The Correlation Between Social Deviance and Political Violence in Settler Colonial Societies: Israel as a Model

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Introduction

Sociologists often define social deviance as flagrant and repeated verbal or physical departure from the norms of the value system in a particular society. Deviance is measured according to three indicators: frequency, severity, and diversity of its forms.[1] One of the most serious problems that face settler societies (such as Israel, the United States, and South Africa during apartheid, etc.) is the extreme diversity of the social environments from which the settlers originate, which makes their society's value system often contradictory, in terms of the arrangement and composition of the value scale in general, and the determination of the highest values in this system in particular. In Israeli society, for example, the origins of the "largest" segments of society originate from various backgrounds, which, according to official Israeli statistics, include about 46 countries across the five continents.[2]

According to a number of specialized studies, it is evident that indigenous-replacing settler societies, which exterminate, displace, or scatter indigenous communities, see force and might as the supreme universal value shared by most of the settler community members, irrespective of the diversity in their social and cultural backgrounds. Indeed, settler communities are established by force; the success of force against the local population or against nature, reinforces the centrality of the idea of force and violence.[3] It is not a coincidence that the United States has the highest rate of foreign military interventions in the world, or that the most violent forms of racial discrimination have been recorded in South Africa, or that Israel is the country with the most violations of United Nations resolutions, where its violations of UN Human Rights Council resolutions, since the creation of the council in 2006, has exceeded the total number of violations recorded in all countries of the world.[4]

This means that the source of social and political deviance in Israeli society cannot be separated from three extant factors that glorify force and violence, and constitute the cultural background of every segment of Israeli society, as follows:

1. The way the settler community was formed by force: The Israelis had defected from their original communities from which they immigrated, then used force to control a new

geography. They maintain control and survival through cycles of violence against the indigenous population and their neighbors. In a previous study, we referred to an Israeli public opinion poll that showed up to 64% of Israelis believe that Israel can only survive with "the edge of the sword,"[5] which is reinforced by the Militarization Index in which Israel ranks first globally.[6] Might as a value has been reinforced among the Israelis, for it has achieved most of their goals, making them believe that might, force, and violence represent the solution to all social and political dilemmas.

2. A system of religious values based on a specific idea, i.e., supremacy, in turn based on a metaphysical epistemological system that presents its adherents as the "chosen people." According to its religious texts gives its adherents the right to dominate others, which reinforces their idea of might is right, seeing it as morally justified, because it is supported by a religious text. The centrality of Joshua bin Nun in Zionist-Jewish thought can be explained by his glorification and exercise of force against gentiles, where we find in some texts of the Torah unparalleled cruelty and glorification of power.[7]

3. A Western heritage based in some dimensions on a coupling of the values of conflict and power (from Greek heritage to Hegel, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche, Niebuhr, and Morgenthau, etc.), and of the values of pragmatism and utilitarianism (David Hume, John Dewey, etc.), a dimension that is consistent with the value system of indigenous-replacing settler societies.[8] As is known most of the Israeli leaderships were formed in this western cultural environment that glorifies power on the one hand, and considers it to be right based on the utility it brings on the other hand, which is the essence of pragmatism.

First: Manifestations of Social Deviance in the Israeli Settler Colonial Society

Due to the difference in societal backgrounds and the value system of the settler community, by virtue of the multiplicity of their societal origins, some manifestations of deviance appear in some societal segments more than in others, while other manifestations of deviance among them overlap despite the difference in societal backgrounds. Indeed, it is evident that the influx of Jewish immigrants from the republics of the former Soviet Union, which increased the population of Israel during the period 1990–1993 by 20%, led to increased tensions and deviances in the relationship

between Soviet Jews and Ethiopian Jews, due to the sharp difference in their social backgrounds.[9] For example, social studies indicate that Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, relative to their proportion of the population, rank the highest among segments of Israeli society on three measurements, namely:[10]

1. School dropout rate, and inability to adapt to the Israeli school system.
2. Percentage of alcoholism, in comparison to their counterparts of other groups.
3. Crime, at a level that exceeds their relative size in the total population, as will be cleared out in this study.

