and the Jewish ultra-orthodox community. The official reasoning behind this law is that each citizen of Israel regardless

of her religious or ethnic affiliations should bear an equal share of “the national burden”, a term that was widely used by right-wing political parties in the Knesset elections of 2013. The Knesset’s representatives of the Palestinian community in Israel strongly oppose this action and warn of civil disobedience if this law is passed (Aljazeera).

The official status of the Arabic language and the collective language rights are other major issues in the public debate and on the legislative agenda. In the formative four decades of the state of Israel, the official language policy managers have been able to secure the primacy of Hebrew and maintain a sociolinguistic status quo that prevents Arabic from achieving equal status to that of Hebrew. Therefore, a considerable body of language policy scholars in Israel are of the opinion that there is a palpable discrepancy between the theoretical status of Arabic being an official language as Hebrew and its actual status that is far from being equal to Hebrew in both official and nonofficial spheres (Amara 60; Saban and Amara 22-25; Spolsky and Shohamy 25; Talmon 203). Macro level planned language policy guarantees the status of Hebrew as the national language while blurring the symbolic role of the Arabic language as a national and unifying facet of the Palestinians in Israel. It also eliminates all collective national manifestations of the Arabic language.

In the following pages, I explore thoroughly the sociolinguistic status of Arabic and the debate of its official status in the legislature and in official discourse.

The Sociolinguistic Status of Arabic in Israel

During the Ottoman rule in Palestine and prior to World War I, Arabic was the dominant language despite the fact that the Turkish language was recognized as the official language of the Empire (Amara 56). After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Palestine was ruled by the British Mandate. In 1922, the British Mandate modified the language policy and recognized Hebrew as one of the three official languages in Palestine as stated in Mandate Article 82:

Official languages: All ordinances, official notices and official forms of the government and all official notices of local authorities and municipalities in areas to be prescribed by Order of the High Commissioner shall be published in English, Arabic and Hebrew. The three languages may be used subject to any regulations to be made by the High Commissioner, in government offices and the law courts. In case of any discrepancy between the English text of any ordinance, official notice or official form and the Arabic or Hebrew text thereof, the English text shall prevail.

Although Article 82 recognizes both Arabic and Hebrew as official languages, these languages were limited to use in official contexts and the priority is given to English "in case of any discrepancy" between English texts and those in Arabic or Hebrew. The recognition of Hebrew as an official language indicates that the status of Hebrew became equal to Arabic. In other words, Arabic was losing its dominance in Palestine.

More important is the recognition of Hebrew as an official language legitimized the spread of Hebrew in Palestine and reinforced it within the Yishuv, the Jewish settlements in Palestine. Moreover, Article 82 legitimized the political ideology of Zionism in which Hebrew has in reality been promoted as a national expression of the Jewish people in a defined territory, Palestine. In this sense, the construction of the new identity represents the culmination of the renewal of Hebrew, the language that has unified Jewish communities, whether they contain religious or secular Jews, and whether they live in Palestine or outside of it.

Indeed, Hebrew has become ideologically and practically associated with the nation-building of the pre-state Jewish community as well as the state of Israel later. Various Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia willingly chose to give up the Yiddish and Russian languages in favor of Hebrew (Safran 49). The linguistic assimilation of these immigrants signifies the social assimilation in the then newly-established Jewish state.

Safran argues that by utilizing the historical, religious and cultural associations of Hebrew, its primacy has been secured; consequently, Israel, as a new state, did not need to restore the former colonial language, as has been the case in other de-colonized countries. Israeli policy makers have transformed the historical and religious elements of the Hebrew language into the political elements that are major tenets of Israeliness (58).

The first policy action of Israel was the adoption of the British Mandatory language policy that granted official status to the Hebrew and Arabic languages, but repealed the official status of English. Hebrew has become the national symbol of the state of Israel as it is stated in the Declaration of Independence of Israel.

Although the inferior status of Arabic in Israel was not regulated by any declared or overt language policy, the dissonance between the de facto and de jure status of Arabic was palpable in the first days of Israel as an independent state. On May 14, 1948 while the Jewish People's Council was finalizing the Independence Declaration of the establishment of Israel, David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel stated clearly that freedom of language does not necessarily contradict that Hebrew is the language of the

state "Nobody would oppose... freedom of language, but... the language of the state is Hebrew. This does not deny other residents the right to use their own language" (Harel-Shalev 41).

Officially, the question of promoting Hebrew as the sole national language of Israel was brought to debate in the Knesset only one time in the first decade after Israel's independence in 1948. In 1952, Knesset Member Raziel-Naor of the national right wing party, Herut, proposed a new law entitled "National Language," the purpose of which was to grant Hebrew the status of being the nation's sole official language.

