

The Palestinians of Israel: The historical development from 1948 to the present

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Basic Demographics

18% of Israel's population are Palestinian Arabs (1.8 M)

Palestinian citizens of Israel are not confined to one geographic location:

55% reside in Northern Israel (The Galilee)

20% in the "Triangle area" (Central Israel)

15% live in the Negev (Southern Israel)

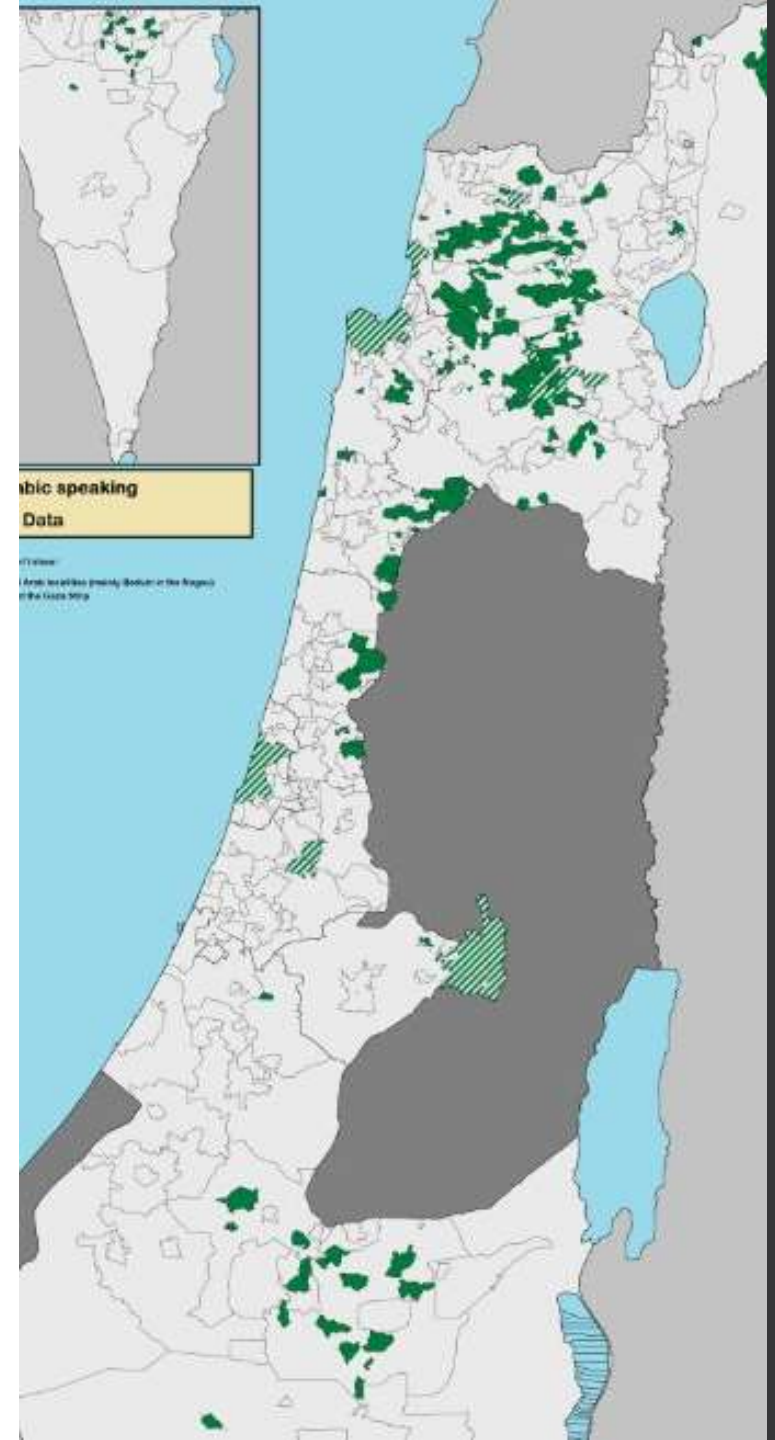
10% live in "mixed cities", mainly on the Mediterranean coast

The community is religiously diverse as well

84% Muslim

8% Christian

8% Druze



Who are the Palestinian citizens of Israel

- The Palestinian citizens of Israel are the descendants of the Palestinians that Remained in their homes during the 1948 war and following the cease fire agreement found themselves under Israeli rule.
- As part of the UN partition plan of 1947, Israel was obliged to give citizenship to all Palestinians living within her border. That is how they ended up receiving Israeli citizenship.
- Ethnically they are **Palestinian Arabs**; yet citizenship wise they are **Israelis**.
- Their everyday experiences and political realities differ from other Palestinians.
- It may seem odd at first, but a person can be both a "Palestinian" and an "Israeli" simultaneously.



