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At the 15th annual Herzliya Conference held by the Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at IDC Herzliya in June 2015, the President of Israel, Mr. Reuven Rivlin, presented his "Vision of the Four Tribes" and called for a new domestic national order for Israel. The "Four Tribes" speech received much attention from various media channels, social networks and in digital and printed articles.

The President's basic premise is that the demographic reality in Israel has changed, creating formidable new challenges. "Israeli society is undergoing changes that are re-shaping our identity as Israelis", he said. The makeup of Israeli first grade classes are approximately 38% secular Jewish classes, 15% observant Jewish classes (religious-nationalists), 25% Arab classes and another 25% ultra-orthodox, or "Haredi" Jewish classes. Where once there was a clear secular majority, today's Israel is characterized by these four groups that are more or less equal in size. In 2018, a half of the Israeli first-grade classes will be Arab and/or Haredi Jews, i.e., communities that do not share the Zionist ethos. A prominent expression of this tribalism and sub-tribalism can be seen in the political map that consists of a wide range of parties, some of which represent tribes and sub-tribes within Israeli society. Nearly half the population does not serve in the army and many in the Haredi and Arab tribes are not integrated into the labor market. There is mutual ignorance among the four tribes and a lack of a common language and ethos.

In an attempt to stop the continuing separation of each of these tribes, the absence of even weak social cohesion and a zero-sum game between the different sectors - a process that could unravel the social fabric of Israel - the President called for the definition and formulation of a new national agenda with a project called, "Israeli Hope". The new national order, according to the President, requires that we "move from the conventional concepts of majority and minority to a new concept of partnership among the different sectors of Israeli society".

The President raised questions including, "What is common to all these sectors? Do we have a common civic language? A common ethos? Do we share values that have the power to connect all these sectors together?" He emphasized that entry into this partnership of tribes does not require the renunciation of the fundamental elements of identity.

The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, in collaboration with the President's Office, formed a national steering committee of 26 members who represent the four tribes that comprise Israeli society. The main output of the project will be a policy document prepared by the Institute's steering committee in cooperation with the President's Office, ahead of the 16th Herzliya Conference, proposing policy recommendations. Its theme will be an effort to identify courses of action for coexistence and a widening of commonalities that will lead to a more inclusive society among the various tribes. The President asked that this partnership, required by Israel's new societal order, be implemented in all areas of our lives.

Conceptual Frameworks for Analysis

There are at least four theoretical frameworks that are conceptually relevant to the subject: the Rifts Theory, Boundaries Theory among Sectors, Distributive Justice Theory, and Theory of Access to Equal Rights and Obligations.

1. The Rifts Theory¹

Social and political sociologists, particularly the winner of the Israel Prize for Sociology, Professor Smootha, point out that it is possible to identify several deep divides in Israeli society: class, ethnicity, and nationalism, including the religious-secular cleft, the Jewish-Arab, Ashkenazi-Sephardi, right-left-wing, gaps between the geographical center and the periphery, and more. These divisions characterize Israeli society. Some, like the ones characterized by contrasting approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for example, the right-wing camp that has not entirely given up the dream of Greater Israel and wants to preserve at least the current status quo in Judea and Samaria and to "manage the conflict", as opposed to the "two states for two peoples" solution, the pursuit of the center-left, indicate to the sociologists a society with deeply divided political opinions. The Rifts Theory is important and brilliantly adaptable to Israeli society, but is less suitable for the new national order because it "separates" and defines the groups in Israeli society in a different way than the four tribes. President Rivlin noted in his speech that, "These fault lines exist both within and between all of these sectors", while the division into tribes reveals the fundamental structure of the Israeli society. That said, the insights derived from the theory, as well as studies and empirical findings on the subject are applicable to the new internal national order project and therefore should not be ignored. For example, understanding the catalyst for this rather remarkable transformation of Israeli society that was characterized by a very prominent ethnic divide in the first fifty years of its existence with the use of melting pots that dimmed the ethnic divide². On the other hand, Israel continues to be extremely polarized between left and right, Arab and Jewish populations, ultra-orthodox and secular, etc. Take, for example, a recent survey by the Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) that found that for the majority in Israel, the Ashkenazi-Sephardi divide is much less relevant and noticeable than ever before, but issues such as racism and violence are common and worrisome, with about 50% of respondents polled claiming to have encountered acts of racism in Israel.