Although the proposal embodies the Israeli national identity ethos that was established in the pre-state stage, this attempt raises the complexity and ambiguity of the definition of the state of Israel as "the democratic and Jewish state." Sustaining such ideology has constructed a dissonance in the civil status of the native Palestinians as well as in the sociolinguistic status of Arabic, the Palestinians native language.

For instance, Arabic is used in numerous public domains. For example, in education, Arabic is the medium of instruction in the elementary, junior-high and high schools within the Palestinian-Israeli school systems, even though there is no specific legislation mandating it (Deutch 275). Similarly, in media, the Second Broadcasting Authority for Radio and T.V. Law (1990) requires broadcasting in Arabic to cater to the needs of Arabic speakers only (Deutch 283); in elections, Section 76 of the *Knesset Election Law* (1964) states that all parties have the right to put Arabic letters on their ballot slips; in the Knesset, members are allowed to address the house in Arabic; in publishing, all laws enacted by the Knesset are supposed to be published in both Hebrew and Arabic; and in official contexts such as courts, currency, paper money, and postage stamps both languages are to be used (Amara 61).

Yet, Hebrew is more dominant and is preferred over Arabic. For instance, obtaining Israeli citizenship requires some knowledge of Hebrew, and Hebrew in Arab schools is taught as a second language starting from the third grade. Although English is not an official language, it is a compulsory subject in both Jewish and Arab schools from the third or fourth grades, and is preferred over Arabic as a second language in Jewish-Israeli schools (Ben-Rafael et al. 12). Arabic is a compulsory subject for only two years at the high school level in Jewish-Israeli schools.

Government laws are published in Hebrew only, and so are representations in courts, instead of being in both languages, Arabic and Hebrew. Most of the prime-time television programming is broadcast in Hebrew. Further-

more, the official status of Arabic only guarantees language rights that protect the individual, and not the Palestinian minority as a group.

Deutch claims that despite the fact that the examination of Israeli legislation reveals "positive language rights" that extend far beyond the mandatory article 82, the legislation deals only with communicative aspects of the language such as the obligation of the bank controller in Israel to publish a notification to all bank customers in Arabic-language newspapers about the maturity dates of their loans, or that a notary confirmation must either be in Hebrew or Arabic (273).

The status of Arabic in Israel is far below that of Hebrew not only in official settings, but also in the public space. The predominance of Hebrew is clearly manifested in the Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli public spaces (Ben-Rafael et al. 19). Ben-Rafael et al.'s findings of the study of public signage show that Hebrew, with or without English, is found in nearly 100% of the signs in a sample of Jewish-Israeli localities, while English appeared in 50% and Arabic appeared in only 6%. Hebrew also appeared in 94% of the linguistic landscape items in Palestinian-Israeli localities, whereas Arabic appeared in 70%, and English in 25% of the linguistic landscape items of these areas (16-17). Arabic is much more prevalent in bottom-up linguistic landscape items in Palestinian-Israeli communities; however, Ben-Rafael et al. believe that the scarcity of Hebrew in bottom-up items in the Palestinian-Israeli linguistic space is motivated by economic interests rather than a desire to exhibit their identity (24).

The findings of Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh's study of the linguistic landscape of Haifa University indicate a scarcity of Arabic on the campus despite the fact that 25 percent of Haifa University's students are Palestinian-Israelis, and the City of Haifa, as one of the mixed cities, is under legal obligation that both Arabic and Hebrew are equally represented in the public space (25-26).

The Sociolinguistic Status Quo and the Rise of Neo-Zionism Politics

The 1967 war brought devastating political consequence for the Palestinians, but as significant were the radical political changes it brought to Israeli society.

The victory of Israel in 1967 stimulated the rise of neo-Zionism politics and efforts to renew an old creed of "Greater Israel." The revival of neo-Zionism ideology has been promoted politically and practically by the national-

religious settlers who have strengthened the expansion of the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories of 1967 in the West Bank.

Within just one decade after the 1967 war, the right wing dominated Israeli politics. In 1977 the Likud party won the Knesset elections. The rise of the right wing has accelerated, supported and backed up the neo-Zionist ideology, particularly through strengthening the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories in the West Bank and promoting a national-religious culture in Israeli politics.

These changes in Israeli politics have filter into the societal and socio-linguistic domains, and as a result, public political discourse has shifted from an ethno civil-national to a national-religious narrative, which means that the Jewish religious ethos, rather than an ethno-national one, has become the core of the Israeli identity.

