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Debates on state identity in the Palestinian- Israeli conflict:

Clash of political and religious paradigms

نقاشات هوية الدولة في الصراع الفلسطيني الاسرائيلي: صدام المنظور السياسي بالمنظور الديني .

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Abstract:

The present paper addresses the question of the debates about the identity of the state in the Palestinian- Israeli conflict on the basis that the matter went over the level of transcending the two- state solution and the single, democratic, bi-national state, and the unified, secular, democratic state for all its citizens. However, it became a true Israeli issue based on the Jewishness of the state. In other words, the increase in official and unofficial Israeli demands for an obligation to proceed with the path of a purely Jewish Israeli state, whether in the concept of national, or religious Judaism. As a matter of fact, this raises many political problems, religious and identity debates within the Israeli and Palestinian political, societal, and religious components alike. The paper analyzes the following question: To what extent does political interfere with religiousideology in debates and theoretical proposals for the future of the state in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

Key words:Debate, Palestine, Israel, Identity

الملخص: تطرح هذه الورقة البحثية مسألة النقاشات المطروحة حول هوية الدولة في الصراع الفلسطيني الاسرائيلي من منطلق أن الأمر لم يتوقف عند مستوى تجاوز حل الدولتين والدولة الواحدة الديموقراطية ثنائية القومية، والدولة الديموقراطية العلمانية الموحدة لكل مواطنيها،بل وصل –اسرائيليا- الى الطرح المبني على يهودية الدولة، أو بمعنى آخر تزايد المطالب الاسرائيلية الرسمية وغير الرسمية بإلزامية المضي في مسار دولة اسرائيلية يهودية خالصة،سواء بمفهوم اليهودية القومية او اليهودية الدينية .الأمر الذي يطرحالعديد من الاشكالات السياسية ،والنقاشات الدينية والهوياتية داخل المكون السياسيوالمجتمعي والديني الاسرائيلي والفلسطيني على حد سواء،منطلقها:الى أي مدى يتصادم ما هو فكري سياسي بما هو ديني في النقاشات والأطروحات النظرية لمستقبل الدولة في الصراع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي؟.
الكلمات المفتاحية :نقاش،فلسطين،اسرائيل،الهوية.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960's, the Palestinian-Israeli negotiationshave been the core subject of the problem of the future of the state, both from the Palestinian and Israeli context. The visions and theses differed, and the endeavors and objectives varied. Between the differences of these trends and the difference of visions and many concerns, the religious approach is often shown in the Israeli case to impose other ends and assumptions increase the concerns of the solution and make it more complex. After the theses have been officially and amere political proposition based on the two-state solution, where it is seen as an alternative ideal solution as it dissociates all parties from the complexities of the identities, quickly became an equation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on land, history, and identity in recent years to take a religious aspect with extremist indicators to be reflected in the thesis of future state-building.This trend and perception have raised many political problems, and various religious and identity debates within the Israeli political, community and religious component

1. The two-state solution within the political, religious, and nationalist calculations:

This proposition is based on the view that the earth as a reflection of the national demographic majority that live on it, and not devoid of human and ideological exclusion (sense of nationalism). This; in fact, shows that this proposition considers the national, political divides, and cultural ideological differences to be observed as an inevitable condition for building a peace project, or an eternal political settlement, although it goes beyond a detailed point that may constitute a major obstacle to the application of the long historical legacy of this conflict, which extends to the very long time before the emergence of this long-standing historical entity. This consensus is manifested in the rejection of the existence and continuity of the other, which also poses a problem about the proposal of the proponents of the two-state solution, namely, to consider the problems that exist (borders, security, refugees, settlement..,ect.). It went beyond looking at the origin of the problem, which is the origin of existence on this earth in and of itself, that is, going beyond geography to something that is much deeper, which makes this solution a double-edged sword.

The political proposal based on the option of two states for two peoples is presented as the most realistic and closest to the possibility of realization, at least in theory, especially after it was adopted by the international community, in addition to its acceptance by Palestinians and Israelis on the theoretical political level, despite the Israeli practical rejection of the essence of this option, because it represents the beginning The end of the great Israeli Jewish state, as some of the ideologues of the extreme right, both national and religious, see, as they reject, in principle, the idea of an independent Palestinian state on the land of Palestine, and offer its alternative to Transjordan ([1]).

