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Long Abstract

Conflict of Loyalties:
The Relationship Between the Israeli Druze Citizens
and the Syrian Druze Citizens During the Arab
Spring 2011-2017 and the Syrian Civil War

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EXPLANATION OF SPELLING OF ARABIC NAMES OF PLACES, PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS

When translated into English, Arabic names take different forms in different sources. To be consistent throughout the thesis, this table presents unified spelling for the following names.

Places		People		Organizations	
Name in Arabic	Name in Google Maps	Names in Arabic	Names in Wikipedia	Name in Arabic	Name in Wikipedia
خلوات البياضه	Khalwat El Biyada	الخليفه الفاطمي	Phatamy halif	جبهة النصرة	Al-Nusra Front
حاصبيا	Hasbaya	المنصور	Almanzor	العثمانيون	Al-Nusra Front
جبل العرب	Jabal Al-Arab	الحاكم بامر الله	al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah	المماليك	Mamluks
الشوف	Chouf	حمزة بن علي	Hamza Ben Ali		
وادي التيم	Wadi Al Taim	حمزة بن علي	Mahmad Ben Ismail Eldrazi		
جبل الشيخ	Mt Hermon	بهاء الدين	Baha Aldin		
جبل لبنان	Mount Lebanon	الموحدون	Muwahedin		
جبل الدروز	Jabal Al-Druze	التوحيد	El-Tawhed		
حلب	Aleppo	الحكمة	El-Hekma		
عين الأسد الرامه ساجور البيعه بيت جن كسرى كفر سميع حرفيش يانوح جث يركا أبو سنان جولس كفر ياسيف دالية الكرمل عسفيا المغار شفاعمرو	Ein Al-Asad Rameh Sajur Peki'in Beit Jann Kisra-Sumei Hurfeish Yanuh-Jat Yarka Abu Snan Julis Kafr Yasif Daliyat Al-Karmel Osuofia Maghar Shefa-'Amr	حفظ الاخوان	El-ehwan		
جبل الدروز	Jabal Al-Druze	كمال جنبلاط	Kamal Jumblatt	حزب الله	Hezbollah
السويداء	Al Suwayda	نشتكين الدرزي	Nashtakin Eldarazi	البعث	Ba'ath
هضبة الجولان	Golan Heights			القاعدة	Al-Qaeda
شهبأ	Shahba	بني معروف	Bney Marof	السلفية الجهادية	Salafi jihadist

Places		People		Organizations	
Name in Arabic	Name in Google Maps	Name in Arabic	Name in Wikipedia	Name in Arabic	Name in Wikipedia
صلخد	Salkhad	شيخ العقل	Sheikh Akl		
القنيطره	Al Qunaytrah	جنبلاط	Jumblatt	الشيبيحة	Shabiha
جرمانة	Garamana	ارسلان	Arslan		
صحنايا	Sahnaya	عقال	Okal	رجال الكرامة	Sheikhs of Honor
ادلب	Idlib	جهال	Gohal		
جبل السماق		معن	Ma'an	شيخ عقل	Akl Sheikhdom
الشلم	Damascus	الأمير فخر الدين المعنبي الثاني	Fakhr al-Din II	الانصار	Al-Ansar
درعا	Daraa	كمال فواد جنبلاط	Kamal Fouad Jumblatt		
قامات	Khamat	سلطان الاطرش	Sultan al-Atrash		
جبل العرب	Arab Mountain	محمد بو عزيزه	Mohamed Bouazizi		
		زين العابدين	Zine El Abidine Ben Ali		
بصرا الشام	Busra	حافظ الاسد	Hafez al-Assad		
		بشار الاسد	Bashar al-Assad		
		الاسد	al-Assad		
قلب لوزة	Qalb Loze	مخلوف	Makhlouf		
بئر قصب	Bi'r Qassab	باسل الاسد	Bassel al-Assad		
		بشار الاسد	Bashar al-Assad		
مطار الثعله	Al Thaala Military Airfield	أبو بكر البغدادي	Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi		
الكهف		ايمن الظواهري	Ayman El-Dawahere		
المزرعة	Al Mazra'a	أبو محمد الجولاني	Abu Mohammad al-Julani		
		قاسم سليمانى	Qasem Soleimani		
		وفيق ناصر	Wafic Nasser		
		الشيخ وحيد البلعوس	Sheik Wahed El-Baloos,		
		الشيخ فادي نعيم	Sheikh Fade Naeem		
		أبو محمد الجولاني	Abo Muhamd El-Golane		
		أبو محمد الجولاني	Abo Muhamd El-Golane		
		عبد الرحمن	Abed El-Rahman		
		وليد جنبلاط	Walid Junblatt		

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ABSTRACT

The current research examined the conflict of loyalties between the Druze in Israel and the Druze in Syria during the Arab Spring and Syrian civil war between the years 2011 and 2017. The aim of this research was to develop a new thinking framework for the coping with the conflict of loyalties during an ongoing feud. Additionally, the research examined the provision of aid by the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria during the Syrian civil war and analysed the dilemmas that revolved around it.

The wave of protests commonly known as the "Arab Spring" that washed over many countries in the Middle East, reached Syria in March 2011. Tens of thousands of protestors swept the streets, surprising the Syrian regime with their volume and intensity. In response, the regime used a firm hand in its aim to subdue the protests. The protests eventually escalated into a bloody civil war with hundreds of thousands of casualties, millions displaced, and the emergence of new players in the Middle East in addition to Hezbollah, such as ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front. The war has led to the involvement of many countries, including the USA, Russia, Iran, and Turkey. As the war progressed, threats from ISIS and Al-Nusra Front against the Druze in Syria intensified, reaching a point of an existential threat. In response, Druze in Syria mobilized to protect their villages and residents. The Druze in Israel, observing these events, knew that they could not stand by idly and began contemplating on the manners in which they could assist their Druze brethren in Syria.

