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## **The integration of minorities in the security forces in Israel: the case of Muslim Arab citizens in the Galilee**

### KEYWORDS

integration, minorities, Muslim Arab citizens, security forces, State of Israel

### ABSTRACT

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Although many changes have occurred and accumulated significantly in Arab society in Israel and in the majority-minority relationship, the great class gap between Arabs and Jewish has been retained. This gap depends on the division of the resources in Israeli society. Inequality in this division and in the social relations between Jewish and Arabs continues, although there are indications that it is lessening. It is difficult to speak about co-existence and peace between Jews and Arabs, since today the Arabs of Israel are integrated in Israeli society primarily by negative and involuntary forces, such as economic dependency, political heresy, and social ecological isolation (Smootha, 2011: 13). The present research focuses only on the Muslim Arab population integrated into the security forces in Israel.

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### **Introduction**

The Arabs in Israel have adapted to the Jewish majority group, after having had a long period of social and cultural experience with it. According to Professor

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Smootha, “the Arabs underwent Israelization (without assimilation), by which they have become closely bound to the state and its Jewish population in many fields of life. They have become bilingual and bicultural, they have undergone partial modernization in their way of life and way of thinking, and they have grown accustomed to Israeli standards.” (Smootha, 2010).

The Arab minority in Israel is considered a national minority. After the 1948 war, the attitude of this minority toward the Israeli police was hostile, but when the Arab population was re-linked to relatives and families in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, some were under Israeli occupation and hostile to the Israeli public and the Israeli state. In light of this situation, a unique approach and position of the Arab population in Israel have evolved toward the army and the police, although there are significant indications of a change in the attitudes of young people (Schafferman, 2008).

The integration is divided into three types. Cultural integration is when individuals from a culture adopt the core of another culture, such as its attitudes and celebrations, at the same time maintaining their own culture. Social integration is specifically the movement of minority groups such as ethnic minorities, refugees, and disadvantaged sections of society in mainstream societies (Kone, 2011). Political integration is integration by uniting, unifying, and organizing in a group of two or more units. Conversely, it represents ‘centralization’ (Hoppe, 2007).

According to (Smootha, 2011), there is a considerable gap in the patterns and the national rights, a cohesive value-oriented framework is lacking, the areas of tangency are limited, and there is inequality on the class-economic level and in control over positions of power. There are many focuses of tension between the Arab national minority and the state represented by the Jewish majority, with considerable reference to the social separation and the Israeli-Arab conflict that reinforce the ethnic status quo to a certain limit. The national separation increases the alienation between Jewish and Arabs, but it also prevents frictions and upholds the management of the cultures independent of one another.

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## Literature review

Smootha added that the Zionist state is unable to deal with its Arab citizens in the same way and with the same degree of equality as it treats its Jewish citizens, nor can it expect from its Arab citizens the amount of sympathy and loyalty it expects

from its Jewish citizens. The Arab minority is accused of dishonesty and loyalty to the state and is respected by the authorities. Arabs of Israel are Palestinians in their ethnic origins, language, culture, national consciousness, and history until 1948. They feel obligated toward Arab-Palestinian nationalism and linked to the fate of the Palestinian people. These harm the delicate fabric of relations between Jews and Arabs in the state. Moreover, the strong relationship between Israeli Arabs and the Palestinian people prevents their integration and cultural and social fusion in the Jewish majority.