Israeli researchers believe that Israeli society does not follow the pattern of "integration" of new immigrants, but rather their "absorption." The Zionist political philosophy of dealing with immigrants is based on the "absorption" of these immigrants of the core components of the Israeli identity, which are: the Jewish religion, the Hebrew language, and military service (any departure from these three dimensions is considered a kind of deviance). Israel is unique among the world's societies in that it forces its Jewish citizens to "absorb" these requirements, and accordingly Israel has an official "Ministry of Immigrant Absorption," rather than "integration" into their new society without having to fully assimilate into a new national identity, as is the case in normal societies to which immigrants arrive. According to the studies of integration and adaptation of the immigrants to their new society, the process requires an average of one generation or a little more, and in some aspects of sexual behavior the process may be more complex and takes more time. Consequently, this reality creates tensions in the early stages between the society and the immigrant, and it is clearly seen, according to these studies, in the relationship between the Israeli Jewish community and the Jewish Russian immigrant community. The difficulties of adaptation of the Russian Jews in Israel are evident through the following indicators cited by an Israeli researcher from Tel Aviv University:[11]

1. Secularism among Russian immigrants is higher than among other Jews.

2. The distinction between the Russian Jews who came under the impulse of the "Zionist ideology," during the early waves of immigration the mid-20th century, and those who came under the influence of expulsive factors in post-Soviet society .Whereas they constitute 20% of Israeli society, they have been able to create less-religious parties, businesses, and cultural preoccupations, making them a subculture that resists "absorption." They also still maintain their ties with their original Russian society, and they still follow Russian satellite channels in the Russian language and establish commercial partnerships with Russia. They have also maintained relations with the "Soviets," who immigrated to countries other than Israel, which makes them closer to being a global, cosmopolitan, or transnational, community.

3. They suffer from linguistic tension, as most of the elderly among them resist improving their Hebrew language and continue using Russian, which makes them less receptive to Hebrew writings.

4. The high rate of divorces among Russian Jews, and the high rate of single-parent families. Moreover, the percentage of women working in the sex trade among them is higher than that of other Jewish segments, often linked to cooperation with organized crime organizations.

This means that separating the social crime (based on violating the prevailing social system of values) from the political environment (based on the pattern of political behavior of the authority with the various social groups, and this behavior between the groups themselves) does not help build a scientific analysis. It means that there is a need to consider social deviance in settler society a deviance that has a special characteristic. Indeed, Israeli Jews who had for long lived as "minorities" in the societies from which they originate, will not act in a consistent manner when they find that they have become a majority in Israel. Accordingly, the narrow identarian tendency pushes many of these immigrants to search for what may distinguish them from the rest of the Jewish community in Israel, given that the shift in their status will push them towards two options, both of which involve violence:[12]

1. A sense of superiority over other [non-Jewish] minorities in Israel in terms of moving from a subordinate or inferior position to a superior or dominant position, which is what we observe in the behavior of many Ethiopian Jews.

2. Looking for and enhancing what distinguishes them from others within the Jewish community, to ensure the independence they were accustomed to when they "belonged to the minority." This is what we notice in the behavior of many Russian Jews, for example.

Second: Deviance Patterns Prevailing in the Israeli Settler Community

1. Homicide, Theft, and Assault on Property and Other Crimes[13]

Homicide in Israel during the period 2015–2018 increased from 1.4 to 1.5 per 100,000, and today Israel ranks 149th out of 230 political entities in the world when it comes to homicide rates. While this suggests that Israel is in an almost average position, an analysis of the data regarding hospital admissions due to violence-related injuries reveals that the ethnic distribution of victims is not similar to the ethnic distribution of the total population, as shown in the following table based on official Israeli statistics from 2008 to 2017.

Table (1): The Distribution of Crime Victims (death or injury) According to the Population Ratio[14]

Ethnic background	% In population	% Injury due to violence	% percentage of injury due to violence to their percentage in population
The Palestinians (1948)*	20.6	46.1	22.38
Jews born in Ethiopia	1	3.2	3.2
Jews born in the former Soviet Union	7.9	12.7	16.08
The rest of the Jews	70.5	38	53.9

*Israeli statistics include the East Jerusalem population with the 1948 Palestinians. Their percentage, without counting Palestinians is Jerusalem, is 16.8% in 2019.

Table (1) shows the disproportion between the percentage of ethnic group (or social) in the total population, and the percentage of them being targeted with crimes, which suggests much of this crime has political backgrounds with a racial component (due to color, race, or both). The repercussions of these trends are likely to creep into political structures in parties and trade unions, and to the formation of negative perceptions of certain groups, especially since the prison population rate (per 100,000 of national population) rose in Israel during the period 2000–2018 from 158 to 234, i.e., a 48% increase,[15] with a similar ethnic or societal distribution to those shown in the previous table. This supports the possibility that we have referred to, otherwise how can we explain the disproportionate number of victims among certain ethnic groups with their percentage in the total population? This is evident in the high percentage of Palestinian victims,

followed by Jews born in Ethiopia, then the Russian Jews, while the proportion of other Jews (especially Western Jews) among the victims of crime is less than their distribution in the total population.