Identity crises

- The Palestinians in Israel are truly in a peculiar situation. Their country (Israel) is at war with their ethnic brethren (The Palestinians).
- The case of the Palestinian citizens leads to multiple identities (identity crises!!) The community has 4 main identities Arab, Palestinian, sectarian and Israeli identities.
- The Identity crisis is so deep that even the term in which you define the community exposes one's political bias.
- The Dichotomus reality: discrimination and the rise of a religious-nationalist Jewish elite leads to greater emphasis on Arab/Palestinian identity. Simultaneously, each generation is further integrated into the economy and cultural of Israel leading to greater emphasis on Sectarian/Israeli identity.

SEEMS ODD?! WELCOME TO THE REALITY OF PALESTINIANS IN ISRAEL

TABLE 2 - WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT YOURSELF, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IDENTITIES IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT (BASED ON SECT)

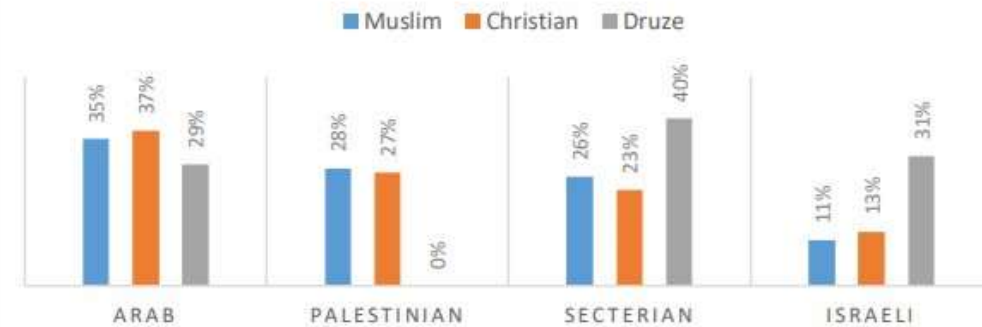
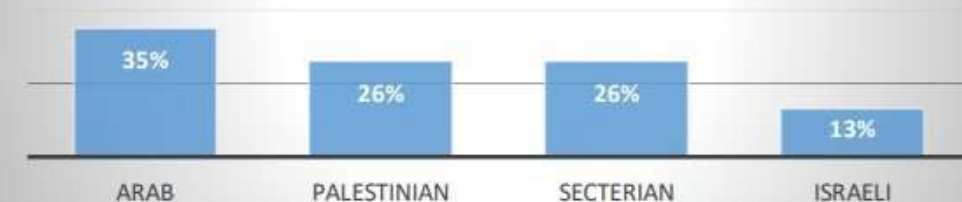
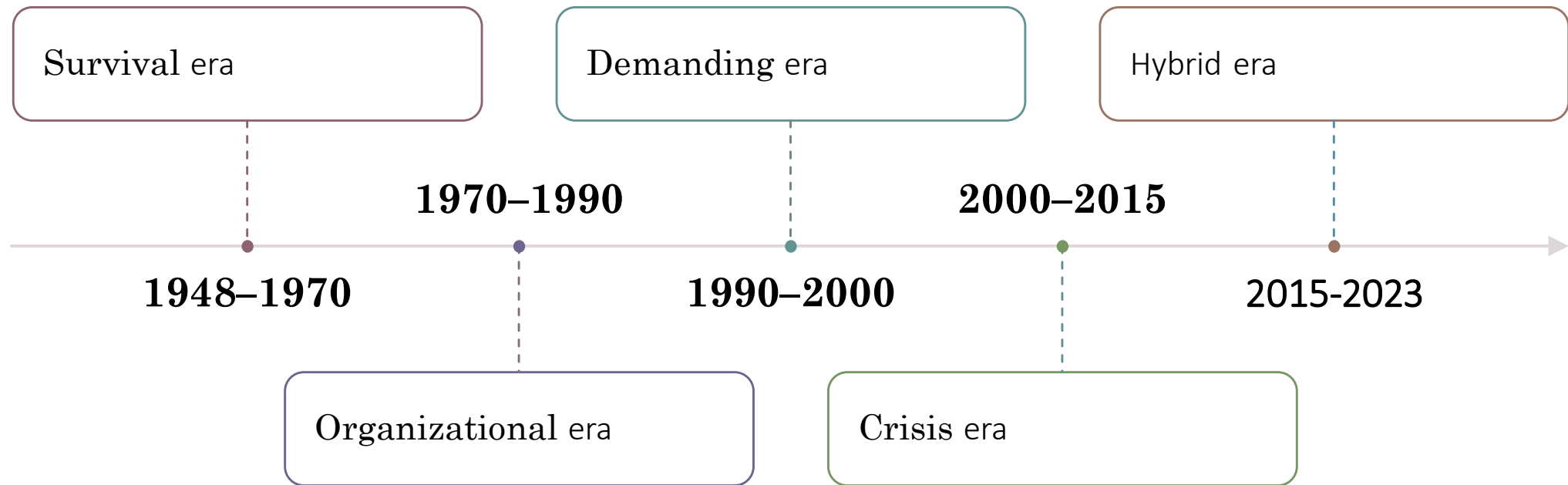