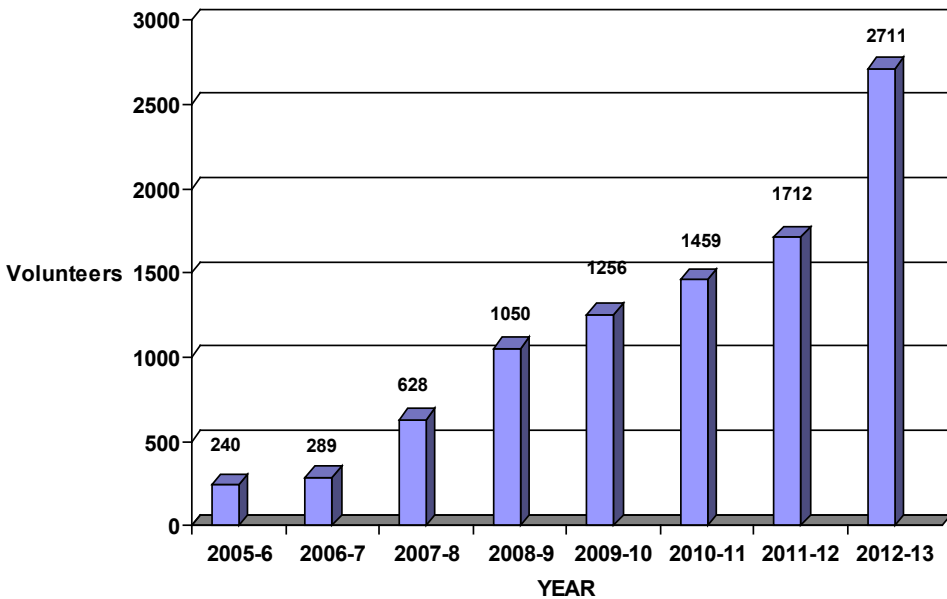


Fig. 1. Number of Arab Volunteers, 2005–2013

Source: Al Khateeb, 2012

In past years, the Arab public focused on the continuation of its physical existence and fought to integrate into Israeli society, with emphasis on the aspiration for a more just division than in the past of the material resources of the state. In recent years, more forces in Arab society see that this strategy, which is called the Al-Sumud strategy, is not enough and is even detrimental. These forces emphasize more strongly the cultural and national dimensions of the Jewish experience in Israel and see them to be the source of the dispossession of the Arabs, the discrimination against them, and their removal to the margins and do not differentiate between the policy of the division of resources and the structure of the power and cultural identity of the Jewish public in Israel (Jamal, 2005).

The position of the Arab public in Israel toward the performance of national service objects to this service for Arabs and strongly struggles against it. Public opinion surveys performed in the years 1994–2007 indicate the willingness of about one half of the respondents. However, there is a trend of the Arab youths to volunteer to the civil service in contrast to the stance of the Arab leadership. This has not changed over the years and is more pronounced when there is reference to the integration into the forces of the police and the military (Smooha, 2011).

Regarding national civil service among the Arab population, in 2012 2711 volunteers volunteered for service, constituting 17.3% of all volunteers (15,612 volunteers). Volunteering is for a year, and at the end the volunteer obtains the status of a soldier. According to the government, until 2009–2010 there was a lack of quality in the Arab environment, which meant that requests for volunteering were rejected because of the lack of suitable traits.

The attitudes of Arab youth and Arab leaders toward the civil service varied widely. Where most of the attitudes of young Arabs were positive and supportive, about 60% of the Arab public expressed their support for the civil service and 40% expressed their willingness to volunteer personally, while those who objected to the civil service were mainly afraid that the civil service would become compulsory military service (Smooha, 2011).

## **Integration concept of Muslim population**

The present research, which focuses on the integration of the population of Muslim youths, has two main contributions on two main axes. The first axis addresses the theoretical contribution in which the present research is supposed to extend the existing knowledge in the field. The extension of the theoretical knowledge is supposed to be in the research of the population of minorities and the integration in the security forces in a general viewpoint, with focus on the integration of Arab Muslim youths in the ranks of the security forces. The second axis addresses the accumulation of research empirical knowledge in the field of the perceptions and positions of Muslim youths in the context of their joining the Israeli security forces.

It is possible to learn from the experiences of the integration of minorities in the security forces of other countries. The experience of the integration of minority populations in the security forces in the USA, Bulgaria, and Kosovo is presented in the following table.

**Table 1.** Integration of Minority Population in the Security Forces in the USA, Bulgaria, and Kosovo

Country	Beginning of the Integration	Integration Form
USA	1970s–1990s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integration of Blacks, Hispanics and women.</li> <li>2. Recruits and officers and were unable to reach a higher rank than a colonel or navy officer.</li> <li>3. By 2012, the US military had a higher percentage of women and ethnic minorities than any other NATO countries. (Schaub, Praden-Blach, Larsen, Larsen, 2012)</li> </ol>
Bulgaria	1990s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The armed forces were developed after the reform of democratic changes in Bulgaria as an institution.</li> <li>2. The army provides “<i>conditions of equality</i>” based on the equal rights and duties of all members of the service.</li> <li>3. The army integration provides a good opportunity for “<i>shared experiences</i>” that force employees to work and live 24 hours together and motivate teamwork. (Nikolov, 1996).</li> <li>4. The high public confidence in the military as a nonpartisan national institution that Bulgarians consider to be of vital importance to the country, despite their ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, is also an important factor in supporting the integration of minorities. (Yanakiev, 2006).</li> </ol>
Kosovo	1990s	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The integration in Bulgaria was expressed after the Communist bloc fell at the beginning of the 1990s, when sweeping political and social processes occurred. (Haltiner, 1997).</li> <li>2. The Serbian minority has had a negative attitude toward the force.</li> <li>3. The Kosovo Security Force remains unpopular among the Serbian ethnic minority, not only because it is a crucial element in the State of Kosovo, but also because the majority of the security forces in Kosovo are derived from the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) which fought against the Serbian forces in the late 1990s. (Prelece, Rashiti, 2015).</li> </ol>