This qualitative research and a case study is based on data collected through 12 semi-structured interviews. The research comprised of three populations who participated in the interviews, i.e., Druze religious leaders in Israel, Druze politicians in Israel and senior officers of the Israeli defense industry, and Syrian Druze who migrated to Europe as a result of the war. The data was analyzed using content analysis.

The findings of the research indicated that the Druze religious principle of "Hefez El-ehwan", namely, brotherhood, served as a compass for the Druze during the war and was the reason for the provision of aid by the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria. Moreover, the Druze in Israel were able to align their values with those of the Israeli decision makers, which led to the country's consent to deliver aid to the Druze in Syria, an enemy state. The findings further indicate that the ability to construct a model based on shared values can pose as a bridge that connects the country's minority with the majority.

The importance of the current research lies in its contribution to the existing knowledge in international relations regarding the relationship between an ethnic minority that is divided across two hostile countries, and nevertheless maintains its identity and loyalty to the country in which it resides as well as its own unique human, social and religious values.

INTRODUCTION

The regional upheaval, also known as the "Arab Spring", was a wave of civil protests against local regimes that began in the late 2010 in North Africa and continued spreading into the Middle East including Syria, where in March 2011, thousands of protesters protested for economic, social and political reforms (Ajami, 2013). The Syrian armed forces reacted violently towards the protesters, including with the use of live fire. The civil protests quickly escalated into violent demonstrations and ultimately into a bloody civil war that involved both domestic and foreign players, such as Iran, Russia, Turkey, and Hezbollah (Zisser, 2020).

The Druze, also known as "Muwahedin", are a community of about approximately two million adherents worldwide, mainly concentrated in Syria, Israel and Lebanon, where they constitute an ethnic minority. The Druze believe in the religion "El-Tawhed", which spread between the years 1017-1043 and consists of letters in the spirit of Greek-Neo-Platonic philosophy, documented in "El-Hekma", the Book of Wisdom.

Some of the beliefs of the Druze include reincarnation, a ban on marrying outside the community and the importance of honor and land. The first and most important law of the Druze is language, i.e., telling the truth and the pursuit of justice. The second law from the religious decrees is internal solidarity, (Falah, 2000) also known as "Hefez El-ehwan" (hereinafter "the preservation of the brethren").

During the Syrian civil war, terrorist groups such as ISIS and Al-Nusra Front attacked the Druze villages on the Jabal-Al Druze as well as other areas that were perceived as supporters of the Syrian regime. In total, dozens and even hundreds of Druze were killed in defense of the Druze villages in Syria .(Khaizran, 2022)

The Druze religious decree of the preservation of the brethren has led the Druze in Israel when seeking for ways to help their Syrian brethren facing an existential crisis in Syria. As the Druze have no inspirations in forming an independent state or nationality, throughout history, the Druze population was characterized as a minority with loyalty to their country of residence. As such, the Druze residing in Israel are faithful to Israel and the Druze residing in Syria are faithful to Syria. Furthermore, since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, there have been no diplomatic or peaceful relationship between the two countries, which led to a severance of the relationship

between the Druze residing in them (Hassan, 2011). Nevertheless, the Druze in Israel sought ways in which they could assist their brethren in Syria who faced an increasing threat to the Jabal-Al Druze. Notably, although in 1982 Israel was at war with Lebanon, it did not intervene in the ongoing civil war in Syria.

The current research deals with the conflict between loyalties of the Druze in Israel as a result amid the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011 and the increasing threat against the Druze in Syria by the local rebels and terrorist organizations. The research examines the relationship between the Druze in Israel and the Druze in Syria between the years 2011-2017 and its impact on the Druze identity.

The goal of the current research is to develop a new thinking framework when examining the interrelations between ethnicity and identity in light of an ongoing conflict. The research will further examine the nature of the provision of aid by Israel to Druze in Syria and the dilemmas faced in Israel in this regard.

Main Research Aim

To develop a new thinking framework for a possible solution to the conflict between the ethnicity and identities in seeking aid in an ongoing conflict.

Subsidiary Research Aims

1. To examine the conflict between identity and loyalty among **Druze religious leaders in Israel** in the context of providing aid to their brethren in Syria during the civil war.
2. To examine the attitudes of **Druze decision makers in Israel** and the **High-ranking officials in the Israeli defense system** towards the Druze conflict of faith and identity in providing aid to their Druze brethren in Syria.
3. To examine the attitudes of the **Syrian Druze citizens who migrated to Europe as a result of the war** towards the aid provided from the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria.

Research Questions

The main research question is: What components might comprise a new thinking framework regarding the conflict of loyalties between Israel Druze and Syrian Druze during the civil war in Syria (2011-2017)?

Secondary research questions

1. What are the issues involved in the conflict of identity and loyalty among the Druze religious leaders in Israel within the context of providing aid to their brethren in Syria during the civil war?
2. What are the attitudes of the Druze decision makers in Israel and the High-ranking officials in the Israeli defense system towards the Druze conflict of faith and identity in providing aid to their Druze brethren in Syria?
3. What are the attitudes of the Syrian Druze citizens who migrated to Europe as a result of the war towards the aid provided from the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria?

Research Boundaries

To properly answer these questions, the research was conducted as qualitative research that was based on a case study in which information was gathered from individuals involved in the relevant dilemmas. Interviews were conducted with Druze leaders in Israel, who were involved in the decision making regarding the provision of the aid, as well as with politicians and military personnel involved in the decision making with regard to the provision of aid from Israel to Syria.

In addition, information was gathered by analysis of documents. Finally, an analysis of the content was conducted in order to raise themes and categories that would shed light on the processes and their impact on the Druze national and ethnic identity of the individuals involved in the provision of aid to the Druze in Syria. The research was conducted during the years 2020-2023.

Thesis Structure

Chapters I and II of this thesis present a critical discussion of the main theories and a current literature review that underpins the issues under this study.

Chapter III depicts the various methodological choices made to reach the aims of this research. Chapter IV outlines the findings that emerged from the research questions, and Chapter V presents a discussion of those findings, maintaining links to the literature review. Finally, Chapter VI presents the conclusions emerging from the research, while presenting a model that explains the conflicts of loyalties and the ways in which those conflicts were analyzed and managed. The thesis ends with statements regarding the contribution to knowledge within international relations, suggestions for future research, as well as the universal significance of this study.