Table 1 - When you think about yourself, which of the following identities is your most important



The historical development – a timeline



The survival period (The quiet generation) 1948-1967

- This era is highlighted by the 'military rule period'.
- A shattered community following the Nakba. The Palestinians of Israel suffered from:

no middle class or urban elite

90% illiteracy rate

(almost) everyone working in the agrarian sector.

No knowledge of Hebrew language and culture

Under a political patronage system with few civil rights

- The main goal was to "survive" by not provoking the establishment and hope that the Arab countries would somehow return the situation to the pre-1948 war reality.

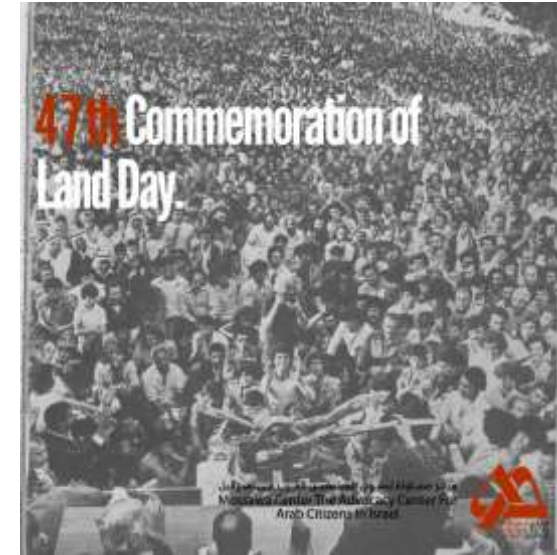


The post 1967 reality

- The 1967 war dramatically reshaped Israel-Palestine, including Palestinian identity in Israel.
- As a result of the war:
- Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories reunited after 19 years of separation.
- Intermarriage between Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories skyrocketed.
- Palestinians in Israel began studying in Palestinian institutions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
- The occupation forced Israeli institutions to focus on new challenges in the WB and Gaza, allowing Palestinians in Israel greater political freedoms. The communist party (the only licensed anti-Zionist party at the time) began to take hold in Palestinian towns in Israel.

1973-2000 the genesis of (independent) political activism

- The 1970s witnessed the rise of the first generation of Palestinian political activism and networking across Israel. Palestinian institutions in Israel were formed (the Arab Mayors association, Arab students' association, the committee to combat land confiscation). High Follow up committee established in 1982
- 1976 Land Day - the first violent confrontation between state authorities and the community.
- 1980s: The rise of Palestinian parties in Israel (as opposed to Israeli Arab parties) and the demise of the Zionist left in Palestinian towns
- 1990s: The peace process led to a rapprochement between Palestinians & Jews in Israel, including political cooperation. (Demanding period)
- 2000: The failure of the peace process and the 2nd Intifada leads to an unprecedented crisis in relations between Palestinians and Jews in Israel



لجنة المتابعة العليا للجماهير العربية في إسرائيل

ועדת המעקב העליונה של הציבור הערבי בישראל

High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel

2000-2023 Never ending cycle of deterioration (and hope!)

- The last generation can be divided into two main periods:
- The crisis period 2000-2015:

This period is highlighted by the lack of trust between the two communities.

State institutions downgraded their presence (and services) in the community.

Political persecution of Palestinian parties and legislators.

Palestinian intellectuals in Israel produce "vision" documents aiming to present a Palestinian path towards democracy and inclusion in Israel.

Dramatic increase in crime and violence in the community.

- The Resurgence Period 2015-2023:

This period is highlighted by the rise of Palestinian politics in Israel

By the start of the political crisis in 2019, the Palestinian parties had become potential kingmakers of Israeli governments.

Rise in socio-economic status of the community and the rise of a middle class.





A Palestinian party in an Israeli government: the case of Ra'am

- In June 2021, we truly witnessed a watershed moment in Israeli political history: the formation of the country's first Jewish-Arab government was formed.
- The Ra'am party a moderate Islamist party became the first Palestinian party to join an Israeli government.
- More interestingly, this government was formed 3 weeks after the most violent episode between Arabs- and Jews in Israel in over 20 years.
- So, what led to this shocking development:
- Majority of Arabs supported the move (~ 70%)
- A belief that only through joining a coalition can Palestinians receive larger budgets and a share of state resources.
- A belief that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be solved soon, therefore Arab legislators should focus on internal issues.
- The political divide in the Jewish community over joining a coalition with (the indicted) Netanyahu provided an unprecedented opportunity for Palestinian parties to become kingmakers.