2. The Boundaries Theory - Among Various Sectors

This theory, applied extensively by prominent political sociologists, including Israel Prize Laureate, Moshe Lisk, with respect to the boundaries between the civilian and military sectors, both in Israel and abroad, claims that boundaries between these sectors can be permeable, ambiguous or impenetrable. Projecting it onto the Four Tribes Project - the new national order, it could be argued that relations among Haredi Jews, religious-nationalists, and secular Jews are permeable with regard to certain matters such as employment, for example, but impermeable and even rigid on other issues such as the meaning of Torah study for the ultra-orthodox vs. its meaning to the secular public. In contrast, the secular and religious-nationalists serving together in the army reflect permeable boundaries. The stances of the secular and national-religious populations are contradictory with regard to settlement construction and the continued Israeli presence in the territories. Without a doubt, the boundaries between Haredi Jews and Arabs in Israel are rigid and completely impenetrable in most, if not all aspects of life.

The boundaries approach is applicable to the Four Tribes Project because the various borders dividing tribe-pairs can be mapped in every sociological area while avoiding focus on areas where borders are rigid and impermeable, and

¹ It should be noted across the four main tribes there are also sub-tribes in Israeli society. For example, Arab society is not monolithic, nor is the Haredi society which is known for its various camps. There are also divisions within the secular population as well as within the religious-Zionists who are divided among the Shas, United Torah Judaism, and the revived Jewish Home party.

² Though election results show significantly and steadily that the ethnic divide definitely influences voter patterns with regard to the Haredi parties and the Nationalist Camp party on one hand, to the Likud party on the other hand, and even the Israel Beitenu, Kulanu, Yachad and Meretz parties, the Arab-Jewish divide mostly influences voting for the United Arab party and not voting for the right-wing parties.

instead concentrate on areas of life where boundaries are permeable, less threatening to the respective tribes, and still open to change.

3. Theory of Distributive Justice

Renowned political philosopher, the late John Rawls, published a famous book, A Theory of Justice (1972) claiming that the policy of just distribution of resources is "always aimed at bettering the poorest individual in society." At its core, the Theory of Distributive Justice claims that the division of wealth and resources must meet certain criteria in order to be considered fair³.

Economics Nobel Laureate, Professor Amartya Sen of Harvard University, proposed another formula for distributive justice that requires, "that every person will have the ability to realize his humanity, and therefore it is necessary for each person to have access to basic resources and a minimal level of opportunity." This approach, known as the, "capabilities approach", requires the state to provide the disadvantaged population with the means that would allow it to live with dignity. Political scientist, Professor Michael Walzer of Princeton University argues, however, that, "different communities are differentiated by the value they attribute to various resources and therefore are also different in the way they define an equitable distribution of these resources".⁴

The distributive justice approach is appropriate and adaptable in many ways to the Four Tribes Project, but it is incumbent upon Israel to raise the cardinal question of whether the rights granted in distributive justice should be conditioned by equal obligations.

4. The Rights-Obligations Approach

Are rights conditioned on obligations? Should such a condition exist? Are rights and obligations not dependent on one another? How should this approach be implemented within the Four Tribes Project? Are there obligations that are simultaneously rights?

Among the four tribes in Israel, there are significant disparities in the distribution of financial resources, infrastructure, and land. There are also differences regarding the equality of opportunities. Additionally, there are wide gaps with regard to the distribution of duties, especially with regard to equal distribution of the overall burden. How can we reduce the gaps in the investments in education, land, military and national service?