The Importance of the Research to the Field of International Relations

The current research contributes to the existing knowledge regarding the relationship between an ethnic minority that is divided across two hostile countries, and nevertheless maintains its identity and loyalty to the country in which it resides as well as its own unique human, social and religious values.

Keywords: Druze, Identity, Israel, Syria, "The Arab Spring", "The Syrian Civil War", "Al-Nusra Front", Isis, Conflict of loyalty.

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I.1 Social Constructivism

The constructivist theory deals with the sociology of knowledge and sees the process of producing human knowledge as constructing a new reality rather than a reflection or an existing reality. Fosnot (1996) explained that according to the constructivist approach, humans do not have direct access to objective reality, because they necessarily build their own version of reality, and at the same time change it and themselves.

Constructivism consists of three sequential levels of theory, with each drawing its explanatory power from the one above it. The first level is constructivism as a metaphysical theory, a kind of super-paradigm that concerns all fields of knowledge

and deals with the way in which researchers seek to know reality and the knowledge through which they seek to interpret it. The second level is constructivism as a social theory that addressing the role of knowledge in the construction of social reality. The third level is constructivism as a theory in international relations, which, in accordance with the two theories above, maintains that international theory and research should be based on social ontology and epistemology (Adler, 2002).

I.2 Ethnic Identity

Seeing the focus of the current research is on the ramifications of the civil war in Syria that erupted in 2011, an analysis of the ethnic identity is likely to explain the behaviors of various ethnic groups. The theory of ethnic identity can help explain the key identity elements of the Druze minority in Israel, and examine the behavior of the Druze as an ethnic group in relation to their Druze brethren in Syria during the civil war.

The term “identity” has been examined in various fields, including: sociology, political science, philosophy and psychology. The term social identity is based on three main sources: theory of personality (Mead, 1964); social psychology (Stets & Burke, 2000) and sociology (Goffman, 1959). Contemporary research in social psychology presents a multi-dimensional model that differentiates between three levels of identity: personal identity; relation-based identity and collective identity (Abbas, 2012).

According to the social identity theory, individuals classify themselves into distinct social groups in order to position themselves in the environment in relation to others (Hogg & Turner, 1985). Social identity emphasizes the mutual or different characteristics of the individual from the rest of the population and uses narratives that focus on their identity and the way they treat others (Lebow, 2012). Similarly, throughout the years, the Druze in Israel and Syria have opted to preserve their social identity, since they are considered a minority group in both Israel and Syria.

I.3 Multiculturalism

Owing to migration processes, more and more countries are becoming culturally diverse, and there deliberate regarding the question whether multiculturalism should be encouraged as a social and state policy. In 1971, an official multicultural policy was first adopted by law. This happened in Canada. Modern societies are increasingly faced with minority groups demanding recognition of identity and adaptation to cultural

diversity. This is often phrased as the challenge of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, the term 'multicultural' covers many varied forms of cultural pluralism, each of which poses its own challenges. (Kymlicka, 1996).

To discuss the common concept of multiculturalism, it is important to begin with a conceptualization of its key value - culture. The concept of culture in its basic and common sense defines a group of people who share values, customs, norms, patterns of behavior and worldviews (Lum, 1999). Despite the tendency to primarily perceive culture as a traditional ethnic aspect, stemming from people's origins, culture can define different groups, such as age groups, nationality, gender, religion and more. In these groups, people share common characteristics, some of which are unique only to their group.

CHAPTER II: SOCIETY, RELIGION AND CONFLICT IN SYRIA

II.1 Proselytism and Prominent Social Characteristics of the Druze Faith

II.1.1 Proselytism in the Druze Faith

One of the most challenging issues in research literature regarding the Druze population is that of their origin, and each attempt to try and clarify this topic is met with difficulty. The main source of this difficulty is that the Druze religion is secret and only males who uphold the Druze faith can read sacred Druze texts. Many researchers, most of whom are Arab, claim that the Druze are a sect originating in Islam while at the same time other researchers and historians attribute a different origin to the Druze, such as French, English, Persian, Kurdish and even to the land where Israel now lies (Avivi, 2000).

The Druze faith is based on a neo-platonic philosophy that does not emphasize liturgy. Still, there are five principles all Druze are supposed to adhere to:

1. "Sidk ellsan"- being truthful.
2. "Hefez El-ehwan "- preservation of the brethren.
3. Staying clear of worshiping false gods, ostracizing of "elmartadin", meaning those that have accepted the faith and left it.
4. Belief in the distinction of God at all times and places.

5. "Elrda and Taslim"- accepting the authority of God with submission and without conditions (Ad-Din, 1994).

II.1.2 Social Attributes of the Druze Faith

The hostility between Muslims and Druze has been substantial. It began with the first stages of the spread of the Druze religion, when the Muslims perceived the Druze, who left the Islam religion, to be greater heretics than the Jews or the Christians (Ben Dor, 1979). The Druze, fearing Muslim prosecution, preferred living in the hills and in high, remote locations, away from the Muslim population. Their livelihood was agricultural-based, thus minimizing their dependence on foreign powers. They zealously protected their independence and uniqueness and as a result, the protection of their land has become one of their sacred values, and its protection has led them to numerous battles (Dana, 1998).

II.1.3 Druze Identity and Ethnic Origin

In 1043, after the Druze faith has sealed the gates to new adherents, the Druze were spread over a wide area, starting from north Africa, to the west, to India and to the East. As a religious minority, the Druze were often persecuted by other rulers and nations and many of them lost their lives or had to become assimilated into other cultures to survive. This was especially true amongst the Druze residing in Sunni Muslim territory (Abo Ez- Aldeen, 1985).

The Druze who resided in Muslim territory received their monotheistic independence in the 11th century. Since then, the Druze were required to show significant bravery, resourcefulness and intelligence to survive the constant threats against them and to preserve their unique identities and their group (Falah, 2000).