In this regard, Oued Eran, head of the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University, believes that there is no other solution to the two-state solution, because any other solution is a solution that is not new for both sides, and adds that he cannot speak in the name of the Palestinians, but in the name of the Jewish side, If, according to him, we want to preserve the Jewish character of Israeli society because the Jews make up 80% of Israeli society, then there can be no other solution, otherwise, a system similar to the system that existed in South Africa (apartheid) will be established here, he adds. And he asserts that he "does not agree with that," as he adds, stressing that "it is impossible to preserve the Jewish majority if we control the population on the other side, and therefore we do not have a solution other

than two states for two peoples" ([2]). Danny "Gutfine" asserts that when he asserts that there is no other alternative to the two-state solution, stressing that whoever talks about the idea of a bi-national state is practically speaking about the continuation of the conflict. Likewise, the one state will increase the seeds of conflict and turn it - according to his belief - into a "violent conflict." Just as the two peoples will not be able to live in one state, "Goltvin" adds, in his defense of the two-state solution, saying: "We are present in the era of nationalities, and the only solution on the table is the national solution, and at its core are two states for two peoples with two flags and two capitals, and everyone is heading towards something[3]." The Israeli side, which is the strong party according to the current balance of power has many concerns that might make it accept this proposition, including:

-Obsession with Jewish purity:

The advocates of the two-state solution start from the obsession with the necessity of preserving Jewish purity and not mixing with the Palestinians who see them as inferior. Any solution other than the two separate nation-state solution is a threat to the Jewish race and its purity and it must be preserved in compliance with what was mentioned in the Old Testament (the Torah) And discipleship.

The Jews claim that they are the chosen people of God, whom God has chosen over the worlds, for they are distinguished from the rest of humanity, and the peoples of the world are of lesser status than them[4]. The spirits of the Children of Israel, as they believe, are distinguished from the rest of the spirits by being part of God just as the Son is part of his Father, as for the other nations of non-Jews. The Old Testament called them "illiterate" or "goim", meaning animals, as they are walking animals in the form of a human speaking to serve the chosen children of God. The world can be divided into two parts: Israel on the one hand and the other nations on the other hand, and Israel is the chosen people, and this Basic doctrine: "The Jew is considered by God to be superior to the angels, for it was stated in the student:"The sperm from which the rest of the peoples were created is the sperm of a horse."It also states:"And God created the foreigner in the form of a human being to be fit to serve the Jews for whom the world was created." It is stated in the Old Testament (the Torah): "The Lord is your God who distinguished you from the peoples, so you should distinguish between pure and unclean beasts, so do not defile your souls with cattle and birds, nor with everything that goes on the earth that has distinguished it for everyone to be unclean."

And "God has distinguished Israel. From other peoples " [5]

This mythical and deep-rooted religious belief is no longer locked into inserts or the belief of "rabbis" and clerics, nor is it just a slogan carried by only religious Jews or extremist Zionists, as it soon became a principle advocated by politicians and seeking to implement it, this is evident in the recent Israeli societal political options that have left Continuing to choose the extreme right-wing governments represented by Benjamin Netanyahu since 2009, although the various political convictions see the theoretically optimal two-state solution to combine preserving the pure Jewish self with the establishment of peace as well, yet the political convictions of "Netanyahu" and his governments are often Its declared and undeclared positions seemed to reject the idea of the two states as a basis, and even to seek to undermine it on the ground through settlement expansion, despite some public statements optimistic about the two-state solution, which could be considered tactical plans that fall within his current desire for "no solution." [6]

-Demographic obsession:

As long as the demographic conflict is complementary to the geographical conflict, and therefore supporters of the two-state solution go to warn of this danger that Israel may be exposed to in the event that the path

of the solution is directed towards a solution other than the two-state solution. The matter reached many researchers. The Israeli leaders express this danger in the term "Palestinian demographic bomb." According to their belief, the advocates of rejecting the two-state solution offer unsustainable solutions, as they consider settlement encroachment and intensification as a sufficient means to impose the status quo, yet settlement needs a growing population and demographic density.