The results of an IPS survey pointed out that more than 60% of respondents feel that social gaps in Israel are widening. Continuation of the current trend will lead to increased polarization, hatred and violence. It may serve to further unravel the social and democratic fabric of Israel. An important question is whether to adopt a "rights conditional on obligations" approach, or to focus on the positive by considering which obligations each tribe can fulfill? Obviously, this approach is very suitable for the "Hope for Israel" Project, although it focuses on only one critical dimension. It should be noted, however, that political-coalition, bureaucratic and other constraints stymie legislation and implementation of even minor changes.

³https://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A6%D7%93%D7%A7_%D7%97%D7%9C%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%AA%D7%99

⁴Ibid

Comparative International Study

Significant demographic changes are also evident in other countries, including Europe, Asia and other regions. In a comparative study by the German Bertelsmann Foundation, Israel was ranked 28 out of 34 EU countries in social cohesion. Denmark, Norway, Finland and New Zealand were ranked at the top of the list, with Greece and Romania at the bottom. The index was based on a series of surveys conducted in these countries and quantitative statistical analysis of comparative data from different countries. Israel was ranked highest in group identity (to Israel and the Jewish people), but very low in terms of acceptance of others, and in viewing distributive justice. There is, therefore, much room for improvement, in the spirit of the President's vision. Israel shows pronounced "satisfaction with life in the country" but waves of terrorism and repeated rounds of fighting against Hamas and Hezbollah have a real potential to reduce the level of overall satisfaction while leading to further social polarization.

Moreover, surveys conducted in Europe before the great wave of immigration from the Middle East show that most of the public in those countries claim that social cohesion there is in decline. The absence of social cohesion was found to have a destructive effect on the economy, social harmony, happiness levels and more. The adoption of a common vision, an emotional connection to the state and society, and cooperation between sectors, reflect important parameters within the report.

Prospects and Risks

The Bertelsmann Foundation Study (2013)⁵ analyzed factors that help and hinder social cohesion in 34 countries and pointed to three factors among the many variables that can strengthen social cohesion among different sectors of society:

- A thriving economy
- Equitable distribution of resources
- Technological development

The main factors found to weaken social cohesion between different sectors are:

- Inequality
- Unemployment rate, although to a lesser extent and not statistically significant
- Level of religiosity in society (because each tribe is entrenched in its own religiousness and faith)

Clearly, every country and society, and even more so in Israel - in a hostile environment and experiencing waves of terror - has its own unique catalysts and impediments to cohesiveness. Catalysts and hindrances that characterize many western societies are therefore only part of the story. The political-security situation in Israel, the lack of a permanent solution, and the presence of an entire sector of the country largely identified with the Palestinian aspirations and struggle to have their own country, make it difficult to fit Israel into comparative scales. However, in at least two of three global catalysts, as a start-up nation among the highest level in the world and as a country with a thriving and enviable economy, the State of Israel has a good chance to meet the challenges of the new national order, at least in terms of the variables that affect economic strength and the level of technological development.

Indices of satisfaction with life in Israel are also very high compared to other Western countries. Success within the new national order is conditional on a significant reduction of inequality in the country, reduced disparities, equitable and just distribution of resources to the different segments in every field. There are far too many adults

⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013. Social Cohesion Radar

and children living under the poverty line in Israel. These are prerequisites for the Hope for Israel project. Of course there is a need to block racist tendencies and increasing violence, and to narrow the gaps and inequality in opportunities as well as obligations.

Compared to the socio-economic variables, which Israel should and can handle, new challenges and risks have evolved that are potentially explosive to the new national order for Israel, even since the President delivered his speech at the Herzliya Conference:

1. Jewish - Arab Relations

Since President Rivlin's important speech at the Herzliya Conference in June of this year, where he offered a new vision of national order and poured optimism into defining a new and original direction for the State of Israel, Israel has experienced in recent months a harsh wave of terror attacks, stabbings and other assaults (vehicular).