II.1.4 The Druze in Syria

During the Syrian civil war of 2011, the Druze were attacked by extremist Islamic forces, such as ISIS and Al-Nusra Front. However, unlike other minorities, the Druze have maintained their Arab and Druze identities and religious customs and did not succumb to extremist groups (Khaizran, 2022). Nowadays, approximately half a million Druze reside in Syria, composing roughly 4% of the Syrian population. Most of the Druze in Syria reside in the city of Sweidaa in the southern "Jabal Al-Arab".

II.1.5 The Druze in Lebanon

The Druze in Lebanon occupy two major regions of the Chouf mountain in central and southern Lebanon. They maintained their status as an independent group within the country as the status of the Druze spiritual leadership strengthened and became a mediator between the government and the Druze community and has even been granted autonomy regarding internal Druze affairs. To this day, the Jumbalat and Arslan families remain the leading Druze families in Lebanon (Erlich, 2000).

II.1.6 The Complexity of Israeli Druze Identity and Loyalty

The Druze in Israel have settled in the country in three main time frames. The first, upon the foundation of the Druze religion. During the first years of the 11th century, the Druze have resided in Israel, settling mostly in the coastal region and the north east of the galilee region. In 1516, the Ottman have invaded the Levant region from the north, ruled at the time by the first Amir Farakh-a-din, a Druze from the “Man” family. The Amir’s support of the Ottman paid off and the new empire allowed him to rule the Chouf mountains and the nearby areas. During this time, the Druze founded settlements in mount Carmel that were occupied with Druze who migrated from Syria and Lebanon. The second time frame was a steady wave of immigration during the last 300 years, following the rule of the house of Man (Falah, 1983).

II.2 The History of the Arab Spring in the Middle East

The revolutions in the Arab world, best known as the “Arab Spring” began in Tunisia, where in 2010, a Tunisian citizen named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of the national building in protest against police brutality. His act has led to a wave of protests that washed over the country and which resulted in the removal of then Tunisian President, Zine al Abidine (Khaizran, 2022).

II.2.1 Factors Leading to the 2011 Civil War in Syria

The civil war in Syria had catastrophic results. According to an article published by the Center for Human Rights in 2021, the war resulted in over half a million dead, over 5.5 million refugees and over 6.7 million displaced across over 130 countries. The lengthy war has left Syria in a social, political and economic abyss.

II.3 The Existing Ethnicities in Syria

II.3.1 Alawites

Alawites constitute 11% of the Syrians. They are mainly concentrated in the western region of Hummus and Hama (Marzouk, 2011). In their quest for better lives than those relying on agriculture and industry, the Alawites have opted to join the Syrian army starting after the French conquest of Syria. Notably, the currently ruling family in Syria, the al-Assad, which has ruled since 1970s, also belongs to the Alawites ethnicity.

II.3.2 Kurds

Kurds constitute 8% of the Syrians. They are mainly concentrated in north-eastern regions bordering with Iraq and Turkey. The Kurds began demanding cultural and national rights soon after the Barzani revolt in Iraq. Their problems increased following the rise to power of the Ba'ath party in Syria, which has led to weakening of their basic rights to language and citizenship.

The Syrian regime, especially during the periods of the al-Assads, has oppressed Kurdish society due to its desire to obtain independence and political and cultural rights, on the pretext that the Kurds had no grasp over the region.

II.3.3 Druze

Following the Syrian independence in 1946, the Syrians promoted “national unity” and Arab ideology. The Syrian government attempted to achieve this by annulling ethnic representations in their parliament. They also included a large number of Druze officers in key positions in the Syrian army. Following the rise to power of the Ba’ath party in 1966, the Druze became involved in the political and public life via party institutions and as a result of their close liaisons with the Damascus ruling elite. Nowadays, majority of the Druze population in Syria resides in the Jabal al-Druze (Mountain of the Druze) region, where the central city is Al-Suwayda. Two other regions in which the Druze reside are the Northern Golan Heights, and outskirts of Damascus.

II.4 Rise of Non-State Actors in the Syrian Arena

II.4.1 Al-Nusra Front

Al-Nusra was established in late 2011 as Al-Qaeda's official representative in Syria, and refused to be under ISIS, even though both the ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front rejected national ideas and sought to establish the Nation of Islam as a genuine political framework. The main focus of the Al-Nusra front is on building the caliphate and establishing its rule through Islamic law, supplying the needs of its loyal residents and establishing government mechanisms, as well as achieving the abolishment of the Assad regime by triumphing the battlefields in Syria.

The Syrian war provided a convenient environment for the rise and strengthening of Al-Nusra Front as a central player in the Syrian arena, seeing Syria as an ideal place to implement its strategy and vision. Unlike other jihadist movements, Al-Nusra Front is considered more pragmatic and has sought alliances among various rebel groups in Syria from its inception (Cafarella, 2014). The stated goals of Al-Nusra Front include ousting the Assad regime and establishing an Islamic state based on Sharia law with a Salafi orientation. Initially, the group kept its affiliation with Al-Qaeda secret, so as not to alienate the local Syrian population (Cafarella, 2014).

II.4.2 Free Syrian Army (FSA)

A group of officers and soldiers who defected from the Syrian army established the nucleus of the Syrian Free Army at the end of July 2011. Assad regime's brutal oppression of protests in Syria led many civilians to join the Free Syrian Army to protect demonstrators and Syrian citizens from the regime's security mechanism (O'Bagy, 2013). Over time, the Syrian Free Army grew in numbers of soldiers and officers to tens of thousands, equipped its fighters with weapons, and even began launching attacks against the Syrian army (Mahio, 2012).

II.5 Jabal al-Druze during the Arab Spring in Syria

Druze in the Middle East are dispersed between Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan. In Syria they are spread in many regions. Horan Mountain is considered their most important concentration, where they constitute a majority and where their most important towns and villages are located. Some of these towns are Al-Suwayda, Shahba, Salkhad, etc. The Druze are also present in the Al-Qunaytrah region as well as

in Damascus peripheries, and mainly in the towns of Garamana and Sahnaya, as well as the Idlib peripheries, where they are spread over approximately 18 villages in what is called “Gabal Elsomak” (Al-Abdullah & Al-Hallaq, 2017).