Although Israel has been keen, since its establishment, to guarantee demographic superiority on the ground, by displacing large numbers of Palestinians from their lands, and stimulating the immigration of Jews to historic Palestine, the demographic reality and in the medium and long term gives different results that are in the interest of the Palestinian side, As the demographic study of the demographic situation between Palestinians and Jews proved that the number of the Palestinian population in historical Palestine has become greater than the number of Jews, since 2013, as the number of Palestinians reached 6 million 117 thousand people compared to 6 million and 86 thousand people for Jews, despite the opening of the door to immigration without restrictions For Jews from all over the world, and preventing the return of Palestinian refugees to their original

homeland in historic Palestine, so that the Palestinian population growth rate remains large compared to that of the Jew.

- The phobia of security:

The two-state solution is also proposed from a security perspective, whereby Israeli society has become a security phobia, despite the great victories achieved on the ground (wars, internal security control, security arrangements with the Palestinians, security cooperation with neighboring countries, especially Egypt and Jordan). However, the continuation of the Israeli settlement presence in the Palestinian territories with a high demography compared to the Jews posed difficulties and security threats of high proportions, which threatens even the Israeli interior, which has come to live in light of these concerns that led to the permanent military mobilization, which made the Israeli society lose its feeling Safety and inner peace.

This feeling led over time to thinking about the need to reach final peace solutions that create security. Therefore, the call was to apply the Egyptian-Israeli peace model to the Palestinian-Israeli situation, so that the withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the formation of a Palestinian state alongside "Israel", which is the matter Which leads to building peaceful relations that guarantee security for both sides. This is what was confirmed by former US President

Barack Obama, saying: "In our discussions today, I assured President" Abbas "that the United States of America is still adhering to the two-state vision, which is in the interest of the Palestinian people, as it is in In the interest of Israeli and American national security, and we seek to establish an independent, viable and contiguous Palestinian state as the homeland of the Palestinian people alongside the Jewish state of Israel, two states that enjoy the right to self-determination, security and peace". Thus, Obama recognizes that the establishment of the Palestinian state is an Israeli security interest. And an American woman at the same time, but the question that arises in this regard: What is the nature of the state that the Israelis and the Americans want, how do they preserve their security and their interests? Is it a full state or lacking its sovereignty as in The Israeli concept of the "road map"? Or a country of cantons and sprawling fringes? While any current settlement reality seems to be an answer to the last question.

2. The political, demographic, religious nationalities and the one-state solution proposal:

Bringing up the issue of the one state, regardless of its contents and names, whether it is bi-national or a secular democratic state for all its citizens (based on individual citizenship) is not a new idea, as

it was proposed since the thirties of the last century. The Palestinian territories, and a reflection of the clear stalemate in front of the two-state solution and the continued settlement encroachment in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and as a result of the despair of establishing a Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967. The philosophical basis of the one state is also based on the thesis of the impossibility of dividing the land geographically as a result of its overlapping (for example the holy places are intertwined to an extent that it is impossible to divide them between the two sides). Therefore, a state must be established on the foundations of a pluralist democracy based on the principle of citizenship based on creating a holistic framework for all individuals on the ground without Looking at the ethnic, racial or religious differences between Jews and non-Jews, and that was after the 1967 War, where the Israeli settlement expansion formed a major point of contact between the Arab identity and the Israeli-Jewish identity, which called for a political proposal based on a plurality of identity according to civil political foundations without Religious and nationalism. The settlement mechanisms are also based on creating a common framework for coexistence between the two sides on the same land, whereby the state is defined as all its citizens and nationalities without

taking any consideration of the other aspects that divide more than calls for peace and coexistence. In this context, many formulas and models have been proposed, and perhaps the most important formulas that prompted the analysis and theorizing of senior leaders, thinkers and political analysts.

-The single bi- national state:

The single bi-national state proposition implicitly acknowledges the existence of two different groups, nationally and ethnically, that can coexist and have a mutual influence between the two identities without giving up their basic elements, so that the two identities interact in a comprehensive social field whose reference is citizenship, equality and mutual recognition, and this option is not easy to achieve. However, it remains one of the scenarios that many Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals, academics, and thinkers have been raising.

