

Beat: Politics

## The Nature of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

### Political

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#### Introduction:

The article briefly discusses the dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict: the political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, as well as the psychology of individuals (national psychology), in addition to the ideological dimension, geopolitics, the relationship between geography and power, the military dimension, the theory of balance of power, and the theory of democratic peace.

#### The Article:

The Arab-Israeli conflict represents one of the most sophisticated conflicts in today's technologically complex world. This particular conflict involves several overlapping dimensions, the most prominent of which are the political, economic, social, and cultural. In addition, the psychology of individuals in both Arab and Israeli societies plays a significant role in understanding the nature of this conflict on both individual and international levels, specifically what is known as "national psychology." At the same time, some argue that the psychological approach is distant in explaining the Arab-Israeli conflict. Still, the psychological dimension became entrenched after the Arab-Israeli conflict evolved into a political one, starting with the Balfour Declaration in 1917, the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the Suez Crisis, the 1967 war, and the repeated raids on Lebanon and Palestine. All these events reinforced the psychological approach to the conflict.

If we interpret the Arab-Israeli conflict from an ideological perspective, assuming that the ideological approach explains conflict phenomena based on ideological contradictions between states, such as the Cold War conflict, it is important to note that the ideological approach derives its intellectual support from Marxist ideologies, as its core methodology is one of conflict. Thus, the ideological dimension does not explain the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Regarding the social approach to interpreting the Arab-Israeli conflict, it plays a significant role in explaining the nature of the conflict. This is due to differences in language, religion, and the idea of Semitic race and racial diversity. Israel succeeded in creating a state of distinction and differentiation, fostering enmity stemming from differences in language, religion, race, and nationality. In addition, Israelis view themselves as the "chosen people of God" and consider Arabs to be inferior, further deepening the conflict.

When it comes to power and the balance of power in explaining the Arab-Israeli conflict, this approach is crucial, especially in the context of the arms race, which has played a significant role in this conflict. Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, as well as its possession of nuclear weapons, is a testament to this. Similarly, some Arab states have engaged in arms deals to maintain ongoing balance and equilibrium.

It is worth noting that the issue of military balance is a fundamental component of the international political system. This was evident in the traditional Cold War-era conflict between the two superpowers, the Soviet Union (before its collapse) and the United States, where the Soviets became a formidable land force following World War II, while the West responded with its technological superiority in the field of aviation and nuclear weaponry, later improving and developing Soviet military power.

As a state, like a living organism, expands and extends its reach as needed, it becomes necessary to study and analyze the geopolitical factor in understanding the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This approach focuses on the relationship between the strength of a state and its geography. Geographical proximity does not inherently lead to cooperation or conflict, but it catalyzes cooperation when there is political will to cooperate and similarly encourages conflict when there is a will for conflict. Israel's location at the heart of the Arab region, along with its continuous efforts to expand its territorial boundaries, in addition to its proximity to five Arab states, has further fueled the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, the geopolitical approach offers an explanation for the conflict.

The military and political dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict can also be explained through the alliances that play a key role in this

conflict. This is evident in the support Israel receives from the United States and the West to achieve its colonial objectives in the heart of the Arab world. Meanwhile, in the past, the Arabs sought support from the Eastern Bloc, particularly the Soviet Union. There are also unofficial alliances, such as those between Hezbollah, Iran, and Hamas in their opposition to Israel.

As for the democratic peace theory, it does not explain the Arab-Israeli conflict, particularly since Israel, according to the international reports is a "democratic state."

In conclusion, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a result of the actions of Israeli governments over the past decades and to the present day, as well as the institutions and activities connected to them. Israel's practice of violence and oppression against the Palestinian people is the only way it addresses its issues with the Palestinians. The repressive measures it employs aim to overcome the obstacles it faces while pursuing its objectives.

If power in political science is understood as a relationship between two parties where one is stronger than the other, it follows that power is necessary for political life, including unions and lobbying groups that use power to achieve their goals. A political system cannot function without the force that supports its survival, especially since international relations are fundamentally power relations, reflecting the power exercised by states relative to their potential.

Thus, power is one of the key aspects of understanding Israeli politics. Power established the state of Israel and remains the foundation of any Israeli government or regime. When we say that Israel cannot, under any circumstances, abandon the use of force, it means that Israel does not recognize any means other than force, and without it, it would not be able to impose its authority, both internally and externally.

Many studies that attempted to measure power in international relations have focused on developing indicators to measure the components of national power, especially material components such as population, industrial capacity, budgets, and military strength. Some scholars placed significant weight on the population as an indicator of a state's power. Based on this measure, experts predicted that the People's Republic of China would become the world's strongest nation in the 1980s.

This projection was based on an analysis of data collected from the early 1960s. However, most power measurements fail to consider non-material factors, due to the difficulty of measuring them. Power can also be gauged by political stability and public support for the political authority, as indicated by public opinion polls, which reflect levels of morale. It is important to acknowledge that one cannot predict in advance whether a population will rally behind its leadership, as seen in Israel's confrontation with Hamas, which placed Netanyahu in a difficult position domestically.

Conversely, no one anticipated that the Soviet people would rally behind their leadership so strongly after the Battle of Stalingrad. Some even expected that Ukrainians and other non-Russian peoples would join the Nazi invaders, but Soviet morale played a crucial role in turning the balance of power upside down.

Perception is another element of state power. Some political decision-makers, such as Nixon and Kissinger, believed that increasing military spending was the optimal way to enhance a nation's power. They viewed increased military spending as a message to the enemy, signaling the state's determination to deter aggression. As such, they focused less on the specific purposes for which the increased military budget would be used, and more on the act of increasing it.

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