II.6 ISIS in Syria

The Islamic State has undergone several phases in Syria, beginning with its emergence in Syria, its spread throughout the nation, and ending with its ultimate withdrawal and collapse. ISIS reached the pinnacle of its power upon establishment of the city of Al-Raqqa as its capital and managing its "state" from there.

The Islamic State organization first appeared in an area east of Al-Suwayda district in late 2014, following its withdrawal from other areas in Syria for the purpose of reorganizing its ranks. The Bir Qassab area, east of Al-Suwayda District, is one of the connecting points to southern Syria.

II.7 Conceptual Framework

The literature review on which the current research is founded is based on the concepts presented in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Conceptual framework

CHPATER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

III.1 Research Paradigm and Method

A paradigm is a wide perspective that explains a phenomenon in a general way while looking at the specific details, and reflecting assumptions that are interrelated and linked to the researched reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Kuhn (1962) was the first to embed the term paradigm within the history and sociology of science. He detailed two eras of scientific research: the normal and the revolutionary. The assumptions of the scientific paradigm were considered an inherent truth in the normal era of scientific research. In addition, each paradigm has assumptions (axioms) that determine the theory and methods the researcher will use. Each paradigm contains several theories, each in turn, comprising of a number of components: (a) concepts: language and specific words that derive their primary meaning within the theory of the paradigm they relate to; (b) assumptions and rules that explain the connections between the concepts; (c) research, an accepted methodology of identifying phenomenon within the scope outlined by the researcher.

III.1.1 The Qualitative Approach

Tzabar Ben Yehoshua (2001) claims that the use of qualitative research emerged from the field of education to other fields such as health, law, social work and more. Today, even quantitative researchers admit that there are questions that cannot be answered with the quantitative approach. As time has passed qualitative approach has been able to stabilize itself as an equal to quantitative approach. This fact is also strengthened by the fact that many researchers nowadays choose to work with the integrated. Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) divide the history of qualitative research to eight eras: the first era is the "traditional" era, beginning from 1900 to the second world war. The loyal representative of this approach is Malinovsky (1916-1948).

III.1.2 Case Study

Although the definition of a Case Study differs among researchers (Flyvbjerg, 2011), there is one common component that is always present: the understanding that what is called a case study, as unique as the case may be, allows for a deeper understanding of human behavior both personal or organizational and for the processes at work in the

particular case. Meaning, a case study is an observation of human activity at a certain place and time (Stake, 2000). The use of case studies has increased over the years, it has been used to explore different facets of human life and to allow for important findings for both researchers and decision makers, such as politicians. Not only do case studies enable a better understanding of the complexity of the human condition they observe, they also allow for improvements to be made.

III.2 Research Design

Table 1: Research design

Stage	Aim	Research Tools	Research Population	Data Analysis Method
1	To examine the conflict between identity and loyalty among Druze religious leaders in Israel in the context of providing aid to their brethren in Syria during the civil war.	Semi-structured interviews	3 Druze religious leaders in Israel.	Content Analysis
2	To examine the attitudes of Druze decision makers in Israel and the High-ranking officials in the Israeli defense system towards the Druze conflict of faith and identity in providing aid to their Druze brethren in Syria.		4 Druze decision makers in Israel + 3 high ranking officials in the Israeli defense system.	
3	To examine the attitudes of the Syrian Druze citizens who migrated to Europe as a result of the war towards the aid provided from the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria.		2 Syrian Druze citizens who migrated to Europe as a result of the war.	

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

IV.1 Findings Emerging from Research Question 1: *What are the issues involved in the conflict of identity and loyalty among the Druze religious leaders in Israel in the context of providing aid to their brethren in Syria during the civil war?*

Table 3: Themes emerging from interviews with the Druze Religious Leaders in Israel

Research population: Druze Religious Leaders in Israel			
	Themes	Sample Quotes	
1	Attitudes towards the Arab Spring	<i>We were surprised they erupted in Syria as well (</i>	
2	Attitude of the State of Israel towards the civil war in Syria	<i>Israel's attitude was not to intervene with Syrian affairs, unless there are threats by Iran</i>	
3	Attitude of the Druze in Israel towards the Druze in Syria	<i>Druze in Israel felt an automatic urge to help their Syrian brethren , even before the Druze in Syria thought of asking for help</i>	
4	Attitude of the State of Israel the provision of aid by the Druze to their Syrian brethren	<i>Whenever we needed the support of the country, we knew who to turn to, since the country authorized the provision of aid.</i>	
5	Methods of involvement of the State of Israel and the Druze in Israel in the provision of aid to Druze in Syria	<i>The Druze in Israel acted as a key player when it came to managing the aid to the Druze in Syria, inter alia, by using their connections in Israel and abroad</i>	
6	Dilemmas regarding the provision of aid by Israel to the Druze in Syria	<i>The Druze in Israel preferred to manage the provision of aid quietly, sometimes through back channels, so as not to place the Druze in Syria in harm's way, by being perceived as cooperating with Israel".</i>	
7	The impact of the provision of aid to the Druze in Syria on the identity of the Druze in Israel	Impact on national identity	<i>The national identity and sense of belonging has also improved, although it remains stable in my view." (Interview 7)</i>
		Impact on ethnic identity	
8	Attitudes towards the factors involved in the outbreak of the Syrian civil war	Involvement of the West	<i>The Americans were unsure of how to address the protests in the Middle East, likely due to a basic lack of understanding of the Middle Eastern culture and behavior (Interviewee 8)</i>
		Attitudes towards Israel's involvement in the civil war in Syria	

In summary, there is a disagreement among the interviewees regarding the factors involved in the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. Whereas some interviewees claimed Israel and the United States were directly involved in the war in Syria, aiming to defend Israel's safety and reducing Russian influence in the Middle East, others noted that the Americans did not know how to address the protests in Syria, since they believed that Middle Eastern countries could act according to the values of American democracy.

