

**Middle East Studies Center
Jordan**

**The Impacts of Transformations in
Israel on Its Policies
Towards Arabs and Palestinians**

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Seminars

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Abstract

The Impacts of Transformations in Israel on Its policies Towards Arabs and Palestinians

This book is the outcome of a symposium held by MESC on September 28, 2019, in Amman-Jordan. Its title " The Impacts of Transformations in Israel on Its policies Towards Arab and Palestinians. " A distinctive group of Jordanian and Palestinian politicians, experts and academicians has participated in this symposium. The authors investigate the most prominent political, security, and economic transformations in Israel during the last ten years, 2009-2019. They examine these impacts from many dimensions.

The book provides many recommendations within the framework of establishing a vision of dealing with these emerging Israeli policies at different levels, including the official and public Palestinians and Arabs. These recommendations aim to serve the Palestinian people's national rights, achieve the objectives of the Arab Renaissance, and protect Arab national security from emerging threats by the Israeli policies in the region.

The book highlights these transformations in three sections, which contain a total of five chapters. The first section, which deals with "the political transformations in Israel and their impact on their policies towards Arabs and Palestinians," the first chapter, entitled "Political Transformations in Israel: The Rise of the New Right," the Likud Party as an example."

It explains the right-wing control in Israeli politics. It uncovers that it has been established during the last two decades. On the other hand, it dominated the political system with a social and popular base supported by far-right leaders, ideas, and policies after imposing different radical changes.

The book illustrates how Israel witnessed the right-wing parties' reproduction in the last decade towards what political literature calls the "New Right." This transformation did not break up with the traditional right-wing system. However, it adopted new directions in its discourse. The book analyzed the trends of this new right, and the environment created its discourse. It concluded that these such perceptions combine the nationalist views cut off from liberal perceptions raised by the traditional right in civil-political affairs.

On the other hand, religious tendencies consider religion as an integral part of its system of thought. Moreover, the "New Right" is a product of socio-demographic transformations in Israeli society that came together with the intellectual transformations in the aftermath of the 1967 war.

Thus, the book previews leadership changes within the right parties and the ruling party in Israel, the Likud, which undergoes political and social transformations that cause internal changes and discourse updates.

The book demonstrates Likud's new and old elite perspective towards the Palestinian's rights. They share the idea of the " Israeli full holy land," [including all the occupied West Bank], but they differ regarding the Palestinians' civil and political rights. The old ones want to give the Palestinians' individual political and civil rights within the Jewish sovereignty framework. While the new elites effectively establish an apartheid regime that embodies maintaining Israeli control

over the territory, annexing areas of the West Bank to Israeli sovereignty, and depriving the Palestinians of any equal and complete political and civil rights.

After studying and analyzing Knesset's election results over the past years (February 2013, March 2015, April 2019), the book concluded that Likud became the people's party as it could penetrate the Jewish community's classes and sectors. Moreover, Likud's succeeded to marginalize voters' socioeconomic status in their Jewish community's electoral choices without permanently abolishing it.

The researchers conclude that real competition has retreated in the government's formation with the Likud party with the upper hand since the elections in 2013 that created a dominant party system.

The second chapter of the first section presents political transformations as Israel witnessed an increasing disintegration and fragmentation of political movements and parties. Also, it witnessed the emergence of a state of influence between small and medium parties regarding the formation of Israeli governments. The Israeli politics still affected by distinctive new factors, including the absence of influential charismatic and historical leaders, the rise of the national-religious current in Israel and its increasing influence on Israeli policy, and the diminishing role of the military establishment in favor of right-wing and religious forces in the political system, the decline of Israeli confidence in the Authority and its official institutions, whether executive or legislative.