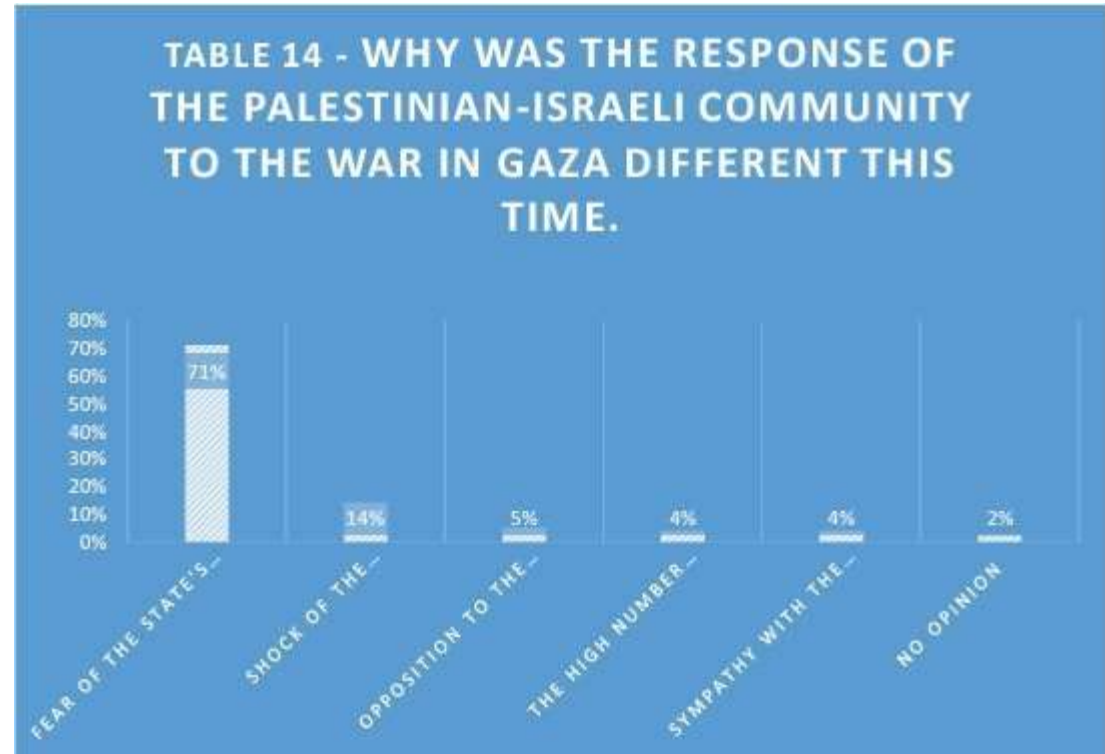
The Gaza war and the Palestinian community in Israel

- We are still in the midst of this horrible war (which has turned into a genocide). A few points to clarify:
- Compared to other Palestinians, those in Israel are not directly suffering from the war.
- While Palestinians in Israel overwhelmingly support their brethren and their right to resist occupation, the community vehemently reject the tactics used by Hamas on October 7th.
- Surprisingly, compared to previous wars, Palestinians in Israel remained "quiet" for the first few months, why:

1- Mainly out of fear! They realize that unlike past events, Israeli Jews felt vulnerable and under immediate attack. Palestinian citizens do not want to provoke a response from the Jewish majority.

2- Israel's democratic margins have been shrinking in recent decades; minority rights and free speech in particular are overlooked during times of war.

3- Many believe that if Israel is successful in Gaza, it will move its attention towards the Palestinians in the West Bank and in Israel.



Contemporary challenges facing the community

- Crime and Violence (partially encouraged and overlooked by state institutions).
- Land and housing scarcity (21% of the population on 3% of the land).
- Rising levels of incitement from Israel's political elite.
- Laws aiming to limit the political rights of Palestinian citizens.

Homicide Rate in Arab Community More Than Doubled in 2023, and 92% of the Murders Remain Unsolved

The steep rise is attributed to gang feuds and Itamar Ben-Gvir's appointment as national security minister ■ Top police official: 'We have without question failed, the numbers are very bad'

Opinion | Haaretz Editorial

Editorial | Israel Trying to Disappear Arab Citizens From the Democratic Process

Future challenges facing the community

- Attacks against the political representation of the community.
- I expect discrimination against Arabs to increase in coming years.
- The 'one state reality' can endanger the (relative) freedoms the community enjoys.
- Simultaneously, Palestinian integration into the Israeli economy will continue and intensify. Demographic and economic challenges facing Israel will force the country to allow Palestinians a greater share in the decision-making process

I hope I ended this presentation on a positive note :)