IV.2 Findings emerging from research question 2: *What are the attitudes of the Druze decision makers in Israel and the High-ranking officials in the Israeli defense system towards the Druze conflict of faith and identity in providing aid to their Druze brethren in Syria?*

Table 4: Themes emerging from interviews with the Druze decision makers in Israel

Research population: Druze Decision Makers in Israel		
	Themes	Sample Quotes
1	Attitudes towards the Arab Spring	<i>The motives for the protests were basically similar, mainly economic motives and the disappearance of the middle class. In addition, the issue of human rights, which were almost extinct encouraged the people to protest."</i>
2	Attitude of the State of Israel towards the civil war in Syria	<i>The State of Israel was not ready for the outburst of the protests in Syria, and it was a surprise.</i>
3	Attitude of the Druze in Israel towards the Druze in Syria	<i>The Syrian arena was infiltrated by various regional factors, such as Hezbollah that came to the aid of the Assad regime, and on the other side, there were organizations that fought against the regime, such as the Al-Nusra Front and ISIS, and the Druze were caught in between.</i>
4	Attitude of the State of Israel the provision of aid by the Druze to their Syrian brethren	<i>I am unfamiliar with any state aiding mechanism but the state did not object to aiding the Druze in Syria</i>
5	Methods of involvement of the State of Israel and the Druze in Israel in the provision of aid to Druze in Syria	<i>The leaders of the Druze authorities, public officials and clergymen, gathered together and discussed how to aid the Druze in Syria.</i>
6	Dilemmas regarding the provision of aid by Israel to the Druze in Syria	<i>The State of Israel was very cautious regarding the provision of aid and tried to maintain balance.</i>
7	The impact of the provision of aid to the Druze in Syria on the identity of the Druze in Israel	Impact on national identity
		Impact on ethnic identity
8	Attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict	<i>In my opinion, the aid contributed to there being less hostility towards the State of Israel by the Druze in Syria</i>
9	Attitudes towards the factors involved in the outbreak of the Syrian civil war	Involvement of the West
		Attitudes towards Israel's involvement in the civil war in Syria
<i>Very soon Israel realized that the war in Syria became a war of Sunni versus Shiite, which no one expected prior to the Arab Spring</i>		

In summary, it can be said that in the perception of Druze decision makers, the factors involved in the outbreak of the civil war in Syria were the influence of the Arab Spring

from other Arab countries, and the conflict between the religions of Islam - Sunni and Shia.

IV.3 Findings Emerging from Research Question 3: *What are the attitudes of the Syrian Druze citizens who migrated to Europe as a result of the war towards the aid provided from the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria?*

Table 6: Themes emerging from interviews Syrian Druze Citizens Who Migrated to Europe as a result of the war

Research population: Syrian Druze Citizens Who Migrated to Europe as a Result of the War		
	Themes	Sample Quotes
1	Attitudes towards the Arab Spring	<i>First, I do not agree with the term 'Arab Spring' but rather an Arab fall</i>
2	Attitude of the Syrian Druze towards the civil war in Syria	<i>With the beginning of the protests, I believed that the country would be able to control the protests and that it would not escalate to a war</i>
3	Attitude of the Druze in Syria towards the Druze in Israel	<i>Although the relationship between the Druze in Israel and the Druze in Syria is long lasting, it was relatively under the radar. Suddenly, with the outbreak of the war, many Druze from Syria began talking to Druze from Israel, including on social media, requesting financial aid</i>
4	Attitudes regarding the factors contributing to the outbreak of the civil war in Syria	<i>I believe that many factors contributed to the outbreak of the protests in Syria, first and foremost the economic status of the citizens that deteriorated significantly since the economy was controlled by the President's cronies</i>
5	Methods of involvement of the State of Israel and the Druze in Israel in the provision of aid to Druze in Syria	<i>The Druze were able to purchase basic groceries and sustain a reasonable life during the war as well as to purchase arms with money</i>
6	The impact of the provision of aid to the Druze in Syria on the identity of the Druze in Israel	Impact on national identity
		Impact on ethnic identity
7	Attitudes towards the factors involved in the outbreak of the Syrian civil war	Involvement of the West
		Attitudes towards Israel's involvement in the civil war in Syria

In summary, the findings clearly indicate that the attitude of the Druze in Syria towards the Druze in Israel derived from the religious principle of ‘preservation of the brethren’. Prior to the war, the Druze in Syria had an under the radar relationships with the Druze in Israel that came to light upon the outbreak of the war, using social platforms. The findings further indicate that the Druze in Syria feel that they were able to survive the war with the help of the financial aid from the Druze in Syria.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.1 Factual Conclusions Emerging from Research Question 1: *What are the issues involved in the conflict of identity and loyalty among the Druze religious leaders in Israel within the context of providing aid to their brethren in Syria during the civil war?*

The conclusion derived from the discussion is that amidst the conflict of identities among the Druze in Israel, Druze religious leaders in Israel recognize the protests in Syria to be a surprisingly powerful act that was derived **from the discontent of Syrian citizens with the Syrian regime** in terms of economic and social-political status. Additionally, Druze religious leaders had a **dual** attitude towards the position of the State of Israel regarding the civil war in Syria, from its involvement on one hand, to lack of involvement on the other. Another conclusion that can be derived with regard to the conflict between identities is that **the provision of aid to the Druze community in Syria overcame an affiliation to the state**, and that despite Israel and Syria being enemy states, the Druze principle of “Hefez El-ehwan” enabled the provision of aid to the Druze community in Syria in its time of need.

V.2 Factual Conclusions Emerging from Research Question 2: *What are the attitudes of the Israeli Druze leaders and the attitudes of the Israeli political and military views towards the Druze conflict of faith and identity in providing aid to their Druze brethren in Syria?*

The conclusions derived from the discussion regarding the attitudes of Druze religious and political leaders and senior officials of Israeli defense industry regarding the conflict of identities among the Druze in Israel and the Arab Spring, indicate that their attitudes are derived from a wrong definition of the Syrian civil war as ‘Arab Spring’, since the war in Syria erupted to the oppression of the Syrian regime against the Syrian

citizens. Therefore, the provision of aid by the Druze in Israel to the Druze in Syria was based on identification with the suffering of the latter.

