

Zionism and Post-Zionism in *A Political Theory for the Jewish People*

Alan Patten¹

apatten@princeton.edu

Revised June 1st, 2018

1. Summary

At the heart of Chaim Gans' book is a central question of political morality facing Israel – the question of Zionism.² One of the major themes of the book is that there are several distinct conceptions of Zionism, making it tricky to attempt a general definition of the idea. What various conceptions of Zionism share in common, however, are the ideas of Jewish self-determination and of the Land of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. A political theory is Zionist if it asserts on behalf of the Jewish people a right to self-determination on some or all of the territory of the Land of Israel.

The premise of Gans' book is that Zionism is a morally controversial position. Most obviously, the Zionist project is controversial because it was pursued and continues to be pursued on territory that is home to Arabs, and that is considered by Arabs to be their own homeland (or part thereof) and thus the site in which their own self-determination ought to take place. The project might also be seen as controversial for reasons that are internal to the Jewish collectivity. There have always been Jews who would prefer that Israel not be dedicated to the self-determination of the Jewish people.

Motivated by these and related concerns, some people reject Zionism altogether and instead propose that any political community based in the Land of Israel should seek to be a home to all of its citizens, and should not present itself as the locus of self-determination for any particular ethnocultural or ethnoreligious collectivity. Gans labels this view, and various related views that also reject Zionism completely, as *post-Zionism*. One of Gans' major aims is to defend Zionism from its post-Zionist critics.

Central to Gans' defense of Zionism is the distinction he draws between several different versions or interpretations of Zionism. The dominant conception of Zionism – among politicians and ordinary Jewish Israelis – is the “proprietary” interpretation.³ This conception holds that the Jewish people have an ownership right over the whole Land of Israel that goes back to antiquity and that was never relinquished during the centuries of Jewish absence from Israel before the 20th century. This collective ownership right has far-reaching implications for the territorial boundaries of the Jewish state: those boundaries ought in principle to encompass the whole territory of the Land of Israel. It also explains who properly belongs within the state of Israel – members of the Jewish people – and who should be regarded as interlopers, whose claims can be given lesser priority and who, to take the position to its logical extreme, can legitimately be expelled from the territory altogether. If one adopts the proprietary conception, it follows that Arabs are living on somebody else's land, and thus do not have any fundamental collective right to remain there, or to establish their own institutions of self-determination on that territory. Gans adds that the individual rights of Arabs are

also suspect under the proprietary conception, although this is a matter of contestation amongst proponents of the conception (66-67).

Gans also discusses a second version of Zionism, which he says is popular among intellectuals and jurists. This view, which Gans dubs “hierarchical Zionism,” diverges from the dominant, proprietary view in basing itself on an a-historical right to self-determination rather than a historical claim of ownership. According to hierarchical Zionists, the Jewish people has a right to self-determination on territory of the Land of Israel. This right to self-determination ought to take the same form it does for other “normal” nations (e.g. Germany, France, Greece, etc.) – that is, it ought to take the form of a “nation-state.” In these “normal” cases, only the majority national group is given collective rights of self-determination; minorities are expected to make do with individual civil and political rights.

Unlike the proprietary view, the hierarchical conception can acknowledge that Palestinian self-determination has a basic claim to be exercised elsewhere in the region, and thus the hierarchical view is not committed to the exercise of Jewish self-determination over the whole Land of Israel. Likewise, in starting from the a-historical value of self-determination, the hierarchical Zionist can and ought to acknowledge other values that come in a package with self-determination, including individual civil and political rights for non-Jews.

Gans himself argues that neither the hierarchical or proprietary interpretations of Zionism are acceptable political doctrines. He is particularly unsparing in his criticism of the proprietary interpretation, calling it “terrifying” (73)

and stating categorically that it licenses acts of “gross injustice” (66) and “dreadful oppression” (75). But Gans also objects – somewhat more mildly – to the hierarchical interpretation, saying that it establishes an objectionable inequality between homeland groups.

So Gans wants to defend Zionism against post-Zionist alternatives, but thinks that neither of the mainstream understandings of Zionism are defensible outlooks. To defend Zionism, then, he is led to develop and defend a third conception of the view, which he calls “egalitarian Zionism.” Like hierarchical Zionism, the egalitarian interpretation appeals to an ahistorical right of self-determination. But in contrast to the hierarchical position, the egalitarian view allows that multiple groups in the territory of the Land of Israel have valid claims to self-determination. The egalitarian seeks to accommodate these claims through institutional arrangements that provide for multiple structures of self-determination. This ends up meaning a two-state solution, with each state providing a setting for self-government by the majority but also provisions for a more limited form of self-rule by the minority. On this view, then, unlike the hierarchical conception, self-determination need not imply possession of a nation-state of one’s own.