On the other hand, the anxiety that plagues society due to the crime rates leads to the emergence of a neurotic society, one aspect of which is to be more inclined to interpret simple situations as threats, and minor frustrations as deep and complex . Israeli public opinion polls in 2017–2020 reveal these attitudes, through the following results:
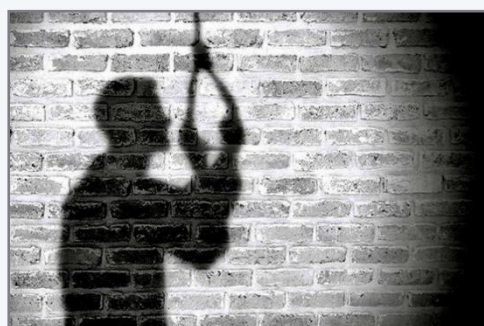

Table (2): Indicators of Crime-Related Anxiety in Israeli Society[16]

Anxiety indicator	Percentage (%)
Crime increasing in the past 3 years	53.92
Increase of corruption and bribery	42.9
Exposure to vandalism and theft	35.91
Fear of items being stolen from cars	34.87
Fear of home being broken and things stolen	33.59

The increase in anxiety can be linked to suicide rates. Israeli studies and official reports recently submitted to the Ministry of Health indicate the magnitude of suicides in Israel. They include suicide related information over the period 2000–2016:[17]

a. The annual suicide cases is between 385–390.
b. The highest suicide rate for both genders occurs for those aged 75 and over .
c. The suicide rate among Jews in Israel is 2.4 times higher than the average suicide rate among the Palestinians of 1948 .
d. The suicide rate of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union is twice that of other Jewish groups. The suicide rate of Jewish immigrants from Ethiopia is four times higher in recent years than the rate of other Jews living in Israel.

e. The suicide rate of married couples is lower than that of the divorced and single men .
f. About a third of suicide attempts among young people occurred among a group whose average age is 21

Some researchers link the levels of suicide in Israeli society with the tense political environment in Israel. For example, an Israeli study indicates that the suicide rate

increases in every year that follows a war between Israel and the Arab countries. An Israeli researcher queries this criterion to Israel in all its wars during the period 1948–2007, and found that it is correct in every period, which means that war leads to high tensions in the collective sentiment .Other studies link suicide with contributing factors such as:[18]

a. The level of religiosity: It was noticed that the suicide rates were higher among the secular than among the religious .

b. Social background: Higher suicide rates among Western Jews than among Eastern Jews .

c. The level of industrialization: Higher suicide rates among Jews coming from industrialized countries compared to those from agricultural countries .

d. Military service: The rate of suicide among Israeli soldiers is higher compared to their counterparts of the same ages who do not join the army. The rate rises following military operations, which was clearly noticeable after the second Palestinian *Intifadah*. This suggests cognitive dissonance among soldiers who were fed the might is right, but live in constant tension, which is similar to the situation of the American soldiers after the Vietnam war, and the 2003 Iraq war.

2. Sexual Deviance (Sex Trafficking)

Sexual deviance is represented in two dimensions; sexual slavery (rent or sale), and human trafficking through kidnapping or deception for purposes of sexual slavery. The UN International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated in 2017 that 4.8 million persons are exploited in forced sexual exploitation, and that 99% of these are women and girls.[19] Estimates that human trafficking earns global profits of roughly between $150–190 billion, of which about $100 billion come from commercial sexual exploitation.[20]

Although Israel ranks number 100 in the list of countries by population, it ranks 20th in the world in terms of income from the sex trade. In 2016, the income from the sex work in Israel was about $318 million annually, while other sources estimated the income at about $500 million. Between 12 thousand and 17 thousand people may be involved in the sex trade in Israel, with up to 71% of prostitutes said they began sex work out of financial desperation.[21] The former Soviet republics constitute the main source of trafficked

women into Israel for the purposes of sex, as mentioned above, and the rate has reached between 3,000 to 5,000 annually, which accounts to 40–50% of the total number of workers in the sex trade, according to the official 2016 Israeli reports.[22]

According to international classifications, the world is divided into three tiers measuring the intensity of sex trafficking. Until 2001, Israel was classed as a Tier 3 country, but moved to Tier 2 in 2009 then Tier 3 in 2011.[23] In 2018, the Knesset passed a law with the support of 34 members without any objection "making hiring sex workers a crime, rather than the work itself."[24] Despite this, specialized references indicate that 10 thousand Israelis go to brothels every month.[25]

What is striking about this phenomenon in Israeli society is its prevalence on the one hand, and the increase in violence related to it on the other hand. According to the Israeli 2013–2014 security reports, the rate of complaints that reach the security centers regarding sexual assaults is as follows:[26]

a. The number of complaints that all competent authorities receive annually reaches 40 thousand, of which 15% are reported to the security forces.
b. The annual increase in rapes is 12% .
c. 64 % of the complainants are between the ages of 12–18 years .
d. There were 957 cases of sexual assaults in the military, more than half of them during military duty .
e. Four out of five young people have experienced some form of sexual violence .