The conclusions regarding the conflict of loyalties further indicate that Israel's neutral attitude towards the civil war in Syria and its lack of intervention was perceived as a means to defend its citizens, including the Druze citizens, as part of the lesson Israel learned during the second Lebanon war. Moreover, Israel's neutral attitude towards the civil war in Syria and its lack of intervention was a result of the appreciation it holds to its alliance with the Druze in Israel. This appreciation was the reason for Israel's profound understanding to the aid requests by the Druze in Israel and the fact that it enabled it.

V.3 Factual Conclusions Emerging from Research Question 3: *What are the attitudes of the Syrian immigrants towards the provision of aid from the Druze in Israel?*

The conclusions derived from the discussion regarding the attitudes of Druze immigrants indicate that the acceptance of aid from the Druze in Israel is related to the understanding by the Druze in Syria that the regime in Syria is harmful to its citizens and that they must save their families either by leaving to the West or receiving aid from Israel, an enemy state. The discussion further indicated that the acceptance of aid from the Druze in Israel is related to the understanding that despite the disagreements among the Druze in Syria regarding the civil war in Syria, and due to the fact that they did not receive any help defending themselves from ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front from the Syrian regime, they must leave to the West to secure their family's future.

V.4 Conceptual Conclusions: A model of Managing Conflict of Loyalties: The Israeli Druze Case

The primary research question in the current research is: what are the components that may comprise a new thinking framework regarding the conflict of loyalties between Israel Druze and Syrian Druze during the civil war in Syria (2011-2017)?

This question referred to the components of a new thinking framework that explains the conflict of loyalties among the Druze in Israel and the Druze in Syria during the civil war in Syria between the years 2011 and 2017. The conclusions derived from the discussion on these findings enable the presentation of a data-based model that explains

the management of the conflict of loyalties of the Druze in Israel regarding the provision of aid to the Druze in Syria during the civil war, also known as the ‘Arab Spring’, taking place between 2011 and 2017.

Figure 2 below presents the model.

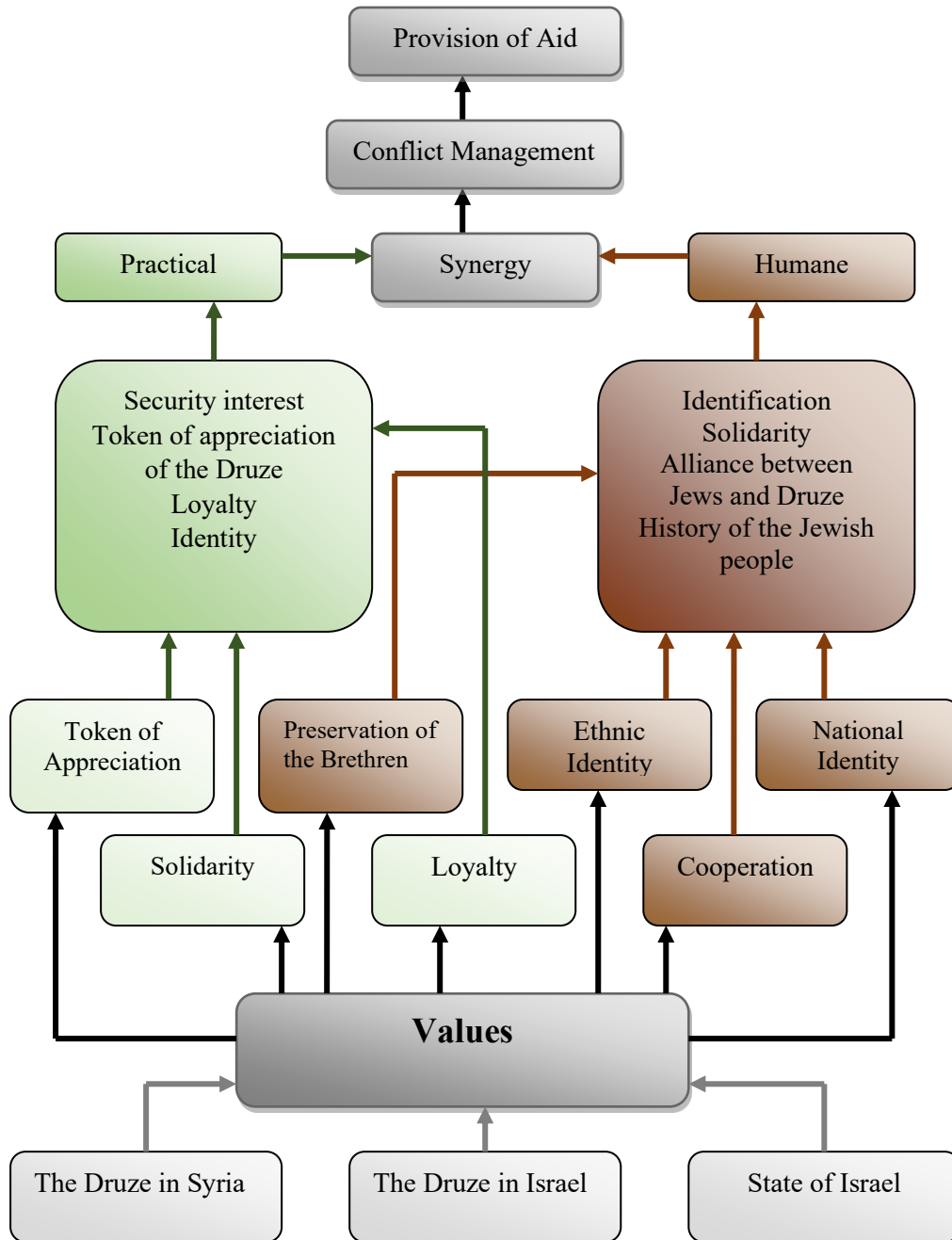


Figure 2: The research model

Figure 3 presents how the conflict of loyalties between two minority groups that belong to the same religion and same ethnic group with a dual loyalty, one to their ethnicity based on the principle of “preservation of the brethren” and the other to the country in

which they reside (two hostile countries), took place. The current research indicated that the State of Israel agreed to provide the humanitarian aid requested by the Druze in Israel as a token of respect and appreciation the country has to its Druze citizens, due to their long-lasting loyalty to the country and their involvement in maintaining the country's security. The model further shows that the management of the conflict between loyalties was based on shared values among all concerning parties.