Gans’ book, then, is about three competing interpretations of Zionism and about the post-Zionist alternative (or alternatives) to any and all of these variants of Zionism. The book’s thesis is that the defense of the egalitarian version provides a sufficient response to the values and concerns that motivate post-Zionism.

Gans compares the different conceptions he distinguishes along historiographical and moral dimensions. Historiographically, Post-Zionists accuse Zionists of making multiple historical errors, and more broadly of working with a fundamentally false narrative of Jewish history. Most centrally, mainstream Zionists have tended to argue that the Jewish people stretches continuously through time back to antiquity. Although the Jewish collective was driven out of Israel by occupying powers, the Jews never ceased to be a nation and never stopped identifying with the Land of Israel or striving for a return. Post-Zionists argue that this whole narrative is deeply inaccurate. There were many Jewish collectives, and many attitudes to Judaism, in the world by the 19th century. Jews around the world did not share a general sense of identification with the Jewish nation, nor did they actively seek to return to the Land of Israel. In the earliest years of the Zionist movement, no Jewish nation could be said to exist, and so there was no Jewish nation that could validly claim a right to self-determination in Israel.

Gans agrees with these historiographical challenges to mainstream Zionism. But he argues that Zionists need not make the strong claims about historical continuity and full nationhood that the post-Zionists criticize. For the Zionist enterprise to get off the ground, it is enough that Jews were a partial nation at the beginning of the movement – that some of the materials or elements of nationhood were present. If Jews were a partial nation in this sense, then the Zionist project could be justified if further nation-building efforts could be considered a viable and reasonable identity strategy for Zionists to pursue, given

the circumstances they face, including the murderous persecution of the Jews experienced in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In addition to this historiographical discussion, the book considers the various positions it distinguishes more directly as claims of political morality. It explores the morality of the Zionist narrative, asking whether (on the various interpretations) Zionist claims to Jewish self-determination in Israel can be defended in the light of objections, such as the impact on legitimate rights and claims of Arab inhabitants of that territory. The book also examines whether the post-Zionist rejection of Jewish self-determination in Israel is morally defensible.

In brief, Gans rejects the strong moral collectivism of the proprietary interpretation, which is insensitive to individual rights and claims, and incompatible with the basic tenets of democracy. He also rejects hierarchical Zionism, arguing that it fails to treat equally claims to self-determination of different groups that are on a par with one another. Based on these objections to mainstream Zionism, one might expect Gans to endorse post-Zionism, but he finds this position to be morally problematic too. It overlooks the legitimate claims that Jews have to self-determination and the ways in which both ancient history and the emergency facing Jews in the middle of the 20th century justified siting this self-determination in territory of the Land of Israel. By the means of this dialectic, Gans is thus brought to egalitarian Zionism, which he believes fairly balances the different claims to self-determination of Jews and Palestinians.

2. Egalitarian Zionism and its Alternatives

The book's general theoretical position is one for which I have a great deal of sympathy. In my own work I have tried to develop an approach to the morality of nationalism that emphasizes the "equal recognition" of different national groups – large and small, majority and minority.⁴ I am generally more sympathetic to egalitarian views about self-determination than to hierarchical ones, and, like Gans, I am suspicious of political theories that treat claims of national identity and self-determination as if they have little or no importance.

Despite these sympathies with Gans' general approach, I found myself resisting several key claims of the book. The most important of these is the claim that egalitarian Zionism should be preferred to all forms of post-Zionism, including what Gans calls "civic" post-Zionism. Whereas Gans believes that a choice must be made between civic nationalism and an egalitarian form of cultural nationalism, my own preference is for a response to nationalism that is both civic and egalitarian. I'll devote most of the remainder of this commentary to a critical evaluation of Gans' arguments for egalitarian Zionism over civic post-Zionism.

Before turning to this topic, there is one other question I want to briefly flag, which concerns the distinctiveness of egalitarian Zionism relative to its hierarchical counterpart. One worry I have about the book is that its distinction between hierarchical and egalitarian Zionism seems somewhat artificial. In practice, the policy and institutional preferences of these versions of Zionism are likely to be quite similar.