The rate of sexual violence doubled during the year 2020 compared to 2019.

In recent times, it has been noted that organized rape or sexual violence against women, run by criminal gangs, has taken on a violent nature, leading to protests attended by more than thirty official and private bodies in a number of cities, including Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beersheba and others.[27] According to the report "Sexual Offenses Against Women" submitted to the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, the police opened 6,123 cases for sexual offenses in 2017, 7% more than in 2016. Sexual harassment cases increased by 13%. Among women who experienced harassment, two-thirds were between 20 and 34 years old, 22% were between 12 and 18 old, and 11% were children. According to the personal security survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) only 3% of the victims reported their abuse to the

police. In total, the CBS estimates that 121,500 people experienced sexual assault in 2017, which reinforces the fact that there is a clear increase over the past five years.[28]

The Israeli feminist movement has tackled the relationship between "national security and individual security," especially gender-based violence and sexual assault against women, or from the standpoint of the status that women have in the ranks of the Israeli army in promotion or joining some units.[29]

3. Narcotics

Israel ranks 136th out of 183 countries in terms of rates of death resulting from drug abuse, the rate standing at 0.67 in 100,000 people.[30]

Israeli press reports indicate that Israeli settlers living nearer to the borders of the Gaza Strip are the most addicted to drugs, due to their state of psychological distress, and that this percentage is clearly increasing.[31]

According to an epidemiological survey in Israel among adults between the ages of 18 and 65 years, 27% of the population used cannabis, and 2% used other illegal drugs, with 0.25% reporting using heroin during this period. It is estimated that there are 15 thousand–25 thousand People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) in Israel, while the exact numbers of people who inject drugs (PWID) and people with HIV/AIDS among them remains unknown. However, according to a PWID database at the Israeli Ministry of Health-Department of Tuberculosis and AIDS, 260 cases were reported in 2017, and 56% of them were infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), and 5% of patients were infected with HIV.[32]

An Elem organization report submitted to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin showed the following:[33]

a. One in four Israeli youths of ages 12 and over use drugs .

b. The percentage of young drug users in the less privileged regions rises to one in two .

The report notes that social media has led to a marked increase in the ability to obtain drugs or reach drug dealers.

Studies indicate that drug abuse in the Israeli society increased between 1967 and 1980 at a rate of about 26%, and in 1980 reached about 7.2 thousand addicts. The number increased in 2018 to about 300 thousand who use drugs on occasions or permanently, which reveals clear and accelerating growth of this phenomenon.[34]

4. Corruption

Transparency International reports indicate that the rate of political and economic corruption in Israel has been increasing, especially in recent years. Israel has fallen from being ranked No. 28 among the world's countries in 2016 to No. 32 in 2017 and No. 35 in 2019. Its transparency score in 2016 was 64 out of 100, which dropped down to 60 in 2019.[35]

However, a phenomenon that deserves attention is the increase in the number of figures in senior political positions who were convicted of corruption during 2000–2020, which is evident in the following table:[36]

Table (3): The Number of Personalities in Senior Political Positions Convicted of Corruption 2000–2020

Position	President	Prime Minister	Ministers	Knesset Members	Rabbis (Clerics)	Heads of municipalities	Total
Number	1	1	10	14	2	5	33

Third: The Implications of Social Deviance on Political Behavior

The results of specialized quantitative studies[37] indicate that political violence and social violence share at least one basic cause, which is the nature and structure of the prevailing political system. Hybrid political institutions create a state of uncertainty about the basis of the legitimate authority in society and undermines the state's ability to maintain the rule of law. This creates a space for the activities of those who reject the values of society, and forces individuals and groups to bear the burden of direct defense of their interests themselves. Here, political violence is mixed with social violence, which impedes economic growth and undermines the state's ability to provide public services, which further exacerbates the conditions of poverty and inequality and violence increases.