To the Druze in Israel, the religious commandment of 'preservation of the brethren' is a key principle of the Druze religion. This principle has a profound religious and practical meaning, based on the perception that each Druze must aid his Druze brother in the face of danger, regardless of where they live. During the civil war in Syria, the Druze in Syria faced financial and security related threats by terror organizations such as ISIS and the al-Nusra Front. Due to the regime's lack of ability to protect them from these threats, they reached out to the Druze in Israel in request for aid. Simultaneously, the Druze in Israel understood the distress their Syrian brethren were under and began negotiating with the State of Israel so that the latter would enable the provision of aid.

Nevertheless, since Israel is in an ongoing state of war with Syria, which is perceived as an enemy state, Israel opted to avoid becoming involved in the Syrian civil war, however, wanted to provide humanitarian aid the Druze in Syria and to respond to the requests of the Druze in Israel in light of their long-lasting loyalty to Israel, preceding the country's establishment. The State of Israel agreed and facilitated the provision of financial and humanitarian aid to the Druze in Syria via the spiritual leader of the Druze in Israel, Shaykh Mowafaq Tarif.

It should be noted that the Druze in Syria were also in a conflict between their loyalty to the country in which they reside, Syria, and the acceptance of aid from Israel, which the Syrian regime considers as an enemy state.

The values shared by the Druze in Israel and the Druze in Syria by virtue of the religious principle of "Hefez El-ehwan" and the involvement on the Druze's spiritual leader, Shaykh Mowafaq Tarif, who took it upon himself to manage the provision of aid approved by the State of Israel, enabled cooperations and the provision of financial and humanitarian aid. Furthermore, based on the experiences of the Jewish people during the holocaust, the State of Israel exhibited its solidarity with the Druze in Syria as they

faced existential threats, thereby enabling the provision of aid through third parties and European countries with the ultimate goal of safeguarding the Druze in Syria from the threats of terror organizations.

In conclusion, the connection between the humane and practical values of those involved in the conflict of loyalties created a synergy that enabled to manage the conflict of loyalties of all parties. Eventually, the Druze in Israel were able to transfer the aid to their brethren in Syria, while avoiding a clash between their religious identity, their loyalty to Israel, and their obligation to their brethren in Syria, derived from the religious principle of “Hefez El-ehwan”.

V.5 Practical Implications and Recommendations

The conceptual framework derived from the model based on the findings of the current research allows for the presentation of recommendations to those seeking to implement the model.

V.5.1 Practical Implications and Recommendations for Israeli Policy Makers

When managing the conflict of identities, it is recommended to be well familiar with the values that guide the minority citizens and harness them to solve problems and distress, via cooperations.

V.5.2 Practical Implications and Recommendations for Minority Leaders

It is recommended to preserve the standing of the Druze spiritual leader in Israel and to strengthen it. The contribution of the Druze spiritual leader and the Druze political leadership especially stood out in managing the conflict between identities, as they impacted the decision-making processes in Israel regarding the Druze in both countries, during the civil war in Syria between the years 2011 and 2017.

It is further recommended that the Druze religious and political leadership continues to preserve the special bond between the Druze ethnicity and the State of Israel.

V.5.3 Practical Implications and Recommendations for Minority Citizens

It is recommended that minority groups become assembled into the majority while preserving the social and religious features that are unique to that group. It is further recommended that social and educational circles operating within the minority groups encourage its preservation of religious-social values, while promoting its integration in the country of residence.

V.6 Contribution to Knowledge

V.6.1 Contribution to Theoretical Knowledge in International Relations

The identities conflict management model developed in this research is based on data collected during the current research, thus closing the existing knowledge gap in this field. Additionally, since the model is based on data collected specifically towards the achievement of the goals of the current research, the model is innovative and original and may shed light on the management of the conflict of identities among an ethnic minority divided across two hostile countries during the Syrian civil war between 2011 and 2017. Since the data was interpreted using broad literary review in the field of international relations, this research provides for an additional contribution to the field. The model derived from the research findings poses a change in policy and perception of identities conflict management among minorities.

V.6.2 Contribution to Practical Knowledge

The model proposed in this research can be a practical and useful guide to those seeking to create collaborations between two ethnic groups dispersed across two hostile countries, on the basis of solidarity and shared human, social and religious values advocating for providing mutual aid in times of need.

V.7 Further Research

The current research was conducted on the basis of the qualitative research principles and as such was based on a limited sample, therefore, cannot be extended to other populations. Due to the importance of the topic and to increase the level of the generalization of the findings, it is recommended to conduct a quantitative analysis that

will include a wide and representing sample, based on data collection using a statistical questionnaire that will enable for generalization.

It is recommended to conduct research on other ethnic groups across the world experiencing a conflict between loyalties in order to learn more on the important issue examined in research.

V.8 Universal Significance of this Research

The universal importance of the current research lies in its significant contribution to knowledge in the field of international relations, with regard to the relationship between an ethnic minority that is dispersed across two hostile countries yet manages to maintain its identity and loyalty to the country in which it resides, as well as its unique human, social and religious values. This research contributed to the knowledge of the relationship between the Druze minority, residing in two different countries, while analyzing and explaining their interactions during the Syrian civil war between 2011 and 2017. The research added to the existing knowledge regarding the conflict between a national identity and an ethnic identity of the Druze community that is dispersed across Syria and Israel, and can teach of the conflict between identities among other minority groups across the world.

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