To see the worry about the egalitarian/hierarchical distinction, start with a

conceptual observation about equality. As Marx noted, and as many later egalitarians have also realized, there is a sense in which a demand for equality is always also a demand for inequality. This is because there are typically multiple dimensions along which the treatment of people or groups can be compared. Treating people equally along one dimension is likely to mean inequality along the others.

For instance, if I give all my students equal amounts of attention, then it is likely that they will obtain quite unequal results. Conversely, if I want to ensure that all students master the material equally well, then I will need to allocate my attention unequally. If we apply this general thought to the treatment of national groups, it may turn out that equality and hierarchy are not distinct opposing positions, but different dimensions of a single position.

Gans says that the equality aimed at by egalitarian Zionism ought to be sensitive to numbers and needs (97-99). It wouldn't be egalitarian to give the same resources and powers to Jews and Arabs within Israel given the population disparity. Equality requires proportionality, which means more for the Jewish majority. Gans suggests that differences in "needs" are likely to further reinforce the inequality that is implied by equality. Given the regional situation, Jews arguably have significant security needs that are different for Arabs. Likewise, Jews face unique demographic pressures, and vulnerability to losing their majority in the only place on earth where they are in the majority. These twin concerns of security and demography – which are ubiquitous in their implications

– arguably justify inequality – one might say hierarchy – as a means of achieving a particular conception of equality.

In other respects, the egalitarian and hierarchical interpretations of Zionism seem congruent with one another. It seems that both approaches favor a two state solution. One of the ways in which hierarchical Zionists diverge from proprietary Zionists is in acknowledging the parity of the broader situation for Jews and Arabs in the region. I suspect that hierarchical Zionists would also not object to some forms of local self-rule, such as the Arab minority in Israel having some role in running the Arab-language school system, or in managing their own religious affairs.

I do not say there are no differences at all between egalitarian and hierarchical forms of Zionism. But in practice the differences seem rather slight to me, and so I wonder whether the emphasis that Gans places on it ends up being somewhat artificial.

As I noted above, however, the main issue I want to consider in the remainder of this commentary is the case for preferring egalitarian Zionism over civic post-Zionism. Many of the post-Zionists that Gans' book engages with are sociologists, post-modernists, and/or others who tend to be impatient with or dismissive of the practice of normative reasoning. In my opinion, Gans is right to take these writers to task for failing to grapple directly with the moral questions surrounding Zionism.

But I wonder if an effect of engaging with these particular opponents is that the civic post-Zionist position never gets articulated in its most theoretically sophisticated and compelling form. For the purposes of considering this question, I shall relax my suspicion that egalitarian and hierarchical Zionism are not sharply distinct positions. My main focus will not be on comparing these two accounts of Zionism, but on comparing the two accounts with the non- or post-Zionist view that Gans labels “civic post-Zionism.” I want to ask whether Gans provides convincing arguments for preferring (egalitarian) Zionism to this post-Zionist alternative. Throughout the discussion, I shall assume that all the positions being compared advocate a two-state solution. The disagreement is about which political theory is correct for the state of Israel.

Let us begin with hierarchical Zionism, and ask what objections a civic post-Zionist might level against this position. Gans organizes his discussion around two broad challenges, one framed in terms of equality, the other in terms of freedom. The equality challenge is made in the name of non-Jews in Israel, principally Arabs but also other minorities. The freedom challenge could in principle be made on behalf of anyone, including Jews in Israel.

In his gloss on the equality challenge, Gans mainly emphasizes the inequality implied by hierarchical Zionism with regards to self-determination:

The Arabs in Israel have the right to vote and to be elected, but they are constitutionally prevented from advancing their collective interests as Arabs, since they cannot vote and be elected for the purpose of promoting their group interest as a homeland

ethnocultural group in Israel. Only the Jews in Israel have this right.

(112)

But he also makes the somewhat more general point that, under hierarchical Zionism, Arab political rights are “to a great extent emasculated,” so that there is an “unequal distribution of political power between Jews and Arabs” (112). This point is more general insofar as it applies not just to the political power that Arabs have to assert themselves as a homeland group but to the power that they have to defend all of their interests.

This more general point is arguably crucial for the civic post-Zionist claim that “there is a fundamental contradiction in Israel’s perception of itself as a state that is both “democratic and Jewish”” (111). The objection holds that, when the majority ethnocultural group is regarded as the defining core of the political community, the equal citizenship of everyone else is threatened. Minorities are pushed to the margins of the political community and risk being treated as second-class citizens.