While democratic institutions may reduce the risks of organized violence, they increase the risk of social violence, where these institutions are generally weak . Studies have shown that establishing and maintaining a stable political system is a first-class condition for curbing social violence, but when looking at Israel, we find that the increasing indicators of social violence (which we dealt with) coincided with an indicator of political instability. In 2000–2018, the ranking of Israel on political stability indexes ranged from 154th to 173rd.[38]

Another dimension in the relationship between social deviance and political behavior in Israeli society can be identified by linking the tendency to violence by specific ethnic groups, which are the Asian, African and Russian ethnic groups, to the fact that these same groups are the poorest. Records of theft and violence in Israel suggest that the geographical proximity factor has an important role in the concentration of violence in certain areas. Indeed, the settlements of new immigrants, who most of them come from Russia, or Africa (especially after 1990), were built near or around rich cities, which makes the temptation of theft high, as is confirmed by specialized Israeli studies. Indeed,

it has been shown that about half of the property theft incidents in cities are carried out by individuals from outside these cities, but who live near them.[39]

As for the violent behavior of Jewish settlers against Palestinians, it is a combination of moral crime (assault on property, stealing money, or cars, etc.) and political crime. Settlers invoke religious pretexts to justify their moral crime, especially those who belong to religious movements under the umbrella of Jewish fundamentalism, a phenomenon acknowledged by a number of Israeli and Western academics.[40]

When tracking the electoral behavior of Russian Jews, we find that 75–80 % of them vote for extreme right-wing parties, most notably the Yisrael Beiteinu party led by a Jew of Russian origin Avigdor Lieberman. In other words, the Russian Jewish community both feeds the right-wing parties on the one hand, and social crime on the other hand, which means the roots of their social violence are implanted in political soil.[41]

Avigdor Lieberman

Social media plays a key role in instigating people, which reinforces racism and the neurotic behavior of society. According to the available statistics, [42] an Israeli post calling for violence against Arabs and Palestinians is published every 64 seconds on social media. A total of 495 thousand violent posts were issued against Arabs and Palestinians in 2019, with the Joint Arab List and its leaders the main themes of violent Zionist discourse during the parliamentary elections of the same year. The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media (7amleh) published the results of its annual index of racism and incitement in Israeli social media for the year 2019, revealing that the height of incitement against Palestinians and Arabs in 2019 was linked to the two rounds of the Israeli elections. There was also a 14% increase in violent discourse towards Arabs and Palestinians between the two rounds, while these statistics also indicate an increase of 5% in inflammatory publications, compared to 2018 statistics.

Conclusion

The relationship between social crime and political crime lies in their intertwining roots. Indigenous-replacing settler colonial societies that elevate the value of might promote this value within their political and social wings. We have found that the proportions of the distribution of victims of social crime, in the Russian, African, Jewish

and Arab segments, are clearly higher than the average percentage in the total population. Moreover, the levels of political instability have risen with the increase in the rates of social crime against the aforementioned segments. These results manifest clearly in the language of incitement (especially found in social media) or in the distribution of votes in the elections, reflecting political polarization parallel to the polarization of the victims of social violence. This result explains what we referred to in a previous article regarding the concerns of Israeli and Western future studies that Israeli socio-political turmoil will take place.

Endnotes

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%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9-
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³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Israeli_public_officials_convicted_of_crimes_or_misdemeanors

³⁷ One of these studies included a sample of countries, including Israel, and linked political violence with social violence, and found that there is a strong relationship between them, see Sean Fox and Kristian Hoelscher, *The Political Economy of Social Violence: Theory and Evidence From A Cross-Country Study*, Working Paper No. 72 (London: Crisis States Research Centre, 2010), pp. 8, 11, 13, 15–16.

³⁸ Site of TheGlobalEconomy.com, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/wb_political_stability/#Israel

³⁹ Boris A. Portnov and Arye Rattner, "Spatial Patterns of Crime in Israel: Investigating the Effects of InterUrban Inequality and Proximity," Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Management, University of Haifa, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/7039956.pdf

⁴⁰ For more details see David Weisburd, *Jewish Settler Violence: Deviance as Social Reaction* (The Pennsylvania University Press, 1989), chapters 5, 6, 7; and Simon A.Wood and David Harrington Watt, *Fundamentalism: Perspectives on a Contested History* (University of South Carolina Press, 2014), chapter 6.

[41] Site of Israel Hayom, https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/03/08/the-russian-vote-still-counts/; and The Times of Israel, 26/7/2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/russians-are-coming-to-the-polls-israeli-politicians-are-finally-waking-up/

[42] Site of 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, https://7amleh.org/2020/02/27/index-of-racism-and-incitement-2019-israeli-elections-were-the-primary-reason-for-increasing-incitement-against-arabs