The study investigates the impact of these Israeli transformations on the Palestinians and the Arabs. These impacts include radical changes in the means of conflict between Arabs and Israel, weakening the possibility of large-scale wars in the region, the tendency to shift the conflict from its Arab framework into an Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, it deepened the policy of discrimination against the Palestinian people and confiscating their rights. The Judaization of their occupied lands and legitimizing Israeli settlements that began to swallow the lands of the occupied territories since 1967 is also considered part of these impacts. Such radical transformations in the governing party's ideology produced the marginalization of the Arab Palestinians in Israel, who make up about 20% of the Israeli population. Israel threatened to rob their civil rights with the increasing Judaization of Jerusalem and the increased grave violations of international law. Israel is also trying to abolish Palestinian refugees' right of return and liquidate the role of (UNRWA). Israel uses American support under President Trump's policy to accomplish the Israeli right-wing government's ambitions against Palestinians rights.

In light of the book's general view of the changes taking place, the second chapter concludes with a set of principles and recommendations that contribute to facing the Israel threat policy to Palestinians and Arabs. The most prominent of which are: Defining the nature of the conflict in the region as an existential conflict of political, religious, economic, and social dimensions, and not as a conflict over disputed borders or regions; Building the Arab strategy facing Israel; establishing democracy and protecting human rights in the Palestinian and Arab communities to gain international support for Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination. It suggests continuing the resistance actions of Israel's policies and projects in the region. It supports the theory of "occupation price" that Israel should pay under such steadfast and continuous resistance until it decides to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories.

The second section of the book, titled "Security Transformations in Israel and its Impact on its Policies toward Arabs and Palestinians," presents two chapters. The first analyzes the most critical security and military transformations in Israel during the last ten years, 2009-2019. It emphasized that these transformations came from the interaction of many active militaries, political, and security factors since the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006. It considers that such a trend was strengthened by Hamas's subsequently increased influence in the West Bank and Gaza, which reinforced Israel's concerns about its internal security. Because after the 2006 Lebanon and Gaza wars in 2014, Israel concluded that its extra power did not resolve the battle, and it headed toward new conflict management. It focuses on developing defensive force, which posed a security and military challenge that the IDF could not resolve until today.

The book confirms that the Arab Spring in 2011 has confused the Israeli decision-makers in anticipation of its success in advancing towards democracy and freedom. Moreover, the nuclear agreement with Iran was a station for new security transformations in Israel also.

The book concludes that Israel has shifted its strategy from confronting the claimed hostile policies of the Arab countries to influence their policies. Israel is no longer interested in the official Arab reactions to its policies. Instead, it focuses on the conflict with non-state actors, especially the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance. The researchers here recommend achieving Palestinian reconciliation, a review of the Palestinian Authority's role in security coordination with the Israeli occupation, and the restoration of the Palestine Liberation Organization role as the lever for the Palestinian struggle. It also recommended exercising the internal Palestinian elections due to supplement their struggle with new energy. Moreover, they suggested finding creative policies to disengage the Palestinian economy from Israel.

They call for the Palestinian people to cling to their land, no matter how it faces Israeli pressures and temptations while raising the cost of the occupation against Israel through mass public marches, strikes, and permanent protests, and building grassroots institutions.

At the Arab level, the book recommends securing immunity, political strategy, and economic integration among Arab states. It suggests strengthening mechanisms and rules for joint action, including the ability to defend the external challenges that Arabs face. It urgently calls for ending disputes and differences between Arab countries.

It recommends strengthening relations between units of the Arab system. Besides, it suggests creating real and influential platforms and tracks for internal dialogue. and negotiation Resolving disputes and

In the second chapter, the book emphasizes that Israeli leaders prioritize security over peace, which is evident in its policy and behavior towards Arabs and Palestinians, even in the broader regional and international circles. It also postpones any real solutions with the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Palestinians in the Israeli state. Israel enjoys the continuing security coordination with the Palestinian Authority in return for limited improvement of the West bank's economic situation.

The second chapter focuses on 2006 as the benchmark for the Israeli security transformation in the past two decades. Israel has transformed from a state of

attacking and surprising its enemy to a situation of protecting its internal front and defending its borders.

Such transformation has been supported by the results of Israeli wars against Gaza in 2008,2012,2014 subsequently. The new shift in the battlefield from armies to non-state organizations has defeated Israeli army attacks and tactics.