This second-class status is reflected in the denial of self-determination rights, but it goes further than this. In a society where some are thought of as “full” or “real” members of the self-determining political community, and others are members only in virtue of their territorial presence, the latter are vulnerable to weaker protection of the law. Even if on paper (according to the law) minorities have equal rights in non-self-determination-related matters, the fact that they are not members of the core self-determining political community means that their presence in the territory of the state puts them “in the way” and their full

participation in the life of the society is not something to be encouraged. The downgrading of concern and respect for the interests of non-Jewish minorities is a risk associated with, rather than a constitutive feature of, hierarchical Zionism, but it is not hard to find evidence that minorities in Israel are often disadvantaged, and that there are disturbing patterns of under-expenditure by the Israeli government on services provided to minorities.

The objection based on freedom focuses on the possibility that an ethno-cultural identity, as opposed to the more “civic” or political identity favored by post-nationalists, might end up empowering narratives and licensing restrictions that reduce individual freedom. According to this objection, thinking about the national identity associated with a political community in ethno-cultural terms may encourage people to invoke certain traditions and allegedly shared values as constitutive of the self-determining national community, and to seek to regulate individual behavior on the basis of these traditions and values. For instance, LGBT rights and recognition might be limited on the grounds that they do not conform to mainstream understandings of Jewish values and identity. By contrast, the post-Zionist insists, a civic national identity is more likely to be accommodating of difference and hospitable to personal freedom.

The civic post-Zionist concludes from these two objections that it would be better – from the standpoint of equality and freedom – for Israelis to move towards a civic-territorial sense of national identity. That is, it would be better if Israelis came to share an identity as citizens of a state of Israel that includes Jews, Arabs, and others, who share in common a commitment to certain political

values and projects, and a dedication to establishing and maintaining the social pre-requisites (including a common language or small number of societal languages) needed to live together as citizens of a single state. By adopting such an identity, Israel would follow in the footsteps of other nations, which have gradually made their identity “thinner” and more civic. Over a timespan of centuries, for instance, British identity has come (far from perfectly) to be decoupled from specific racial characteristics or religious affiliations, and to become open to anyone who shares an allegiance to the British political project, and who is willing to learn English and participate in British society.

In the view of civic post-Zionists, the adoption of a civic identity of this kind in Israel would address both the equality and the freedom challenges associated with hierarchical Zionism. There would likely still be inequalities in an Israel organized around a civic national identity – civic nationalism is not a magic cure for all inequality - but, to the extent that the civic post-Zionist solution is successfully implemented, there would not be inequalities grounded in the fact that one ethno-cultural group, and not others, enjoys a privileged, insider status in the state. In the same way, there will still be limits on personal freedom in a civic post-Zionist state. No society can function without some such limits, including the limits associated with coordinating on one or several societal languages, and on certain norms and practices needed for social life. But the identity associated with civic post-Zionism could have less ethnocultural content, and could be more focused on the conditions necessary for a shared social and political life.

Gans offers two main objections to this civic post-Zionist alternative to hierarchical Zionism. First, he argues that there is no need to turn to this alternative. Insofar as the main concern is equality, egalitarian Zionism is another solution. Second, he argues that civic post-Zionism is oppressive. It makes Jews “divest themselves of their national identity as Jews,” a demand that he calls “exceptionally demanding as well as insulting.” (8-9; see also 117-18).

Let us look more closely at each of these objections. Is egalitarian Zionism an alternative solution to the inequalities that are associated with hierarchical Zionism? This is difficult to answer because Gans has very little to say about what egalitarian Zionism would look like institutionally. Depending on how Gans fills out these institutional implications, the argument that egalitarian Zionism takes care of the equality objection faces a different problem.

Suppose that egalitarian Zionism is realized in the following way: the major state institutions of Israel are regarded as the instruments of Jewish self-determination, while Arab self-determination is achieved through official language status, Muslim courts, local institutions, and autonomy over schools and certain cultural and religious matters. This would be a lopsided form of equality, but, as we saw earlier, Gans believes that an appropriate metric of equality would take into account differences in numbers and needs.