Although the essence of the conflict between Jews and Palestinians concerns the Temple Mount, the territories, and the desire of many Palestinians to return to their homes in Israel, this wave, also fueled by incitement within social networks and in mosques, has a significant projection on the ability of Jews and Arabs in Israel to move forward side by side towards a better future, as the President outlined. Instead of a "win-win" situation for both the Arab tribe and the Jewish tribes (including secular, national-religious, and ultra-orthodox), through mutual cooperation with Israel as delineated in the "Israeli Hope" Project, we are moving quickly towards a classic lose-lose situation where the fracture, cleavage and residue produced by the parties can lead, if they haven't already, to financial, societal and national losses, both in the Arab and Jewish sectors. Jewish fear of terrorist attacks and Arab fear of operating freely in Jewish settlements are creating a reality characterized by mutual loss.

2. Haredi - Secular Relations

The percentage of casualties in recent terrorist acts is largest within the ultra-orthodox, police and military communities, due to the ease with which these populations are recognized as Jews and not Arabs (though there were also Druze among the casualties), and their presence in large concentrations in Jerusalem, where most of the attacks took place initially, with the exception of those that occurred in Judea and Samaria.

Among the ultra-orthodox (Haredi) elite is a claim that Israel is provoking gentiles to commit terrorist activities in the territories, settlements, and especially on the Temple Mount, with Haredi Jews bearing the brunt of this anger, frustration and incitement. There is not, as yet, a rift among the Jewish tribes, but if the wave of terror intensifies and most civilian casualties continue to occur among Haredim, it may cause such a rift between tribes and disrupt attempts to bring them closer together.

3. Haredi - Arab Relations

For the first time ever, the deputy editor of "In the Family" magazine published a message in Arabic in which he asked Palestinians to stop killing Haredi Jews. He claimed that the Haredim are not involved in going to the Temple Mount nor any other national activities. The very publication of the article in Arabic is unprecedented.

Although Israeli Arabs are rarely involved in the wave of attacks, the "Intifada of Knives", if the trend of attacking the Haredim continues, the fear on the one hand and on the hostility on the other, may increase to such proportions that it would be very difficult to bring them back even to the level they were prior to the President's speech. It is clear that hidden fears and hostility existed even before this wave, but statistics of these victims of the latest acts of terror are exacerbating the rift such that it may be difficult to heal.

4. Secular - Religious-Nationalist Relations

Most of the secular Israeli population lives between Hadera and Gedera. The majority of religious-nationalists live in Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Givat Shmuel, Beitar Illit, Beit Shemesh and the settlements. The wave of terror is perceived as a threat to the settlement enterprise because of the risk that the country's secular majority will tire of maintaining control of these areas. The wave is physically affecting many settlers and religious-nationalists. Many residents of Tel Aviv voted center-left, support the two states for two peoples' solution and the large majority opposes the outlook of the national-religious public with regard to the settlement enterprise, the territories and East Jerusalem. It is also connected to the left-right divide in Israel, of course, and the belief of the religious-nationalists and others that the area from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River was promised to the Jews, as opposed to the pragmatic desire of most of the secular public, or at least those in the "country" of Tel Aviv to separate from the Palestinians. The last wave of terror radicalizes these views further, for example, by discussing the handing over of Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to the Palestinian Authority, an idea furthered by the secular public.

Conclusion⁶

Alongside the call for a new national order by the President in his four tribes speech – a call that was received enthusiastically in many sectors of the country but also with a degree of skepticism about its chances of success – a dangerous situation emerged in recent weeks that could deepen the rift between the tribes and cause a deterioration in the current situation to the point of irreversibility. If radicalization, racism and violence continue to rage in the country, these trends will lead to a deepening rift between the tribes, contrary to what the President desired to promote. In order to stop the erosion, both Jewish and Arab leaders must condemn the terrorist attacks and call for continued co-existence and cooperation. Otherwise, the new national order will be reflected not in reducing the conflicts between tribes but in extreme attitudes and actions, the deterioration of the State of Israel into a state of anarchy and make it more difficult to formulate a new national agenda and strengthened social cohesion.

⁶ The author thanks Dr. Chaim Weizmann for his comments on the position paper draft