The book presents the possibility of Israel's new type of war application with experience, the cyberwar. This war could lead to confusion in the event of its use, especially since Arab and regional political actors and Arab governments are modest in terms of capabilities and wealth and can join the cyberwar club as such. The chapter recommends further profound studies and research on the emergent Israeli strategy regarding advanced cyberwar and drones.

The economic transformations and their impact on Israeli policy towards Arabs and Palestinians are discussed and analyzed in the third section. It confirms the high degree of centralization of the Israeli economic system, especially in light of the government's control over resources. This economy closely links to the expansionist policy based on an ideology of Religious Nationalism. The book confirms that the Israeli economy directly and fundamentally affects Palestinians in their daily lives.

During the past decade, the transformations were also the pledge to annex Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian West Bank to Israel, especially the Jordan Valley and the northern of the Dead Sea, for their economic value.

In the context of the impact of these transformations on the Palestinians, the book shows that since its formation in 2009, the Netanyahu government has intermittently suspended Palestinian clearing funds and linked them to political events. By the end of 2018, the US government stopped all financial aid to the Palestinians except for security. Israeli government deducted Israeli part of the clearing money, which led to its transfer entirely, freezing about 70% of the Palestinian Authority's revenues. The PNA has to reduce government employees' salaries in half, leading to a reduction in services and decreased purchasing movement in the markets.

The Arabs and Palestinians' economy has been subjected to the carrot and stick politics under the Trump-Netanyahu policy. American aid and economic sanctions policy towards the Palestinians and the Arabs were encouraged by Israeli leaders and their allies in the Administration; it even opened up new horizons to sell Israeli technology systems and desalination equipment to Gulf, Arab and African markets.

At the end of this chapter, the book concludes that reviving the Palestinian economy is temporary. Unless Palestinian political independence is achieved, the economy will still suffer. This independence is considered an entrance and condition for improving the Palestinians lives.

At the end of this chapter, the book presents recommendations for Palestinian and Arabs governments and influential actors. They include a complete departure from establishing/ normalizing economic relations between Arabs and Israel; developing an economic approach from available local sources would enable them to dispense with American aid; activating the Arab financial safety net for the Palestinian Authority as per Arab Summits decisions; Enhance the ability of the Palestinian Authority to carry out its duties towards citizens, enhance their resilience, and reduce the Israeli dominance on the Palestinian economy. The researchers call for Formulating and implementing initiatives by business people and economic elites under the PNA administration in the West Bank and Gaza.

They call it to contribute to the liberation of the Palestinian economy away from the Israeli hegemony that is often employed for political purposes.

The book concludes that the leading transformations in Israel include the reproduction of the right-wing movement towards what political literature calls the "New Right," the decline of the military's role and the right-wing and religious forces' progress imposed their control over the Israeli political system and policies. A decline in confidence in the authority and official institutions, strengthening the judiciary's role in holding state officials and politicians accountable would also be part of these transformations' repercussions. Israel's adopting the theory of absolute security by using its technological capabilities to hit any targets that they see as a threat in the future.

The book also concludes that these transformations have dangerous repercussions on Israel's policies towards Arabs and Palestinians. Especially on increasing attempts to legitimize settlements, confiscate lands, and the Palestinian Arabs' expulsion from Palestinian territories. Israel already has many racist legislation against Palestinians and their holy places. As such, Israel would control over the Palestinians, in light of the only strategic Arab option is peace with Israel.

The book finally recommends Arab adherence to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. It calls for Palestinian unity to be restored to face anonymously such repercussions. The Palestinian Authority has to reconsider its role in light of Israel's denial of the Oslo agreements. It has to restore the PLO's role in Palestine and the diaspora, returning to the Palestinian people to building democratic institutions.

The book also stresses the importance of disengaging the Palestinian economy from Israel. It affirms to raise the Israeli occupation costs so that Israel does not live comfortably in managing the conflict with the Palestinian people while continuing occupying, confiscating Palestinian lands, and abusing gravely Palestinian rights. Such trends included the right to use all legitimate means of resistance to end the West Bank's Israeli occupation, including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip occupied in 1967.