Source: Schaub, Praden- Blach, Larsen & Larsen, 2012; Nikolov, 1996; Yanakiev, 2006; Haltiner, 1997; Prelece & Rashiti, 2015

Therefore, the integration of the Arab population, as a national minority population in the security forces, is not disconnected from the structure of the relations of majority and minority. The relationships between the Arab and the Jewish population in Israel are complicated. In addition, the infrastructure of the relationships between Arabs and Jews in Israel is shaky because of the many memories of the past and the little commonality in the present. There is a considerable gap between the patterns of culture and the national privilege, a value-oriented framework is lacking, and the areas of contact are limited and less significant than the areas of separation (Smootha, 2011).

The trend of the integration of the Arab population in the public space is deficient but is not similar to the trend of the integration in the security forces. These processes create tension based on relations of majority and minority, but the national separation increases the alienation between Jews and Arabs but also prevents friction and maintains the management of the culture independent from one another. Thus, one of the main arguments in this research study is that the history that is based on majority-minority relations in Israel created the tension that exists in it, when the Arab population in Israel finds it difficult to integrate into the security forces (Rodinski, 2014).

The division between Arabs and Jews is manifested in various areas and aspects of life, including organizations, values, beliefs, national identity, social and economic status, and attitudes about the nature of the state, the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, and other central subjects. These variations and conflicts increased after the defeat of the Arab minority in 1948. The clarification of the distinguishing characteristics of the minority is considered a good way to detect the division and separation. The Arabs are a minority in their homeland, having inhabited Palestine for centuries, while most of the Jews are from the first to the third generations of immigrants. Arabs have strong connections to the land and see themselves as the genuine and authentic holders of the land. However, based on historical, religious, national, and emotional relations, Jews have the same feeling (Smootha, 2010).

The Arabs are a national minority, in addition to an ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural minority. They are an inseparable part of the Palestinians and Arabs who lived in the borders before 1967, which are the borders of the actual State of Israel. Israeli Arabs are linked by language, culture, identity, history, collective memory, novels, and loyalty to Palestinian nationalism and Arabism (Smootha, 2010). These characteristics combine to make Arabs into a weak minority. Arabs do not marry Jews and seek to maintain a separate presence. The Jews did not put any pressure on them to accommodate them (Smootha, 2010).

Conversely, Salman pointed out that excluding Arabs from compulsory military service has fundamentally contributed to the policy of segregation and isolation against Arabs. The Israeli army in society is a center of convergence and interaction from which Israeli youth in general must graduate. The exclusion of Arabs has been and is used as a basic argument against discrimination, in the justification of denying Arabs equality in citizenship and denying them job opportunities (Salman, 1990).

The Arab population today constitutes about 20% of the population of Israel. 83.4% are Muslim, 8.3% are Christian, and 8.2% are Druse. More than one half (58.8%) of the Arab population lives in the North region, 18.7% live in the Jeru-

salem region, 11.5% live in the South region, and about 10.9% live in the Center region (Abu Asba, Rian-Jara, Abu Nasra, 2011). The number of Arab residents living in mixed cities was at the end of 2011 91,200 people and constituted about 11% of the residents (Araham, 2011). The term ‘mixed’ cities in Israel refers to cities where an Arab minority lives among a Jewish majority (Khoury, 2013).