Perhaps one of the most prominent political descriptions presented about bi-nationalism is what was proposed by thinker Noam Chomsky, where he sees that the land factor is the element of solution and conflict at the same time, the problem is that the perception of the two sides is based on unilateralism, as he gave an example of that, saying that " Solving the Jewish problem in the diaspora requires the promised land, and the solution

to the Palestinian refugee problem and the Palestinian state also requires land, so it is the common element to solve each party's problem. However, this participation in the existence of a previous problem, the land was also the common factor in the existence of a subsequent problem. It is imperative to overcome the idea of the inter-conflict for this self-centered perception only, so that the land becomes a common element that accommodates solutions for both parties and dissolves national differences. [7]

What is noticeable is that "Chomsky" gave a philosophical diagnosis based on a fixed variable, which is the land as the center of the conflict, and proposed ways out of the complex of looking at it from an ethnic and nationalistic perspective as a way to liberation and bilateral coexistence. However[8], the final stage of his conception of the implementation of the binational state highlights another problem Another place of difference may be formed: Is the recent fusion to create a state taking place within the Israeli framework or the Palestinian framework? Or is there another formula for combining them? (For example, the proposal made by the late Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi by calling the state "Isratine") .

- The single, democratic, secular state:

The proposal of a single, democratic, secular state for all its citizens is one of the most recent formulas presented for resolving the conflict, and it is an attractive option for Palestinians rather than Israelis. Therefore, we find that the first who considered this agenda were Palestinian thinkers, headed by "Azmi Beshara" and "Edward Saeed", and this idea was propagated in light of the current settlement conditions, which made the opportunity to establish a two-state solution and a single binational state difficult to attain.

The single, democratic, secular state is an integrated, comprehensive and monolithic vision based on creating an equal situation between individuals and groups from which society is composed, and aims to carry out a continuous cultural and social fusion process, within acommon political framework, that leads to building cultural awareness and a common social and political identity for all members of society who belong equally.

Israel totally rejects this option despite some Israeli theses (religious Jews) support the one-state option based on its response to the interests of a large group of Jews who wish to live in the "promised full" land, that is to say, to live in all of historical Palestine and make up half of its population instead a smaller country with a majority (in the case of the two-state option), in which they suffer

from security concerns and closures. In this, AviDavush believes that the land can be divided, but the homeland is no. Feelings of Jewish nostalgia for the hills of Samaria (the West Bank) and the Jewish longing for a "Judah valley" should not be curbed by any agreement, and therefore he sees the need to take measures that contain many risks but that they contain The profits for both sides are much greater than the idea of separation, which is the assimilation of citizens on both sides (the one bi-national or secular democratic state)[9], which allows the Israelis to associate with the entire "Harz Israel" (the Land of Israel) and its religious sites. According to this proposition, if the separation meant the final loss of the dream of a Jewish state, where a Palestinian state would be established for the Palestinians. Over time, it would make Israel a bi-national state (approximately 25% of the citizens of Israel are currently Arabs), and in this way Israel will suffer from internal demographic threats after If major concessions are made, and according to this perception, the one bi-national state is an unavoidable reality, so it is better for it to be established throughout the land (Israel and Palestine) than to be born within "Israel" alone.[10]

3. -The demand for the Jewishness of the state and the signs of the emergence of the extreme right and the dominance of the religious belief over political action:

The demand for recognition of Israel as a Jewish state for the Jewish people is a step towards "legitimizing" the Israeli settlement occupation in Palestine. This request was formally announced within the "Road Map 2003" in the midst of the conditions and amendments submitted by the Palestinian and Israeli sides, including the Israeli condition that the Palestinian negotiating delegation must recognize the "Jewishness of the State of Israel", and full recognition that Israel is a Jewish state as a condition for accepting any peace initiative that would establish A Palestinian state. This was followed by a speech by "Ariel Sharon" a month later at the Aqaba Summit (June 4, 2003) and his assertion that the Palestinians must recognize the Jewishness of Israel, a request that was endorsed by US President George W. Bush at the same summit.