As a result, Hebrew no longer represents civil-national identity, cultural unity and territorial expansion but rather has become a proxy for a Judaic ethos and territorial expansion (Ram 332).

In accordance with the political transformations, in the 1980s and 1990s the public and official discourse on the matter of the status of Arabic and Hebrew steadily moved toward promoting Hebrew as the sole official language of the Jewish state. The peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians have contributed to this reaction on the part of the national right wing that feared that these negotiations will lead, in one way or another, to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza next to Israel. In this sense, the ruling right wing perceives the realization of an independent Palestinian state as a real threat to its monolithic national-religious ideology of a "Greater Israel."

In practice, there were repeated attempts to revoke the official status of Arabic and the promotion of Hebrew as the nation's sole language. In 1994 Knesset member Shaki of the Mafdal party, a religious Zionist party, proposed a law entitled: "The Hebrew Language", but the proposal went no further than the Knesset's Committee discussion. Similar attempts were made in 2001 by Knesset member Michael Kleiner of the *Herut* party and by Zvi Hendel of the *Mafdal* in 2005, but both were rejected by the Committee of Ministers. In May 2008, a group of Israeli lawmakers introduced a new bill that gives primacy to Hebrew over the Arabic and Russian languages but this bill was also rejected by the Committee of Ministers in 2009.

In August 2011, the topic of promoting Hebrew as the sole language of Israel reemerged in the Knesset discussions, and a new Basic Law, "Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People" was proposed by Knesset Member

Avi Dichter from *Kadima*, a center-right Zionist party. The proposed law advances the Jewish character of Israel over the concept of a Jewish-democratic state as established in the Declaration of Independence. Additionally the new law proposes a change in the status of Hebrew, designating it the only official language in Israel, and giving Arabic a unique, but not official status. The proposal of the new law provoked a massive public debate and it was postponed until after the 2013 Knesset elections, at which time it returned to the public debate and to the Knesset agenda. It is worth mentioning that two similar proposals have been put forth, but in each of them the amendment to change the status of Hebrew has been removed.

In contrast to the national right wing's intense focus on repealing the official status of Arabic in the Israeli house of legislation, the Palestinian minority, particularly its civil rights movements and civil society, have struggled to promote the equal status of the Arabic language. In the eyes of the Palestinian minority in Israel, accomplishing the peace process would not only solve the political issues between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors in the West Bank and Gaza, but could also convey full Israeli citizenship to all Israel's citizens including the Palestinian-Israelis (Rouhana and Ghanem 330). In fact, progress in the peace process may create feasible conditions for a multicultural national state inside the Green Line borders, Israel's pre-1967 borders. In addition, it may also intensify the national identity predicament of the Palestinian-Israelis, who are divided between the national Palestinian identity and the Israeli civil identity (Ghanem 100-1).

Therefore, in the last three decades Palestinian-Israeli intellectuals, politicians and NGOs have demanded full and equal citizenship as well as national collective rights (Bishara 14-15; Jamal 208).

One of the focuses of the Palestinian-Israeli politicians and NGOs in their struggle for collective rights is language rights, firstly because the Arabic language is the cultural culmination of their indigenous collective identity, and secondly because the case of language rights is different from other rights, the status of Arabic is clearly derived from a law that grants it that official status. In other words, the struggle over the status of Arabic is a struggle over an existing legal framework, whereas the struggle over other collective rights requires the creation and regulation of a new legal framework.

The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights, Adalah, and the Association for Civil Right in Israel (ACRI) have led this struggle with increasing success (Saban and Amara 27-33). In February 1999 the Israeli Supreme Court accepted Adalah's petition to require the Transportation Ministry and the

Public Works Department to post town names and directions in Arabic as well as Hebrew on all national road signs within 5 years (Adalah, et. al. v. The Ministry of Transportation, et. al.). In June 1999 Adalah, along with the ACRI, filed another petition with the Supreme Court against the mixed Arab-Jewish cities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Ramle, Lod, Akka (Acre), and Natseret Illit demanding multilingual signage in these cities. In 2002 the Supreme Court accepted the petition in a majority opinion (two to one) and ordered the placement of multilingual warnings, guidance signs and road signs in Israeli municipalities with an Arab population (Adalah, et. al. v. The Municipalities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, et. al.).

In March 2001, Adalah submitted a petition against Haifa municipality requiring the publication of all official public announcements in the Arabic language press, in the Arabic language. The two parties reached an agreement, that Haifa Municipality must publish in the Arabic language press all official announcements such as registration for schools and kindergartens, alterations to traffic routes and the municipality's public opening hours (Adalah, et. al. v. Haifa Municipality).

