**Some inconvenient facts for one-state advocates**

*There are so many Jewish settlers the populations can't be separated -- wrong. The one-state solution is a viable option -- wrong again.*

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<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/some-inconvenient-facts-for-one-state-advocates/>

In the debate over how to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the contribution of one-state advocates is to oversimplify a very complex reality. Trying to explain how wrong they are can be like trying to explain to Flat Earthers why people on the other side of the world do not fall off into space. They may have a simple, catchy idea but it does not reflect the reality illuminated by research from the field and empirical data.

Two complementary arguments typically undergird positions against two states and in favor of one. The first is that the large number of settlers and their integration with the West Bank Palestinian population has rendered the two-state solution impossible. The second is that one state is necessarily a viable answer.

Here are a few useful facts relating to the first assumption:

* 62% of the Israeli settler labor force works in Israel-proper, another 25% work in the over-subsidized settlements’ education systems, and only a tiny percent work in agriculture and industry, where 99% of their workers are Palestinian
* The roads servicing the settlements are in practice almost completely separate and do not observe any clear governing principle.
* There is no common fabric of life with nearby Israeli settlements.
* There is virtually no social and cultural connection between the two populations.
* Regarding the geographical and demographic realities (some presented in my new [report](https://israelpolicyforum.org/understanding-the-trump-plan/) released this week):
* In Gaza, where 2.1 million Palestinians live, there is not a single Israeli, in other words, separation.
* 99% of Israelis in East Jerusalem live in homogenous Jewish neighborhoods, in other words, separation.
* For more than 20 years, the number of Israelis living in  the West Bank has remained proportionally steady at 18% of the total West Bank population, a rate similar to the Arab minority within Israel on the eve of the establishment of the state. South of Gush Etzion and north of Nablus, the ratio of Arabs to Jews is 40:1. In other words, separation.
* 99% of the private land is Palestinian-owned. The built-up area of all the settlements amounts to less than 2% of the West Bank.
* Half of all settlers live in the three major cities adjacent to the Green Line and Jerusalem, and within an area of land exchange of less than 4% of the area.
* This means that 80% of Israelis living beyond the Green Line can be retained (without Ariel). That is, separation.
* Israel has the full capacity to absorb the rest in terms of employment and housing.
* Now, to the argument that impediments to two states should lead us to embrace one. This line of thinking requires that we address a few little questions:
* How does a country with a per capita GDP of $40,000 absorb a population with a per capita GDP of less than $4,000?
* With the absorption of a population of a similar size, of which 98% will be ranked at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, will the Jewish population accept the dramatic and intolerable decline in health, welfare and education, or will we witness a brain drain, with young Israelis with the means to do so leaving?
* Will the Palestinians serve in Israel’s security services?
* What will be the future of the Palestinian refugees? Will they return to “Israestine” and make the state a decisive Arab majority?
* Who will bear the economic burden of absorbing and rehabilitating them?
* Are one staters familiar with the recent survey of the The Institute for National Security Studies, which found that 78% of the Jewish population is unwilling to grant resident or civil rights to Palestinians in the territories annexed to Israel, preferring apartheid over loss of Jewish control?

Indeed, the feasibility of the two-state solution today is extremely low, but not for the reasons some one state supporters may think. The trends that characterize the settlement enterprise in the last two decades — a dramatic decrease in immigration from Israel (any increase is based mainly on the natural increase of ultra-Orthodox in the two cities on the Green Line), a continuing decline in economic-social ranking and more — indicate that it poses no demographic obstacle to the two-state solution. Physical-spatial feasibility exists in relation to the four core issues of the conflict — borders, Jerusalem, security and refugees.

The impossibility stems from the lack of political feasibility, especially on the Israeli side. Suffice it to mention the “Shamir Declaration,” in which more than 40 ministers and MKs pledged to abolish the two-state solution and establish one state for one people in the entire Land of Israel. It’s a simple, catchy idea. The only thing it lacks is any grounding in facts that assess the political, cultural, security and economic implications of the creation of one state, and that demonstrate how such a move will not lead to civil war and the inevitable unraveling of the Zionist dream.