If this is what egalitarian Zionism looks like, then it is hard to see how it solves the equality problem that civic post-Zionists worry about. Recall that there is a narrower equality problem, which concerns the Arab minority’s interest in self-determination, and a broader problem that concerns the vulnerability of

minority interests in general to abuse or neglect. Perhaps the institutions mentioned above would establish some form of Arab self-determination, and thus address the narrower problem. But the fact that the major political institutions of Israel – the legislature, the high court, the civil service, the military, and so on – are regarded as the locus of Jewish self-determination leaves the broader problem unresolved. The interests of minorities would be poorly protected in a system where the major political institutions making decisions that apply to minorities are generally regarded as belonging to an ethnocultural group that excludes them.

As I said, Gans says very little about the institutional implications of egalitarian Zionism. Perhaps he would resist the suggestion that major state institutions should be regarded as specifically dedicated to Jewish self-determination. The state he advocates is a bi-national one, and so one might expect that the state's central institutions would have a bi-national orientation. They would have a special responsibility to promote both Jewish and Arab peoples and to facilitate self-determination for each group. Legislators, judges, civil servants, and so on, are to regard members of both groups as being full members of a bi-national political community.

But if this is the view that Gans has in mind then I have two questions. First, what then is the locus of Jewish self-determination? If not the Knesset, the Supreme Court, and so on, then through what institutions is Jewish self-determination realized? Is Gans envisaging a sub-state layer of institutions that

would provide a locus for this self-determination to occur? If so, it seems odd that nothing is said about these institutions.

Second, does this solution not, in effect, introduce the need for something like the civic-territorial national identity advocated by post-Zionists? The idea is that legislators, judges, and public officials should see themselves as equally representing Jewish and non-Jewish citizens, albeit in a manner that recognizes the existence and claims of particular groups. But if officials are to have this “Israeli” identity, and Israel is to remain a democracy, then should ordinary citizens not have it too? If citizens of the Jewish majority think of themselves when they act politically as realizing ethnocultural self-determination, then won’t they tend to elect politicians that have this orientation as well? And this would conflict with the idea that officials should have an Israeli identity. The upshot of this second point is that Gans’ egalitarian Zionism faces a dilemma. Either it conceives of major Israeli institutions as the site of Jewish self-determination – but then fails to address the equality problem – or it ends up relying on a kind of civic-territorial identity – but then, in effect, adopts the solution advocated by civic post-Zionists.

Let us turn now to the argument concerning freedom. Would it be oppressive to expect and encourage Israeli Jews to adopt an Israeli identity? As we have seen, Gans talks as though this would mean rejecting or denying Jewish identity, something he thinks would plainly be oppressive:

In effect, it requires that they discard or replace fundamental aspects of their identity that have a profound effect on their lives,

personalities, values, and at times even their perception of reality...Moreover, the demands in question are in effect demands to change one's identity because it is false, or supposedly perverted. (9)

He adds to this that the expectation that Jews in Israel develop a civic, Israeli identity would parallel the obviously illiberal demand that a gay man give up his sexual orientation and become straight. (9-10, 118)

But some care is needed here. Civic post-Zionism need not argue that people should be required to shed Jewish identity completely, any more than civic nationalists in Britain need to argue that Anglicans ought to shed a Protestant identity in order to identify as British. In general, civic nationalism is compatible with people having multiple identities, including a religious and/or ethnocultural identity that is expressed primarily in non-public contexts (personal life, associational life, etc.) and a political or civic identity that refers to the political community and that comes to the fore in public institutions. In addition, civic nationalists ought to have no objection to the politicization of particular religious or ethnocultural identities when the bearers of these identities have historically been marginalized or subordinated in the political community and the identity is being used to mobilize its bearers to struggle for greater inclusion and equality. For example, a civic nationalist should not have a problem with political mobilization around an African American identity insofar as the aim of such mobilization is to bring about a society that is more just, democratic, and inclusive.

Thus the analogy Gans suggests between Jewish and gay identity is off the mark. Of course, civic nationalists should accommodate people with a gay identity. Such an identity is primarily exercised in non-political contexts, and insofar as it is exercised politically it is normally to advocate for a more equal and inclusive society. By contrast, an ethnocultural national identity is inescapably political. It specifies who the “we” is when some group of people exercise power through the institutions of the state over everyone living on a particular territory. People do not have a legitimate interest in the sexual orientation of their neighbors, nor do they have reasonable complaints when their neighbors politicize a particular identity in the name of greater equality and inclusion. But they do have a legitimate interest in the character of the national identity of the majority that controls the state. As I argued earlier, a dominant national identity that is exclusive or hierarchical makes the rights and interests of minorities vulnerable to abuse or neglect. Given that everyone has a legitimate stake in the character of the dominant national identity, it does not seem oppressive to expect that that identity be developed in an inclusive, civic direction.