The Palestinian-Israeli civil society's struggle for language rights and the modification of the de facto status of Arabic is gathering momentum in a variety of ways, such as the success of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel in convincing the senior affairs office to add Arabic script as well as Hebrew and English on the senior citizen card in September 2012.

In addition to the legal struggle with its attempts at promoting the status of Arabic and amending the de facto official language policy, the Palestinian-Israeli civil society tries to reach out to the general Israeli public and the Palestinian-Israeli public by organizing different campaigns to promote the status of Arabic. One of these ongoing campaigns in the social media is "the train speaks Arabic too" that aims to promote Arabic as well as Hebrew and English on signage found in train stations. This campaign is sponsored by the ACRI and Shutafut- Sharakah, an organization working toward a shared, democratic and equal society.

Despite the significant successes of the Palestinian-Israeli civil society at the juridical level, the mixed cities appear to be not fully compliant with the Supreme Court's decisions; for example, the Natseret Illit municipality was rebuked in 2011 by the Supreme Justice for its failure to comply with the 2002 decision. The municipality of Natseret Illit not only did not replace the Hebrew monolingual signs, but have issued new signs in Hebrew script only.

In August 2012, Tel Aviv-Jaffa city council member Ahmed Mashharawi proposed the addition of Arabic script to the city's logo alongside Hebrew and English, but the city council rejected the motion by a vote of 14 to 10 (Haaretz). As these examples illustrate, the Palestinian-Israeli civil society has had some legal success in transforming the *de facto* status of Arabic into a *de jure* status in Israel. However, those who oppose giving Arabic equal official status seem to have been more successful in advancing their views in the public space and promoting monolingual and mononational statehood.

Conclusions

The struggle over the last two decades between the Zionist right wing and the Palestinian-Israeli civil society over the official status of Arabic in Israel exemplifies how language policy actions are politically situated. In fact, these actions are subject to ecological and contextual dynamics within a wider nexus of power relations between opposing ideologies, such as the ethno-national religious ideology accelerated by the Zionist right wing and the multicultural and multilingual ideology presented by the Palestinian-Israeli civil society.

This study shows that the modification of language policy can take place not only at the macro and planned level, but can also be initiated by internal forces at the micro level, as evidenced by the growing power of the Palestinian-Israeli grassroots organizations who have managed to persuade the judicial supreme authority to support minority language rights.

It also shows how language is carefully utilized to promote these oppositional ideologies. For Palestinian-Israelis, the struggle for language rights is actually a form of struggle for civil rights and the acquisition of equal citizenship in a multinational, multilingual state. For the Zionist right wing, Hebrew has transmuted to become the core of an evolving national-religious Israeli identity. This struggle over language rights clearly embodies the clash between an ethno-national statehood ideology and a multilingual statehood ideology.

One may argue that the clash between these two conflicting ideologies is a result of the renewal of the "Greater Israel" ideology, whose support has increased significantly after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. But it is also a result of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and its progress toward the two-state solution that may potentially resolve the civil identity predicament among Palestinian-Israelis within the Israeli state and put an end to the Zionist national religious ideology. This is a particularly valid argument

since both sides, the Israelis and the Palestinians, agree that the Palestinian-Israelis' civil affairs should remain under Israeli sovereignty. The refusal of the politically dominant power in Israel to comply with the Palestinian-Israelis' demands for full citizenship, while at the same time enhancing the Jewish character of the state makes the political and cultural alienation of the Palestinian-Israelis more likely.

The Zionist right wing's language policy practices imply that the civil status of the Palestinians in Israel is far from reaching full participation and equality. The growing power of the Zionist right wing and its focus on achieving a monolingual and ethno-religious state places the Palestinian minority in an increasingly difficult position with regard to citizenship, the state, and Israeli culture.

The persistence of the ruling Zionist-Israeli right wing in promoting Jewish identity and the hegemony of Hebrew as the national symbol of the state may indicate that language management policy regarding Arabic in Israel has reached a crossroads. Whether it moves backward toward prohibition or forward toward promotion, it seems any progress is fully in the hands of the Jewish majority and the intra-Jewish power relations between neo-Zionist and post-Zionist politics.

Notes

- 1 - Mandatory conscription is effective only for Jews and male Druze citizens.
- 2 - Nakba is "catastrophe" in Arabic, it is a term used to describe the suffering of Palestinians, who lost their homes in 1948 and have become refugees in the Arab neighboring states of Israel.

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