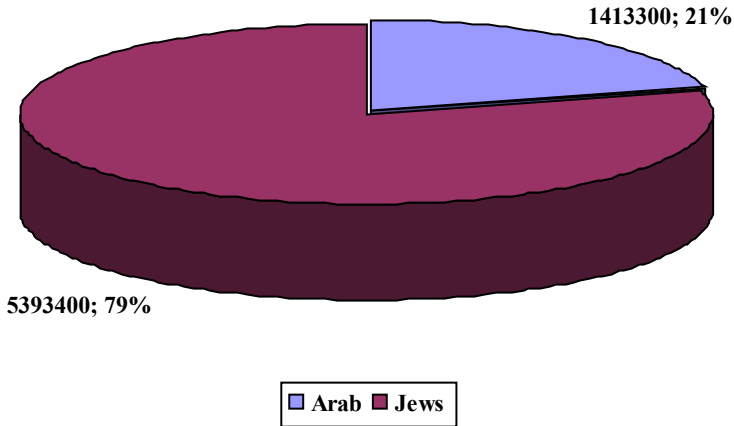


Fig. 2. The Arab Minority in Israel

Source: Suan, 2008

The approach of the Jewish majority to the Arab minority is characterized by alienation, reservations, and sense of threat. So, the Arab minority in Israel is accumulating feelings of frustration, deprivation, marginality, and exclusion. It should be noted that the Arab minority in Israel receives the individual rights customary in a democratic society but lacks the collective rights. The sense of a security threat in Israel results in negative perceptions toward the Arab minority (Suan, 2008).

### Integration in Israeli society

In past years, the Arab public worked to ensure the continuation of its physical existence and fought for its integration in Israeli society while emphasizing the desire for a more just division than in the past of the material resources of the State. In recent years, more and more forces in Arab society see that this strategy, which can be called a coping strategy, is not enough and is even detrimental (Jamal, 2005).

Arab society is found in a process of transition, from traditionalism to modernity. Modernity as a concept is simply the advancement of society in technological,

social, and economic relations over a period of time (Stein, 2013), whereas traditionalism is defined as the behaviors and ideas that support customs, traditions, and ideas, rather than modern habits. Arab society still preserves uniqueness in its characteristics and especially in the structure of the traditional family, and the extended family remains the basic social unit in Arab society in Israel when the nuclear family is assimilated in and depends on it (Raya, 2014).

The link of the Israeli Arabs with the Palestinians and Arab nationality has greatly impacted the nature of the internal conflict between Arabs and Jews in Israel and its relationship to the conflict with the Palestinians in the areas of the Palestinian Authority. The ethnic origins, language, culture, and historical standpoint of Israeli Arabs were all congruous to their Palestinian equivalents until 1948. Thus, they are faithful to their Palestinian nationality, and many of them see their fate as one they share with the Palestinians (Schafferman, 2008). This situation creates tension between the national affiliation and the civilian affiliation and complexity in the identity of the Arabs in Israel, which obligates complex reference that distances from simplistic generalizations. Surveys conducted in the past three decades among the Arabs in Israel display the strengthening of the component of the Palestinian identity and the weakening of the support of the State of Israel as a Jewish State. These processes influence the Jewish public and strengthen their feeling of threat from the Arabs in Israel (Hativ, 2003).

The identity of the Arabs in Israel has two main components: the civilian component, which derives from the very status of the Arabs as citizens of the State of Israel, and the national component, which is the outcome of the national affiliation of the Arabs in Israel with the Arab world and the Palestinian nation. Regarding the question of the relationships between these components of the identity, one approach sees the strengthening of the weak national identity of the civilian identity and in contrast another approach maintains that although there is a conflict between these two components, the one component does not necessarily contradict the other (Schafferman, 2008).

## Conclusion

The researcher concludes that in the future, we will witness a considerable number of Arab and Muslim youth in Israel who will integrate in the Israeli security forces and Israeli police due to economic circumstances, absence of national sentiment, and integration into Jewish culture and current society. Regarding the future, the results of this integration of the Muslim minority into the security forces will pro-



vide the youth with benefits in political, economic, and social terms, thus causing them to integrate or not to integrate into the security forces.

This research study, which examines the attitudes of the Arab recruits to the Israeli security forces, emphasizes the difference in the attitudes of the public of recruits. The analysis of this research findings emphasizes the uniqueness of the attitudes of the public of Arab recruits to the Israeli security forces.

To conclude, there is an increasing trend among the Arab youth in Israel to integrate into the Israeli security forces and Israeli Police.

Also, the researcher is doing a new article, which is searching this topic in a wider circle. In the future, the article will examine in a specific look the economic and the political side. Because the Palestinian- Israeli community needs more exposure for topics from this kind.

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