Against an argument of this form it is sometimes observed that the relegation of religious identity to a private sphere fits comfortably with Protestant outlooks but much less so with the belief systems of other religions. The beliefs associated with many religions refer directly to matters that are public and political. These beliefs are suppressed when religion is excluded from the public sphere. If this is true for religion, it is even truer for ethnocultural national identities. By their very nature, these identities are constituted by the desire of an

ethnocultural group to be a political community and to enjoy respect and self-determination as a group. The insistence on a civic identity clashes directly with the inherently political claims of ethnocultural nationalism. In Israel, it might be argued, the Jewish and Zionist identities are far more intertwined than being British ever was with being Anglican. So perhaps Gans is on to something about the Jewish identity (of many Israeli Jews) that is not answered by claims that religion is easily uncoupled from national identity in other countries.

But this response misses the point of the civic post-Zionist position. The post-Zionist need not argue that religious and ethnocultural identities *can* be adequately realized in non-public contexts. Perhaps they cannot be. Rather, the core of the civic nationalist position is that whether an identity has a right to be publicly accommodated depends on its implications for other people who would be affected. If an ethnocultural national identity would predictably jeopardize the legitimate rights and interests of minority citizens, then it has no right to public accommodation in its present form, and should be adapted and reformed to suit the conditions of a pluralistic society.

Gans acknowledges the underlying principle here, agreeing that there is no right to realize an identity that produces political outcomes that are “inherently unjust and oppressive” (10). He says, for instance, that there is no requirement to create a political environment in which identities based on white supremacy or gender hierarchy can flourish. But Gans denies that egalitarian Zionism would produce unjust outcomes: “The post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism fail to establish their claims. Most of what they say to support their claims does not even begin to

be an argument...” (10) Egalitarian Zionism, he adds, “does not induce its believers to commit gross and ongoing injustices” (11).

I agree of course that egalitarian Zionism is nothing like white supremacy. But I still think that Gans should take more seriously the possibility that treating Israeli political institutions as the locus of Jewish self-determination could have adverse effects on the rights and interests of non-Jews in Israel, and could to that extent contribute to a pattern of “ongoing injustices.” As I said earlier, the impact of egalitarian Zionism would depend on how it takes shape institutionally. Perhaps Gans has a proposal for institutions that would safeguard the interests of non-Jews without giving too much ground to civic post-Zionists. If he does, I for one would love to hear it.⁵

Let me conclude by contrasting egalitarian Zionism with my own support for the equal recognition of majority and minority national identities in multinational states such as Canada, Spain, and Britain. The crucial difference is that, on my view, it is possible for public institutions to recognize a national identity while at the same time expecting that that identity be interpreted or reinterpreted in an inclusive or civic manner. A political system can recognize Québécois, or Scottish, or Catalan national identities by creating a sub-state political unit with a jurisdiction over a territory in which those with the identity in question are in the majority. This is consistent with expecting that the identity itself should be detached to a considerable extent from the racial, religious, and cultural characteristics that are associated with the group historically having that identity, and should be reinterpreted in a more open and inclusive fashion. Likewise, the

statewide national identity can be recognized through retaining significant powers in Ottawa, London and Madrid, while at the same time expecting that identity to be developed in a civic direction.

As we have seen, Gans, by contrast, wants Jewish identity to be recognized through egalitarian Zionism without expecting the ruling identity to open up and be accessible in principle to all citizens who would be affected by Jewish self-determination. This is a subtle difference, perhaps, but an important one worthy of more study by anyone interested in the prospects for a nationalism that is genuinely egalitarian.

Endnotes

¹ Howard Harrison and Gabrielle Snyder Beck Professor of Politics, Princeton University.

² Chaim Gans, *A Political Theory for the Jewish People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). All parenthetical references in the text are to this book.

³ Gans also refers to this view as the “essentialist-proprietary” or “proprietary-historical” interpretation.

⁴ Alan Patten, *Equal Recognition: The Moral Foundations of Minority Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁵ Gans might also try to bolster his defense of Zionism with an appeal to the interests of non-Israeli Jews. But I think that the challenge I’ve just been sketching would apply to this version of the argument as well. The interest of non-Israeli Jews is primarily an *identity* interest. But just as Israeli Jews do not, in general, have rights to a successful identity when that identity conflicts with the legitimate rights and claims of others, the same is true for non-Israeli Jews.