First of all, the request to recognize Israel as a Jewish state means transferring the conflict from national to religious, with an Israeli-Zionist claim that Jewish nationalism is greater and further than the religious complex and the biblical proposition, but rather that it contains but is not limited to it, and according to this narrative, Jewish nationalism is earlier than religion. The demand is not to recognize the religious

dimension, but rather the historical right that preceded it, and this novel tries to emphasize that the Jews are the original inhabitants of that land as a people. Then the national dimension was mixed with the religious dimension through the concept of the promised land (where the Jews claim that Palestine is the land that he gave them, Jehovah the Almighty Lord), relying on this on biblical and discursive justifications, including the following beliefs:

-The Book of Genesis, chapter (15): "On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, "To your offspring I will give this land from the River of Egypt to the great river of the Euphrates." In addition, in chapter (12), it was stated:"And he passed" Abram "to the place of your sheikh, to the naked oak, and the Canaanites were at that time in the land, and the Lord appeared" to Abram "and said to your offspring, I will give this land." In chapter (13)[11], it is stated: "And the Lord said to Abraham ... Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are north, south, east and west, because all the land that you see I will give to you, and to your offspring forever, and make your offspring like the dirt of the earth, until If someone is able to count the dirt of the earth, then your offspring will also count ... Without diving into the primacy of Judaism as a religion and as a national, or the stage of intermingling between them in the thesis

on the demand for recognition of the Jewishness of the state, this recognition, according to "Hunaydah Ghanem",means:

- The abolition of the settler colonial dimension: In the way that the Israeli settlement project becomes a return to the land of the ancestors, and consequently the colonial character is dropped, and all legal and moral responsibilities regarding the catastrophe and the genocide, … etc.[12] According to this approach, the immigrant population becomes the original and the Palestinians are simply second-class citizens or Less, or minority, must be dealt with according to circumstances and conditions.

- Strengthening the religious character of the conflict: It means the direct recognition of various biblical texts, myths and "Talmudic" myths that justify the current political behaviors, which also gives power to the religious or secular Jewish settlement current to justify settlement, according to the saying of one of the early founders of Zionism: "A group does not believe By God (the Jews and the secular Zionists) they claim the land given to them by God (the Promised Land)."

-Recognition of the Jewish and Zionist narrative: The issue of recognition is not only related to the recognition of the existence of "Israel", but also related to the full recognition of its thesis and its historical, religious and political narrative on

the conflict (settlement, the Nakba, the setback, refugees, Jerusalem, negotiations ... etc.).

As a matter of fact, the Israeli colonial settlementof Palestine is a historical correction, and that the Israeli settlement presence in Palestine today is just a restoration of a historical right, so that the Palestinian presence becomes a marginal existence, and in this way completes the biblical Jewish religious narrative supported by national and historical allegations to create a political scenario based on The strategy of amending the history and geography of Palestine (the Jewish past in the diaspora), and building a new horizon for the future on the new reference.

. CONCLUSION

The Israeli rejection of the idea of a two-state solution, or even one state, is based on the premise that Israel is fully convinced that it faces the challenge of the demographic race and reinforces mutual democratic concerns, which will work to institutionalize the national incitement from each side on the other. The one-state option, for example, is the loss of the Jewish majority coupled with the obligation to have equal rights. And here we refer to the entrenched, exclusionary racial nature, and the constant dissolution in the historical

heritage, the ideological structure, the psychological formation, and the political perception of the Jewish personality in general, from which it is impossible to emancipate regardless of the multiplicity of political options and the change of circumstances and facts.

Also, there is no reasonable reason for the Israelis to suddenly agree to a radical transformation from a party that controls the current balance of power in which the Jews form a majority and control their own security, borders and demographic status to a state in which they share control and the status of the majority with the Palestinians, and voluntarily surrender their affairs to constitutional arrangements and guarantees that may not prove their effectiveness.

However, in recent years, Israeli society has become more inclined to adopt the nationalist theses and religious approaches promoted by the extreme right and the religious currents of Judaism, Haredim, and religious Zionism, and what the extremist Israeli governments in the last decade are led by Netanyahu is not the greatest proof of that. Accordingly, the interpretation of the current political and national action is nothing but an attempt to build the identity of a state and society from an extremist

national religious standpoint that seeks to exclude the Palestinian other party by all means and methods.

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